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**IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONAL POTENTIAL
OF POLISH ENTERPRISES IN THE EXPANSION
TO THE EMERGING MARKETS OF ASIA AND AFRICA**

Abstract

This doctoral thesis discusses how the relational potential of a company impacts the emerging market entry decision and the entry strategy choice, especially in the context of the Asian and African markets. The reason for undertaking this study was cognitive gap identified by the author, which demonstrated itself in the insufficient research of the shaping and the use of the relational potential (i.e. the heterogenous portfolio of dynamic interorganizational connections) from the perspective of an efficient emerging market entry by an organization. There is especially little research of the impact of interorganizational connections on foreign entry strategy choice by Polish enterprises expanding beyond Europe. The perception of the Polish enterprises internationalization, adopted in this dissertation, has cognitive value, but it may also help Polish executives to consciously shape the business relations potential of their companies and, thus, enable a more efficient foreign expansion to the still little known emerging markets.

The goal of this dissertation was to evaluate the impact of the organization's relational potential on the decision to expand to an emerging market and on foreign entry strategy choice, especially in the context of the Asian and African markets. On the basis of the author's study, a model of the emerging market entry strategy choice was created, based on the relational potential. In response to the research dilemma, two analytical questions were raised by the author:

Q1: How does the company's relational potential impact the decision to expand to the emerging markets and the choice of the entry strategy?

and, on the other hand,

Q2: How does the decision to expand to the emerging markets impact the development of relational potential of an entity?

In order to meet the goal of this dissertation and provide answers to the questions referred to above, the author performed his own research work. The study of literature was complemented with expert survey. The experts included representatives of agencies and state institutions which support the internationalization of the Polish entities, as well as representatives of Polish enterprises which plan or already carry out their expansion to the selected emerging markets. In addition, a questionnaire among Polish entrepreneurs was conducted and a case study was provided, which featured an enterprise carrying out its expansion to the Asian and African markets.

This dissertation covers the topic in the context of theory and empiria and consists of five chapters. The first chapter discusses the theoretical background of the relational potential, identifies the factors shaping the interorganizational relations, as well as determines the mechanisms underlying the creation and development of relations. In the second chapter the definition of the emerging markets and their characteristic features are provided. In this chapter, the author also identifies the foreign entry motivators and constraints, as well as discusses the entry modes. Chapter two further presents the conclusions from the study of literature on the impact of the business relations potential on the emerging market entry decision. In the third chapter, the author explains the research methodology, discusses the specificity of the researched markets, determines the research objective and scope as well as the research procedure. This chapter brings also the description and the selection criteria of the two expert groups and the respondents of the survey. Finally, in this chapter, the author provides arguments underlying the selection of the research subject. Chapter four presents the results of the expert survey and the questionnaire. On the basis of the results, the author presents his own model of the emerging market entry strategy, based on the relational potential. The fifth chapter includes the monographic study which verifies the model of the emerging market entry strategy, based on the relational potential. In the summary of this dissertation, the answers to the research questions are provided, foreign entry constraints are described, recommendations are formulated and the directions for further research are defined.