What are the critical drivers of the founders for ”Intention to Internationalise”?

Zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines
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DISSERTATION

von

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

International trade, the exchange of capital, goods, and services between nations, has existed throughout history. As early as 500 AD, horses were traded from Central Asia to India and from there to the regions of South East Asia (Ghosh, 2000). One example in Europe is the Amber Road, which ran from the mouth of the Vistula, the largest river in Poland, to the Adriatic Sea (Burghardt, 1979). As early as 183 AD, Northern European countries traded amber with the Romans. In the 170 years to come, the contact through this road remained in the hands of merchants (Burghardt, 1979). The most famous example is the Silk Road. Linking China, India, and Iran to the Mediterranean, it is likely that trade had occurred on these roads even in prehistoric times, finding its height during the Han dynasty from 200 AD on (Hahn, 2009).

While international trade itself is not a new phenomenon, the **speed and scale** at which it now occurs are unprecedented. In particular, the intensified flow of finance, information, labour, technology, and goods across national boundaries has contributed to the formation of an interconnected global economy, a process commonly referred to as **globalisation** (Dicken, 2015). Over the past two decades, globalisation and technological innovation have significantly transformed international entrepreneurship. During this period, substantial changes have occurred in how firms operate internationally, driven by technological advancements, policy reforms, market dynamics, and cultural shifts.

Several factors account for these developments. At the political level, trade barriers have declined, and the **liberalisation** of markets has become a strategic objective for many countries seeking economic growth. International trade agreements have opened new markets, while governments worldwide have introduced programmes aimed at supporting international entrepreneurship. The *World Trade Report 2019* highlights the growing importance of services trade and its implications for global business activity (World Trade Organization [WTO], 2019). Collectively, these policy shifts have facilitated cross-border trade and fostered a more collaborative global business environment.

In parallel, the emergence of new markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has reshaped the international business landscape. According to the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor*

2020/2021 report, these regions have experienced a substantial increase in entrepreneurial activity, driven by economic growth, improved access to technology, and a young, increasingly entrepreneurial population (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2021). Moreover, increased global exposure has influenced consumer behaviour, leading to growing demand for diverse and culturally differentiated products, as discussed by Peng (2001).

Furthermore, the number of individuals with international experience has increased, and such individuals are more likely to engage in international trade (Rasmussen & Madsen, 2002). This period has also been characterised by a significant cultural shift towards a global mindset. Entrepreneurs have become increasingly globally oriented, demonstrating greater awareness of the nuances of diverse markets and cultures. The cultural dimensions of international entrepreneurship are examined in greater detail by Hofstede (2001).

The rise of the internet and digital communication technologies has further transformed international entrepreneurship. As demonstrated by Acs and Amorós (2008), digitalisation has democratised access to information and enabled entrepreneurs to connect more easily with global markets. The expansion of e-commerce platforms has allowed small firms to reach international customers with fewer resource constraints. In addition, social media platforms have reshaped marketing and customer engagement practices, providing entrepreneurs with new tools to interact with global audiences.

This period has also witnessed the growth of social entrepreneurship, with firms increasingly prioritising social and environmental objectives alongside economic performance (Zahra & Wright, 2011). This trend reflects a broader societal shift towards sustainability and corporate responsibility.

Despite these developments, international entrepreneurship continues to face challenges, including cultural barriers, legal complexity, and economic inequality. Looking ahead, Shih (2020) highlights how global supply chains are evolving in the post-pandemic context, suggesting that technological innovations, particularly in artificial intelligence and blockchain, will continue to shape the future trajectory of international entrepreneurship.

Under these conditions, home-market advantages diminish, giving rise to intense competition, sometimes described as "hyper-competition" (Rasmussen & Madsen, 2002). In combination with the continuously evolving global business environment, this has positioned the internationalisation of start-ups as a pivotal area of academic inquiry. This phenomenon, characterised by young entrepreneurial firms expanding beyond their domestic markets, encompasses multidisciplinary dimensions ranging from economic growth to cultural adaptation. The growing scholarly interest in this field can be attributed to the distinct global challenges and opportunities that start-ups encounter.

International entrepreneurship is a field of research that examines entrepreneurial activity across national borders. This includes cross-country comparisons of the nature and extent of entrepreneurial activity, as well as studies of cross-border entrepreneurship involving small and medium-sized enterprises and new ventures (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). It is widely assumed that entrepreneurship—particularly cross-border entrepreneurship—contributes to value and wealth creation at both the firm and macroeconomic levels.

Oviatt and McDougall (1994) introduced the concept of international entrepreneurship, which serves as a foundational framework for understanding start-up internationalisation. They emphasised the role of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behaviour in pursuing global market opportunities. This seminal work has subsequently inspired a substantial body of research examining the dynamics of start-up internationalisation.

Knight and Cavusgil (2005) further advanced this discourse by introducing the concept of the "born global" firm, referring to start-ups that internationalise rapidly after inception. Their research highlights the importance of technological advancements and global networks in enabling swift international expansion. This perspective challenges traditional stage-based models of internationalisation, such as the Uppsala model, which conceptualises international expansion as a gradual, incremental process driven by experiential learning and increasing commitment (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

Recent studies have emphasised the role of digitalisation in start-up internationalisation. A notable contribution by Autio, Sapienza, and Almeida (2000) examines how digital technologies enable start-ups to scale internationally despite limited resources. This body of work suggests a departure from conventional resource-based views and highlights the importance of leveraging digital platforms to achieve global reach.

The influence of entrepreneurial ecosystems on start-up internationalisation has also attracted considerable scholarly attention. Acs, Autio, and Szerb (2014) explore how supportive environments—characterised by access to resources, mentorship, and networks—can catalyse the international growth of start-ups. Their findings underscore the interaction between local ecosystem conditions and global market opportunities.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural dimensions of internationalisation have been examined extensively. Zahra, Ireland, and Hitt (2000) investigate the impact of cultural diversity and adaptability on the international success of start-ups. They argue that the ability to understand and navigate cultural differences is critical for building sustainable global operations.

In conclusion, start-up internationalisation represents a multifaceted and dynamic field of research. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of start-up internationalisation and to identify the critical drivers influencing founders' intentions to internationalise.

1.2 Research Summary

The essence of academic research lies not only in the generation of new knowledge but also in its effective dissemination and comprehension. Within this context, a research summary plays a pivotal role by transforming complex and extensive research into an accessible and coherent format. As Bretag and Mahmud (2009) assert, a well-constructed summary is essential for facilitating understanding, particularly in academic environments where rapid assimilation of information is often required.

A research summary is not merely a condensed version of the original work but rather a careful distillation of its central ideas. Swales and Feak (2012) emphasise the importance of simplifying complex academic content without compromising its integrity. Such simplification is crucial to ensuring that research findings are accessible to a broader audience, including readers who may not be familiar with the specialised terminology of a given discipline.

Moreover, Hart (2018) highlights the value of research summaries in synthesising information efficiently. For academics and researchers who routinely engage with a wide range of sources, summaries serve as a timesaving means of understanding the key arguments and findings of multiple studies. This efficiency is valuable not only in academic contexts but also in professional settings, where the concise communication of complex information is often required. As Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2008) note, research summaries are particularly useful in situations where stakeholders or decision-makers require prompt access to the core insights of detailed reports or studies.

However, producing an effective research summary requires adherence to several essential principles. Conciseness, objectivity, clarity, and coherence form the foundation of a high-quality summary, as outlined by Sternberg and Sternberg (2016). A summary should be succinct yet comprehensive, capturing the essential elements of the research without introducing subjective interpretation. It should present the main ideas and findings clearly and coherently, remaining faithful to the intent of the original work.

In conclusion, the importance of a research summary in academic and professional communication cannot be overstated. It serves as a vital bridge between complex research and broader understanding, ensuring that knowledge is not only generated but also effectively communicated and meaningfully understood.

This research examines the critical drivers influencing start-up founders' intentions to internationalise. Adopting a four-pronged empirical approach, the study first formulates relevant propositions through an extensive literature review, desk research on seventy start-ups, an analysis of internationalisation support mechanisms across twenty organisations, and interviews with ten start-up founders and six experienced business executives. Second, a dual-layered hypothesised model is developed by linking these propositions and grounding them in the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Third, a quantitative model is constructed through thirteen iterative cycles of structural equation modelling, drawing on 105 survey responses. Finally, the model is validated using additional qualitative insights derived from secondary survey data from 19 recently established start-ups, three desk-based case studies, and six previously conducted expert interviews.

The findings indicate that founders' **ambition and mindset** towards internationalisation, **knowledge of foreign markets**, and the desire to achieve a **first-mover advantage** represent the three most influential drivers shaping intentions to internationalise. Conventionally recognised drivers, such as access to foreign market networks and the presence of a co-evolution partner, appear to play a more prominent role in the subsequent transition from intention to action. The resulting single-layered **intention to internationalise** model provides a parsimonious framework that offers practical relevance for stakeholders across the start-up ecosystem. **Figure 1** presents an overview of the research design and key outcomes.

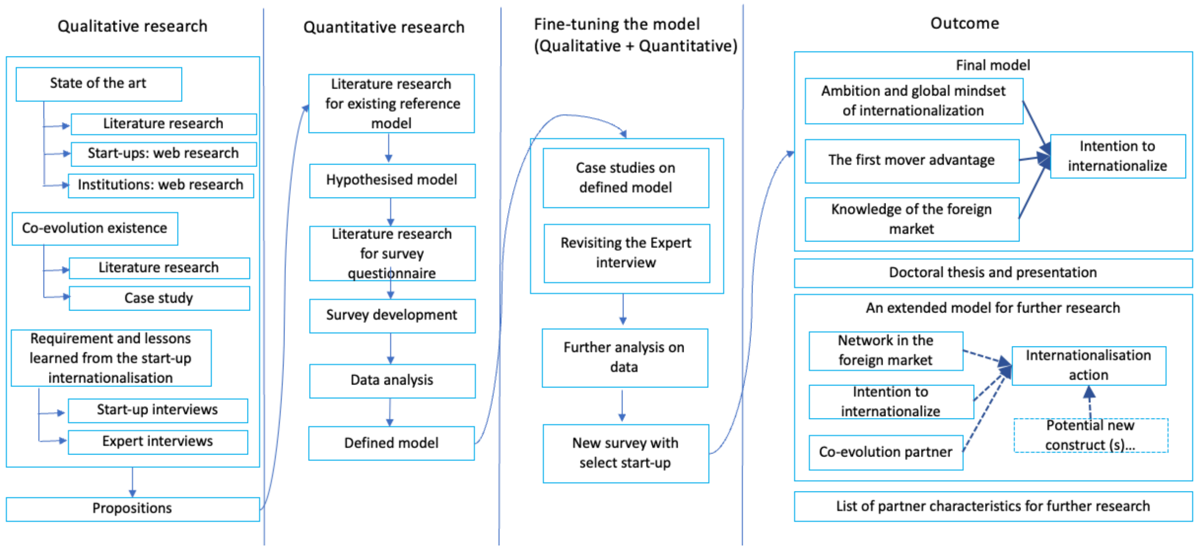


Figure 1: Overview of the research design and outcome

Keywords: Start-up, Internationalisation, International new ventures, Born global, Entrepreneurship, International entrepreneurship, International business, Foreign market entry, International market, Global entrepreneurship.

1.3 Research Motivation

The need for start-ups to internationalise has become increasingly pressing. Global expansion is no longer merely an opportunity for growth but a strategic imperative for survival and competitiveness. Start-ups that internationalise early in their life cycle tend to achieve faster growth and are more likely to sustain their operations over the long term (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). This observation highlights the critical role of internationalisation in shaping the success trajectories of contemporary start-ups.

From a professional perspective, the author's experience of operating in international markets, combined with exposure to innovative start-up practices, provided a strong impetus for undertaking this research. One of the initial reports informing this interest was the *Start-up Genome Report* (Marmer et al., 2012), which outlines distinct stages of start-up development. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, the report identifies the onset of internationalisation at Stage Three, labelled *"efficiency and customer acquisition"*.

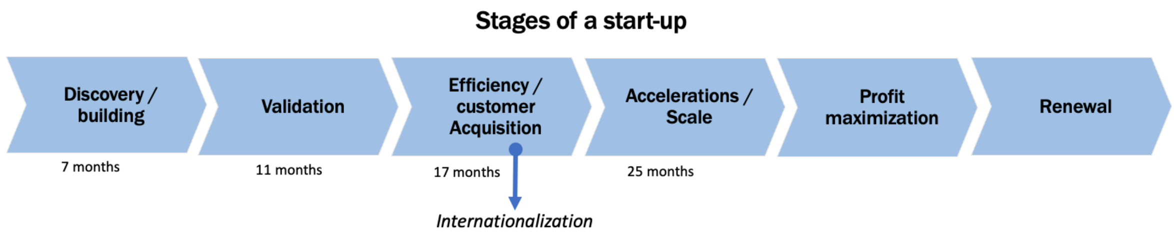


Figure 2: Stages of start-up development

Reflecting on these developments, the initial conceptual motivation for this research emerged from the question of whether internationalisation could be pursued from the outset of a start-up's life cycle. This line of thinking was reinforced by illustrative examples such as *Enchanting Travel*, where two co-founders from different continents established a globally oriented business from inception. Their collaboration originated during their studies at INSEAD, where they developed a joint business plan before returning to their respective home countries to launch the venture.

This initial motivation evolved into a research focus on understanding how internationalisation can be accelerated through the use of a co-evolution process. Co-evolution refers to a collaborative approach in which entrepreneurs from different countries form partnerships that enable mutual business growth and development. This process is grounded in trust, reputation, and the establishment of long-term business relationships that support the complex and sensitive task of managing international expansion.

For early-stage ventures with limited resources, entering foreign markets presents significant financial and personal challenges. The co-evolution process seeks to address these constraints by leveraging entrepreneurs' contextual knowledge of their domestic markets while simultaneously unlocking the international potential of their business concepts. To maintain analytical focus, the study initially concentrated on the Indo–German geographical corridor.

Following the first phase of research on the *state of the art* in start-up internationalisation, the scope was subsequently refined to focus specifically on founders' **intentions to internationalise**.

1.4 Research Goals

Research goals are fundamental to academic inquiry, as they provide a structured blueprint for the entire research process. Clearly defined goals offer direction for a study by focusing effort and resources on relevant areas and ensuring alignment with the intended outcomes (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2013). They also help delineate the scope of the research, which is essential for formulating appropriate research questions and selecting suitable methodologies (Creswell, 2014).

The formulation of research goals begins with a clear understanding of the underlying research problem. Effective goals address identified gaps in knowledge or specific issues within the field of study (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, research goals must be realistic and achievable, taking into account available resources and time constraints. Such pragmatism increases the likelihood that the research can be completed successfully (Phillips & Pugh, 2010). To enhance clarity and feasibility, goals are often framed according to the SMART criteria—that is, they should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (Doran, 1981).

In summary, well-defined research goals are essential for the success of academic studies. They provide clarity, focus, and direction, ensuring that the research remains feasible, methodologically sound, and capable of making a meaningful contribution to the field.

In line with these principles, this research pursues two primary goals. First, it aims to deepen understanding of start-up internationalisation by examining both historical and contemporary developments and the underlying factors driving them. Second, it seeks to contribute original insights to the field by applying existing theoretical frameworks and empirical findings to generate new knowledge.

1.5 Research Questions

Research questions are central to shaping the direction and scope of academic studies. They are formulated to be precise and answerable, thereby guiding the research process from inception to completion. As Creswell (2014) notes, a well-crafted research question is fundamental to successful research, as it defines the focus of the study and informs the selection of appropriate methodologies. This perspective highlights the importance of clarity and precision in the formulation of research questions.

Furthermore, the development of effective research questions requires careful consideration of the research topic, scope, and feasibility. Bryman (2016) emphasises that robust research questions are not only clearly articulated but also aligned with the research objectives and achievable within the practical constraints of a study. This alignment ensures that the research remains manageable and capable of making a meaningful contribution to the existing body of knowledge. The formulation process typically involves identifying the research problem, refining the focus, and ensuring that the questions adhere to criteria such as being specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound.

At the outset of this study, the guiding research question focused on how the internationalisation of start-ups could be accelerated. As the research progressed and the scope was refined, this question evolved into the following: What are the critical drivers influencing founders' intentions to internationalise? To guide each phase of the research process, the author developed a set of critical sub-questions, as presented in **Table 1.**

Key phase of work	**Critical sub-questions to the main research question.**
Understanding the current state (state of the Art)	• What characterises the current entrepreneurial environment? • What historical developments in start-up internationalisation are documented in the literature? • How have start-ups approached internationalisation in recent years?
Framing the concept / hypothesised model	• What insights and lessons can be derived from prior research on start-up internationalisation? • Which existing empirical concepts or models can be leveraged to adapt or develop new theoretical contributions?

Validation of the concept / model	• Does the initial concept or model withstand empirical testing using a large dataset? • What new insights emerge from the empirical analysis? • What refinements are required to arrive at a revised or finalised model?

Table 1: List of research sub-questions

1.6 Structure

The structure of a doctoral dissertation typically comprises several key components, including the title page, acknowledgements, abstract (or executive summary), table of contents, and a series of core sections. These core sections commonly include the Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, Reference List, and Appendices. Each section fulfils a specific function within the research process. For example, the Introduction presents the research problem and questions, the Literature Review critically analyses existing scholarship, and subsequent sections describe the research design, empirical findings, discussion, and conclusions. This structure reflects the overall research process, encompassing problem formulation, investigation, and the presentation of findings (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

This dissertation follows an established academic structure. It begins with the dissertation title followed by the affiliated institute's name and the author's and supervisor's details. Subsequent preliminary sections include the acknowledgements, table of contents, and lists of figures and tables.

The main body of the dissertation consists of six sections, followed by references and appendices, as outlined in **Table 2**. Sections 2 through 5 draw on work developed during the research process, with each section containing its own introduction, methodology, data collection and analysis, and conclusions. The dissertation is framed by Section 1, Introduction, and Section 6, Conclusions, which together contextualise and synthesise the overall research.

No.	**Section name**
1	Introduction
2	State-of-the-Art of Start-up Internationalisation
3	Co-evolution and Hypothesised Model Development

4	Operationalisation of the Hypothesised Model
5	Empirical Study to Develop the Final Model
6	Conclusions
7	References
8	Appendices

Table 2: Structure of the Dissertation

1.6.1 Section 1: Introduction

This section provides an overview of the research by outlining the background, rationale, research questions, and the overall structural composition of the dissertation.

1.6.2 Section 2: State-of-the-Art of Start-up Internationalisation

This section examines the start-up ecosystem by exploring the entrepreneurial landscapes of two countries, India and Germany. It reviews the extant literature on internationalisation, analyses the global expansion trajectories of selected start-ups, and evaluates the support mechanisms provided by various organisations to facilitate international growth. All analyses presented in this section are based on publicly available data. In addition, the section discusses the evolution of research paradigms informed by these findings.

1.6.3 Section 3: Co-evolution and Hypothesised Model Development

This section begins with a case study examining co-evolutionary dynamics within start-ups. This is followed by in-depth interviews with founders and experienced executives. Insights derived from these interviews inform the formulation of initial propositions, which are subsequently mapped onto relevant theoretical constructs. Existing theoretical models are then reviewed with respect to their applicability. This process culminates in the development of a novel hypothesised model aimed at explaining founders' intentions to internationalise.

1.6.4 Section 4: Operationalisation of The Hypothesised Model

This section details the development of a survey content designed to quantitatively validate the hypothesised model. Statements corresponding to each construct are systematically identified and formulated through an extensive review of the literature, complemented by professional expertise.

1.6.5 Section 5: Empirical Study to Develop the Final Model

This section presents the empirical phase of the research (Kumar & Terzidis, 2026), which is based on quantitative analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM). It details the development of the survey instrument, the data collection procedures, and the analytical techniques employed to test the hypothesised model. The empirical results derived from the SEM analysis inform an iterative refinement of the model. The refined model is subsequently subjected to further quantitative validation through an additional survey administered to selected founders of emerging start-ups, resulting in a robust and empirically validated final model.

1.6.6 Section 6: Conclusions

This section synthesises the outcomes of the research and is structured as follows. First, it presents the scientific outcomes of the study, highlighting the key theoretical contributions and empirical findings. Second, it discusses the limitations of the research, acknowledging methodological and contextual constraints. Third, it outlines directions for future research, identifying opportunities to extend and deepen the findings of this study. Fourth, the section examines the relevance and practical applications of the research for stakeholders within the start-up ecosystem. Finally, it summarises other accomplishments arising from the research process.

1.6.7 Section 7: References

This section contains the complete list of sources cited throughout the dissertation. All references are presented in alphabetical order and formatted in accordance with the APA 7 referencing guidelines.

1.6.8 Section 8: Appendices

This section contains all appendices developed to support and complement the research presented in the main sections. Each appendix is appropriately referenced within the dissertation.

2 State-of-the-Art of Start-up Internationalisation

2.1 Introduction

In today's globalised economy, understanding the current state of start-up internationalisation is crucial for both academics and practitioners. This section examines historical and contemporary trends, challenges, and practices related to the international expansion of start-ups, thereby providing a foundation for subsequent analysis and research.

The landscape of start-up internationalisation has undergone a substantial transformation in recent years. Technological advancements, shifts in global trade policies, and the emergence of new market opportunities have collectively reshaped how start-ups approach international markets. In particular, the rise of digital platforms has revolutionised the scale and speed at which start-ups can internationalise, enabling even small firms to access foreign markets with unprecedented efficiency (Zahra, 2021).

The current international environment is also characterised by heightened competitiveness and increasing complexity. Start-ups now compete not only with domestic firms but also with established international players seeking global market share (Knight & Liesch, 2016). This intensified competition necessitates a nuanced understanding of market dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and cultural contexts, highlighting the importance of strategic planning and organisational adaptability in international ventures (Knight & Liesch, 2016).

A thorough understanding of the current state of start-up internationalisation provides a necessary baseline for theoretical developments, identifying patterns, and proposing innovative strategies for successful international expansion. The subsequent sections explore these issues in greater detail by examining the methods employed by start-ups, the challenges encountered, and the influence of external environmental factors on their internationalisation processes.

2.2 Understanding the State of the Art of Start-Up Internationalisation

Research on the internationalisation of start-ups requires a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the art. In this study, such an understanding was developed through a multipronged approach comprising a systematic literature review, extensive desk research on start-ups, and an analysis of the role of institutions in supporting start-up internationalisation.

2.2.1 Literature Review

The foundation of this research was established through an exhaustive review of the relevant literature. This process involved scrutinising academic publications, industry reports, and case studies related to start-up internationalisation. By analysing influential contributions by scholars such as Knight and Cavusgil (2004), Oviatt and McDougall (1994), and Zahra (2021), the review developed a nuanced understanding of the theoretical foundations and evolving trends in the field.

In particular, the literature review provided insights into the dynamics of born global firms, the role of digitalisation, and the importance of strategic planning in the international expansion of start-ups. Moreover, it identified gaps in the existing literature, especially in relation to rapidly changing global market conditions and ongoing technological advancements.

2.2.2 Desk Research on Start-Ups

To complement the literature review, in-depth desk research was conducted focusing on contemporary start-ups. This involved analysing business models, growth strategies, market entry modes, and the challenges encountered during international expansion. By examining a diverse set of start-ups across multiple industries and geographical contexts, patterns, distinctive approaches, success factors, and barriers in internationalisation processes were identified.

This desk research was instrumental in linking theoretical insights with practical applications, offering empirical illustrations of both the complexities and the opportunities associated with start-up internationalisation.

2.2.3 Analysis of Organisations Supporting Start-Up Internationalisation

The third pillar of understanding the state of the art involved analysing the role of various organisations in facilitating the international growth of start-ups. This analysis encompassed governmental bodies, accelerators, venture capital firms, and industry, business, and entrepreneurship associations that provide support in the form of funding, mentorship, networking opportunities, and regulatory guidance.

By examining publicly available information and engaging with stakeholders, insights were gained into the support ecosystems that enable start-ups to expand internationally. This analysis underscored the critical role such organisations play in bridging the gap between domestic operations and global markets by providing access to essential resources, knowledge, and networks.

In summary, this multifaceted research approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the current state of start-up internationalisation. The integration of theoretical perspectives from the literature, practical insights from start-up desk research, and analysis of organisational support mechanisms provided a holistic view of the factors influencing start-up internationalisation. This robust foundation offers a theoretically informed and empirically grounded basis for subsequent stages of the research.

2.3 Method

As outlined in the introduction, the analysis of the state of the art of start-up internationalisation was structured around three methodological pillars. First, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. Second, desk research was undertaken on selected start-ups. Third, desk research focused on organisations that support start-up internationalisation.

Prior to engaging in these three analytical pillars, an exploratory review of the start-up landscapes in Germany and India was conducted. This review aimed to contextualise the entrepreneurial environments of the two countries, which were selected due to the initial geographical focus of the research. While this contextual analysis informed the researcher's understanding of national entrepreneurial conditions, it did not directly contribute to the empirical findings of the study.

A key methodological consideration concerned the appropriate approach to assessing the state of the art of start-up internationalisation. One option involved inductively reviewing and coding existing information to derive conclusions. An alternative approach entailed defining specific analytical questions in advance and subsequently extracting relevant data from a range of sources.

The latter approach was adopted, as extracting information from the literature is considerably more effective when guided by predefined questions. This strategy enables researchers to navigate large volumes of data with clear objectives, thereby enhancing relevance and analytical focus. Predefined questions act as a filtering mechanism, narrowing the scope of the review and directing attention to literature that directly addresses the research aims. This approach is particularly well suited to systematic reviews, where both comprehensiveness and relevance are essential. Moreover, the use of clearly formulated questions supports methodological rigour by reducing the risk of selective interpretation or confirmation bias.

This methodological rationale is well established in the literature. Booth, Sutton, and Papaioannou (2016) emphasise the importance of formulating clear and researchable questions to guide systematic literature reviews, ensuring that the review process remains focused, transparent, and comprehensive.

Based on these considerations, the question-driven approach was selected for the literature review, as well as for the desk research on start-ups and supporting organisations. This strategy enabled the efficient use of multiple datasets within a limited timeframe. The overall methodological process employed in this study is illustrated in **Figure 3.**

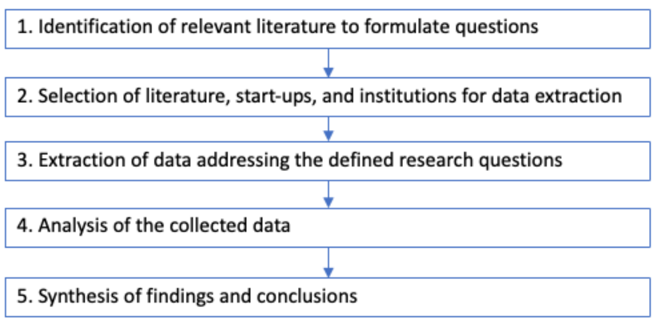


Figure 3: Methods for the state-of-the-art analysis

To develop the questions used for data extraction, this study drew on the literature reviewed in Section 1: Introduction, in combination with the researcher's professional experience. The question development process was iterative, involving repeated engagement with the source material and successive refinement of the question set as additional insights emerged. **Table 3** illustrates the principal analytical pillars of the study, along with the scope, and outlines how the data collection process was structured across these pillars.

Analytical pillar	Research scope	Data structure
Reports-based analysis of the Indo–German start-up landscape	To characterise the current entrepreneurial environment in India and Germany	Six analytical categories were defined to guide data extraction
Literature review on start-up internationalisation	To identify prevailing trends and patterns in the internationalisation of start-ups, including the timing of international expansion	Nine research questions were defined to guide the literature analysis
Desk research on start-ups	To examine prevailing trends in start-up internationalisation and identify when start-ups typically initiate international expansion	Nine research questions were defined for the analysis of start-ups
Desk research on institutions supporting internationalisation	To assess the availability and types of external support mechanisms for business internationalisation	Fifty-seven parameters across seven categories were defined

Table 3: Research scope and data structure guiding the state-of-the-art analysis

Building on the research scope and analytical pillars outlined in **Table 3**, the subsequent analysis operationalises these questions through a structured categorisation of data sources. To support the contextual analysis of the start-up landscape in Germany and India, the following analytical categories were applied:

- Status quo and recent developments
- Funding of start-ups
- Incubation and mentoring mechanisms
- Role of educational institutions
- Role of corporate and business associations
- Role of government

Table 4 presents the research questions developed for the first analytical pillar, *Literature Review*. A total of nine questions were formulated to guide the analysis. The literature search was conducted using established search terms related to the internationalisation of start-ups, including *international entrepreneurship*, *international new ventures*, and *critical factors in internationalisation*. In addition, relevant literature was identified through academic networks, including recommendations from fellow researchers and supervisory guidance.

All literature sources were systematically tagged and subsequently grouped according to their central thematic focus to facilitate structured analysis and later retrieval.

No.	Research questions
1	What is the definition and scope of start-up internationalisation?
2	Why do start-ups seek to internationalise?
3	At what stage or phase of development do start-ups internationalise?
4	How long does it typically take for start-ups to achieve their first internationalisation after founding?
5	What factors constrain start-ups from internationalising, and what are the key barriers to internationalisation?
6	What are the critical success factors for start-up internationalisation?
7	Do founders perceive delays in internationalisation as a loss of value capture?
8	What forms of support exist to facilitate start-up internationalisation?
9	What triggers the internationalisation of start-ups?

Table 4: Research questions guiding the literature review

Table 5 presents the questions used to extract data for the second analytical pillar, *Desk Research on Start-ups*. A total of nine questions were developed to guide the analysis. The selection of start-ups followed a three-stage process.

In the first stage, a comprehensive longlist of start-ups was compiled using multiple publicly available sources, including incubators, accelerators, and venture capital firms. In the second stage, this list was refined based on qualitative relevance to the research scope. In the third stage, start-ups for which sufficient publicly accessible information was unavailable were excluded from the analysis.

Data were collected by systematically reviewing online sources such as start-up websites, blog posts, and encyclopaedic platforms (e.g., Wikipedia). These sources were examined to extract responses to the nine research questions for each selected start-up.

No.	Questions
1	When was the start-up founded?
2	What is the nationality of the founders?
3	When was the first international office established?
4	In which country was the first foreign office or location established?
5	When was the first office or location established in Germany (for Indian and non-German companies)?
6	When was first office or location established in India (for German and non-German companies)?
7	What factors triggered the internationalisation of the start-up? Further insight would be helpful?
8	How was internationalisation initiated e.g. own office, strategic partner, sales office?
9	Did the start-up engage partners to support internationalisation e.g. membership associations, partner affiliations?

Table 5: Questions guiding the desk research of the start-ups

Table 6 lists the parameters used to extract information on institutions supporting start-up internationalisation. These parameters were organised into seven analytical categories, comprising a total of fifty-seven items.

The selection of organisations was guided by existing domain knowledge, with a deliberate focus on Indian and German institutions. The selection process was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, a comprehensive longlist of relevant organisations was compiled. In the second stage, organisations were selected based on the availability of publicly accessible information, while ensuring diversity in both geographical representation and organisational type.

Sr. #	Questions (parameters)
A	**About the Organization**
A1	Short Name
A2	Head office location
A3	Offices in India for German Institution
A4	Office in Germany for India Institutions
A5	Offices in other countries
A6	Start of Indian operations for German institutions
A7	Start of German operations for Indian Institutions
A8	Type of organization
A9	Specific sector / activities
A10	Supported by - Govt, banks etc.
B	**Market Strategy Services - value discovery**
B1	Discovery service
B2	Economic and financial due diligence
B3	Political due diligence
B4	Legal and regulatory due diligence
B5	Sector specific due diligence
B6	Product, services or business feasibility
B7	Long term sustainability potential
B8	Market vision, strategy and roadmap
B9	Value case (cost and benefit)
B10	Governance
B11	Market entry strategy / approach i.e. JV
B12	Test marketing
B13	Others
C	**Knowledge support - Value discovery**
C1	Publications
C2	News letters
C3	Interactive digital platform
C4	Networking platform - own
C5	Networking platform- connect support
C6	Delegation visits - only regular ones
C7	Training centre
D	**Partner development - Value realization**
D1	Partner framework
D2	Partner search
D3	Partner due diligence
D4	Partner selection
D5	Partner onboarding
D6	Partner / alliance governance model
E	**Investment support - Value realization**
E1	Direct investment funds
E2	Fund syndication support - Banks etc.
E3	Funds syndication- PE, VC etc.
E4	Funding option information's
E5	Others
F	**Setting up of business and Business development- Value realization**
F1	Own incubation centre
F2	Support for finding land, office etc.
F3	Set-up of company
F4	Legal inhouse
F5	Legal support via connect
F6	Tax and audit - inhouse
F7	Tax and audit - support via connect
F8	Recruitment and team building
F9	Business culture set-up support
F10	PR and Press services - own
F11	PR and Press services - support via connect
F12	Translation services - inhouse
F13	Translation services - support via connect
F14	Market immersion service
G	**Ongoing support - value optimization (in addition to what could be derived from above i.e. Legal)**
G1	Alliance management
G2	Market change information's

Table 6: Parameters guiding the desk research of the institutions

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

2.4.1 Start-up Ecosystem Landscape in Germany and India

As outlined in the method section, an initial contextual analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystems in Germany and India was conducted before the core empirical investigation. This analysis drew on thirteen reports and peer-reviewed academic sources to collect data across the six analytical categories defined in the methodology and approach section.

The analysis indicates that both Germany and India possess well-established start-up ecosystems with strong foundations and significant potential for further growth. To synthesise the key findings, the results of this contextual analysis are summarised in **Table 7**. Detailed country-specific analyses for India and Germany are provided in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**, respectively.

Analytical category	**Germany**	**India**
Status quo / trends	Berlin emerging as a major start-up hub in Europe; strong market leadership in digital innovation; presence of traditional start-ups and “hidden champions”	Third-ranked global start-up ecosystem; significant growth observed since 2015; strong focus on technology-driven investment
Funding	Emphasis on incremental innovation funding; strong presence of foreign investors	Focus on breakthrough innovation funding; funding largely concentrated in major cities; limited availability of very early-stage funding
Incubation and mentoring	Growing and increasingly structured ecosystem	Growing ecosystem with expanding incubation and mentoring support
Role of educational institutions	Very strong and well-established involvement in	Primarily concentrated in highly ranked institutions

	entrepreneurship and innovation	
Role of corporate and business associations	Increasing levels of corporate investment; numerous institutions supporting start-ups and entrepreneurship	Relatively low levels of corporate investment; associations concentrated in large urban areas; limited rural ecosystem support
Role of Government	Government-supported funding for business angels; national associations supporting German start-ups; initiatives such as EXITS and HTGF; support from development banks	Increasing governmental interest; initiatives such as *Start-up India* and *Stand-Up India*; dedicated federal ministry for skills and entrepreneurship

Table 7: Comparative overview of the start-up ecosystem landscapes in Germany and India

2.4.2 Insight from the Literature Data

The next stage of the analysis focused on data collection for the first analytical pillar, the *literature review*. Relevant literature was identified through systematic searches using predefined keywords, complemented by recommendations from academic supervisors and fellow researchers. The search terms were applied both individually and in combination and included *born global*, *effectuation logic*, *global start-ups*, *gradual internationalisation process models*, *international new ventures*, *international start-ups*, *internalisation theory of the multinational enterprise*, *rapid internationalisation*, and *small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)*.

In total, 188 literature sources were initially identified. Of these, 122 were retrieved through online searches using the predefined keywords, 44 were sourced through fellow researchers, 9 were recommended by academic supervisors, and 13 were obtained from additional sources. Following an initial screening process, 62 sources were excluded due to limited relevance. From the remaining body of literature, 30 publications from 17 distinct publishers were selected for detailed analysis and used to extract responses to the predefined research questions.

To facilitate systematic analysis and document management, all selected literature was categorised into 15 thematic groups. This categorisation was primarily based on the titles, abstracts, and introductory sections of the publications. Each source was subsequently organised into dedicated folders and tagged to enable efficient tracking and retrieval throughout the analysis process. **Table 8** presents an overview of the literature categories and the number of publications used for data collection within each category.

Sr. #	Category definition	# of literature pieces
1	State of the art	32
2	Co-evolution with direct reference	18
3	Crowd sourcing and Accelerators	9
4	Government and measurements	4
5	Innovation	2
6	Entrepreneurship landscape	13
7	Knowledge	10
8	Internationalisation Model	3
9	Network	15
10	Opportunity identification	6
11	Prerequisites	4
12	Team	1
13	Technology	3
15	Trust	2
15	Others	4
	Total	126

Table 8: Literature categories and number of sources used for data collection

A systematic and transparent approach was adopted to tag each literature source used in the analysis. Literature retrieved through online searches was prefixed with the letter **"S"**, followed by a sequential numeric identifier. Literature obtained through academic supervisors or fellow researchers was prefixed with the initial letter of the contributor's first name, followed by a sequential numeric identifier.

As noted earlier, a total of 30 literature sources were ultimately selected to extract responses to the predefined research questions. **Table 9** presents an overview of the selected literature, including publication titles and their respective journals or platforms.

SR. #	Title of the literature	Tag
1	The Internationalization of German Software -Based companies published by Springer	S1
2	What Technology Startups Must Get Right to Globalize Early and Rapidly published by Technology Innovation Management Review	S3
3	The phenomenon of early internationalizing firms: what do we know after a decade (1993–2003) of scientific inquiry? Published by International Business Review	S23
4	The drivers of the early internationalization of the firm published by Journal of World Business	S78
5	Firms' degree of born-globalness, international entrepreneurial orientation and export performance published by Journal of World Business	S77
6	International Entrepreneurship research (1989–2009): A domain ontology and thematic analysis published by Journal of Business Venturing	S70
7	The Internationalization of New and Small Firms: A Resource-Based View published by Journal of Business Venturing	S67
8	The internationalisation of born global and international new venture SMEs published by International Marketing Review	S65
9	New Venture Internationalization, Strategic Change and Performance: A follow up study published by Journal of Business Venturing	S64
10	Explaining the Formation of International New Ventures: The limits of Theories From International Business Research published by Journal of Business Venturing	S63
11	Toward a Theory of International New Ventures published by Journal of International Business Studies	S62
12	Rapid internationalization of traditional SMEs: Between gradualist models and born global published by International Business Review	S53
13	Start-up patterns of internationalization: A framework and its application in the context of knowledge-intensive SMEs published by European Management Journal	S51
14	Exploring the antecedents of born-global companies' international development published by International Entrepreneurship Magazine	S44
15	'Born-again global' firms: An extension to the 'born global' phenomenon published by Journal of International Management	S31
16	Global from the Start: The Characteristics of Born-Global Firms in the Technology Sector published by Technology Innovation Management Review	S21
17	Innovative Internationalisation in New firms: Born Globals the Swedish Case published by Journal of International Entrepreneurship	S17
18	Born globals: A cross-country survey on high-tech start-ups published by International Business Review	S13
19	Born globals: how to reach new business space rapidly published by International Business Review	S9
20	Legitimacy and accelerated internationalisation: An Indian perspective published by Journal of World Business	S5
21	Factors Influencing the Early Internationalization of High Technology Start-ups: US and UK Evidence published by Journal of International Entrepreneurship	S2
22	Citizens' summary Entrepreneurship 2020 – EU action plan published by European Union Commission	A1
23	Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan: Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe published by European Union Commission	A7
24	A Manifesto for Entrepreneurship and Innovation to Power Growth in the EU published by European Union Commission	A10
25	2015/16 Global Report published by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor	A3
26	The Born Global Entrepreneur in Emerging Economies published by International Business & Economics Research Journal	A12
27	Cooperative internationalization of SMEs: Self-commitment as a success factor for International Entrepreneurship published by European School of Management	F3
28	The Internationalization Process of Born Global Companies published by NTNU School of Entrepreneurship	A13
29	International entrepreneurship: A critical analysis of studies in the past two decades and future directions for research published by Journal of International Entrepreneurship	O7
30	A new framework for understanding why startups succeed published by Start-ups Genome	O9

Table 9: Selected literature sources and publication outlets

Appendix C presents the raw data extracted from the literature review. On average, approximately seventeen responses were identified per research question, with an average of six responses derived from each literature source across the twenty-eight publications used for data extraction. It should be noted that two literature sources (coded A1 and O9) did not yield any meaningful information relevant to the predefined research questions and were therefore excluded from the substantive analysis.

Table 10 provides descriptive statistics summarising the volume of responses obtained from the literature. **Table 11** presents a consolidated overview of the responses corresponding to all nine research questions used for data extraction. In addition, supplementary information identified during the analysis and deemed relevant to the research context is also reported.

Literature tag	S1	S3	S23	S78	S77	S70	S67	S65	S64	S63	S62	S53	S51	S44	S31	S21	S17	S13	S9	S5	S2	A7	A10	A3	A12	F3	A13	O7	**# of responses per Question**
Q1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
Q2	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	22
Q3	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	21
Q4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	14
Q5	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	13
Q6	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	20
Q7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Q8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	8
Q9	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17
Additional insight	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	15
# of responses per document	4	5	4	6	6	6	5	8	6	7	7	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	9	6	9	2	2	1	5	3	3	7	154

Table 10: Descriptive statistics of literature-based responses

No.	**Question**	**Summary responses**	**Sources (Tag)**
Q1	What is the definition and scope of start-up internationalisation?	Multiple conceptualisations are used, including *international new ventures*, *born global*, and *gradual internationalisation*.	S1, S3, S2, S9, S13, S17, S21, S23, S44, S62, S63, S65, S67, S70, S78
		Scope is commonly defined by foreign revenue generation, production or distribution activities, and sustained business relationships with foreign partners.	S2, S3, S17, S44, S51, S53, S62, S63, S65, S67, S78
		Time horizons typically range from inception to within three years.	S5, S13, S21, S31, S44, S53, S62, S65, S77
		Foreign revenue thresholds between approximately 5% and 25%.	S9, S13, S64, S77
Q2	Why do start-ups seek to internationalise?	Motivations include business value creation (market size, growth, profitability, technology access, brand development, and talent acquisition).	A12, S2, S3, S9, S13, S17, S21, S31, S44, S53, S62, S64, S65, S67, S70, S78
		Risk diversification through a broader customer base and management of seasonality in business.	S2, S21, S31, S64, S70

		Dealing with ecosystem: first mover advantage, globalisation, learning & knowledge, differentiators, local market pressure.	F3, O7, A12, S2, S3, S5, S13, S62, S63, S65, S70, S77, S78
Q3	At what stage or phase of development do start-ups internationalise?	Evidence indicates heterogeneous timing. Some start-ups internationalise early, while others delay reducing risk. Common patterns include internationalisation within the first three years, around the growth stage, or when favourable opportunities arise based on accumulated knowledge and capabilities.	A3, A13, O7, S2, S3, S5, S9, S13, S17, S21, S31, S44, S51, S53, S62, S63, S64, S65, S70, S77, S78,
Q4	How long does it typically take for start-ups to achieve their first internationalisation after founding?	Timeframes vary widely. The most frequently observed period is within three years after founding, followed by five to six years, with fewer cases exceeding seven years.	A12, A13, O7, S2, S5, S9, S13, S17, S21, S31, S51, S53, S65, S67
Q5	What factors constrain start-ups from internationalising, and what are the key barriers to internationalisation?	Business-related constraints e.g. Costs, profitability, competition, credibility	S1, S9, S64,
		Business network related constraints e.g. International connect, orientation, opportunism from the partners and providers of the services.	S1, S5, S51, S65
		Resource constraints e.g. Capital, knowledge, physical resources, currency.	A12, S1, S5, S9, S31, S51, S78
		People resources related constraints e.g. Talent, capabilities, organizational issues, mobility.	A10, S1, S5, S70, S78
		Knowledge related constraints e.g. Culture, market dynamics, language, foreign laws, business practices, barriers to trade.	S63, S64,
		External and other constraints e.g. Foreign direct investments (FDI), hostility, heterogeneity.	A10, A12, S5, S31, S63, S70
Q6	What are the critical success factors for start-up internationalisation?	Business basis: Global vision, credibility, flexibility in adopting the business, governance.	A12, A13, F3, O7, S1, S2, S3, S17, S23, S44, S51, S62, S64, S78
		Product and services: Localization, investment in innovation.	A12, S1, S23, S44, S62
		Network: Large and diverse network of people, relationship capital, customers & suppliers in international market, network information.	A12, A13, F3, O7, S2, S3, S9, S13, S23, S44, S53, S62, S63, S67, S70, S78

		Resources: Financial resources, technology, lean processes.	A13, O7, S3, S9, S13, S63, S67, S78
		People: Commitment, international experience, ambition, mindset	S1, S23, S78
		Knowledge: culture, fast acquisition	A12, S1, S3, S13, S17, S23, S53, S67, S70
		External: securing commitments from agencies.	F3, S3
Q7	Do founders perceive delays in internationalisation as a loss of value capture?	Very limited information or insight were found. But available information's led to suggest "Yes"	O7, S2, S63
Q8	What forms of support exist to facilitate start-up internationalisation?	Very limited information's were found. What was available tend to suggest on how to do it rather real content. Explicit info included trade fairs, leveraging universities, exchange platforms.	A7, A12, S2, S9, S21, S23, S44, S65,
Q9	What triggers the internationalisation of start-ups?	No systematic internationalisation effort was found. Here are some insights:	
		Individual motives (People aspect): Family business orientation, international mindset, personal motives, competencies of management (team diversity), risk taking ability, ambition, or energy level.	O9, S2, S9, S53, S65, S77, S78
		Business aspect: Opportunity, market imperfection, cost, uncertainty in current business environment, maturity of home market, economy of scale, pre-empting competition.	O7, S2, S5, S9, S17, S21, S31, S44, S53, S62, S63, S70,
		International funding.	S2, S65
		Knowledge or the foreign market and network in the foreign market.	S13, S17, S44, S70, S78
		Others: Hostile local environment leading to internationalisation for survival.	S2, S13, S44, S62, S67
	Additional notable insights	- Collective entrepreneurship may be a better abstraction than the conventional "entrepreneur at "the individual level" abstraction. - Trust-based internationalisation is a promising alternative to other forms of internationalisation, particularly for SMEs	A7, A10, F3, O7, S1, S2, S3, S9, S23, S51, S62, S64, S65, S67, S77,

		- The entire process of international opportunity identification and exploitation is embedded in the external environmental context and must be interpreted with reference to the industry, market, and competitive forces	

Table 11: Consolidated responses to literature review research questions

2.4.3 Insight from the Start-up Data

The next stage of the research involved compiling a comprehensive list of start-ups for desk analysis. An initial pool of over 600 start-ups was assembled using multiple sources, including:

- Centre of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)
- KIT Venture Fest
- KIT Incubator
- German Accelerator
- German start-up networks and groups
- Tech Tour
- SAP SE start-up programmes
- Selected venture capital firms (e.g. Wellington Partners)
- The author's professional network

The complete list of identified start-ups is presented in **Appendix D**. Following an initial screening based on the availability of publicly accessible information (primarily via company websites), the list was reduced to 260 start-ups. A subsequent, more detailed review further narrowed the sample to 70 start-ups.

In addition to information availability, the year of founding was used as a key selection criterion. Start-ups founded in or after the year 2000 were prioritised to ensure relevance to contemporary internationalisation contexts, although a limited number of older start-ups were intentionally retained for comparative purposes. While the majority of the selected start-ups originated from Germany and India, the final sample also included firms from North America, Asia, and other European countries.

Once the final sample was established, data were extracted for each start-up based on the nine predefined research questions, to the extent permitted by publicly available information.

Appendix E presents the detailed dataset compiled for the 70 start-ups analysed in this study. **Table 12** provides an overview of the **32 start-ups that had internationalised**, including their country of foundation and the location of their first international office.

Sr. No.	Start-up name	Country	4 In which country was the first foreign office or location established?
2	Nuru Energy (Africa & India)	Afrika	India
3	Blabla car	France	Spain
5	ProAlpha	Germany	Austria
7	Enchanting Travel	Germany	India
11	ZaaK Technologies GmbH	Germany	India
12	Wooga	Germany	Japan
1	Sofarware AG	Germany	USA
6	PTV Group	Germany	Many countries via partners
9	Delivery Hero	Germany	Russia, Australia, Mexico
10	hellofood/foodpanda	Germany	Singapore
4	SAP	Germany	Switzerland
13	6WunderKinder	Germany	USA
8	Cassantech	Germany	USA
36	paytm	India	Canada
32	Zomato	India	Dubai
34	Knowlarity	India	Singapore (moved HQ from India to Singapore)
31	AdNear (Now Near)	India	Singapore and Australia
29	Mind Tree	India	USA
33	Cube 26 (PredictGaze)	India	USA
35	Bidgely	India	USA
30	Subex	India	USA
47	Genus Power	India	USA, Singapore, China
60	LetsVenture	Singapore	India
62	Spotify	Sweden	UK
63	iZettle	Sweden	UK,Denmark, Finland and Norway
67	Facebook	USA	Dublin, Ireland
69	AirBnb	USA	Germany
64	Amazon	USA	Germany and UK
65	Google	USA	Japan
70	Uber	USA	Paris,France
68	Tesla	USA	UK
66	Alfresco	USA	USA

Table 12: Overview of internationalised start-ups and their first international office

Following data collection, the analysis phase commenced and yielded several noteworthy insights around triggers of start-up internationalisation, the approaches adopted to initiate internationalisation, the support received from external partners, and additional relevant insights.

Trigger for Start-up Internationalisation

Information on triggers for internationalisation was available and extracted from 40 start-ups within the analysed sample. **Table 13** presents the complete details of these triggers. To enable comparability and analytical clarity, the initially diverse responses were refined and consolidated into a set of common categories. The key triggers for start-up internationalisation and their observed distribution are as follows:

- Demand and growth opportunities: 16
- Product suitability for foreign markets: 10
- Size of the target market: 9
- Ambition following success in the home market: 2
- Proximity to the supply base: 2
- Access to funding: 1

Sr. No.	Start-up name	7 What factors triggered the internationalisation of the start-up? Further insight would be helpful?	Refined response
32	Zomato	Initial success in local market	Ambition
36	paytm	Early scale success in local market	Ambition
27	Hanson Robotics	Close to suppy base	Closure to supply base
12	Wooga	Close to market leader	Closure to supply base
16	e Senza	Demand	Demand
49	Jigsaw Academy	Clients	Demand
2	Nuru Energy (Africa & India)	Demand	Demand
1	Sofarware AG	Demand	Demand
35	Bidgely	Demand	Demand
30	Subex	Demand	Demand
47	Genus Power	Demand	Demand
37	Applied Solar Technologies	Demand	Demand
66	Alfresco	Fund	Fund
65	Google	Scale	Growth
3	Blabla car	Growth	Growth
8	Cassantech	Growth	Growth
5	ProAlpha	Growth	Growth
6	PTV Group	Growth	Growth
29	Mind Tree	Growth	Growth
42	Eckovation	expansion	Growth
13	6WunderKinder	Acquisition	Growth
4	SAP	Produt acceptance	Product suitability
9	Delivery Hero	Produt acceptance	Product suitability
62	Spotify	Produt acceptance	Product suitability
34	Knowlarity	Product acceptance	Product suitability
67	Facebook	Product acceptance	Product suitability
70	Uber	Product acceptance	Product suitability
69	AirBnb	Prodcut / service acceptance	Product suitability
63	iZettle	Easy acceptance of products	Product suitability
7	Enchanting Travel	Customer Needs and the nature of the business itself	Product suitability
10	hellofood/foodpanda	Competetive advantage	Product suitability
60	LetsVenture	Size	Size of the market
64	Amazon	Size	Size of the market
21	LetsVenture	Market size, supply base	Size of the market
68	Tesla	Market size / Maturity of market	Size of the market
11	ZaaK Technologies GmbH	Market size	Size of the market
14	Arineos	Market size	Size of the market
20	Kniexon	Market size	Size of the market
33	Cube 26 (PredictGaze)	Market size	Size of the market
31	AdNear (Now Near)	Market size	Size of the market

Table 13: Trigger for start-up internationalisation

Approach to Initiate Start-up Internationalisation

This analysis examined how start-ups initiated their first international business activities. Information on the approach to internationalisation was extracted from 43 start-ups. The collected data were coded into 5 categories**:** exporting**,** acquisition**,** own office/sales office**,** partner-based entry**,** and customer- or project-based office. **Table 14** presents the complete overview.

The key observations regarding the approaches adopted by start-ups to initiate internationalisation are as follows:

- **29** start-ups established their own office abroad, including **4** cases involving acquisitions. It could not be conclusively determined whether the establishment of the office resulted directly from the acquisition.
- **12** start-ups entered foreign markets through partnerships, including **5** that also established their own offices. In these cases, it remains unclear whether the offices were opened jointly with partners.
- **4** start-ups operated through customer- or project-based offices.
- **1** start-up relied exclusively on exporting as its mode of internationalisation

Sr. No.	Start-up name	8 How was internationalisation initiated e.g. own office, strategic partner, sales office?	Export	Acquisition	Own office Sales office	Partner	Customer / Project office
13	6WunderKinder	Own			X		
31	AdNear (Now Near)	Own Office			X		
69	AirBnb	Own office			X		
66	Alfresco	Thrrough branch officef, local offices and partners			X	X	
64	Amazon	Own			X		
37	Applied Solar Technologies	Project					X
14	Arineos	Customers and projects					X
35	Bidgely	Own office			X		
3	Blabla car	Own Office and various acquisitions					
38	Boond	Research partnerships University				X	
8	Cassantech	Own office			X		
15	Competitive Intelligence Institute	Representative				X	
33	Cube 26 (PredictGaze)	Own Office			X		
9	Delivery Hero	own, acquisitions		X	X		
16	e Senza	own and representative			X	X	
7	Enchanting Travel	One of the partners is from Germany				X	
67	Facebook	Own office			X		
47	Genus Power	Own and export	X		X		
65	Google	Own office, acquisitions		X	X		
10	hellofood/foodpanda	Own Office			X		
19	iversity (Bernau)	Tie-ups with various universities in Europe.				X	
63	iZettle	Partner				X	
20	Kniexon	Export	X				
34	Knowlarity	Own office			X		
60	LetsVenture	Own office			X		
21	LetsVenture	Partner stores				X	
29	Mind Tree	Own office			X		
2	Nuru Energy (Africa & India)	Working with microfinance partners in India				X	
36	paytm	Own Office			X		
5	ProAlpha	Subsidiaries and partners			X	X	
6	PTV Group	Own and partner			X	X	
23	Rehability Reha-Fachhandel GmbH & Co. KG	International clients					X
4	SAP	Own office in Biel, Switzerland			X		
1	Sofarware AG	Offices, subsidiaries and R&D centre			X		
62	Spotify	Own office			X		
25	Startnext Network GmbH	Through its clients in Austria and Switzerland					X
30	Subex	Acquistion and own office		X	X		
68	Tesla	Own store			X		
70	Uber	Partners and own office			X	X	
12	Wooga	Own office			X		
11	ZaaK Technologies GmbH	Own Office			X		
32	Zomato	Own office , acquisition		X	X		

Table 14: Approach adopted by start-ups to initiate internationalisation

Support Received from External Resources for Start-up Internationalisation

This analysis examined whether start-ups received support from external experts, institutions, or organisations during their internationalisation process. Information on external support was extracted from **40** start-ups. It should be noted that, although considerable effort was made to identify partnerships and support structures outside the home country, the available information may not fully capture all forms of external support utilised by the start-ups.

The collected data were coded into **5** categories: educational institutions, alumni networks, investor networks, corporate networks, and governmental or institutional networks. **Table 15** presents the complete overview. The key observations regarding external support for start-up internationalisation are as follows:

- **11** start-ups received support from educational institutions, including alumni network
- **8** start-ups received support from investor networks.
- **21** start-ups utilised corporate networks.
- **10** start-ups received support from the government or institutional networks.
- **5** start-ups utilised support from **2** categories, while **1** start-up each relied on **3** or **4** categories of external support.

Sr. No.	Start-up name	9 Did the start-up engage partners to support internationalisation e.g. membership associations, partner affiliations?	Educational Institution Network	Alumni Network	Investor Network	Corporate network	Government Institutional network
70	Uber	Baidu in China, Toyota, Alipay				X	
5	ProAlpha	BMBF					X
48	HealthEra	Cambridge Enterprise	X				
38	Boond	Center for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) - IIMA, ARTHA, Opes Impact	X				X
18	Honestly	CIE,KIT	X				
47	Genus Power	collaborating with TBM consultants, USA in 2004 and joint venture				X	
21	LetsVenture	Deutsche startups					X
44	Fastudent	EduVision Retail Technologies Pvt Ltd				X	
20	Kniexon	EIT ICT Labs,Intel,TU Munchen,EESA space Solutions	X			X	X
62	Spotify	Facebook, Bandpage, Starbucks, Uber, Virgin, etc				X	
50	Ketto	Google India, London Business School	X			X	
24	Solandeo GmbH	HTGF			X		
15	Competitive Intelligence Institute	iMove					X
43	EzySolare now Gosolar Ventures Pvt Ltd	Infuse Ventures, fund backed by IIMA, CIIE, Government of India's Ministry of New and others	X		X	X	X
61	Cultavo	INSEAD Network		X			
3	Blabla car	INSEAD Network		X			
7	Enchanting Travel	INSEAD Network		X			
60	LetsVenture	Investors from US,Russia, Israel,Ukraine, Singapore			X		
6	PTV Group	ITC, Siemens				X	
35	Bidgely	Khosla Ventures			X		
11	ZaaK Technologies GmbH	KIC InnoEnergy,TU Berlin, IIT Bombay, Vattenfall, Weber Saint-Gobin, Tata Power	X			X	
17	E-Volo	Institutions, Investors			X		X
68	Tesla	Many corporate partnerships				X	
8	Cassantech	Many institutions					X
30	Subex	Many tech partners				X	
25	Startnext Network GmbH	media & cooperation partners seedmatch,FINTECHTECH HUB by zeb				X	
2	Nuru Energy (Africa & India)	Microfinance company BASIX				X	
33	Cube 26 (PredictGaze)	Micromax, Intex, Celkon, Zen, iBerry and Lemon Mobile				X	
41	Craftsvilla	Ministry of Textile,GOI					X
29	Mind Tree	Oracle, Microsoft, Netbiscuits, Conversable, etc.				X	
4	SAP	Investors, Corporates				X	
53	Swajal	REEEP, Saurya EnerTech				X	X
10	hellofood/foodpanda	Rocket Internet			X		
51	kWatt Solutions	Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), IIT Bombay	X				
9	Delivery Hero	Team Europe and Rocket Internet			X	X	
16	e Senza	TiE 50 Award Winner				X	
69	AirBnb	Times group Strategic partnership			X		
13	6WunderKinder	VCs				X	
65	Google	Wordstream, Sun Microsystems, Luxottica, Macy, etc.				X	

Table 15: External support utilised by start-ups for internationalisation

Additional Insights

- Opening of international offices in Germany: 13 out of 31 start-ups that had initiated internationalisation established their first international office in Germany.
- Opening of international offices in India: 15 out of 31 start-ups that had initiated internationalisation established their first international office in India.

2.4.4 Insight from the Support Organization Data

The final pillar of data collection and analysis focused on identifying support organisations involved in start-up internationalisation and examining the types of support they provide. Based on prior domain knowledge and a targeted internet search, an initial list of **79** organisations was compiled. **Appendix F** presents the complete list of identified organisations in alphabetical order, together with their respective countries.

Following an initial screening process, 20 organisations were selected for in-depth analysis. The selection was guided by the following criteria:

- Prior awareness of, and access to, the organisations
- Availability of publicly accessible information relevant to the intended data collection
- Geographical location of the organisations
- Type of organisation

Table 16 presents an overview of the 20 support organisations selected for the in-depth analysis. For analytical clarity, the table includes the type of organisation and an abbreviated name assigned by the author.

Sr. No.	Organizations name	Country	Short name	Type of organization
1	Cyberforum	India	C-Forum	Business / Industry Association
2	Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at KIT	Germany	CiE	Education Institution
3	BW International	Germany	BW-Int.	Government Institution
4	European Business and Technology Centre	Germany	EBTC	Government Institution
5	German Trade and Invest	Germany	GTAI	Government Institution
6	Rocket Internet	Germany	R-Internet	Accelerator
7	Business Angel Network Deutschland	Germany	BAND	Angel Association
8	High-Tech Gründerfonds Management	Germany	HTFG	Venture Capital
9	Wellington Partners	Germany	W-Part	Venture Capital
10	German India Round Table	Germany	GIRT	Business / Industry Association
11	National Entrepreneurship Network	India	NEN	Entrepreneurship Association
12	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry	India	FICCI	Business / Industry Association
13	Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurs- IIT Mumbai	India	SINE	Education Institution
14	Invest India	India	Inv-Ind	Government Institution
15	German centres	India	GC	Accelerator
16	India angel network	India	IAN	Angel Association
17	Let's Venture	India	Let-Ven	Venture Capital
18	The Indus Entrepreneurs	India	TiE	Entrepreneurship Association
19	Indo German Chamber of Commerce	India + Germany	IGCC	Business / Industry Association
20	India Business Centre Stuttgart	India + Germany	IBC-S	Accelerator

Table 16: Support organisations selected for in-depth analysis

As shown in **Table 16,** the sample of support organisations is relatively balanced in terms of both geographical coverage and organisational type. Specifically, 9 organisations each are based in India and Germany, while 2 operate across the India–Germany corridor.
With respect to organisational type, the sample includes:

- **2** angel investor networks and **2** entrepreneurship support associations
- **3** accelerators
- **4** business or industry associations
- **2** educational institutions
- **4** government institutions
- **3** venture capital firms

A detailed analysis was conducted using publicly available information, including organisational websites, blog posts, Wikipedia entries, and materials presented at public forums and conferences. In addition, informal discussions were held with representatives of several organisations (though not all 20) during events such as Indo–German conferences, the *Stuttgart Meets Mumbai* festival, meetings of the German India Round Table (GIRT)**,** and TiE Deutschland (The Indus Entrepreneurs)**.**

Appendix G provides a brief descriptive profile of each of the 20 organisations, while **Appendix H** presents the complete dataset used to analyse the organisations against the predefined questions and parameters. Based on this dataset, the range of services offered by the organisations was analysed. **Table 17** presents an overview of the key services and their availability across the analysed organisations.

Service category	Scaled Score	Group total- Yes	# of parameters	# of institutions	Max possible
Market Strategy Services	55%	144	13	20	260
Knowledge support	51%	81	8	20	160
Partner development	26%	36	7	20	140
Investment support	37%	44	6	20	120
Setting up of business and Business development	37%	111	15	20	300
Ongoing support	30%	18	3	20	60

Table 17: Key services provided by support organisations

2.5 Results and Conclusion

Following the completion of data analysis across the analytical pillars underpinning the *state-of-the-art* assessment, the following results and conclusions were derived.

- Overall, the analysis indicates that the start-up ecosystems in Germany and India are reasonably well developed and continue to accelerate.
- A response rate of approximately 62% across the literature-based questions suggests that the selected questions are relevant and meaningful within the existing body of research.
- No unified or standardised terminology, definition, or set of criteria for *start-up internationalisation* exists across the literature.
- There is no evidence of systematic patterns regarding *why* and *when* start-ups internationalise. Instead, internationalisation appears to be largely opportunistic **i**n nature.

- On average, start-ups initiate internationalisation approximately 3.5 years after founding, with the majority doing so within 6 years.
- Factors identified as barriers to internationalisation are frequently mirrored as success factors, suggesting a dual role depending on context and execution.
- No explicit evidence was found in the literature regarding measurable business losses attributable to delayed internationalisation.
- The most frequently identified trigger for internationalisation is demand and growth opportunities (38%), followed by product–market fit (23%) and market size (21%).
- The majority of start-ups (67%) initiated international business activities by establishing their own office, followed by partner-based entry (27%).
- While the literature provides limited explicit discussion on internationalisation support mechanisms, the organisational analysis demonstrates that such support does exist in practice. Many organisations actively support start-ups in their internationalisation efforts, including funding-related support. Some start-ups leveraged multiple support organisations. A majority (52%) utilised corporate networks, followed by educational institutions (27%).
- More than 50% of the analysed support organisations offer market strategy services, followed by knowledge-based support. Limited ongoing support suggests that start-ups tend to operate more independently once established in foreign markets.

In conclusion, the findings highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of start-up internationalisation. Given this complexity, subsequent research was deliberately narrowed to focus on the **intention to internationalise**, rather than addressing the full internationalisation process. Furthermore, the research scope was refined by discontinuing a specific focus on the Indo–German corridor, allowing for a more generalisable investigation of founders' internationalisation intentions.

3 Co-evolution and Hypothesised Model Development

3.1 Introduction

In the search for a model explaining the *intention to internationalise*, understanding the underlying mechanisms and patterns influencing this intention is essential. The development of comprehensive and theoretically grounded models is therefore a critical endeavour in advancing research in this domain. This section focuses on the development of a hypothesised model designed to capture the key drivers shaping founders' intentions to internationalise. By integrating insights derived from prior desk research, start-up founder interviews, and expert interviews, and by aligning these insights with an established theoretical framework, this section aims to propose a robust and analytically sound model. The proposed model seeks not only to consolidate existing knowledge but also to provide a foundation for future empirical investigation.

The conceptual foundation of this work is informed by seminal contributions in intention-based research, particularly the Theory of Planned Behaviour developed by Icek Ajzen, as well as by entrepreneurship scholars such as Francisco Liñán, whose work extensively examines entrepreneurial intentions. Hypothesis development in this study is rooted in systematic inquiry, empirical observation, and theoretical reflection. Accordingly, this section outlines the rationale underpinning the selection of constructs, the relationships proposed between them, and the decisions made during the model's conceptualisation and formulation. By situating the proposed model within the broader literature on the intention to internationalise, this section provides a transparent account of its development and highlights its potential contribution to addressing existing gaps in the literature.

3.2 Method

Figure 4 shows the methodological approach adopted for the development of the hypothesised model of founders' *intention to internationalise*. The primary objective of this stage of the research was to derive theoretically grounded constructs by synthesising insights from multiple qualitative and secondary data sources. The method followed a sequential and iterative process, progressing from proposition development to construct formation and theoretical anchoring.

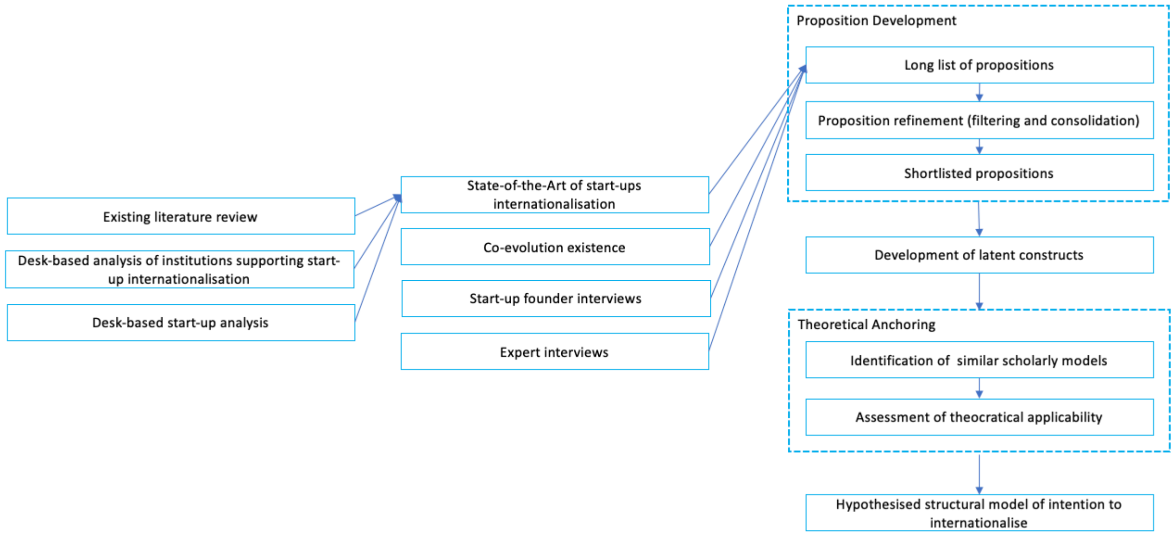


Figure 4: Approach for deriving the hypothesised model

The development of the hypothesised model began with the formulation of propositions. Propositions are declarative statements that posit relationships between two or more concepts and serve as precursors to empirical hypothesis testing (Bacharach, 1989). They are central to theory building, as they articulate expected patterns or associations between variables and contribute to conceptual coherence and theoretical robustness (Sutton & Staw, 1995).

Propositions were derived from three primary sources:

1. **State of the art on start-up internationalisation**, developed in section 2, comprising:
    - an extensive literature review.
    - desk-based analysis of start-ups and the timing and modes of their internationalisation; and
    - analysis of institutions supporting start-up internationalisation.

2. **Start-up founder interviews**, originally conducted as part of the master's thesis *"Co-evolution in International New Ventures"* (Horn, 2017), were co-supervised by the author of this dissertation.
3. **Expert interviews**, conducted specifically for this research, capture experiential insights from individuals with extensive involvement in international business and internationalisation processes.

The state-of-the-art analysis provided an empirical and conceptual foundation for proposition development, drawing on publicly available data collected through structured and source-specific question sets.

3.2.1 Start-up Founder Interviews

The start-up founder interviews were originally conducted within the master's thesis *"Co-evolution in International New Ventures"* (Horn, 2017). That study examined the existence and relevance of co-evolutionary dynamics in international new ventures by combining a literature review with a case study, followed by interviews with selected start-ups meeting predefined co-evolution criteria. A grounded theory approach was employed to support theory generation. For the present research, the interview material was re-analysed to extract propositions relevant to the *intention to internationalise*. A purposive sampling strategy was applied, consistent with Flick's (2014) recommendations. Four categories of firms were initially considered:

1. International new ventures (INVs)
2. Start-ups planning to internationalise
3. Late-internationalising SMEs or MNEs and
4. Failed INVs

Although failed INVs were initially included, difficulties in identifying suitable cases and time constraints led to their exclusion from the final sample.

Interview topics were informed by prior research highlighting the importance of institutional environments, legal frameworks, culture, knowledge, resources, and networks in internationalisation decisions. Studies indicate that domestic economic conditions influence internationalisation choices (Bangara et al., 2012), while institutional environments in home and host countries affect decision-making and network development (Chetty et al., 2006; Zhang & Dodgson, 2007). Cultural factors, including psychic distance and global mindset, also play a significant role (Gertsen & Søderberg, 2011; Levy et al., 2007; Richardson, 2014).

Knowledge-related factors, such as foreign market knowledge and internationalisation process knowledge, were incorporated due to their established relevance for INV growth (Autio, 2005;

Deligianni et al., 2015). In addition, entrepreneurial orientation, networks, and dynamic capabilities were considered based on prior empirical findings (Ellis, 2011; Gassmann & Keupp, 2007; Gerschewski et al., 2015).

A semi-structured interview guide was developed based on these thematic areas (**Figure** 5). While this guide supported comparability across interviews, the author did not adhere to it rigidly, allowing interviewees to follow emergent thematic paths, in line with qualitative research best practice (Hohl, 2000). The full interview guide is provided in **Appendix I**.

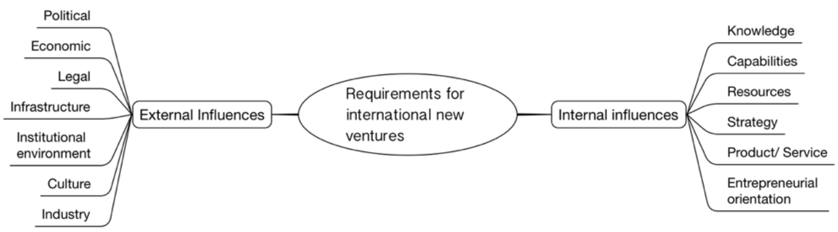


Figure 5: Key thematic areas informing internationalisation requirements

3.2.2 Expert Interviews

Expert interviews can be conducted along a continuum ranging from highly structured formats to open, free-flowing conversations. In order to leverage the advantages of both approaches, this study adopts a hybrid interview design. Specifically, the author developed a prototype foundational model informed by three decades of experience in international business, complemented by academic training and extensive intercultural living experience. This model serves as an integrative framework to guide the expert interviews while preserving sufficient flexibility to capture emergent insights.

Accordingly, reflection is adopted as the central mechanism through which prior experience is systematically examined and integrated into the model-development process. Reflection can be understood as a deliberate and conscious cognitive process in which an individual examines past experiences to gain insights, which can be used to improve future actions (Schön, 1983). It is a critical tool for professional growth, allowing for the identification and challenging of assumptions, enhancing decision-making capabilities, and cultivating a deeper understanding of complex scenarios (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). Reflection holds paramount importance in professional contexts, especially in international business. Given the dynamic and multifaceted nature of global markets, reflection aids professionals in:

Adapting to change: International business landscapes evolve rapidly. Reflecting on past experiences helps professionals forecast market trends and adapt strategies accordingly (Mezirow, 1990).

Cultural competence: Operating in diverse markets requires a keen understanding of varying cultural nuances. Reflection assists in developing this understanding, making interactions and negotiations smoother (Moon, 2004).

Ethical decision-making: As professionals navigate global markets, they often encounter ethical dilemmas. Reflective practice ensures decisions are both profitable and ethically grounded (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998).

Drawing from over 30 years of study and work experience in diverse international markets, reflection can be deployed in the following ways for model development:

Identify patterns: Reflect on past experiences to discern recurring market trends, challenges, and successes. This can form the basis for model parameters (Kolb, 1984).

Assess relevance: Not all past experiences may be relevant in current or future contexts. Reflective evaluation helps sift out outdated practices, ensuring the model remains contemporary (Johns, 1995).

Incorporate diverse perspectives: Given the varied nature of international markets, reflecting on experiences from different regions, cultures, and market scenarios will enrich the model's comprehensiveness (Moon, 2004).

Feedback integration: Reflect on feedback from peers, subordinates, and superiors over the years. Their perspectives can provide valuable insights and fill potential blind spots in the model (Brockbank & McGill, 2007).

In essence, reflection, when applied methodically, can be a robust tool, turning years of experience into actionable and adaptable strategies in international business. The details concerning historical data and the resulting model development are covered in the subsequent section.

In preparation for the expert interviews, the researchers developed a comprehensive prototype model of international business based on a co-evolutionary business engagement perspective. The prototype was created using Microsoft PowerPoint to complement verbal communication with visual representations during the interviews. This approach was adopted because the interviews were conducted virtually with geographically dispersed experts. The integration of visual and verbal information is supported by multimedia learning theory, which suggests that individuals process information more effectively when it is presented through both visual and auditory channels rather than through a single modality alone (Mayer, 2021). Similarly, dual coding theory proposes that the combined use of verbal and visual representations enhances comprehension, recall, and knowledge construction (Paivio, 1986). The prototype also served as a visual elicitation tool, facilitating a shared understanding of complex concepts, reducing ambiguity, and encouraging richer expert feedback during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Flick, 2014). Furthermore, the use of a structured visual prototype helped maximize the effectiveness of the limited interview time, as most experts participated between other professional commitments.

In conducting the expert interviews, a comprehensive approach was adopted to encompass diverse perspectives, including:

- Senior executives from multinational corporations,
- Founders of early-stage start-ups with an internationalisation focus,
- Founders of late-stage start-ups,
- Specialists supporting internationalisation efforts,
- Representatives spanning the geographies of India and Germany/Europe, and
- Consideration of gender diversity

Expert participants were curated from a list prepared by the researcher and were recognised for their extensive experience in international business.

As illustrated in **Figure 4**, the subsequent step involved extracting a list of propositions from each of the three data sources and refining this list to exclude non-pertinent entries. **Table 18** presents the exclusion filters applied during this refinement process.

Sr. #	Exclusion filter name	Filter description
1	Start-up specific information related to internationalisation	Details concerning the internationalisation approach, timing of implementation or planning, etc.
2	Capital and financial resources	Entries related to capital and financial requirements
3	Operational factors	Elements required for business operations, such as the availability of human resources
4	External factors	Variables like geographical restrictions, government permissions, and host country dynamics (e.g., hostilities towards foreign enterprises)
5	Business without a real need of internationalisation	Cases such as web development firm inherently international from inception
6	Product – market fit	Concerns regarding product compatibility with foreign markets, assuming universal suitability or adoptability

Table 18: List of exclusion filters applied to proposition exclusion

While excluding specific propositions, each filter could itself serve as a foundation for future scholarly inquiry. Following refinement, analogous propositions were aggregated into distinct categories to formulate constructs.

In an effort to develop a theoretical model concerning the "intention to internationalise" among enterprises and entrepreneurs, and leveraging the derived constructs, an extensive review of existing scholarly literature was undertaken to establish conceptual foundations and validate the empirical rigour of the proposed framework. An initial search using primary keywords yielded more than 20 ostensibly relevant publications. 9 were selected for a deep dive, and upon closer examination, 4 were identified as particularly germane to the study's objectives. In addition, 3 KIT doctoral research projects were reviewed as well.

The rationale for selecting and leveraging these studies in the development of an internationalisation intention model is outlined below.

3.2.3 Identification of Similar Scholarly Models

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991) represents a seminal framework for understanding and predicting human behaviour across contexts. The theory posits that intentions are shaped by attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of internationalisation, TPB provides a robust basis for explaining how attitudes towards foreign markets, normative pressures, and perceived control over internationalisation processes influence firms' or entrepreneurs' intentions to internationalise.

Intention-based models of entrepreneurship education

Liñán's (2004) work offers valuable insight into the influence of educational factors on entrepreneurial intentions, highlighting the role of knowledge acquisition and skill development. When extended to internationalisation intentions, this framework facilitates examination of how exposure to international entrepreneurship education and training affects preparedness, risk mitigation, and cognitive adaptability in global expansion contexts.

Interaction between feasibility and desirability in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions

Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2011) provide a nuanced perspective on how perceived feasibility and desirability interact to shape entrepreneurial intentions. This perspective is particularly relevant to internationalisation, where feasibility (e.g., resource availability and international market knowledge) and desirability (e.g., profit potential and market size) jointly influence decisions to expand abroad.

Development and cross-cultural application of an entrepreneurial intention measurement instrument

Liñán and Chen's (2009) development of a cross-culturally applicable entrepreneurial intention instrument is especially valuable for constructing a robust measurement framework for internationalisation intentions. Their work supports the development of valid, reliable, and culturally sensitive constructs suitable for application across diverse contexts.

3.2.4 Analysis of the Application of Scholarly Models

Linking TPB to internationalisation

Ajzen's TPB is adapted as a foundational framework to examine how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control within an international context shape internationalisation intentions.

Embedding the educational aspect

Insights from Liñán (2004) are incorporated to explore how international entrepreneurship education influences attitudes, perceptions, and preparedness, thereby shaping intentions to internationalise.

Integrating feasibility and desirability

The perspectives of Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2011) are utilised to examine how feasibility and desirability interact, potentially acting as mediating or moderating variables in the relationship between attitudes and internationalisation intentions.

Adding cross-cultural applicability

The measurement approach developed by Liñán and Chen (2009) is employed to ensure cultural neutrality and cross-contextual applicability, with attention to how cultural variables may influence internationalisation intentions.

By synthesising insights from these foundational frameworks, the author sought to develop a multi-dimensional and culturally sensitive theoretical model that captures the complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing the intention to internationalise among entrepreneurs and businesses. This model aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how cognitive, contextual, and structural variables converge to shape internationalisation intentions within the entrepreneurial landscape.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

3.3.1 State of the Art

Section 2 of this thesis is devoted to the state-of-the-art analysis and presents detailed accounts of the methodology, data collection, data analysis, and results. After carefully reviewing the outcomes of this section, the author derived the propositions presented in **Table 19**.

No.	Proposition	Source	References
1	Germany and India boast mature start-up ecosystems.	Start-up Ecosystem landscape in Germany & India Support organization data	Section 2.4.1 (figure 2.3), Appendices A and B; Table 2.14 and 2.15
2	Internationalisation is sparse within the Indo-German corridor.	Start-up data	Table 2.11
3	Diverse terminologies exist for internationalisation concepts.	Literature review data	Table 2.10 (Q1)
4	Criteria for international business vary widely.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.10 (Q1, Q2) Table 2.11
5	Numerous triggers and reasons drive internationalisation.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.10 (Q1, Q2, Q9) Table 2.12
6	Distinct approaches to establishing a foreign business exist.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q3, Q4) Table 2.13
7	Some entrepreneurs equate delayed internationalisation with lost opportunities.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q7)
8	Start-ups are increasingly looking toward internationalisation.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q7) Table 2.11, 2.12
9	Multi-national founder teams often lead to greater international reach.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q6)

10	Most approaches to internationalisation remain tactical, although a strategic shift is emerging.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q2, Q5, Q6, Q9) Table 2.12
11	Limited internationalisation is prevalent.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q1)
12	Multiple phases mark the onset of internationalisation.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q3)
13	The onset of internationalisation typically occurs 3-6 years.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q1, Q3, Q4)
14	Internet-centric start-ups tend to internationalise earlier.	Start-up data	Author's generic conclusion
15	An international mindset is viewed as a determinant of success.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9)
16	A global vision enhances the probability of success.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q6, Q9)
17	Business credibility, adaptability, and governance drive international success.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q6); Table 2.14 Additional insight
18	Foreign market networks enable success, while their absence constitutes a barrier.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9) Table 2.13 Table 2.14
19	Product alignment with international markets is pivotal for success.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q6, Q9) Table 2.12
20	Capital availability can function as either a facilitator or a barrier.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9) Table 2.12
21	Familiarity with foreign markets positively influences success outcomes.	Literature review data Start-up data Support organization data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9) Table 2.14 Table 2.16
22	Scarcity of skilled personnel constitute a significant hurdle.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9)
23	Success abroad requires ambitious, committed personnel with global experience.	Literature review data Start-up data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9) Table 2.12
24	External challenges include FDI constraints and host country hostilities.	Literature review data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6, Q9)

25	Collaborations with agencies can act as an external success multiplier.	Literature review data Start-up data Support organization data	Table 2.9 (Q5, Q6); Table 2.13; Table 2.14; Table 2.15; Table 2.16
26	Numerous start-ups seek institutional or agency support for internationalisation.	Start-up data Support organization data	Table 2.13; Table 2.14; Table 2.15; Table 2.15

Table 19: Propositions derived from the State-of-the-Art Analysis

3.3.2 Start-up Founder Interviews

The first dataset comprises the list of start-ups selected for the interviews. **Table 20** lists the start-ups, their state of internationalisation, and international presence. **Appendix J** provides detailed information on each start-up. The data are derived from the study by Horn (2017).

Enchanting Travel, a prominent example of a global start-up, is explored in greater detail. Of the remaining ten companies, one each operates in the food, health, fashion, music, and travel sectors. Two companies can be assigned to the green technology sector, and three operate in the software sector. This distribution enabled the investigation of diverse perspectives on international entrepreneurship. Three start-ups were not yet internationalised but planned to do so in the near future; two companies internationalised only five years after inception, and five start-ups internationalised within five years of founding.

No.	Name of the start-up	State of internationalisation	Countries present
1	Aquasphere / Idropan	Late internationalisation / Joint venture	Italy, India
2	Capermint	Early internationalisation	India, United States, Mexico
3	Easy Smart Grid	No internationalisation	-
4	Erhard beer	Early internationalisation	More than seven countries
5	Greeneyca	Early internationalisation	India, United Kingdom, Singapore, Finland
6	Poshaq	No internationalisation	-
7	Prescrip	No internationalisation	-

8	PTV Group	Late internationalisation	Worldwide
9	Questerra	Early internationalisation	India, United States
10	Siccas	Early internationalisation	Worldwide
11	Enchanting Travel	Early internationalisation	More than thirty countries

Table 20: List of the Start-ups whose founders were interviewed

As noted earlier, this component of the research builds on Horn (2017), who examined co-evolution through a literature review and case study before analysing internationalisation requirements. Using grounded theory, the study identified eight key requirements from expert interviews.

1. International background of the founding team
2. International network
3. Building a single team across nations
4. Communication across borders
5. Deep international integration
6. Good political relations
7. A positive cultural image in society
8. Trust

As presented in Horn (2017), requirements one to five are internal to the company and can be influenced by founders or by institutions that foster the foundation of international new ventures. The sixth and the seventh requirements represent external influences and typically evolve over the long term. The eighth requirement, trust, frames all others, as it enables the remaining factors.

Below, the author provides further detail on each requirement identified in the study, rephrased and fine-tuned for clarity. The original study provides a detailed account of the coding process and the maintenance of a chain of evidence (Yin, 2014).

International Background of The Founding Team

The majority of founders possessed an international background, having studied abroad, worked overseas, or had an immigrant background. In several cases, founding teams comprised members from multiple countries, embedding a global mindset at the highest organisational level. This international exposure provided both explicit and implicit understanding of cultural nuances and fostered adaptability in cross-cultural contexts. Such capabilities enabled founders to establish trust-based and empathetic relationships, which are crucial when leading international teams and developing networks, particularly during the ideation phase and when refining selection processes.

In one case, limited English proficiency presented a communication barrier for a founder. However, shared professional expertise, such as engineering knowledge, and complementary personal characteristics helped bridge this gap. This illustrates that effective communication extends beyond language proficiency and that deficiencies can be compensated for through other means.

International Network

Networks were formed through alumni associations, international incubator and accelerator programmes, academic conferences, and government-led initiatives promoting cross-border collaboration. In one case, a firm deliberately built its network by proactively approaching potential partners and organising business visits.

At the individual level, networks often originated from academic activities or collaborative professional experiences. These connections provided early legitimacy to start-ups and facilitated access to local contacts. In some cases, networks also served as channels for recruiting qualified staff or identifying potential co-founders. Technology-oriented start-ups, in particular, benefited from collaborative projects enabled through their networks.

International Team

Leading international teams hinges on establishing and communicating shared values. These values can be developed collaboratively with all staff members, or they may be defined by the management team. Regular interactions, whether through monthly discussions or inter-branch exchange programmes, are crucial for cultivating a cohesive global team and laying the groundwork for a shared understanding and seamless cooperation. However, it is essential to minimise disparities or perceptions of inequity between different branches to prevent envy, which could hamper productivity. At times, founders may need to intervene and bridge communication gaps between teams across various locations. Transparency and honesty towards team members become even more pivotal in international contexts, as they help to build and sustain trust.

When managed effectively, international teams can play a significant role in coevolution. Interactions at the team level may give rise to novel business approaches and alternative selections thereof. For instance, communication protocols may differ across national branches, or even in seemingly minor matters such as determining optimal temperature settings for office spaces. Similarly, at the managerial level, new operational methodologies may emerge and be selected through comparable processes. As effective strategies from one region demonstrate success, they can be adopted elsewhere, facilitating global knowledge sharing and the dissemination of best practices.

Communication Across the Borders

Modern tools such as Skype, Google Translate, and various transmission or translation platforms have made cross-national communication more accessible. For some, bridging communication gaps across borders appears straightforward, while others perceive it as a significant challenge. This disparity may stem from the dual nature of communication: the physical transmission of sounds or texts and the conveyance of underlying meaning or information. Naturally, transmitting intended meaning is more complex than simple message relay.

Consistent communication at managerial levels is therefore crucial. However, establishing routine communication requires proactive effort. One founder emphasised the importance of active communication with every team member to sustain motivation. In addition, monthly calls between managers from different branches were introduced to address ongoing challenges and ensure alignment between local and global perspectives.

Effective communication is also vital for accurately assessing local circumstances. This is particularly relevant in leadership contexts, as remote communication can obscure subtle cues, making it difficult to recognise distress or gauge the atmosphere in a distant office. It is equally important for sales representatives to assess a project's feasibility accurately.

Depth of International Integration

A start-up can internationalise in the labour, supplier, financial, and/or customer markets (Terzidis, 2016). Coevolution is more likely to occur if a firm internationalises in the labour market. In the service sector, coevolution may also be triggered by the internationalisation of the customer market. In one case, the company altered how it organised its operations, shifting from an iterative to a linear approach when dealing with Western customers. In the product sector, however, when only the customer and supplier markets were internationalised, no coevolution was observed in the two cases examined (Siccas Guitars; Erhard Beer).

Political Relations

When political relations are favourable, initiatives that promote cultural and economic exchange are established, trade barriers are reduced, and visa regulations become more relaxed. Such reciprocal exchange programmes have historically been significant, particularly in their early stages. In addition, policymakers can introduce measures that facilitate international business transactions. Even start-ups entering foreign markets may face the demanding requirement of making substantial local investments, which can constitute a major obstacle. Moreover, differences in local regulations present further challenges, as these are often difficult to navigate comprehensively.

These factors can either increase or reduce the likelihood that potential co-founders from different countries will meet, develop ideas, or establish operations abroad, thereby fostering co-evolution. Streamlined cross-border travel regulations can further facilitate the formation of international teams within a single country.

Image in Society

Further, there were indications that the image a society holds of another country strongly influences the attitudes and behaviours of its members. For instance, relations between China and India are strained, resulting in fewer customers from China in the travel sector. By contrast, India receives positive media coverage in Japan and is often viewed with fascination in Germany, making customers in these countries more likely to travel to India or purchase products of Indian origin. The same pattern applies to perceptions of Africa in Western societies.

Similarly, Poshaq faces scepticism from international investors who doubt that a small Indian start-up can disrupt the fashion market. For these investors, it is difficult to believe that such innovation could originate in India; they consider it more likely to emerge from the United States, which makes international success harder to achieve.

Furthermore, in the context of teamwork, it was considered essential to break down negative images of the other country. In some cases, however, these negative perceptions were so deeply rooted that projects only became successful once responsibility was transferred to a person from another country. Business practices and ideas are more readily adopted from another country when the societal image of that country is positive. As such images are commonly shaped by news coverage and narratives in books or films, it is likely that all stakeholders—employees, managers, investors, and customers alike—are consciously or unconsciously influenced by them

Trust

All the requirements mentioned above have one thing in common: they lead to, or are built on, trust. The international background of a founding team can foster trust among customers or prospective business partners. Networks are entirely built on trust and the reputation of individuals within them. In international teams, trust is particularly important, as managers are not co-located and cannot easily monitor work processes. Furthermore, trust forms the basis for open communication. Good political relations and a positive societal image of a country can generate a higher level of trust compared to situations in which a country is perceived as an "enemy". There is an inherent inequality related to where a start-up is founded and where its founders originate, with some gaining trust simply due to the image associated with their nation.

Trust can be established by demonstrating success in certain markets or areas and subsequently expanding into others. In addition, prominent investors or mentors can help to build trust. Personal ties, such as friendships, family relationships, or previous professional collaborations, also provide a strong foundation for trust. Research has shown that even in a business context, personal meetings are crucial for building trust.

Strong moral values, when consistently upheld, can also serve as a source of trust. In an international context, however, it must be recognised that values may be interpreted differently across cultures. For example, when a person from an Asian culture avoids directly saying “no”, this may be perceived as dishonest by a Western counterpart, although it is not considered so within that cultural context. A further apparent contradiction arises in dealing with failure. While many perceive the admission of failure as a sign of weakness that undermines trust, honest and transparent handling of failure can, in fact, be an important source of trust.

This trust is particularly valuable when leading international teams and establishing smooth operations between different branches. In many of the interviews, trust was explicitly identified as a key factor. However, while trust can be built over time, it can also be lost. If one branch acts against the goals of the overall company, this may lead to conflict, a loss of trust, and the introduction of additional control mechanisms. With regard to external partners, if trust has already been violated by one partner from a particular country—for example, through dishonesty or unprofessional practices—it may become difficult for other potential partners from the same country to establish trust.

For the purposes of this research, all identified requirements were formulated as propositions, with some adjustments to their wording. **Table 21** presents an overview of these propositions

No.	Proposition
1	International background of the founding team / international team.
2	International network.
3	Building a unified team across the nations.
4	Communication across the borders.
5	Depth of international integrations.

6	Global political relations.
7	Positive cultural image in society.
8	Mutual trust with the partner in foreign markets

Table 21: Proposition derived from the requirements of the internationalisation study

Furthermore, when examining the existence of co-evolution among the start-ups, it was initially expected that only a single proposition—namely, the *need for a partner in a foreign market*—would emerge. However, a more in-depth review of the study by Horn (2017) provided additional insights, leading to the identification of four further propositions. **Table 22** presents the propositions derived from the data collected to examine the existence of co-evolution (Horn, 2017).

No.	Proposition
1	Successful co-evolution model exists and helps accelerate internationalisation.
2	Definition of start-up internationalisation vary.
3	The co-evolution model helps generate new ideas and business practices.
4	Capital, or the lack of financial resources, is the top barriers to internationalisation.
5	A suitable partner in foreign market is key to initiating the internationalisation.

Table 22: Proposition derived from the research on the existence of co-evolution

3.3.3 Expert Interviews

As outlined in the methods section, the first step involved reflecting on the author's international business experience in order to develop a prototype co-innovation operating model. This prototype was subsequently used to conduct the expert interviews.

3.3.3.1 About the Author's International Experience

a. Living and studying among diverse communities in India

The author was born and raised in Varanasi, India, a city in the northern part of the country that attracts a large number of tourists from Western nations. During his schooling, he participated in cultural festivals that involved collaboration with foreign countries, which contributed to the development of his initial global perspective.

He later relocated to Allahabad to pursue his undergraduate studies at the Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology. Established by the Government of India, the institute is recognised for fostering diversity and promoting an international outlook. Its notable characteristics include:

- Each year, 275 students from across India are admitted to the four-year undergraduate programme, with a predetermined quota for each state, alongside approximately 25 international students. In addition, the institute maintains strong enrolment in master’s and doctoral programmes.
- The institute operates as a fully residential campus, encouraging continuous interaction among students.
- A single campus and shared dining facilities serve all students, promoting a cohesive community environment.

India itself is often described as a subcontinent due to its size and diversity. It comprises 28 states and eight Union territories and is home to over 1.3 billion people who speak more than 1,600 languages, including 22 officially recognised languages. This cultural diversity is reflected in the country’s varied geography, ranging from the Himalayan Mountain range to the coastal regions of Kerala. India’s history encompasses ancient civilisations, powerful empires, and major political transformations, including its struggle for independence and its development as the world’s largest democracy. Beyond its historical and natural attractions, India plays a significant role in global technology, the economy, and the arts.

Following the completion of his undergraduate studies, the author began working in Mumbai, one of India’s most cosmopolitan cities. This experience further immersed him in a highly diverse environment, fostering sensitivity to different cultures, value systems, and lifestyles, as well as an appreciation for diverse cuisines.

Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, is India’s financial capital and home to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Bollywood—the world’s largest film industry by production volume—and numerous multinational corporations. Situated along the Arabian Sea, the city is characterised by a highly diverse population and a rich blend of cultures, religions, cuisines, and languages. Its landmarks, from the historic Gateway of India to its modern skyline, reflect both its colonial past and its global economic significance. Often referred to as the "City of Dreams", Mumbai attracts millions seeking opportunity and upward mobility.

b. Working with international and multinational companies in India

The author's professional career began with The Tata Group, India's largest and most diversified conglomerate. He was employed at Tata Special Steels Ltd. in Mumbai, a subsidiary of Tata Steel, where he worked as part of a project team responsible for establishing a cold rolling steel mill. This role involved close collaboration with colleagues from various Indian states, as well as with international partners from supplier companies in Germany and the United States.

He subsequently joined Siemens, where he worked in sales and interacted with customers and suppliers across three Indian states—Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat—as well as in the United States. This role also required frequent collaboration with Siemens colleagues based in Germany.

Later, as a consultant at Siemens Information Systems in Mumbai, the author participated in multiple projects involving team members from different regions of India. He also contributed to a project for Schindler AG, working alongside colleagues from Switzerland and Australia.

c. Relocating to Europe and working with global corporations

In 2000, the author relocated to Switzerland to join Schindler Informatik AG, where he provided SAP ERP support across European operations. This role offered extensive experience of working and living in a multicultural European environment. In 2002, he moved to Germany to join SAP SE, where he worked on global and EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa) markets. He remained with SAP SE until 2017 and has since continued his professional activities in Germany, primarily serving the European market.

d. Working across the value chain in a global business context

For most of his professional career, the author has worked within multinational corporations. Over a career spanning more than three decades, he has been involved in a wide range of business functions, including sales, business development, manufacturing, product management, transformation consulting, project management, strategy, delivery management, procurement, recruitment, people management, and commercial management. He has conducted business activities in more than 15 countries.

Across these roles, several common elements can be identified:

- Working with highly international teams, comprising individuals from more than 50 nationalities
- Building business operations in multiple countries by introducing services and products to new markets
- Operating within global delivery models

Appendix K presents the author's curriculum vitae (CV), developed in early 2023.

About the professional role of internationalisation of the business

In one of his roles at SAP SE, the author was responsible for establishing service businesses for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across approximately ten European countries, starting from scratch. SAP, traditionally focused on large enterprises, was entering the SME segment with a new product offering designed to penetrate this market. **Table 23** summarises the key questions and challenges faced by the author, the actions undertaken, and the potential contributions to the prototype operating business model.

Key questions / challenges	**Actions**	**Input for the model**
Is this part of the company strategy?	Yes, it was identified as a core pillar of company's growth strategy.	Global business as a strategic option

Do we have the fund to invest and develop business?	Yes, management has already allocated the required funding.	Funding
What phases and milestones are required to ensure successful execution and sustainable business development?	Followed the standard company model consisting of four phases.	The four phases: Discovery; design and develop; execute; and run
Do we have the support of senior management?	Yes, management was fully committed.	Trust
How can talent with SME experience be acquired?	A local recruiter was hired through the existing recruitment network, providing access to the SME talent pool.	Team; partners; network; resources; capabilities
How can talent from country teams be secured when there is limited willingness to release resources?	Information sessions were offered to top talent and high-potential employees and applications were encouraged within the existing governance framework.	Internal network; governance; resources; capabilities
Do we have access to SME customers, and how can they be reached?	Leveraged the network of local managing director to access SME associations.	Network; first customer access, go-to-market (GTM); Institutions
Is the product–service offering suitable for the local market?	Product development addressed country-specific requirements prior to defining the country roadmap.	Product and service fit for the market
How should services be developed?	Conducted design thinking workshops with range of stakeholders.	Design thinking

What pricing strategy should be applied?	Collaborated with local businesses and country units to define appropriate pricing.	Go-to-market (GTM); network,
How should collaboration with local management and administrative functions (e.g. legal, recruitment) be managed?	Leveraged local country teams to provide operational support.	Global business strategy; best practices; governance
How can collaboration across teams in different countries be ensured?	Used web-based communication tools, including video conferencing, and enabled virtual working.	Technology: virtual working
How can early experiences be shared across countries?	Established regular bi-weekly interaction platforms.	Best practice sharing; virtual working; governance
What external factors may influence business operations in a specific country?	Reviewed analyst reports and conducted interviews with selected local executives.	External factors; local business systems
What are the key risks and how can they be mitigated?	Identified risks and developed mitigation plans in consultation with multiple stakeholders.	Risk management; associations; governance
How should progress be reported to management and which milestones should be tracked?	Defined key quality gates and the objectives to be achieved at each stage.	Proof of compatibility; concept, value and sustainability

Table 23: Reflection summary of the author's experience of business internationalisation

3.3.3.2 Prototype of the Co-evolution Business Operating Model

As a final step prior to conducting the expert interviews, a visualisation was developed based on the elements identified in the preceding analysis. This visualisation integrated strategic, organisational, and contextual components into a coherent and structured framework, resulting in a prototype of the co-evolution business operating model. **Figure 6** illustrates the phased structure of the model, encompassing discovery, design and development, execution, and run phases, alongside key dimensions such as trust, transparency, governance, and international collaboration. The prototype served as a guiding framework for the expert interviews, supporting structured discussion and facilitating validation of the model's relevance for internationalisation and co-evolution.

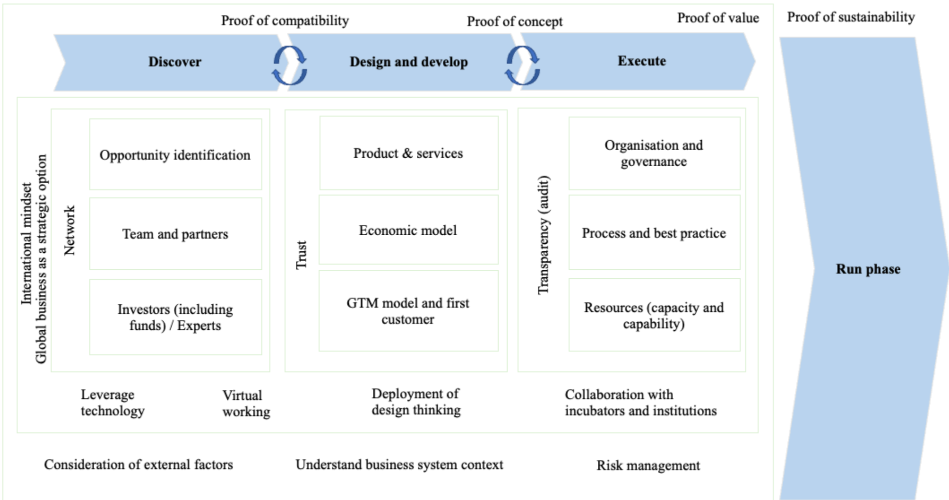


Figure 6: Prototype of the co-evolution business operating model

3.3.3.3 About the Experts

As outlined earlier, six experts from different countries were selected for the interviews. These experts were chosen to provide diverse perspectives on internationalisation, entrepreneurship, and global business practices. **Table 24** presents an overview of the conducted expert interviews, including the interview dates, professional backgrounds of the experts, and brief contextual details.

No.	Date	Expert profile	Brief details
1	13 July 2017	Global Entrepreneur, **India** (Interviewee 1)	Co-founder, Chairman, and Group CEO of KPIT Technologies (approximately USD 1 billion in revenue). The author interacted with him on multiple occasions through Indo–German ICT collaboration platforms and as part of TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs), where both were active members.
2	21 July 2017	Corporate executive / international business,	Senior Vice President at Atos and former Chief Marketing Officer at SAP SE. The author worked with her on the SAP Business

		supporter of entrepreneurship, **France** (Interviewee 2)	ByDesign go-to-market strategy project and engaged in discussions on platform leadership.
3	28 August 2017	Corporate executive / international business, supporter of entrepreneurship, **Switzerland** (Interviewee 3)	Chief Operating Officer at proALPHA Software Corporation and former Executive Vice President at SAP. The author reported to him and was part of his leadership team between 2007 and 2011 (in two periods, separated by a nine-month gap). He is also an active supporter of entrepreneurship and serves on the advisory boards of several start-ups.
4	31 August 2017	Global entrepreneur, **Germany** (Interviewee 4)	Co-founder of Sugartrends, a platform initially designed to present local retail stores and their specialised products to an international audience. He was also involved in running the KIT start-up community. The author has known him since his time at KIT and collaborated with him through TiE Germany, where he was a chartered member.
5	1 September 2017	Corporate lawyer specialising in international business, **Germany** (Interviewee 5)	Partner at Osborne Clarke and legal counsel (Justiziar) at VOICE e.V. A well-known corporate lawyer, particularly in the areas of ICT and Indo–German business relations. He hosted the Indo–German ICT Conference for many years, at which the author was a speaker on several occasions, and served as legal advisor to the author during his tenure as Managing Director at Intrigo Systems.
6	1 September 2017	Indo-German entrepreneur and angel investor, **Germany** (Interviewee 6)	A well-known promoter of Indo–German business collaboration and an active angel investor. Founder of Black Forest Consulting GmbH. The author has known him for many years through joint Indo–German business initiatives and collaborations within TiE Deutschland, where he served on the advisory board.

Table 24: Overview of the expert interviews

All interviews were conducted via video calls and were recorded with the interviewees' consent. The author adopted a three-step analytical approach to derive the propositions. In the first step, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and converted into textual scripts, which are presented in **Appendix L**. In the second step, key messages and keywords were extracted from each interview; these are summarised in **Table 25**. In the third and final step, the author synthesised these messages into propositions, which are presented in **Table 26**.

Interviewee #	Relevant keywords and themes identified from interview transcripts (May 2017) and subsequent review (April 2020)
1	Partner co-founder in the United States and Germany; time required to become ready for global business; acquisitions for expertise; knowledge and specialised skills; restricted versus broader vision; partner identification through existing networks; trust as a key factor; capital constraints; partner dependence in early stages; balance between central and local control; rotation of personnel across locations for knowledge sharing and trust building; importance of regulatory and business knowledge; mutual value creation between partners; early opportunity identification.
2	Capital as a key constraint; team and ecosystem development (skills and competencies); co-innovation and co-selling; global mindset; trust and organisational culture; customer knowledge and acquisition of first customer; capacity and capability alignment; business and economic models; global design and global talent; resource availability to support global innovation; recognition that markets are not purely local.
3	Strategic positioning as a global player or local/niche player (hidden champion); customer proximity; partner ecosystem; international mindset; partner-driven acceleration in terms of speed and scale; business type considerations (e.g. digital versus brick-and-mortar); local technological and business knowledge; market dynamics; global versus multi-local strategies; trust, complementarity, and scalability; cultural awareness; investor community engagement.
4	Role of partners in accelerating growth; limitations of agency-based approaches; investor preference for local presence; trust among investors and suppliers; importance of networks; need for local partners for local content and interpretation; long-term trust development; highly personal team structures; reputation as a strategic asset.
5	Capital, financing, and resource bandwidth constraints; confidence and global mindset as prerequisites; partner necessity; opportunity identification; trust as a foundational element; professional services example demonstrating co-evolution; preference for network-based partnerships; trust-building over time; role of agencies versus trusted partners; importance of local knowledge and personal interactions; transparency as a guiding principle; process adherence; selective transparency; co-evolution as mutual agreement; risk management; significance of the first step as a sequence of smaller steps; importance of face-to-face meetings; time required to develop a viable economic model; best practices and shared value creation.
6	Importance of local knowledge and business practices; risks of incorrect expectations; necessity of acquiring the first customer; need for knowledgeable partners; networks as a mechanism for partner identification; trust-building challenges and risks of opportunistic behaviour; lack of clear internationalisation strategies in many firms; limitations of formal documentation; global mindset as a strategic choice; importance of transparency and information access; understanding local business approaches.

Table 25: Relevant keywords and themes derived from the expert interviews

No.	Proposition	Reference
1	Finding the first customer in a foreign market is critical for successful internationalisation.	Interviewee 6
2	Monitoring and mitigation of failure risk is required throughout the internationalisation journey.	Interviewees 5, 6
3	Limited access to capital and financial resources constitutes a major challenge to internationalisation.	Interviewees 1, 2, 5
4	An entrepreneurial orientation and global mindset are essential pre-requisites for international expansion.	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5	In-depth knowledge of, and competencies related to, the foreign market is essential.	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
6	Access to networks in the foreign market is required to support internationalisation efforts.	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7	Collaboration with a partner in the foreign market significantly supports the internationalisation process.	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
8	Transparency, trust, and a strong collaborative orientation with foreign market partners are required.	Interviewees 1, 3, 5, 6
9	The calibre and quality of partners in the foreign market are critical to international success.	Interviewees 1, 2, 5, 6

Table 26: Key propositions derived from the expert interviews

3.4 Development of the Constructs and Hypothesised Model

3.4.1 Finalising the Propositions

In the subsequent phase, the author consolidated propositions derived from multiple sources, including the state-of-the-art literature review, start-up interviews, and expert interviews. This process resulted in an initial set of 48 propositions. These propositions were then subjected to a systematic and structured filtering process based on the criteria outlined in **Table 3.1**.

The filtering framework comprised six categories: (1) start-up-specific information related to internationalisation, (2) capital and financial resources, (3) operational factors, (4) external factors, (5) business without a real need of internationalisation, and (6) product–market fit.

Importantly, the applied filters prioritised observable internationalisation actions rather than stated intentions, thereby ensuring close alignment with the empirical orientation of the study.

Following this filtering process, the initial set of propositions was reduced to 23 propositions that were considered most relevant for the development of the proposed model. **Table 27** presents both the complete list of consolidated propositions and the shortlisted set of relevant propositions. The shortlisted propositions are clearly marked with an "X" to enhance transparency and traceability in the selection process.

No.	Proposition	Relevant proposition
1	Germany and India boast mature start-up ecosystems.	
2	Internationalisation is sparse within the Indo-German corridor.	
3	Diverse terminologies exist for internationalisation concepts.	
4	Criteria for international business vary widely.	
5	Numerous triggers and reasons drive internationalisation.	
6	Distinct approaches to establishing a foreign business exist.	
7	Some entrepreneurs equate delayed internationalisation with lost opportunities.	X
8	Start-ups are increasingly looking toward internationalisation.	
9	Multi-national founder teams often lead to greater international reach.	
10	Most approaches to internationalisation remain tactical, although a strategic shift is emerging.	
11	Limited internationalisation is prevalent.	
12	Multiple phases mark the onset of internationalisation.	
13	The onset of internationalisation typically occurs 3-6 years.	
14	Internet-centric start-ups tend to internationalise earlier.	
15	An international mindset is viewed as a determinant of success	X
16	A global vision enhances probability of success.	X
17	Business credibility, adaptability, and governance drive international success.	X
18	Foreign market networks enable success, while their absence constitutes a barrier.	X
19	Product alignment with international markets is pivotal for success.	
20	Capital availability can function as either a facilitator or a barrier.	
21	Familiarity with foreign markets positively influences success outcomes.	X
22	Scarcity of skilled personnel constitute a significant hurdle.	X
23	Success abroad requires ambitious, committed personnel with global experience.	X
24	External challenges include FDI constraints and host country hostilities.	

25	Collaborations with agencies can act as an external success multiplier.	
26	Numerous start-ups seek institutional or agency support for internationalisation.	X
27	International background of the founding team / International team.	X
28	International network.	X
29	Building of a unified team across the nations.	X
30	Communication across the borders.	X
31	Depth of international integrations.	X
32	Global political relations.	
33	Positive cultural image in society.	X
34	Mutual trust with the partner in foreign market.	
35	Successful co-evolution model exists and helps accelerate internationalisation.	X
36	Definition of start-up internationalisation vary.	
37	The co-evolution model helps generate new ideas and business practices.	X
38	Capital, or the lack of financial resources, is the top barriers to internationalisation.	
39	A suitable partner in foreign market is key to initiating the internationalisation.	X
40	Finding the first customer in foreign market is critical for successful internationalisation.	X
41	Monitoring and mitigation of failure risk is required throughout the internationalisation journey.	
42	Limited access to capital and financial resources constitutes a major challenge to internationalisation.	
43	An entrepreneurial orientation and global mindset are essential pre-requisites for international expansion.	X
44	In-depth knowledge of, and competencies related to, the foreign market is essential.	X
45	Access to networks in the foreign market is required to support internationalisation efforts.	X
46	Collaboration with a partner in the foreign market significantly supports the internationalisation process.	X
47	Transparency, trust, and a strong collaborative orientation with foreign market partners are required.	
48	The calibre and quality of partners in the foreign market are critical to international success.	

Table 27: Complete list of the propositions

3.4.2 Theory-informed Construct Development

The development of constructs represents a pivotal stage in the design of the empirical study, as it determines how abstract concepts and empirical observations are translated into analytically meaningful and measurable components. In the present research, this process followed a deliberate, multi-stage logic that combines empirical grounding with theoretical integration. Rather than relying exclusively on a purely inductive approach, the author adopted a theory-informed strategy that draws on established intention-based frameworks in order to enhance conceptual clarity, explanatory depth, and theoretical robustness.

Following the identification and filtering of propositions, a final set of 23 empirically relevant propositions was retained. Although it would have been possible to operationalise each proposition as an individual construct, such an approach was considered neither analytically parsimonious nor practically viable. Methodological literature highlights that excessive proliferation of constructs can reduce interpretability and weaken empirical robustness (Hair et al., 2017). A closer examination of the propositions revealed substantial conceptual overlap, particularly among those related to cognitive orientations, market-related capabilities, and relational mechanisms.

Guided by principles of model parsimony and conceptual coherence, the author therefore consolidated the 23 propositions into seven higher-order constructs. This consolidation was informed by both theoretical sensitivity and professional experience, acknowledging that explanatory models—especially those designed for empirical testing—generally benefit from a limited number of well-defined constructs rather than an overly fragmented structure (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). Throughout this process, careful attention was given to construct naming to ensure that each construct label is concise, intuitive, and reflective of the underlying propositions. The outcome of this step is presented in **Table 28**, which illustrates how the individual propositions were aggregated into the seven core constructs.

No.	Proposition	Construct
1	Some entrepreneurs equate delayed internationalisation with lost opportunities.	Anticipated loss of business
2	An international mindset is viewed as determinant of success.	Global mindset
3	A global vision enhances the probability of success.	Ambition of internationalisation
4	Business credibility, adaptability, and governance drive international success.	Network in the foreign market

5	Foreign market networks enable success, while their absence constitute a barrier.	Network in the foreign market
6	Familiarity with foreign markets positively influences success outcomes.	Knowledge of the foreign market
7	Scarcity of skilled personnel constitute a significant hurdle.	Knowledge of the foreign market
8	Success abroad requires ambitious, committed personnel with global experience.	Ambition of internationalisation
9	Numerous start-ups seek institutional or agency support for internationalisation.	Co-evolution partner
10	International background of the founding team / International team.	Global mindset
11	International network.	Network in the foreign market
12	Building a unified team across the nations.	Global mindset
13	Communication across the borders.	Global mindset
14	Depth of international integrations.	Ambition of internationalisation
15	Positive cultural image in society.	Ambition of internationalisation
16	Successful co-evolution model exists and helps accelerate internationalisation.	Co-evolution partner
17	The co-evolution model helps generate new ideas and business practices.	Co-evolution partner
18	A suitable partner in foreign market is key to initiating the internationalisation.	Co-evolution partner
19	Finding the first customer in foreign market is critical for successful internationalisation.	The potential of finding the first customer in a foreign market
20	An entrepreneurial orientation and global mindset are essential pre-requisite for international expansion.	Global mindset
21	In-depth knowledge of, and competencies related to, the foreign market is essential.	Knowledge of the foreign market
22	Access to networks in the foreign market is required to support internationalisation efforts.	Knowledge of the foreign market
23	Collaboration with a partner in the foreign market significantly supports the internationalisation process.	Co-evolution partner

Table 28: Table with relevant propositions and derived constructs

Although the initial construct set was empirically grounded, the author intentionally avoided treating construct development as a purely inductive exercise. Purely inductive approaches, while valuable for exploratory research, may result in context-specific constructs that lack theoretical anchoring and broader applicability (Eisenhardt, 1989). To mitigate this risk, the study integrates established intention-based theories as conceptual reference points. These theories are not applied deductively; rather, they serve as sensitizing frameworks that help interpret, organise, and extend the empirically derived constructs (Blumer, 1954).

The choice of intention-based theories is particularly appropriate given the study's focus on internationalisation intentions of the start-ups. Internationalisation involves deliberate decision-making under uncertainty, assessments of opportunity attractiveness, evaluations of resource availability, and interaction with external actors. Intention-based models, therefore, offer a well-established explanatory foundation for understanding how cognitive evaluations and contextual constraints shape action-oriented behaviours.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991) provides a foundational framework for explaining intentional behaviour. According to TPB, behaviour is preceded by intention, which is influenced by attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Although intention itself is not modelled as the primary dependent variable in this study, TPB offers a valuable conceptual structure for distinguishing between evaluative judgments, social influences, and control-related constraints.

From the author's perspective, TPB is particularly relevant because it explicitly links cognition to intention. Several empirically derived constructs reflect evaluative processes analogous to attitudes—for example, Anticipated Loss of Business captures negative outcome expectations associated with delayed internationalisation, while Ambition of Internationalisation reflects positive evaluations of international growth opportunities. Similarly, constructs related to networks, knowledge, and partners align closely with perceived behavioural control, as they represent assessments of whether internationalisation is achievable given available resources and capabilities (Ajzen, 1991).

Intention-based models of entrepreneurial intention

Building on TPB, Liñán (2004) extends intention-based reasoning to the entrepreneurial context, emphasising perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy as central determinants of entrepreneurial intention. His framework recognises that entrepreneurial behaviour is embedded in learning processes, experience accumulation, and contextual exposure, making it particularly suitable for early-stage ventures.

This perspective is highly relevant to the present study, as many of the consolidated propositions reflect learning-driven cognitive orientations rather than static characteristics. Constructs such as Global Mindset and Knowledge of the Foreign Market emerge as outcomes of experiential learning, international exposure, and interaction across borders. Liñán's model thus provided conceptual guidance in distinguishing between desirability-related constructs (reflecting motivation and aspiration) and feasibility-related constructs (reflecting capability and readiness).

Interaction between feasibility and desirability

The framework proposed by Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2011) further advances intention-based theory by emphasizing the interaction between perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. Rather than treating these dimensions as independent predictors, their model argues that entrepreneurial action emerges from their combined and dynamic influence.

This interactional logic closely aligns with the empirical observations underlying the present study. Several propositions indicate that attractive international opportunities alone are insufficient to trigger action unless feasibility conditions—such as networks, market knowledge, and partners—are also present. Conversely, strong capabilities without perceived opportunity attractiveness may not lead to internationalisation. This reasoning informed the author's decision to assign certain constructs, particularly Co-evolution Partner, a dual conceptual role linking perceived feasibility and intention to internationalise, as summarised in **Table 29**.

Integration of theory and empirical constructs

Drawing on these three theoretical frameworks, the author systematically aligned the seven consolidated constructs with higher-level intention-based dimensions. Constructs associated with opportunity evaluation and strategic motivation—Anticipated Loss of Business, Global Mindset, and Ambition of Internationalisation—were linked to perceived desirability. Constructs reflecting capability, access, and execution—Network in the Foreign Market, Knowledge of the Foreign Market, and The Potential of Finding the First Customer in a Foreign Market—were associated with perceived feasibility. The construct Co-evolution Partner was positioned at the intersection of perceived feasibility and intention to internationalise.

This alignment, presented in **Table 29**, does not impose theory onto the data but rather demonstrates how empirically grounded constructs correspond to well-established cognitive and behavioural mechanisms. The final construct set thus reflects a hybrid development logic: inductive in origin yet theoretically informed in structure and interpretation. This blended approach enhances conceptual rigour, empirical relevance, and theoretical generalisability.

Derived constructs	**Connection**
Anticipated loss of business	Perceived desirability
Global mindset	Perceived desirability
Ambition of internationalisation	Perceived desirability
Network in the foreign market	Perceived feasibility
Knowledge of the foreign market	Perceived feasibility
Co-evolution partner	Perceived feasibility and Intention to internationalise
The potential of finding the first customer in a foreign market	Perceived feasibility

Table 29: Hypothesised constructs and connections

3.5 Results and Conclusion

The data analysis provided the necessary foundation for conceptualising the hypothesised model, which is illustrated in **Figure 7**. As the **Co-evolution Partner** construct exerts influence on two distinct constructs, its direct relationship with the outcome construct is represented by a dotted line in the model to indicate this dual influence.

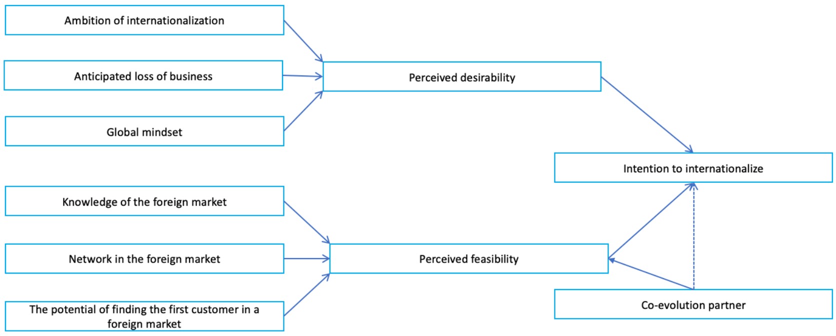


Figure 7: Hypothesised model for further research

At the conclusion of this section, the author identified a model suitable for subsequent research. The model comprises ten constructs, including two intermediary constructs and one final outcome construct. Building on this development, the author then operationalised the model for quantitative analysis.

4 Operationalisation of the Hypothesised Model

4.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this part of the research was to develop survey statements (questionnaires) for the quantitative validation of the hypothesised model conceptualised in **Section 3**. Conceptualisation refers to the definition of a construct, while operationalisation involves determining how that construct is measured in empirical research. Both processes are closely intertwined and are crucial for ensuring that a study accurately represents the intended constructs (Babbie, 2010).

The constructs included in the hypothesised model needed to be operationalised. Constructs can be operationalised at different levels of measurement, namely nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. The chosen level of measurement determines the statistical tests that can be applied and the inferences that can be drawn from the data (Stevens, 1946). In survey-based research, this process often involves developing multiple items or questions for each construct (Nunnally, 1978).

Although the validation of construct measures in a hypothesised model is essential for building cumulative knowledge, the processes of scale development and quantitative validation remain challenging. Several limitations persist in current practice. In this context, MacKenzie et al. (2011) have sought to integrate new and existing techniques into a comprehensive set of recommendations that can serve as a framework for developing valid measurement instruments. Once the author had developed a list of items for each of the ten constructs in the hypothesised model, these items were converted into survey statements and subjected to a pre-test prior to deployment in the main survey.

Pretesting helps to identify ambiguities, confusing questions, and wording issues within a survey instrument. Without pretesting, such issues may result in misleading or invalid responses in the main survey (Fowler, 2013). A pre-test can also indicate whether the survey is excessively long—potentially leading to respondent fatigue and lower completion rates—or too short, thereby omitting critical information (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009). By measuring the time required to complete the pre-test, researchers can set realistic expectations for respondents and identify sections of the survey that may be overly time-consuming (Yan & Tourangeau, 2008). In addition, pretesting enhances face validity by assessing whether the survey appears credible and legitimate to respondents, thereby increasing the likelihood of meaningful engagement (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996).

Overall, the pre-test functions as an important quality assurance mechanism, helping to ensure that the main survey instrument is clear, precise, and effective, and thereby supporting the validity and reliability of the research findings.

4.2 Method

In the current phase of the research, the author focused on identifying suitable methods for two fundamental aspects: (a) developing a comprehensive list of statements to operationalise the hypothesised model, and (b) selecting an appropriate measurement scale. Guided by the recommendations of the author's supervisor, the author consulted the work of MacKenzie et al. (2011), which discusses validation procedures in MIS and behavioural research. A thorough examination of the steps proposed by MacKenzie et al. (2011), combined with a preliminary search for construct items, led to the conclusion that a more detailed approach was required.

Consequently, a refined flow diagram was developed that preserved the core logic of the original steps while incorporating enhancements and modifications to better align with the specific requirements of the research. This resulted in a seventeen-step process. The revised flow diagram is illustrated in **Figure 8**.

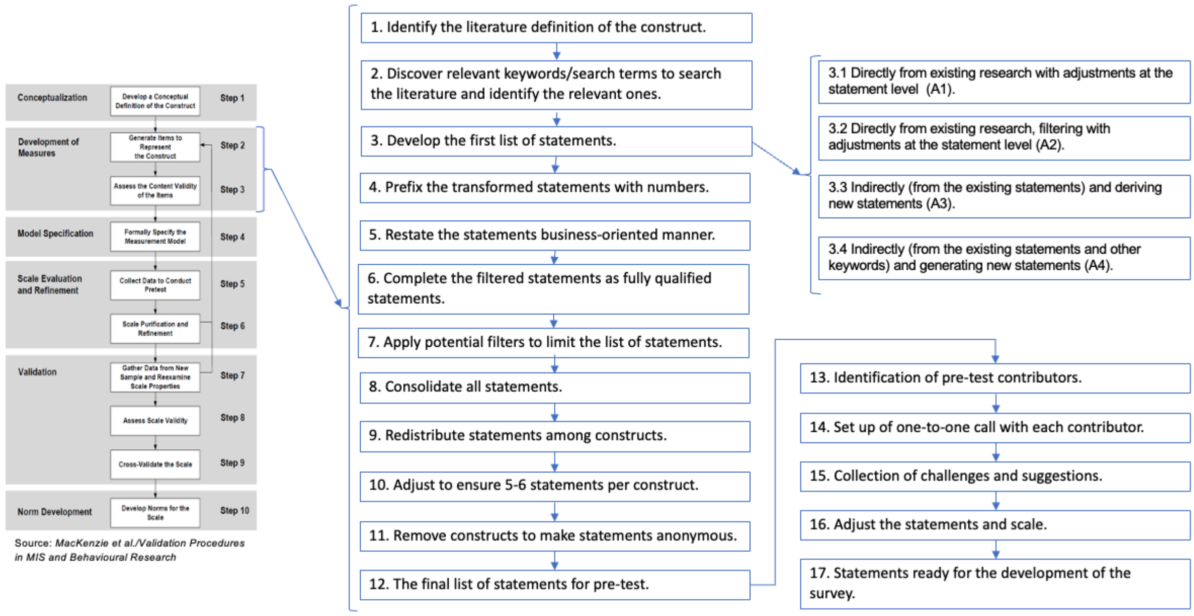


Figure 8: Process to develop statements for the survey

In the initial phase, the author carefully articulated the definition of each construct in order to establish a clear foundation for the research process and selected relevant keywords to support the generation of a comprehensive list of items. The definition of a construct includes its formal description as well as any associated terms. These terms and keywords were subsequently used to search for and identify relevant scholarly articles related to each construct.

When operationalising a model for survey research, an *item* refers to an individual question or statement presented to participants for response or evaluation. Each item is intended to measure a specific facet or dimension of a broader construct under investigation. According to DeVellis (2016), an item is "a specific question, statement, or task designed to assess a particular aspect of a construct of interest". The purpose of these items is to collect data that provides insights into the research question. As Schwarz and Weckmüller (2014) outline, key considerations include:

- determining which questions are necessary to obtain the required information;
- understanding how each question contributes to the overall research objectives.

These items serve as the primary tools through which researchers collect the data needed to address their central research questions. A range of established methods for generating items has been discussed in the literature by authors such as Schwarz and Weckmüller (2014), Rowley (2014), and Slattery et al. (2011). These methods include, but are not limited to:

- conducting interviews with focus groups
- engaging key informants in interviews.
- drawing insights from personal practice and professional experience
- building on existing theories and findings from prior research
- adapting items from pre-existing, validated questionnaires
- exploring themes within relevant research topics

For the present study, item derivation was guided by a comprehensive review of the literature, following a structured approach as illustrated in **Figure 9**. The first method involved directly extracting statements and questions from existing literature and was designated as category A1. The second method refined and adjusted these statements and questions based on the literature and was labelled A2. The third approach adopted an indirect strategy, adapting relevant literature into appropriate statements, referred to as A3. Finally, a synthesis of keywords and textual sources was used to generate statements aligned with the constructs of the hypothesised model, identified as A4. These four methods are embedded within the overarching framework presented in **Figure 8**. The selection and refinement of items were strongly informed by professional expertise and their relevance to the constructs of the hypothesised model.

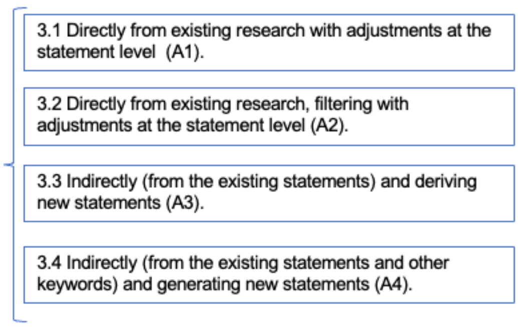


Figure 9: Approach to the extraction of the items

After the derivation of items for each construct, the subsequent step was to transform these items into statements or questions for inclusion in the questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions or statements designed to systematically collect information for the recording of facts, as described by Reinders (2011). According to Rowley (2014), questionnaires are advantageous due to their ability to collect data efficiently, their adaptability for different research purposes, and their suitability for quantitative analysis, as applied in this study. However, questionnaire construction can also be challenging (Slattery et al., 2011; Singh, 2017; Rowley, 2014), particularly with regard to the quality and informational value of questions, the wording of individual items, the design of response options, and the establishment of appropriate rating scales.

Key considerations in questionnaire design include alignment with the research objectives, the avoidance of data distortion and measurement errors, the improvement of response rates, and the assurance of overall data quality.

To address these aspects of questionnaire development, the author reviewed the relevant literature on the formulation of statements and questions. Insights from Singh (2017), Slattery et al. (2011), Leung (2001), and Rowley (2014) were particularly informative. These authors suggest that statements and questions should be concise and expressed in clear, straightforward language. Emphasis is placed on clarity and precision, with careful attention to relevant details. Ambiguous and double-barrelled questions should be avoided, as should negatively worded items. Sensitive topics must be handled with caution, avoiding taboo or confidential issues. Questions should not contain implicit assumptions or judgemental wording. The use of a variety of question formats is recommended, with a preference for closed questions over open questions to facilitate analysis. Questions that respondents are unable to answer due to their nature should be excluded.

While all of these guidelines were taken into account, the author focused specifically on the distinction between open and closed questions, as this decision is not influenced by language proficiency, unlike several of the other criteria. **Table 30** provides a comparative analysis of closed and open questions, drawing on insights from Slattery et al. (2011) and Rowley (2014).

Closed questions / statements	Open questions / statements
Offer predefined answer choices.	Allow respondents to formulate and provide answers independently.
Quick and straightforward for respondents to answer.	Enhance the diversity and depth of data.

Simplify the analysis and comparison of data.	Typically, easier to draft without restrictive answer options.
Limit the variety of responses.	Can be time-consuming for respondents to answer.
Require significant effort in the careful formulation of questions.	Demand considerable effort in the interpretation and evaluation of response.

Table 30: Comparison of closed and open questions/statements

While it is feasible to use a combination of open and closed questions or statements, the author opted to employ closed questions and statements in this study in order to minimise potential misinterpretation of the results.

The subsequent consideration concerned the length of the questionnaire. Shorter questionnaires are generally associated with higher response rates (Leung, 2001). The optimal length and number of statements are influenced by several factors, as highlighted by Rowley (2014), including:

- The type of research question
- The characteristics of the target group
- The type of planned data analysis

After determining the appropriate phrasing of the statements, the author proceeded to develop statements for all items. The decision to use statements rather than questions simplified the development process and was considered more suitable for the purposes of the study. As illustrated in **Figure 8**, the author followed a structured set of steps to compile the final list of statements for inclusion in the pre-test.

- Professional experience was used to ensure that the statements were practical and relevant to the business context.
- A unique numerical identifier was assigned to each statement to facilitate referencing. Each identifier comprised the construct number, followed by a dot and the specific statement number within that construct.
- All statements were compiled and organised by construct to ensure structure and coherence.

- A systematic review was conducted to assess whether any statements were more appropriately aligned with alternative constructs.
- The questionnaire was balanced to include five to six statements per construct, resulting in a total of 50 to 60 statements. This decision was based on the assumption that respondents could reasonably complete the questionnaire within 15 to 20 minutes, which is generally regarded as an acceptable maximum duration.
- The statements were then randomised to create a single consolidated list. The overall ordering began with broader statements, followed by those addressing underlying motivations, then statements related to people, capabilities, success factors, and finally risks and constraints.
- Drawing on professional expertise, the author carefully sequenced the statements to maximise respondent focus, engagement, and efficiency.

The next step involved selecting an appropriate rating scale for use in the pre-test. Rating scales are essential instruments in social science research, as they enable the quantification of respondents' attitudes and opinions. They present a continuum of evaluation—such as levels of agreement, intensity, frequency, or satisfaction—and are critical for capturing a wide range of characteristics and phenomena in questionnaires. Respondents indicate their evaluation of each statement by selecting the category on the rating scale that best reflects their view (Menold & Bogner, 2015).

A commonly accepted guideline recommends the use of scales comprising five to seven points, as these are easier for respondents to understand and to label verbally (Menold & Bogner, 2015). According to Menold and Bogner (2015), four main types of rating scales are commonly used in research:

1. **Unipolar rating scales**, which range from a low to a high level of a given trait, such as from "not satisfied at all" to "very satisfied".
2. **Bipolar rating scales**, which span two opposing ends of a spectrum, such as "positive/negative" or "agree/disagree".
3. **Direct rating scales**, which are tailored specifically to the content of the statements, for example assessing interest in opening an office abroad, with responses ranging from "very much" to "not at all".
4. **Likert scales** which primarily use degrees of agreement as their evaluative dimension.

The author selected the Likert scale for questionnaire evaluation, as it is a widely accepted method for data collection. Likert scales are valued for their simplicity and ease of comprehension, and they allow responses to be quantified for statistical analysis. One key advantage of the Likert scale is that it does not restrict respondents to binary “yes” or “no” options. Instead, it provides a range of response categories reflecting varying degrees of agreement or disagreement, thereby enabling more nuanced expression of opinions. This feature not only facilitates respondent engagement but also enhances the richness of the data collected. Likert scales are also recognised for their efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Initially, the author selected a seven-point Likert scale rather than a five-point scale. This decision was informed by research suggesting that seven-point Likert items offer greater accuracy, are easier for respondents to use, and more precisely reflect respondents’ true evaluations. Russell and Bobko (1992) reported that five-point Likert scales provide estimates that are too coarse to capture moderator effects effectively, while Diefenbach et al. (1993) found that seven-point scales consistently outperformed five-point scales in both objective rank matching and subjective evaluations. Furthermore, five-point items have been shown to be more likely than seven-point items to encourage respondents to attempt to exceed prescribed response limits.

Another important consideration in scale design concerns the labelling of scale points. Labels represent specific score values corresponding to respondents’ opinions, such as “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”. Menold and Bogner (2015) recommend that scale labels should be precise, balanced, and symmetrical, with an equal number of positive and negative categories. Labels should be easily comprehensible and ideally universally understood, and the intervals between categories should be perceived as equidistant to ensure measurement consistency. Broadly, two types of labels are used in rating scales.

Verbal labels, such as “very unlikely” or “very likely”, are advantageous because they reduce the influence of other visual elements that might otherwise introduce bias (Toepoel & Dillman, 2011). They also clarify category meanings (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997) and have been shown to improve test–retest reliability and validity.

Numerical labels, such as scales ranging from 1 to 10, are generally less preferred. Numerical values can be interpreted differently by respondents, for example, due to cultural associations or educational grading systems, and these interpretations may not align with the intended meaning of the scale categories (Menold & Bogner, 2015). In addition, expressing attitudes or characteristics numerically is not always intuitive for respondents (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). A further design decision relates to the orientation of the scale, specifically whether the lowest or most negative value should appear at the beginning of the scale and the highest or most positive value at the end, thereby creating an ascending order, or vice versa. For example, a scale may range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” or be presented in the reverse order. Menold and Bogner (2015) discuss the implications of scale orientation for response behaviour and data quality.

Drawing on these insights, the author initially implemented a seven-point Likert scale with verbal labels arranged in ascending order, as follows:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Neutral
5. Somewhat agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly agree

However, following the pre-test and an evaluation of participant feedback, the scale was revised to a five-point Likert scale with verbal labels, also arranged in ascending order. The final scale comprised the following categories:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

This adjustment was made to simplify the response process and enhance analytical clarity, while maintaining methodological rigour.

As a final step before the questionnaire was ready for deployment in the survey, the author conducted a pre-test in accordance with the process outlined in **Figure 8**. A survey pre-test, also referred to as a pilot study, is a small-scale investigation conducted prior to the main survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the questionnaire. Pre-testing aims to identify and address issues such as unclear questions, ambiguous wording, complex language, or inappropriate sequencing, thereby ensuring that respondents interpret questions as intended and that the survey yields reliable and valid data. A review of the literature identified several established pre-testing techniques, as described below.

Cognitive interviews involve in-depth discussions with members of the target population to explore their interpretation of survey questions and to identify potential misunderstandings (Willis, 2005).
Expert review entails the evaluation of the survey by subject-matter experts to assess content validity and confirm that the questions effectively measure the intended constructs (Presser et al., 2004).
Behaviour coding involves the systematic observation and coding of respondents' reactions during survey administration to identify problematic questions (Oksenberg et al., 1986).
Split-ballot testing distributes alternative versions of a survey to different subsamples in order to assess the effects of changes in wording, order, or format (Dillman et al., 2014).
Field pre-tests involve administering a reduced version of the survey under real-world conditions to identify logistical or unforeseen issues (Groves et al., 2009).

Based on the review of pre-testing methods, the author observed that expert panels were particularly effective in identifying a broad range of issues, while conventional pre-tests and behaviour coding were especially effective in detecting interviewer-related problems. Expert panels and cognitive interviews were found to be superior in identifying analytical issues, whereas expert panels and behaviour coding demonstrated greater consistency in identifying both the number and types of problems across studies. Behaviour coding emerged as the most reliable method for identifying specific issues, while conventional pre-tests and behaviour coding were similar in terms of cost, cognitive interviews were slightly less costly, and expert panels were the most cost-effective overall.

Taking these considerations into account, and with a focus on resource efficiency, the author selected the conventional pre-test method for its robustness in identifying a wide range of issues. The pre-test was conducted with five individuals—entrepreneurs or international business experts—from the author's professional network. It was carried out through one-to-one video calls, during which each statement was presented and discussed to obtain qualitative feedback in addition to direct responses. The insights, suggestions, and identified challenges informed subsequent revisions to the questionnaire.

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The author began data collection once the research approach and methods had been finalised. This phase involved desk-based research, drawing on literature reviews for each construct defined in the hypothesised model (Figure 9). Based on this review, the following eight hypotheses were developed.

H1: Ambition of internationalisation increases perceived desirability of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H2: Global mindset increases perceived desirability of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H3: Anticipated loss of business increases perceived desirability of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H4: Knowledge of the foreign market increases perceived feasibility of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H5: Network in the foreign market increases perceived feasibility of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H6: The potential of finding a new customer in the foreign market increases the perceived feasibility of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H7: A co-evolution partner increases perceived feasibility of internationalisation, leading to an increase in the intention to internationalise.
H8: A co-evolution partner increases the intention to internationalise.

Table 31 provides a structured overview of the depth of the literature review and the methodological approach adopted to derive statements for each construct. For each construct, the table reports the number of research papers initially identified through keyword-based searches, the subset of papers deemed relevant following content screening, and the final set of papers referenced for statement development. This multi-stage filtering process highlights variations in the extent of scholarly attention and empirical grounding across constructs. In addition, the table outlines the specific methodological approach used to translate the literature into measurable statements, distinguishing between direct extraction of statements from existing research, indirect derivation through thematic synthesis, and adaptations informed by exploratory factor analysis or hypothesis development.

By explicitly documenting both the breadth of literature engagement and the derivation logic applied to each construct, this overview enhances the transparency and rigour of the research design and demonstrates a systematic and replicable approach to construct operationalisation.

No.	Construct name	No. of papers	No. of relevant papers	No. of papers leveraged	Approach to derive the items (refer figure 8)
1	Ambition of internationalisation	40	11	2	A2
2	Anticipated loss of business	41	6	5	A3
3	Global mindset	21	7	2	A1
4	Perceived desirability	22	7	1	A1
5	Knowledge of the foreign market	26	7	2	A1
6	Network in the foreign market	38	10	5	A3
7	The potential of finding the first customer in a foreign market	13	2	1	A3
8	Co-evolution partner	32	7	4	A4
9	Perceived feasibility	22	7	3	A1
10	Intention to internationalise	32	11	4	A4

Table 31: Overview of research effort and approach to deriving the items

4.3.1 Development of Statements for Each Construct

Construct 1: Ambition of Internationalisation

Ambition is characterised by a strong aspiration or determination to achieve success, influence, wealth, or specific objectives. It involves setting ambitious goals, cultivating the motivation to work towards these goals, and demonstrating the resilience required to overcome challenges and obstacles. Ambition can be observed across various domains of life, including professional pursuits, educational endeavours, and personal development. It is commonly associated with a commitment to self-improvement and the persistent pursuit of personal goals.

Central to this research is the concept of entrepreneurial ambition, with particular emphasis on the **ambition to internationalise**. In *Entrepreneurship: Theory, Process, and Practice*, Kuratko (2016) describes ambitious entrepreneurs as individuals with a strong desire to innovate, develop, and significantly expand their business activities. Such entrepreneurs are characterised by foresight, determination, and a willingness to take calculated risks in pursuit of substantial business success. They are motivated by opportunities for innovation, growth, and market leadership. This characterisation aligns with widely accepted views of entrepreneurial ambition within the entrepreneurship literature.

The following key search terms were used to review the existing literature related to this construct:

Entrepreneurial ambition | Ambition as a key success factor | Work ambition | Promotion | Career expectations | Status and power | Perceived self-efficacy | Ambitious employees | Role conflict | Task significance | Hierarchical ambition at work | Opportunities for promotion | Challenge at work | Ambition as an attitude of commitment | Ambition as extra effort | Salary | Business/work motivation | Achievement and ambition | Development and ambition at work | Outcome expectations moderating ambition | Motive measurement | Growth ambition

The literature review revealed that, although extensive research exists on ambition and entrepreneurship as separate constructs, there is a noticeable lack of studies directly linking ambition, entrepreneurship, and start-up internationalisation. In total, forty academic papers were reviewed. Of these, eleven were considered relevant, and only two were directly used to derive items for measuring general ambition. These two sources provided the foundation for the development of the survey items:

- Lang, and Fries (2006) presented a *revised 10-item Version of the Achievement Motives Scale*, offering a nuanced approach to measuring ambition within the context of achievement motivation.
- Bot (2017) conducted a study entitled *Are Women Lacking Ambition? A quantitative study focusing on a broader perspective of ambition,* which provided valuable insights into the multidimensional nature of ambition.

The items and subsequent statements derived from these sources were adapted to assess ambition specifically within the context of start-up internationalisation.

Following the procedure outlined in the flow diagram, potential items were extracted from the selected literature. The identified items included: challenge, resources, communal goals, self-realisation, social status, salary, self-efficacy, promotion, development, and power. Upon further examination, self-efficacy was allocated to the construct *intention to internationalise*.

In assessing the applicability of the remaining items within an entrepreneurial context, it was determined that certain items, such as promotion and salary, were not well aligned with entrepreneurial activity and were therefore excluded. The remaining items were evaluated based on their frequency of occurrence in the literature. As a result, *challenge* and *development* emerged as the most relevant items, given their strong association with entrepreneurial behaviour.

Challenge: This item refers to tasks that involve solving novel problems, managing uncertainty, overcoming significant obstacles, and making decisions that entail a substantial degree of risk.

Development: This item relates to activities and processes associated with identifying and pursuing growth opportunities, both within an organisation and through interactions with external organisations.

Following a more focused review of the literature addressing challenge and development, the following statements were developed:

1. I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent.
2. I am attracted to situations that allow me to test my capabilities.
3. I like situations in which I can find out how capable I am.
4. I am afraid of failing in somewhat difficult situations when a lot depends on me.
5. I feel uneasy about doing something if I am not sure of succeeding.
6. I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge.
7. I am willing to select a challenging work assignment from which I can learn much.

As a final step, the statements were refined and assigned identifiers for **Construct 1**. The revised statements are presented below:

1.1 The team preferred work situations requiring a high level of ability and talent.
1.2 Internationalisation was an appealing situation.
1.3 Internationalisation work allowed the teams to test their capabilities.
1.4 Team members were partially afraid of failure when things were dependent on them.
1.5 The team had a high expectation of success.
1.6 The team felt internationalisation was a great learning opportunity.
1.7 Internationalisation was considered a challenging assignment.

Construct 2: Anticipated Loss of Business

Anticipated loss of business refers to a notional loss that a firm may experience as a consequence of delays or inefficiencies associated with the initiation of internationalisation. The following search terms were used to identify relevant literature for item extraction:

Delay in internationalisation | Anticipated loss | Loss in business | Time to internationalise start-up | Early and fast internationalisation | International competencies | Speed of internationalisation | Delay in business plan | Performance measurement | Initial internationalisation | Performance of born globals | Profit | Business loss

Following the review of forty-one academic papers, six were identified as relevant. However, none directly addressed loss of business specifically attributable to internationalisation. Consequently, the selected papers were analysed to identify relevant textual material that could be adapted for statement development. The following six excerpts were used as the basis for deriving statements:

1. Access to superior international networks for funding has also driven entrepreneurs to compete internationally rather than solely locally (McDougall et al., 1994).
2. Findings suggest that, during the early international entry and development phase, overall effectiveness and operational performance measures are particularly relevant (Trudgen & Freeman, 2014).
3. Early internationalisation exposes start-ups to elevated costs and risks; however, it can also generate significant long-term growth and learning advantages (Sapienza et al., 2006).
4. Despite the importance of early and rapid internationalisation, high-technology start-ups often experience significant delays in executing international market development activities compared to timelines outlined in their business plans, frequently due to disorganised internationalisation behaviour (Neubert, 2017).
5. When financing is sourced internationally, investors often expect firms to enter their markets more rapidly (McDougall et al., 1994).
6. Entrepreneurial teams require the ability to build networks, create promising business opportunities, acquire customers in foreign markets, and develop global marketing and sales capabilities; otherwise, firms may face substantial delays in executing their business plans (Neubert, 2017).

These six excerpts were further analysed and combined with the author's professional experience to develop construct-specific statements. The resulting statements and assigned identifiers are presented below:

2.1 A move to the international market was targeted due to access to the funding network.
2.2 Due to a lack of ability in the foreign market, the firm anticipated delayed value capture.
2.3 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was risky but considered worthwhile.
2.5 Disorganized internationalisation behaviour led to a delay in value capture.
2.6 Early access to the international market prevented the loss of business opportunities.
2.7 Early access to the international market prevented loss of talent pool in foreign markets.

Construct 3: Global Mindset

Global mindset refers to the ability to scan global environments and identify emerging trends and opportunities that may pose either threats or opportunities for achieving personal, professional, or organisational objectives. It comprises both attitudinal and behavioural components and can be assessed through indicators such as international vision, proactiveness in global markets, and commitment to internationalisation (Rhinesmith, 1993).

The following search terms were used to identify relevant literature for this construct:
Global mindset | Managerial experience | Market characteristics | International education | International work experience | Market globalness | Market turbulence | Start-up perception of international markets | International vision | Proactiveness | Commitment to internationalisation | Learning orientation | Economic orientation | Financial indicators | Attitude | Behaviour | Need for international activities | International outlook | Subjective and objective performance

Twenty-one academic sources were reviewed, of which seven were deemed relevant. Two of these were directly related to the construct and were therefore used for item extraction. Items one to three were derived from Nummela et al. (2004), *A global mindset—a prerequisite for successful internationalisation*, while the fourth item was derived from Stroh and Caligiuri (1998), *Increasing global competitiveness through effective people management*.

1. **Proactiveness in the International Market:** This dimension reflects the anticipation of future problems, needs, and changes related to international markets, as well as an understanding of their strategic importance. It is measured through statements relating to the need for and importance of international activities. The following statements were derived:

   a. The firm will need to internationalise in order to succeed in the future.
   b. It is essential for the firm to internationalise rapidly.
   c. Internationalisation is the primary means of achieving growth objectives.
   d. The intended growth can be achieved mainly through internationalisation.

2. **Commitment to Internationalisation:** This dimension reflects the willingness to invest time and effort in activities believed to be essential. One statement was derived: a. The founder, owner, or manager is willing to take the firm into international markets.

3. **International Vision:** This dimension describes long-term aspirations, typically spanning five to ten years or longer. Two statements were derived:

   a. The firm's management views the world as a single marketplace.
   b. The firm prefers opportunities that increase long-term profitability.

4. **Market Turbulence:** This dimension reflects the rate of change in customer composition and preferences. Two statements were derived:

   a. The firm prefers situations that may stimulate new demand for its products.
   b. The firm prefers situations that allow it to stabilise market fluctuations.

After evaluating the relevance of these items to the objectives of the present research, the following seven statements were finalised and assigned identifiers:

3.1 The firm believed that internationalisation was a must for future success. (from item one, first statement)
3.2 Internationalisation was a key growth pillar for the success of the firm. (from item one with the last three statements combined)
3.3 A general willingness among management existed to internationalise in the firm. (from item 2)
3.4 The team saw the whole world as one big marketplace. (from item three, first statement)
3.5 The firm saw internationalisation as a profit booster. (from item three, second statement)
3.6 Internationalisation was a way to simulate demands for new products. (from item four, first statement)
3.7 Internationalisation was a way to stabilize demand fluctuations. (from item four, second statement).

Construct 4: Perceived Desirability

Perceived desirability refers to the degree to which an individual is attracted to a particular behaviour, such as becoming an entrepreneur (Liñán, 2004). The following keywords were used to search the relevant literature:

Perceived desirability | Specific desirability | Propensity to act | Intention to internationalise | Expected values | Normative beliefs | Attitude to act | Risk-taking behaviour | Entrepreneurial intention | Entrepreneurial behaviour | Entrepreneurial environment | Global mindset | Ambition | Respect for entrepreneurs

A total of twenty-two academic sources were identified, of which seven were considered relevant during the initial review. Many of these studies presented theoretical links between perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intention; however, they did not directly address the intention to internationalise start-ups. In light of this limitation, the author drew primarily on the work of Masrury (2016) and relevant insights from Gerschewski et al., (2015) to derive the following statements. These statements were subsequently refined to enhance relevance to the research context and prefixed with construct identifiers.

• Bringing the start-up to the international market interests me
→ 4.1 The firm had an interest in the international market.
• If founders have opportunities, abilities, and capital, they will pursue internationalisation
→ 4.2 A general sense of resourcefulness existed within the firm to go for internationalisation.
• Founders feel that entrepreneurs receive less respect in the domestic market
→ 4.3 Internationalisation success brought more respect from the business community compared to domestic success.
• Entrepreneurial activities align with the culture of the country
→ 4.4 Internationalisation was the culture in the home country.

In addition, the author introduced one statement based on professional experience and discussions with multiple founders:
4.5 It was a general belief that internationalisation was not a choice but a must

The final statement initially derived within this construct related primarily to skills acquisition. Consequently, the author reassigned this statement to Construct 5, *Knowledge of the foreign Market*: We prefer situations that give us a chance to acquire new skills → 5.1 Internationalisation was a situation whereby the team felt they could acquire new skills.

Construct 5: Knowledge of the Foreign Market

Internationalisation knowledge refers to a firm's need for experiential knowledge to support and facilitate its international operations, including the adaptation of resources and capabilities to foreign market environments (Eriksson et al., 1997). The following keywords were used to search the relevant literature:

Foreign market knowledge and start-up internationalisation | Foreign institutional knowledge | Foreign business knowledge | Internationalisation knowledge | Innovation and capabilities | Organisational learning effort | International learning effort | Domestic learning effort | Entrepreneurial proclivity and foreign market knowledge | Proactiveness | Innovativeness | Risk-taking | Risk tolerance | Knowledge management | Entrepreneurial orientation | International experience | International education

A total of twenty-six academic sources were identified, of which seven were considered relevant. Several studies emphasised the importance of experiential knowledge for successful internationalisation. However, the two sources listed below were deemed most pertinent and were therefore used to derive two items and seven statements:

- Organisational knowledge and learning items and corresponding statements were adapted from Stroh and Caligiuri (1998), *Increasing global competitiveness through effective people management*.
- Entrepreneurial proclivity items and corresponding statements were adapted from Zhou (2007), *The effects of entrepreneurial proclivity and foreign market knowledge on early internationalisation.*

***Item one:* Organizational Knowledge and Learning**

Organisational knowledge is defined as the firm's capacity to understand and utilise relationships among critical factors in order to achieve intended objectives. Organisational learning refers to the process through which new knowledge is assimilated into the organisation's existing knowledge base (Autio et al., 2000). The following statements were derived from this item:

- We prefer situations that allow us to increase organisational capabilities
  → 5.2 Existing organisational capabilities were strengthened during internationalisation.
- We prefer situations that allow us to learn new technologies
  → 5.3 The team had to learn new skills and technologies.
- We prefer situations that allow us to broaden our organisational skills
  → 5.4 Internationalisation was needed to build new organisational capabilities.

***Item two:* Entrepreneurial Proclivity**

Entrepreneurial proclivity refers to a firm's predisposition to engage in entrepreneurial processes, practices, and decision-making, characterised by an organisational culture that supports innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Matsuno et al., 2002). The following statements were derived from this item and assigned identifiers:

- Our top managers have usually spent time abroad for business visits
  → 5.5 The team had spent time abroad for learning prior to internationalisation.
- Our top managers have regularly attended local and foreign trade fairs
  → 5.6 The firm monitored foreign trade fairs on a regular basis.
- Our top management regularly monitors export market trends
  → 5.7 The firm had accumulated relevant information about foreign markets prior to internationalisation.
- The more prior international experience and knowledge a firm has, the greater its ability to identify unanticipated means–end relationships leading to international opportunities (Chandra et al., 2009)

→ 5.8 Prior foreign market knowledge and experience helped the firm identify new business opportunities.

Construct 6: Network in the Foreign Market.

A network refers to the relationships between a firm's management team and employees and external actors such as customers, suppliers, competitors, government institutions, distributors, financial institutions, family members, friends, or any other parties that enable the firm to internationalise its business activities (Axelsson & Johanson, 1992). From a network perspective, internationalisation is understood as a process through which a firm enters and establishes a position within a foreign business network and develops relationships with international business partners. The following keywords were used to search the relevant literature:

International network | Social network | Personal ties | Foreign market network | Strong ties | Weak ties | Country institutional context | Networking and start-up internationalisation | Knowledge and business network | Network relationships | Foreign networks | Entrepreneurial orientation and networks | Internationalisation intention and networking | Social ties | Firm scope | Market opportunity | Institutional context | International entrepreneurship | Alliance networks | Strategic alliances | Entrepreneur advice networks | International expansion

The literature search yielded thirty-eight academic sources, of which ten were considered relevant. As much of the content overlapped, the study by Kiss and Danis (2008), *Country institutional context, social networks, and new venture internationalisation speed*, was selected as the primary source for item extraction. Insights from four additional studies were then incorporated to refine the statements, resulting in eight final statements for this construct. These statements were subsequently prefixed with identifiers to prepare them for inclusion in the questionnaire.

Item one: **Personal Networking**

Personal networks in the entrepreneurial context refer to relationships with individuals or entities closely connected to the entrepreneur, who provide support and assistance to facilitate entrepreneurial activity (Elali & Al-Yacoub, 2016). This item led to the derivation of the following three statements:

- Having a broad network supports the internationalisation of small firms by positively influencing speed, intensity, and scope (Zahra, 2005)
  → 6.1 Target countries for internationalisation were influenced by existing networks.
- Networks help international entrepreneurs identify foreign business opportunities and directly influence founders' target market choices (McDougall et al., 1994)
  → 6.2 The firm leveraged networks to identify initial opportunities in the foreign markets.
- Network relationships contribute to the development of initial credibility in foreign markets (Zain & Ng, 2006)
  → 6.3 Initial credibility in the foreign markets was derived from the network.

Item two: **Inter-firm Networking**

Inter-firm networks enable firms to access resources and complementary skills, specialise, achieve economies of scale, and collaborate to generate superior knowledge and capabilities (Chetty & Wilson, 2003). This item resulted in the following statements:

- Foreign networking supports the formation of alliances and collaborative opportunities (De Klerk & Kroon, 2008)
  → 6.5 Networks helped find the first employees.
- Entrepreneurial teams require networking capabilities to create opportunities, acquire customers in foreign markets, and develop global marketing and sales functions; otherwise, firms risk delays in their business plans (Neubert, 2017)
  → 6.6 Networks were pivotal in finding potential foreign business opportunity.

Item three: **Institutional Embeddedness**

Institutional development comprises relatively stable rules, social norms, and cognitive structures that shape market transactions by defining the "rules of the game" and establishing conditions under which firms gain legitimacy (Milgrom et al., 1990; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1995). From this item, the following statements were derived:

- Network relationships facilitate access to local market knowledge (Zain & Ng, 2006)
  → 6.7 Networks were a key source of information.
- Firms with varying levels of prior international experience can generate diverse ideas through participation in networks such as partnerships, conferences, digital platforms, and by hiring individuals with international expertise (Chandra et al., 2009)
  → 6.8 Strong network ties helped converting opportunities into a first customer

Construct 7: Potential of Finding the First Customer in the Foreign Market.

A potential customer is an individual or organisation that is not yet a customer but has a high likelihood of becoming one. The following keywords were used to identify relevant literature:

International business | Opportunity recognition | Entrepreneurship | Knowledge economy | Prior knowledge | International network structure | Entrepreneurial orientation | Weak ties | Strong ties | Autonomy | Innovativeness | Risk-taking | Proactiveness | Competitive aggressiveness | First business customer | International market entry | International market choice

Using these keywords, thirteen academic sources were identified, of which two were considered relevant to the present research. The literature primarily addressed international market entry and factors influencing foreign market selection. The study by Chandra et al. (2009) was the only source that could be directly leveraged for deriving items and statements for this construct

Item one: **Prior Knowledge & Experience**

Prior knowledge and experience refer to the extent of experience accumulated in an international context, including time spent abroad through foreign assignments and international education (Zhou et al., 2007). Two statements were initially derived from this item; however, one was excluded due to its stronger relevance to knowledge-based constructs.

The remaining statement was adapted and prefixed with an identifier for inclusion in the questionnaire.

- Moreover, the more prior international experience and knowledge a firm has, the greater its chance of identifying unanticipated new means-ends relationships leading to an international opportunity.
  -> 7.1 Finding the first customer in the target country was considered a significant milestone.

Item two: **International Network Structure**

International network structures serve as sources of information and ideas that trigger entrepreneurial opportunity recognition (Chandra et al., 2009). Two potential statements were identified; however, one was excluded due to limited relevance to this construct, as it was more closely related to knowledge and networking constructs. The remaining statement was adapted and prefixed as follows:

• Through networks and referrals, firms encounter new information, which must then be interpreted and recombined with prior knowledge to identify international market opportunities
→ 7.2 Converting initial opportunities into a first customer was a uphill task.

In order to meet the minimum requirement of five statements for the questionnaire, the author additionally drew upon extensive professional experience. Reflecting on multiple comparable internationalisation scenarios encountered throughout his career, the following four statements were developed:

7.3 Having acquired the first customer in the target country, expansion became comparably easy.
7.4 Acquiring the first customer in the target country was celebrated in a big way.
7.5 After finding the first customer, the company started expansion in the target market.
7.6 The first customer was acquired ahead of any physical establishment in the target market..

Construct 8: Co-evolution Partner

Co-evolution refers to the simultaneous and interdependent development of organisations, alliances, and their environments, occurring both independently and interactively (Wilson & Hynes, 2009). The following keywords were used to identify relevant literature:

Alliances | Collaborative behaviour | Relational quality | Joint ventures | Learning and failure in alliances | Co-evolution | Strategic alliances | Strategic interdependence | Repeated ties | Common ties | Alliance performance | Intention to internationalise | Inter-organisational ties | Direct ties | Indirect ties | Inter-firm learning | Trust | Confidence | Strategic exploration | Strategic exploitation

The literature search yielded thirty-two academic sources, of which four were considered relevant during the initial review. A deeper analysis of these sources did not result in the direct identification of measurable items or statements suitable for questionnaire development. However, the author was able to extract four key themes and two initial concepts from the literature. These were subsequently refined and transformed into six questionnaire statements, which were prefixed with construct identifiers.

- In comparison to myself, other people have more capacities for a leadership position (Bot, 2017)
  → 8.1 Required leadership capabilities for internationalisation were acquired via a partner in the foreign market.
- Alliances with Korean firms can serve as gateways to other Asian markets, enabling firms to leverage existing alliances for future collaborations (Inkson et al., 1997)
  → 8.2 Partners in target countries were very helpful in internationalisation.
- Capacity and recruiting new clients (Koza & Lewin, 1999)
  → 8.3 The firm relied on the capacity of the foreign partner in the target country for recruiting new clients.
- Network in the foreign market (Liñán, 2004)
  → 8.4 The firm relied on the know-how of the foreign partner in the target country.
  → 8.5 The firm relied on external partners to develop a network in the foreign market.

- The potential of finding the first customer
  → 8.6 The firm relied on a partner in a foreign country to find the potential first customer.

Construct 9: Perceived Feasibility

Perceived feasibility is defined as the degree to which individuals consider themselves personally capable of carrying out a specific behaviour (Liñán, 2004). The following keywords were used to identify relevant literature:

Perceived feasibility | Self-efficacy | Co-evolution partner | Intention to internationalise | Expected values | Network ties | Weak ties | Risk-taking behaviour | Entrepreneurial intention | Entrepreneurial behaviour | Entrepreneurial environment | Business opportunity | Creativity | Respect for entrepreneurs

A total of twenty-two academic sources were identified, of which seven were considered relevant. Many of these studies and theoretical frameworks link perceived feasibility to entrepreneurial intentions; however, they do not directly address the intention to internationalise start-ups. Consequently, the author drew on the most relevant literature sources—Masrury (2016) and Zhou (2007)—to extract statements directly related to perceived feasibility. These statements were adapted to the context of internationalisation and transformed into questionnaire items, which were subsequently prefixed with construct identifiers.

- Founders feel they can control the process of firm internationalisation
  → 9.1 The firm was in control of the internationalisation process.
- Founders feel they can develop new products or services
  → 9.2 The firm could develop new products/services.
- Founders believe they can solve problems encountered during firm internationalisation
  → 9.3 The firm successfully addressed challenges that arose during internationalisation.

- Founders believe they have a high probability of success if they internationalise early
  → 9.4 The team believed with a high probability of success of early internationalisation.
- Founders believe they can network and establish professional contacts
  → 9.5 The team developed many new professional contacts during internationalisation.
  → 9.6 The team could network, leading to generation of opportunities?
- When firms enter markets where customers are not yet ready to recognise or adopt new value propositions, organisational maturity becomes critical (Trudgen & Freeman, 2014)
  → 9.7 The team believed that organisational maturity in the foreign market would be helpful.
- Our firm is usually among the first to introduce new products in the industry
  → 9.8 The firm was among the first to introduce a new product in international markets. (similar to 5.5).

Construct 10: Intention to Internationalise.

Intention to internationalise refers to a firm's propensity to expand its cross-border activities in terms of both intensity (e.g., level of exports) and scope (e.g., number of foreign markets served). The following keywords were used to search the relevant literature:

Measure intention to internationalise business | Quantitative measures of intention | Intention to internationalise start-ups | Entrepreneurial intentions | Entrepreneurial behaviour | Firm international and domestic learning effort | Vicarious learning | Gender effects on entrepreneurial intention | Networking and intention to internationalise | Personal traits | Feasibility and desirability | Business networking | Self-efficacy

A total of thirty-two academic sources were identified, of which eleven were considered relevant during the initial screening. However, there was limited literature directly addressing the intention to internationalise start-ups. From the available sources, the author was able to extract only two statements, which were adapted for relevance to the present questionnaire and prefixed with identifiers.

- Extreme risk aversion may create a blind spot that prevents a firm from considering or formulating international opportunities (Chandra et al., 2009)
  → 10.1 There was no risk aversion at the team or firm level to internationalise.
- Among various growth options, internationalisation was preferred (Masrury, 2016)
  → 10.2 Among various growth options, internationalisation was preferred.

To derive additional statements, the author reviewed two foundational intention-based frameworks in entrepreneurship research: the Shapero–Krueger Model of Entrepreneurial Intentions (Krueger et al., 2000) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Liñán, 2004). These models were used to identify more precise keywords and guide further searches within the literature. The resulting keywords and derived statements are presented below. During this process, the author also drew on professional experience to ensure that the statements were meaningful and relevant to practitioners. All statements were prefixed with construct identifiers.

- Perceived feasibility
  → 10.3 Perceived feasibility of internationalisation led to discussions related to internationalisation.
  → 10.4 Perceived feasibility led to more interest in visiting foreign trade fairs.
- Perceived desirability
  → 10.5 Prior to internationalisation, there was a lot of interest in knowing a person or firm who could help in foreign markets.
  → 10.6 Prior to internationalisation, there was a strong interest in meeting agencies supporting internationalisation, i.e., chambers of commerce.
  → 10.7 The firm and its team had a clear aim to for the internationalisation of business.
- Self-efficacy
  → 10.8 The Team had no issue in dealing with unknowns.
  → 10.9 The Team always looked for solutions to challenges rather than being demotivated.
  → 10.10 The Team had no problems developing or learning new skills to achieve the objective.

- Willingness (in the context of internationalisation)
  → 10.11 A high level of willingness existed for internationalisation.
- Motivation
  → 10.12 Motivation to internationalise was obvious among the team prior to the plan of internationalisation.

Furthermore, the author incorporated one statement derived from Construct 5 and one based on professional experience. Both statements were prefixed with identifiers:

- → 10.13 The team's confidence was a reflection of its intention to internationalise.
- Top management consistently encourages the development of new product ideas for international markets (Zhou, 2007)
  → 5.6 Management encouraged new ideas for international markets prior to planning internationalisation (from construct 5).

4.3.2 The Pre-test Questionnaire

Following the completion of the construct-to-statement conversion, the author compiled an initial pool of statements for each construct, resulting in a total of seventy-nine items intended for inclusion in the questionnaire. These statements are documented in **Appendix M.**

To enhance the clarity, validity, and overall quality of the measurement instrument, a systematic and rigorous review process was undertaken, resulting in several key refinements.

First, the wording of the statements was revised to improve clarity and ensure ease of comprehension for respondents. Second, statements were reassigned across constructs where closer conceptual alignment was identified. Third, an iterative refinement process was conducted with the objective of reducing the total number of statements to a more manageable and methodologically appropriate target of approximately fifty items. This reduction was achieved by eliminating redundant or conceptually overlapping statements, removing overly complex items that could hinder respondent understanding or complicate interpretation, and critically assessing the relevance and contribution of each statement, with items of limited importance being excluded. In addition, care was taken to ensure that each construct remained adequately represented by a minimum of five statements.

To maintain traceability and facilitate transparency throughout the research process, the original numbering of the statements was retained following refinement. This approach ensured continuity between earlier versions of the instrument and the final questionnaire.

As a result of this comprehensive review and refinement process, the initial pool of statements was successfully reduced to fifty items. In the final step, the retained statements were ordered in accordance with the criteria specified in Section 4.2. The resulting set of fifty statements, prepared for pre-testing, is presented below:

3.4 The team saw the whole world as one big marketplace.
10.11 A high level of willingness existed for the internationalisation of business prior to the actual plan being developed.
10.12 Motivation to internationalise was obvious among the team members prior to actual plan was developed.
4.4 Internationalisation of business was the culture in the home country.
4.3 Success in the international market was respected more by the business community compared to the domestic one.
10.2 Among various growth options, internationalisation was preferred.
4.5 It was a general belief that internationalisation of business was not a choice but a must.
6.1 Target countries of internationalisation were influenced by existing networks.
3.2 Internationalisation was a key growth pillar for the success of the firm.
3.5 The firm saw internationalisation as a profit booster.
3.6 Internationalisation was a way to simulate demands for new products.
2.6 Early access to the international market prevented the loss of business opportunities.
2.7 Early access to the international market prevented loss of talent pool in foreign markets.
3.7 Internationalisation was a way to stabilize demand fluctuations.
1.2 Internationalisation of business was an appealing situation for the team.
1.1 Team-preferred work situation requiring a high level of ability and talent.
1.3 Internationalisation work allowed the team to test their capabilities.
1.7 Internationalisation of business was considered a challenging assignment.
1.6 The team felt it was a great learning opportunity.
9.4 The team believed (with high probability) in the success of early internationalisation.

9.9 The team had the ability to identify business opportunities in a foreign market.

6.5 Networks helped in finding the first employees in a foreign market.

4.2 A general feeling of resourcefulness existed in the firm to go for internationalisation.

5.2 Existing organizational capabilities were strengthened prior to the internationalisation of business.

5.3 The team had to learn new skills and technologies.

5.7 The team had spent time abroad for learning prior to internationalisation.

5.9 The firm had accumulated all the relevant information about foreign market prior to internationalisation.

5.10 Prior knowledge/experience of the target market helped in identifying new business opportunities.

7.1 Finding the first customer in the target country was considered a big milestone.

6.2 The firm leveraged networks to identify initial opportunities in the foreign market.

9.1 The firm had all the tools needed to be in control of the internationalisation process

9.2 The firm had the ability to develop new products/services for new markets prior to entering the market.

9.7 The firm had the practical know-how of running business operations in the foreign market prior to entering.

6.4 Networks helped in developing alliances, associates, and partners in a foreign market.

6.7 Networks were a key source of information about the foreign market.

10.1 There was no risk aversion at the team or firm level to internationalise.

2.2 Due to a lack of operational ability in the foreign market, the firm anticipated delayed value capture.

2.3 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was risky but considered worthwhile.

2.4 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was costly but considered worthwhile.

6.3 Initial credibility in the foreign market was derived from the network.

7.2 Converting initial opportunities into a first customer in a foreign market was an uphill task.

7.3 Having acquired the first customer in the target country, expansion became comparably easy.

8.1 Required leadership capabilities for internationalisation were acquired via a partner in the foreign market.

8.3 The firm relied on the capacity of the foreign partner in the target country to recruit new clients.

8.4 The firm relied on the know-how of the foreign partner in the target country.
8.5 The firm relied on external partners to develop a network in a foreign market.
8.6 The firm relied on a partner in a foreign country to find the first customer.
7.5 After finding the first customer, the company started expansion in the target market.
7.6 The first customer was acquired ahead of any physical establishment in the target market.
5.6 The firm always encouraged new ideas for the international market prior to planning for internationalisation.

4.3.3 Conducting the Pre-test

Pre-testing serves as an essential phase in finalising the questionnaire before survey deployment, verifying its quality and efficacy. This step is crucial, as it helps to mitigate the need for extensive data cleaning after the survey or the potential requirement to conduct the survey again due to unanticipated complications, thereby saving time and resources.

As previously mentioned, the participants for the pre-test were carefully selected from the author's wide-ranging professional network. The selected group of five experts, known for their diverse backgrounds and experiences, included:

1. Pre-tester 1, Founder and CEO of Innoval Digital Solutions Pvt Ltd, India.
2. Pre-tester 2, Founder and Managing Director of Logosworld GmbH, Germany.
3. Pre-tester 3, Founder and CEO of Tribi Embedded Technologies Pvt Ltd, India.
4. Pre-tester 4, Offshore Product Owner in India for BukuKas, Indonesia.
5. Pre-tester 5, Founder and CEO of Elena International GmbH, Germany.

The diversity of this group was characterised by:

- A balanced geographical representation, with three participants from India (Pre-testers 1, 3, and 4) and two from Germany (Pre-testers 2 and 5).
- A mixture of professional roles, including three entrepreneurs active in international markets (Pre-testers 1, 2, and 5), one individual operating within a start-up in a global context (Pre-tester 4), and another (Pre-tester 3) whose plans for internationalisation had not materialised.

The pre-test process began with the author contacting the participants via email to schedule a video call, outlining the purpose, expected duration, and procedure for the pre-test. Upon receiving their consent and following a series of email exchanges, the video calls were arranged. During these sessions, the author presented each statement to the experts, provided clarification where necessary, and gathered their evaluations and feedback. After completing the pre-tests, the author consolidated the feedback and identified strategies to address the insights obtained.

- Four statements (2.3, 2.4, 2.7, and 3.6) posed comprehension challenges for the experts. These were revised without altering their original meaning.
- For ten statements (4.2, 5.2, 5.9, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 7.2, 8.1, 8.5, and 10.12), experts noted minor wording differences reflecting alternative expressions of the same concept. These were standardised accordingly.
- At least one expert experienced difficulty with the scale used for five statements (1.7, 2.7, 3.5, 3.6, and 7.2). In addition, general feedback was provided on the seven-point Likert scale. Consequently, the author decided to adopt a five-point Likert scale for survey development.
- On two occasions, experts perceived repetition across statements: (a) 4.2, 10.11, and 10.12, and (b) 3.2 and 3.6. A closer examination confirmed that while similar in nature, these statements were intentionally distinct.
- Some requests for clarification related to specific terms. The author attributed this to the interactive nature of the video-call pre-test, where participants tended to seek immediate clarification rather than reflect independently.
- The time required to conduct the pre-tests ranged from 30 to 45 minutes, including introductions, informal discussions, and clarifications. Reflecting on this, the author concluded that the questionnaire itself could be completed in approximately 10–15 minutes.
- Minor grammatical issues in English were also identified and corrected.

The final set of statements after the pre-tests is presented below. **Appendix N** presents the experts' ratings of pre-tests.

3.4 The team saw the whole world as one big marketplace.

10.11 A high level of willingness for internationalisation of business existed before developing the actual plan.

10.12 The motivation to internationalise was obvious among the team members.

4.4 Internationalisation of business has been the culture in the home country.

4.3 In the business community, success in the international market was considered more respectable than domestic success.

10.2 Internationalisation of business was preferred over various other growth options.

4.5 It was a general belief that internationalisation of business was not a choice but a must.

6.1 The target countries of internationalisation were influenced by the existing networks of the firm.

3.2 Internationalisation of business was a key growth pillar for the success of the firm.

3.5 The firm saw the internationalisation of business as a profit booster.

3.6 Internationalisation of business was a way to generate initial demands for new products.

2.6 Early access to the international market prevented loss of business opportunities in the target countries.

2.7 Early access to the international market prevented loss of possible resources (people, finance, etc.) in the target countries.

3.7 Internationalisation of business was a way to stabilize the sales demand fluctuations for the firm.

1.2 Internationalisation of business was an appealing/attractive situation for the team.

1.1 The team preferred a work situation requiring a high level of ability and talent.

1.3 Internationalisation of business allowed the team to test their capabilities.

1.7 Internationalisation of business was considered a challenging assignment.

1.6 The team felt that internationalisation of business was a great learning opportunity.

9.4 The team believed (with high probability) in the success of an early internationalisation of business.

9.9 The team had the ability to identify business opportunities in the target countries.

6.5 The network helped in finding first employees in the target country.

4.2 A general feeling of resourcefulness (ability to overcome any difficulty) made the firm go for internationalisation of business.

5.2 The existing organizational capabilities were strengthened prior to internationalisation of business.

5.3 The team had to learn new skills and technologies for the internationalisation of business.

5.7 The team had spent time abroad for learning prior to internationalisation of business.

5.9 The firm had accumulated all the relevant information about the target country at the start of the internationalisation of business.

5.10 Prior knowledge/experience of the target country helped in identifying new business opportunities there.

7.1 Finding the first customer in the target country was considered a big milestone.

6.2 The firm leveraged network to identify initial business opportunities in the target country.

9.1 The firm had all the tools needed to be in control of the process of internationalisation of business.

9.2 The firm had the ability to develop new products /services for new countries prior to entering the country.

9.7 The firm had the practical know-how of running business operations in the target country prior to entering the country.

6.4 The network helped in developing alliances, associates, and partners in the target country.

6.7 The network was a key source of information about the target country.

10.1 There was no risk aversion to business internationalisation both at the team and firm level.

2.2 Due to lack of operational ability in the target country, the firm anticipated delayed value capture.

2.3 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was considered risky but valuable for the future.

2.4 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was considered costly but valuable for the future.

6.3 The initial credibility in the target country was derived from the network.

7.2 Converting the initial opportunities into a first customer in the target country was very challenging.

7.3 Having acquired the first customer in the target country, expansion of business there became comparatively easy.

8.1 The leadership capabilities required for internationalisation of business were acquired via an external business partner/agency.

8.3 The firm relied on the capacity of the external business partner in the target country for recruiting new clients.

8.4 The firm relied on the know-how of the external business partner in the target country.

8.5 The firm relied on the external business partner to develop the network in the target country.
8.6 The firm relied on the external business partner in the target country for finding the first customer.
7.5 After finding the first customer, the company started business expansion in the target country.
7.6 The first customer was acquired prior to any physical establishment in the target country.
5.6 The firm always encouraged new ideas to capture value in the target country prior to planning for the internationalisation of business.

4.4 Results and Conclusion

Following the established process flow, fifty statements were successfully formulated to operationalise the hypothesised model, thereby enabling progression to the empirical phase of the study. On average, each construct was represented by between five and seven carefully developed statements. These statements were systematically reviewed and refined to ensure alignment with practical business contexts and were intentionally framed in a predominantly positive and unambiguous manner. Particular attention was paid to clarity and simplicity of wording, with the objective that respondents could readily comprehend each statement on first reading. This approach was adopted to enhance the reliability of responses and to support the overall effectiveness of the survey instrument.

5 Critical Drivers of Founders for Intention to Internationalise: An Empirical Study

5.1 Introduction

Although entrepreneurial ecosystems have become increasingly global and interconnected—providing founders with expanding opportunities to access foreign customers, specialised knowledge, and international resources—start-ups nevertheless display considerable variation in the timing of their international engagement despite these favourable conditions. While some ventures internationalise rapidly—as highlighted in the "born global" literature (Rennie, 1993; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004)—many delays foreign expansion until later growth stages, often three to six years after founding (Kumar & Terzidis, 2018). This variation raises an important question: What drives some founders to form an early intention to internationalise, while others postpone such decisions despite similar environmental opportunities?

Research in international entrepreneurship offers substantial insight into the mechanisms that enable firms to expand abroad. Influential frameworks such as those of Oviatt and McDougall (1994) and Knight and Cavusgil (2004) emphasise knowledge, networks, capabilities, and innovation as foundations for rapid global expansion. Process models, most notably the Uppsala model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), highlight the gradual accumulation of experiential knowledge and relational ties as firms increase their foreign market commitments. More recent perspectives integrate co-evolutionary dynamics, suggesting that ventures and ecosystem stakeholders develop jointly during internationalisation (Horn et al., 2017; Sarasvathy, 2008).

However, while these frameworks explain how internationalisation unfolds, they offer relatively limited insight into why founders form the intention to internationalise in the first place. Much of the literature concentrates on observable actions—entry modes, market commitment, and performance—leaving the motivational and cognitive antecedents of internationalisation under-explored. This gap is noteworthy because entrepreneurial intention is a robust predictor of behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán, 2004), and intention formation represents a distinct decision stage preceding action (Sheeran & Webb, 2016).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) provides a strong foundation for understanding how attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioural control shape intentions. Yet its application to early internationalisation remains limited. Founder-level factors—such as ambition, mindset, perceptions of opportunity, and foreign-market knowledge—have not been fully integrated into a comprehensive intention-based model. Similarly, although elements such as foreign-market networks and partner support are widely recognised as influential in internationalisation processes, their role in intention formation, as opposed to execution, remains unclear.

This study addresses these gaps by developing and empirically testing a founder-centric model of intention to internationalise. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, intention-based models of entrepreneurship (Liñán, 2004), co-evolutionary perspectives (Horn et al., 2017; Kumar & Terzidis, 2018), and research in international entrepreneurship (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004), we adopt a mixed-methods design consisting of a literature review, expert interviews, a survey-based structural equation model (N = 105), and qualitative validation.

Our findings identify three constructs—*ambition and mindset*, *knowledge of the foreign market*, and *first-mover advantage*—as the strongest predictors of founders' intention to internationalise. In contrast, foreign-market networks and partner support exhibit limited relevance at the intention stage, suggesting that they may instead become critical during the intention–action transition.

By illuminating the cognitive, motivational, and strategic antecedents of intention, this study contributes to a more nuanced and founder-oriented understanding of early internationalisation. It further highlights an overlooked opportunity for ecosystem stakeholders: the development of founders' ambition and global mindset, factors that exert substantial influence on early internationalisation intentions but are rarely targeted in policy or accelerator programmes.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the theoretical foundations and develops the hypotheses. We then describe the methodological approach, followed by the quantitative and qualitative results. The paper concludes with theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

5.2 Method

This study followed the causal-model specification and evaluation procedure outlined by Weiber and Mühlhaus (2014). Their framework (**Figure 10**) guided the design of an empirical process that included theoretical model development, quantitative analysis through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and qualitative validation. **Appendix O** provides a more detailed flow of the research method.

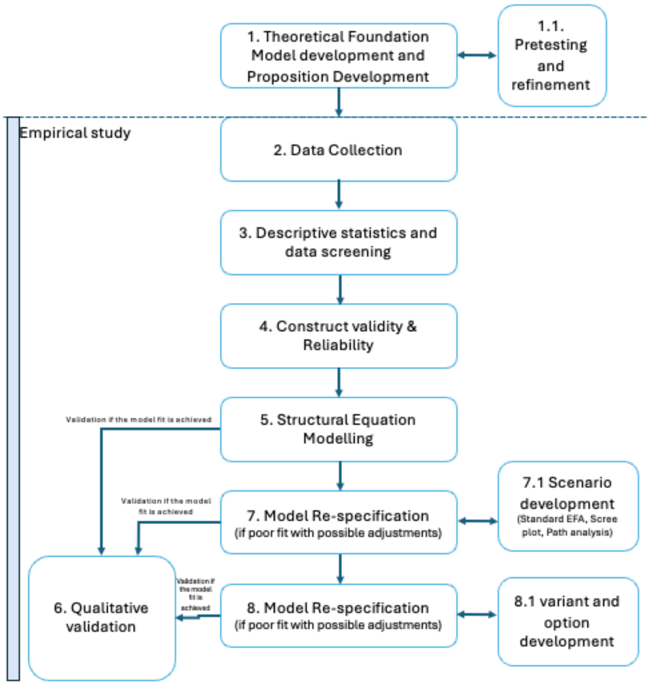


Figure 10: Steps to complete the empirical study

Theoretical model development began by formulating propositions in established frameworks for conceptual clarity, construct validity, and continuity with prior research (Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007). Using a mixed-methods approach (Najmaei, 2016), we combined desk research—including a systematic literature review, analysis of start-ups, internationalisation support mechanisms, and semi-structured interviews of founders as well as industry executives to develop the proposition set (refer to **Table 28**). The hypothesised intention-to-internationalise model (**Figure 11**) was developed by translating propositions into measurable constructs (Thorndike, 1913) and integrating Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) as well as Liñán's Intention-Based Model (2004), following the principles by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1989). Survey items were developed in line with MacKenzie et al. (2011) and pre-tested with six entrepreneurs for clarity and relevance (Khivasara et al., 2021). **Figure 8**

illustrates the complete process, and **a** full list of final items post pre-testing can be found in **section 4.4.3.**

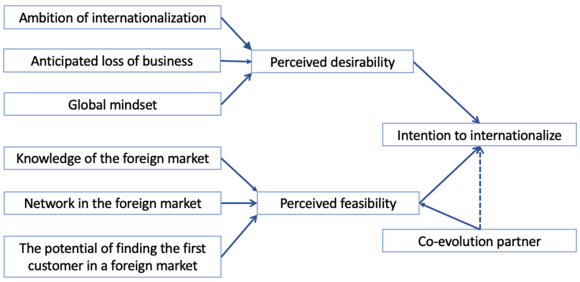


Figure 11: A hypothesised theoretical model for intention to internationalise

Data were collected through an online survey titled Internationalisation of Business (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), designed for clarity and relevance (Blair & Czaja, 2014) and introduced with instructions, timing, and a confidentiality statement (Fowler, 2013). The instrument included 50 randomised items and three standard control variables used in entrepreneurship research (Delmar & Shane, 2003; Saris & Gallhofer, 2014; Gruber, 2007). A filter question excluded remote-only firms, and participation was encouraged through a brief footnote and disclaimer (Blair & Czaja, 2014). The primary survey (**Appendix P**) was distributed via MailChimp, hosted externally, and all items used a five-point Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932).

Quantitative analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in SPSS, AMOS 24, and R, enabling estimation of relationships among latent and observed variables, including direct and indirect effects (Kline, 2016). Following Weiber and Mühlhaus (2014), a causal modelling approach was applied to test the hypothesised relationships.

Data screening involved descriptive statistics to assess central tendency, dispersion, outliers, skewness, and kurtosis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013; Byrne, 2016). Missing data were assessed using Little’s MCAR test, and non-significant results supported chained regression imputation (Kline, 2016).

Construct validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify latent structures and evaluate convergent validity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013; Byrne, 2016). Factor extraction was based on eigenvalues, supported by scree-plot inspection (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). Both orthogonal and oblique rotations were applied to improve interpretability (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

Sampling adequacy was verified using Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests (Brown, 2015), and reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). EFA refinement involved removing low-loading items and adjusting factor structures following theory-driven guidelines (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Gorsuch, 1983; Hair et al., 2017), while minimizing capitalization on chance (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

SEM examined the hypothesised relationships among the latent constructs, with model fit assessed using the Chi-square statistic, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016). Established benchmark criteria guided the interpretation.

When the initial model exhibited inadequate fit, potential sources of misspecification were examined. Following the recommendation that misfit frequently reflects structural or theoretical issues rather than data deficiencies (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Kline, 2016), both the measurement and structural components were reassessed using empirical diagnostics and theoretical criteria. This ensured that subsequent refinements remained grounded in established SEM principles (Byrne, 2016; MacCallum, 2003).

To improve model validity, a model re-specification strategy was applied. At first, three complementary analytical scenarios guided re-specification: (1) unconstrained EFA to reassess the latent structure (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Gorsuch, 1983), (2) scree-plot analysis to determine the optimal number of factors (Cattell, 1966), and (3) path analysis to clarify direct and indirect relationships among refined constructs (Kline, 2016; Byrne, 2016). The results of these scenarios were compared systematically, enabling refinement of factor structures and structural paths in a manner that balanced statistical adequacy with theoretical coherence.

A further round of model re-specification was conducted to refine model fit. Following MacCallum (1986), Bollen (1989), and Hair et al. (2017), items with conceptual misalignment or weak loadings were reviewed, and constructs were revised where theoretically justified and empirically supported (Brown, 2015; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Detailed documentation of diagnostic evaluations and revision decisions is provided to demonstrate transparent, evidence-driven model refinement.

To complement quantitative validation, which may not fully capture the complexity of latent constructs (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989; Najmaei, 2016), qualitative methods, including interviews, case studies, and a follow-up survey of early-stage founders, provided deeper contextual insight (Bollen, 1989) and strengthened the model's validity. **Appendix Q and R** summarize the secondary survey and threshold criteria for the parameters used for the quantitative analysis. Overall, the integrated methodological approach combined model development, data collection, statistical evaluation, and qualitative triangulation to ensure rigor and coherence.

5.3 Data Collection

The study used multiple recruitment channels, including EnTechnon start-up databases, the CyberForum Karlsruhe network, the India Angel Network (IAN), and the researcher's affiliations with INSEAD and TiE Germany. A screening of 3,766 LinkedIn profiles identified 756 relevant individuals, complemented by outreach to 695 EnTechnon contacts, 300 CyberForum entrepreneurs, and 450 IAN members. The primary survey yielded 249 valid responses. Additional qualitative insights were obtained from three desk-based case studies and executive interviews. A secondary survey distributed to 34 founders generated 19 eligible responses, representing 18 start-ups.

5.4 Data Analysis

The primary survey data were cleaned by removing incomplete submissions (131 cases), anonymizing responses, converting ratings to numerical values, and excluding cases with ≤ 80% completion (13 cases), leaving 105 valid cases. The dataset was imported into IBM SPSS/AMOS, and descriptive statistics (**Appendix S**) were used to assess distributions, missing data, and overall readiness. Respondents represented 23 countries—primarily Germany, India, and the United States—and were mostly male, experienced professionals, and start-up founders involved in internationalisation. Missing data were minimal (0.30%) and imputed using chained regression, and normality diagnostics showed acceptable skewness for 94% of variables and acceptable kurtosis for 84%.

As outlined in the method, construct reliability for the global model varied widely, with several constructs falling below acceptable levels. A revised model adding new paths (5) based on modification indices and by removing a negatively correlated path (Finding first customer in the foreign market to perceived feasibility) was tested, but overall fit remained poor. **Appendix T** provides the results. Consequently, we proceeded with EFA-based model re-specification.

A data-readiness assessment preceded the EFA. Model adequacy was supported by a KMO value above 0.50 and a highly significant Bartlett's test ($p < .001$). At the variable level, 48 of 50 items achieved MSA values above 0.50, confirming suitability for factor extraction. A systematic EFA using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was then conducted, producing three analytical scenarios shown in **Figure 12**.

Standard EFA

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8,491	18,458	18,458	8,491	18,458	18,458	3,970	8,630	8,630
2	3,961	8,610	27,069	3,961	8,610	27,069	3,668	7,974	16,604
3	3,253	7,073	34,141	3,253	7,073	34,141	3,217	6,994	23,599
4	2,483	5,399	39,540	2,483	5,399	39,540	3,154	6,857	30,455
5	2,018	4,388	43,928	2,018	4,388	43,928	2,839	6,172	36,628
6	1,907	4,147	48,075	1,907	4,147	48,075	2,342	5,091	41,718
7	1,696	3,687	51,761	1,696	3,687	51,761	2,232	4,853	46,571
8	1,620	3,522	55,283	1,620	3,522	55,283	1,970	4,282	50,853
9	1,360	2,956	58,239	1,360	2,956	58,239	1,810	3,935	54,788
10	1,336	2,905	61,145	1,336	2,905	61,145	1,593	3,464	58,252
11	1,263	2,746	63,890	1,263	2,746	63,890	1,575	3,423	61,675
12	1,201	2,612	66,502	1,201	2,612	66,502	1,553	3,377	65,052
13	1,112	2,418	68,920	1,112	2,418	68,920	1,434	3,118	68,170
14	1,028	2,236	71,156	1,028	2,236	71,156	1,374	2,986	71,156
15	,956	2,079	73,235						
16	,889	1,932	75,167						
17	,872	[illegible]	[illegible]						
18	,809								
19	,757								
20	,727								
21	,673								
22	,650								
23	,598								
24	,551								
25	,521								
26	,472								
27	,461								
28	,446								
29	,413								
30	,383								
31	,370								
32	,354								
33	,299								
34	,266								
35	,245	[illegible]	[illegible]						
36	,225	,490	97,106						
37	,206	,447	97,553						
38	,189	,410	97,964						
39	,169	,368	98,332						
40	,154	,334	98,666						
41	,146	,318	98,984						
42	,131	,286	99,270						
43	,105	,227	99,497						
44	,095	,206	99,703						
45	,073	,159	99,863						
46	,063	,137	100,000						

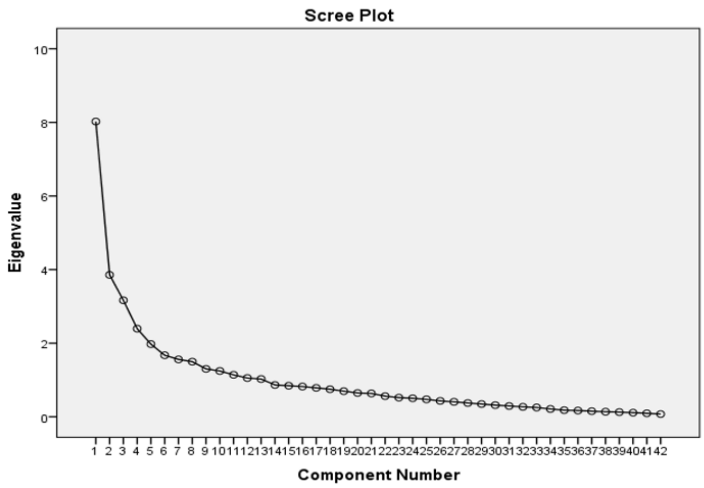
Total Variance Explained

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

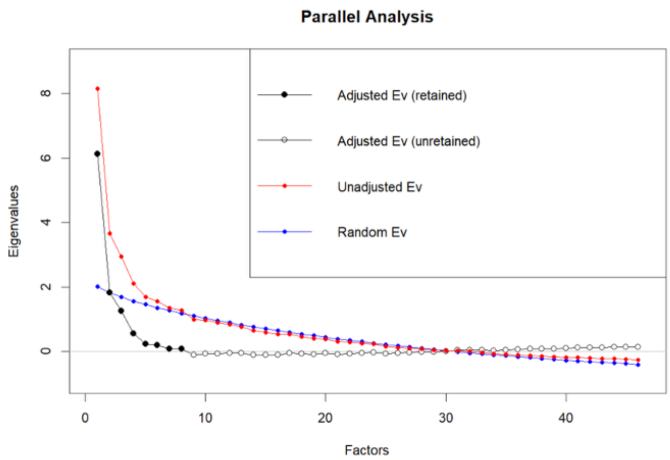
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8,491	18,458	18,458	8,491	18,458	18,458	3,970	8,630	8,630
2	3,961	8,610	27,069	3,961	8,610	27,069	3,668	7,974	16,604
3	3,253	7,073	34,141	3,253	7,073	34,141	3,217	6,994	23,599
4	2,483	5,399	39,540	2,483	5,399	39,540	3,154	6,857	30,455
5	2,018	4,388	43,928	2,018	4,388	43,928	2,839	6,172	36,628
6	1,907	4,147	48,075	1,907	4,147	48,075	2,342	5,091	41,718
7	1,696	3,687	51,761	1,696	3,687	51,761	2,232	4,853	46,571
8	1,620	3,522	55,283	1,620	3,522	55,283	1,970	4,282	50,853
9	1,360	2,956	58,239	1,360	2,956	58,239	1,810	3,935	54,788
10	1,336	2,905	61,145	1,336	2,905	61,145	1,593	3,464	58,252
11	1,263	2,746	63,890	1,263	2,746	63,890	1,575	3,423	61,675
12	1,201	2,612	66,502	1,201	2,612	66,502	1,553	3,377	65,052
13	1,112	2,418	68,920	1,112	2,418	68,920	1,434	3,118	68,170
14	1,028	2,236	71,156	1,028	2,236	71,156	1,374	2,986	71,156
15	,956	2,079	73,235						
16	,889	1,932	75,167						

Scenario 0
Standard EFA
14 Independent constructs
1 Dependent constructs



Scenario 1
Scree Plot
5 Independent constructs
1 Dependent constructs



Scenario 2
Parallel Analysis
8 Independent constructs
1 Dependent constructs

Figure 12: Systematic EFA Analysis - Scenarios

Each construct was coded as C1–C14, with DV denoting the dependent variable, and items were assigned based on a minimum loading of 0.40. In Scenario 0, the model comprised 14 constructs plus the DV; four (C9 to C13) constructs had only one or two items, C13 and C14 showed low reliability, and four constructs (C2, C3, C7, C13) displayed negative regression weights. Model fit was poor (CFI = 0.493; RMSEA = 0.093; GFI = 0.557). Scenario 1, based on the Scree Plot, yielded five constructs plus the DV, with acceptable reliability but negative regression weights for C2 and C3 and weak overall fit (CFI = 0.553; RMSEA = 0.092; GFI = 0.608). Scenario 2, based on Parallel Path Analysis, produced eight constructs plus the DV; reliability was acceptable except for C7 and C8, and C2 and C4 showed negative regression weights. Although fit remained weak (CFI = 0.593; RMSEA = 0.091; GFI = 0.593), Scenario 2 performed best among the three.

Because the models did not achieve an acceptable fit, a further round of re-specification was conducted based on the strongest baseline (Scenario 2). Three variants were developed, reflecting adjustments to the construct set, modification indices, and measurement items (Scenario2-Variant1, Variant2, and Variant3). Scenario2-Variant1 achieved the most substantial improvement in model fit (CFI = 0.638, RMSEA = 0.085, GFI = 0.656).

Building on the previous re-specification results, the researchers replaced construct codes with theory-based labels for further improvement. Accurate construct naming strengthens measurement validity, clarifies structural relationships, and supports cumulative theory building (Kline, 2016; Byrne, 2016). Labels were derived from original item sources, with overlaps resolved through item-level review consistent with theory-driven specification guidance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011), and one new construct name (The first-mover advantage) was developed. **Table 5.1** summarizes the naming decisions, and **Appendix U** provides the extended naming table and the updated model.

Construct	**Final construct name**	**Number of items**	**Short form**
C1	Knowledge of the foreign market	8	Knowledge
C2	Co-evolution Partner	5	Partner
C3	Ambition and Mindset	8	Ambition and mindset

C4	Anticipated loss of business	5	Loss of business
C5	Network in the foreign market	5	Network
C6	The First-mover advantage	4	First-mover
DV	Intention to internationalise	--	Intention

Table 32: Names of the constructs

To strengthen the emerging structural model, the researchers conducted an additional round of model re-specification, consistent with established SEM refinement guidelines (MacCallum, 1986; Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016). Building on the strongest earlier solution (Scenario2-Variant1), two targeted refinement strategies were developed: one retained only items with loadings ≥ 0.50, while the other limited each construct to its three highest-loading items and removed constructs that showed persistent negative effects or theoretical inconsistencies. These alternatives were designated Scenario2-Variant1-Option1 and Scenario2-Variant1-Option2, and were evaluated systematically, with Option 2 yielding the strongest results (CFI = 0.859, RMSEA = 0.077, GFI = 0.880, SRMR = 0.113) and even better with modification indices (CFI = 0.915, RMSEA = 0.061, GFI = 0.900, SRMR = 0.063).

The superior performance of Scenario2-Variant1-Option2 resulted from an integrated application of statistical diagnostics and theoretical assessment. In this specification, the constructs Partner (C2), Loss of Business (C4), and Network (C5) exhibited unacceptable p-values and negative regression coefficients, indicating insufficient explanatory contribution within the structural model. However, these statistical anomalies were not considered sufficient grounds for removal without additional validation. To ensure conceptual rigour, the research team examined qualitative evidence drawn from desk research, three desk case studies (Xhemi, 2022), and executive interviews. This review provided limited support for the Loss of Business construct and indicated that Partner and Network primarily reflect action-oriented processes rather than intention formation, rendering them theoretically misaligned with the model's focus. Taken together, the statistical and qualitative evidence justified the exclusion of all three constructs from the final specification. **Appendix V** details all re-specification variants and fit indices, and **Appendix W** summarizes the retained measurement items.

After establishing a reasonably fitting model, an RMSEA-based power analysis (MacCallum et al., 1996) was conducted to confirm sample adequacy for SEM. The analysis indicated a minimum requirement of 91 cases, and the available 105 cases met this threshold. Scenario2–Variant1–Option2 was therefore accepted as the final quantitative model (**Figure 13**).

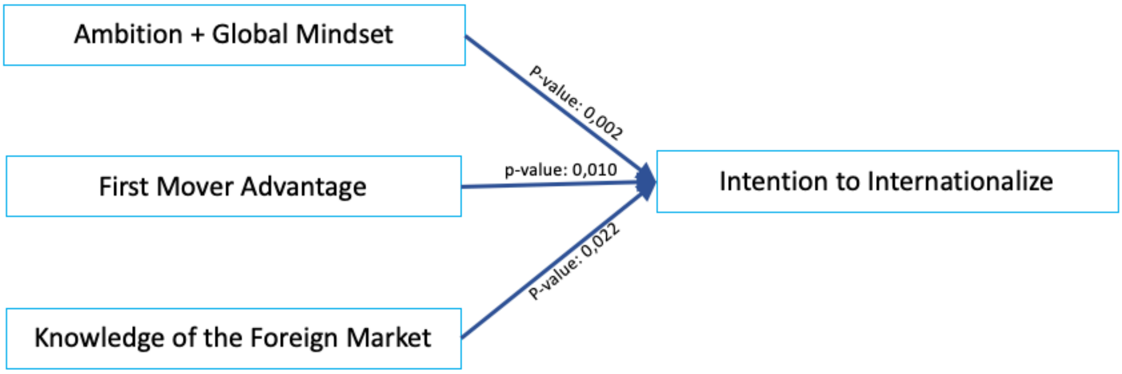
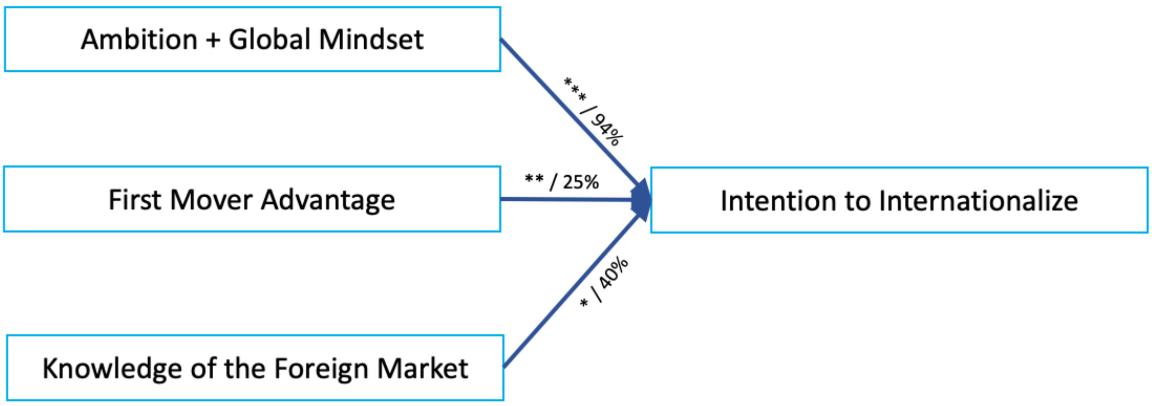


Figure 13: Quantitative Model

As outlined in the method, a qualitative validation was then conducted on the quantitative model using secondary survey data. The secondary survey contained two questions with three response options (agree, disagree, maybe) and produced 19 responses representing 18 start-ups across diverse countries and industries. Results showed strong support for all retained constructs: 60–79% selected agree, increasing to 95–100% when "maybe" was treated as partial agreement. This corroboration reinforced the credibility of the final structural model. **Figure 14** displays the validated model, and **Appendix X** reports the full secondary survey outcomes.



'One star ('*'), Two stars ('**'), and Three stars ('***') denote that the corresponding variable is significant with % of chance result less than 5%, 1%, and 0,1%, respectively. And 94%, 25%, and 40% represent the corresponding impact on "Intention to Internationalize," respectively.

Figure 14: Final validated model

Taken together, the analysis drew on two surveys, prior qualitative insights, scenario development, and two rounds of model re-specification. This structured, theory-driven refinement process ensured analytical rigour and conceptual coherence. The validated intention-to-internationalise model comprises four constructs, each directly linked to the dependent variable, enhancing clarity and interpretability. **Figure 15** summarizes the two re-specification rounds and positions them within the overall methodological sequence.

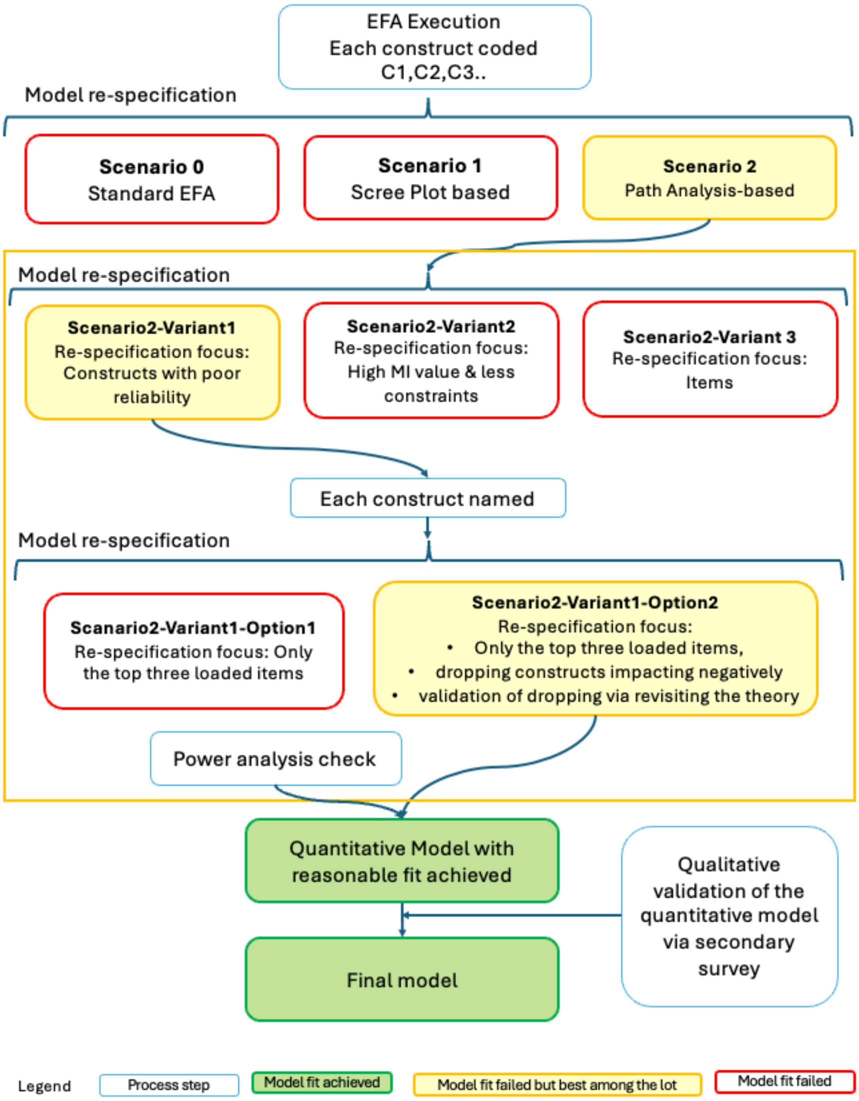


Figure 15: Summary of steps for model re-specification

5.5 Results and Conclusion

This study advances international entrepreneurship research by identifying and validating the key drivers shaping founders' intention to internationalise and by introducing a theoretically grounded, empirically refined model tailored to early-stage start-ups. Using a rigorous mixed-methods design—including two surveys and qualitative triangulation the study delivers a parsimonious yet robust framework for understanding how founders form internationalisation intentions.

The analysis generated six principal findings. First, knowledge of the foreign market, “ambition and mindset”, and a first-mover advantage emerged as the strongest predictors of internationalisation intention. “Ambition and mindset”—psychological and behavioural constructs—exerted the most pronounced influence, explaining 94% of variance in intention. Ambition captures founders’ drive for achievement (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), whereas mindset reflects the cognitive frames shaping opportunity evaluation (Dweck, 2006). Knowledge and first-mover advantage—strategic and action-oriented factors—also demonstrated substantial explanatory power (accounting for 65% influence), underscoring their complementary role.

Second, the findings challenge common assumptions within start-up ecosystems: network embeddedness in the foreign market and co-evolution partnerships did not significantly predict intention. Instead, these constructs appear more aligned with the intention-to-action stage (Sheeran & Webb, 2016), suggesting their relevance primarily for operational execution rather than early-stage decision formation.

Third, the findings also carry important implications for start-up-support ecosystems. While these ecosystems frequently emphasise networks, operational readiness, and market knowledge, the results suggest that psychological factors—particularly ambition and global mindset—play a more fundamental role in shaping early internationalisation intentions. Greater attention to these founder-level characteristics may therefore enhance the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at stimulating early global engagement.

Fourth, the study yields a simplified, single-layer structural model in which all constructs load directly onto the dependent variable. This enhances conceptual clarity and ease of practical application compared with more complex mediating or hierarchical configurations.

Fifth, the study underscores the value of a structured, theory-driven EFA and model re-specification process. The systematic re-specifications revealed latent relationships not apparent in the initial model, demonstrating the importance of methodological discipline in analysing complex entrepreneurial constructs.

Finally, the study highlights the persistent challenge of securing high-quality data in entrepreneurship research. Personalised recruitment and leveraging trusted networks across Germany, India, the United States, and other regions were essential to obtaining reliable responses.

Overall, this study offers a validated and parsimonious model of founders' intention to internationalise, contributing new insights into the cognitive, motivational, and strategic antecedents of early global expansion. It also identifies promising avenues for future research, particularly examining the intention–action transition and replicating the model across more diverse geographic and founder populations.

5.6 Relevance

This study contributes to international entrepreneurship research by offering an empirically validated model that clarifies how founders form intentions to internationalise. By addressing founder-level antecedents that precede resource commitment and market entry, the study fills an important gap in the literature. The model also offers practical value for policymakers, incubators, accelerators, and investors by identifying levers that influence a founder's global orientation. In particular, the prominence of "ambition and mindset" highlights the relevance of psychological dimensions that are often overlooked in ecosystem design. Finally, the transparent reporting of the model refinement process provides methodological value and may serve as a reference for researchers examining similarly complex, multi-construct phenomena.

6 Conclusions

This research was motivated by two foundational convictions: the value of lifelong learning and the belief that while experience reveals *what* occurs in practice, education explains *why* it occurs. Drawing on a solid professional background in international business and a sustained interest in start-ups, the author undertook this research with the aim of integrating experiential insight with rigorous scholarly inquiry.

This study advances international entrepreneurship research by identifying and validating the key drivers shaping founders' intention to internationalise and by introducing a theoretically grounded, empirically refined model tailored to early-stage start-ups. Using a rigorous mixed-methods design—including two surveys and qualitative triangulation the study delivers a parsimonious yet robust framework for understanding how founders form internationalisation intentions.

The research journey began with the clear identification of goals, assumptions, and outcomes (GAO), which established a coherent foundation for the study. These goals guided a critical analysis of the existing literature, complemented by insights from start-up and institutional contexts, to identify specific and under-explored gaps—most notably, delays in internationalisation and the prevalence of unstructured internationalisation approaches. The analysis further incorporated illustrative examples of day-one internationalisation through co-evolution, which informed the conceptualisation and direction of the research.

Building on this foundation, the research was deliberately designed to address the identified gap by focusing on the critical drivers shaping founders' intention to internationalise. An extensive literature review, combined with stakeholder and expert interviews, informed the development of the theoretical framework. By adopting an interdisciplinary perspective grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the study leveraged established theoretical foundations while extending their application to the start-up internationalisation context.

Methodological rigour was maintained throughout the research process. Rather than applying a uniform methodological approach, the study adopted methods appropriate to each research phase, including desk research on institutions and start-ups during the state-of-the-art phase, iterative expert interviews, and a secondary quantitative survey to refine and validate results. The robustness of the research design is reflected in the multiple iterations of quantitative analysis undertaken to achieve theoretical and empirical consistency.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), ensuring a rigorous examination of relationships among constructs. The interpretation of results was closely aligned with the theoretical framework and yielded new insights into founder intention formation, thereby strengthening the validity and explanatory power of the findings.

The most significant contribution of this dissertation lies in its advancement of scientific knowledge regarding the factors influencing founders' intention to internationalise. By empirically demonstrating how these drivers operate at an early stage, the study establishes a new reference point in start-up internationalisation research. Beyond its academic contribution, the research offers practical relevance for key stakeholders within the start-up ecosystem and opens avenues for future research in international and co-evolutionary entrepreneurship.

Finally, this dissertation adheres to rigorous academic standards and fulfils the requirements established by EnTechnon (KIT), reflecting a commitment to scholarly diligence and integrity (Huistra & Paul, 2022). As such, it contributes a meaningful and enduring addition to the ongoing scholarly discourse in international entrepreneurship.

6.1 Scientific Outcome and Contributions

This subsection synthesizes the principal scientific outcomes of the study by consolidating its key empirical findings and situating them within the broader international entrepreneurship literature. Together, these outcomes demonstrate the study's contribution to understanding founders' intention to internationalise and the mechanisms shaping early-stage global orientation.

The analysis generated six principal findings. First, knowledge of the foreign market, "ambition and mindset", and a first-mover advantage emerged as the strongest predictors of internationalisation intention. "Ambition and mindset"—psychological and behavioural constructs—exerted the most pronounced influence, explaining 94% of their variance in intention. Ambition captures founders' drive for achievement (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), whereas mindset reflects the cognitive frames shaping opportunity evaluation (Dweck, 2006). Knowledge and first-mover advantage—strategic and action-oriented factors—also demonstrated substantial explanatory power (65% influence), underscoring their complementary role.

Second, the findings challenge common assumptions within start-up ecosystems: network embeddedness in the foreign market and co-evolution partnerships did not significantly predict intention. Instead, these constructs appear more aligned with the intention-to-action stage (Sheeran & Webb, 2016), suggesting their relevance primarily for operational execution rather than early-stage decision formation.

Third, the findings also carry important implications for start-up-support ecosystems. While these ecosystems frequently emphasise networks, operational readiness, and market knowledge, the results suggest that psychological factors—particularly ambition and global mindset—play a more fundamental role in shaping early internationalisation intentions. Greater attention to these founder-level characteristics may therefore enhance the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at stimulating early global engagement.

Fourth, the study yields a simplified, single-layer structural model in which all constructs load directly onto the dependent variable. This enhances conceptual clarity and ease of practical application compared with more complex mediating or hierarchical configurations.

Fifth, the study underscores the value of a structured, theory-driven EFA and model re-specification process. The systematic re-specifications revealed latent relationships not apparent in the initial model, demonstrating the importance of methodological discipline in analysing complex entrepreneurial constructs.

Finally, the study highlights the persistent challenge of securing high-quality data in entrepreneurship research. Personalised recruitment and leveraging trusted networks across Germany, India, the United States, and other regions were essential to obtaining reliable responses.

Overall, this study offers a validated and parsimonious model of founders' intention to internationalise, contributing new insights into the cognitive, motivational, and strategic antecedents of early global expansion. It also identifies promising avenues for future research, particularly examining the intention–action transition and replicating the model across more diverse geographic and founder populations.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite its methodological breadth, this doctoral research is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study's exclusive focus on *intention to internationalise* constrains its ability to capture later stages of the internationalisation process. While this delimitation enabled a focused and in-depth examination of intention formation, treating the transition from intention to action as a separate domain may have limited the study's ability to provide a complete picture of start-up internationalisation dynamics.

Second, the sampling strategy may have introduced systematic bias. The respondent pool was drawn largely from the researcher's professional network, institutional affiliations at KIT, and associated contacts, which may have resulted in the underrepresentation of certain founder profiles and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This concern is further reinforced by the demographic composition of the sample, which was disproportionately composed of experienced executives and founders from India, Germany, and the United States. Such geographical and experiential concentration may have constrained the generalisability of the findings, particularly to early-stage or first-time entrepreneurs operating in other regions or institutional contexts. In addition, self-selection bias is likely, as individuals with prior internationalisation experience or a strong interest in foreign markets may have been more inclined to participate. Recall bias may also have affected the data, especially where senior respondents were asked to retrospectively assess earlier decision-making processes.

Third, several methodological factors may have influenced the results. The analytical procedure involved an additional exploratory factor analysis and two rounds of model re-specification which, despite being guided by theory-driven refinement principles, carry an inherent risk of capitalising on chance and potential overfitting. Furthermore, aspects of the research process—including data extraction through predefined questions during the state-of-the-art review, the development of measurement items derived from the literature but supplemented at certain points by the author's professional experience, and the extended duration of the research—cannot be entirely discounted as sources of influence on the outcomes.

Taken together, these limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation of the findings and highlight the importance of replication using independent and more diverse samples. Future research could address these constraints by incorporating broader and more heterogeneous data sources, expanding geographic and experiential coverage, and integrating additional qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, to enhance robustness and external validity.

6.3 Directions for Future Research

The proposition of future research directions is a testament to the evolving nature of scholarly inquiry. It acknowledges that while a dissertation may address specific questions, it also opens new frontiers for exploration. Suggesting areas for further study is not only beneficial but necessary for the progressive refinement and expansion of knowledge within any discipline (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The iterative research process, where each study builds upon the findings of its predecessors, is fundamental to academic progression. Through this continuous cycle, more comprehensive and sophisticated understandings emerge. By identifying potential research paths, scholars invite collaboration, stimulate debate, and inspire the next generation of researchers to advance the field.

Moreover, these suggestions often highlight the practical implications of research, driving innovation and societal advancement. They ensure that academic work does not exist in a vacuum but serves as a catalyst for real-world applications.

In essence, the articulation of future research ideas is a critical component of the research output, embodying the dynamic interplay between current understanding and the quest for further discovery.

This study opens several promising directions for future research that extend the theoretical scope and empirical applicability of start-up internationalisation research. While the present work contributes to understanding internationalisation intention, it also highlights the need to examine the mechanisms through which intention is transformed into action, to validate the proposed model across broader contexts, and to further develop emerging constructs identified in this research.

1. **Intention–Action Transition in Start-up Internationalisation**

Future research should move beyond the cognitive domain of intention and focus explicitly on the transition from intention to actual internationalisation behaviour. In particular, the roles of network embeddedness in the foreign market and the presence of a co-evolution partner warrant deeper theoretical and empirical investigation, as these constructs appear more closely linked to action than to intention. **Figure 16** below illustrates the author's proposed extension.

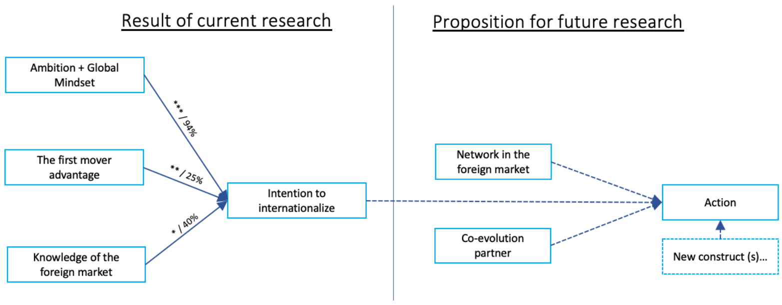


Figure 16: Proposition of future research on Intention to action

2. **Model Validation Across Contexts and Founder Populations**

The refined model developed in this study should be replicated and tested across more diverse founder populations and geographic settings. Research involving early-stage founders and varied entrepreneurial ecosystems would strengthen external validity and provide insight into how contextual conditions, founder characteristics, and ecosystem resources influence both internationalisation intention and its realization.

3. **Development and Empirical Validation of the Co-evolution Index**

Further research is encouraged to refine and empirically validate the proposed Co-evolution Index, which was developed through prior literature review and exploratory qualitative work

(Kumar et al., 2018) Testing this index across different entrepreneurial contexts would help assess its robustness and explanatory power in capturing co-evolutionary dynamics in start-up internationalisation. **Figure 17** below presents the theoretically developed index during this research.

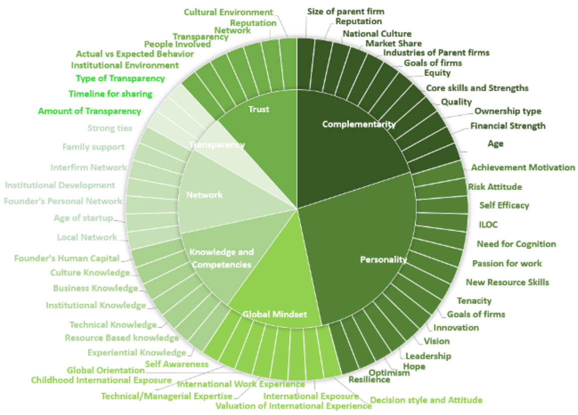


Figure 17: The Co-evolution Index for further research

6.4 Relevance and Application of the Research

This study contributes to international entrepreneurship research by developing and empirically validating a model that explains how founders form intentions to internationalise. By focusing on founder-level antecedents that precede resource commitment and foreign market entry, the research addresses a notable gap in the literature, which has largely emphasised post-entry behaviour and firm-level outcomes. The identification of ambition and mindset as a central driver underscores the importance of psychological dimensions that remain under-explored in both theory and ecosystem design.

Beyond its theoretical contribution, the study offers methodological value through the transparent documentation of model development and refinement. The reporting of construct operationalisation, exploratory factor analysis, and theory-driven re-specification provides a replicable reference for researchers examining complex, multi-construct phenomena in entrepreneurship and related fields.

The findings also have clear practical relevance across multiple stakeholder groups. For policymakers, the model highlights actionable levers that can be embedded within entrepreneurship education and ecosystem initiatives to strengthen founders' global orientation. Educational interventions addressing the three critical drivers identified in the study can be introduced across different levels of education, from early exposure to advanced entrepreneurial training.

From an academic perspective, the results can be directly leveraged in international entrepreneurship education and research. The framework and findings support teaching and inquiry on intention formation, co-evolution, internationalisation requirements, and the broader state of the art in start-up internationalisation research.

For start-ups and entrepreneurial support organisations, the study provides a practical assessment framework that can be used to evaluate internationalisation readiness. Founders may use the identified constructs and measurement items to better understand the requirements of early internationalisation, reflect on co-evolutionary dynamics, and gain exposure to diverse perspectives on global expansion. Accelerators, incubators, and venture capital firms may likewise deploy the framework as part of their portfolio assessment and support processes.

Finally, organisations supporting internationalisation can develop new service offerings based on the study's findings, particularly assessment and advisory services targeting the three critical drivers. While interventions related to knowledge of foreign markets may be comparatively straightforward, the research also highlights opportunities for more advanced services aimed at developing ambition and mindset. Taken together, the findings provide a foundation for a structured and evidence-based guide to start-up internationalisation.

6.5 Other Accomplishments

In addition to its substantive research contributions, this doctoral programme resulted in several complementary academic and professional outcomes. Throughout the doctoral process, the author developed advanced subject-matter expertise as well as a range of transferable skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical competence.

Networking opportunities expanded as the researcher became an active member of the scholarly community, fostering collaborations that span continents. These relationships have led to joint publications, conference presentations, and the establishment of enduring academic partnerships.

Pedagogical contributions were also significant. The doctoral candidate engaged in teaching-related activities, thereby contributing to the university's educational mission and supporting the development of future scholars. Through the co-supervision of undergraduate and master's theses, the candidate transferred expertise and stimulated research interest among students.

The doctoral process further represented an exercise in perseverance and personal development, requiring sustained engagement with the rigour of research design, publication, and knowledge dissemination. Participation in conferences and symposia enabled the researcher not only to share findings but also to engage with contemporary academic discourse, thereby facilitating reciprocal knowledge exchange.

Finally, the researcher's commitment to lifelong learning is reflected in continuous professional development activities, ensuring that scholarly contributions remain relevant and impactful.

The author is pleased to have completed this academic journey. The process was both rewarding and intellectually enriching, as were the outcomes achieved. The following section outlines notable accomplishments beyond the core research results:

1. Publication of a paper in the Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research (Springer Nature), "Critical Drivers of Founders for Intention to Internationalise: An Empirical Study," (Kumar & Terzidis, 2026). This paper was derived from the author's quantitative work to arrive at a validated model.

2. Publication and presentation of three papers at the annual G-Forum conference organised by FGF e.V. The FGF is the leading and most important scientific association for entrepreneurship, innovation, and SMEs in the German-speaking world.
    a. "Coevolution in International New Ventures" (Horn, Kumar, Terzidis, & Sharma, 2017).

b. "International Entrepreneurship: State of Internationalisation of start-ups in the context of Indo-German geographical corridor" (Kumar & Terzidis, 2018).
c. "Co-evolutionary Entrepreneurship Index: A measure for an entrepreneur to find a Partner for Internationalisation of his Venture" (Kumar, Terzidis, & Ganesh, 2018).

3. The author co-supervised three master's theses at EnTechnon (KIT).
   a. "Coevolution in International New Ventures" by C. Horn (2017) for obtaining a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in the field of Industrial Engineering and Management at KIT.
   b. Operationalisation of the "Co-evolutionary Index" by M. Midyanyy (2019) for obtaining a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in the field of Business Information Management.
   c. "Co-evolutionary Entrepreneurship in Healthcare" by T. Xhemi (2022) for obtaining a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in the field of Industrial Engineering and Management at KIT.

4. The author co-supervised one bachelor's thesis at EnTechnon (KIT). "International Entrepreneurship" by A. Fissler-Pechtl (2019) for obtaining a bachelor's degree.

5. The author co-supervised three international students who worked for three to six months at EnTechnon (KIT).
   a. S. Hyung Choe (2015) from Ivey Business School at Western University, Ontario (Canada).
   b. S. Ganesh (2018) from the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (India).
   c. M. Khivasara (2021) from the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (India).

6. The author served on the city of Karlsruhe's India Board from 2015-2019, representing EnTechnon (KIT) and supporting start-up collaborations between India and Germany.

7. The author presented at multiple EnTechnon / KIT events focused on International Entrepreneurship, India, and Start-ups, including one in 2023 for a visit by start-ups from Latin American countries.

8. The author successfully initiated and supported the closure of an academic partnership agreement between KIT and IIM (Indian Institute of Management) Ahmedabad (India).

9. Bilateral exchange and visit to the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, and Gandhinagar (2017).

10. In 2015, the author supported a business and academia meeting hosted by the KIT International Office. The participants included the founder and CEO of Persistent Systems, the head of pervasive computing at the Department of Informatics, the executive director of the Steinbuch Centre of Computing, and a professor from the Department of Data Processing and Electronics.

11. In 2015, the author represented KIT as part of the delegation of the Mayor of Karlsruhe traveling to India. The cities visited were Mumbai and Pune. In Mumbai, the activities included,
    a. Participation in an Indo-German conference.
    b. Visit IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Mumbai, where the delegation had the opportunity to exchange with faculty and students, as well as a campus tour.
    c. Visit IIT, Mumbai’s entrepreneurship centre, SINE (Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship). Many start-ups made presentations at SINE, and the author also spoke about his doctoral research work.

    At Pune, the activities included:
    a. Presentation at the Maratha chamber of commerce.
    b. Visit FLAME University for an exchange with the dean, faculty, and students.
    c. Visit and exchange at the headquarters of Persistent Systems.

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8 Appendices (A to Y)

Appendix A: State of entrepreneurship in India

India has witnessed unparalleled growth in start-ups in the last five years. During the 2015 financial year, 98,473 new companies were incorporated in India (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, n.d.), with many small and micro enterprises across various sectors. Simon Levene, a venture capitalist in London, once said, “Anyone who writes code can become an entrepreneur-anywhere in the world”. This notion seems to work exorbitantly in India since many of these start-ups focus on information technology-enabled products and services, including e-commerce, aggregators, analytics, the Internet of Things, etc. According to a recent report by NASSCOM & Zinnov (2015), India has around 4400 start-ups that employ approximately 85,000 employees. Total funding between 2010 and 2015 in start-ups is estimated to be $6.5 billion. Thus, the ecosystem for both technology and traditional start-ups has been expanding quickly, making India the third-ranked Global Start-up Ecosystem in 2015 (www.start-up-ecosystem.compass.com).

Funding the Start-ups

Funding is one of the most important factors determining a start-up’s survival and growth. Start-ups can mobilize funding from various sources like loans, mezzanines, grants, equity capital, or informal sources like family and friends. The total funding in technology start-ups in India was $2.2 billion in 2014. It was expected to reach $4.9 billion in 2015, according to a study on technology and digital start-ups by NASSCOM & Zinnov (2015). Also, the number of funds invested in India grew by 40% in 2013-14 (Bain & Company, 2015). Although these funds seem promising, a significant share of the capital goes into ventures already generating substantial revenues, and a minimal amount reaches start-ups. A report by NITI Aayog (2015) in India pointed out two key issues: lack of early-stage funding – angel and seed funding and the current concentration of the financing towards technology and e-commerce. Also, Indian investors prefer to make relatively significant investments of around 3 to 5 crores (€ 0,33 to 0,55 million), rather than spreading smaller investments across a large number of smaller firms (Capria Ventures LLC. (2015). So, start-ups looking for relatively smaller investments struggle to attract investors. Furthermore, there seems to be a segregation of investments only in major cities like NCR, Mumbai, and Bangalore, which account for around 93% of the total tech start-up investments and 69% of angel investments (NASSCOM & Zinnov, 2015).

Top Venture Capital Firms in India

Sr. No.	Name	Potential Start-up Investments
1	Sequoia Capital	Energy, Financial solutions, Mobile solutions, Internet, Healthcare, Technology
2	Helion Venture Partners	Outsourcing, Mobile solutions, Internet, Retail Services, Healthcare, Education, Financial Services
3	Accel Partners	Internet and consumer services, Infrastructure, Cloud-enabled services, Mobile and Software
4	Blume Ventures	Mobile applications, Telecommunications Equipment, Data infrastructure, Internet and Software, Media, Research and Development
5	Nexus Venture Partners	Mobile, Data Security, Big Data Analytics, Infrastructure, Cloud, Storage, Internet, Rural Sector, Agribusiness, Energy, Media, Consumer and Business services
6	Inventus Capital Partners	Consumer, Hotel, Restaurants and Leisure, Media, Internet and Catalogue Retail, Healthcare, IT, Hardware, Telecommunications
7	IDG Ventures	Digital Consumer – Internet, Mobile, Media and Technology Enabled Consumer Services, Enterprise Software – SaaS, Software Products and Enterprise services, Engineering – Medical Devices, Clean-tech and IP-led Businesses
8	Qualcomm Ventures	Business Software, Cloud/Enterprise, Consumer Software, Hardware, Health Care, Infrastructure, Semi/Components

Although banks remain the primary source of debt finance, start-ups find it cumbersome to mobilize this source since banks are unwilling to finance because of a lack of collateral and considerable risk. With the government's improving policies towards foreign direct investment (FDI), the majority of funding in India is foreign investment. It is expected to remain the primary source of capital in 2016 (Bain & Company, 2015). Angel investments are emerging in India, but they have a meagre share of 7% in the early-stage investment as compared to a humongous share of 75% in the US.

Top Angel Networks in India

Sr. No.	Name	Potential Start-up Investments
1	Indian Angel Network	Multiple sectors
2	Mumbai Angels	Agriculture, E-commerce, Education, Finance, Mobile Apps, Healthcare, Media and Entertainment
3	India Impact Investment Network	Social impact sectors

Incubation and Mentoring

Start-ups often require non-financial support, including capacity building, improved business model canvas and business plan, human resource management, expert technical services, accounting, legal advice, etc. These ensure a systematic reduction of the risk of underperformance in various domains. Incubators work with start-ups to develop entrepreneurship skills such as building a scalable, sustainable, and profitable business around an idea, creating and testing a prototype, conducting market research, etc. Whereas accelerators offer short-term intense programmes to improve the business model, understand the market opportunity, and the product. Co-working spaces, such as shared desks and other facility-based services, enable start-ups to save significant money on such services and focus on their core idea Capria Ventures LLC. (2015). Table 3 lists a few incubation centres actively involved in shaping Indian start-ups.

List of Incubation centres

Sr. No.	Name	Start-up Focus
1	Indavest	Ecommerce, Mobile Applications, Customised Gifting and Branding solutions, Software products

2	Khosla Labs	Mobile Payment and Banking, Retail Efficiency, Healthcare Delivery and Big Data Analytics
3	Seedfarm, Seedfund	Consumer Internet, E-commerce, Sports, Education, Healthcare, Financial services, Analytics, Online Ticketing
4	Start-up Village	Technology Product Start-ups (particularly student start-ups)
5	Unltd India	Profit and non-profit social enterprises across various sectors
6	Villgro	Social Enterprises
7	Venture Centre	Science and Technology based start-ups

Role of Education Institutions

While a phenomenal number of universities and colleges in India are now offering entrepreneurship courses, several have incubation centres and various student clubs that encourage starting up new companies. A common challenge these universities face is to mobilize the research done over the years into a marketable product or service. Also, sometimes the research done is not applicable or accessible to start-ups of the start-up ecosystem.

Top Indian Universities with Incubators

Sr. No.	Institute	Name	Start-up Focus
1	IIM Ahmedabad	Centre for Innovation Incubation and Entrepreneurship	ICT, Cleantech, Social Entrepreneurship
2	IIM Bangalore	Nadathur S Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning	Women start-ups, Social Entrepreneurship
3	IIT Mumbai	Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship,	Technology based Start-ups
4	IIT Madras	Rural Technology Business Incubator	Start-ups which impact rural/underserved societal

			segments, ICT, Industrial solutions
5	IIT Kharagpur	Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Park	Technology based Start-ups
6	Tata Institute for Social Sciences	Centre for Social Entrepreneurship	Social Enterprises
7	BITS Pilani	Technology Business Incubator	Embedded Systems and VLSI Design

The table above lists a few incubation centres in some of the premier educational institutes of the country. The list is long and promising; however, it is a long way to go for the educational system as a whole to foster skills for start-ups and entrepreneurship-based economies.

Role of Corporations and Business Associations

While start-ups search for a profitable, scalable, and sustainable business model, corporations and enterprises execute a certain business model. A fusion of the two notions indicates how start-ups can spark innovation that corporations lack. Thus, more and more corporations are interacting with the start-up community to keep up with the exploding innovation and a 21st-century mindset of speed and technology products. Several business associations and networks have local chapters operating across the country and thereby creating a platform for local enterprises to meet, share their ideas, and be a part of the ecosystem. The table below lists a few active business associations and networks.

Business Associations and Networks

Sr. No.	Name	Contribution
1	Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)	Organises competitive expos and CII Start-upreneurs
2	The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE)	Conducts events for start-ups, works with global start-up events such as Start-up Cup and Start-up Weekend

3	National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)	Launched the 10000 Start-ups initiative to support new and upcoming technology start-ups
4	Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICGI)	Start-up workshops and conclave for start-ups, research on start-ups in sports
5	Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC)	Works on businesses in eastern and north-eastern states of the country

An important challenge in this domain is to expand these networks, which are active in Tier-I cities, to Tier-II and Tier-III cities, rural districts, and towns across India, and the CII is actively working with the government to create this rural ecosystem.

Role of the Government

The Government of India is more involved than ever in nurturing the start-up ecosystem in the country. A number of new policies are being implemented and drafted to foster the growth of newbies in this ecosystem. These policies aim at improving the business environment, providing direct support and skills for entrepreneurship (www.finmin.nic.in). Some state governments are working hand in hand with the central government to augment the potential that has been untapped for a long time now. A few states have announced tax incentives for start-ups, while a few are working on setting up incubation centres and drafting policies like a window system, etc.

The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, announced the launch of 'Start-up India' and 'Stand-up India' during his Independence Day speech on 15th August 2015, assuring that the government will promote bank financing for start-ups and offer incentives to foster entrepreneurship and job creation. A number of ministries are integrating their schemes to ensure the inclusion of all economic and geographical sectors of the country.

Organisations and their initiatives

Sr. No.	Organization	Contribution
1	The Ministry of Finance	India Aspiration Fund (IAF) to invest in VC funds in collaboration with SIDBI and LIC

2	Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)	SIDBI Make in India Loan for Small Enterprises (SMILE) loan program to offer quasi-equity and term based short term loans to SMEs in about 25 sectors
3	Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA Bank)	Provide loans to start-ups with existing banks
4	The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Formulated new policy framework, 'The National Policy for Skills Development and Entrepreneurship 2015', to create an integrated policy that strengthens the ecosystems for both entrepreneurship and skilling
5	Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC)	Works on businesses in eastern and north-eastern states of the country
6	The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	Drafted a new policy- 'ASPIRE: A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship' in 2015, with an aim to create new jobs, promote entrepreneurship, facilitate new business solutions to unmet needs, and promote and strengthen the MSME sector

Appendix B: State of entrepreneurship in Germany

In 2015, Germany witnessed a significant development in the domain of start-ups, with a great number of funding rounds of €10 million and above. Also, many of these investments have crossed €50 million and fewer than three-digit EUR amounts (EY, 2015). According to Simon Levene, a venture capitalist in London, anyone who writes code can become an entrepreneur-anywhere in the world. This notion seems to work exorbitantly in Europe since many of these start-ups focus on information technology-enabled products and services, including e-commerce, aggregators, analytics, the Internet of Things, food delivery, etc. Europe plays a vital role in the development of the worldwide market of digital ideas. A significant indicator is the funding volume channelled into technology markets such as AdTech, FinTech, food delivery, and niche segments that require software and hardware development expertise. London has traditionally been the technology start-up capital in Europe; however, Berlin is the ‘new kid on the block,’ surpassing London in terms of the VC funds received in 2014. Thus, the ecosystem for both technology and traditional start-ups has been expanding quickly, making Germany among the top-ranked start-up ecosystems.

Funding the Start-ups

One of the most important factors determining the survival and growth of a start-up is funding. Start-ups can mobilize funding from various sources like loans, mezzanines, grants, equity capital, or informal sources like family and friends. The total investment in start-ups in Germany has increased by more than 43% from $2.04 billion in 2013 to $2.92 billion in 2014. It is expected to grow significantly, given that the first half of 2015 already accounted for $ 1.64 billion (NASCOM & . This implies the impetus the German market has gained in recent years, driven by key regional tech hubs in Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich.

There is a strong involvement of foreign investors who appreciate the ability of German start-ups to excel in incremental innovation (as opposed to breakthrough innovation, which is more prevalent in countries like the US and India). Investors rely on existing business models, which are perfected and thoroughly executed, driven by the country’s precision culture. Thus, FDI remains a significant source of capital to German start-ups based on traditional business models.

Germany has been a world leader in markets such as automobiles and machinery, energy, metal industries, etc., for a long time, and these industries have been natural epicentres of investment. However, the investors’ landscape has become far more heterogeneous in recent years, with VCs seeking new business models outside these traditional sectors.

Top Venture Capital Firms in Germany

No.	Name	Potential Start-up Investments
1	High-Tech Gruenderfonds	Young Technology Ventures, SaaS, Medicine Technology, Application Software, Industrial Software, Mechanical Industries
2	German Start-ups Group	E-Commerce, Social Network & Sharing Economy, SaaS, BigData & AdTech, Online

		Services, Digital Content, Publishing & CRM, High Technology & Others, FinTech
3	IBB Beteiligungsgesellschaft	ICT, Life Sciences, Industrial Technologies, Creative Industries, Digital Media
4	Bayern Kapital	Life Science (Biotech and Medical Technology), Software & IT, Nanotechnology and Environmental Technology
5	Holtzbrinck Ventures	E-Commerce, Games, Mobile
6	Earlybird Venture Capital	Software, Consumer Electronics, Hardware, Medicine Technology, Health IT
7	Tiger Partners	Software, Mobile, SaaS
8	WestTech Ventures	B2B SaaS, Enterprise Software, Developer Tools, Mobile, MediaTech, EdTech
9	Wellington Partners	Software, Mobile, Analytics, Enterprise, SaaS, Biotechnology, Life Sciences
10	Creathor Venture	Mobile, E-commerce, Digital Media, Cloud Technology, Internet of Things, Shared Economy, Fintech, Life Science and E-Health

Angel Networks in Germany

No.	**Name**	**Potential Start-up Investments**
1	Business Angels Agentur Ruhr (BAAR)	Across sectors
2	Business Angels Club Berlin	Biotechnology, Manufacturing, Medicine technology, IT
3	Business Angel Netzwerk Süd Ost Niedersachsen	Across sector
4	Brainstoventures GmbH (b-to-v)	Across sectors

A fast-growing institutional network of support, various public and private start-up centres, and a growing number of national and international VC investors have facilitated the market growth.

Incubation and Mentoring

Start-ups often require non-financial support, which includes capacity building, improved business model canvas and business plan, human resource management, expert technical services, accounting, legal advice, etc. These ensure a systematic reduction of the risk of underperformance in various domains. Incubators work with start-ups to develop entrepreneurship skills such as building a scalable, sustainable, and profitable business around an idea, creating and testing a prototype, conducting market research, etc. Whereas, accelerators offer short-term term intense programmes to improve the business model, understand the market opportunity, and the product. Co-working spaces, such as shared desks and other facility-based services, enable start-ups to save significant money on such services and focus on their core idea (Bain & Company, 2015). The table below lists a few incubation centres actively involved in shaping German start-ups.

List of Incubation centres

No.	**Name**	**Start-up Focus**
1	Allianz Accelerator	Big Data Analytics, Sharing Economy, IOT, InsurTech, FinTech, E-Travel, IT
2	BMW Start-up Garage	Automotive Start-ups
3	CommerzVentures	Financial services, Insurance
4	Hub: raum	Telecom
5	Microsoft Ventures	Big Data Analytics, Business SaaS, Cloud Infrastructure, Machine Learning, Productivity and Communications, Security
6	Siemens Technology Accelerator	Hardware, Software, Healthcare, CleanTech,
7	Techstars Metro Accelerator	Hospitality, FoodTech

Role of Education Institutions

It is apparent that, in addition to the entrepreneurial culture within regions, education also plays a considerable role in developing entrepreneurial activity. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) carried out a study on the three East German university cities of Halle, Rostock, and Berlin. The results of this project are very encouraging and the presentation of good practice. The Federal Government contributes to this field by improving the policy framework, for example, through the EXIST support program, which promotes the creation of university spin-offs.

German Universities and their activities

No.	**Institute**	**Name of the entrepreneurship centre**	**Activities**
1	The Entrepreneurial University of Wismar		Strategy, mentoring premises, administration, comprehensive support infrastructure, etc.
2	Humboldt University, Berlin	Humboldt-Innovation GMB	Research, spinoff support, merchandising, help desk, coaching centre, business support and advisory service providers, firms, financiers, etc.
3	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology	Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Research, entrepreneurship education and its implementation
4	Konrad Wolf Film & Television Academy	Media Exist: Start-up Incubation and Business support	Entrepreneurship education, cost-free consulting, future-oriented research projects, investor pool, web portals
5	The University of Potsdam	BIEM CEIP (Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation)	Infrastructure, entrepreneurship education program, research, strategic planning, open innovation, entrepreneurial career development for women
6	The University of Rostock		Consulting, entrepreneurship networking, business start-up grants
7	University of Applied Sciences Jena	The Centre for Entrepreneurship (COE)	Interdisciplinary and cross-faculty collaboration, close collaboration with external actors

8	University of Leipzig	Smile: Entrepreneurship Support	Entrepreneurship education, coaching, business idea competition

The Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau KfW (Reconstruction loan corporation) supports integrating entrepreneurship education into study programmes. The table above lists a few out of many universities and their initiatives. The list is long and promising; however, the educational system has a long way to go to foster skills for start-ups and entrepreneurship.

Role of Corporations and Business Associations

While start-ups search for a profitable, scalable, and sustainable business model, corporations and enterprises execute a certain business model. A fusion of the two notions indicates how start-ups can spark innovation that corporations lack. Thus, more and more corporations are interacting with the start-up community to keep up with the exploding innovation and a 21st-century mindset of speed and technology products. Several business associations and networks have local chapters operating across the country and thereby creating a platform for local enterprises to meet, share their ideas, and be a part of the ecosystem. The number of corporate investments in Germany has increased by about 74% from 2013 to 2015 (EY, 2015).

Business Associations and Networks

Sr. No.	Name	Contribution
1	German Chambers of Commerce (AHKs)	Offers an international service network to German companies who want to establish activities abroad can approach the AHKs for advice, support, contacts and expert information about foreign markets
2	National Association of German Innovation, Technology and Business Start-Up Centres	Supports innovation centres and represents them in the public and promotes business start-ups and their development, innovation and technology transfer
3	Business Angels Network	Matches up young companies on the one hand and start-up capital and business experience on the other, has network extending throughout

		Germany and offers companies consulting services and contacts in the Internet Forum
4	EXIST	Serves as a pacesetter for a culture of entrepreneurial independence in training, research and management at universities.
5	Gruendungskatalog.de	Paves the way to the information provided by counselling centres, networks, official agencies and banks

He table above lists a few active business associations and networks. For the start-ups, the key challenge is to balance various advantages and disadvantages while considering a corporate strategic investor on the one hand and a pure financial investor on the other hand.

Role of the Government

The willingness of the German government to augment the start-up ecosystem is evident from the efforts of the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, which aimed to provide €150 million in federal funds for business angels during the period 2013–2016 as a boost for the start-up industry. Moreover, additional funds allotted for investors are a welcome sign for the start-up ecosystem in Germany. Improving the conditions for start-ups in Germany inspired the launch of the Bundesverband Deutsche Startups, a lobbying group for politics and laws affecting start-ups. The group opposed the so-called "Anti-Angel" law, a proposed legislative change that would have increased taxes for investors with small shareholdings in companies (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 2013; Bundesverband Deutsche Startups e.V., n.d.).

The German government offers multiple funding options for international investors based on their individual needs throughout various stages in developing an investment or innovative project. Germany has a national public-private High-Tech Gründerfonds, and at the local level, some Länder have established equity guarantee facilities for private investment in local SMEs. Germany has adopted a comprehensive approach to university entrepreneurship through the EXIST programme, which promotes an entrepreneurial culture, start-up grants, and technology transfer in higher education institutions (OECD, 2017).

The government-owned development bank KfW has disclosed a new €400 million fund to support national technology firms over five years. The bank, owned by the Federal Republic of Germany (80%) and the federal states (20%), focuses on investments for the growth of start-ups rather than later-stage venture funding. The increasing involvement of KfW represents a notable milestone in the German venture capital market and demonstrates the political commitment to supporting the start-up ecosystem. KfW also offers coaching for entrepreneurs and business consultancy services through its *Gründercoaching Deutschland* (GCD) scheme (EY, 2015).

Appendix C: Information collected from the literature on start-up internationalisation

Literature tag	Publisher of the literature	Q1- What is the definition of internationalization of start-up? What is the scope?	Q2- Why do start-up want to internationalize?	Q3- When do the start-up internationalize (stage or phase of development)?	Q4- How long it takes for them to get to first internationalization after founding the start-up?	Q5- Why do start-ups hold themselves or what are the key barriers in internationalization?	Q6- What are the success factors?	Q7- Do founders believe that a delay in internationalization is loss to value capture?	Q8-What support exists to for the internationalization?	Q9- What triggers the internationalization of start-ups?	Additional insight
S1	Springer	p-15, see the work document				high Cost - p17 - Lack of capital could be a reason-read results on Capital - Lack of talent, hiring challenges-Result HR area - Profitable market in Germany / comfort zone (p55) - Lack of international contacts (p60)	Network - p18 Strategy & Culture - p19 Product should be tailored to international market- p48 Adopting a process which facilitates int. Business (P51) Mind set for early internationalization (p52) - Location of company in a cluster (p65)	No indication			Difference between B2B and B2C companies
S3	Technology Innovation Management Review October 2012	p3, see work document Many approach - good categorization-> Rapid internationalization 2. International new ventures 3. Effectuation logic 4. Global start-ups 5. Gradual internationalization process models 6. Internalization theory of the multinational enterprise and the ownership-location-internalization (OLI) model	i) increase the value of the start-ups, ii) reduce revenue source risks, and iii) increase the size of the startup's addressable market	Multiple theories: - Lock the start-ups into a global growth path from its inception. (p3) - Entry into foreign markets is an incremental process that starts late in a company's life cycle; early internationalization increases the probability of company failure (p4)			Acquire and deploy knowledge quickly - p5 Secure commitments to act jointly and quickly- p5 Use the Internet- p5 Build relational capital - p5 Gain legitimacy - p5 Strengthen global capability - p6 Define and act on what can be achieved using the means that are available to the start-ups (e.g., personal contacts, international experiences) and collaborate with others.Network, Select large customer, Relationship with customer, suppliers, Problem scope Acquire and deploy knowledge quickly. Secure commitments to act jointly and quickly - stake holder commitment Use the Internet , web, tech Build relational capital, Gain legitimacy, Strengthen global capability, Increase the entrepreneur's international competences, vision, risk tolerance, cross-border networks, and awareness of foreign growth opportunities. Create value through cross-border resource combinations				collective entrepreneurship may be a better abstraction than the conventional "entrepreneur at "the individual level" abstraction effectuation logic to identify opportunities with foreign actors when resources are lacking. Once the business grows and the number of foreign partners increases, causation logic should be used rather than effectuation logic, even when the start-ups is still small. Use causation logic to overcome psychic distance
S23	International Business Review 14 (2005) 147–166	p2, see work document					(1) a managerial global vision from inception; (2) high degree of previous international experience on behalf of managers; (3) management commitment; (4) strong use of personal and business networks (networking); (5) market knowledge and market commitment; (6) unique intangible assets based on knowledge management; (7) high value creation through product differentiation, leading-edge technology products, technological innovativeness (usually associated with a greater use of IT), and quality leadership; (8) a niche-focused, proactive international strategy in geographically spread lead markets around the world from the very beginning; (9) narrowly defined customer groups with strong customer orientation and close customer relationships; and finally (10) flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing external conditions and circumstances.		(1) new market conditions in many sectors of economic activity (including the increasing importance of niche markets for small and medium enterprises worldwide), (2) technological developments in the areas of production, transportation and communication, (3) the increased importance of global networks and alliances, and (4) more elaborate capabilities of people, including those of the founder/entrepreneur who starts early internationalizing firms		Early internationalizing firms can be further classified as being either 'knowledge- and/or service-intensive' or 'knowledge-based'
S78	Journal of World Business 42 (2007) 268–280	Firms which become international, through export or any other entry mode (P1)	first mover advantages, scale up learning curves and thus access to profit advantages sooner than global competitors (P2) ,globalization (P 3) Good one	First 3 years of life (Page 9)		Knowledge accumulation, organizational capabilities, financial resources, equipment, and other physical resources (P 3)	Vision of the founders, which depends on education and previous experience. Commitment, which depends on human and financial resources devoted to the internationalization project from firm inception. Capacity, which depends on the quality of the previous experience of founders. Access to external competencies (managers, consulting, associations, local cluster collective knowledge capital) may be needed when the founders' ones are not well developed or sufficient. Relationships, which depend mostly on the system of embedded ties developed by founders and top management team (P11)			role of the previous experience of the entrepreneur, and especially of their international experience, frequently nurtured in internationally oriented family firms on one side or in multinational/foreign firms on the other one (Page 1)	
S77	Journal of World Business 42 (2007) 253–267	25 percent of its total sales should come from exporting and it has to have internationalized within a few (most often three) years after its inception, the scope or the 'market effect' has been excluded or not analysed thoroughly (P1)	they are often influenced by the globalization of markets and customer needs (P1)	three years from the foundation (P2)	three years from the foundation (P2)					an international mindset (i.e. an IEO), and management and personnel motives	market distance is a measure used for the scope of internationalization, whereas export turnover is a measure used for scale
S70	Journal of Business Venturing	Firms that derive significant competitive advantage from extensive coordination among multiple organizational activities, the locations of which are geographically unlimited (P4)	enhance firm growth , while entering diverse international markets can increase technological learning and improve performance (p7)	Three years from inception (P5)		Organizational Issues ,orientation, domestic market's dynamism, hostility and heterogeneity (Zahra et al., 1997) and uncertainty (P9)	Factors enabling rapid internationalization include client followership, the firm's knowledge intensity and its social capital (Bell, 1995; Belso-Martinez, 2006; Litvak, 1990; McNaughton, 2001; Yli-Renko et al., 2002), and its perception and management of risk (P7)			opportunity identification, dynamic processes of exploitation, (re)deployment of resources and learning (P7)	
S67	Journal of Business Venturing	The ability of a firm to export a proportion of its sales abroad (p2)	P5 - see work attachment Key paper				Businesses with older principal founders, with more resources, denser information and contact networks, and considerable management know-how (P2)			Firms may be "pushed" into exporting abroad due to hostile local environments that make survival and development difficult (P11)	Surprisingly, variables related to general human capital, the ability to acquire financial capital, and competition for resources in the external environment did not significantly predict the subsequent propensity to export. (P19)
S65	International Marketing Review, Vol. 26 Is 4/5 pp. 453 - 476	The term "global" suggests firms have a presence in at least the world's triad regions and arguably a commitment spread across them. INVs, however, may have internationalized quickly to address opportunities but without necessarily a global presence (P2) internationalization is "the process of adapting firms" operations (strategy, structure, resources, etc.) to international environments (P3)	some firms were growth oriented and planned for overseas market development, others were influenced by serendipitous factors. (P4)	Within three years of their business start-up (P2)	within three years of business formation although some studies have extended this to five or six years.	Diversification into a number of international markets can lead to relatively low-market revenues and low levels of commitment in each market (P6)			Particular general assistance such as trade fairs and missions had been utilized by all of the firms in this study but while useful, had played a relatively minor role in assisting competitiveness. (P14)	a management team with an "unusual constellation of competencies" developed from previous experience and that are more alert at combining resources from different national markets (P4)	Internationalization of INV and BGs comparision
S64	Georgia Institute of Technology	if sales in foreign countries comprised 5 % or more of their total sales (P3)	Overall return on investment (ROI) as a principal reason for exporting, the costs and risk of exporting can be less than those of selling domestically, and more important, profits can be higher (P2) AK:page 4	The time of inception, or soon thereafter may be the best opportunity to set or to change a venture's strategy so that it is consistent with the needs of the international environment (P5)		Greater knowledge of the culture and a superior network of local business partners by local firms can pose to be a barrier (P3) Knowledge of foreign laws, language, culture, and competitors. (P5)	International sales in technology-based new ventures seems to require simultaneous strategic changes in order to positively impact venture performance. (P2) Internationalization of sales does not appear to be a simple matter of applying established strategies and procedures developed for a domestic arena. Successful internationalization appears to require changes in the venture's strategy as well. (P2)				New venture internationalization must be part of an overall organizational strategy to address foreign rather than simply domestic markets. (P12) AK: Impact of internationalization
S63 -	Georgia Institute of Technology	A business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries (P1)	Firm has unique sources of superiority over foreign firms in their own markets (P4)	From Inception (P2)		Threat of opportunism from their partners that could lead to venture failure (P15)	Combining resources from different national markets because of the competencies (networks, knowledge, and background) that they have developed from their earlier activities (P2).	Yes, Otherwise, the venture may become path-dependent on the development of domestic competencies and the entrepreneur will find it difficult to change strategic direction when international expansion eventually becomes necessary. (P2)		market imperfections create the opportunity for firms to earn higher economic rents by internalizing the transfer of factor goods and services across national boundaries within a single firm than they can by arm's length transactions between firms (P9)	
S62	Journal of International Business Studies, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1994), pp. 45-64	A business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries (P6)	(1) increased concentration of limited resources on the primary internal sources of competitive advantage and (2) the cost, quality and flexibility benefits that may be derived from using outside experts to supply all peripheral resources.	From Inception (P6)		governmentally instituted barriers to trade and an incomplete understanding of laws, language, and business practices in foreign countries (P21)	Success of international new ventures seems to depend on having an international vision of the firm from inception, an innovative product or service marketed through a strong network, and a tightly managed organization focused on international sales growth (P4)			transaction cost analysis, market imperfections, and the internationalization of essential transaction (P9)	Stage model
S53	International Business Review	a gradual acquisition, integration and use of knowledge about foreign markets and operations and a . . . successively increasing commitment to foreign market (P2)	Usually, it begins with sporadic overseas sales and continues with increasingly larger and gradual commitments in the foreign markets through sales (P2)	According to the level of knowledge of the market. (P2)	three, five or six (P3) Great analysis		specific strategic focus (P2) process are knowledge and international networking(P3) a major source of their international competitive advantage is based on knowledge intensity P11)			Strategic focus, Organisational capabilities and Founder's (and/or founding team's) characteristics (P4)	
S51	European Management Journal	The process of adapting firms operations (strategy, structure, resource, etc.) to international environments (P2)		The term BG itself implies that a firm aims for international markets from inception and BAGs internationalize rapidly after operating for a rather long-time in their home markets (P3)	Within 6 years (P3) Ak: Great analysis	The challenges that lay ahead are related to the existence of providers of internationalization support and venture capital that meet the needs of BGs and BAGs alike. (P13)	Following of the niche strategy and acquisition of important key customers which create trust and credibility (P11)				Internationalization in small steps is not the strategy for entrepreneurs/firms seeking rapid growth (P12)
S44	Int Entrep Magazine Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics, University of Bergamo,	A business organization that from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries (P3)	Advances in technology regarding production, transportation and communication and the increasing level of entrepreneurs' international experience and foreign market knowledge (P2)	Since inception (P1)			1)markets' and segments' knowledge of the founders/managers and networks links to overcome cultural differences on international business management. 2)Investments in product innovation can accelerate born global companies' process of internationalization. 3)Positioning in an international niche market seems to be a successful strategy for SMEs companies (P9)		Local authorities should increase investment to facilitate their access to international networks, should support universities that focus on master courses with international students exchange to create market knowledge and experience for the new managers, should organize new investment policies for innovative SMEs that create innovation in both products and process that enhance the firm's success in international markets (P11)	1)Increasing uncertainty and dynamism in the firm's environment 2)Dimension/maturity of the home market 3)Specific characteristics of the industry/segment 4)Availability of markets' and segments' knowledge 5)Entrepreneur and managers' previous international experience with foreign markets 6)Product innovation and firm's innovativeness 7)Access to network links (P4 &5)	
S31	Journal of International Management 7 (2001) 173–189	Firms gravitate towards 'psychologically close' markets and increase commitment to international markets in a gradual, stepwise manner through a series of evolutionary 'stages.' (P1)	New opportunities in international markets, favourable exchange rates or adverse economic conditions in the domestic market many encourage firms to internationalise rapidly (P5)	Born global firms , international new ventures, committed internationalists demonstrate early and rapid internationalisation (which are usually smaller, highly committed, technology-intensive firms) (P4)	These firms are global from inception, or internationalise within 2 years of establishment (P4)	Difficult trading conditions abroad or the strength of the exporters currency (P5)				'Knowledge-intensive' firms adopted much more proactive and structured approaches to internationalisation and were more flexible in relation to their choice of entry modes (P6)	
S21	Technology Innovation Management Review	A born global firm is a venture launched to exploit a global niche from the first day of its operations. (P1)	The market in the home country is not large enough to support the scale at which the firm needs to operate. Most of the firm's potential customers are foreign, multinational firms Customer needs and tastes are fairly standard across the firm's potential country-markets. The firm's product or service category faces few trade barriers. The firm has key managers who are experienced in international business. (P3)	Born-global firms begin exporting their products or services within a couple of years after their founding and may export a quarter or more of their total production (P2)	1-2 years (P1)				Most born-global firms expand internationally through exports by engaging in direct international sales or leveraging the resources of independent intermediaries located abroad. Many of them rely on external facilitators to organize international shipments. draw from foreign markets relatively quickly and easily. More experienced born-global firms appear to adopt additional strategies, such as joint ventures and foreign direct investment (p3)	Born-global firms tend to adopt differentiation strategies by developing differentiated designs and highly distinctive products that target niche markets, which may be too small for the tastes of larger firms (P2)	
S17	Journal of International Entrepreneurship	A business organisation that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sales of outputs in multiple countries (P4)	Recognition of global opportunities by active entrepreneurs (P1)	They emerge as a result of a significant breakthrough in some process or technology (P3). This would depend on the industry, in some cases it would be introductory and in some at a growth stage (P22)	Within 2 years of establishment (P3)		Global vision Entrepreneurs level of ambition International experience of top management			Increasing role of niche markets Advances in process technology Advance in communication technology Inherent advantages of small companies Tren towards a global network Means of internationalization - Knowledge, technology, tools, facilitating institutions (P4)	
S13	International Business Review	Born global have here been categorized as those firms that started their foreign operations within 3 years of inception and which have derived at least 25% of their turnover from outside their home market within 3 years	Tough competition on the home market is a major force that influences the propensity of a firm to internationalize from its inception The technological dynamism and growth potential of a home country's industrial system (P3)	Over the last two decades, the observation that an increasing number of firms aim for international markets right from their start (P1)	Within 3 years (P5)		Born global have to offer unique and highly specialized products/services or leading edge technologies, by leveraging innovativeness, knowledge and internal capabilities (P4) Technology Home country condition Network Firm attribute Entrepreneurs			Technology, home country conditions, the entrepreneur, network relationships and firms attributes. (P2)	
S9	International Business Review 13 (2004) 555–571	Definition is based on geographical expansion in terms of a minimum of 25% of foreign sales or a minimum number of countries served outside the home country (P3)	A lack of resources, compared to the requirements for the company vision of doing business globally, is the crucial gap for the "born global" start-up, which tries to reach world markets (P2)	Born global from their inception pursue a vision of becoming global and often globalize rapidly without any preceding long term domestic or internationalization period	immediate to three years (P3)	Economies of scale purchases leave little surplus to reinvest and develop their core competencies (8) If a born global sells solely to an MNC, there is the risk of a prolonged "dependency" relationship. How long should "dependency" last? (P14)	Founders' core competencies which include technological knowledge and market knowledge, neither of which required much capital and were not dependent on scale economies (P11) MNCs (system integrator, distributor) Network Internet		. MNCs acting as systems integrators . MNCs distributing born global products/services . Networks . Internet (P6)	Innovation capability, internal locus of control, risk taking propensity, and energy level of the entrepreneur (P5) AK: Size of domestic market	Born global companies trying to reach new business space in international markets rapidly must use the channels outlined earlier of MNCs as system integrators/distributors, networks, and the Internet, either separately or in combination. In this way, the born global's risk is lessened. (P14) Taiwan, Finland, Isareal -> Small country to global play
S5	Journal of World Business	Firms that undertake international activities from an early stage in their development (P2)	The rise of search for markets and technological innovations to compete successfully in the global economy (P2) Limited domestic demand	There is little evidence to suggest that they move through the 'stages of internationalisation' and enter psychically close markets first as a means of overcoming their liabilities of newness and foreignness. Instead research has shown that they possess high-level network capabilities to quickly overcome outsidership P2)	The firms did not wait to establish themselves in the domestic market first. Neither did they adopt a regional strategy before entering western markets. These firms developed a global mindset and were proactive in developing aggressive strategies from the outset (P10)	The aggressive measures typically adopted by these firms subject them to increased levels of risk which can lead to negative perceptions and dependence on stereotypes (P2) Establishment of a physical presence Gaining endorsement Establishment of network FDI initiatives, Partnerships Distribution agreements				New ventures from emerging markets are able to leverage off resources and connections that already exist in international markets, leading to collaborative partnerships (Freeman et al., 2006) and hence accelerate their internationalisation. (P3)	
S2	Journal of International Entrepreneurship 2, 139–154, 2004	International start-ups are firms that commence with an international business strategy, manifested by the early sourcing and deployment of their resources as well as the sale of their products and services in multiple strategic markets worldwide, with the intent of gaining competitive advantage (P2)	1)Short product life cycles 2)Highly competitive nature of their international industry 3)Size of the domestic market for the firms was very limited 4)Influence of the firms' network partners (P3)	All twelve firms engaged in international business activity within three years of founding or initial product release, with five firms achieving their first international sale in their first year (P8)	5 years of founding (P7)		The international vision of the founders, the identification of specific international opportunities, the possession of international contacts and sales leads and the desire of the founders and top management team to be international market leaders (P13)	Page 6- Internal, external and facilitating factors	Advances in international communications, transportation, IT, process technology and integration of the worlds financial markets (P6)	1)International/global vision of the founders 2)Need to obtain financing (which may be easier and less costly in international markets.) 3)Economies of scale 4)Rapidly respond to competitor initiatives worldwide 5)Exploit a proprietary technology or process internationally in order to set a worldwide standard and pre-empt competitors 6) To avoid the complications associated with altering domestic inertia (P3)	Key factors influencing UK and US small high technology international start-ups to be international at or near inception are Entrepreneur, industry and competitive environment (P11)
A7	EUROPEAN COMMISSION - ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2020 ACTION PLAN								To thrive, entrepreneurs and SMEs need specific, customised expertise that can help them develop competitive advantages and benefit from global value chains and shared management of human resources. Clusters, business networks and other types of association of enterprises can provide supportive environments as they bring together the relevant actors from business, education, research and the public sector. p11		Analogy with EU, what EU is facilitating
A10	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor					- The lack of a unified data protection law in Europe erects unnecessary obstacles for companies wanting to transact with and across the region. This is partially why only 12% of all internet transactions made by European consumers are transnational. p7 - For many businesses around the world considering starting a new office in the EU, a key constraint will be their hesitation of being left with a workforce that cannot be adapted to the realities of today's and tomorrow's markets.p5					Analogy with EU, what EU is facilitating
A3	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor			The innovation-driven phase of development reveals the highest average level of internationalization (6% for factor-driven, 13% for efficiency-driven and 20% for innovation-driven). P6							
A12	International Business & Economics Research Journal – March 2007 Volume 6, Number 3		-increasing role of niche markets and greater demand for specialized or customized products - Shorter product life cycles -significant advances in the production, transportation and communication areas, the increased importance of global networks and alliances, and more elaborate capabilities of people, including those of the founder/entrepreneur who starts early internationalizing firms P3 - emerging economies P4 - seek to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and sales of outputs in multiple countries P6		shortly after their inception P5	- Doing business in an emerging market is, quite simply, risky. - resources needed may not be available - Capital constraints - foreign investors do not want to take the risk, domestic investors do not have the required capital P8	-Before a firm can be global it must think global - Managers have prior international experience - Strong international business networks. - Pre-emptive technology or marketing is exploited - A unique intangible asset is present - Product or service extensions are closely linked - The organization is closely coordinated worldwide P3		-reliance on advanced technology - market advantage through product or process innovations P3		
F3	Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Department of Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship		Increased pressure on the home market coming from international competitors (P2)				Self-commitment : which is understood here as the fundamental willingness of the individuals to subject themselves to the cooperation partner without the safety net of controls or sanction mechanisms (P3) Self commitment				Trust-based internationalization is a promising alternative to other forms of internationalization, particularly for SMEs.
A13	NTNU School of Entrepreneurship			born global appear more able to "succeed in internationalizing extensively from start-up" - P41	"Born Global begin exporting one or several products within 2 years of their establishment and tend to export at least a quarter of total sales" P41		- effectuation logic, proactiveness and partnering strategies P36 - Network is the foundation of internationalisation - P36 - Means-driven - Affordable loss - partnerships rather than competitive - exploiting contingencies - creation of opportunities P56				
O7	Springer		entrepreneurs actively create opportunities that can be exploited using innovative approaches and products that promote faster market entry - P18 - self-efficacy, creativity and prior knowledge P20 - access to resources through internal (firm) and external environment (social networks, institutions, industry and markets). P20	The internationalisation process is path-dependent and involves gradual/rapid knowledge and resource development and deployment of the firm - P23	four typologies of firms - BG, enduring global (EG), early exporter (EE) and mature exporter (ME). P23 - BG: 6 years, - EG: >6 years, >70 % FSTS - EE; <6 Years, < 70% FSTS - ME: >6 years, <70 % FSTS		- entrepreneurial, firm and network resources - P3 - knowledge intensity (the extent of dependency in existing knowledge base of the firm) P10 - time-dependent, co-evolving and integrative nature of firm resources, networks and the entrepreneurial behaviour leading to sustainable competitive advantage of the firm. P19 - combining and recombining these resources to create value innovating outcomes.P26	the EE firm lags behind on the basis of market and product differentiation with relatively low-value innovation capability in the international market. P25		entrepreneur, firm, networks, environment and competitive advantage	the entire process of international opportunity identification and exploitation is embedded in the external environmental context and must be interpreted with reference to the industry, market and competitive forces - P22

Sr. #	Company	Country
1	10stamps	Germany
2	42 Technologies	Germany
3	6WunderKinder	Germany
4	Aaramshop	India
5	aberklar	Germany
6	abusix	Germany
7	Accedo	Germany
8	ACQUIFER	Germany
9	Activecubes	India
10	Adidas AG (Herzogenaurach)	Germany
11	adjust (Berlin)	Germany
12	AdMaster	Germany
13	AdNear (Now Near)	India
14	Adtelligence	Germany
15	Adtelligence(Mannheim)	Germany
16	Adyen	Germany
17	Affine Analytics	India
18	Agile Plunge	India
19	Agrostar	India
20	AirBnb	USA
21	AirStream	India
22	Airwoot	India
23	aisle	India
24	Akdemia (Lima)	Germany
25	Akosha	India
26	Alfresco	USA
27	AlienVault	Germany
28	AlmaConnect	India
29	AlmaMapper	India
30	Almamater	India
31	Amagi Media Labs	India
32	Amazon	USA
33	ambiotex	Germany
34	Amoeboids Technologies	India
35	Anantara Solutions	India
36	ApartmentAdda	India
37	apaxo	Germany
38	Apfelback	Germany
39	apiomat	Germany
40	Applicate	India
41	Applied Solar Technologies	India
42	AppsDaily	India
43	AppSurfer	India
44	AppVirality	India
45	APX Labs	Germany
46	Arineos	Germany
47	Arout	India
48	ArtiMinds Robotics	Germany
49	Ather Energy	India
50	atria.co.in	India
51	Auctionata (Berlin)	Germany
52	AUDI (Ingolstadt)	Germany
53	audriga	Germany
54	AUPEO (Berlin) acquired by panasonic	Germany
55	Automotive start-up	India
56	Avanti Learning	India
57	Avantium	Germany
58	avenyou	Germany
59	Avira (Tettnang)	Germany
60	Avito.ru	Germany
61	Axel Springer (Berlin)	Germany
62	Ayojak	India
63	ayondo	Germany
64	azeti	Germany
65	Azeti Networks AG (Berlin)	Germany
66	B2X Care Solutions	Germany
67	B9 Beverages	India
68	Babbel / Lesson Nine (Berlin)	Germany
69	BankBazar	India
70	BASF (Ludwigshafen Am Rhein-oggersheim)	Germany
71	Baxi	India
72	Bertelsmann AG Acquired by Boutiquesecret (Gutersloh)	Germany
73	betabots	Germany
74	Betaout	India
75	BetaOut	India
76	Bewakoof	India
77	BibTip	Germany
78	Bidgely	India
79	BigBasket	India
80	Bigpoint (Hamburg)	Germany
81	Biosense	India
82	Birds Eye	India
83	bitstars	Germany
84	Blabla car	France
85	Blacklane	Germany
86	Blacklane (Berlin)	Germany
87	Blippar	Germany
88	BMW (Munchen)	Germany
89	BookEventz	India
90	BookMyBai.com	India
91	Boond	India
92	Borro	Germany
93	BrainChild Media	Germany
94	Brandnew	Germany
95	Brightup (Hamburg)	Germany
96	BrizzTV	India
97	Bus Radar	Germany
98	BusyLamp	Germany
99	Bytro Labs	Germany
100	Calastone	Germany
101	Calpano	Germany
102	Campusjäger	Germany
103	camunda	Germany
104	Capillary Tech	India
105	Capital Float	India
106	Caravan Craft Retail	India
107	CarDekho	India
108	Carl Zeiss (Oberkochen)	Germany
109	Cashkaro.com	India
110	Cassantech	Germany
111	Celonis	Germany
112	Changers (Berlin)	Germany
113	Chargebee	India
114	Chillr	India
115	chocoBRAIN	Germany
116	Cityflo	India
117	ClickAstro.com	India
118	Clonect Solutions	India
119	Cloud 9 (Holi Hai)	Germany
120	Cloudbash	India
121	Cloudbyte	India
122	Club Cooee	Germany
123	Clue (Berlin)	Germany
124	Collegedunia	India
125	Commonfloor	India
126	Competitive Intelligence Institute	Germany
127	conemis AG	Germany
128	Contify	India
129	Corporate360	India
130	Craftsvilla	India
131	Crate (Dornbirn)	Germany
132	CreditMantri	India
133	CredR	India
134	Creole Studios	India
135	Creonic	Germany
136	Cryte (Frankfurt am Main)	Germany
137	Cube 26 (PredictGaze)	India
138	Cubito	India
139	Cultavo	Singapore
140	Culture Machine	India
141	CultureAlley	India
142	Curofy	India
143	Customer Alliance	Germany
144	Customer Alliance (Berlin)	Germany
145	Customfurnish	India
146	CX Ray	Hongkong
147	cybits	Germany
148	cynora	Germany
149	DailyDump	India
150	DailyObjects	India
151	DailyRounds	India
152	DAOPAY Gmbh (Vienna)	Germany
153	Data Resolve	India
154	Datagres	India
155	datavirtuality	Germany
156	Dataweave	India
157	DealForge	Germany
158	Deck	India
159	Deezer	Germany
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234	Freecharge	India
235	Fresenius Medical Care (Homburg)	Germany
236	FreshDesk	India
237	Friendsurance	Germany
238	frsh	India
239	fruux	Germany
240	Fuer-Grunder	Germany
241	Fusion Microfinance	India
242	Fxkart.com	India
243	Fyber	Germany
244	Gadgetwood	India
245	GameDuell (Berlin)	Germany
246	GazeMatrix	India
247	Gecko	India
248	Geisteswirtschaft	Germany
249	Genus Power	India
250	GetYourGuide (Berlin)	Germany
251	Giant Swarm (Cologne)	Germany
252	Gini	Germany
253	Giveter	India
254	Glamya	Germany
255	Glowship	India
256	GoEuro (Berlin)	Germany
257	gomnini	Germany
258	Google	USA
259	Gozoomo	India
260	Grabhouse	India
261	Gram Vaani	India
262	Graphic India	India
263	Grey Orange	India
264	Greycaps India	India
265	Grofers	India
266	HackerRank	India
267	Hanson Robotics	Hongkong
268	Harness Handitouch	India
269	HealthEra	India
270	Heliatek (Dresden)	Germany
271	hellofood/foodpanda	Germany
272	HeyPillow	India
273	Hire My Assistants	India
274	Hiree	India
275	Holidu	Germany
276	holisol	India
277	home24 (Berlin)	Germany
278	HomeVeda	India
279	Honestly	Germany
280	HoneyTracks	Germany
281	Hostel Dunia	India
282	Housejoy	India
283	Housing.com	India
284	hoverr	India
285	i2e1	India
286	i7 Networks	India
287	ideaDevice	India
288	Igrenenergi	India
289	iMapping	Germany
290	Impartus	India
291	Incella	Germany
292	Indifi	India
293	IndustryBuying	India
294	Innoz	India
295	InOpen	India
296	Inreal	Germany
297	InShorts	India
298	InstaBounce	India
299	InStaff	Germany
300	InstaLively.com	India
301	Instamojo	India
302	Intellocut	India
303	interact.io (Berlin)	Germany
304	Internet World (Munich)	Germany
305	IntraWorlds	Germany
306	iStream	India
307	itembase	Germany
308	iTIZZIMO	Germany
309	iversity (Bernau)	Germany
310	ivi.ru	Germany
311	iZettle	Sweden
312	Jai Heart	India
313	JetSetGo	India
314	Jigsaw Academy	India
315	Jobspire	India
316	Jugnoo	India
317	Just Software	Germany
318	JustUnfollow	India
319	juwi AG (Wörrstadt)	Germany
320	KA Kneipenquartett	Germany
321	Kaaryah	India
322	Karma Healthcare	India
323	KDE (Berlin)	Germany
324	Keeeb	Germany
325	KENFORX GmbH	Germany
326	Ketto	India
327	Keyetech	Germany
328	Kitchen Stories (Berlin)	Germany
329	Klarna	Germany
330	Kniexon	Germany
331	Knit	India
332	Knowlarity	India
333	Knowtion	Germany
334	KooKoo	India
335	Kreditech (Hamburg)	Germany

336	KupiVIP	Germany
337	kWatt Solutions	India
338	Lamoda.ru	Germany
339	LeadSquared	India
340	lengoo GmbH	Germany
341	Lets Corp	India
342	libreja.de	Germany
343	Little Eye Labs	India
344	LiveDooh	Germany
345	Livspace	India
346	Localbanya	India
347	locaside	Germany
348	Lookeen	Germany
349	Lookup	India
350	lovoo	Germany
351	Lufthansa (Cologne, Nordrhein-Westfalen)	Germany
352	LUUV (Berlin)	Germany
353	Mad Street Den	India
354	MadRatGames	India
355	MagnetWorks Engineering	India
356	Mambu	Germany
357	mapcase	Germany
358	MapMyGenome	India
359	Marley Spoon (Berlin)	Germany
360	MartMobi	India
361	MedicAnimal	Germany
362	Meisterclass.de	Germany
363	Meraki Foundation	India
364	Mersck KGaA (Darmstadt)	Germany
365	metgeconsulting.de	Germany
366	Mettl	India
367	Milap	India
368	Mimecast	Germany
369	Mind Tree	India
370	MindTickle	India
371	Mister Spex	Germany
372	MobiLab	Germany
373	Mobile Event Guide	Germany
374	MobileBits	Germany
375	mobilion.eu	Germany
376	Mobstac	India
377	MockBank	India
378	MoMArk	India
379	Monoqi (Berlin)	Germany
380	MoonFrog Labs	India
381	Mosambee	India
382	movisens GmbH	Germany
383	Musafir	India
384	MyDreamStore	India
385	MYESTRO	Germany
386	MyGola	India
387	MyParichay	India
388	myWindow	India
389	Nanoscribe	Germany
390	Navigon AG (Hamburg)	Germany
391	Near	India
392	Netmeds.com	India
393	NETSYNO	Germany
394	Netzsieger-Holding	Germany
395	Newshunt	India
396	Nimble Wireless	India
397	Nimbuzz	India
398	NinjaConcept	Germany
399	Nitrokey (Berlin)	Germany
400	Nowfloats	India
401	Nox the Robot	Germany
402	nubedian	Germany
403	Number 26 (Berlin)	Germany
404	NumberMall	India
405	Nurturey	India
406	Nuru Energy (Africa & India)	Afrika
407	Nutmeg	Germany
408	OKListen	India
409	OneAssist	India
410	OnefineStay	Germany
411	Onefootball (Berlin)	Germany
412	ONEPIP	China
413	Online Prasad	India
414	OnPage	Germany
415	Onvaria	Germany
416	Oodriva	Germany
417	Open Experience	Germany
418	Openet	Germany
419	Orangescape	India
420	Orderbird AG (Berlin)	Germany
421	Orobind	India
422	Outfittery (Berlin)	Germany
423	Ozon	Germany
424	Papershift	Germany
425	ParkTAG	Germany
426	ParStream	Germany
427	Paynear	India
428	paytm	India
429	pCloudy	India
430	Pharos Solutions	Germany
431	Phone Warrior	India
432	PlagScan	Germany
433	planature	Germany
434	plexiware	Germany
435	Plinga (Berlin)	Germany
436	Plivo	India
437	Porsche Design (Ludwigsburg)	Germany
438	Poster Gully	India
439	Powa Technologies	Germany
440	Power2SME	India
441	PriceNow	Germany
442	Printmate (Berlin)	Germany
443	Printvenue	India
444	ProAlpha	Germany
445	Process 9	India
446	Products-Up	Germany
447	Programmr	India
448	PTV Group	Germany
449	Q-Cells (Wolfen) Acquired by Hanwha SolarOne	Germany
450	qa82	Germany
451	Quandoo	Germany
452	Qyk	India
453	RailYatri	India
454	reBuy.de	Germany
455	Rehability Reha-Fachhandel GmbH & Co. KG	Germany
456	RentoMojo	India
457	RESTUBE	Germany
458	Returbo	Germany
459	Reverie	India
460	RevoPrint	Germany
461	RivalFox (Berlin)	Germany
462	Rivigo	India
463	Roadrunnr	India
464	Robert Bosch GmBH (Stuttgart)	Germany
465	Robosoft	India
466	Robot company	Germany
467	RoomsTonite	India
468	Routofy	India
469	Rozgar Mela	India
470	S-Cube Futuretech	India
471	Saavn	India
472	SAP	Germany
473	Satvacart	India
474	ScoopWhoop	India
475	Scytl	Germany
476	SearchHaus	Germany
477	Seed education	India
478	Seed Schools	India
479	Semasi	Germany
480	Semasio	Germany
481	Senic	Germany
482	Sennheiser (Wiedemar)	Germany
483	Sensolute	Germany
484	Sharedacab	India
485	Shazam	Germany
486	Sheroes	India
487	Shifu	India
488	Showroomprive	Germany
489	Shuoba	China
490	Siemens (Munich)	Germany
491	Signavio	Germany
492	SignEasy	India
493	SiliconRadar	Germany
494	Simplify360	India
495	Simplilearn	India
496	Simplotel	India
497	Simscale	Germany
498	Sinosol	Germany
499	Skillkindle.de	India
500	Skyscanner	Germany
501	SlidePresenter	Germany
502	Smaato	Germany
503	SmartExergy	Germany
504	Smartpocket	India
505	snapmobl	Germany
506	Sococo	Germany
507	Software AG Darmstadt, (Hessen)	Germany
508	Software Diagnostics	Germany
509	Sokrati	India
510	Solandeo GmbH	Germany
511	Sonnenbatterie	Germany
512	Soothe Healthcare	India
513	SoundCloud	Germany
514	SoundCloud (Berlin)	Germany
515	Sportzvillage	India
516	Spotify	Sweden
517	Spreadshirt (Leipzig-plagwitz)	Germany
518	squareup	India
519	Stadtrallye	Germany
520	Stagelink	Germany
521	Stampay	Germany
522	Startnext Network GmbH	Germany
523	Stayzilla	India
524	Steckwerk	Germany
525	StickyPop	Germany
526	StoreKing	India
527	Streetspotr	Germany
528	StyleTag.com	India
529	Subex	India
530	sunsteps.org	Germany
531	SunTerrace	India
532	SuperProfs	India
533	SupportBee	India
534	Swajal	India
535	Swiftkey	Germany
536	Tado (Munich)	Germany
537	Takeovercode.com	India
538	Talend	Germany
539	TalentSpirit	India
540	Talentwunder	Germany
541	Talixo	Germany
542	Talview	India
543	Tame	Germany
544	tasqade	Germany
545	TaxSutra	India
546	Tea Trails	India
547	Teabox	India
548	Teewe	India
549	Tesla	USA
550	Testbirds	Germany
551	The Better India	India
552	The Media Ant	India
553	TheHotStart	India
554	Tobii Technology	Germany
555	Tookitaki	India
556	Toppr.com	India
557	Townscript	India
558	Trademob	Germany
559	Tradeshift	Germany
560	Tradesparq	China
561	Tralios IT	Germany
562	Transferwise	Germany
563	Travel Triangle	India
564	tricider	Germany
565	TRIFENSE	Germany
566	Trip38	India
567	TripHobo	India
568	Tripoto	India
569	trivago (Dusseldorf)	Germany
570	Truecaller	Germany
571	TrulyMadly.com	India
572	twago (Berlin)	Germany
573	Uber	USA
574	uberMetrics	Germany
575	UE Life Sciences	India
576	uFaber	India
577	Unbxd	India
578	Unicommerce	India
579	Uniphore	India
580	United Signals	Germany
581	UnMetric	India
582	UPcload	Germany
583	URBANARA	Germany
584	Urbanladder	India
585	Urjas	India
586	Vdopia	India
587	Verayu	India
588	VERSUS (Berlin)	Germany
589	VI-Systems	Germany
590	Vidyartha	India
591	VillFarm	India
592	Villgro	India
593	Vimito	India
594	Vistaar Finance	India
595	Vizury	India
596	volatiles	Germany
597	Volkswagen Group (Wolfsburg)	Germany
598	Voylla	India
599	Vserv	India
600	Walking Würschtl	Germany
601	Wavelabs	Germany
602	Waymate(Berlin)	Germany
603	WebEngage	India
604	Webpgr	Germany
605	Weptun	Germany
606	Westwing	Germany
607	Wicfy	India
608	WickedRide	India
609	Wimdu (Berlin)	Germany
610	Windeln	Germany
611	Wishberry	India
612	WiThings	Germany
613	Wiggo	India
614	WizIQ	India
615	Wonga	Germany
616	Wooga	Germany
617	World Art Community	India
618	WorldRemit	Germany
619	Wunder	Germany
620	www.cannybots.com	Germany
621	www.talerang.com	India
622	wywy	Germany
623	Xing (Hamburg)	Germany
624	Yatra	India
625	Yo! Grad	India
626	Yogurt Labs	India
627	Younicos AG	Germany
628	YOUPublish	Germany
629	YourStory	India
630	YouthKiAwaaz	India
631	Yumist	India
632	ZaaK Technologies GmbH	Germany
633	Zalando (Berlin)	Germany
634	ZenMate (Berlin)	Germany
635	ZenParent	India
636	Zertisa	Germany
637	ZeyOs	Germany
638	Zipdial	India
639	Zivame	India
640	Zomato	India
641	Zoomcar	India
642	Zound Industries	Germany
643	ZU-ZWEIT.de	Germany

Appendix E: Collected data for each start-up on internationalisation

Sr. #	Start-Up	Country	1 When was the start-up founded?	2 What was the nationality of the founders?	3 When was the first international office opened?	4 Where was the first office / location abroad (country)?	5 When was first office / location established in Germany (for Indian and non German companies)	6 When was first office / location established in India (for German and non German companies)	7 What triggerred the internationlization? -> any insight would be helpful	8 How was internationalization started ->Own office, partner, sales office	9 Did they have any partner to support (look at membership associations, partner logos etc..)
1	Sofarware AG	Germany	1969	German	1971	USA	-	2003	Demand	Offices, subsidiaries and R&D centre	-
2	Nuru Energy (Africa & India)	Afrika	2008	Indian, Canadians	2010	India	-	-	Demand	Working with microfinance partners in India	Microfinance company BASIX
3	Blabla car	France	2006	French	2009	Spain	2013	2015	Growth	Own Office and various acquisitions	INSEAD Network
4	SAP	Germany	1972	German	1984	Switzerland	-	1998	Produt acceptance	Own office in Biel, Switzerland	Investors, Corporates
5	ProAlpha	Germany	1994	Germans	1995	Austria	-	-	Growth	Subsidiaries and partners	BMBF
6	PTV Group	Germany	1979	German	1997	Many countries	-	-	Growth	Own and partner	ITC, Siemens
7	Enchanting Travel	Germany	2004	A German and an Indian	2004	India	2004	2004	Customer Needs and the nature of the business itself	One of the partners is from Germany	INSEAD Network
8	Cassantech	Germany	2007	German	2009	USA	2014	-	Growth	Own office	Many institutions
9	Delivery Hero	Germany	2011	Various countries in Europe	2011	Russia, Australia, Mexico		-	Produt acceptance	own, acquisitions	Team Europe and Rocket Internet
10	hellofood/foodpanda	Germany	2012	Germans	2012	Singapore	-	2012	Competetive advantage	Own Office	Rocket Internet
11	ZaaK Technologies GmbH	Germany	2012	Indian	2012	India		2012	Market size	Own Office	KIC InnoEnergy,TU Berlin, IIT Bombay, Vattenfall, Weber Saint-Gobin, Tata Power
12	Wooga	Germany	2009	Germans	2014	Japan	-	-	Close to market leader	Own office	-
13	6WunderKinder	Germany	2010	Germans	2015	USA	-	-	Acquisition	Own	VCs
14	Arineos	Germany	2010	German	-	-	-	-	Market size	Customers and projects	-
15	Competitive Intelligence Institute	Germany	2004	German	-	-	-	2014		Representative	iMove
16	e Senza	Germany	2005	A German and an Indian	-	-	-	-	Demand	own and representative	TiE 50 Award Winner
17	E-Volo	Germany	2010	Germans	-	-	-	-	-	-	Institutions, VCs
18	Honestly	Germany	2012	Germans	-	-	-	-	-	-	CIE,KIT
19	iversity (Bernau)	Germany	2008	Germans	-	-	-	-	-	Tie-ups with various universities in Europe.	-
20	Kniexon	Germany	2012	German	-	-	-	-	Market size	Export	EIT ICT Labs,Intel,TU Munchen,EESA space Solutions
21	LetsVenture	Germany	2014	Germans	-	-	-	-	Market size, supply base	Partner stores	Deutsche startups
22	Netzsieger- Holding	Germany	2014	German	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	Rehability Reha-Fachhandel GmbH & Co. KG	Germany	1993	Germans	-	-	-	-	-	International clients	-
24	Solandeo GmbH	Germany	2011	German	-	-	-	-	-	-	HTGF
25	Startnext Network GmbH	Germany	2010	Germans	-	-	-	-	-	Through its clients in Austria and Switzerland	media & cooperation partners seedmatch,FINTECHTECH HUB by zeb
26	Meisterclass.de	Germany	2014	Germans	-	-					
27	Hanson Robotics	Hong kong	2003	American		-	-	-	Close to suppy base		-
28	CX Ray	Hongkong	2014	Hungarians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	Mind Tree	India	1999	Indians	2001	USA	2005	-	Growth	Own office	Oracle, Microsoft, Netbiscuits, Conversable, etc.
30	Subex	India	1992	Indians	2001	USA	-	-	Demand	Acquistion and own office.	Many tech partners
31	AdNear (Now Near)	India	2012	Indian	2012	Singapore and Australia	-	-	Market size	Own Office	-
32	Zomato	India	2008	Indians	2012	Dubai	-	-	Initial success in local market	Own office , acquisition	-
33	Cube 26 (PredictGaze)	India	2012	Indians	2013	USA		2013	Market size	Own Office	Micromax, Intex, Celkon, Zen, iBerry and Lemon Mobile
34	Knowlarity	India	2009	Indians	2013	Singapore (moved HQ from India to Singapore)	-	-	Product acceptance	Own office	-
35	Bidgely	India	2011	Indians	2014	USA	-	2014	Demand	Own office	Khosla Ventures

Sr. #	Start-Up	Country	1 When was the start-up founded?	2 What was the nationality of the founders?	3 When was the first international office opened?	4 Where was the first office / location abroad (country)?	5 When was first office / location established in Germany (for Indian and non German companies)	6 When was first office / location established in India (for German and non German companies)	7 What triggerred the internationlization? -> any insight would be helpful	8 How was internationalization started ->Own office, partner, sales office	9 Did they have any partner to support (look at membership associations, partner logos etc..)
36	paytm	India	2010	Indians	2017	Canada	-	-	Early scale success in local market	Own Office	-
37	Applied Solar Technologies	India	2008	Indian	-	-	-	-	Demand	Project	-
38	Boond	India	2010	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	Research partnerships University	Center for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) - IIMA, ARTHA, Opes Impact
39	Caravan Craft Retail	India	2008	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40	Chillr	India	2014	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
41	Craftsvilla	India	2011	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ministry of Textile,GOI
42	Eckovation	India	2015	Indians	-	-	-	-	expansion		-
43	EzySolare now Gosolar Ventures Pvt Ltd	India	2014	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	Infuse Ventures, fund backed by IIMA, CIIE, Government of India's Ministry of New and others
44	Fastudent	India	2013	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	EduVision Retail Technologies Pvt Ltd
45	Findyahan-acquired by Zimmber, Rejuvenate Solutions Pvt. Ltd	India	2013	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
46	Fixy	India	2014	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
47	Genus Power	India	1992	Indian	-	USA, Singapore, China	-	-	Demand	Own and export	collaborating with TBM consultants, USA in 2004 and joint venture
48	HealthEra	India	2015	Chinese	-	-	-	-	-	-	Cambridge Enterprise
49	Jigsaw Academy	India	2011	Indians	-	-	-	-	Clients	-	-
50	Ketto	India	2012	Indians	-	-	-	-		-	Google India, London Business School
51	kWatt Solutions	India	2013	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), IIT Bombay
52	ScoopWhoop	India	2013	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
53	Swajal	India	2011	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	REEEP, Saurya EnerTech
54	The Better India	India	2008	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55	VillFarm	India	2009	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
56	Yatra	India	2006	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
57	YourStory	India	2008	Indian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
58	Yumist	India	2014	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
59	JetSetGo	India	2014	Indians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60	LetsVenture	Singapore	2013	Indians	2014	India	-	2014	Size	Own office	Investors from US,Russia, Israel,Ukraine, Singapore
61	Cultavo	Singapore	2016	Chinese, American,Pakistani	-	-	-	-	-	-	INSEAD Network
62	Spotify	Sweden	2006	Swedish	2009	UK	2012	-	Produt acceptance	Own office	Facebook, Bandpage, Starbucks, Uber, Virgin, etc
63	iZettle	Sweden	2010	Swedish	2012	UK,Denmark, Finland and Norway	2012	-	Easy acceptance of products	Partner	Yes
64	Amazon	USA	1994	American	1998	Germany and UK	1998	2013	Size	Own	-
65	Google	USA	1998	American and Russian	2001	Japan	2006	2004	Scale	Own office, acquisitions	Wordstream, Sun Microsystems, Luxottica, Macy, etc.
66	Alfresco	USA	2005	UK	2008	USA	2009		Fund	Thrrough branch officef, local offices and partners	Zia Consulting, USA
67	Facebook	USA	2004	Americans	2008	Ireland	2010	2010	Product acceptance	Own office	-
68	Tesla	USA	2003	Americans, South African, Canadian-American	2009	UK	2009	-	Market size / Maturity of market	Own store	Many corporate partnerships
69	AirBnb	USA	2008	Americans	2011	Germany	2011	2012	Prodcut / service acceptance	Own office	Times group Strategic partnership
70	Uber	USA	2009	American and Canadian	2011	France	2013	2013	Product acceptance	Partners and own office	Baidu in China, Toyota, Alipay

Appendix F: Complete list of organisations selected for the analysis of start-up internationalisation support

Sr. #	Organizations Name	Country
1	All India Associations of Industries	India
2	Asian Development Bank	Global
3	Astia	USA
4	Born Global firm	India
5	Business Angel Network Deutschland	Germany
6	BW International	Germany
7	BWCON (Baden-Württemberg: Connected)	Germany
8	Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at KIT	Germany
9	Client Associates	India
10	Confederations of Indian Industries	India
11	Cyberforum	India
12	Department of Science and Technology	India
13	Elephant Equity	Germany
14	Entrepreneurs' Organization	Global
15	EURAXESS	India
16	European Business and Technology Centre	Germany
17	Exim Bank	India
18	EXIST Research Transfer	Germany
19	EXIST- Entrepreneurship Scholarship	Germany
20	Export councils / Export promotion council of India	India
21	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry	India
22	Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs	India
23	Fraunhofer Society	Germany
24	Freemont Partners	India
25	G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance (G20 YEA)	Global
26	Generation Media Start-up	Germany
27	German centres	India
28	German India Round Table	Germany
29	German Trade and Invest	Germany
30	GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)	Germany
31	Global Innovation & Technology Alliance	India
32	Government of India Ministry of Entrepreneurship	India
33	GründerStartInitiative (GSI)	Germany
34	GSF Ventures	India
35	High-Tech Gründerfonds Management	Germany
36	IIM Ahmedabad	India
37	India angel network	India
38	India Business Centre Stuttgart	India + Germany
39	India business School	India
40	Indian Industries association	India
41	Indo EU association	Germany
42	Indo German Chamber of Commerce	India + Germany
43	Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI)	India
44	Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI)	India
45	Industrie- und Handelskammer	Germany
46	InkTalks	India
47	Invest Bawaria	Germany
48	Invest India	India
49	IVCA (Indian Venture capital association)	India
50	Kaalari Capital	India
51	Kaufmann Foundation (istart)	USA
52	Kfw	Germany
53	Kompass Zentrum für Existenzgründungen	Germany
54	Kultur & Kreativwirtschaft der Bundesregierung (K3)	Germany
55	Let's Venture	India
56	Marie Curie Program	Germany
57	Max Muller Centre	India
58	Mumbai Angel	India
59	National Entrepreneurship Network	India
60	Nexus Ventures	India
61	Project A ventures	Germany
62	Rocket Internet	Germany
63	RWTH Aachen Entrepreneurship Centre	Germany
64	Scaale group	India
65	Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)	India
66	Society for Innovation & Entrepreneur- IIT Mumbai	India
67	Start-up Focus SAP HANA - Accelerators	Germany
68	Start-up Village	India
69	SUBG (Sparkassen Unternehmensbeteiligungsgesellschaft)	Germany
70	Swissnex	Switzerland
71	TARA Livelihood academy	India
72	The council of EU chambers of Commerce in India	Germany
73	The Energy and Resources Institute	India
74	The Indus Entrepreneurs	India
75	The Techtour	Germany
76	Transaction Syndicate	India
77	TVM Capital	Germany
78	Wellington Partners	Germany
79	World Bank	Global

Appendix G: Write-up on organisations researched to collect data

Business Angels Netzwerk Deutschland

Founded in 1998 in Essen, Germany, Business Angels Netzwerk Deutschland (BAND) is an association of business angels and their networks. BAND organises the exchange of experiences and supports co-operations. As an umbrella organization of the German informal venture capital market, BAND is the spokesperson of the German Business Angels and Business Angels networks towards politicians and the public.

The primary objective of the association is the promotion of the German business angels' network. It looks forward to becoming the centre point of contact for start-ups seeking capital for their innovations. BAND reflects the constant change in the Business Angel Ecosystem (Super Angels, Crowd Investing, Accelerators, Incubators, family offices) and provides partnership to the new forms of financing as well as to the classic venture capital funds. Through its website (www.business-angels.de), BAND provides central access to the activities in the German Business Angels' market and provides links leading to all business angels' networks. Through its 'Special Services', it provides a list of eligible companies for the public funding program 'INVEST' and the advisory tool where experts of the business angels' market answer all questions around the topic of equity (financing, contracts, exit, intellectual property, etc.).

More than 1,500 business angels are organised in the BAND member networks. In close coordination with these member networks and through communications with decision-makers from important companies, science, politics, and administration, BAND takes positions on economic, legal, and political issues. Also, BAND is one of the founding members of Business Angels Europe (BAE), the European confederation of the national Business Angels associations and federations in Europe.

One of the key features of BAND is its 'Market Intelligence' system. BAND accumulates knowledge about Angel investments by surveying the market and analysing the trends. It collects figures, data, and statistics as well as academic knowledge and cooperates with market experts for professionalizing the Angel market. Also, it aims to publish standard solutions and best practices in order to reflect the opinions and positions of the market community, which would facilitate benchmarking and give indications for the development of good conditions, especially in fiscal, legal, and political issues, as well as for strategic and exchange of experience.

BAND could thus be looked upon as a promising Business Angels' network working in tune with various public and private investment partners in Europe. A study of similar networks in Asia poses the possibility of a worldwide network soon.

Baden-Württemberg International

Baden-Württemberg International (bw-i) is an organization in the state of Baden-Württemberg in Germany to promote the establishment of foreign businesses in the state and thereby enhance the foreign direct investments (FDI) into the state and the country as a whole. The state recognised the significance of internationalising businesses during the early globalisation era and established this organization in 1984. It has a committed core team of 60 members and has an output volume of approximately 15 million Euros per year.

bw-i supports domestic and foreign companies, research institutions, and universities by serving as the central first point of contact in all endeavours relating to internationalisation. The primary objective of the organization is to open up foreign markets for Baden-Württemberg companies and to profile the state globally as an ideal location for industry, business, and science. It has been striving to secure and strengthen the position of Baden-Württemberg over the long term – by encouraging foreign capital investment, helping companies to settle here, and promoting cooperation between business and science. It also helps businesses to recruit the qualified staff and expertise they need.

bw-i initiates international cooperation between companies by means of market-penetration measures in the most significant global markets. It enables participation in location-marketing campaigns in Germany and abroad, and back-up support for foreign companies wishing to invest in Baden-Württemberg. It also carries out projects relating to business promotion, training, qualification, and management in selected target countries.

bw-i's endeavour of promoting the state as an ideal location for business is strongly backed by the state, the L-Bank, the Federation of Industry of the State of Baden-Württemberg Inc., the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Baden-Württemberg, and the Association of Chambers of Crafts of Baden-Württemberg. They not only contribute their specialist expertise but also offer networks that aspiring investors can take advantage of. It also makes bw-i one of the most reliable partners in the business voyages in Germany.

One of the key features of bw-i is its emphasis and encouragement for cooperative ventures and networks. It opens a large bandwidth of opportunities for SMEs to collaborate with other international companies in a similar domain of products, technology, or services. Thus, bw-i sets the standards high for an organization promoting a state as a business hub for international entrepreneurs.

CyberForum

CyberForum is a non-profit organization focused on the high-tech and IT sector. It is a networking platform connecting competence, business contacts, and career opportunities that brings together start-ups and software companies to seasoned businesspeople, international information and communication technology suppliers, to research institutions and universities. Cyberforum consists of a team of about thirty-two people working across various domains such as economic development, communication and marketing, events, cluster and initiatives, recruitment, consulting, etc., along with a core team. The main emphasis of activities lies in Karlsruhe, the centre of the technology region. It is the regional coordination point of Northern Baden's Software-Cluster. The Software-Cluster extends across the software development centres of Darmstadt, Kaiserslautern, Karlsruhe, Saarbrücken, and Walldorf in the Southwest of Germany.

In its function as a networking platform, Cyberforum arranges roughly 140 events per year. It assists through specific concepts designed for all developmental stages of the corporate life cycle, from start-up consulting to a business congress. Other emphases are location marketing and activities for traineeship and additional qualification of skilled personnel. It serves as a partner for convincing ideas and projects for affairs such as securing external and third-party funding, managing and controlling projects, etc. Cyberforum assists in the research (by virtue of its close association with Informatics Research Centre (FZI)) and selection of suitable financing options in order to transform the potential for innovation into specific research and development projects.

Cyberforum provides a co-working space that includes a workshop room for up to forty people, two meeting rooms for smaller meetings, and a large networking area equipped with everything needed to give presentations or hold seminars. The two hundred square meters of area provide optimal conditions for workshops, seminars, training, meetings, video conferences, etc.

More than a thousand members are part of the CyberForum network from sectors such as software development, internet portals, e-commerce, IT consulting, social media, games, IT security, software architecture, providers, and the creative industries. Adding to that are cities and communities, institutions, research institutes, and universities. However, Cyberforum operates mainly in Germany, and the available information provides no signs of its intent to internationalise its presence.

EBTC

EBTC is an independent non-profit organization launched and co-funded by the European Union (EU) and owned by Eurochambres and the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry. EBTC offers solutions to EU clean-technology companies willing to enter and ensure sustainability in the Indian market. It focuses on four key sectors, which include Energy, Environment, ICT, and mobility, all of which offer a vast scope for closer EU-India business and research collaborations. EBTC's services support cross-border collaboration at all levels - from comprehensive market information to help overcome market access issues, to project and partner identification, strategic advisory services, business and technology incubation, and more.

EBTC is headquartered in New Delhi with regional presence in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai. Also, EBTC has a long list of partners in the EU, which includes Chambers of commerce and industry of different EU countries and regions that are all represented by Eurochambres. It also works in conjunction with a number of partners and supporting organisations in India.

EBTC funds itself as a not-for-profit entity through services, partnerships, and projects. Although EBTC does not provide direct funding, it provides assistance in the identification of funding. The other services provided by EBTC include technology transfer services, market insight, market exploration, project/partner identification, market entry strategies, IPR helpdesk, tender support, funding & financing identification, business and technology incubation services, event hosting, etc. These services and their costs are tailor-made depending on customers' requirements; however, it's free to enquire, engage in webinars, or access online knowledge.

A few success stories of the EBTC include a collaboration between Kolkata-based 'ONergy' and Germany-based 'Institute for Decentralized Electrification, Sales Entrepreneurship and Education, GmbH' (ID-EEE) to design and develop pilots in the area of rural electrification, collaborations in applied research between Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften Neu-Ulm (HNU) and three Indian organisations, etc.

Considering the colossal number of initiatives by the Government of India to tap the potential of conventional sources of energy, which includes massive solar and wind energy projects, start-ups, and large business houses investing their ideas and capital in clean energy and allied projects, there seems to be a promising need for services similar to those offered by EBTC.

FICCI

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is the largest and oldest apex business organization in India. Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies. Established in 1927 in New Delhi, today FICCI has a presence in about fourteen Indian States and eight more countries, which include the USA, UK, China, Japan, Singapore, Italy, Germany, and Nepal.

A non-government, not-for-profit organization, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry. From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policy makers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry. It serves its members from the Indian private and public corporate sectors and multinational companies, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry across states, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies.

FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus-building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policymakers, and the international business community. By virtue of its presence from the pre-independence era of India, Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies.

It operates in more than fifty sectors, which include highly specialised sectors like civil aviation, defence, urban infrastructure, and smart cities, etc. It can be looked upon as one of the widest spectrums of domains by a single organization. FICCI is allied with a number of giant organisations across various sectors which includes All India Organization of Employees (AIOE), Confederation of Indian Food Trade and Industry (CFITI), Confederation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (CMSME), Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA), Indian Chambers of Commerce (ICC India), etc. Also, it is the single largest equity in Invest India.

In its long haul of about 90 years, it has also come up with a number of initiatives to foster the business and industrial ecosystem in the country. Its initiatives include Millennium Alliance, which aims at supporting and scaling up low-cost, innovative solutions, Indian Sanitation Coalition which aims at bringing together all actors in the sanitation space to drive sustainable sanitation, Invest India which aims as augmenting investments in the Indian companies, etc. It has recently launched its maiden initiative aimed at travel start-ups, Travel Tech Launchpad to encourage innovation and growth of travel start-ups. Thus, FICCI can be looked upon as one of the largest organisations in India that regulates its businesses and industries and helps formulates policies to foster its growth.

German Centre for Industry and Trade

Established in 2008, the German Centre for Industry and Trade Delhi, Gurgaon supports small and medium-sized German companies venturing into the Indian market. A combination of offices, conference rooms and allied services enables companies to smoothly establish themselves in the dynamic Indian market. The German Centre offers office space, Appendixion centre, assembly area, production and warehouse space, conference and training facilities and an extensive range of consulting and other services concerning entering and establishing in the local market.

Along with the space needs, the German Centre connects German businesses with Indian companies working in the same and allied domains through social or business events to enable the German firms to access important networks. During various entrepreneurial and business events and seminars, German and local companies can exchange information and experiences, thereby helping the German companies understand the Indian market. Thus, the Centre works as an interface between German companies aspiring to enter the Indian market and Indian businesses and various service' providers. Last but not the least, the German Centre is located in Gurgram, located south of New Delhi and around 20 minutes away from the international airport.

German-India Round Table

With growing trade and investment, an increasing number of Indian companies are now looking at Germany, and an increasing number of German entrepreneurs are attracted to the Indian market. This creates a need for actual, reliable, and practically oriented information in India as well as in Germany. To meet this need and to support business development efficiently, individuals with a strong business and personal interest in India established the German-India Round Table (GIRT) in 2001 for the provision and exchange of information. The IGEP Foundation works as the secretariat for GIRT in India. The objective of the GIRT has been to create a forum where people dealing with India could exchange their knowledge of and experience in India to further Indo-German cooperation and to disseminate information to all potentially interested entrepreneurs and manufacturers in Germany about business and investment opportunities in India.

GIRT facilitates business relations between India and Germany. Every two months, Indian and German businessmen and corporate leaders meet in a casual atmosphere. The objective of the GIRT is to spread information about India and the facilitate of Indo-German business ties. Apart from this, cultural and social activities relating to India are being supported by the participants of the Indo-German 'Stammtisch. GIRT , Stammtisch are regularly held at several cities. Additional, Stammtisch's in India are in the course of formation. There are about 3000 individuals of the Indo-German business scene under the umbrella of GIRT. GIRT has a dense network of about 20 offices throughout Germany and 3 offices in India (Delhi, Coimbatore and Pune).

Germany Trade and Invest

Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI) is the economic development agency of the Federal Republic of Germany. With more than 50 offices in Germany and abroad, and its network of partners throughout the world, GTAI supports German companies setting up in foreign markets, promotes Germany as a business location, and assists foreign companies setting up in Germany. GTAI provides comprehensive export market information to enable Germany's export-oriented SME sector to know its markets and the import regulations and characteristics of its target countries. GTAI experts analyse the latest trends and developments in all strategic growth markets. Its database is updated daily and offers a diverse variety of status reports and analyses with around 3,000 new articles each year. Its standardized information range presents the basic knowledge for foreign business planning and implementation in important markets for market comparison. GTAI also offers information on opening new markets.

GTAI advises foreign investors locating in Germany. GTAI industry experts identify future themes that position Germany as an attractive business and technology location for international businesses. Investment streams, international industry trends, and market and R&D potential are analysed. This data is used to provide information for potential investors. GTAI addresses foreign companies active in strategic industry sectors in order to increase investment interest in Germany. For specific investment plans, its experts support foreign companies from the decision-making phase to market entry, right up to setting up in Germany. GTAI promotes the strengths of the German economy abroad in order to maintain this position through an effective communication strategy, excellently coordinated instruments and the right mix of its own and external content. GTAI also promotes the internationalisation of the East German economy through activities that market Eastern Germany as a business location to the world, bundled together under the 'Powerhouse Eastern Germany' umbrella brand.

GTAI provides direct access to all of the relevant actors in the German economy by the virtue of its relationships with a number of partners, which include a number of commerce chambers, Federal ministries and business associations. Thus, GTAI is an extensive organization that promotes the country in terms of its trade with other countries and investment from other countries.

HTGF

The High-Tech Gründerfonds (HTGF) is a public-private venture capital investment firm based in Bonn, Germany. HTGF is an early-stage seed investor, focused on young, high potential high-tech start-ups. The seed financing is provided to allow start-ups to take their ideas through the prototyping phase up to the market launch. Typically, HTGF invests €600,000 in the seed stage, with the potential for up to a total of €2 million per portfolio company in follow-on financing. Investors in this public/private partnership include the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy, the KfW Banking Group, as well as strategic corporate investors including ALTANA, BASF, Bayer, B. Braun, Robert Bosch, Deutsche Post DHL, Deutsche Telekom, SAP, Carl Zeiss, etc. HTGF has about EUR 576 million under management in two funds (€272 million HTGF I, €304 million HTGF II).

HTGF provides technology expertise through specialists in its investment management team, which is a large network of growth capital investors, members of industry, etc. It has financed about 400 companies since its inception in 2005. More than €1 billion of additional capital has been raised into its portfolio in about 940 follow-on rounds of financing. Moreover, it has successfully exited 64 of its portfolio companies. The sectors under the purview of HTGF are Information and Communication Technology, Application Software, Internet, Consumer goods and E-commerce, Life Science, Material Science, Healthcare, Medical Engineering, Pharmacy/Drug Development, Biotechnology, Diagnostics, Chemistry, Medical Technology, Regenerative Energies, Application Software, Automation, Photonics, Hardware Technology, Robotics, Chemical processes, Electronics, Microelectronics, Micro Systems Engineering, Sensor Technology, Cleantech, Electromobility, Manufacturing Technology, Manufacturing Technologies, Sensor Technology, Water, Measurement technology, etc.

HTGF seeks to invest in German companies, which have less than 50 employees and that have a turnover of less than €10 million. It seeks to acquire 15 percent stake in its portfolio companies (nominal, without company valuation). It seeks to invest in small and middle-sized businesses and holds its investments for seven years and usually acts as the lead investor.

The main criterion from obtaining funding from HTGF is a realistic and meaningful business plan for a technology related business idea. Another important factor is the entrepreneurial team that implements the idea. Lastly, there has to be a clear proof of the business concept or business plan showing how the team intends to implement the idea. Business plans with a high level of innovation, a sustainable USP and clear consumer value proposition are given preference over the rest. Along with providing seed funding for eligible and promising companies, it also helps to establish contacts between founders, investors and multipliers, for example, through its own events such as the High-Tech Partnering Conference or through the HTGF network. It provides additional expertise; helps with management issues, recruitment, follow-up financing, etc.

Indian Angel Network

Indian Angel Network is a network of Angel investors keen to invest in early-stage businesses which have potential to create disproportionate value. The members of the Network are leaders in the Entrepreneurial Eco-System as they have had strong operational experience as CEOs or a background of creating new and successful ventures. They share an intention to create scale and value for start-up ventures. Started in April 2006 in New Delhi, the Indian Angel Network, in addition to money, provides constant access to high-quality mentoring, vast networks and inputs on strategy as well as execution. The Network members, because of their background are better able to assess the potential and risks at the early stage.

Some of the key features of the Network are that it has a strong entrepreneurial and operational background of investors who are willing to invest their money and time, it has the ability to leverage a vast network, it has a comparatively simple term sheet, and it gives quick feedback on its investment decision. The Network invests in a wide spectrum of domains that include agriculture, e-commerce, education, financial services, gaming, healthcare, IT, internet, lifestyle, manufacturing, etc. Along with the post investment service, it also gives detailed guidelines to aspiring start-ups for preparing themselves for discussions with the members of the Network.

The Network looks at investing up to $ 1 million, with an average of about $ 400-600 thousand and exiting over a 3-to-5-year period through a strategic sale. The Network may consider investments over a million dollars but is only likely to do so through syndication.

Indian Angel Network has partnerships with organisations such as The Indus Entrepreneurs (TIE), National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), The Indian Venture Capitalist Association (IVCA), 10000 Start-ups, SINE IIT Mumbai and Plugin that are geared to play a vital role in building the entrepreneurial ecosystems in India. Along with its partners, The Network aims to provide entrepreneurs across the country with a platform to interact with successful entrepreneurs and established professionals and receive their guidance towards building a quality organization.

The Indian Angel Network is thus an ideal nexus of investors sharing the passion of investing and augmenting the potential of young start-ups and entrepreneurs and thereby contributes to the society and nation. There is a vast space for the development of not only such national but also international networks.

Indian Business Centre Stuttgart

The Indian Business Centre (IBC) Stuttgart offers subsidized office space to Indian mid-sized companies or family-owned businesses. It offers a smooth transition for Indian companies into Germany via its established networks. Headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, the office of IBC is located in the same building as that of the Indo-German Society and the Honorary Consulate of India which is the host of the German Indian Round Table in Stuttgart. Thus, the location creates a German Indian meeting and melting point for business, science and culture.

In the process of establishing office in Germany, IBC connects entrepreneurs with many of its contacts in the following sectors to speed up the process:

- Registration of company
- Residence permit, Insurance and others
- Legal and Tax
- Consulting and arranging of financial support and founders' loans
- Apartment search, assisting with daily operations in the office (Translations, German courses, Internal contacts)
- IT support in case of any kind of computer or internet problems
- English speaking staff

- Intercultural connections
- Indian food and lodging on demand

It gives a detailed description of the prices for the above facilities on its website.

In a nutshell, the primary objective of IBC is to help Indian start-ups/established businesses to set up the basic infrastructure needed for getting their businesses operational in Germany. Looking at the small (but important) spectrum of services provided by the Business Centre, it can be inferred that there is a little promise for the Indian start-ups looking forward to penetrating into the European market through the IBC in other cities and countries.

Indo-German Chamber of Commerce

Indo-German Chamber of Commerce or Auslandshandelskammer (AHK) Indien is a German foreign Chamber of Commerce that provides business solutions through its experience, connections and services to companies interested in setting up business connections with India or Germany. Established in 1956, today the Chamber has over six thousand Indian and German members, over a hundred professionals and is the largest bi-national German foreign Chamber of Commerce (among 130 German Chamber offices in 90 countries) as well as the largest Chamber of Commerce in India. It has a strong presence in India with its head office in Mumbai and branch offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune and a liaison office in Düsseldorf, Germany. With its long-standing history, qualified team and innumerable contacts and connections, the Commerce has played a major role in advancing corporate as well as cultural understanding between India and Germany.

The Chamber offers support to companies entering new markets in India or Germany in terms of recruiting staff, legal advice, event management, trade fair management and translations at fees based on a cost-recovery basis. It offers various tools for doing the background research before setting up any business in terms of a wide range of books, directories, brochures and practical guidebooks containing information on investment in India and Germany providing insights with regard to Indo-German cooperation, trade and investments, thus aiding its business plans. The chamber carries out tailor-made research which includes location analysis, market potential analysis, competition analysis, industry reports, etc. for businesses in cooperation with market research experts thus enabling them to competently develop a profound market entry strategy.

The Chamber is traditionally a members' association wherein Indian and German members come together on the basis of a voluntary membership to create a unique and exclusive network to promote the exchange of information and experience, and to make business contacts. The Chamber has cooperation with other AHKS abroad as well as Chambers of Commerce and Industry within Germany to set up India Desk at the Chambers to seek business contacts not only in Germany, but also in other countries.

Invest India

Invest India is the official investment promotion and facilitation agency of the Government of India, mandated to facilitate investments into India. It is envisaged to be the first point of reference for potential investors. Headquartered in New Delhi, India, Invest India has been operational since early 2010. With around 60 people on its rolls, Invest India works closely with the Prime Minister's Office, the External Affairs Ministry, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Government of India), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and State Governments in assisting investors.

The core mandate of Invest India is investment promotion and facilitation. The team of domain and functional experts provides sector-and state-specific inputs, and hand-holding support to investors through the entire investment cycle, from pre-investment decision-making to after-care. It assists with location identification, expediting regulatory approvals, facilitating meetings with relevant government and corporate officials, and also provides aftercare services that include initiating remedial action on problems faced by investors. All facilitation and hand-holding support to investors under the 'Make in India' initiative is being provided by Invest India.

In about a year, Invest India has been able to guide a clutch of big and small investors keen to invest in India. It has become a one-stop window that handles both global and domestic investors from the moment they conceive a business idea to setting up their units. It has helped big-ticket names such as Wanda, Marks and Spencer, Indo-UK Healthcare and IKEA to get their businesses going in India. It has also assisted small companies like Sagar Defence Engineering, which received orders of Unmanned Marine Surface Vehicles from the Indian Navy, and Gujarat-based Devashree Aluminium.

Invest India is a valuable point of contact between international companies investing in India and the various departments and state bodies across the country. Two of the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's pet programmes — ‘Make in India’ (to turn India into a manufacturing hub) and ‘Start-up India’ — are being driven by Invest India. The Start-up India hub within Invest India will be a single point of contact for the entire ecosystem and enable knowledge exchange and access to funding. It has been assisting potentially big investors as soon as they land in India, to smoothen their investments in India. This kind of investment support exists in many business-friendly parts of the world.

KIT Incubator

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology is one of the premier educational institutes in Germany. Along with a large number of highly capable engineers, KIT also nurtures a lot of entrepreneurs through its various institutes working proactively in collaboration with the industry. KIT Incubator is one such initiative by the institute to transform the innovations of its students into marketable products and services. KIT Incubator was established in 2008 to provide support and accelerate the successful development of chosen ideas. Fully equipped laboratories and offices are available for these entrepreneurial projects. As this offer was noticed so positively and the first ‘KIT-High-tech-Incubator’ is temporarily full, another building was put into operation in 2012 with offices and meeting rooms as an extension of the incubator.

The total floor space available at the incubator is 1850 m2. About 60 percent of this space is reserved for KIT start-up projects. These spaces are available KIT-wide to selected spin-offs with pronounced laboratory requirements. The term ‘start-up project’ here includes both start-ups in the pre-start-up phase, as well as young companies that are already implementing their ideas. About 10 start-up projects can be accommodated in the incubator as of now.

Let’s Venture

With a belief that a connected ecosystem of investors, business experts, mentors and fellow founders can create significant business leverage for a start-up, LetsVenture was founded in Singapore in 2013-14. It later added a couple of more offices in India in Bangalore and Delhi.

Let's Venture enables start-ups looking to raise seed/angel money to create investment-ready profiles online and connect to accredited investors. It also allows start-ups to get their business plans reviewed by its experts as well as connect to mentors. Once a start-up has verbal commitments from investors, it helps them in the funding closure process through its 'Commitment-to-Closure' package. The package takes care of the closure of the term sheet and shareholders' agreement, and complete legal & financial due diligence. Started with a small team of 5, the organization has 32 people on board as of now.

LetsVenture connects start-ups with global angels, VCs, and Start-up programmes. In the year 2014, 23 Start-ups got funded through LetsVenture, raising over $6.5 million angel money and over 4900 plus connections were made between Start-ups and Investors. Even for Start-ups that are not fundraising, it provides a host of services like job portal, access to Start-up competitions, a community of founders, mentors, and advisors, etc.

LetsVenture acts as a platform for joining an active group of Founders, Advisors, and Mentors. It allows posting job openings for the core management team of start-ups. It facilitates start-ups to apply for incubators, accelerators, and start-up competitions, connect with various service providers, and get featured as a trending start-up.

Thus, LetsVenture is a one stop shop for entrepreneurs for their requirements during early stages of their start-ups and for individuals looking for adding value to the entrepreneurial ecosystem by acting as either investors or mentors. The organization is a platform for not only Indian start-ups but also for start-ups all over the world and currently has start-ups registered from US and Singapore as well.

National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN)

The National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN) has been established by the Wadhwani Foundation in 2003 in Bengaluru, India. The Wadhwani foundation, established in 2000, has come up with a number of such networks such as the Policy Research Network (PRN), the

Global Skills Network (GSN) with an objective of accelerating entrepreneurship and economic development in emerging economies through large-scale job creation.

Since its inception, NEN has built a network with 600 educational institutes, 4000 mentors and 3200 faculty working to inspire, educate and support emerging entrepreneurs. A colossal number of practicing entrepreneurs and start-ups are supported through NEN's programmes that facilitate learning through hundreds of short videos from experienced entrepreneurs, angels, VCs along with longer video courses and blog posts. Since inception, NEN has resulted in 2,000 new start-ups with more than 12 thousand direct and more than 50 thousand indirect jobs and is now tracking more than a thousand new companies each year. Through NEN, entrepreneurs are supported with series of tailor-made targeted programmes delivered by nation-wide network of institutional partners, experts, mentors and entrepreneurship resources. NEN's key programmes (whose functions are evident from their names) include 'Access to Mentors', 'Access to Funds', 'Tools for Growth', 'Student Entrepreneurship Development', etc. Thus, NEN can be looked upon as an organization that provides formal education with its entrepreneurship development model to aspiring entrepreneurs and also supports existing start-ups through mentoring, networking and skill-building programmes to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Similar networks have been established in Europe by various organisations which depict the global applicability of the concept and the need for forming such international networks.

Rocket Internet

Rocket Internet builds and invests in internet companies that take proven online business models to new, fast-growing markets. Rocket Internet focuses on five industry sectors of online and mobile retail services that make up a significant share of consumer spending: Food & Groceries, Fashion, General Merchandise and Home & Living and Travel.

The company, founded in 2007, provides office space to new companies at its headquarters in Berlin, with IT support, marketing services and access to investors. As of 2016, it has more than 36,000 employees (at the end of 2015) across its worldwide network of companies, which consists of over 100 entities active in 110 countries. It also has regional internet groups in Africa, Asia Pacific and the Middle East in order to bundle local market and business model insights, facilitate regional commercial, strategic and investment partnerships.

Rocket Internet follows the strategy of building companies based on proven Internet-based business models. It provides start-ups with infrastructure to quickly build companies in complex markets, technology that gives plug-and-play solutions, and exposure to a large network

of similar companies across the globe. In addition to the companies in the five industry sectors mentioned above, Rocket Internet owns stakes in companies at varying maturity stages, ranging from recently launched models to companies that are in the process of establishing leadership positions or still expanding their geographic reach. Rocket Internet's investments include shares in renowned companies such as Carmudi, Delivery Hero, Foodpanda, Jumia, Jabong etc.
Internet is going further and faster into daily life. This is the opportunity seen by Rocket Internet with a goal to capture the largest possible share of consumer online spending in its markets. However, the complexity of these diverse markets is a major challenge seen by the company while expanding globally.

Rocket Internet has been criticized for its 'copy-cat' way of copying business models proven in the US or China and adapting them to high-potential markets outside those two countries. The company's performance in India hasn't been impressive, which is evident from the fact that since the start of 2016, it has sold Jabong and FabFurnish, two of its largest investments in the country, in a fire sale; its other holdings, Foodpanda, a food-tech company, and Printvenue, a personalised printing business, are struggling to survive. However, it might be too early to come to any conclusions about the global performance of the company and its business model.

SINE

Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), hosted by the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai (IIT Mumbai), is an umbrella for the promotion of entrepreneurship at the prestigious institute. SINE administers a business incubator that provides support for technology-based entrepreneurship. Set up in 2004, SINE was the formalisation of an IT incubator pilot started in 2000 with the support of its alumni. The incubator is a platform to support technology start-ups founded by the IIT Mumbai community or that are based on IIT Mumbai technologies. Thus, SINE extends the role of IIT Mumbai by facilitating the conversion of R&D into entrepreneurial ventures.

SINE has an infrastructure spread over 10,000 square feet and can incubate 15-17 companies at a time. SINE is supported by several government departments such as Department of Science and Technology, Department of Information Technology, & Technology Development Board.
SINE incubates early-stage entrepreneurial technology-based ventures. It helps start-ups create physical infrastructure and support systems necessary for business incubation activities. It facilitates networking with professional resources, including mentors, experts, investors, industry professionals, consultants, and advisors from a wide spectrum of technologies. By virtue of its strong networking and experience, it helps start-ups identify technologies/innovations that have potential for commercial ventures and can be converted into a profitable, scalable, and sustainable business. Most importantly, it promotes and fosters the spirit of entrepreneurship through activities that facilitate knowledge creation, innovation, and entrepreneurial initiatives.

The SINE team consists of students, researchers and professors from IIT Mumbai, and the governing board is comprised of IIT Mumbai faculty members and reputed industrialists, who bring in technological and industrial expertise in directing its activities. Thus, SINE works to bridge the gap between academic research labs and business enterprises and helps technology entrepreneurs transform their ideas and concepts into market viable products and services.
A strong alumni base, the 'IIT' brand and similar institutes established in other IITs of the country in various domains present myriads of opportunities for budding technologists to penetrate and survive the highly innovative and competitive Indian market.

TiE Deutschland

TiE Deutschland was founded in 2011 as the German chapter of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE). The author was the founding President of the organization. TiE was founded in 1992 in Silicon Valley by a group of successful entrepreneurs, corporate executives, and senior professionals with roots in the Indus region. There are currently 13,000 members, including over 2,500 charter members in 61 chapters across 18 countries. TiE's mission is to foster entrepreneurship globally through mentoring, networking, education, incubating, and funding. About 25 start-ups, including Food Panda, Red Bus, Pay Stand, Silvernest, etc. have been impacted by TiE.

One of the prime objectives of TiE is mentoring start-ups in their fundamental stages. With a belief that mentoring is an essential part of building an entrepreneurial culture, there are several mentoring programmes at TiE Chapters. TiE Global has teamed up with MentorCloud to offer TiE mentors and mentees access to connect on a Global level. This cloud-based platform enables members within an organization to collaborate and support one another to achieve their personal, academic, and professional aspirations. Members can easily connect as subject-matter experts, mentors, mentees, and peers, around specific goals and areas of mutual interest.

One of TiE's unique features is its efforts to nurture the spirit of Entrepreneurship in school and high-school students who will be spearheading the entrepreneurial eco-system of the country and the world in a few years. TiE Institute is an on-line education portal which offers courses to up and coming entrepreneurs all over the world. TiE Talks is a series of videos from the TiE Network which showcase TiE's global footprint and serve to educate the next generation of entrepreneurs. The TiE Young Entrepreneurs (TYE) Program focuses on teaching entrepreneurship to high school students and helping them discover the rewards and challenges of becoming an entrepreneur.

TiE runs numerous angel investment groups and funding forums throughout its network. TiE runs numerous angel investment groups and funding forums throughout its network. TiE hosts a number of incubators and accelerators throughout our network. These start-up hubs offer expert mentorship, resources like office space and legal counsel, and even seed money.
Thus TiE can be looked upon as an organization working in almost all the domains of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, viz., education, mentoring, networking, funding and incubation on a global level.

Wellington Partners

Wellington Partners Venture Capital GmbH is a pan-European venture capital firm specializing in seed stage, start-ups, early stage, and growth capital investments. It primarily invests in the technology and life sciences sector. Founded in 1991, it has offices in London, Munich and Zurich.

In the technology sector, Wellington Partners are active investors in two very specific sectors on a global scale – Food and Agriculture Technology and Artificial Intelligence. They have been tapping the $7 trillion food market with an approach different from the current trend of investing in the food delivery space, anticipating a wider, more positive explosion of disruption and innovation in the food system. Similarly, they look forward to invest in innovative teams leveraging breakthrough defensible intellectual property in the expanding and improving AI domain. They have invested in about 69 companies in the technology sector.

In the Life Sciences sector, they are active investors in the Therapeutics, Medtech, Diagnostics, Digital Health and Biotechnology. They primarily invest in seed to post-seed stages with ticket sizes of €1 to 10 million. With more than €200 million AUM dedicated to Life Sciences,

Wellington Partners has invested in more than 30 Life Science companies in Europe and beyond till date. Along with providing funding Wellington Partners also engage in long-term commitment and active collaboration the start-ups they invest in. They offer strategic support to entrepreneurs on a board level. Entrepreneurs backed by them have access to the knowledge and advice of members of the Wellington life science team and to their global scientific and commercial network. In a nutshell, they organise financing rounds, accelerate preclinical and clinical development, regulatory approval processes, and drive successful market entry into the most important healthcare markets in Europe, the U.S. and Asia.

The scope of the company's investment is limited to Europe and in special circumstances, US as of now. However, looking at the global importance, applications and potential of their domains of investment, there is colossal scope of internationalisation of its business across other continents.

Appendix H: Data collected for each organization on Start-up internationalisation support

		"Yes" total	Group sum	Org-1	Org-2	Org-3	Org-4	Org-5	Org-6	Org-7	Org-8	Org-9	Org-10
A	**About the Organization**												
A1	Short name			C-Forum	CiE	BW-Int.	EBTC	GTAI	R-Internet	BAND	HTFG	W-Part	GIRT
A2	Head office location	10 DE, 9 IND, 1US		Karlsruhe	Karlsruhe	Stuttgart	New Delhi	Berlin	Berlin	Essen	Bonn	London/ Munich	Berlin
A3	Offices in India for German Institution	3		No	No	-	New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata	No	No	No	No	-	Yes (Delhi, Coimbatore, Pune)
A4	Office in Germany for India Institutions	2		-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-
A5	Offices in other countries	6		No	No	Yes (China)	Brussels, Belgium	China, US, UK, Russia, France, South Korea, Australia, Japan, Canada	No	No	No	Yes (Germany, Switzerland)	No
A6	Start of Indian operations for German institutions	2 out of 10		No	-	No	2009	-	2011	-	No	No	-
A7	Start of German operations for Indian Institutions	3 out of 9		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A8	Type of organization			Business / Industry Association	Education Institution	Government Institution	Government Institution	Government Institution	Accelerator	Angel Association	Venture Capital	Venture Capital	Business / Industry Association
A9	Specific sector / activities			IT, High-Tech	Tech Start-ups	None	Energy, Environment, ICT, Mobility	Foreign Investment in Germany	e-commerce	None	None	Technology, Life Sciences	Business Information Sharing
A10	Supported by - Govt, banks etc.	12		No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	**Market Strategy Services - value discovery**		**144**										
B1	Discovery service	16		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B2	Economic and financial due diligence	10		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B3	Political due diligence	9		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
B4	Legal and regulatory due diligence	9		No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B5	Sector specific due diligence	18		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B6	Product, services or business feasibility	16		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B7	Long term sustainability potential	12		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B8	Market vision, strategy and roadmap	13		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B9	Value case (cost and benefit)	9		No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B10	Governance	8		No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
B11	Market entry strategy / approach i.e. JV	16		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B12	Test marketing	8		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
B13	Others												
C	**Knowledge support - Value discovery**		**81**										
C1	Publications	13		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
C2	News letters	12		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
C3	Interactive digital platform	11		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
C4	Networking platform - own	19		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C5	Networking platform- connect support	1		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C6	Delegation visits - only regular ones	16		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
C7	Training centre	9		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	No	No	No	No
D	**Partner development - Value realization**		**25**										
D1	Partner framework	3		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
D2	Partner search	6		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
D3	Partner due diligence	5		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
D4	Partner selection	5		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
D5	Partner onboarding	3		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
D6	Partner / alliance governance model	3		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
E	**Investment support - Value realization**		**25**										
E1	Direct investment funds	4		No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
E2	Fund syndication support - Banks etc.	4		No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
E3	Funds syndication- PE, VC etc.	6		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
E4	Funding option information's	10		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
E5	Others	1		Assistance for							Assistance for		
F	**Setting up of business and Business development- Value realization**		**58**										
F1	Own incubation centre	3		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
F2	Support for finding land, office etc.	5		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
F3	Set-up of company	8		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
F4	Legal inhouse	5		No	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
F5	Legal support via connect	1		-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-
F6	Tax and audit - inhouse	5		No	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
F7	Tax and audit - support via connect	1		-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-
F8	Recruitment and team building	5		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
F9	Business culture set-up support	8		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
F10	PR and Press services - own	9		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F11	PR and Press services - support via connect	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F12	Translation services - inhouse	3		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	NA	No	No	No	Yes
F13	Translation services - support via connect	0		No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F14	Market immersion service	5		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
G	**Ongoing support - value optimization (in addition to what could be derived from above i.e. Legal)**		**11**										
G1	Alliance management	3		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
G2	Market change information's	8		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

		"Yes" total	Group sum	Org-11	Org-12	Org-13	Org-14	Org-15	Org-16	Org-17	Org-18	Org-19	Org-20
A	**About the Organization**												
A1	Short name			NEN	FICCI	SINE	Inv-Ind	GC	IAN	Let-Ven	TiE	IGCC	IBC-S
A2	Head office location	10 DE, 9 IND, 1US		Bengaluru	New Delhi	Mumbai	New Delhi	New Delhi	New Delhi	India	Sunnyvale	Mumbai	Stuttgart
A3	Offices in India for German Institution	3		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune	No
A4	Office in Germany for India Institutions	2		No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Düsseldorf	-
A5	Offices in other countries	6		No	Yes (Germany, UK, USA, Italy, China, Japan, Nepal)	-	No	No	UK	India	No	No	No
A6	Start of Indian operations for German institutions	2 out of 10		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
A7	Start of German operations for Indian Institutions	3 out of 9		-	2012	No	No	-	No	-	2011	1956	-
A8	Type of organization			Entrepreneursh ip Association	Business / Industry Association	Education Institution	Government Institution	Accelerator	Angel Association	Venture Capital	Entrepreneursh ip Association	Business / Industry Association	Accelerator
A9	Specific sector / activities			Entrepreneursh ip Education	None	Technology Start-ups	Foreign Investment in India	None	None	None	Technology	None	Office space for start-ups
A10	Supported by - Govt, banks etc.	12		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
B	**Market Strategy Services - value discovery**		**144**										
B1	Discovery service	16		Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B2	Economic and financial due diligence	10		No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
B3	Political due diligence	9		No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
B4	Legal and regulatory due diligence	9		No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
B5	Sector specific due diligence	18		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B6	Product, services or business feasibility	16		Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B7	Long term sustainability potential	12		Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
B8	Market vision, strategy and roadmap	13		Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B9	Value case (cost and benefit)	9		No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
B10	Governance	8		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
B11	Market entry strategy / approach i.e. JV	16		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B12	Test marketing	8		Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
B13	Others											Yes	
C	**Knowledge support - Value discovery**		**81**										
C1	Publications	13		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
C2	News letters	12		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
C3	Interactive digital platform	11		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
C4	Networking platform - own	19		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C5	Networking platform- connect support	1		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	No
C6	Delegation visits - only regular ones	16		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
C7	Training centre	9		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
D	**Partner development - Value realization**		**11**										
D1	Partner framework	2		No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
D2	Partner search	5		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
D3	Partner due diligence	1		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
D4	Partner selection	1		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
D5	Partner onboarding	1		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
D6	Partner / alliance governance model	1		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
E	**Investment support - Value realization**		**20**										
E1	Direct investment funds	2		No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		No
E2	Fund syndication support - Banks etc.	4		No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
E3	Funds syndication- PE, VC etc.	4		No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No
E4	Funding option information's	9		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
E5	Others	1											
F	**Setting up of business and Business development- Value realization**		**59**										
F1	Own incubation centre	3		No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		No
F2	Support for finding land, office etc.	5		No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		Yes
F3	Set-up of company	8		No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F4	Legal inhouse	7		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F5	Legal support via connect	2		Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
F6	Tax and audit - inhouse	7		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F7	Tax and audit - support via connect	2		Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
F8	Recruitment and team building	4		Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
F9	Business culture set-up support	6		Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
F10	PR and Press services - own	6		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
F11	PR and Press services - support via connect	2		-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
F12	Translation services - inhouse	2		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
F13	Translation services - support via connect	1		-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
F14	Market immersion service	4		Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
G	**Ongoing support - value optimization (in addition to what could be derived from above i.e. Legal)**		**7**										
G1	Alliance management	1		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
G2	Market change information's	6		Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Appendix I: Interview questions for the Start-up founder interviews

Introduction:

- Research question: What are the requirements of start-ups to internationalise, leveraging the co-evolutionary entrepreneurship model?
- Research method: deep interviews and case study, grounded theory
- Anonymity: Can we tell the name of the organization or the interviewee? If not, everything will be anonymized.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. They should be in person but can be via Skype.

Clarification questions (if not visible on the website)

- What is your product? Who are your customers?
- Where did you internationalise?

Open questions: Focus on past events

- What was the biggest challenge with internationalising the start-up? (In which stage did it take place? At what time did it take place? How was it met?)
- What would have helped to overcome the challenge?
- What was the most straightforward task when internationalising the start-up?
- What would have allowed you to internationalise more quickly?
- What would have allowed you to internationalise more effectively?
- Focus on the decision-making process.
- What was the reason to internationalise?
- What was the most important point in the decision-making process to internationalise?
- What would have helped to make the decision quicker?
- What would have helped to make the decision more effective?
- Focus on current events.
- What is currently the biggest challenge in running an international start-up?
- What do you do to overcome it?
- What could help to overcome it?
- Focus on country-level.
- Why did you decide to start in these countries?
- Why did you not start in India/Germany?

- What other countries could you imagine internationalising in?
- What holds you back?
- What would facilitate to start in these countries as well?
- Focus on institutions.
- What was the most helpful service/ institution during the internationalisation?
- What could be improved in that institution/ service?
- Do you feel an institution/ service is missing in the start-up internationalisation landscape?
- What institutions would have helped for a quicker internationalisation?
- What institutions would have helped for a more effective internationalisation?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Knowledge

- What were the challenges with regard to knowledge?
- What knowledge was the most helpful during internationalisation?
- What knowledge would have helped you if you had had it earlier?
- Do you feel there is a knowledge gap that needs to be bridged?
- What knowledge would you like to have for a quicker internationalisation?
- What knowledge would you like to have for a more effective internationalisation?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Resources

- What were the challenges with regard to resources?
- What resources were the most helpful during the internationalisation?
- What resources would have helped you if you had had it earlier?
- Do you feel there is a systematic lack of resources that should be addressed?
- What resources would you like to have for a quicker internationalisation?
- What resources would you like to have for a more effective internationalisation?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Capabilities

- What were the challenges with regard to capability building?
- Which capabilities were the most important during the internationalisation?
- Which capabilities would have helped you if you had had it earlier?
- Do you feel there is a systematic lack of capabilities that should be addressed?
- Which capabilities would you like to have for a quicker internationalisation?
- Which capabilities would you like to have for a more effective internationalisation?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Channels (distribution)

- Were there challenges with regard to the distribution channels?
- What would have helped regarding distribution channels?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Channels (marketing)

- Were there challenges with regard to the marketing channels?
- What would have helped with regard to marketing channels?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Law

- Were there challenges with regard to the law?
- What would have helped with regard to the law?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Organizational Structure

- Were there challenges with regard to the organizational structure?
- What would have helped with regard to the organizational structure?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Funding

- Were there challenges with funding?
- What would have helped with regard to funding?

Deeper Questions (Optional): People

- Were there challenges with regard to finding the right personnel?
- What would have helped with finding the right personnel?

Deeper Questions (Optional): Culture

- Were there challenges with regard to culture?
- What would have helped with regard to culture?

General questions

- When was the start-up founded?
- When was the first international office opened?
- Where was the first office/location abroad?
- When was the first office/location established in Germany (for Indian and non-German companies)?
- When was the first office/location established in India (for German and non-German companies)?
- What triggered the internationalisation?
- How was the internationalisation started? How did internationalisation evolve?

- Did you have any partners to support? (look at membership associations, partner logos, etc.)?
- Did you have any special funding for internationalisation? (see in history, look at partners, and do some internet research)?
- Is there a chief in India / Germany from the nationality of the origin country nationality or local?

Appendix J: A brief description of the start-ups selected for the interview

Aquasphere / Idropan

Tullio Servida, CEO of the Italian company Idropan, and Vijay Sampath, CEO of the Indian company Aquasphere, have been working together since 2012, and they are planning to found a joint venture. From the technical side, a professor from the Indian Institute of Technology Madras is the advisor. Their products are small water treatment plants for homes, hotels, and small businesses. In India, they plan to partner with NGOs and the government to bring these products to small villages without clean water.

Capermint

An Indian company founded in 2014 by Vivek Shah. They had their first international office in 2015, in Mexico. They opened another office in the US, their partners being former customers, mainly of Indian origin. Their customers are from around the world, among them Australian chefs. Capermint plans and executes the development of apps and mobile games for small companies and self-employed. They are currently looking to set up offices in European cities, but since the regulations demand prior investment, this is a difficult task.

Easy Smart Grid

Thomas Walter founded Easy Smart Grid in 2014 and has been looking for potential partners and investors. The venture is about giving the price signal with the current and aims at people consuming less when there is less energy in the grid and more when there is plenty. He has taken part in numerous conferences about the topic; however, has not yet found a partner to build the first minimal viable product.

Erhard Beer

In 2010, Christian Klemenz studied at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. During an entrepreneurship class, the idea was formed to sell a German beer in India. With his Indian classmate, he built up the business for the Indian market. Since then, the brand exports the beer in multiple countries, among them Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Spain, the US, Poland, New Zealand, Finland, and South Africa.

Greeneyca

In 2016, Peter Sinnott from the UK went to India for a project on predicting coffee production with satellite images. This was part of his studies in geography at a university in Montreal. Peter Sinnott knew a commodity trader who saw the potential of this idea and became his first potential customer. He went back to India to get more knowledge on coffee production. Together with his Finnish friend from university, he plans to set up the business in the months to come.

Poshaq

Yash Saxena had the initial idea for Poshaq – a recommendation system for fashion similar to the Amazon recommendation algorithm. Someone should be able to take a photo of a shirt and then ask the app for recommendations on what to buy and wear with it. Later, Riken Mehta, Nitesh Oswal, and Ruchit Dalwadi joined the founding team. They were admitted into the incubator of the CIIE, IIMA. Currently, they have Bestseller brands Vero Moda, Only, Shoppers Stop, and Jack and Jones as customers. If they are successful there, they plan to internationalise their start-up and are looking for advice on how to proceed with the internationalisation.

Prescrip

In 2009, Shekhar Rawtani did a one-month internship in Hungary in a pharmaceutical company. Unlike India, all the prescriptions out there were digitalized, and they were printed prescriptions with barcodes. This inspired the idea of a prescription application that learns from the doctors' habits, and he founded the company in 2014. Currently, the start-up is active only in India, but they plan to go international and target the United States and other markets.

PTV Group

In 1979, Hans Hubschneider and Michael Sahling founded PTV and developed the first computer program for site, distribution, and traffic planning. They founded their first international partner in 1989 in the Netherlands. Maintaining a global network of researchers, the company gradually expanded. Nowadays, they are active in multiple countries around the globe. The internationalisation took place through partnerships, joint ventures, or acquisitions.

Questerra

Founded in 2017, this start-up is just about to test and iterate on its business model. They plan to execute trips to India for professionals who want to get in contact with experienced professionals in India in their field. In the common room of a youth hostel in Bangalore, they constantly get feedback and iterate on their model. As a travel company, they aim to get customers from all over the world.

Siccas Guitars

Manuel and Mirco Sicca founded the start-up in 2012. The two brothers sell antique and professional guitars. Before, customers had to go to the guitar builders directly and were not able to compare a large variety of guitars. Siccas Guitars has all these guitars in one place where they can be tested and compared under the same acoustic conditions. In an international niche from day one, customers from around the world come to their shop in Karlsruhe.

Enchanting Travels

The idea for Enchanting Travels was developed during an entrepreneurship class at INSEAD, where Alexander Metzler and Parik Laxminarayan formed a team. Previously, during his studies in Singapore, Parik Laxminarayan had organised a trip to India with his classmates. During this trip, the students found India to be far different from their expectations, and they enjoyed travelling. When they were looking for possible business ideas for a start-up, Parik Laxminarayan connected this experience, and they developed the idea of executing individual trips to India. The business proved successful, but now the customers wished for more destinations. A former colleague of Alexander Metzler, Florian Keller, who had invested in Enchanting India, had the idea of a travel company. However, the concept being slightly different from Enchanting travels, it proved unfeasible. Florian Keller asked Alexander Metzler if they had planned to open a branch in yet another country and proposed to head that branch.

After several talks and negotiations, they founded Enchanting Africa with Florian Keller holding 50% and Enchanting Travels holding 50%. This was the first branch outside India, which proved that the business model worked in other destinations as well. Later, they opened Enchanting South America, this time with a managing director instead of a cofounder. They felt that having a cofounder in one place is different from having a manager, as the former is more dedicated and passionate about the venture.

Appendix K: Author's curriculum vitae (CV) developed in early 2023

Ashutosh KUMAR

MANAGING DIRECTOR |GENERAL MANAGER | C-LEVEL -ROLES

Thought leader and Senior Executive with extensive global multicultural leadership in the Enterprise software and services business, including emerging technologies and across multiple sectors.

Entrepreneurial thinker/leader, supply chain expert, and change catalyst with a strong global network, who creates customer-centric scalable teams, organisations, and practices for the robust deployment of SAP platforms, cloud & digital transformations, and agile customer journeys.

- **Evangelizes digital innovation, adoption, and integration.** Defines enterprise digital strategy and designs high-level scalable architecture, roadmap, governance, and delivery team that facilitates value-based, client-focused outcomes.
- **Influences Board and C-level with credibility and gravitas**. Shapes strategic direction and establishes end-to-end commercially viable projects and programmes to accelerate operational performance, competitive advantage, margin, and ROI.
- **Drives revenue generation and profitability.** Builds and motivates high-performing world-class teams, incubates services, builds networks with digital / information technology leaders, and connects organizational dots for the acquisition and successful delivery of projects and programmes.

EXPERTISE | KEY SKILLS

&L Management | Sales & Business Development |Management Consulting | M &A | Strategy
SAP | Cloud | SaaS| Digital supply chain |Digital transformation | Technology Agenda |ERP
Program Management | Product Management | Agile | Change Management | Business Process
International business | Partner / Start-up Ecosystem Development| People / Talent Development
SAP S/4 | SAP Ariba | SAP IBP | SAP ByD | SAP Fieldglass

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ACCENTURE GMBH, GERMANY 2019 – 2022

SAP Business Unit Leader

Joined via the acquisition of Intrigo Systems Inc. and asked to lead the integration of Intrigo's EMEA business and develop a new business unit.

- **Acquisition Integration case leader.** Overall lead for integration (people, process, systems, customers) and owner of a 3-year acquisition business case, including leading the existing team and customers.
- **Set up an independent SAP S&P business unit.** Carved out teams to establish new units with their own P/L.
- **Drove business acquisition and delivery of SAP S/4 & S&P**. Currently leading 350+ strong practice with a high 2-digit €M P&L and 25+ clients. Account & program leadership of 4 key accounts.
- **Built ecosystem and innovation capabilities**. Cultivated SAP SE alliance relationships and built a portfolio of innovative services for market development, i.e., sustainability in the procurement business.
- **Assured digital supply chain planning transformations.** Mentor to the team and guide for business development/sales.

INTRIGO SYSTEMS INC. 2017 – 2019

Co-Founder and Managing Director - EMEA

Brought in to set up and found the EMEA business unit, define and execute strategy, and deliver cloud-based SAP S/4 and other SAP Digital supply chain solutions to customers. A truly entrepreneurial experience.

- **Launched Intrigo into EMEA.** Built a business case to cofound the EMEA business and drove the activities ground up from business development, sales, marketing, policies, processes, and governance structures, recruited a local team of 15, and categorized service portfolio and pricing.
- **Acquired 5+ net new clients, 10+ wins, and established** > 50 m€ pipeline. Leveraged ecosystem partners, identified targets, pitched solutions, negotiated contracts, and onboarded clients such as Richemont, Vestas, Grundfos, TE Connectivity.
- **Assured digital supply chain transformations delivery to budget and deadline.** Oversaw 6+ projects, overcame the challenges of a small player and leveraged larger US teams and offshore centres in India.
- **Built ecosystems & alliances**. Cultivated SAP SE alliance relationships and worked with them for market development, development of a network of smaller strategy consultancies & free-lance consultants. Worked with large system integrators for select clients.

SAP SE, GERMANY 2002 – 2017

Chief Business Consultant, EMEA 2013 – 2017

Handpicked to provide thought leadership, lead new business development, outline digital transformation agenda, and drive new technology adoption strategy, including Mobility, AI, IoT, Machine Learning, and Blockchain for €1,2B business unit.

- **Drove mindset change.** Hosted numerous workshops to educate senior managers and experts in SAP S/4 and other SAP solutions based on emerging technologies, including IoT, ML, Blockchain, and AI.
- **Augmented organizational capability.** Developed a learning model, built/enabled a network of 100+ SAP evangelists to establish trusted client relations, and delivered advisory services to secure software sales.
- **Onboarded 25 net new logos.** Engaged with 50+ top SAP accounts, led discovery sessions, strategically advised on tech, architected high-level solutions, and secured clients such as Heineken, BOSCH, and SKF.

- **Increased visibility and awareness of SAP offerings.** Presented events such as World Mobile Congress, Indo-German ICT Conference, SAP SAPPHIRE, and SAP FKOM.
- **Enhanced customer-centricity.** Led design thinking / value-driven approaches, launched Discovery, Planning & Centre of Expertise services that accelerated technology adoption and increased agility.
- **Boosted margin.** Joined a CEO-sponsored project to implement a commercial project management solution and led the roll-out of the 'one services' business model across EMEA.
- **Delivered software solutions and digital transformation assessments to 10+ strategic clients.** Governed global strategy and services delivery of advisory services of 1000+ organisations.

Director & Internal Strategy Consultant, EMEA 2007 – 2013

Member of the EMEA leadership team for SAP Digital Business Services with oversight of €500M Service unit operating across 12 markets. Acted as internal strategy consultant, leading a multidisciplinary team of five and matrix-managed client-facing teams of up to 150 across 20+ project portfolios. Presented at SAP events and kick-off meetings and collaborated with the current SAP CEO, CIO, and global/regional presidents.

- **Captured new customers and industry sectors.** Changed mindsets and strategically led 'game-changer' programme to introduce Cloud, IoT, SAP HANA, and Mobile services to 1,000+ business consultants.
- **Established €1BN SAP service business unit.** Co-led operating team for integration of Central EMEA and Rest of EMEA Services business and consolidated best-practice methodologies affecting 8,000 staff.
- **Doubled revenue growth in Asia-Pacific.** Researched the sector and developed a strategy for a custom development unit. Guided and advised in-country CxO leadership and supported implementation.
- **Turned €50M loss-making SAP Supply chain services unit into profitability.** Selected by the President to step in as interim manager, specify and execute the transformation roadmap and lead 200+ staff.
- **Increased competitiveness and profitability.** Defined and operationalised a global delivery model that fully leveraged and utilised India's Centre of Excellence talent pool to secure new and ongoing business.
- **Governed large innovation projects.** Led/advised strategic customer programmes, worked with customer CxOs, built relationships, and architected solutions for clients such as NOKIA, Telefonica, and Verizon.
- **Mobility monetization program.** Worked with presidents, researched market opportunities, and built a business case that resulted in the $5BN Sybase Inc. acquisition. Developed, led, and deployed the SAP Global Mobile Services business unit roadmap.
- **Boosted revenue generation and profitability.** As PMO head of €500M SAP Services unit, tracked performance, identified problems, led change initiatives, and set up resilient operational excellence and SaaS delivery models.

Product Manager 2002 – 2006

Responsible for product management within the SAP Digital Supply Chain organization and the SAP Business ByDesign Solution Management.

- **SAP APO Customer ramp-up (100+ clients).** SAP APO (Advanced planning and optimization) Demo system management, escalation management, and Supply Chain subject matter expert.

- **Launched innovative products to market.** Co-authored Platform Leadership @SAP, developed Web 2.0 integration concept, and created/implemented industry roadmap for SAP Business ByDesign.

SCHINDLER INFORMATIK AG, SWITZERLAND – SR. SAP CONSULTANT & PM 2000 – 2001
SIEMENS BUSINESS SERVICES, INDIA – SAP CONSULTANT & MANAGER 1997 – 2000
SIEMENS LTD., INDIA – PROJECT & SALES EXECUTIVE 1995 – 1997
TATA STEEL, INDIA – SENIOR PROJECTS & OPERATIONS OFFICER 1992 – 1995

EDUCATION | TRAINING

In-Board Certification Programme, INSEAD, 2019 **| EMBA, (Financial Times Scholar),** INSEAD, 2005

CPIM, APICS, 1997 | **Bachelor of Electrical Engineering,** National Institute of Technology India, 1992

Trained in SAP Products, Services, and Sales leadership, Delivery management, Project management, High-performance team management, Design Thinking, User experience, Logistics, SME business

VOLUNTEER/BOARD & ADVISORY POSITIONS / ANGEL INVEST

President at INSEAD Alumni Association (IAAG), Germany 2022 – Present
Angel Investor 12 start-ups, including AI, Blockchain, Biotech, Healthcare 2012 – Present
Judge at INSEAD Venture Competition 2015 – Present
Advisory Board member at Boutique M & A Advisory 2019 – Present
Board member at INSEAD Alumni Association (IAAG), Germany 2017 – Present
Founding President/Board Chair @ TiE Deutschland (not for profit), Germany 2011 – 2017
Guest Lectures, including KIT, INSEAD 2013 – 2016

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages: English, German (limited) & Hindi,

Author: Digital Transformation @Digitalist Magazine, Co-evolutionary entrepreneurship @G-Forum

Patent: Product-driven Go-to-Market @ SAP

Appendix L: Text script of all the expert interviews

Expert interview with Interviewee 2

Meeting start time: Friday, July 21, 2017, 18.52.43

AK: Ashutosh Kumar, EM: Interviewee 2.

<Some missing recording at the beginning of the interview>

AK: And based on that, we have created a model, which is in the draft phase, which should cover each element of, you know, if we have two-three different entrepreneurs with similar ideas coming from different places, if you want to create a global company from day 1 – what are the components we have to consider from the start to running an operation and of the components, I will basically go one by one on it and I want to hear your top of the mind thought, whether this is, what you think is good or not and second is if there is anything which is missing and comes to your mind immediately on the top of your mind as I said. So, that would be very easy.

EM: So quickly, based on what you said right, just as an introduction, and I will probably have a few questions here. Just to scroll exactly what you have in mind because you are talking about research, which obviously as an outcome, will have a methodology, obviously have a very straight outcome – at least that's what I understand from what you said – however, all the speakers are maybe completely getting [00:01:24]

AK – How can we make sure, or how can we ensure the start-ups go global from Day 1? Because there is no way to succeed unless you are global. In most of the industries, unless you are global, a start-up to become a scale-up without even thinking, you know, any further has no chance of being global- that's number one.

But with that it really depends what you have in mind so what I'm thinking from what you said is, you are thinking of a platform, right, you are thinking of an eco-system or a platform, let us put it this way like that you will do in life science, where by default you will have at the very same time in the world quite a few names who are thinking the same time or maybe it's a question of days but it's not a question of Years, that's the way it goes

So interesting enough, you say, well, we connect all rows, making sure they do partner instead of competing, to accelerate to the best of both masses [00:02:38] and for the best for the customers. Is that what you had in mind, or is it something different than what you had in mind?

AK: So what you said is absolutely correct, except one thing that the platform that we talked about could be an outcome after the research. In the research we are looking at whether first question is what is the state, you know why it takes companies 3-6 Years to internationalise, so we looked at the research and we've done some quantitative analysis also on 60-70 start-ups is like 3-5 Years- 6 Years – a range you find, so can we do it from the beginning and if it is yes then can we the coevolution be a model and what is the model, what are the components of the model and some details around that and develop some artefacts out of it so if you say first step is opportunity identification so what are the key questions which we need to have as an artefact for matching those things happen, once we have done that, Yes platform can be created as an output of that and we do intend to have a follow up work to do that but that will be after the research.

EM: Okay, so now I understand. Even before thinking of the why, so now I agree with you [00:04:07] this is for the time being. Why would you think that from day one, founders in most of industries should really be global? Why would you think this is what makes sense?

AK: So essentially the acceleration of value realisation I think you already used the word is what we are looking at, you know there are a number of examples, so I give an example which I countered myself 6 Years back, Groupon is a company here which was founded in U.S, there are a set of people who did a copycat the same thing in Berlin called Citydeal. Now, when Groupon started to go for internationalisation and looked at Germany as a market, they have a competitor who is doing exactly the same thing. Now they have to pay, you know, a massive premium to acquire the City deal because there is no other option for them to get started with a strong footing; otherwise, it takes a much longer time, so they are going to burn money. On the other side, if you look at the money City Deal has spent, the money Groupon has spent in parallel on the same platform, they spent the money twice, so this is a loss of value. So if we can find that there is a way that there are 2 people passionate about similar things and have similar ideas, and if we can bring them together from the beginning, how can we create more value and accelerate the value realization, so that’s the reason we are talking about. We took it as a pre-requisite that this is a given, and I will have to see how we write the research report afterwards, but I think this is a pre-requisite we have taken.

EM: I agree with you, this is a prerequisite, and I understand how, when you say well okay, it's conceived so that is why it is tough with them, even if I do agree with you the reason why it takes so long because from the very very beginning of the setup, I am thinking capital nexus. In most of the countries these VC’s will be equally partners the family of these be sitting with business and jobs and everyone will be looking to imitate, well, I’m trying to be nice, to the immediate circle like to be a rowing king fruits and to be a quickings [00:06:43] and by default, you want to first establish when you feel comfortable right? Now, if you are thinking, even if you have the ambitions, so by default, and you would have your confidence in your comfort zone, you might have the greatest idea on earth, it will depend on who's going to help you to raise capital. So I think the very first thing I would tell you, why so long, the very first body, we need to educate in all of the major countries right, let us say where we can raise capital as it is when I was in France while I some other countries in the world, by the way this is the extreme opposite business done in the US which is whoever has a responsibility to number one raise and number two fund should definitely have in mind and something you should I think this is part of the success here, how do we globalize immediately because you somehow basically burn off from your own VC or equity partners or something like that. Number 2 then it depends of course on the team right, it depends on the competencies and the appetite to execute globally and I'm not talking only culturally because let us take another pre requisite is all of this time that you will be looking for, will be at the level of lot of maturity in terms of management team that will be fairly global, let us put it this way, why because that's what will be easiest to be sold in any case anyway and if you are not then you have another problem[00:08:36] the wrong management team anyway.

But then ultimately, how do you ensure that in your high aim, in your growth path, you need to do you will do it right with the global value, however, still without even thinking the culture having the team execute and my view on that is you can only do that in partnership. So, what I mean doing that in partnership is, helping and supporting the board of some of the partnership in place [00:09:32] the only way to do this is really develop an ecosystem from day 1 and bring it back to the place. I think that's absolutely fundamental

So, first of all as we said is capital. Second is immediately as part of business days the development of the ecosystem, which means we set free. Be ready in terms of innovation for product be ready in terms of enter a channel in terms of sales, be ready for delivery in terms of customer satisfaction, you know in terms of access which means having as well and this time I go Culture, having a culture of sharing having a culture of this is what means global and diversity blah blah blah. It a question of accelerating value by sharing and obviously when you accelerate at the end of the day you don't have a smaller part of the much bigger pie and by the way this is not something we learn spontaneously, I think maybe by responsibility you might be thinking of this is not applicable for each incident that will be applicable for college and university and before that before MBA's, when we do not allow this. We do not learn, we do not teach the next generations, and the current generations.

Today, what they are up against, how they react, they're ready to, you know to share a lot, right let us say social, community, there is a real trend here, but which does not yet translate, right, in my mind at least, from their private life into the business life. That is very interesting. In a lot of this time, businesses first in terms of strategies are opposite, socially I think are more advanced than doing business in terms of sharing [00:12:08] you were just asking me about what I was thinking about first introductions, something you want to do this is from the top of my head.

AK: No, That is great. Since it is a formal research, technically I am using what we call grounded theory method in which we have some set of questions for me and then I leave it open for the scope of for the speaker to speak and I think what you said was very right and maybe I give you one more sentence before I go to the topic what I was asking before, so what I looked at is, I looked at a number of research and coevolution international entrepreneurship, the documented thing, there's a lot of things that is not documented and then we looked at some other start-ups, why they really delay that and what has been then reasons and we also looked at what are the offerings that exist in the marketplace so the associations and what they offer in terms of internationalisation and we did a case study and interviews of many start-ups, founders with their start-ups to understand what would be their requirement and where we would be heading, you know if we want to do this and the points you have said is all very valid because they are reflected I got an additional point already so I've divided those requirement and interest and how it will happen in three parts of the model so first is which I called is Discovery stage where the network becomes the central and one topic was investor, you already mentioned on that so that was one of the topic second I talked about in there is opportunity identification, do we have an opportunity where there is complimentary things for internationalisation from day one, it should not be a local opportunity, it should be a global opportunity and third thing which you mentioned is partner, the team, and this is key and before I go to the next stage there are certain elements which I have put as overall for all the phases so one of them is the mind-set which you set and the second is the trust because the ten founders we spoke about to earlier everyone talked about trust there was no one who has not talked about the trust because how do we develop, if you link it to the network, this is how you derive the network, If I look at enchanting travels which is now a 20 million start-up, the founder Alex the Indian guy and the German guy they went to INSEAD together they did a project, they went for a summer vacation to India they got the idea they started and they already had a network, they came out of an instant network and they had a certain level of trust to get started. SO these are the elements which I have, so I think it converted with what you said, I think you emphasised significantly on mind-set and the culture. Culture definitely I have, both I have but it was slightly different way but that's very valuable and I moved to the next stage and before one more sentence, I also looked at a separate block of technology and external factor so when I talk about external factors, the regulations and visa topic etc. talks about and the technology I mentioned overall is, because technology nowadays becomes the facilitator, how you communicate, how you connect with people like we are doing the interview on phone with so much of technology available, lot of barriers are going away so the barriers we have identified looking at literature, some of them can be kicked out leveraging technology. So this is also a component we have. Moving onto the second stage, I think there are 4 components here I put that together which is, let us say start of the execution stage, so first is how do we get the first customer, does the co evolution helps get the first customer, if that is the advantage then it makes sense to do that , the second is about knowledge, now when you want to internationalise, knowledge has been one of the biggest barrier for people not going and doing anything international. This is what we see and of course we hear as well, then I don't know the market, how the market is, knowledge could also include culture as well, what are the revelations, what kind of how you get the financing, the different aspects. Knowing a marketplace, there is a research work which looked at and worked on it pretty much 9 components, from social capital to human capital to financial capital, looking at that so this is a big building block of knowledge which I have and within culture we are also looking at a bit more deeper into it. We will be looking at which includes what is the value for the value system we have in different countries, how that impact and how people need to learn about each other and the third building block in this stage is about product and services. So any product I do for a German market for example may not be suitable for the other international market. Now this is if we have a certain percentage of common denominator in products and services then the other party has to do to the delta only and if we do it from a co evolution perspective that delta is also prepared simultaneously and you do not lose the value and time of going to market. So having said that these three things, products and service first customers knowledge and while you are building of the business and the fourth component I put it as the centre of it, is transparency, how do we make sure that the minimum trust we had in the beginning continues to be to get deeper and for that transparency is the key element while you are building face of the business. Any comment you would like to make on these four things, and anything additional, and while you are, you know, once you have decided, that Ok I have an opportunity, and I want to go build a business till you are running into an operational stage. Do you think any other component, which is missing, anything additional that comes to your mind, or any corrections you would like to do what I said?

EM: Well, the corrections certainly not because it is a very short conversation, and it is extremely rich what you said in a few sentences. I'm probably a bit uncomfortable the reason is that we go from very short term to mid long term so what I mean with very short term we are not talking about pattern we are talking about if you will have the right team and then you will have the trust into the partners then you will have the obviously developed the company, because that's what we are talking about its one start-up to say. And then you say well number one is customer knowledge, to get to the very first customer, what knowledge you will need to have, you know levels about different locations because we are talking about the position, but with that what I'm not so comfortable is that at one end we are talking very high level however very precise as specifically as it comes to capital and funds and how you will need to have then I think teaming in everything you do and I'm going to mean with that and that's real, the teaming model would be real in terms of customer acquisition, in terms of knowledge best practice, sharing knowledge transfer, innovation in terms of service customers and so on so a few things.

As much as you and me based on our background which mean that you know the position would be obvious culturally; I do believe that this is the same for consumers that is for business consumers in most of the industries you will consider obvious that it has to be global to succeed I m a person who believes that your end customer, your business consumer will as well be global right? so not like 20 Years ago, so if you think if I'm right to that assumption, the value and the thinking of it, which explains why we are talking mind-set and trust specifically so trust, as far as see, I'm with you on the way forward but again and that goes as well with governance and that goes as well with a proper shareholders agreement and will really depend on how, let us call it VC for the time being, or private equity business in general that whoever is giving you and sharing the capital and this time again you might want to have teaming [00:22:22] in here, but the growth capital venture space in India and China is getting overcrowded it is efficient but by the way it is internet as an example and now they are winding up, so can that be the reason why you might want to be able to have access to capital all over the world and you need to globalise capital in creating the relationship of governance I'm thinking make additions and everything you said and is absolutely right because the vast majority of founders would want obviously to valid where they are coming from because that's the way they have been educated and that's the way their business specifically pushing but it might to do more it might be much better shape having a partner from a different country depending of course on which industry you are in, you know, if you are in Israel or being in Israel and choose orderly and carefully the kind of private equity firm you want to go for right. Sorry, I am coming back to this because I think that is key, that is going to be a big decision and when you hope to accelerate and make it right, because the rest is, for me, it's business common sense. So how do you give the capabilities, and how do you, how do you do the capabilities, number one. How do you offer the right capacity and therefore my point, capital, to ensure that globalisation will happen you know at least in the plan in the business case and therefore [00:24:14] what you said about trust is you think that probably in the ecosystem in the partnerships you would want to have co-founders?

AK: Yeah exactly

EM: Which I believe it is absolutely right and the right thing to do and I am completely with you so would you want to facilitate access to capital, capabilities, other capacity as a route to really expand outside your own market because that is what it means. And the interesting confusion about what we are discussing here is there is no more home market because we intimate consequence, which is a bit different from the home market because you should choose several markets depending on where you want to first establish. I'll give you an example so I'm really thinking of a specific, you know, it's not a start-up in other words its 5 years old 12 million revenue Euro 120 people, French at the beginning. I wouldn't say they have their right VC or the bank and so on. Change in on the way and so first 3 years they were French and now all of a sudden they have access to US, thanks to [00:26:00] in Canada and then finally to South Africa and servicing in Dubai then opening in Israel and then here we go and what's going to be next and in really quick we should have the right partners because the way we do that to a company is only partnering so you keep your IP and you partner on all of the rest

AK: That's very valuable input and what I think when I'm listening to you and thinking I realize that there is one beyond some of the key topics but one thing is that how does the flow over, the flow needs to work when I talk about a model that's something I need to re work on it now but this is what I get a sense and the components what you said, this is absolutely right and maybe I give you let us say go back to the case study that we did travel it's a very simple example. If you are a German and you are in Germany and you want a high net worth German people going for experienced travel, If you are a German you can speak the language you are native here if say that it's much easier to acquire a customer for an Indian travel company than doing it from India, being an Indian even if you can speak a language you probably will not be get the comfort of the customer to be on boarded with you for that experience travel. Now this practice when they started with the business they also continued to do it so even if they go Africa and if their target customers are mostly European they also have people who can speak the language plus they have had people from Europe to be based in Africa so that theirs is a nativenesss, continuity of building the trust of that business and this is where the two partners or three partners basically, one is in Africa, while being local the Indian guy knows the knows the market knows the environment, he can operationalize everything but for customer acquisition he needed a complimentary thing and that he got from the German partner so absolutely true this is how this partnership came in and because they had this trust from the beginning and international mind-set and I think what you said was very true, both these guys have an international mind-set I mean I know Alex the German founder for ATS and I know from him before I started and conceived the idea of research that he is very international so that mind-set is playing into that theme and then they got the third partner for Africa and they also had a failure they were not successful in Italy just because they really didn't found a good partner who has this kind of mind-set and approach and continues so I think what you said is perfectly fitting to me and I need to readjust the way I shape the model and before I go to the

EM:Yeahh but I think you said something important which is first customer now is from day one right, think global and obviously customer acquisition is the most important determination of success, most customers can be anywhere in the world, how can you make sure your product can be purchased anywhere which you just answered partly but not fully how do you service your customers anywhere, and again maybe our scope of discussion here is too small because we went full born capital and ecosystem right, partners but there is something called the missing in the middle which is let us put it this way resources availability and what I mean with resources availability will be is products, will be finance will be logistics will be above and beyond revenues and some acquisitions, what will that mean in terms of margin right and this is much more visible from what I have seen it's not that obvious and this is my opinion when you said well that's why it didn't work out in Italy, so what is interesting about the partner is choosing the partner to have a business model with that sheet you would go global, do you see where I'm going with that. I think you already have that in your model, but I think it is extremely brilliant, maybe not in an early stage

AK: No no, that's perfect, I think what you said is perfect and that's where my last phase is when the business is from an incubation to operation mode so that's my third stage and there I talk about governance because in the beginning I have the trust I have the transparency so now we have to sign off the contract so we need to have a governance in place the second is the processes we need to find mechanics to have certain processes put in place we need to talk about how the learnings we make is incorporated and all of that is embedded around the economic model I know I didn't use the word economic model but I used the monetization model, but I think the economic model is a broader scope and a better word but I use the monetization model that and monetization is not just about having a shareholder agreement for the company, monetization is who is contributing what and who is bringing what so this is over a period of time you need to fix that and have an economic model and also while you start with maybe two or three partners so for two or three companies and when we talk about global today the scientific definition of born global is company with 25 percent sales and over a period done in three years so this is the current scientific definition and now in the future when you say I want to have a global thing from day one it doesn't mean that you are touching all 180 all 200 countries together but few countries which is important for you and where you found the partner but over a period of time you might want to expand with a similar model and then you need to have a very crystallised economic model so that you can attract new partners for new countries for the business and if I look at again going back to the case study they have a partner in Latin American countries now who is not a co-founder but they established the economic model between three countries before and they applied the similar economic model, for the Latin American model of course there is some localisation they have to do but then this partner came in after 5 years on board so this is not someone like co-founder, so they have a defined model and this is why I said the process governance and learning needs to be embedded around the economic model or the monetary model so I think what you said is very valuable here When we talk about running an operations beyond governance processes and making it learning I made a note of you emphasised a lot on the resource availability both in terms of capacity and capability and the finance

EM: And I agree with that you just described in the phase one thing at least needs to be designed from day one right so even if you act locally first you need to design your business in a way so that you won't be faced in the global market which means you will only have your processes maybe what will be doing best for you right already have in mind the big market and not being local while you will agree that we are talking about languages as an example so making sure that it's going to work in any of the big countries that you want to be in so as a result all of the designer systems and service specification right, it will reach beyond your home or your home country, the rest you have covered it all; in this phase there is no other clients right

AK: And this goes back to the theme that you mentioned in the beginning if I want to have a global mind-set and I want to have a global design for example the product you need to have a global people also in the team that means you just cannot have only locally available people but rather people coming from different backgrounds before you can say Ok I have something which is more global

EM: That's best it is explained good that in terms of my first [00:36:35] …definitely larger than diversity, what I mean is you know what's the sales record, you know where are you coming from, all of that backgrounds, and now all the countries, of course, that's extremely important

AK: I know we have time till 7:30, so there is one minute left here so, any last minute important comment, which you would like to make, and I also would like to say you are based in Paris, normally right. So I travel quite a bit to Paris, so I was last month in Paris, I 'll be in august in Paris so if you ever have time, I will drop a note if we see we have a chance to say hello in person and say thank you to you for this

EM: I hope it's going to be a it was interesting and it was difficult in to finish in some minutes it's a very interesting topic I would really love this world to be more bolder than it is because in there you know how much [00:37:45] that we have you know we could globalise to venture capitals to globalize that will push quite a lot of entities and obviously countries to think differently you know when I'm thinking governance I'm not thinking governance only from a capability point of view but as you said it really again depends on the kind of industry you are in right so it has been a very interesting topic happy to know so you tell me what's going to be the outcome

AK: no definitely I mean the research will continue for some more months so you know as I said I will also touch base and if we find another time we can do a next round of discussion a bit later stage when we have something more on the table and I can share the information for sure that definitely and I definitely want to make it nice research and then want to deploy that so we have a plan to do it more actionable thing but I want to take time to makes sue that the theory is right for me before we go into more pumping in practical things

EM: I would encourage an entrepreneur to globally innovate, that's what best is what is really global

AK: So, this is what it means when we talk about creating something from day one, global
EM: Yeah, and I do not want to get into politics right, so I should stop with what I am doing just fine, because I think well, we all need to remember that the world is not local
AK: Yes, that is a belief here too to make it this kind of project, and we are moving in that direction, so

EM: We can even say that to someone you're valid folk's right with better than we did anyway, okay so enjoy the evening, and I will put a word

AK: Yes definitely I have that email so I can write to you, so thanks again for today and very good insight and if I have more chance to talk to you it will always be beneficial so I'll try to reach out again when we have time some other time thank you very much thanks for your time good evening to you
EM: Okay Thank you bye

Interview with Interviewee 5
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AK: Ashutosh Kumar, UB: Interviewee 5

AK: Now, so what I will do is what we call the grounded theory approach, meaning I will have a few guiding questions, but it will be a bit open kind of discussion, so you can bring it what thoughts come to you, and I will ask questions based on the answers I am getting from you. So it is not a very fixed structure interview. That is just how it is. And we should be able to finish on time. Like 40-45 minutes is normally, I am taking so this is how it is.

So, going back to, let me start with the real issue, being involved in a number of international topics and more specifically Indo-German space. So, when a company from India or a company from Germany, especially the younger companies, I would say the smaller companies, not the big ones like SAP and Bosch going international what the challenges you come across that they face

UB: Okay, so one of course, a large SAP, a large Bosch has is finance and unlimited funds, they want to do something they have the money to research to buy the advisors to buy the network because they have customers in all these places. Start-ups just have limited resources so the first challenge that start-ups have is money. Second is even more complicated that money, probably is clientele [00:01:45]so SAP and Bosch again have so many sub managers that they can just say manager 5 you do India, or you do Germany within the company. A start-up does not have that amount of top-notch managers who can run a successful business in other countries because they do not have the manpower. And the last one is of course; I would call it confidence; if you are a Bosch, you have conquered the whole world and if there is one more country you want to conquer you just do it because you have done it 55 times. But if you are a start-up, you don't the first time, it's like family who has no history of you know university as in the first family member goes to university, they don't know what to expect and don't know if they can do it. The first time all my siblings went to university when I went, I knew I could do it because I know my siblings and they did it so I can do it so I would call it confidence

AK: Good taking that further if suppose we find like 2 -3 partners and I can tell you that there's a company called, a small company not very big but fairly decent company and again in the travel space. This is Enchanting Travel; I am not sure if you have heard about them. They had this kind of, of course, the travel business is a business of arbitrage, a business of opportunity, but they wanted to experience travel. What happened is that they found a the two guys who started it together, and there is another guy who is an ex-colleague. So they had expertise in three different locations. So, one of them was German, and the other was an Indian, and the third is basically a German, but he lived in a lot of towns in Africa, so he brought in African knowledge, and they started a company, which is kind of global from the very beginning, and of course, they bootstrapped themselves. So, assuming that we have these kinds of partners coming in and there is an investor we are able to rope in, then what would be the key things you would look for in the team, where you would say this is something which can fly?

UB: One of the key things is obviously, if it's a travel company, I would think they would have essentially have to have a global mindset set. We have an Indian, we have a German, and we have a kind of German African ties and knowledge. What about the rest of the world? How will they cover the US, which is the big travel market, obviously? So I would advise them to see if you want to have a long-term plan. If you want to be global, see how you can fill the gap that you have with your setup or differentiate yourself and put your business model so that you don't need all the other parts you just be the best travel agents for India, Germany, and Africa. That would be my first advice.

AK: So that is basically what I noted, a point is global mindset and this is what I have as well. Anything else that comes to your mind

UB: No not at the moment no

AK: So, the way I have defined the model, basically talk about three building blocks broadly. One is the initial discovery phase, the second is more design and develop phase and third is when you really secured everything. So, within the discovery phase this is what I wrote already is the international mind-set and what is a global mind-set probably the same thing. First topic for me is what I call opportunity identification, meaning does the opportunity and the idea we are talking about has international flavour international scope or not? Because not everything can be global, you know. Because there are some very physical kind of assets, something, which is local, flavoured. So do you agree with that, that we need to really look at the opportunity, if that can be a real global opportunity.
2: Absolutely, I believe that not everything is not on the way to a global scale, for whatever reason maybe the market is not there, or the market is not global, the players cannot reach that part of the world definitely

AK: And in the previous question, I made an assumption about, and I gave the example of an enchanting travels, the partner are there, and the investors are there. Now the next question I will try to frame it is like this, assuming that we have a team from different location would that help or enhance the chances of investors from different locations to invest in the company.

UB: I personally do not think so. I think it is the experience and their track record, and the personality of the people who will decide whether you will find investments. Just knowing people means nothing. You can buy a network if you don't know people. For example, if you are German, go to Deutsche Bank in Mumbai, and they will point you to certain people, so I think knowing investors is not really anything. It is convincing them to really put money on the table and that is to do with the track record and personality and the charisma and of the investor, of the founders I mean, and the management, and not just knowing someone.

AK: That is a good point. But I am going to put I it slightly differently. So one of the things which I heard a lot in the past also while doing the research, and before that, and I'm not talking about let's say banking investment I'm looking at more like angel and seed investment in the beginning maybe early-stage venture capitalist. So a lot of angel investors keep telling me that I would invest in, if I'm in Germany, I would prefer to invest in companies nearby and I ask questions to them why do you think so. One is that generally what you said exactly, I know the people who are only here, so this is the confidence and trust side of it. The second is that I understand the local business environment and business context here. The same thing happens if someone is in India, there is an Indian guy so if I bring one Indian and one German together. German angel investor gets a confidence via German partner to invest in business which also has operation in India and vice versa the Indian investor trust via the Indian founder is willing to invest in Germany so would that be something which is feasible or would that make it better than what you said before.

UB: No probably, it is feasible and why it is feasible is because of the element of trust. I don't know how the Germans work. I cannot read this guy, he makes statements but I do not trust him but maybe if he is an Indian and he knows this and has networks and families or whatever it is or he knows someone who knows someone then of course the trust is there. For me this is not a question of are you covering continents or are you there but more of trust and confidence.

If you take us for instance, we have our Indian office run by Indians and when we go to see Indian clients, we go with our Indian colleagues and German colleagues and when we are in Germany, we also go with an Indian colleague and German colleague. Even though when I'm in India and I'm trying so sell German legal services, my Indian colleagues can't do anything legal because Indian law, they bring the trust, the trust that is given to the Indian colleague of mine is extended to me by his presence and that's what makes it so powerful.

AK: So this is the kind of linage I was thinking and I am just linking. You started with a resource and finance point and I think that was perfect for me to start the interview because most of the start-ups say why I am not doing internationalisation. a) I don't have the bandwidth, I don't have people, I don't have the knowledge and where do I have the money to go and do then, even if I know I can sell this product or service very nicely, you know if it is an Indian company I can sell it in Germany, but where do I have the money to start operations. If I go to my local investors they say listen guys I'm not putting the money for you to burn for business in India ah sorry in Germany but by creating this kind of cycle we probably can create and that may facilitate early stage creation of a global start-up. You touched on trust and I want to ask a question on the trust and this is getting very specific to individual business. How do you, it's difficult probably question in terms of explaining, what kind of trust do you see and how do you assess that we have a trust established certain level of trust that we can do business

UB: It is actually very easy to answer. Just like in any other relationship either you invest time in this relationship and over time you build trust because you can see certain behavioural patterns which gives you the feeling that yes I can trust this partner or you don't invest time and you have never been there and you have never been to Mumbai and you don't know what it means to live and work in Mumbai. I don't think you would put your money to someone living in Mumbai If you have never been there, done business have never had bad experiences or if you had bad experiences you can understand why they were bad and you know the person seen him and visited him or her in his environment then trust is there and the other way around if an Indian never comes to Frankfurt or wherever the partner is in Germany I don't think they would put their money there. I wouldn't.

AK: Fair point, I mean it kind of fits into all the other discussion I am having and I think I am happy that it evolves into that direction that I have heard trust words so many times in every discussion that is important. But the next question is of course how do you get their trust and what you just said, while we work a lot virtual working and visit and knowing that place personally visiting makes sense. I take a step back here and I initially made a conjecture that you have an opportunity, you have members and you have investors in different places but one of the fundamental challenge is that these things are not normally given. So even if I have a global mind-set or international mind-set and I want to do the business internationally I find it very difficult to find a right partner so the question is what is normally the advice if you get into these kind of situations, how to search for a partner and how do you see the role of a network, meaning most of the time I've heard that people come from the network only so how would you see that

UB: Whatever you do, when you are trying to find a partner it either takes time or it takes money. You can speed up the process of finding a partner by hiring someone who will find you the right partners. There are agencies who know the market very well, you buy them a list or buy them match making powers and you pay for it –that's one way or a better way mind you is you have to build this network yourself and once this network is established at one point the partner will come from your network because your network knows what you are doing and how you are doing it and they will then identify people within the network who fits your biz so my view is the only way to find you the right partner is if you are doing it yourself and not for someone else, if we're talking about start-ups then personnel the managers, the founders, they have to do it the hard way of being on the ground and building a network and then I guarantee you that from this network your partner will somehow emerge. You don't even know when and how it will just happen.

AK: Very good point and now moving further, I want to get to some very interesting generally talked about topic. I call it business system context which essentially includes the culture, the local knowledge of business etc. So the question is basically in two part initially, A is that how do you see the role of local business knowledge the culture playing into doing business and the second is what generally you see or have done to make it you know if there is a gap to bridge the gap

UB: There is a hard factor and a soft factor here. The hard factor is that without the knowledge you will never be successful, it can be compliance it can be legal it can just be a simple fact that on a certain day is a national holiday in the other country you are trying to go and meet people you need the local knowledge. Again you can buy it, then it comes from someone else then you have a certain amount of time but after that time it is gone and you have to buy it again or you can build up yourself like the network. My preference is definitely to build it up yourself because then you have it for life and you don't have to re buy it every time you need it and the soft factor in business means people interacting that's what business is all about and I'm firmly convinced that you don't need good technical skills to do business. You need good interpersonal skills because when you deal with the other person and you are able to deal with the other person then business will automatically flow because you know local knowledge. You can build like the legs of a bridge with the other person that can then develop your business and move on.

AK: Okay perfect. So, I think now I want to move from the first building block, which I had about discover, and the basic things to getting to something. Suppose we found partners and we got an opportunity we got investors and now we come to this design thing and see how we can be and there I have basically three sub blocks. So let us start with the first one. It is about products and services and it is very good for a product here, how it is sold in India and we have Indian products sold here. Now if I want to create a global company that the products and services need to be global. SO what are some of the basic factors that we need to keep in mind that we are turning into design and development of that?

UB: Again first of all if you have found the right partner and now are in the design stage I personally believe you are 70% down the road of success. With the right partner I don't think anything can go wrong that's the first statement. Second statement if you now work on the design global knowledge is everything. 5 Years ago I went to see German company doing harvesting, I forgot the name, it's one of the biggest harvesting companies in the world the German company and I went to their India plant which is outside Delhi and they showed me how harvesters are made and designed for use in India. I could see that this company is and why it is so successful in Germany and in India because they have totally taken into account local knowledge and local requirement of a machine, of a product for the local market in India. Further when it comes to the design stage if you just think that your product however perfect it is for your home market whatever your home market is, if you assume that this is perfect for every other market then you are completely mistaken

AK: And let me follow it up with a very interesting point your made. So I wanted to do a follow up question on that. One thing is knowledge. So if I have the right partner, I know that I have a local knowledge so I can make the product, which is locally relevant. Would you also see that people coming in form 2 or 3 different parts of the world and trying to develop a product which is globally acceptable or at least making sure that different flavours or variants are produced to be acceptable, would these different knowledge from the beginning be beneficial for the end business or would you say sequential is also fine?

UB: Its 100% beneficial but I don’t think it’s enough [00:20:58], take the example of the German and Indian investor working together or founder working together, one brings the German requirement and one brings the Indian, they can now divide the global product that is good for India and Germany but they can’t develop and build it the global product that will be good for the US. So that’s not enough. It’s great the more you do the better but obviously you need to see where the product is used for is for and then you have to buy the additional knowledge from the market.

AK: And say fine and there as I, you know in the beginning I was trying to say you can have people from every major market around from the very beginning. So what you can do is let us say three, four markets. Two or three markets you can do and the rest of course you have to follow the normal business approach of internationalising but the assumption I am making here is that now if you do 3 or 4 markets from the very beginning conquering the rest of the market will be faster than if you do in a sequential process yourself.

UB: Definitely because in the process of introducing in 3 markets you have made so many experiences and challenges, every market will have their own challenges when you introduce this product. By having done this three times, first of all you know that there will be issues and challenges. You will be prepared for it and secondly whatever you choose there will be recurring issues. You need financing in India or financing in America the details will be different, the general approach to how you do it and what are the documents you need to produce is all the same so you are prepared for pretty much whatever comes.

AK: Great, coming to the next point, which I call it when you have three or four partners especially from different countries when setting up a business. Of course, you have to do a business case overall and I want to take this a bit on a higher level which I call it economic model which includes how you generate revenue, how you share revenue, how your equity is structured, how the investments are structured coming in and so on. And so a number of topics can be a part of the economic model, beyond the fact that you have to look at the product and services economics as well, so there are number of things coming up in here. Now while we can go into length of each topic, here my question to you would be that being a lawyer and attorney yourself, you might have seen a number of disputes in partnerships. So maybe if you can generalise and say a few things, which you would advise, based on your experience of litigation and challenges that one should care from the very beginning while designing any kind of economic model.

UB: I believe that a lot of litigation and problems could be prevented if partners at the beginning a) take the time to define what they are bringing in and what they are expected to take out and if they would stop working with hidden agendas but put on the table what really is at stake for them and what their limitations are. That is least how I try to when I advise partnerships. When I draft partnership agreements, I try to work out exactly what each partner is bringing to the table; what each partner is expecting of the partnership, not just the short but mid to long term and what are the few circumstances a partner would have to exit. What can happen if one of the partners exit from this partnership and then I would bring in exit clauses to make sure that everybody knows these are the rules of engagement? The dangers of partnership, these are the rules of engagement you and your partnerships exist in and these are the rules of obligation while we end this partnership and exit. The more you define the better. It’s like playing a game the better defined the rules are the easier and the more fun it is to play this game. If you constantly have to revisit the game, the rules or you don’t have rules and have to invest them then obviously some people will feel cheated because they think that this rule is made up because now that someone has got something else out of this thing

AK: Okay so that is good and I’m just bringing the value you create in your profession a far word than not having the value because there’s no litigation, so you have the right to define the word

UB: I agree if lawyers would do that job there would be way less litigation because the people won't have to litigate the relationship documents, or whatever it is would define what the outcome is?

AK: So that's a fair understanding, it's a good point you mentioned, because I've learned that the hard way a bit, but I learned that exit clauses are so important for anything you do because a the end of the day you never know when challenges come. Now because we talked about litigation and challenge, I want to bring another point here and it's about external factors and generally people talk about a lot of litigation, the legal aspects but beyond legal aspects what are the other external factors which overall impact the relationship when you see the businesses? When I say legal it's like the local laws and so on but there are a number of things beyond that so how do you see that? What are the other things you see?

UB: Alright I mean first of all I see macro-economic sections. So whatever you know so [00:27:29] and I can't get there together. It is going to affect every business large and small ones, these are the obvious ones the exchange rates of the Euro to the pound changes if you're going to exchange your business model if Brexit happens therefore everybody with capital with new investments and I'm sure kill the market your business model and your business is affected the people the management will first have issues the family would have whatever it is then [00:28:05] externally your business may have a million things. Business is a living organism it is in orbit, everything that is in orbit affects business

AK: SO moving to more on the execution side so once we have agreed that there is a good agreement the rule of engagement defined etc etc. we now let us start the business. There I've heard that based on my experience in other discussions one of the things which people always talk about is transparency in terms of what's happening and a lot of times people told me that I don't need to be involved in everything but I'd prefer to be somehow informed on a regular basis, it may not be on a daily basis but some periodic basis. So how do you see the role of transparency in the execution of business? Especially when we are in different countries

UB: Of course, transparency means somebody has to follow certain processes so that transparency can be established and now you have this dichotomy between running a lean operation and not making people turn paper and the need for transparency. I think it is definitely important but you are to also be careful not to be over transparent because some things should not be seen by everyone, sometimes transparency is not such a good thing and transparency comes with a cost because it means processes and it means people doing certain things and then you have to make sure that you don't overkill people with transparency jobs. That's the only two concerns that I have

AK: That's a very good point because well within the block of execution I've put 4 points and transparency is my central point but as you're said and I liked your wordings and articulation that transparency needs to be enabled ad enforced and you do that via processes. I've another block, a sub block which I call is organisation and governance, how you organise your people, how you would set up a governance mechanism and what processes you follow and that will enable the transparency, and that will ensure that you are doing optimum activity, so organisation and governance also plays a role here

UB: Definitely, and I need to add one thing, one is to add processes like this to be transparent, the other is it needs execution. If something comes up because a company is transparent and things are transparent for people, and something is not right then the organisation has to be able to execute on this and correct the wrongdoing. Just being transparent and being weak in enforcing the outcome of the transparent report in this situation is really dangerous then I'd rather head a non-transparent organisation than a transparent organisation that looks the other way

AK: Understood I think this is a very very, good point, this is entirely a new piece as in how you manage if something is not the right way so give me a second, I just want to make sure that I make the right notes here

UB: Yea Yea sure, sure sure

AK: Okay so moving one I want to touch a couple of softer points and I should not say the soft actually but at a lot of time people do ignore and think that this is not something important is about risk management, I talked about and then we talked about process and we talked about you know when we define the rule of engagement but let me ask a question here within risk management that one is mitigating the risk by defining it better in the beginning rule of engagement but the second is when risk comes up how do you manage so what would be your thought on that and what your experience say how if you have unknown risk coming in how do you work on that

UB: Two words on this, one is transparency and process and the other is escalation so in terms of risk, risk is inherent you can get rid of risk the only question is how do you allocate the risks so if you are talking to someone else and they are the risk in this relationship then I think it's very important to have processes in your relationship and harass those risks as risks don't go alone for long term and then you need another process to escalate and to lower the risk the problem. I think if your relationship has these two to it to unearth the probable risk and to have a defined mechanism to solve this risk then I think the risk management is quite easy

AK: Moving to, lets also talk about, I call it best practise but it could be slightly different you know when you are working in different locations, the way I do it, and I think the way we do it at our company in general, I work with different markets so I worked across Europe Africa, Middle east, I worked with different markets in India, so when I see something good happening for example in Norway I want to see, can we do it in other locations. Now this basically enhances overall the business. SO you see that by bringing people from different locations, bringing the knowledge are we able to enhance the overall diversity and best practices of doing work and businesses?

UB: I 100% agree, it is at the end the cost factor especially with a start-up company moving people around cost time costs money and is completely underestimated by most people, most people think that if someone would travel they just want to have a good time and like off so they have a bad reputation I at least try to get my colleagues travel as much as they can to other offices to meet other people again its trust building its team building its relationship building I think it is 100% right thing to do. If you have empower employee and let them self-motivated, where self-motivated empowered employees will also use the travel time to work and wont slack off and will do whatever they need to do while they travel. If you dis motivated people who are empowered then I think travelling is not a good idea.

AK: And you touched upon a point which is my favourite so when I travel especially the long distance flight two hours plus, when I say long I'm not talking 12 hours, anything 2-3 hours flying time, I always carry a notebook and a pen and the purpose of that is that two hours you don't have anything to disturb you except someone to give you the food assuming that you have a nice passenger next to you then in that 2- 3 hours I'm able to and also in the train journeys it is possible I'm able to list out a note of a lot of things which goes around in different situations create a summary okay this is what can be done this is what I learnt here and there so the number of things that can be accumulated in that peaceful time. So for me I take advantage of travel like this also that it's a challenge in terms of impact on your health etc. but of course I use that and when you reach to some other location you have a better mind to deal with the discussion so it's not only that you meet people and you are building the trust in that it adds certain things because while travelling I use my time to do something concretely and that adds value for it for me which it doesn't happen if I'm just doing virtual work because I'm not getting that peaceful time to think it through a lot of times, just shared a thought which came to my mind to share. That brings to me one other soft point towards the end here is the virtual working. Nowadays we work a lot virtual and definitely, we have got good technologies to do that. Now I also know that it is not a replacement of in person meeting but in terms of virtual work and leveraging different technologies how do you see that in terms of, are you able to do serious business or it is really difficult that we are able to do some serious business with that?

UB: No like any technology, it is first of all neutral, the way you use it makes it good or bad so I completely endorse the technology of virtual working I love it I think it is great because it gives you another way of doing business and working. When it comes to how you use it, yes, you need to acknowledge and have a plan how to use it; you just use it without thinking that is really bad. For example long negotiations which are just stared with you one today before this call, the first meeting I insist has to face to face and I need to see the person, I need to read their faces, their expressions I need to hear how they say certain things so that when I move this next discussion to virtual to videoconferencing to whatever it is, I understand if he take a deep breath if he says whatever he says I know what he means which I can only learn through the first face to face. So I think it is how you enable you to save time travel time and cost, travel cost but you have to use it for the benefits and outcomes which is getting whatever you want to do get it fixed get it closed

AK: Okay good I think those were my questions cover my last concluding question and if you have any question to ask that would be fine for me. I gave you the context of internationalisation star up from the very beginning and I've tried to cover quite a few points with you, is there anything which comes to your mind which wasn't talked about and very valuable and important from your point of view

UB: I think we have covered most of the big items I mean you asked about the challenges the one thing I would add that I see a lot I know a lot of investments from India to Germany an Germany to India, all of them I see the biggest challenge actually is that they are all afraid, they're all afraid to do the first step. They think where you make the first step right and then everything will work or you make the first step wrong and then nothing will work and in my world, in my experience it's all a sequence of mini steps and making the first step and making it wrong is actually a good thing because then you will have learned that this route is wrong and you can try another route, I think that should be more trusting in taking the first step. Of course from India, Germany looks like a complicated market but for a German an Indian looks like a very complicated market where you would think India is not so complicated because you lived there, you know how the culture is you know how the people are so I think make first steps and if they are wrong that's not a bad thing, it's a good thing, that's the only thing I would add. Don't be afraid because being afraid doesn't help you.

AK: That's a very valuable point and I liked it because you say these mini steps as we say in design thinking fail frequently fail early don't wait to fail towards the end because when you fail towards the end you really fail miserably. When you fail early you probably have less damage to be done, so this translates into what you just said and of course I know from India and Germany, for an Indian point of view there's no problem, every time you hear that no problem it will be happening and in Germany every time you say this is not possible because they only say it is possible when it is really possible so it is a very contrasting environment to deal with but that's how I experience it. So thanks Ulrich for your time today, that was good discussion, a lot of insight quite a few new things I got and of course a number of things I had is validated so with that I definitely want to thank you for that so I hope you are in (abrupt end)

Interview with Interviewee 3

Meeting start time: Monday, August 28, 2017, 18:17:56

AK: Ashutosh Kumar, NS: Interviewee 3

AK: In doing the research is that we need to document everything, which is fair from their perspective, but we need to record and transcript everything that we have done. So I have already started now. You are saying this should be part of the strategy right.

NS: Yea

AK: That is true, maybe before I

NS: Let me give you a couple of. I'm in three cases involved closely. The one company from the start said is the US, Swiss company. The US is the largest market for healthcare so what they did their first product was directly launched in the US and now it turns out that this was a kind of, from my point of view, it was kind of a wise decision because they have now competitive, the US is the largest market and most competitive market and they are successful now so now they can go, you now from slightly more up to European markets. Now as a second point, there they want to relatively quickly go into China because it is going to be the same. It will be the second market the reason they want to basically say is okay, we are a Swiss company and we have Swiss technology, whatever, but before we really launch it in Switzerland anyhow a market which is too small we go right away into the US.

The second company I am involved in, they are moving into their market. They are into Biotechnology. Look, in biotechnology they are like three max four centres worldwide, its Boston its Switzerland its Singapore and maybe in the fourth it is Cambridge in the UK. So they were founded in Finland but they decided relatively quickly to move their headquarter to Switzerland and to set up a strong presence in Boston in the US because you know just like close to where the music plays. And the third company in which is like a platform for e-commerce they said no, we setup in Spain, what we want to do we want to be a local market leader. Even they tried to get a little bit into the UK, little bit into France and so on but in the end they said no if we become strong in Spain then when somebody comes we can do an exit by a global company. They wants to get established in Spain that is kind of clearly part of a strategy that you say this as a retailer, he needs to be close to the people and so on. So it is a different, in the three cases I would say that the way they went about founding the company. They said clearly from the beginning we want to be either a global player in a kind of a small niche, that of a hidden champion strategy or we want to be a local player in a slightly broader niche so that might be an attractive target for somebody wants to build up a global company in the same business.

AK: Maybe that is a good reference and let me say two more things before I get a bit more deeper into it. So first of all just for the sake of interview and analysis we are applying an approach called grounded theory meaning it's an open discussion with some moderated questions from my side so that we capture all the points what is in someone else's mind rather than going very structured interview. So it is very unstructured kind of thing. The second thing is the presentation I sent there is a slide, slide number 6 that is where I have tried to capture what all things are needed in order to get going from a global perspective and now I am coming to the strategy piece. I didn't use the word strategy but there are two places. I mean I can be more explicit with this strategy word. I was talking about a) is international mind sets meaning if we really want to create a global company, we need to have this from the day 1 that we need to create a global company. It cannot be that I want to do it now and then we will see how it works but we still want the global so it needs to be coming in from the initial. There is another dimension to it is about the partner you have with the people around with you everybody needs to be thinking the same way. That means if it is strategy they have to fully buy in to that piece. And the second point I just want to mention here on top is called opportunity identification. That is what I want to build it the trade-off topic, which we discuss in the beginning. So this is just to outline a bit on the interview side. Now maybe my first question, you already mentioned Nicolas three companies with approaches. Based on the Swiss company's example, let me just drill down a bit on that. You mentioned they had a technology and then they wanted to go for market, so the technology was developed locally or this was developed with some global partners.

NS: No the technology was developed locally. So they basically, their IP's semantical algorithm is not really local thing, they basically needed to be close to a university or medical research centre. I also think it depends a little bit, the business you are in. So IT well maybe not IT but software development, medical, biotech, they all by definition are global businesses because once you do a discovery then you are in a more global market, and I think retailer here you are more in a local market. I mean it is difficult to say a B2B or B2C because even B2C can be a global player. The only reason why they are not in China is, now I think they are going to China but why they are not in China, has to do with regulations and the way China is from a legal framework, managing that. But from a technology perspective or from a user's perspective, from an assumptions perspective these are global industries by definition.

AK: Yeah, that's definitely the case and for this pharma company when they were going for US and then going to China second step so I think they are looking at the size of the market as kind of arbitrage possibility in terms of why they want to do to US. But the question I would have here when they were going for US how did they go about it? Did they have someone in the team from US or they basically opened their office?

NS: Yeah, they opened up a subsidiary and the team move over sometime. They had a VP for the US who is also well I mean it's a small company so their marketing VP took up to US and the CEO was in the US in the beginning so as they change the technology was more or less stable and the product launch was getting closer the CEO moved over to the US for 6 months. I think looking back that was a very good move. Even though some guys in the board said hey guys do you have sufficient experience in the US, so on and so but they were just dropping in the sense to look at the largest market and it's the most competitive one so the only way we can really grow fast is if we are successful we have much more growth potential which we saw from the US and that's the truth and I mean it was the best you know. It could have been a different path if you say look we are small, we can own a plane or niche and stuff like this but they were doing their best and said look our services and revenue is so there is no competition around and for the time being so it's really about everything it about speed and scalability and I mean in the big data world you just need scalability.

AK: Yeah

NS: So that is something you probably need to you know. When you do kind of a framework you could take that into consideration, I mean, if you are in a physical business you know if you are a retailer sort of you know. Even in Germany, the southern Germans are different from the Eastern Germans and so on. So the stuff you bring to the market is different. So for a retail I think local closeness is important and on the other side for a technology company I think it's really a topic of why does the IT differentiating against the IT. Then if we avail of it quickly you know, if you look at Facebook I mean you use Facebook independently where you are, you speak English or Instagram a more extreme example, you know my kids use Instagram, my friends in the US use Instagram, my friends in Latin America use Instagram. Now if Instagram was to consider itself as a US company or an East coast company so I think its just from a scalability perspective they would have become competitions just global there. You know if there was a competitor coming in, getting into the US they don't care where they sit and somebody might have the same idea. It is basically the one who is quicker you know the winner takes it all as they say. Probably the market dynamics need to be looked at and that's why they say this kind of international to make a business international or not is a strategic decision and in many cases this has to do with you know one of the fundamentals, that has to be taken right away from the start-up. Do you want to become a local player and why are we able to defend our business better if we are a local player or do we just or are we forced to become a local player, a global player right. And then if that's the case then you probably need to have a financing which is different to speed up across, which is different the approach the market needs to be different and so on and so on. You know, I think it is as a physical business if you compare. You know I grew up in a place with a lot of international businesses which is pharmaceutical industries in barcland. why did they grow so why is Rosch more international than whatever than Pfizer but today it's a little different. But they were forced to grow because the Swiss home market is just too small so the Rosch where they were founded in the early 20's in the last century they were by at least 20 years later in 10 or 15 countries. While some German big competitor at the time much larger companies some of the US much larger companies they were just not that international. So for the American companies they needed to go after the Second World War that they really started to expand into the rest of the world. Look today at China, when you Chinese Telco operator, if you are the market leader in China you already more or less by definition the market leader in the worldwide from a size perspective but you are not necessarily the most international one. So I think you know the platform if you use the internet you use IT you use software so this is your platform then you probably by definition today you need to conceive yourself as a global player from the very beginning. Sorry you need to have a creative graphic strategy. Now there is a difference. This is an international company, is it a global company so let me get to your example we have a start-up which started from scratch just having in three different locations with three different partners. Is this company then getting lets say local knowledge differentiator for them.

Your approach makes sense but that probably the point that's probably the kind of the key question they have to ask, do we need local knowledge or not. And then you can say, Okay I want to be a global player, here I want to be a multi-local player because my strengths is that I am a local player but not only in one place therefore I have an international mind-set. I grow from the beginning with the idea to become an international company so it becomes a multi-local company. So I think there’s a difference between a global player that plays in global market and a local player and the mid-term or somewhere in a triangle shape you have the multi-local company. There is probably this kind of an approach, let us fall in three location and let us have three partners, have a power based and all this kind of thing makes sense but then the reason is not that they want to become a global business, the reason is that they need local knowledge. But on the other side they want to leverage the international aspect of it for the multi-local, they want to gain speed in ramping up the company by starting up in three place at a time.

AK: So I think, it is absolutely and I get some new thoughts and new ideas and new points here and maybe from the way I’ve seen and maybe I just want to elaborate on the travel time. The travel company and the people spoken, so knowledge definitely is one of the key things which plays a big role even if it is a company which has a potential or which can become a global company if you go to the investors there are specially at the early stage of the investments. The investors probably look for local companies as well because they just want to be making sure that they understand the system, they understand the business environment and they understand the business logics etc. So knowledge definitely play a key role. Now in terms of the travel company, the two guys, the three guys who are there, two of them basically went to do an MBA at INSEAD together and they got the idea to doing it in the beginning. One guy was an Indian guy, the other was a German guy. So they conceived the idea and while studying. Now if you want to do experience travel for German people going to India, India is a complex market and for a German going and hiring someone to run the operation there as a subsidiary would have been much more difficult than having a partner who knows the local market, who knows the local business, have a connect. So as you said the benefit they got is the speed of execution of the business and while they were conceiving the idea of the business they got the third partner who happened to spend most of his life in Africa. He is not an African but he spent most of his life in Africa. So suddenly they are able to cover 3 big locations from Germany and Europe area Africa and India so they basically got a big boost in terms of how they are able to accelerate their business. So knowledge definitely place a key role.

NS: But it's not channel knowledge, it's not IT, it's not knowledge about algorithm, you know. Your competitive advantage versus, imagine you were in Indian travel experience organiser so your good in the reception part, you know the market, you know the fancy places, you know the beautiful places but you don't know who your customers are because your kind of in the reception business, your customers are in the UK, US, from any place and you don't have this kind of intimacy with your customer base. No if you're setting up in India plus in Germany then you know we look for the German market, we understand what they look for and we design for the German experience traveller an unforgettable experience in India. Then you need by definition you have a competitive advantage in such a contrast, have a competitive advantage over a pure Indian company or a pure German company. One is close to the customer but not so close to the where things happening and the other one is close to where things are happening but not to the customer and that you can overcome because of multi-local topic.
AK: So maybe just to make sure I get it right when you talk about global, international, multi-local if you can just repeat how do you define that.

NS: Look, I would say global, you know, if you are in a global, probably you have two or three aspects. First of all, the market. Okay then the market equals industry where you are in so you know healthcare, biotechnology, custom production or by definition are very global businesses, global markets, global industries because there is no barrier. Software you have the localization if you are in a, you know if you are in the account or key businesses or so, you have some localization so if you are in commercial transactions. But there is little barrier to deploy your technology in one country versus in another one, so the industry is most probably per se relatively global. Okay and the needs you satisfy are similar in the US in Europe you know if you are in the communications business, if you are providing a credit card service or providing whatever. That's for me the global thing, so the industry is global; there is no barrier for the knowledge to flow. Then on the other side you have the other extreme is the local company. The local company is basically has a market where the demand of the consumers or the customers is significantly different in one location versus another location. And then if you don't know, if you know your local market, your local customers you can then from a purchasing or a supplying perspective, you can source or make your local customers happy. Or it can also be an ethnic, you are in the US focussed on Hispanics, you are in the US and focused on the black population or whatever that from a segmentation perspective. Then I think there are like a third category which I called multi-local. Basically, it brings a competitive advantage if you are not only local but if you are multi-local you know from a sourcing perspective from a go to market perspective. It can be both because if you are local and you need your source, your product or your services come from somewhere else you need to buy their finishing your competitive disadvantage over [00:23:26], somebody who is established in the sourcing location. And then you can start to grow like a network. Some of you not become then market others become supply centric, sourcing centric and then you can start to combine and that's where I would see the difference. So per se your initial question was why do companies become international or global or is it an advantage if they start right away international. Now if you, I'd say basically, look for me its not an advantage or not it is part of a strategy, the way you define your USP, your service you want to offer to the market you go to the market what is it you want to offer to at what price and so on. There you have basically you have an area where you multi-local is an alternative to local, pure local but multi-local is another noun if you were in a global industry in a global environment. If your platform is the internet then many cases, the whole thing is global.

AK: No that helps and the different examples I see now, because I've been starting to think about it and work more closely with different start-ups in terms of how they are doing it. One company I know, there is a software is a basically an internet based online shopping but its not for a generic product. What they say, global stores with local products so what they have done is the guys are basically selling unique localized items in the internet platform available globally. So every country you go there are somewhere very specific items and they are only selling those items on to their global platform but the supplier is basically very local and then I came across

NS: Again this comes close to the definition of what I said multi-local

AK: Yeah exactly

NS: That seems to be an area where you need to start the definition work

AK: Yeah and another example I just want to share is there is a start-up in India in Hyderabad in India, they are basically, there are 3 founders; a Singaporean, a French and an Indian guy and what they are doing is ambulance service, kind of Uber for ambulances. They are doing it very local, it's for local business and the question is why do we have a French guy into it. Of

course they have got interest in India, but the idea was that the French guy and the Singapore guy understand the operations, healthcare business especially how it works in European environment and in Singapore, south east Asian environment and they want to replicate those processes, leveraging technology into India. So they want to, they don't want to create a global company, they want to create an Indian company for India starting with one city and then go to multiple cities but they have got these people and they are working as a beginning as a partner into the business. Of course, there are reasons why they came together in terms of they knew each other. So the network plays a big role in terms of that and how you can trust people this is how they are able to drive it. At this there is a numerous example of export kind of scenario where for example you have a lot of silk produced in India and there are quite some people who wants to produce silk and silk based material in India and they want to sell here in Europe in Germany and so on. So this is again a trade-off versus what is customers need here. The advantage they have here by having a partner here in Germany and a partner in India is the Indian guy can talk about raw material, production etc., but the guy here not only talks about selling but European market from a choice of say the texture and the colour of textile products are very different than what you sell in India or what you sell in Asia. It is just too different and I know for my own experience perspective it takes minimum 5-10 years for people to really understand the colour choices are so different for European people than the Indian people. Now if you don't have these two very knowledgeable partners then you just can't do that business and then people struggle exporting, they take ages to get some initial success with any customer. These are some examples I just wanted to highlight. But going back to one more time to this pharma company, I want to, if you can share the details when they started in Europe. You mentioned they had a VP and the CEO also relocated there, but within the company did they have this VP with significant share of the company, equity based into it or it is more hired
NS: No they were like 4 founders and one went to the US right away, they decided from the very beginning that they needed to be in North America and also little bit to be where the Silicon valley and the big [00:29:38] so that was one reason and the CEO is the other one. During the last year, the company is founded in 2014, so their first product launch was summer 2016 and the previous to the launch, the CEO went off to after the launch let's say from march to September, the CEO was based in the US. So, two of the 4 founders were based in the US.

AK: But they didn't look for an American counterpart into the team did they?

NS: No they did not. Probably no. The founders are like one or two Germans, and one or two Swiss people the lady went to the US and formally opened up a business and in Bangalore, this lady trying to sell chocolate in Bangalore. The business practices were different, the Swiss mentality have an encounter with an Indian mentality so I think they split, so her Indian partner bought her out and, anyhow the, I think your model makes sense. Just need to find a kind of more elements to it for the definition. Where does it make sense and where not you know the, that's why I call it multi-local because it obviously you know I mean you have Uber and you have, if you have Uber slogging to create a whole local business in each market. There are some markets which are open from a regulation perspective and is basically focused first on their technology and on the customer experience, on the consumer experience and if you have you know Uber will have designed themselves as far as an American company then build on the business there and become a solid and a large organisation and not only when they are large then move over to the next market then that would have been a different but it is also in this, I think maybe some element you can explore further. This kind of you know leanness you know, one thing is you are this pharma company so they would set up markets, let's say they were founded in Europe, so then they set up an American subsidiary then I think the whole thing would have gone in the wrong direction because then they would have the American, the head of the American subsidiary to an American guy who tells them that everything is different in US and they do it his way or highway. To be honest if I remember well, SAP was really struggling. I mean they established in the Philadelphia area because they were a couple of their first American customer was based there and they settled very very close to this customer. And then in the late 90's and the early 2000 there was always a kind of a fight between the American subsidiary and the rest. The Americans basically considered that nobody, that the Germans had no clue about creating software and selling software. Well if you were to start the way you said, if you were to start say okay and that was one of the reasons why the founders went over houses spend was six months in North America and six months in Germany and a guy there called Paul Rold, he was a board member in Germany but and the German guy was basically managing the US but that did not succeed either because there were several intense half European guys, English guys running the American subsidiary. And the final turnaround only happened when the term was ended and SAP is playing the other way around. It took them 30 years to find that out and they take the American out of Rolhand but they need a strong counterpart from a European legislation and Germany they took from a legal and cultural perspective. I mean have a look at SAP, just from the other way around see what they did SAP is kind of a traditional approach. You start in Germany and then you set up a subsidiary in Switzerland where we talked about being an international business. But all production and services, all knowledge was based in Germany. If you come by the model a fair case, so that you relatively quickly, so these guys were not too swift in San Francisco. It is a pharmaceutical company. Look, I don't know. The company is small. They are selling five or six million dollars right now. But, they are growing very quickly. But they were also basically like focusing first on what the platform is and then they said, look we need to launch our product in the US. Because if we are successful in the US, then we can be successful all over. Because we know the European market, but we don't know the American market. Now, if we put all the bets on the US, then we have a better chance at being successful. That goes a little bit with your theory there.

Then we come again back to what I said in the beginning. To become international, global or decision, that is a key decision that needs to happen in the very beginning.

AK: That is a very valuable point, which I have taken into my list now already. I think when you say SAP example, and also this Swiss company with two founders going to US, and this is where the challenge comes into. If you have a partner, and this is what I am, I still need to kind of find the right words here. If you have a partner who is locally knowledgeable, but he is not onboarded well on time, so then again you have the challenge of having someone from America, the way SAP faced the problem. They are not part of the company from the beginning or from the core. As you say, the development and assets is here in Germany, so you are not attached to it. You are only doing kind of selling job and telling everyone, this is a very different place of work. When you have a founder going there, you overcome, for sure one big barrier. And that big barrier is that you understand the company, you understand the value system, you understand the product, understand the service, you understand how company is working and then you have to bring in the knowledge of the market. So, at least there is one element and especially in the US of course, the language wise it is not a big challenge in general. So people are able to probably do that. But if you find a person who is also an American, and knows the American market and has been part of the company from the beginning, you are able to send that person, probably you are better off. So these are the dimensions I still need to find the right way to express. But we are up to kind of elaborate a bit more.

Let me bring it to another topic of investments. So if you look at start-ups, especially for seed funding and initial angel funding, once you get to like Series B and D, you probably have lot of international venture capitalists and so on today. But for early stage funding, what is your take? Do you see that there are investors who are willing to put on to this global company the money or they still prefer to look for local businesses and more local strong thing. How do you see the investment community looks.

NS: Look, I think that is a very fair point. I mean even here the investors, investors maybe not, but the board say, hey guys why are you coming to US, what's your experience? Well, one of the critical points is that, two, or fifty percent of the founders went over. But the real critical point was that we do not launch the product in our home market. We launch the product in the US. That was the topic. They just said, look we go for the big market. Because if we can survive in the big market, and grow in the big market, then we will be able to do so in the small market as well. If you are able to scale, and that's probably a critical point, are you able to scale? And if you are not able to scale, then you probably go better into small market because it is easier to protect the small market. These guys, they basically sell in the internet service or health service on the internet. So whether there are 5000 people asking for the same service today or fifty, that's the, they have the supply chain on the control, that's then fine for them. And that's what their main goal to say, what do we need to be able to do in order to really scale. [00:40:21] cannot learn to scale if everything is so small and so close.

AK: And these four partners you said, two are Germans and Swiss. How did they got together? Do you have some insight there?

NS: No idea. Look I came in, I learned and they were looking for seed money, I got to know them then. I just kept in touch with them because I thought it was an interesting company, interesting approach. And in Switzerland, their seed, all these kind of [00:41:02] in Switzerland. They are like, depending on the topic you know. Fintech is now hot topic in outside of Zurich and Zug. Now Zug has a province, they want to be world market leader in Fintetch. The government there is like, they are trying to track these kind people since they have a tax regime, which is very interesting for big companies and big finance companies. They say, okay, let's see if we can do something for the start-ups. So, in FinTech, if you get FinTech, in the bitcoin business, you cannot be local, it is just not possible. If you want to be a player there. The same thing in biotechnology. So [00:41:51] this biotechnology thing. So, if the venture capitalist and the seed money people, they are always looking, except if we talk about the facilities management companies, but if it is about research and health care, or methodologies in healthcare, they are always have in mind the global market. Look, I would imagine that if you are a member of a business angels club in Stuttgart, you probably, your mind-set is slightly different. Or if you are in [00:42:29] and firstly, if such a club exists there, secondly who is composing it. Depends also there and let's say, where are the start-ups. In Switzerland you have like a couple of schools. One is the polytechnical school, the university schools [00:42:53] is proud, every 15 days a new company is founded [00:43:03] That is part of the way they create invention, they create. This research you know, this is all research that is with global view in place and then the research attracts investments community. You know the seed money, the venture capital and so on. Lake of Geneva now has an interesting investment fund. Same happens around Zurich and Zurich was the financial centre anyhow. So in [00:43:41] it is a different. They have the school, they have a lot of bio-technology, bio-chemistry at the university and they are now changing the university, and creating the vehicle that the university can become an investor in the company and things like this which was not possible in the past. You know, they probably cannot put money on the table, but they can say we, since the research was conducted in our premises, by our people, helped by our professors, so we will be a shareholder like all the big US universities do that.

So this kind of start-up tries to first start off, create like a framework. [00:44:36] you know once become strong in mobility. I don't think they are so strong from the; the weak link right now, in Barcelona I see around the actual research institutions and probably money wise they are not as strong as some of the traditional finance centre. You know San Francisco was never a, was never able to compete with New York or with Wall Street in managing finances. It is clear. Silicon Valley is basically in San Francisco and not in New York. This combination of knowledge, culture and probably the kind of commitment to or the investors community; for the financing part.

AK: You mentioned Zug and I think Zug has been doing that. At least I first heard about it almost 17-18 years back that they have the big international companies' offices in Zug because of the taxation reasons.

NS: Zug was never a financial. They started as traders. So all the trading companies that came to Zug. But this was a pure tax driven thing. Now what Zug is trying to do is, even some other companies are close to Zug because it is nicer to be there from a tax perspective. You know it is like cheap labour force. If Bangalore becomes, starts to pay huge salary, the owners of the lab or whatever, they are moving to the next place. So, the same thing in Zug. If they can't sustain, their kind of income, or low income taxes, then people move on. So they start to realise, we need something, we need something that's related to the area. And that's why said we need companies that are starting here, that are employing people from here, they are locally attached to this place. And then they say, what kind of, so the name of the game for them is FinTech right now.

AK: That's true. In terms of, maybe I ask one question very generic, in my slide six I have tried to capture at least the key words, what would be interesting to be part of and of course, we are elaborating on each of them as we go by. Anything is specific you see that key thing is missing. Beyond what I. Strategic, the word, I think I need get it on to that for sure. Arbitrage piece is part of opportunity identification. But anything which comes to your mind when you look at this slide.

NS: Why don't you take you take the kind of the business model canvas [00:48:24] You have the opportunity identification part, you put it somewhere, products and services and economic model, first customer. For me it is very much like, if something is missing it goes to the business model canvas. Then you can say, design and develop, okay. And there is the difference. The discovery area, there might be something which, so for the opportunity identification, that might be different. Because you look at an opportunity normally appears in the local context. But then it is your decision to say, No this opportunity, if we go, if we scrutinise it [00:49:12] People have exactly the same needs across the world, across the globe. Very very similar needs. Then already things are changing. Then the way you can match the business model canvas will probably have an impact. Then from an execution perspective. There is really where you need to see it goes. It is probably between the discovery phase, design and develop phase probably. In the discovery phase, you put the number of [00:49:50] then you verify them or you do not verify them during this time of development. Then the execution is probably then adapted to a strategy and I feel a little bit that your coevolution model here is good [00:50:11]. That would be for me a kind of a hypothesis that I would then try to verify or not verify during the process.

It is like a circle here, you know, between discover and execute, there is design and develop, there you could probably just take a [00:50:34] business model canvas. By the way, there is a version for start-ups as well. By an Indian guy who adapted it. Then you get kind of a circle, so you know one of these arrows that go around.

AK: Yeah, yeah. Understood.

NS: So, it is kind of an intricate process. Then for execution, I think you just need to look at the topic of cultural diversity, market diversity. If it doesn't makes a difference, if it provides with a competitive advantage. Basically [00:51:15] The model you go where you grow into a big business in Germany, and you go on to France and so on, every time you are going to new market. First of all, there is no full focus there and secondly you run a big risk while in this kind of distributed partnership. You start right away in three markets across the globe or we are going into the most risky market over there. So you try to manage things in different ways, not just step by step. If you take one giant step and then another step, you want to obtain a competitive advantage. Governance probably is something. To me what is important is the culture. What is that we want to achieve culture-wise? And the process is probably, I don't know. So the resources, capacity and capability and the whole thing around capacity, capability and scalability would be a very important point here.

You know in the one below, the international mind-set, it is not per se good or bad. It should, if it needs to be a global mind-set, it needs to be a multi-local mind-set, and if also needs to be a local mind-set. And the knowledge, obviously. Technology, network, trust, transparency. Transparency, you know would just call it culture. Or you mean different partners in a company.
AK: So the three things I want to say, and I think I should elaborate. When I said knowledge, for me that is piece of culture was part of it. But I think, culture I need to separate it out. The transparency was basically among the partners who are working in different places. So that when you are, everybody should follow what we have agreed for. So we need to make sure that on periodic basis, some kind of way it is that works otherwise. You start, you know initially you build the trust. You started with some trust, so because you knew the people, either you studied together or even before. Then while doing it, you develop further trust and when you start executing it should not be that you go away and the you lose the trust and the company

starts falling apart. So that is why I was trying to have the transparency piecec here. One thing which I added

NS: For that you know, probably you can put, knowledge part as IP because you see you can protect IP. Technology is then fine, network, trust and transparency is probably something different from the culture. The culture is the values you want to promote all over. And trust and transparency is. You know, I have my own experiences where we started a company in Latin America, my partners screwed me all over. The idea was that he would do the business in Latin America and I would get invested in here. I would start with some buyers in Europe and he would invest in mine. But he never invested in mine. [00:54:46] That topic. But that was at the a local business again because we were not really creating a kind of a, it was, I invest in your local business, you then invest in my local business. My local business would probably by definition because I am a totally different person from a local geographical perspective. But my partner, my business would have been more international in mind from the very beginning. So the trust and transparency and the governance, that's a good point. That is a topic. [00:55:46] AK: That's a good point. Of course, I have to also look at how far I have to go but the idea definitely is that some detail around each building block, at least as a part of the research and that would be the next step, once I have this model a bit more refined. And that is why I am doing these discussions. There is a plan to have around ten discussions. And then I kind of refine that, fine tune it, and then go for the next step detail that would be then the second last step for me. Before I close the interview, I have one more question, which I wanted to discuss today. I see that there are people with great ideas for business and I see that there are people who have the knowledge about the business of the local system. But when we talk about creating either a multi-local or a global company, of course, in case of Swiss, they are cofounders, two of them travelled, but getting four people together, always, even in the local market is very difficult. So, do you see there is a potential for having some effort to say, can we bring ideas and people together which can create a global company?

NS: Sorry, can you repeat the question.

AK: The question is that, do you see as well, would there be a potential market where we have opportunity or ideas and entrepreneurs whom we can do the match-making kind of thing.

NS: As a business?

AK: To create a global start-up, for example.

NS: You mean a platform that provides match-making for potential entrepreneurs. Good question. You know, I think there is a market, but whether you can monetise it, I don't really know.

AK: Okay.

NS: I would, you know the problem is exactly the trust and transparency. I mean, how do you guarantee trust and transparency.

AK: That's true. Here I wanted to maybe I can share the thought which I was just getting in this morning. You know we have this different kind of platform for match-making. So if we look at Uber. Basically, it is a match-making platform of a driver who has a car and the passenger who wants to. Then there is a start-up called Upwork, which is bringing freelancers together for different work from web design to PowerPoint presentation to virtual assistant and so on. Now why I believe, this is my thought, I don't know, I don't have any proof point for that, why Uber is more successful and why Upwork is not that successful has such two elements. One key element for that is how fast you can take money out of the consumer and how much you can take. That's the key thing here. In case of Uber, what happens is that, I need a taxi, I need someone to drop me from A to B, I quickly search, there is a nice technology for that, and I got matched and I paid my taxi driver and I go away. The possibility of me telling the taxi driver that you are paying commission to Uber, so next time you give me your number, I want to take it, the transaction size is low and repeatability could be high but you know the probability of having in the same A to B is limited. But in case of Upwork, the transaction size is slightly bigger. It is not 10-15 dollars, it is 100, 200, 500 dollars and there I hear a lot, this happens. And that's how I thought this is probably the reason. Upwork is less successful because people, Upwork is able to do the matchmaking of work and doer of the work, but then what they do is that, okay we agree on the work, now it costs 200-300 Euros, let's do it offline, because why should we pay 20% to Upwork. So this is where.

NS: Yeah, and Upwork, do they have the. What is the value proposition to the person who looks for somebody doing him a job, you know. Uber is basically an App that is like let us say, micro size on both sides. The consumer on one side and the other one is also a consumer. The driver, somehow from a, they are also like consumers in a way. They are micro business. What Uber does in reality, like they are many, there are also interesting successful networks in the transportation business. If you have your own lorry. If you are a lorry driver today, If you have your own lorry, you either have, the company [01:01:25] provides you with most of the work and then if you then accept the trip, then you basically all the logistics of, so they are not [01:01:35]. If you want to transport a container from Frankfurt to Boston, it goes over these kind of logistics platforms. The ones that go into the last mile, that they open the container and take the merchandise out, and the final distribution. DHL is also already kind of offering a [01:02:05] Kind of Uberisation. They say, okay, we don't want to, we have little parcels and packages, so if you are anyhow moving from place A to place B, why don't you take one of our parcels with you. In this kind of environment, where you have relatively small transaction sizes, I think there it is successful for sometime. [01:02:41] Uber takes it to further extreme, for the whole financial transaction is done, its GPS, people feel more secure than with taxi drivers because at any moment their car is on control. If you sent your daughter in such an Uber car, it is traceable, call if something happens, when a car wreck or something happens. The taxi company can't provide you with that now. Honestly, locally I would go for a taxi company because I know them and maybe they have a couple of drivers that I am dealing with, but in places in Argentina, like in Buenos Aires, where likely people feel insecure, nobody takes a taxi company. They all take Uber. Like my taxi is Uber over there. Just because they feel more secure, because the cars are traced in any minute.

AK: That's absolutely true. I mean, the platform works fantastic. So this is great, I mean.

NS: Probably, it is just the ease of use, it is the transaction size has to do with it and kind of, you know. If you had on the other side, all big companies, it probably will be different. What they really do is they go into these monopolies. I know, in my thought it is the guys who have, the taxi drivers, [01:04:15] who have three or four cars and have a couple of cars. That's their model. And then they have the power to make the price. Because you know if they have a large taxi company, let's say in Munich, they have two companies, two large organisations, institutions and each of them have 300 drivers. They would then probably, Uber manages the

[01:04:45] but on the other side, the taxi, the driving company says, hey you know what, [01:04:51] So I think the power is now in the platform. But the power can only be in the platform as long as the effort to be connected between the direct connections and I think there you have a point. If it is easy for the driver or for the consumer to connect with the driver, on both sides, then they probably don't need the platform. So the size of the transaction has something to do, and the size of the economic power, it creates a balance. You know you have micro, yet multiple offerings and multiple demands. That's probably why maybe this why Upwork is not so interesting because they need to look for work in larger organisations. Except they bring it [01:05:50] But they basically have this kind of small stuff. I now have to cook and I come to your house and I look and you come to my house. So they have like a currency there. Then if I cook, I get five points, and I can use my five points to pay for carpenter who does my bookshelf, to create my bookshelf, Ikea bookshelf. Then they have a kind of a screening methodology and so on. It is important that people are trustworthy. But they do some kind of screening. The idea there is to one provides the platform that allows them to find supplies and on the other side how do you provide trustworthiness in there. I think eBay has the same problem. [01:06:56]

AK: I think we are coming close to the time. Basically I have asked some of the questions I wanted and I think it is a lot of good insight I have to refine my model. So thanks for that. I will just stop the recording and of course we can talk few more minutes which we have.

Interview with Interviewee 4

Meeting start time: Thursday, August 31, 2017 18:20:37

AK: Ashutosh Kumar, TL: Interviewee 4

AK: So thanks again for agreeing to talk about it. Let us start with; it is more what we call grounded theory based. That means we have a few questions and basically we allow the interviewer to share more and more and it is [00:00:33] structured. So I will have [00:00:36]

TL: There is a lot of echo, so I will get my earphones.

AK: I hear my own echo, but I don't hear any echo from your side.

TL: You hear your own echo is because of my [00:00:53]. I will get my headset.

AK: Okay.

TL: Okay, now.

AK: This is better. Much better. Maybe you can share some thoughts about your venture. How you started, what exactly do you do?

TL: We come from two sides. We are actually big fans of local independent stories and retail and the side streets and little stores where you can talk to people and people have backgrounds and they know what they do and have a professional selection of products. We liked this very much. We saw then difficulties of all these stores to sell online because of specific kind of browsing product online also and get them shipped at least decide your shopping decisions online. And that is how we created, or started to create this international network of small stores to show them to customers and be the front system of small stores and at the same time also have a public [00:04:24] for browsing individual contents and products so that you can do virtual travelling.

This is why we from the beginning have an idea of very international setup that is national and international at the same time. We do it in German and English, in two languages. Now there are 350 sellers on our platform; 280 Germans and the remaining ones are international. Europe and also some worldwide stores. And the global thing, to make it really global, we see some issues, some limits of language itself or shipping, of customs, different tax laws. That are a little bit and also shipping costs are in the way of doing international retail from the beginning.

AK: Moving further, I hear from you and I know a little bit – even though you have two languages [00:05:49] majority German, to make it a global from the very beginning and you have out of 350 stores, 70-80 stores from different other locations. How many countries you are able to cover with that?

TL: Good question. Roughly, I don't know how many countries we touch right now. 20 countries, 25, 35 countries something already. We will need to look up the statistics. We touched 35 countries. If we cover them is the second question. We do global actually. Other one is that we ship globally. So, basically we ship to every country in the world.

AK: So, one of the [00:06:50] to bring local products to global level, I would think multi-local globalised. How is your operations? If a store from India wants to sell, they have their own entity, they have their management, knowhow, what you are helping them is to sell globally and ship globally. Is that correct understanding?

TL: Yeah, it is two sided right now like now. Especially for the German stores, we run a fully functional webshop system. There is no need of another online shop. You can use this as the main online shop and in your seller page, you link from your website to that shop. This is actually the best use case because then you get customer reviews, product reviews into this one channel and it is also visible to the other visitors and attract more people from the product to you. For international stores, we are like in the second shopping window and for them we have two address – international and [00:08:14] German customers. And we also help with the shipping. We already integrate much more of these processes to make them easier in the next steps.

AK: And when you are recruiting these local shops, I have two questions here. One is they should share the vision of globally or do you find most of them are interested, whosoever comes here I am selling just to them and not selling globally. What has been the general trend?
TL: General trend of the sellers is that they are frightened of the global shipping. And frightened of tax law, of customs and paperwork and how to get it out because they don't have the knowledge specially for fashion or jewellery. They are also frightened of returns, like international returns. It is sometimes a limitation, the seller says I don't want to ship internationally, I only want to ship within Europe. At the moment, with this limitation, we say Okay [00:09:33] And as soon as our global knowledge grows and global shipping will get easier in the future. Then it will open up.

AK: So the point you mentioned to me, in our model of internationalisation, knowledge is the key component. [00:09:55] They have the product knowledge which is kind of traditional [00:10:08] to global business. [00:10:10] And my next question was, how do you go about recruiting? What is the mechanism to search for them?

TL: For now, we raise, we collect the recommendations from customers and from existing sellers and existing stores from our page. We have four ways. One is recommendation; we get a lot of recommendations. Second is, we do web research, and web search, reviews or their rated stars where you see trusted reviews. Third channel is, we go to the cities and we walk through the streets and put out our flyers into the doors of the sellers and note down which sellers that are. The fourth channel is they apply to us actively and say that I discovered you, I search for you, and can I please join? Then we have an qualification process, interview process to see if the requirements fits and if it really is a store, because we count so much on the location, if there is a location behind this store, that this store is able to do an Instagram story for example with a video camera and it is not the bedroom or the living room of the person or an apartment. Then, do they have successful customers or satisfied customers in their city. And the third one is are they really willing to sell to customers digitally. Do they have a digital channel already or. In the beginning, we started to take a lot of complete offliners into our system and we noticed that it is a bit too hard for us in the time of low traffic on the portal and also not very best visibility on the store. Very difficult [00:12:40] best computer use in the beginning.

AK: One more question on the same thing. When you talk about global business, there are agencies and institutions who support globalisation. Did you also got support from those kind of institutions or agencies?

TL: Not yet. We are in touch a little bit, but since we do this little slow; we also didn't look too much of support of these agencies actually. But what we found out is that there is in many countries, people who like to support internationalisation, but they only work for the mid-sized and bigger companies and not so much for the very little guys. It is too little. They are interested in joining sellers to the platform, but each seller brings super little sales in the beginning and then it is not so interesting for this stage. [00:13:56]

AK: Just to explain to you what our model is. Internationalisation [00:14:09] It is about discovering, about finding what is the right opportunity, the look for right partners, so this is what I heard in my earlier research when I looked at. I do realise [00:14:24] for this kind of support. If you look at Indo-German commerce basically, [00:14:32] We are really in the small mid-sized companies [00:14:40] The third building block to discovery is that we are looking at investors [00:14:51] So experts talk about, I have taken up institutions but the [00:15:02] investors. Do you also have more international investors who helps you or you have only investors from Germany? What is your response to this, is what I am

TL: We are in the threat of, you can say, the seller from other countries that have these faster international platforms, faster growing. They all start with much bigger funding also. We have this issue of slow German funding and everyone wants to see the KPIs first and look later on it and so. Our pace of investors is very German right now. We looked at international investors, but they all want to see it working in Germany now first. Maybe they are afraid of [00:15:57] This is also since we want to see some performance, we also noticed that an international store on our platform that sells one product per month is not enough because then we are not active partner and they even forget the login/password for our platform. So it is more frequency and frequency itself is right now on the long distance, overseas [00:16:28] We see more into Germany for beginning. In the long run, right now actually, we are super interested in international investors that could help with their networks also. We are looking into traffic partnerships, to join with other websites that get traffic that is looking for some travel aspects for niche content, for music, for the little things and not the mass market stuff where we could join forces and link exchanges and promotions together. That's one. These partnerships could also grow more with international investors [00:17:19] right now, our major shareholder, he is from Russia. Also an interesting market. He also has some relations to Arabia right now. We use our seller network for sourcing things that are difficult to get [00:17:42] there is also some potential in international things. Yeah, we keep talking to more international investors actually and it would be very interesting to join Asian, American and find from Israel or something, if possible.

AK: So you are also looking at more international investors. That's how I hear it. One more question. [00:18:11] international mind-set. Now, from a global perspective, you and [00:18:24] are two partners. [00:18:29]. How did you decide about this internationalisation? How did you got that? [00:18:42]

TL: Yeah, somehow we travel around and we are always thinking international. We like the travel aspect and like to have these boxes coming to me with stories from other cities and I like the emotions of the cities and of talking to the people and of individual backgrounds. So drinking the tequila that is normally offered in Germany or was offered was always too boring for me after I found out that there are so many tequilas in Mexico. So many little ones and different ones that you don't know here or don't get here. I like to [00:19:23] from the stores, but also little retail stores, from the guys who specialise in these product with a store in Germany. So get it in little bit more volume and distribute in Germany. I also like these guys. I like stories and backgrounds and this is one of the best criteria and then we saw how difficult it is for the local stores to keep up the store facility there and also run the website, also web shop system. This is a complete different challenge that so many of these stores have very old fashioned web shops. They cost money and they also. We also combine both models. So it is also a bit of challenge right now to get this two side thing. What we also notice is just collecting the sellers with an additional shopping window is also difficult and to pitch, to make them very active to put all their products and then to have customers finding and looking for it. So the question is how to grow? City by city or category by category and we decided for this very [00:20:39] we give as gifts [00:20:42] to jewellery to kids stuff to all sort of gift things. It makes it so broad and so diverse also and also struggling and finding the right path of having the density of all different methods, of structure that we have here. Region structure, product structure, category structure, price structure, [00:21:08] group structure. Like what is interesting to the thirty year old guys to fifty year old or seventy. Right now, in the core we are in the thirty to fifty year old people who look for something unique and something with a story and would like the small store. Outside if you ask them if they like more the chain stores or would prefer to shop in the smaller side streets, they would answer I prefer to go to the small side streets. More uniqueness.

AK: So in your case, moving further to, if I am trying to create a start-up completely from the global, [00:21:50] partner, network, mind-set. We already touched on factors but I want to. When we talk about design [00:22:05] In your case, we have a local product. But when you are thinking globally, I have two questions here. One is, do you also look for localising it, not localising, the word is globalising it and are you also kind of looking at opportunities presented, so it is presented in a global fashion. [00:22:38]

TL: Once again the question.

AK: So, let me ask only one question first. Do you also, let us say, globalise the product? Globalisation product, it has two meaning for me. One is, let us take for example, [00:23:00] you get here in Germany. [00:23:08] So this is kind of localisation done here. So that is one aspect. The second aspect is just not the product but also the packaging. Look at Indian product, their packaging would be very bright for example. When you come to Europe, it is not that bright. So, are you also doing that or you are only selling as is.

TL: Now we are selling as is. Right now, it is more the idea of finding local friends and we shop as local so, you get it as in country it is from if you go as a tourist. That is one. But we also think that it might be not so popular in one area or one country anymore but they are much more popular in another country. So that customers could find this style from places where it is actually not the main trend at the moment. So that you can supply and transport. Right now it is more to have the original flavour and find the original and unique things and not the mass-market stuff.

AK: Yeah, I think that makes sense as well. [00:24:38] But that is also very specific.

TL: And since it is also very low volume, it is very difficult that the regions because our main region right now is, 80% of all that is happening right now is within Germany.

AK: Moving on, there is another topic I have what is called [00:25:01]. In your case, [00:25:16] are two aspects for me again. One is with your partner [00:25:20] since you know him, as I understand both of you studied together and you have [00:25:28]. But in terms of with the sellers, what kind of dimensions you know, what do you see when we talk about trust?

TL: There are a couple of trust dimensions in the whole thing. Like the trust in the team here, as you know, as founders and everything we have worked for years, like more than 10 years together. Then, there is this trust of our investors into us [00:26:01] the plan, numbers don't fit completely and [00:26:08] free trust into us that somehow we will make it go in the end. This is also trust. You know, our sellers. We spent money also for our whole shop system to have the trust [00:26:24]. In the bottom, in the footer you have one EHI. We tell institutions here in Germany and the other one is trusted shops so it is this place and also the customer reviews of the shop and the European trust pitch. It all shows that there are some check-ups from this whole [00:26:45] And people are satisfied and you can read the reviews. Also, we look after our google reviews and have now 40 or 41 reviews and it is around 5 stars. We do a lot of reviews, in written reviews. So people look this up and try to gain trust. And in terms of our marketing, we have this idea of locally known specialist stores where people in the neighbourhood of 20 kilometres around the store have high visibility of the store and have trust into the brand name of the store. Specially from the country guys, like from the villages. And then we run our social media campaigns promoting that this store joined the network and is also now online with the idea that some brand trust into the little store, on this little region, of this people transforms into brand trust of storefront. Also at the same time, you have to trust into the other sellers. Like once you have trusted one seller here, and we say everything is clearly sorted and pre-collected and the application processes that then you also start to trust this other seller. What we also find is that people who are looking for product, they have more brand trust of this product, and they find it on google and it is a rare product. And they find it on our page and they see the trust pitches and the whole thing. And if they normally probably if they wouldn't trust the local seller because they didn't know it before and as it is another language or doesn't look more on the website. But when they see it on our page, there is more trust to shop it with prepayment and then they do. There is level of trust in here. We want to have the little independent guys and then transform all the trust into the family, into the network, into the community.

AK: Very interesting. Coming to the next [00:29:05]. So, here there is a product. So does it work? They have a price rate and when it is sold from your page, you get the money from the customer and you pay to the seller.

TL: Yeah, exactly.

AK: [00:29:29] So that is very transparent of what model of [00:29:35]. You earlier touched upon a lot of process challenges like shipping and so on. If you want to elaborate a little more them. I am not looking for any specific process. What I am looking for is, where are the sources of challenges and how to try to address that. Some, whatever you can easily.

TL: Yes. Challenges what we see, issue of putting product into the webshop or of getting pictures, of writing the text, of doing social media marketing, of how to use Instagram, how to use, how to do insta story, how to have communication Instagram with customers, and how to ship box into Switzerland, how to ship a box faraway. What's more challenges. Then, how to make our visibility of our page very nice so that you have a good browsing experience. And we try to find always now which contributes the most economy and of most flow into our ecosystem model. This is how we try to approach which services we tackle. [00:31:12] with our little theme here. With the website, the problem of performance, some usability of shipping. [00:31:25] copy and paste stuff, find a service guy who goes to the store and helps them in generating content. Sometimes, we need to see how much this costs and how much it could be worth for seller to do this. Because little sellers that only have a couple of pieces, it might not even pay off at all to generate such content. [00:31:52] we build piece by piece here with personal trainer ship for the sellers, little sellers. Some extra bookable services you can have from us. Also [00:32:09] marketing where we send stuff to the store, helping them part-time. This is our add-on services. Then, there is our own development effort to improve the visibility and our portal.

AK: Excellent. And, coming to one of the topics I have here, technology. Lot of things that you have already touched. [00:32:47] Any other aspect you want to cover and say when you talk to the seller and sometimes they don’t know the technology. Or most of the time they know the technology and they are fine to use it. How is that working?

TL: What we kind of try to figure out as we start to approach each other. We have the phone and what we also see is that this is so people related and independently run shops so, there is always a person, a retailer person behind it. That is works a lot when you connect on social media, Instagram or Facebook or even WhatsApp to be closer. Then especially on the other side when you could see some common contact, it helps when you have more closeness with people. And this also builds more trust and more easiness to work together and this is what I see more and more. Writing emails is always communication, but once you have the guys on WhatsApp, with many of them it is easier to communicate. It is also like people with each other. Same process. [00:34:32] They start to follow you on Instagram, it builds personal connection. This is why we [00:34:41] on the whole communication with customers and with stores and our whole team to be super personal. Also, [00:34:51] In the beginning we were a bit longer on [00:34:59], but right now, once you [00:35:04] Many of them, this old fashioned retailers have difficulties. But we notice like once we start to get used to it, then it is much easier. They like it.
AK: So this is good piece again. [00:35:30] This is very important in a virtual world. So, let us, I think the major topics that I want to touch with you,

TL: One interesting thing is also in terms of start-up and money. You cannot really pay competitive salary. So at the same time it means, if there is so much to do, you have a lot of interns and you kind of get fast exchanging staff. [00:36:27] In terms of trying to make it personal, make sure the people show the same faces, we have the big trend of showing the whole team and all faces on our page, but then we notice that we [00:36:41] so much and people, sellers get used to one person and it is not there anymore. So right now, we. .. back a little bit and then just show the two founders and talk about the team instead of replacing the faces all the time. And it is also a challenge right now to build a strong ecosystem and a strong platform, you need some strong pillars from the staff level also. Otherwise you build up knowledge, you build up relationships and then it breaks away and you need to build up and it is also a big challenge.

AK: That is a good point. The one question that I have in follow up to that is, in terms of software development, the team must [00:37:30] The software that you are developing, I remember that you have a team member in Portugal and other places.

TL: We replaced the development team. Right now, we have an Ukrainian developer, our CTO and he is based in Dusseldorf and his team is based in the Ukraine. So it is also very international. Same time, it was also lot of friction because English, the German-English rationale. There is a lot of detail of languages and double checks and couple of feedback loops that were [00:38:12]

AK: So before I sum up the interview part, any piece of thought or point which come to mind when we talk about internationalisation.

TL: Right now, we have like the location where we operate. So we have this idea to be based here because of some private reasons. Also, in the middle of Germany, not in the German hotspot because it is not so over [00:38:47] with competition between [00:38:51] companies and teams. That's what I see is when you want to do something very global, it also makes sense to be in the global spot. So if Sugar Trends had been in Berlin as location, somehow I think it would make easier to make it global. Or New York or Tel Aviv or some other global spot. [00:39:22] is a bit far and I think it still has an impact in terms of how global is the perception of the people, like how popular. It is also about trust again of whatever investment funds. For investment funds, it is much easier to visit people in Berlin than come to Cologne.

AK: True, agree.

TL: Because it is still one further flight, one more travel. For me also, there is a lot of aspects that would vote for a super global city if we want to do something super global.

AK: Yeah, there is the benefits of what we would call cluster benefits.

TL: So still there is some start-up movement here. In terms of a very international setup could be better.

AK: Since you mentioned, I got to thinking. We talk about local products that are sold here. But there is a start-up like, you know, [00:40:31] there is a guy who sells [00:40:36] here in Germany and he gets it produced in his hometown. So, do you have these kind of products as well online?

TL: [00:40:45] We have the stores and locations that we can show. We don't have it so much. But we could have it. More actually also. Right now, most activity is the sellers that are driving the customers. It is much more of our orders are being driven by the sellers themselves that use Sugar Trends as their front system. And they do social media, and Instagram. They always communicate that I am in the shop [00:41:21] we since we have the shop, it is easy, it is not a marketplace, it is my webshop, please put your orders there. This is what they communicate. [00:41:35] little bit more platform movement when people start to look at stores and categories or the gift lists. Right now we have one [00:41:43] and the question is like when add too much international content right from the beginning and after a while when there is nothing happening from the portal side, they don't like it anymore. They don't want to put time in there anymore. So somehow it is a big issue of building up demand and supplies in time clearly whatever the market places have. And to somehow channel this and get more density to the demand. But we are looking into this. We had some people from Italy, some people from India who said I have sources of very trustworthy cool stuff. But that didn't somehow workout so far. This middlemen. Because what I said in the beginning was that they expected big volumes of sales and if it is just super little, these middlemen don't have anything to add because sellers wouldn't give them something as base fee and if you just work it on commission and if then it is just super little orders, then also doesn't help. So, [00:42:58] middle is somehow blocking it in between.

AK: [00:43:04] There is no middlemen. What they do is they have their own factory, they set it up and they produce things only to be sold in Europe. Very high end stuff. We are talking about 200-300 Euros [00:43:34] And they sell it to a separate company here, but it is all the same people. This is how they are operating.

TL: That is also interesting.

AK: You know Amitabh who is also part of [00:43:46], he is in Frankfurt, I can connect [00:43:51] you might want to meet him sometime. Whenever it is convenient. I can do that.
So, Tim, thanks for the time for the interview here. I will stop the recording. There are a couple of more points, I will take it offline, that is not part of the interview.

TL: Just one last point maybe. When I did the Entrepreneurship program in Carlsberg, we had some of our start-ups that wanted to do something super international or global and internationally. There was a [00:44:28] about the location. When we started to tell them, if you want to do this, consider changing your place, your location. And if you have the chance to go to London or to possibly go to the place where the subset of possibilities is better. To make it global. So I always saw this issue of the difficulties, to create something global from Carlsberg, it is not into core tech, you know. It is some technical patent. Also, we didn't see so many [00:45:08] on this consumer space [00:45:11] platforms popping up that became global from there. It is better here in Cologne, it is already bigger but somehow it is also the same effect a little bit.

AK: Yeah, that's true.

TL: It is not one of the core hubs. The question is if there is any core hubs in Germany, I would say the only one is Berlin. So far. And then you can look further in the world's super capitals.
AK: And I didn't find any [00:45:51] of London.

TL: Yeah, London also. Why not. London is so big, no? Question is [00:45:56] and what things you want to do. It is also a question of regulation. Like this from e-commerce site, there is a lot of regulation here in this country that makes it very safer for the customers to shop. But once you [00:46:14] platform here, you need to apply to the German regulations. It is kind of, it makes it easier in comparison to other countries and are marketed as super trustworthy. It is made in Germany, reliability and the other question is why if it is so super global and if it makes it harder here, why would you do it here instead of somewhere else. That is also a question sometimes. [00:46:40]

AK: That is true. Have you ever thought of doing it in [00:46:46] platform, something like in Ireland, for example.

TL: We never, once we started to look into details and find out what would be easier [00:47:03] We wanted to start something in Germany, so [00:47:05] in Germany also. It has a couple of regulations that make it more difficult here. We also have this issue of not being local from the other countries, so if you are based in one of the other countries, you will need to find a local cofounder and lot of issues can arise in you are not local [00:47:28] there.

AK: That is true. That is true. So, thanks again.

Interview with Interviewee 1

Meeting start time: Thursday, July 13, 2017 12:53:48

AK: Ashutosh Kumar, RP: Interviewee 1

AK: Thanks and I think we have blocked one hour so we have timed almost 40 minutes

RP: 35 I think if we can do 35 it will be good

AK: Let's do 35 at least I have some key elements to cover so maybe as I said my first question would be how has been KPIT internationalisation journey, when did it first happen and what, how the approach has been whether it is acquisition routes, whether it is partner routes you know whatever way you would like to describe, I want to do a grounder theory approach where I listen to you and then afterwards I ask few more questions so if you can describe in the next ten minutes or so it will be very helpful.

RP: From the beginning, the It business in India is fairly export focus so for the first few years we were in India to get our bearings right to get our clue right to get our services right and then we started working with clients abroad from India and then from wherever the clients were so I would believe that as in the case of any company there would be some time they would need especially if they are a compete start-up there is some time they need before they go international because I feel that when it comes to any new enterprise, you need to spend some time understanding the customer, you need to spend some time putting you team together, you need to spend some time getting your economic model right and typically these things pass some money, takes some time and they are best done in your domestic market before you step out and do it internationally. I think we followed the same path see because we were not an IT business naturally before we started IT business, I m a chartered accountant and you know I was running a CA firm and from that I got into IT so it took me some time to get my bearing right before we could actually start looking outside

AK: So how much time it took you, so like 3 years or 4 years any sense if you can give
RP: Actually, it was all more than that; I think it took more than that, from start it took 5-6 years

AK: And I would not publish the data unless we have a specific agreement afterwards, it will be more anonymous data just that you know. So now KPIT as I look at it this morning operates in 16 countries across the globe including Germany, so when was like first time you got Germany and normally I have seen that Germany is always later for an Indian company's perspective so how much time and when was Germany and the second part would be the, in all the 16 locations

RP: Actually we started in UK because our first Indian customer who wanted our services was a foreign collaborator, it was the UK so we started in the UK first, we set up our office in the UK first then we went to the US because that is always the very big market for IT services and we came to Germany after we had gone to the all these places and in Germany, we came to Germany because a very large part of the work that we do is in the automotive embedded software area and the automotive software area then you are dealing with automotive OEM's and if you are not doing work in German company then you are not working in automotive right, that's why Germany

AK: And what has been the market entry strategy going to different countries, UK I understood it was to meet the Indian client, you went with the client to get the first business started but how about the other countries

RP: In the US, we found a partner with whom we started working in the Silicon Valley. The initial work was that we train people for the purpose to train the people there and got to understand the context. One of my co-founders moved to the US so that the understanding of the market was deeper than we did almost like a JV with a large US manufacturing company Cummings and then the IT subsidiary of Cummings merged with KPIT and we became KPIT Cummings where they took something like 12% stake in the company and that's how the US grew In Germany we started our operations first from our UK office and then in Germany we bought a couple of companies and our main focus started after we bought a couple of companies in Germany.

AK: Okay so it has been a mix of own business to acquisition to partner and then joint venture and to acquisitions so there has been a mix in different locations and maybe one follow on question on that when you say you bought a couple of companies what has been the reason for buying, is it about skill set is it about customer or is it about timing?

RP: So it was actually one company that we bought won in the area of 906, it was formed there product based [00:06:53] but other company that we bought was mainly a functional shifting one that was also in the area of product expertise. The third company that we have bought is in the area of electric vehicles, which is also on account of their specific functionary area. So, they have been because of the skill set that they have and fortunately, they have skill sets, those skill sets can be consumed by some customers; these customers have customization that we wanted to work with so it is a combination of technology and customer access. But more technology than customer access

AK: So moving on maybe before I move on maybe one more question in terms of success and failure, so what would you say has been the likely two three key things for success and what are the areas where you saw the success has not been good, it's up to you on how much you want to disclose as I said its only going to be for neutralise but what would be the key for success

RP: So, the companies that we picked up have been specialised niche companies and they have therefore necessarily been small companies. Now typically what happens is that sometimes people who are running the small companies have relatively restricted vision and sometimes they also have a far higher need for their own personal autonomy and in some cases therefore the continuation of those individual people can become problem and in our case [00:09:00]. The founder left after the [00:09:18] but his other colleagues stayed and the acquisition has been very successful.

In the second case we realized that the applications of the functional safety product have beyond automotive and we were automotive application was very large [00:09:44] so what we did was we ultimately after working in the company for 4 years or so we found a minor software company who find the functional safety product very relevant for this overall suite of product and we have used that product only in the case of automobile and which is doing quite well.
The Third case is the one we bought relatively recently, the main founder had international exposure, he understands the need for growth as well as the way of working in an international environment and that acquisition is going very good basically, so I would say that this success of [00:10:40] depends on [00:10:45] both culturally business wise as well as financially so we often used these three factors on acquisitions. Our strategy has been that we don't want clients that are obviously not related to the business, we don't acquire companies to increase our top line which is what some companies try to do so [00:11:10], so that's what we have been doing. So generally our acquisitions have been good.

AK: Good, so thank you for that. Moving through to the next part to also respect the time, in the current model if I say that this is what it will take a start-up to internationalise early what we are looking at is three parts into it right now the hypothesis. So in the first part, and I'll take you through all the three parts and get your input on that, your thoughts, in the first part we talked about 3 building blocks purely from a start-up perspective. First is what is opportunity we are talking about when we talk about internationalisation. Do what the idea I have to create a start-up I want to create, does this have a match for international business so what is opportunity identification. The second we talked about the partner because as we already, as I already heard from you briefly also in this past people are not going to international business, they lack the resources on one side and they lack the knowledge so one of the reasons why companies are doing this partner model is essentially to address those challenges. So second topic here is a partner and the third from a start-up perspective is also investment because as I said they lack resources both not only in terms of knowledge but also in terms of money. No these three building blocks is driven by the network because based on the start-ups we analyse, we found that most of the people going to international via partner, search for partner in their ow network and the network is either their institution they studied, the network is also coming from the, if they have a partnership with any kind of education institution, some research project they also go to the research network, education and so on. So these are the four key blocks I have for the first phase and I will come to the second and third phase afterwards. In this first phase, do you believe, I would say not believe but what would be your thoughts for the first step of internationalisation when I'm in the planning stage I'm in the discovery and the planning stage are these four components what is key or do you see anything missing in this element

RP: So you know Capital partnership, [00:14:16], these four are important components for making internationalisation faster and more successful, and I think that makes sense. I would however go back my earlier comment in that you know, if you are looking at a true start-up, the first job of a start-up is to survive. For that they do need some time to understand the business in their own area and give them confidence, in customer perfections to get customer insights so it does take some time and I would think that typically a start-up would do that before they go international even if all the other things are happening. That is my acquired thinking

AK: Right that is absolutely fair and fine. In terms of you mentioned about US expansion via partnered so I would have two parts of questions to that, one is that how did you find a partner and the second part would be that in all kind of partnership business we do trust plays a big role. SO first is how did you find a partner and how was the role of, how did you find the trust, how did you establish?
RP: Say academic institution, personal networks, it really comes to marketplace or something
AK: And the role of trust, how, sorry

RP: Yea so the trust was established because people had known each other for 5, 7, 10 years so

AK: And did you have to do any effort to further build on the trust with them

RP: No further effort required. You start off with a good grounding when you know each other for some years and then you know your action finally keeps on building the trust right, you are watching your partner and your partner is watching you

AK: And the last question for this phase from you would be in terms of investment so has been the investment and also if you can elaborate for a start-up to a start-up perspective if someone wants to expedite internationalise, what has been the role, let's say do they find investors who are willing to fund that.

RP: Yeah, so in our case we had a private equity investor even before we went public and that money was very valuable in making our business interaction and we actually started from a bootstrap, we did not have much capital, we started with kind of borrowed funds.

AK: Okay moving to the first block, which I mentioned is more about initial plan you, know initial discovery and the second phase is for me to start building up the business to a certain level when you say this is now a regular operational business. So there is always a build phase for that. Within build and phase, build phase I have got 4 key components so 3 major components is like products and services, the second is how do we get the first customer the third is about the knowledge of the local market and all that three is driven by what I have heard from other start-ups research is transparency that among the partners you are doing transparency becomes the key into that. Now I will quickly would like to hear from you for example product and services, did you have to do some localization work on the product and services, you had or you developed altogether in your service for the international market.

RP: So, the same services which we were in implementation of ERP's then there some custom development of some solution some, you know, IT is truly special in that sense, so we didn't have to do any modification in that sense for the market, what we had worked on most international markets, So no need for making any modification to our offerings

AK: And in terms of knowledge did you rely 100% on the knowledge of local market of partners or did you also acquired of course everybody acquires when you enter the partnership but in the beginning, the knowledge of the market was fairly driven by partner or how was that?

RP: Well in [00:20:15] generally particular we had the consecutive [00:20:19] of knowledge, there the focus was how can we use that to expand the business into other areas like US or UK. We did a fair amount of work to build the customers so we get more often by word of mouth and that is how it started in the beginning

AK: And of course, when you acquired the company in Germany you got the customers via them. Now when we generally acquire a company there has been you know if you look at the M&A success rate statistically data wise there has been a significant amount of failure I think 2 – 3 normally fails, that's what the data says. Now in case of KPIT when you acquired the company primarily driven by technology that is knowledge and technology what has been the key things for success for integration of the companies into the KPIT fold

RP: So, when we do our acquisition we put our three filter kind of, uh what do you say, one is whether the focus is the same, our focus and their focus from a technology perspective etc., secondly whether the culture is matching or not and thirdly it makes money sense to me to both of us to the seller and the buyer. That is the presumption which we will look at. As I mentioned earlier we don't know any acquisition because instead of being a 100 million dollar company we want to be a 200 million dollar company so the focus is actually not enhancing our size but support to our two or three areas so with that in mind we have an acquisition and secondly we have not done any large acquisitions because we have looked at small small acquisitions which are very pointedly focused at certain market segments. I would think that we have done ten small acquisitions and I would say that at least 8 of them have been very very useful and our basic financial criteria has been that we should get a 3 year payback on our investment which we have achieved actually in averages, and that beyond three years that you get sustained income or not and that I would say is the centre of the case

AK: And most of the partners, the companies you acquired especially the German companies the management team stayed back with KPIT or there has been significant churning out of that, some churning of course happens but this is a regular?

RP: Yea so the first company that I talked about the top guy left and two other people left with him but the current person who is running the business is one of the people who came along with the acquisition, the second company that we sold off the same people continued but that was during their run off period, the third company I believe both people will still be on, actually there is this fourth small acquisition that we did, there also the main team continues to work with us and I'm pretty sure they will continue to work with us.

AK: Okay, so moving to the last block I have is about running the business on a daily basis so once you have done the build of business either you do the acquisition or with the partners. In the run phase again I'm talking about a few things again I'm trying to have a bundle things in four blocks, so first part is about governance you have in terms of you have a company you have a partner in Germany who is operating so how has been the governance, the governance model the second is about how do we make sure that the knowledge is integrated within the organisation so it is like people do rotation exchange programmes, learning or so on, so the knowledge piece again coming back, third is the process, global versus the local process, the three things which I have and of course all these to be driven with the right strategy and balance of power. So what has been the governance in general if we can talk about briefly?

RP: So governance to me is the right balance between centralization and decentralization, see because there are certain aspects of a company, which you want, decentralised to be done locally, but there are certain other aspects that you want to ensure that they are kind of centrally controlled. To illustrate the people policies have to be decentralised because every market is different, every company is different culture, so we have let that happen. On the other hand the financial information or the sales pipelines; these are the things, which are very important to bring it together from a governance perspective so that is one aspect of centralization and decentralization. The second aspect is actually the processes, you know how often you meet and what do you discuss, what kind of business reviews you have, what kind of people reviews you have how do you, so the processes that you put in place and I think one has to make a judicious mix of knowing the nature of operation of a company where you insist on centralization or communalization and where you let differences continue. I think this is an important judgemental calling I think one has to take in order to make working like this a success

The second point that you mentioned is the technology part, yes it think it's a challenge as to how do you ensure that the company that you have bought does not remain an island and it is a part of your overall company because ultimately at least in the case of merger and acquisitions the focus has been o buy technology and I’ve been having largely, exclusively in the context of automotive engineering area the cross pollination of technology across the whole company has been very valuable and we are to first ensure that we make that technology door open so that wind has to move from, the air has to move from one area to the other. That is very critical to me and that has to be done well. The third area you have mentioned is processes, I spoke about it so

AK: In terms of just very quickly the knowledge and the learning so what is the mechanics you have to make sure that the local knowledge goes to the global are rotated between the subsidiary and the other countries

RP: So that is what I meant by technology because in our case the knowledge is essentially in technology right so one of the reasons for the acquisitions, the companies that we bought had good detailed focussed knowledge but their initial work was largely concentrated only in Germany whereas hat we brought to the table was clients across the world China, Korea, Japan, US etc. so naturally the travel of the folks from the German company were to all these places working along with our own people ensures that the knowledge gets spread. Secondly we, again in our business typically that happens is that if you want to get leveraged out of a larger base of people then the delivery development has to happen from India. So there is also the knowledge sharing there. So, you need a knowledge sharing both to sell as well as to develop and the mechanisms have been actually joint meetings. In our company we also have what we call as a practise development forum where we decide which investments to make in which area of knowledge and that is commonly run, jointly run exercise so there is a lot of knowledge exchange that happens through that

AK: Thanks for that and Mr Panditji if you have anything in between you have to mention feel free to interrupt me, I have one more key thing and then we can wrap it up. Beyond these building blocks I think what I also believe going forward and from today’s environment perspective there are 2 additional factors which has a potential to impact on internationalisation so first always has been the external factor, regulatory environment and so on and that is also valid industry to industry and the second is facilitation of the new information technology age with social media with the virtual meeting rooms and so on and so forth so what has been the impact on your business especially in the internationalisation context from the external factor which is not at all under your control

RP: Yea so I think especially in the last year and a half or so the regulatory factors have been making a big impact definitely in the US and now to some small extent in the UK because of the Brexit and naturally it is making an impact on the business model of an IT company, a business model in the sense, how can you ensure that we don't do much work on site, how do you ensure that there is more offshoring so as not to invite the attention of how many people do you post in the US, that kind of a thing. So yes especially in the IT business the regulatory environment is quite important and I would think that outside of possibly Germany, Japan, China and in other countries this could become probably more and more relevant probably even in Germany with all this new immigrant kind of, becoming a sour point, I think even in Germany it will become important, so what it means is that most of the business will be done though wire rather than anything else and that kind of rises with the second point that you made about the usage of social media or usage of technology like telecom, or teleconferences I think all this will become available to I think the whole new idea of what you and me call the BJP prises is the new thing that will have an impact on the internationalisation but to me it would mean increase in business done away from the customer markets rather than [00:33:00] the business. I think most people who would need R&D, customer premises, move away from the customer premises, so I think this would help I the business of IT
AK: Good, So thank you for all your insight I think it has been great, last 2-3 minutes so any any comment you would like to say to

RP: This is an interesting topic and the work which is good and it would be very interesting to see how, what actions one can take to facilitate such growth in international business because I believe that is something that we can, one just last point I would like to add is that in my opinion international partnerships will work well that happens from both sides in all areas so for example if a value add in an Indo German software industry is India to provide more people at more affordable cost I don't think it is a very sustainable model but over a period if the model includes India providing technology inputs then the model will become more successful and we believe that that's the way in which the future successes will need to be looked at. So progressing more and more Indian companies bringing technology or IP developed in the rest of the world and pulling it into a German partner and they were taking an enhanced technology solution to a customer I think that's a very workable model and in the last few years that is what we have been investing in and we are seeing even better traction

AK: Very good, so thanks for the input as well. Very well said and to wrap it up as I said in the beginning while I v e been working for 20 + years in the industry living in Europe becoming from India there are a lot of things we probably know but the reason why we did the research is not to count on our own opinion but do the rigorous work in a systematic way looking at the literature, reading it doing the interviews, analysing the sum, we did around 70 start-up analysis out of 600 we listed so some quantitative things measure before we get to the frame now we are validating the frame and then we will go for larger validation to and I'll be happy to share at the end the result which will take a few more maybe a year or more for us to do that. And last thing you know I'm here in SAP I drive the advisory service business fairly well networked in Germany, I sit on the India board of some of the sittings here and also the INSEAD alumni association so anything I can do for you feel free to write me an email and I'll be happy to support what I can do. Thank you so much for your time today. Bye bye.

Interview with Interviewee 6

Meeting start time: Friday, September 1, 2017 14:06:52

AK: Ashutosh Kumar, GW: Interviewee 6

AK: Recording has started and thanks again for your time Gunter today. We will need around, something between 40 to 50 minutes is what it normally takes to go through.

Let me outline as I said, the process here. I have a few questions and it is what we call grounded theory based, meaning we will ask some questions, but we allow mostly the speaker and the interviewer to speak as much as they can and the questions are basically to just guide the conversation rather than very structured questions. So, it is more guiding question, rather than a structured question.

GW: Okay.

AK: Gunter, I mean, there are two aspects that my first question goes into. So you have been supporting the internationalisation of young companies, I would say, medium sized businesses and coming from India to Germany and Germany to India. So, my first question would be that when we start on this, your discussion with the potential customer for you, and having taken them through some of the processes, what are the key challenges you see coming in, why companies in India have a challenge to open an office in Germany and vice-versa. So, what are the key challenges you see from your point of view.

GW: You talk about Indian companies want to go to Germany?

AK: Yeah, and then you can also say what happens to German companies going to India. I know the problems will be slightly different, but yeah.

GW: Okay. Indian companies want to go to Germany. For them of course, first of all it is to open the market, to find potential clients, and so on. And here I have the, most of the Indian companies come with completely wrong expectations. That's what I see. They think, if they approach me, normally, the first thing is that they want me to help them find potential clients and so on. And then, I tell them okay, that the market in Germany is different from that in USA. Most of them have already experience in USA. So I say, your expectation should be clearly that in Germany until from the first contact, until you get an order, it takes normally at least one year. In US, you can have it within 3 months already. But then Indian companies more or less mostly become impatient, and so after three or four months, they don't see any results, then they cancel it.

AK: So one is the expectation in terms of the cycle time. And when you say it is different here from the UK, it is just because of the cultural aspects or are there more dimension to it?

GW: I think it is more or less cultural aspects. They simply come here with completely wrong expectations. Even if I told them right from the beginning that it will take much more time in Germany than in the US for that, but at the end you will have the customer here who does not look for alternatives or so on and so as long as he is half-way pleased he will not look left or right. He will just stay with you and build long-term relationship. That is the difference you know. But at the beginning, it takes much more time and much more investment from your side, much more creating confidence and so on. Of course, the Indian companies, they always at the beginning they say, yes we hope that is a long one, but when it comes to really [00:04:40], at the end they lose patience.

AK: And what happens to the German companies if they are going to India?

GW: German companies, let me say, they go more organised to India, more or less they try to establish a partnership with someone – not necessarily a joint venture one. Mostly, it is just the relational partnership for someone who takes care of their products. They are also looking for first customers and so on. Also, the Germans sometimes get impatient, but they are more aware that it might take time and they have already planned some budgets for all the time. They know in advance that it will take a year or so before they get their first results and only then they think about establishing their own premises or so on.

AK: Let us go back to the question I would have. Essentially if I look at what you have been doing and again, I should not restrict you to what you are doing. What I know is I would like to leave with all your experience and knowledge on that. There is a company, that means there is a company which sees that they have an opportunity to internationalise. Let's say in India there is a company, which sees that there is an opportunity to internationalise and they are looking for business, the first customer, and they might be looking at a partner. So, before you do the first customer search or the first partner search for them, do you also do the what I would call the validation of opportunity, meaning is the Indian company, what they are talking about, you know, either selling a product or a service, do they have really something which they can sell and market here.

GW: Yes, of course you know. That's most important. Because CIF, very often receives enquiries for let me say, standard parts, let me say, some small metal parts or something which are more or less made by CNC machines so on and then. I tell them that the chance that you can sell it to Germany is very low because basically in Germany we use the same machines which you use in India in the meantime. The advantage of less salary in these kind of parts is really minimal, because it is done by the machine and not by people. On the other end if you do other things like, for example, engineering or so, there the chance is extremely good because we have first of all, a lack of engineers. Second, they are very expensive. And third, also you need very specialised knowledge, which is to my opinion, easier to find in India than in Germany.

So, for example, one of my customers, he was looking to buy engineering company in Germany. He did that. I brought them six or seven opportunities which they were talking to, but at the end nothing worked. And at the end, they decided to start their own company in Germany.

AK: Okay. Taking that a bit further, so, now the next part for me is, once we have probably validated a bit of opportunity, then you are looking for, let's say, if they say, "okay, we need a partner locally." And partner, I have two aspects. One is that, having someone who has knowledge and experience of that area; and second that, whether that knowledge really fits to the opportunity we talked about. In terms of partners, what is the normal, you know, ways to, I assume that lot of this depends on the network you have (G: of course), but beyond the network, is there any other way that you see happening or is this primarily the network?

GW: It is normally the network. Whereas, in some cases, I also transfer it to someone else whom I know from my network and I know that he has much better access to the specific branch than I have.

AK: But, driving is primarily via network, right?

GW: Yeah, that's right.

AK: I looked at some of the other associations and institutions also, and we find that this is exactly how it is working.
The next part, as I was saying, you probably find a partner who might be relevant for the let's say the Indian company coming to Germany and you find someone. And then, how do you work with the opportunity, let's say, match with them, that they have a common understanding of the opportunity and they see the real fit, that this is the fit.
GW: Okay. The first thing is to create confidence of course on both sides. Normally, the first thing I try is that the German potential partner will meet and come to India, to see the premises and how the Indian company looks like. And, of course also, some sense of projects which they already did, reference customers and all that. This usually is a journey for them, for about a week or so. After that, we come back and the of course, the next step would be the decision if you are going to do a kind of due diligence if it is a joint venture, or into building a business plan if it is just a sales rep.

AK: Let me ask another, a little different question, but is important for me to make sure that I understand. One of the, let me put it like this. When you have a customer/client from India, and you found a partner for him. I am sure you have a retainer agreement with them. It is not that you bring two people together; they say okay we do the business together, and then say, "Why do we need Gunter?" So, how do you manage that risk? Is it because of the retainer agreement or how is that working?

GW: Of course, this is based very much on confidence. Usually for such cases - I am talking mainly about potential joint ventures – usually for such cases I know the Indian part already since two or three years at least. So, some confidence, at least, is already there. You cannot put everything into an agreement. That is the problem. Sometimes, it finally goes completely different ways as you expected it. (laugh) Maybe through personal relations, maybe through third party relations, or whatever, you know. I trust in the Indian partner as much that he will not try to cheat me. Even though also that happened.

AK: This is where I was heading for. I mean, I will give you an example. One of the questions that always come in is why Uber is so successful. There is an Indian company we had. I knew the guys who founded it is **skill** [00:13:26]. So, they were doing like, matching of teachers to students for singing, for cooking and so on and so forth. And what happened, he found that most of the time, the moment he connects via the platform, people will talk offline and then decide about the rates and they forget about the platform. And he was so much problem because most of the time this was happening to him and he could not monetise everything. But the question I would ask you is that, how is the percentage. Do you see it is 20% kind of problematic or more or less?

GW: You're talking about percentages. Probably very few cases that I was involved in that. A percentage does not say much. As you know, I do not use a platform and I do not connect via internet. It all comes from network and personal relations.

AK: So, trust is very important.

GW: Yes, it is.

AK: So, trust is the key.

GW: Yes, it is.

AK: I go back to, right now, we talked about the joint ventures with the partners. I think you also have cases where you are also helping people to find their first customers here.
GW: Yeah
AK: So, when you have this first customer, you become an official representative to them here or it's like a sales kind of responsibility or I don't know, is there any other model you have?

GW: Not really, you know. I am not looking for a job that I can live from. So, I usually, the first contact always comes directly from me and I am the source of confidence which the German customer has. And I have to convince him that this Indian company is the right partner for you and so on. So, the company, the first order which they give, I intervene if necessary. With regard of quality problems or delivery problems or whatever it is. For the first order I am, more or less, the single source of communication. After that, they work independently and I negotiate with the Indian customer for kind of lump sum for having established the business and for the future business. From the first order, of course, I get a commission.

AK: Now, going to another topic, a little bit different. So, when we talk about, let's say, a start-up or mid-sized smaller companies coming from India to Germany or Germany to India and partner looking for, how does the investment flow work? In terms of, whether the respective companies put the investment or you also help them bring the investors who might be willing to invest.

GW: I have only two such cases. And in both cases, I am also personally invested. One was a company in which I was already invested in Germany and they started their Indian subsidiary. So, I said I also want to be part of the Indian subsidiary and be involved in the Indian side of the business. And the other one was simply that someone wanted to start a company, and he knew me and he approached me whether I want to partner with him.

AK: Okay. But you don't see other investors coming in or do you also see that?
GW: At the moment, I do not care for that.
AK: Why do you not care?
GW: I do not have time for this at the moment, you know.
AK: That is fine. I am trying to get what you do plus what you know. So a little bit.

GW: I would say if someone approaches me and I see it as a real opportunity and so on, I might consider that. But as I said, I do not actively search for such opportunities.

AK: That's exactly the, when you said you might be interested and you might do that. This is what I trying to put as a. Because what happens is that, based on other discussions with start-ups is they want to, they are always running short of cash and they don't have a lot of money. One reason they do not internationalise is that,"I don't have money to internationalise, and I don't have the knowledge, I don't have the network." Now, if you get someone who has a passion for similar idea, and who wants to start this and have the local knowledge and then there are investors also possible who can put in the money for internationalisation. And then, investors also look, okay if there is an Indian company, there is a German investor, it is too far for me. But if he sees there is a German partner of an Indian company doing the similar business here in Germany, he is probably willing to invest. Because he gets more confidence of local business. So, this is how I see the picture and that is why I was asking the question.

GW: So, for example, for this first one, an Indo-German business guy has a small share as well. I have also found the investor who puts the majority of the money into that. Investor from Germany and who is now the main financier of the project.

AK: Okay, very good. So, moving on. So, this and all the questions that I normally ask was focused on in the initial stages of what I call in the model is discover phase. If I am just looking at pure start-up perspective, and it is very beginning so they still has to develop product and services. In terms of products and services, if someone wants to make it a global from the beginning, what would be your kind of suggestion to them, what they should care for?
GW: Depends on the nature of the business, of course. A clear idea of where they want to go, they should have a target already. Where they want to be in, let us say, five years. Which business they want to approach, how they want to approach it, by which ways they want to do that and from that of course. Basically, you need to know that already before you make your business plan. You should have a clear understanding of what exactly you want. My experience is that, 90 percent of the companies do not really have a clear perspective for that.

AK: So, one of my interviewers in the interview I did before and I liked his words. He said, "If someone wants to create a global company, he should have two things in mind. He should have two things. First, he should have a mind set for global business and the second thing is global business should be given strategic choice.”

GW: Yes, I completely agree.

AK: I think that is what I was hearing from you, but in different words. I just wanted to validate that. This is what we see, you know. Lot of times people say that ‘I want to go to..’ I mean, beyond the research, you know Gunter, in my experience and I meet a lot of people and a lot of people I meet in India say I want to do something in Germany. But you ask a few questions and you realise that this is just lie because they saw me and I am living in Germany and they say, ‘I want to do something in Germany.’ Not the serious thought.

GW: But they really don’t know what they want to do in Germany.

AK: Exactly. Just that they saw Ashutosh is living there for 15 years and it is very interesting, let us talk about it. I am like, this is there but answer my two questions and then I know are you serious or are you just kind of you know.

GW: Yes, very often I have this situation.

AK: I can give you another example, you know, we had this [00:22:24] Delegation in Pune two years back when I went there and I made a presentation in there. And we had in the room almost 100 people listening to that presentation. And after the presentation, everybody, not everybody, a lot of people came to me asking for my business card and I just kept giving everyone and trust me I had almost 70 cards with me and I finished all 70 cards there. Nobody expect one person wrote back after the event. Out of 70 cards, there was only one. And 70 people came to me asking for the card. This was like for me was no serious business. You just want to collect cards. I don’t why but. Anyway.

GW: I had exactly the same experience.

AK: Now, one of things that I know is very different in terms of business, in terms of industry, in terms of products and services, how the whole business can be structured. Suppose we have a start-up, a person, an entrepreneur who wants to create a global start-up. He maybe in

Germany but he sees that he wants to look for two or three other partners from other places so that he can really create a good start-up. What would be some of your thoughts, in general, in terms of economic model. And When I say economic model, I mean how the profit sharing could be, how the equity structure could be. What would be some of the points which you say is the guiding principles or advices that you will give. I know it is a difficult question, but maybe some thoughts.

GW: It is a difficult question. Well, first of all, it should be related to the amount of time and knowledge which each partner invests in the company. Normally you have one let me say, key founder who is one who has the idea, who pushes the idea and so on and he is looking for another partner and the other partner maybe very much interested in that but he is not the initiator of it. He puts less amount, he has also other businesses that he puts less amount and this should be addressed of in the share of profit and all that. The main thing, I think, is not the share of profit or all those kinds. I would say I hate it how most of the start-ups today are started. They are started with a focus in mind that after seven or eight years, they will sell the company and make the big profit. My game is to start the company and have it established in the market and don't sell the shares and create the most [00:25:50] possible within that company. That is different from most of the start-ups nowadays I would say. And, so my focus is also different. It is not mainly on focus I expect after first five years of course you cannot expect real profit out of a new start-up and after five years I expect at least 10% of what I invested, you know. Then I am pleased. If it is more, it is okay, fine. But I don't expect more. So, it is a matter of expectations. But on the other hand, of course, I also do not invest more time in that than necessary for this. If you bring two others together for this, you have first of all to investigate their interest in this start-up. So, it would clearly tell you if they have exit strategy or establishment strategy.

AK: And, moving further, I understood the knowledge piece you talked about before. Now, when you have these two three kind of joint ventures, the companies where you are partner to the German companies and also to the Indian companies, you are living far away and there are two aspects here. One is working virtual – I will touch on that - and leveraging technology. But the second is in terms of transparency. So how do we, do you see transparency of what is happening is important and if yes, then what happens, what exactly do you kind of ask people to do?

GW: That is also a question of the nature of the partners. So if you are a control freak that will not work. You must, of course, from my partner in India, I expect the maximum transparency, that means that I must be informed about everything. But I do not want to be involved in it. I want to know what is happening and only in case that I do not understand something or I think this costs too much money, this aspect or so, then I ask him and I go into deeper. But for any other issue, I am happy just by being informed. I think it is a killer of such corporation when you overvalue the controlling.

AK: That's a very fair point, and I can you know. I do a lot of virtual business myself at SAP and the way I have worked and we have all learned over the period of last 8-10 years when we have done a lot of virtual thing is that, and since I am working mostly in European environment where is no practice of making everybody in copy. You know, if you go to India, then everybody is in copy in your email. So what we do is that we upfront discuss and say how frequently we should have a conversation so that each other is updated. Depending on the intensity and the business type, sometimes it is weekly, sometimes it is monthly, sometimes it is also quarterly depending on that. But then we make sure that everybody is updating each other with that cycle and if there is something which is more critical, more important, more valuable, then everybody assembles for a conversation or it is informed via email. So, this is how we normally adopt the practice. I hear the same from you.

Now, going back to virtual working and technology. So the general assumption I have is technology helps collaborate the cross border business. Would you agree with that or do you have any different opinion on that?

GW: I would agree with that.

AK: And in terms of virtual working – I know face to face working is very easy compared to virtual – what would be your take on virtual working. Is this like beneficial or it has positive and negative. If you can highlight a few things on that.

GW: I just want to tell you how I manage the company that I am involved in India, that means my company in India. That means one partner is in India, I am here and I am actively involved

in the business as I do the sales side in Germany. We have basically, everyday one hour where I am available on Skype and my partner also. If it is necessary, we have 10 minutes Skype or so, but not everyday. Usually, it is about twice a week or so. But I have access to all files. All business files are available on Dropbox and I can look into the documents anytime. My partner's the same thing. The same happens, for example, I have access to the accounts in India, I can see the transactions and everything and only if I have certain question for that, I can ask him, but this is basically very rare. More or less, everyone cares about his side of the business and the other does not intervene as long as there is no exceptional thing happening.
AK: And as you said earlier, a lot goes with the initial trust you have, because you know people from some years. So, there is some initial trust.

GW: I know this guy, this partner already since about seven or eight years.

AK: So the trust and then you start working with them and trust evolves over a period of time and then by making things transparent, you have the next level of trust established. That is how I kind of hear from you and I think similar feeling from other people as well.

GW: Yes, of course. Of course, in the daily, in the day by day business, always something happens which you think, 'Oh, I would have done this in a different way or so,' but it is like the normal management of the company locally as well, you know, you must give your managers certain kind of freedom to [00:33:03] their way. And only if you feel it is really necessary and it goes in the wrong direction, then you intervene. That is what I meant also before when I said that, okay, the death of such relation is if you start to play the control freak.

AK: That's very different.

GW: Which is very German.

AK: I would definitely say following that sometimes I wonder because German people put themselves under stress by planning every detail, but at the same time I like to, in my personal opinion, if people ask me that, I am living here in Germany, I work with them, how do I feel. I can give you the example. I tell if I have a project and I have an Indian team in it and the project is to be done by the Indian team and I say, let us do a kick-off of the project and in the kick-off

I will say, let us have a daily standing call, 10 minutes and have a weekly review, if it is like a four month project or something. If I have a German team, then I will do a kick-off and I will say let us have a review in 3 weeks time so that we know that everything is working perfectly alright and three weeks, I am normally peaceful, they are peaceful. Because I know that if there is a problem, they will come back to me. But as I said, if it is an Indian team, I definitely will have everyday 10 minutes at least standing briefing, something to happen because things doesn’t move. This is how I kind of orchestrate. That is where I love the German people because once they say Yes, I have taken it, I will do it, they know that they will do it and I know for sure that they will do it.

GW: As a German, you have to learn that in India nothing is really predictable.

AK: Yeah, exactly.

GW: That is one thing. And second thing, if you are involved in such a project, you have to have almost daily short conversation just to make them confident that the project is still important and it is moving and so on. Otherwise, they will do something else in between.

AK: Moving further, I know that there is certain processes and governances structure. Let me ask a question around resources and capacity and capability. So when you are doing an international business, there are certain capacity you need and certain capability. Normally, how you make the decision whether that would be done here in India, that would be done in Germany. The one which is very clear, okay, this kind of person, this thing is only needed in India. But there are some positions, some resources that can be both sides. So, how the decision goes about it.

GW: Okay. Well, in my own company, it is very clear. The business model is in a way that, it is clear what has to be done in India and what has to be done in Germany. There is nothing which can be done on both sides. On the other business I am involved it is Indian majority and it is engineering business, it depends mainly on the customer and the nature of work. How much has to be done in Germany, or in India how much is done. Also, by the German customer, how much he outsources to us. And from the outsourcing, how much has to be done in and from Germany and how much has to be done in or from India. This is basically result of discussions, I would say.

AK: One question would be that

GW: Sorry, sometimes there is one conflict you know. The German customer of course wants to have the project done as cheap as possible. Sometimes, you have the conflict that to do it in the cheapest way that means most of the work is done completely in India. The risk is much higher that the quality is not there. So, certain part has to be done in Germany to ensure that there is right understanding of the project, that the quality is kept and all that. It is basically a little more expensive for the customer. If you discuss this really openly with the German customer, he will understand it and this also creates confidence.

AK: Before my closing question, I think there is one more question I have. Which is about external factors. So, I know that when you do business in Germany, you do business in India, where legal laws are slightly different and there are certain underlying things that are probably the same. But beyond the pure legal aspects, what other external factors you see is impacting the business?

GW: Ooh, that is a difficult question. Depends on the situation. I had already situations where the Indian bureaucracy created problems. So we had to find Indian solution, if you know what I mean.

AK: Yeah, yeah, I understood.

GW: After some thoughts and so on and some discussions, we found Indian solution, which means that it is not really legal as we did it, but it worked.

AK: And now my closing comments, so it is my closing question basically. So Gunter when we talked about making a start-up from a global start-up from the very beginning, from the day one, let us put it that way. What would be your last comments? Something that I have not asked, what would be something which I missed to ask and something important which we should be caring for.

GW: Are you talking about the Indo-German collaboration or

AK: I would focus more on Indo-German, yes.

GW: Okay. Well, it depends of course on the experience of both sides whichever happens to be the other country. If the German part has not yet real practical experience with India, you must make him aware of the Indian bureaucracy, that he needs things like DIN and so on which you don't have in Germany. There are a lot of bureaucratical things which not everything is written in the law, it does really imply. There will be a lot of problems right at the beginning until the company is established and also after that. You find out that certain documents are written but in fact no one cares and things like that. So this kind of expectation is a learning process. I think also from both sides. Indian people mostly think okay if they once signed an agreement, it is not the end of the line, every time they can also change that. You cannot. In Germany, if it is signed, this is the law. There is nothing left or right. In India, it is like we can change it anytime, no problem. So, that is a different mentality also. Both sides must learn about that.

AK: I think the biggest challenge is when we Indian people say no problem, no problem to everything. It means there is a problem.

GW: Yes, if they say no problem that means now the problem starts

AK: Exactly. First of all, I think I have asked most of the questions which I wanted to ask and we are fairly on time. Thank you for that Gunter and I may come back to you if I have more detailed questions when I move to the next phase. So that is possible. So thanks again.

Appendix M: A compiled list of all the statements per construct

1 - Ambition of Internationalisation

1.1 Team preferred work situation requiring high level of ability and talent

1.2 Internationalisation was an appealing situation

1.3 Internationalisation work allowed the teams to test their capabilities

1.4 Team members were partially afraid of failure when things were dependent on them

1.5 Team had a high expectation of success

1.6 Team felt internationalisation was a great learning opportunity

1.7 Internationalisation was considered a challenging assignment

2 - Anticipated Loss of business due to delay in internationalisation

2.1 A move to international market was targeted due to access to funding network

2.2 Due to a lack of ability in the foreign market, the firm anticipated delayed value capture

2.3 Capturing internationalisation opportunity early on was risky but considered worthwhile

2.4 Capturing internationalisation opportunity early on was costly but considered worthwhile

2.5 Disorganised internationalisation behaviour led to delay in value capture

2.6 Early access to international market prevented loss of business opportunities

2.7 Early access to the international market prevented loss of talent pool in foreign market

2.8 Not having a network in foreign market led to delay in value capture

3 - Global Mind set

3.1 Firm believed that internationalisation was must for future success

3.2 Internationalisation was a key growth pillar for the success of the firm

3.3 A general willingness among management existed to internationalise the firm

3.4 Team saw the whole world as one big marketplace

3.5 Firm saw internationalisation as a profit booster

3.6 Internationalisation was a way to simulate demands for new products

3.7 Internationalisation was a way to stabilize demand fluctuations

4 - Perceived Desirability

4.1 Firm had interest in the international market

4.2 A general feeling of resourcefulness existed in the firm to go for internationalisation

4.3 Internationalisation successes brought more respect from business community compared to domestic successes

4.4 Internationalisation was the culture in the home country

4.5 It was a general a belief that internationalisation was not a choice but must

5.1 Internationalisation was a situation whereby team felt that they can acquire new skills

5 - Knowledge of Foreign Markets

5.2 Existing organizational capabilities were strengthened during internationalisation

5.3 Team had to learn new skills and technologies prior to internationalisation

5.4 Internationalisation was needed to build new organizational capabilities

5.7 The team had spent time abroad for learning prior to internationalisation

5.8 Firm monitored foreign trade fairs on a regular basis

5.9 Firm had accumulated all the relevant information about foreign market prior to internationalisation

5.10 Prior market knowledge/experience helped in identifying new business opportunities

6 - Network in Foreign Market

6.1 Target countries of internationalisation was influenced by existing networks

6.2 Firm leveraged networks to identify initial opportunities in the foreign market

6.3 Initial credibility in the foreign market was derived from the network

6.4 Networks helped in developing alliances, associates and partners

6.5 Networks helped in finding the first employees

6.6 Networks were pivotal in finding a potential foreign business opportunity

6.7 Networks were a key source of information

6.8 Strong network ties help in converting potential opportunities to a first customer

7 - Potential of Finding First customer in foreign market

7.1 Finding the first customer in target country was considered a big milestone

7.2 Converting initial opportunities into a first customer was an uphill task

7.3 Having acquired the first customer in target country, expansion became comparably easy

7.4 Acquiring first customer in target country was celebrated in a big way

7.5 After finding the first customer, company started expansion in target market

7.6 First customer was acquired ahead of any physical establishment in target market

8 - Coevolution Partner

8.1 Required leadership capabilities for internationalisation was acquired via a partner in the foreign market

8.2 Partners in target countries were very helpful in internationalisation

8.3 The firm relied on the capacity of the foreign partner in target country for recruiting new clients

8.4 The firm relied on the knowhow of the foreign partner in target country

8.5 The firm relied on external partners to develop network in foreign market

8.6 The firm relied on the partner in foreign country for finding the first customer

9 - Perceived Feasibility

9.1 Firm was in control of the internationalisation process
9.2 Firm had the ability to develop new product/services
9.3 Firm successfully addressed challenges arose during internationalisation
9.4 Team believed with high probability in success of early internationalisation
9.5 Team developed many new professional contacts during internationalisation
9.6 Team had the ability to network leading to generation of opportunities
9.7 Firm had the practical knowhow of running business operations in the foreign market
9.8 The team believed that organizational maturity in the foreign market would be helpful
9.9 Team had the ability to identify business opportunities in the foreign markets
5.5 Our firm was the first to introduce a new product in the international markets (came from Knowledge)

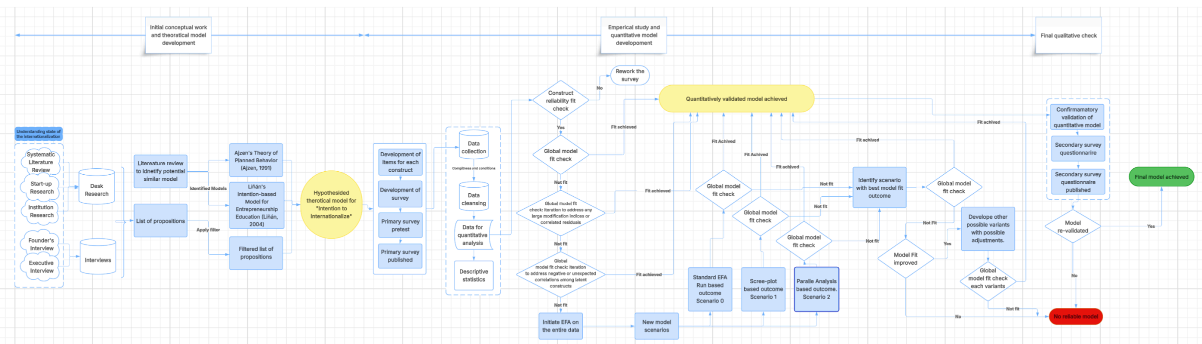
10 - Intention to Internationalise
10.1 There was no risk aversion at the team or firm level to internationalise
10.2 Among various growth options, internationalisation was preferred
10.3 Perceived feasibility of internationalisation led to discussions related to internationalisation
10.4 Perceived feasibility led to more interest in the visit of foreign trade fairs
10.5 Prior to internationalisation there was lot of interest in knowing a person or firm who could help in foreign market
10.6 Prior to internationalisation there was a lot of interest in meeting agencies supporting internationalisation i.e. Chamber of commerce
10.7 Firm and its team had firm aim to go for international business
10.8 Team had no issue in dealing with unknowns
10.9 Team always looked for solution to challenges rather being demotivated
10.10 Team had no problems developing or learning new skills to achieve the objective
10.11 High level of willingness existed for internationalisation
10.12 Motivation to internationalise was obvious among the team prior to plan of internationalisation
10.13 Team’s confidence was reflection of its intention to internationalise
5.6 Management always encouraged new ideas for international market prior to planning of internationalisation

Appendix N: Pre-tests rating by the experts

Statements before the pre-test	Rating by the experts				
	Sunil	Axel	Sundar	Sai	Christina
3.4 Team saw the whole world as one big marketplace	5	7	7	3	6
10.11 High level of willingness existed for internationalization of business prior to actual plan was developed	6	7	5	6	7
10.12 Motivation to internationalize was obvious among the team members prior to actual plan was developed	5	7	7	6	7
4.4 Internationalization of business was the culture in the home country	5	3	2	2	3
4.3 Success in international market was respected more by business community compared to domestic one	6	4	7	4	6
10.2 Among various growth options, internationalization was preferred	7	4	4	3	6
4.5 It was a general a belief that internationalization of business was not a choice but must	6	6	7	2	7
6.1 Target countries of internationalization was influenced by existing networks	6	6	6	5	7
3.2 Internationalization was a key growth pillar for the success of the firm	7	7	6	4	7
3.5 Firm saw internationalization as a profit booster	7	7	7,3	5	7
3.6 Internationalization was a way to simulate demands for new products	5	N/A	2	2	7
2.6 Early access to international market prevented loss of business opportunities	6	7	6	4	6
2.7 Early access to the international market prevented loss of talent pool in foreign market	4	6	N/A	5	1
3.7 Internationalization was a way to stabilize demand fluctuations	3	7	6	2	4
1.2 Internationalization of business was an appealing situation for the team	6	7	5	5	7
1.1 Team preferred work situation requiring high level of ability and talent	7	6	7	6	7
1.3 Internationalization work allowed the team to test their capabilities	5	2	4	6	7
1.7 Internationalization of business was considered a challenging assignment	6	2	6	7	5,7
1.6 Team felt it was a great learning opportunity	7	6	5	6	7
9.4 Team believed (with high probability) in success of early internationalization	5	7	4	5	7
9.9 Team had the ability to identify business opportunities in the foreign markets	5	5	5	6	6
6.5 Networks helped in finding the first employees in foreign market	6	5	3	6	7
4.2 A general feeling of resourcefulness existed in the firm to go for internationalization	6	7	6	6	6
5.2 Existing organizational capabilities were strengthened prior to internationalization of business	7	2	5	6	1
5.3 Team had to learn new skills and technologies	5	1	7	6	5
5.7 Team had spent time abroad for learning prior to internationalization	3	6	5	2	7
5.9 Firm had accumulated all the relevant informations about foreign market prior to internationalization	5	4	6	7	5
5.10 Prior knowledge/experience of target market helped in identifying new business opportunities	6	4	6	6	6
7.1 Finding the first customer in target country was considered a big milestone	5	1	7	6	7
6.2 Firm leveraged networks to identify initial opportunities in the foreign market	6	6	7	6	7
9.1 Firm had all the tools needed to be in control of the internationalization process	4	7	6	5	5
9.2 Firm had the ability to develop new product/services for new markets prior to entering the market	6	4	7	6	7
9.7 Firm had the practical knowhow of running business operations in the foreign market prior to entering	6	7	5	4	1
6.4 Networks helped in developing alliances, associates and partners in foreign market	6	7	7	6	7
6.7 Networks were a key source of information about the foreign market	6	7	7	7	7
10.1 There was no risk aversion at the team or firm level to internationalize	4	7	7	5	6
2.2 Due to a lack of operational ability in the foreign market, the firm anticipated delayed value capture	4	5	6	5	1
2.3 Capturing internationalization opportunity early on was risky but considered worthwhile	6	6	4	5	7
2.4 Capturing internationalization opportunity early on was costly but considered worthwhile	6	4	4	5	3
6.3 Initial credibility in the foreign market was derived from the network	6	6	7	6	7
7.2 Converting initial opportunities into a first customer in foreign market was an uphill task	5	4	1,7	5	6
7.3 Having acquired the first customer in target country, expansion became comparably easy	4	4	6	3	7
8.1 Required leadership capabilities for internationalization was acquired via a partner in the foreign market	3	1	2	5	7
8.3 Firm relied on the capacity of the foreign partner in target country for recruiting new clients	3	6	5	3	1
8.4 Firm relied on the knowhow of the foreign partner in target country	3	6	2	3	2
8.5 Firm relied on external partners to develop network in foreign market	3	5	3	6	2
8.6 Firm relied on the partner in foreign country for finding the first customer	5	6	3	5	1
7.5 After finding the first customer, company started expansion in target market	6	6	6	5	7
7.6 First customer was acquired ahead of any physical establishment in target market	6	7	7	6	7
5.6 Firm always encouraged new ideas for international market prior to planning of internationalization	7	7	7	5	7

Appendix O: Comprehensive flow diagram for the empirical study

To enhance conceptual clarity and provide a more comprehensive representation of the research process, the original framework was expanded; the detailed version is presented in



Appendix P: Complete details of the primary survey

Survey title: Survey on Internationalisation of Business
Introduction section:
Hello and welcome to our Survey on Internationalisation of Business!!
It is an honour and privilege to welcome you to this survey. The survey is intended to capture your learnings/insight on the internationalisation of business via a set of fifty statements. The rating scale is from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree), and it will take about 15 minutes of your time. Besides rating the statements, some additional information will be collected for analysis.

The data collected will be used anonymously to quantitatively validate a "co-evolutionary entrepreneurship" model for business internationalisation.

Please consider the following while responding to the survey statements:

- Leverage only one project of internationalisation of business.
- Select the most recent or comprehensive project on which to base your assessments.
- Please avoid using the experience of internationalising business with direct neighbouring countries.
- Use your best guess for situations you have not encountered for the internationalisation of business.
- Ignore any topics/issues specific to a country.
- The survey uses the term "team" to refer to an individual or a group, including founders, responsible for internationalising a business.

… Thank you for your participation. We look forward to receiving your assessments.

Disclaimer: All assessments will be treated as the opinion of the individuals completing the survey and will not be taken as the opinion of the organization (s) the persons may belong to. The survey (via the link) can be shared with other persons, organisations, or groups to increase the response rate, but the survey content in whole or part cannot be used for any other purpose beyond this assessment. All data collected will be used anonymously for the analysis. In case of any doubt or questions, please write an e-mail at ashutoshgroup@gmail.com
Personal and baseline information
How many years of professional work experience do you have?
Which of the following will represent your work experience?

- Entrepreneur - Having done or planned the internationalisation of business.
- Entrepreneur - Yet to reach the stage of internationalisation of business.
- Investor or investment professional, i.e., angel investors, venture capitalists, etc.
- Industry executive with experience in the internationalisation of businesses.
- Consultant for internationalisation of business.
- Other.

Please select the most appropriate industry where you made your experience in the internationalisation of business:

- Energy and natural resources, including the chemical & process industry
- Services industry
- Consumer industry
- Discrete industry
- Financial services industry
- Public services industry

Is the project/experience that you will leverage for this survey related to business that can be done remotely in total, i.e., in a web development company?
Survey statements for rating:
3.4 The team saw the whole world as one big marketplace.
10.11 A high level of willingness for the internationalisation of business existed before developing the actual plan.
10.12 The motivation to internationalise was evident among the team members.

4.4 Internationalisation of business has been the culture in the home country.
4.3 In the business community, success in the international market was considered more respectable than domestic success.
10.2 Internationalisation of business was preferred over various other growth options.
4.5 It was a general belief that the internationalisation of business was not a choice but a must.
6.1 The firm's existing networks influenced the target countries of internationalisation.
3.2 Internationalisation of business was a key growth pillar for the firm's success.
3.5 The firm saw the internationalisation of business as a profit booster.
3.6 Internationalisation of business was a way to generate initial demands for new products.
2.6 Early access to the international market prevented the loss of business opportunities in the target countries.
2.7 Early access to the international market prevented the target countries from losing possible resources (people, finance, etc.).
3.7 Internationalisation of business was a way to stabilize the sales demand fluctuations for the firm.
1.2 Internationalisation of business was an appealing/attractive situation for the team.
1.1 The team preferred a work situation requiring high ability and talent.
1.3 Internationalisation of business allowed the team to test their capabilities.
1.7 Internationalisation of business was considered a challenging assignment.
1.6 The team felt that the internationalisation of business was a great learning opportunity.
9.4 The team believed (with high probability) in the success of an early internationalisation of business.
9.9 The team could identify business opportunities in the target countries.
6.5 The network helped in finding the first employees in the target country.
4.2 A general feeling of resourcefulness (the ability to overcome any difficulty) led the firm to internationalise its business.
5.2 The existing organizational capabilities were strengthened before the internationalisation of business.
5.3 The team had to learn new skills and technologies for the internationalisation of business.
5.7 The team had spent time abroad to learn before the internationalisation of business.
5.9 At the start of internationalising business, the firm accumulated all the relevant information about the target country.
5.10 Prior knowledge/experience of the target country helped identify new business opportunities.
7.1 Finding the first customer in the target country was considered a significant milestone.
6.2 The firm leveraged the network to identify initial business opportunities in the target country.
9.1 The firm had all the tools needed to be in control of the process of internationalisation of business.
9.2 The firm could develop new products /services for new countries before entering.
9.7 The firm had the practical know-how to run business operations in the target country before entering.
6.4 The network helped develop alliances, associates, and partners in the target country.
6.7 The network was a key source of information about the target country.
10.1 There was no risk aversion to business internationalisation at the team and firm levels.
2.2 Due to a lack of operational ability in the target country, the firm anticipated delayed value capture.
2.3 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was considered risky but valuable for the future.
2.4 Capturing internationalisation opportunities early on was considered costly but valuable for the future.
6.3 The initial credibility in the target country was derived from the network.
7.2 Converting the initial opportunities into a first customer in the target country was very challenging.
7.3 Having acquired the first customer in the target country, expanding the business there became comparatively easy.
8.1 The leadership capabilities required for the internationalisation of business were acquired via an external business partner/agency.
8.3 The firm relied on the capacity of the external business partner in the target country for recruiting new clients.
8.4 The firm relied on the know-how of the external business partner in the target country.
8.5 The firm relied on the external business partner to develop the network in the target country.
8.6 The firm relied on the external business partner in the target country to find the first customer.
7.5 After finding the first customer, the company expanded in the target country.
7.6 The first customer was acquired before any physical establishment in the target country.

5.6 The firm always encouraged new ideas to capture value in the target country before planning for business internationalisation.

Survey end section

Thank you for your time and valuable insight!!

Please feel free to forward this survey to others or provide their contact details. If you have any further questions or feedback, please contact me.

With best wishes!!

Survey footer
Co-evolutionary entrepreneurship model for internationalisation of business!!

"Co-evolution is a process where entrepreneurs from different countries are matched to create partnerships that enable them to develop business in coexistence."

E-mail text:
Subject line: Your input to an academic survey on the internationalisation of business
Preview text: The survey is intended to capture your insight on the internationalisation of business via a set of fifty statements and needs ~ 15 minutes of your time.

Dear XX,

I trust you are well and coming out of the pandemic well! I appreciate your 10-15 minutes of time to complete this academic survey on the internationalisation of business. The survey is done in collaboration with Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Karlsruhe (Germany), and with contributions from the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (India). The survey content is self-explanatory, but if you have questions, please do write back to me.

We will be sharing the results of the survey analysis. Please feel free to forward this link to any relevant person, organization, or group who may be interested.

Thanks a lot for your time and support.

With best regards from Germany,

Appendix Q: Details of the Secondary Survey

Dear XYZ,
Trust that you are well and making significant progress. I need your 3-4-minute time for the following two questions. The questions are part of a research study on the internationalisation of start-ups and have no commercial use. Just highlight your selection (marked in italics) and return this mail to me.

While answering, think about what you may have done in the past or will do concerning the internationalisation of business.
Q1) Would the following three characteristics increase the "Intention to Internationalise" the business?

a) "Ambition and mindset" of internationalisation: Agree or disagree or maybe.
b) Knowledge of the foreign market: Agree or disagree or maybe.
c) To take the first-mover advantage: Agree or disagree or maybe.

Q2) Would the following two characteristics increase the potential to "kick start execution of internationalisation of the business"?

a) Network in a foreign market: Agree or disagree or maybe.
b) A business partner in a foreign market where you intend to internationalise: Agree or disagree or maybe.

Thanks for your support and best regards,
Ashutosh

Appendix R: Tables for threshold values of parameters used for the quantitative Analysis

1) The table below details normality statistics.

Measure	Threshold value and interpretation
Skewness, Kline (2011)	<3.0 is within the acceptable limit
Kurtosis, Sposito, Hand, and Skarpness (1983)	<2.2 is within the acceptable limit

2) The table below details the interpretation of factor loading, with ranges provided by Comrey and Lee (1992) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2013).

Factor loading	Interpretation
0.9 to 1.0	Very strong loading
0.7 to 0.89	Strong loading
0.4 to 0.69	Moderate loading
0.2 to 0.39	Weak loading
0.1 to 0.19	Very weak loading

3) The table below presents the commonly used threshold values for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Field, 2013).

Measure	Threshold value	Interpretation
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	0.50	Marginally acceptable
	0.60	Adequate
	0.70	Good
	0.80	Great
	0.90	Superb
Bartlett's Test	< 0.05	Significant (Factor analysis valid)

4) The table below lists interpretations of Cronbach's alpha threshold values (George & Mallery, 2003).

Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
0.9 to 1.0	Excellent reliability
0.8 to 0.89	Good reliability
0.7 to 0.79	Acceptable reliability
0.6 to 0.69	Questionable reliability
0.5 to 0.59	Poor reliability
Below 0.5	Unacceptable reliability

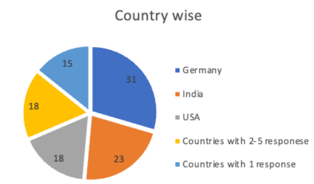
5) The table below presents threshold values for model fit (Kline, 2016).

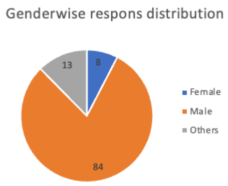
Measure of Fit	Threshold Value
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	≤ 0.05 (good fit) 0.05-0.08 (acceptable fit), > 0.10 (poor fit)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	≥ 0.90 (good fit), 0.80-0.89 (acceptable fit), < 0.80 (poor fit)

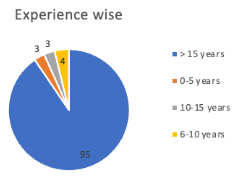
Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	≥ 0.90 (good fit), 0.80-0.89 (acceptable fit), < 0.80 (poor fit)
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	≤ 0.05 (good fit) 0.05-0.08 (acceptable fit), > 0.10 (poor fit)

Appendix S: Details of the descriptive statistics

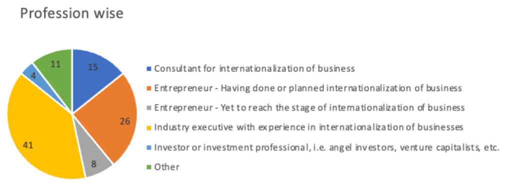
Distribution of data:

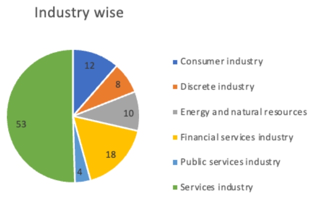






Countries (23)	# of responses
Australia	4
Austria	1
Belgium	1
Canada	5
Denmark	1
France	3
Germany	31
India	23
Italy	1
Kazakhstan	1
Luxembourg	1
Malaysia	1
Netherlands	1
New Zealand	1
Norway	1
Qatar	1
Singapore	2
South Africa	1
Spain	1
UAE	1
UKI	4
USA	18
Zambia	1





Missing values and test of normality results:

Item #	# of cases	# of count	# of missing count
1	105	105	0
2	105	105	0
3	105	104	1
4	105	105	0
5	105	105	0
6	105	105	0
7	105	103	2
8	105	104	1
9	105	105	0
10	105	104	1
11	105	105	0
12	105	105	0
13	105	105	0
14	105	105	0
15	105	105	0
16	105	105	0
17	105	105	0
18	105	105	0
19	105	105	0
20	105	104	1
21	105	105	0
22	105	104	1
23	105	105	0
24	105	105	0
25	105	105	0
26	105	105	0
27	105	104	1
28	105	105	0
29	105	103	2
30	105	105	0
31	105	105	0
32	105	105	0
33	105	104	1
34	105	105	0
35	105	104	1
36	105	105	0
37	105	105	0
38	105	104	1
39	105	105	0
40	105	105	0
41	105	104	1
42	105	105	0
43	105	104	1
44	105	105	0
45	105	105	0
46	105	104	1
47	105	105	0
48	105	105	0
49	105	105	0
50	105	105	0

Item #	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	-0,171	-0,817
2	-0,750	1,710
3	-0,639	0,517
4	-0,469	-0,198
5	-1,128	1,939
6	-0,522	-0,721
7	-0,744	0,394
8	-0,894	0,768
9	-0,346	-0,401
10	-0,341	-0,314
11	-0,592	0,098
12	-0,375	-0,529
13	-0,566	0,328
14	-0,336	-0,803
15	-0,324	-0,694
16	-1,005	1,419
17	-0,284	-0,820
18	-0,496	-0,298
19	-0,749	-0,242
20	-0,345	-0,739
21	-1,144	1,747
22	-0,450	-0,110
23	-0,391	-0,780
24	-0,545	-0,416
25	-0,959	2,250
26	-0,580	0,321
27	-1,100	3,032
28	-0,953	1,377
29	-1,014	3,590
30	-0,955	2,056
31	-0,893	2,252
32	-0,929	1,490
33	-0,634	-0,229
34	-0,542	-0,575
35	-1,512	3,492
36	-0,705	-0,551
37	0,354	-0,926
38	-0,055	-0,984
39	-0,352	-0,708
40	-0,330	-0,712
41	-0,129	-0,911
42	0,155	-0,867
43	-0,682	-0,113
44	-0,626	0,079
45	-0,505	-0,721
46	-0,480	0,595
47	-0,224	-0,835
48	-0,306	-0,767
49	-1,144	1,624
50	-0,905	0,977

Appendix T: Reliability check result of global model fit

The results of the reliability check conducted on the hypothesised model.

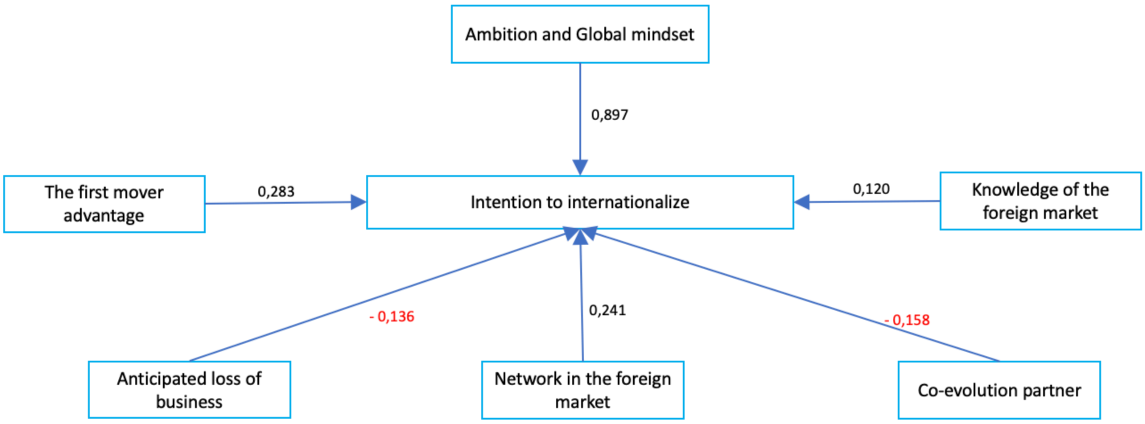
Construct	Cronbach alpha
Ambition of internationalisation	0,579
Anticipated loss of business	0,601
Mindset	0,580
Perceived desirability	0,466
Knowledge of foreign market	0,602
Network in the foreign market	0,752
The potential of finding the first customer in a foreign market	0,472
Co-evolution partner	0,849
Perceived feasibility	0,696
Intention to internationalise	0,656

Model fit analysis of the hypothesised model

Model	**Chi-square value**	**CFI** (Comparative Fit Index)	**RMSEA** (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)
Hypothesised model	276.858	0.371	0.230
Hypothesised model – variation 1	138.198	0.791	0.155
Hypothesised model – variation 2	143.867	0.707	0.157

Appendix U: Naming of the construct and resulting model after first model re-specification

Construct	Final construct name	# of items	Original source of items	Short form
C1	Knowledge of the foreign market	8	3 × Knowledge of the foreign market; 2 × Mindset; 3 × Perceived feasibility	Knowledge
C2	Co-evolution Partner	5	5 × Co-evolution partner	Partner
C3	Ambition and Mindset	8	3 × Ambition of internationalisation; 2 × Mindset; 2 × Perceived desirability; 1 × Perceived feasibility	Ambition and mindset
C4	Anticipated loss of business	5	3 × Anticipated loss of business; 1 × Ambition of internationalisation; 1 × Knowledge of the foreign market	Loss of business
C5	Network in the foreign market	5	5 × Network in the foreign market	Network
C6	The First-mover advantage	4	2 × Anticipated loss of business; 1 × Mindset; 1 × Potential of finding first customer	First-mover
DV	Intention to internationalise	--	Dependent construct	Intention



Appendix V: Details of various variations and results

Details of variations developed and tested:

Variation type	Variation name	Variation descriptions and considerations	Outcome
Global Model Fit		Checking directly the local and global fit.	Very poor global fit.
EFA Run	Scenario 0	Standard EAF run, considered all constructs 14 (C1-C14) and 1 dependent construct (DC).	Poor model fit.
	Scenario 1	Scree plot-based outcome with five constructs (C1 to C5), and 1 dependent construct (DC).	Poor model fit.
	Scenario 2	Parallel analysis-based outcome with eight constructs (C1 to C8), and 1 dependent construct (DC).	Poor model fit, but best among the three scenarios with improvements.
Model re-specification 1	Scenario2-Variant1	Scenario 2 with two less constructs C7 & C8 having poor reliability	Poor model fit. but encouraging improvements. Best among the variations after the first model re-specification.
	Scenario2-Variant2	Scenario2-Variant1 with MI value >10 and less constraints, removed connections C1-C3, C2-C5, C3-C6, and C1-C6	Poor model fit.
	Scenario2-Variant3	Scenario2-Variant2 with items having factor loading of >=0,5	Poor model fit.
Model re-specification 2	Scenario2-Variant1-Option1	Scenario2-Variant1 with each construct with items originally associated with the construct. And for C6, only the top three loaded items.	Poor model fit.
	Scenario2-Variant1-Option2	In Scenario1-Variant1, the top three initial items were examined in detail. Constructs C3, C4, and C5, which exhibited P-values above acceptable thresholds, underwent further analysis. Because the items in C2 were conceptually aligned with those in C5, they were treated as extensions of that construct. Incorporating qualitative evidence from three desk-based case studies and coded executive interviews, the researchers subsequently removed constructs C2, C4, and C5 from the model.	The results show a substantial improvement, falling fully within the acceptable thresholds when modification indices (MI) are applied and remaining very close even without MI.

Model fit parameters for all the variations:

Parameters	Acceptable value range	Scenario0	Scenario1	Scenario2	Scenario2-Variant1	Scenario2-Variant2	Scenario2-Variant3	Scenario2-Variant1-Option1	Scenario2-Variant1-Option2
# of constructs excluding dependent construct		14	5	8	6	6	6	6	3
# of items in total		50	45	47	39	39	35	22	13
# of contructs locally fit (cronbach alpha)	>0,6	9	6	7	7	7	7	7	3
# of construct with +ve regressions		10	3	6	4	3	3	5	3
# of constructs with P value in limit	0,05 or lower				3	3	2	3	3
Global fit: CFI	> 0,9	0,493	0,553	0,52	0,638		0,659	0,759	0,859
CFI with MI (all connection)			0,585	0,599	0,708	0,688	0,696	0,836	0,915
Global fit: RMSEA	< 0,05 is good, <0,1 acceptable	0,093	0,092	0,091	0,085		0,085	0,085	0,077
RMSEA with MI (all connection)			0,089	0,084	0,077	0,079	0,081	0,073	0,061
Global fit SRMR					0,1595			0,1334	0,113
SRMR with MI (all connections)	< 0,08 acceptable, 0 perfect fit				0,0965			0.0841	0,0635
GFI	>0,9 satisfactory fit, >0,8 good fit	0,557	0,608	0,593	0,656		0,677	0,772	0,88
GFI with MI			0,62	0,625	0,686	0,679	0,694	0,812	0,9

Additional details of two variations, which were best among the variation types:

Construct code	Construct name	Scenario2-Variant1				Scenario2-Variant1-Option2			
		# of items	Reliability	Regression Weight	P (signficance)	# of items	Reliability	Regression Weight	P (signficance)
C1	KM	8	0,795	0,12	0,244	3	0,6	0,405	0,022
C2	Partner	5	0,848	-0,158	0,119				
C3	Ambition + Mindset	8	0,758	0,897	0,001	3	0,513	0,934	0,002
C4	Loss of business	5	0,727	-0,136	0,182				
C5	Network	5	0,764	0,241	0,043				
C6	New -> First mover advantage	4	0,678	0,283	0,025	3	0,686	0,248	0,01
DC	Intention to internationalise	4	0,656			4	0,656		
	Total items	39				13			

Qualitative input used for deriving the final variation:

Construct code	Construct name	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Interview 6	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
C1	KM	Yes (competency, culture)	Yes (culture)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (own business reference)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C2	Partner	Yes (at the start of business)	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes (own business reference)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C3	Ambition + Mindset	Yes (high aim, mindset))	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (own business reference)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C4	Loss of business			Yes (interpretation, getting close to big market)		No (Wait for business to settle before internationalize)	Yes (interpretation)		Yes	
C5	Network	Yes (ecosystem)	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C6	New -> First mover advantage	Yes (interpretation)		Yes (interpretation, getting close to big market)			Yes (interpretation)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix W: List of items for the final model

Construct name	Items
Knowledge of the foreign market	The firm had accumulated all the relevant information about the target country at the start of the internationalization of busines
Knowledge of the foreign market	The firm had all the tools needed to be in control of the process of internationalization of business.
Knowledge of the foreign market	The firm had the practical know-how of running business operations in the target country prior to entering the country.
Ambition and Global mindset	The team preferred a work situation requiring a high level of ability and talent.
Ambition and Global mindset	Internationalization of business was a key growth pillar for the success of the firm.
Ambition and Global mindset	It was a general belief that internationalization of business was not a choice but a must.
The First mover advantage	Early access to the international market will prevent loss of business opportunities in the target countries.
The First mover advantage	Early access to the international market will prevent loss of possible resources (people, finance, etc.) in the target countries.
The First mover advantage	Internationalization of business was a way to stabilize the sales demand fluctuations for the firm.
Intention to internationalize	There was no risk aversion to business internationalization both at the team and firm level.
Intention to internationalize	Internationalization of business was preferred over various other growth options.
Intention to internationalize	A high level of willingness for internationalization of business existed prior to developing the actual plan.
Intention to internationalize	The motivation to internationalize was obvious among the team members.

Appendix X: Input collected from the secondary survey

Overview of feedback of the secondary survey results:

Construct short name	Construct code	Result Summary
KM	C1	Agree: 15, Maybe: 3, Disagree: 1
Ambition and mindset	C3	Agree: 15, Maybe: 3, Disagree: 1
First-mover	C6	Agree: 13, Maybe: 6, Disagree: 0
Network	C4	Agree: 18, Maybe: 1, Disagree: 0
Partner	C2	Agree: 12, Maybe: 6, Disagree: 1

Complete feedback of the secondary survey results:

Sr #	Name od the start-up	KM (C1)	Ambition+Mindset (C3)	Network (C5)	New-First Move	Partner (C2)	Indutry (Source: D&B)	Year of founding	Country
1	FUL Foods BV	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Breverage Manufacturing	2020	The Netherlands
2	Nordovo Biosciences AS	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Medical equipment and supplies	2018	Norway
3	Nordovo Biosciences AS	Agree	Maybe	Agree	Agree	Agree	Medical equipment and supplies	2018	Norway
4	SPATULA Foods Inc.	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Non classified (Food)	2021	Canada
5	mia & noa SA	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Grocery Wholesale	2019	Switzerland
6	Atica Paris	Agree	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Agree	Restaurants and Bars	2021	France
7	TRENDEX SAS	Agree	Maybe	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Computer Programming	2021	France
8	Tremau SAS	Agree	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Agree	Computer Programming	2022	France
9	Innoloft GmbH	Maybe	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Professional Services	2015	Germany
10	Softbrik Helath Sarl	Maybe	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Maybe	Computer Programming	2020	Luxembourg
11	Waitrr PTE. LTD.	Agree	Maybe	Maybe	Agree	Agree	Computer Programming	2015	Singapore
12	Sparrow Network GmbH	Maybe	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Agree	Professional Services	2019	Germany
13	Cloudthread Inc.	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Non classified (Digital)	2020	USA
14	4 Hundred GmbH	Agree	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Maybe	Non classified (Energy Retail)	2017	UK / Germany
15	Cashbackapp Inc.	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	No reference (Digital payment)	2018	Kenya
16	Belcarra GmbH	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	no reference (VC)	2010	Germany
17	Green Streams GmbH	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Computer System Design Service	2021	Germany
18	Millionway Germany GmbH	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Maybe	Computer System Design Service	2015	Germany
19	From A to B GmbH	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Maybe	Maybe	No reference (Digital)	2008	Germany

Appendix Y: Assessment of Common Method Bias using Harman's Single-Factor Test

Context

During the doctoral defence, the examination committee recommended an additional assessment of Common Method Bias (CMB), also referred to as Common Method Variance (CMV), for the primary survey dataset used in the quantitative analysis. In response to this recommendation, an additional post-defence analysis was conducted using Harman's Single-Factor Test. The assessment was performed on the primary survey dataset consisting of 105 valid responses and 50 measurement items used for the exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modelling phases of the study. The purpose of the analysis was to evaluate whether the observed relationships among the constructs may have been influenced by the data collection method rather than reflecting the underlying theoretical constructs.

Method

Several approaches have been proposed in the literature to assess Common Method Bias (CMB), including Harman's Single-Factor Test (Harman, 1967), Common Latent Factor (CLF) analysis, Marker Variable Techniques, and Full Collinearity Assessment. Among these methods, Harman's Single-Factor Test remains one of the most widely used diagnostic procedures in survey-based behavioural and management research (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The underlying premise is that if Common Method Bias is substantial, a single factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the measurement items. Conversely, when variance is distributed across multiple factors, Common Method Bias is generally not considered a significant threat to the validity of the findings. Given the exploratory nature of this assessment and the availability of the complete survey dataset, Harman's Single-Factor Test was selected.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted using the final primary survey dataset consisting of 105 valid responses and 50 measurement items. All questionnaire items were entered simultaneously into an unrotated exploratory factor analysis. No rotation was applied, consistent with the standard Harman's Single-Factor Test procedure. The percentage of variance explained by the first extracted factor was subsequently examined. The commonly accepted interpretation criteria are:

- If the first factor explains more than 50% of the total variance, Common Method Bias may be present.
- If the first factor explains less than 50% of the total variance and multiple factors emerge, Common Method Bias is generally not considered a serious concern.

Results and Conclusions

The analysis produced multiple factors, indicating that respondents differentiated between several underlying constructs rather than responding according to a single general response tendency. The first factor explained 19.74% of the total variance. This value is substantially below the commonly accepted threshold of 50%. Furthermore, variance was distributed across multiple factors rather than being concentrated in a single dominant factor. The results are presented below:

Factor	**Variance Explained (%)**
Factor 1	19.74
Factor 2	8.68
Factor 3	6.69
Factor 4	5.43
Factor 5	4.21
Factor 6	3.75
Factor 7	3.42
Factor 8	3.11

This pattern is consistent with the multidimensional structure identified during the exploratory factor analysis and subsequent structural equation modelling phases of the research.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the relationships observed among the constructs are unlikely to be attributable primarily to the survey method itself. Consequently, Common Method Bias does not appear to have materially influenced the empirical results reported in this dissertation.

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Eidesstattliche Versicherung

gemäß § 13 Abs. 2 Ziff. 3 der Promotionsordnung des Karlsruher
Instituts für Technologie für die KIT-Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften

1. Bei der eingereichten Dissertation zu dem Thema, „**What are the critical drivers of the founders for ‚Intention to Internationalise'?"** handelt es sich um meine eigenständig erbrachte Leistung.

2. Ich habe nur die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und mich keiner unzulässigen Hilfe Dritter bedient. Insbesondere habe ich wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus anderen Werken übernommene Inhalte als solche kenntlich gemacht.

3. Die Arbeit oder Teile davon habe ich *wie bislang nicht* an einer Hochschule des In- oder Auslands als Bestandteil einer Prüfungs- oder Qualifikationsleistung vorgelegt.

4. Die Richtigkeit der vorstehenden Erklärungen bestätige ich.

5. Die Bedeutung der eidesstattlichen Versicherung und die strafrechtlichen Folgen einer unrichtigen oder unvollständigen eidesstattlichen Versicherung sind mir bekannt. Ich versichere an Eides statt, dass ich nach bestem Wissen die reine Wahrheit erklärt und nichts verschwiegen habe.

St. Leon-Rot, den 18.*02.2026*

Ashutosh Kumar
Hermannstr. 15
68789, St. Leon-Rot

Eidesstattliche Versicherung

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Die entsprechenden Strafvorschriften sind in § 156 StGB (falsche Versicherung an Eides Statt) und in § 161 StGB (fahrlässiger Falscheid, fahrlässige falsche Versicherung an Eides Statt) wiedergegeben.

§ 156 StGB: Falsche Versicherung an Eides Statt
Wer vor einer zur Abnahme einer Versicherung an Eides Statt zuständigen Behörde eine solche Versicherung falsch abgibt oder unter Berufung auf eine solche Versicherung falsch aussagt, wird mit Freiheitsstrafe bis zu drei Jahren oder mit Geldstrafe bestraft.

§ 161 StGB: Fahrlässiger Falscheid, fahrlässige falsche Versicherung an Eides Statt
Abs. 1: Wenn eine der in den § 154 bis 156 bezeichneten Handlungen aus Fahrlässigkeit begangen worden ist, so tritt Freiheitsstrafe bis zu einem Jahr oder Geldstrafe ein.
Abs. 2: Straflosigkeit tritt ein, wenn der Täter die falsche Angabe rechtzeitig berichtigt. Die Vorschriften des § 158 Abs. 2 und 3 gelten entsprechend.

St. Leon-Rot, den 18.*02.2026*