



**THE DETERMINANTS OF RAPID AND EARLY
INTERNATIONALIZATION OF AGRO-FOOD SMES IN THE
MOROCCAN CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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Abstract

In the literature of international entrepreneurship, there is a large number of researches and writings related to the study of the speed of internationalization at young age of the company, using different names, such as International New Ventures (INV), Born Global (BG), or Fast and Early Internationalization Companies (EIRP). All these studies concern SMEs of mature industrialized countries in the European Union, or in the United States. And explain this orientation to internationalization at an early age since childhood especially by the saturation and the strong rivalry within the internal market. However, EIRPs also exist in less industrialized countries such as Morocco. In this paper other factors explaining the rapid internationalization of Moroccan SMEs in the agric-food sector have been explored. These are essentially cultural determinants, in addition to the specific characteristics of the manager, the industry, and the business environment in the Moroccan context.

Keywords: Rapid internationalization, export, earliness, Moroccan SMEs.

Introduction

The study of Newly International Enterprises (NIE) is becoming increasingly important in the literature on international entrepreneurship (McDougall et al., 2003). Traditionally, companies get internationalized with slow and gradual development (Johansson and Vale, 1990). However, a phenomenon accentuated in the 90s shows that other more dynamic and newly created companies become international from their creation or shortly thereafter. Qualified as 'born global' (McKinsey and Co, 1993) or 'global start-ups' or 'international new ventures' (Obviate and McDougall, 1994), these are companies which, from their birth or little time later, seek to gain competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of products in multiple countries (Obviate and McDougall, 1994).

In their review of the literature covering the decade 1993-2003, Rialp et al. (2005) highlight a dozen factors at the origin of this phenomenon of rapid internationalization, namely: a global vision of the entrepreneur and his team, the manager's experience, managerial commitment, belonging to a network, in-depth knowledge of the market, the presence of intangible resources, product differentiation, a niche strategy, a strong customer focus and flexibility. While many

studies have empirically examined the impact of most of these factors on the emergence of such firms, relatively few have focused specifically on the influence of the entrepreneur's experience. For Audio (2005), experience is at the heart of the debate between the approach of the internationalization process (Johansson and Vale, 1990) and the approach of new and international firms (Obviate and McDougall, 1994). Indeed, the experiential knowledge acquired in foreign markets at the organizational level is at the origin of the international learning process (Johansson and Vale, 1990). The experience gained at the individual level by the entrepreneur and his team makes it possible to internationalize from the outset and to gain a competitive advantage from the mobilization of resources in foreign markets (Obviate and McDougall, 1994).

In this article, we are interested in exploring and understanding other explanatory factors of rapid and early internationalization in the context of Moroccan exporting SMEs in the agric-food sector.

Review of literature on SMEs with rapid and early internationalization

Definition of rapid and early internationalization (REI)

According to Servant, 2007, fast and early internationalization companies are those that can be observed earlier than usually to have the ability to develop and coordinate regular links with foreign countries. In their founding article, Obviate and McDougall (1994) strongly insist on the specificity of the REIE (or "international new venture" the original expression): for these authors, the REIE is not a special case of SME internationalization, but a radically new form of multinational organization. They propose the following definition: "A commercial organization that, from birth, seeks to gain a significant competitive advantage from the use of resources (material, human, financial, time, etc.) and the sale of products in multiple countries."

This definition by Obviate and McDougall (1994) has been taken up by many researchers in international entrepreneurship (Blood good, Sapiens and Almeida, 1996, Rail, Rail and Knight, 2005). Obviate and McDougall (1994) argue that this phenomenon of REIE does not match the characteristics traditionally observed in multinational enterprises. According to these authors, unlike traditional organizations that are gradually developing from the national environment, the REIE begins with a proactive international strategy. Obviate and McDougall (1994) distinguish four types of REIE according to two criteria: the number of countries involved, on the one hand, and the number of activities in the value chain that are coordinated, on the other hand. The REIEs, which coordinate a limited number of activities (mainly logistic activities) across countries, fall into two first categories: "export / import start-ups" focus on a small number of countries with which the entrepreneur is familiar, while "Multinational traders" serve a wider field of countries and are constantly looking for business opportunities in places where they have established networks or easy access. A third type of REIE brings together geographically focused start-ups. The latter derive their competitive advantage from their ability to meet the specific needs of a region by mobilizing resources from abroad (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Classification of INV (International New Venture)



Source: Obviate & McDougall, (1994)

In other words, the source of the competitive advantage of this type of enterprise lies in the coordination of multiple activities in the value chain, such as technology development, human resources and production. Finally, according to the name of Maimis (1989), global start-ups correspond to the most radical manifestation of the REIE because they base their competitive advantage on the extensive coordination of multiple organizational activities spread over a large number of geographical territories. In the same vein, Madsen and Serves (1997) adopt the denomination of "born global", introduced by Ronnie (1993) and already taken up by Knight and Cavusgil (1996). "Born-global firms" - which they define as "companies that adopt an international, or even global, approach from birth or soon after" - grow in a way that may be consistent with evolutionary thinking.

The emergence of the REIE, for Obviate and McDougall, corresponds to the emergence of a new form of multinational enterprise. Mathews and Sander (2007) distinguish three new kinds of multinational companies in the global economy. First, the smaller multinationals in terms of resources, personnel and capital, called "multinational-children" (infant-multinationals) (Lindquist, 1991, cited in Mathews and Sander, 2007), or "micro-multinationals," include SMEs from industrialized countries, but attacking the global market with such vigor and such innovative integration strategies that they can be considered as new entrants. Secondly, there are firms that almost avoid the process of internationalization as soon as they start and operate from day one, in global markets, as global players. Finally, and thirdly, the "lagging" multinationals, many of which are from emerging countries, arrive late on the international stage, which allow them to reap unattainable benefits for their earlier counterparts. Mathews and Sander (2007) name these organizations "multinational dragon". Other names have been used by researchers in international entrepreneurship to complement the notion of REIE. The terms "high technology start-up" (Jolly, Alahuhta and Jeannette, 1992), "small foreign investment firm" (Kohn, 1997), or "firm internationalizing early" (early internationalizing firm, Rail, Rail and Knight, 2005).

REIEs can be likened to Obviate and McDougall's (1994) International New Ventures (INV), with the difference that we do not look at them under a time approach but rather under an international organizational capacity approach given their likely low maturity. In this article, we prefer to use this new term "REIE", servant, 2007, rather than INV. We observe that among the concepts identified in the literature, those of "Entrepreneurial New Ventures and Internationalization" (Shaw and Damrosch, 2004), "Instant International" (Jones and Dimitratos,

2003), or "Early Internationalizing Firms" (Rail , Rail and Knight, 2005) can also be directly associated with REIE.

The INV type classification matrix allows several other terms observed in the literature to be positioned according to value chain depth criteria (Porter, 1986) and geographic diversity and to compare their significance to the REIE concept. Thus, in the first category of Reye (I), called "Export / Import Start-Ups" (Obviate and McDougall, 1994), we can include the notions of "Innate Exporters" (Ganitsky, 1989) and "Instant Exporters "(McCauley, 1999) that limit the international connotation to export activity. In the second category (II), we find the "Multinational Traders" (Obviate and McDougall, 1994), who trade between several nations. In the third one (III), that of the "Geographically Focused Start-up" (Obviate and McDougall, 1994), we introduce the "Born Global", these companies that extend their space of operation on a planetary scale but act locally (Torres , 1997). Finally, in the fourth division (IV), we find the "Global Startup" (Obviate and McDougall, 1994), the "Born Global" (Ronnie, 1993, Cavusgil, 1994, among others ...) and the "Multinational Infant" (Roux, 1979), which can be described as all firms that have reached a medium to high level of internationalization in each of the five dimensions described by Daniels and Radebaugh (2001) earlier than usual (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Classification of REIE

<p>Coordination of value chain activities</p>	<p>Few activities coordinated across countries (primarily logistics)</p>	<p>I</p> <p>- Born exporters - Instants exporters Export/Import Start-Up</p>	<p>II</p> <p>- Multinational trader</p>
	<p>Many activities coordinated across countries</p>	<p>III</p> <p>- Born Glocal - Geographically Focused Start-Up</p>	<p>IV</p> <p>- Born Global - Global Start-Up Infant - Multinational -</p>
		<p>Same continent</p>	<p>Several continent</p>
<p>Geographical diversity</p>			

Source : (Servant, 2007)

The specific characteristics of REIE

In view of this syntactic propagation, it is important to define the key characteristics that frame this concept of REIE.

The first distinctive factor emphasized by Obviate and McDougall (1994) and reinforced by Zahra (2005) is logically that of age, that is to say the concomitance between act of creation and act of internationalization. The authenticity of the phenomenon, therefore, is somewhat akin to this double act of birth ("from inception"): there is REIE if there is "immediacy" of creation and internationalization. However, no fine and precise determination of this specificity is specified;

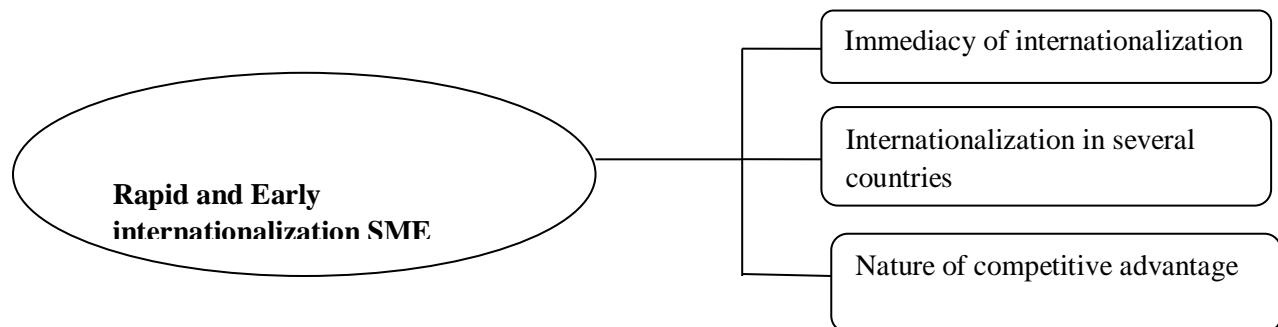
the authors themselves consider that only the phase of empirical research will eventually be able to solve this question (Obviate and McDougall, 1994: 49).

The second distinguishing factor is the very meaning of internationalization. While it is clear that, by definition, an REIE must carry out an activity outside its national borders, it remains to be defined from which threshold (s) we can really speak of internationalization. Oviatt and McDougall (1994, p.49) speak of "multiple countries", but add a few lines after, that the REIE is involved in more than one country (multiplication of countries). Moreover, nothing is said about the part that these international activities can represent. One suspects that it must be non-marginal, that is to say engage the strategic development of the young company. But this is an interpretation, because the authors do not detail, strictly speaking, this definition of internationalization (Back, Sophie, Coeurderoy, Regis, 2011).

A third distinguishing factor is the nature of the competitive advantage. According to Obviate and McDougall (1994), the REIE derives its competitive advantage from its ability to leverage resources and achieve international sales. This definition implies, in a way, that the REIE develops an original business model insofar as it has both the characteristics of a new entrepreneurial enterprise and those of a multinational, (Back, Sophie, Coeurderoy, Regis, 2011). Age, internationalization and competitive advantage are therefore the three distinguishing features of a REIE.

The theoretical delimitation of these criteria remains, however, partly imprecise. For this, the empirical work that necessarily raises the question of measurement plays a decisive role for the validation of these criteria.

Figure 3 : Characteristics of rapid and Early Internationalization SMEs



Source : Review of literature (Adapted by the authors)

Context and reasons for emergence.

The way of internationalization described by traditional approaches is not the only one possible. Companies that have become international since their inception have existed for a very long time (Obviate and McDougall 1994, Mudambi and Zahra 2007). However, they were long ignored by researchers, who were more interested in developing large and mature firms (Obviate and McDougall 1994, Knight and Cavusgil 1996).

It is since the mid-1980s that the phenomenon of small international companies, even global one, has amplified and attracted the attention of researchers. Numerous case studies of companies in different parts of the world have challenged traditional models (Welch and Luostarinen 1988, Ganitsky 1989, McKinsey An Co 1993, Holstein 1992, Jolly et al 1992). The first studies that attempted to explain the phenomenon identified three interrelated factors in the emergence of these firms (Obviate and McDougall 1994, Knight and Cavusgil 1996, Madsen and Serves 1997).

Firstly, this concerns new market conditions that consist of: the growing specialization and the related emergence of niche markets; the global sourcing and international networks that characterize many industries; the globalization of the financial system that allows entrepreneurs to seek financing on a global scale. Second, more accessible transportation and ICTs are factors that facilitate specialization and the emergence of niche markets. The third factor is the very high level of skills and international experience of entrepreneurs and more broadly of the management team.

Determinants of the rapid and early internationalization of SMEs extracted from the literature

The literature on internationalization offers a range of factors influencing the internationalization of SMEs. Among the most important factors include leadership and management, resources, environment, industry, innovation, competitive advantage, network use, speed to acquire information, the characteristics of the local market and the

Partners.

Hutchinson, Quinn and Alexander (2006), show that the characteristics of leaders and managers, including demographic factors (age, gender, education, past experiences, etc.) and psychological factors (personality, attitudes, needs, traits), play an important role in the creation of the new company, and they influence the performance and results of the company. These characteristics explain the diversification of the firm (Michel, Ham brick, 1992), its export orientation (Diehl, Koeglmayr, Mueller, 1990), and its international expansion (Chatty, Campbell-Hunt, 2004). The level of education explains the manager's appetite for exporting, because the more educated entrepreneurs are, the more they seize international business opportunities. In addition to education, the executive's previous industrial and commercial experiences are also important in explaining the creation of a business and its international expansion (Evangelista, 2005). Although the leader's education and industrial and commercial experience provide the expertise or skills needed to run international business, they cannot, on their own, help the leader to run his business internationally. McDougall, Obviate and Shrader (2003) find that the international experience of manager, rather than his commercial or industrial experience, plays a key role in the internationalization of SMEs. The managerial attitude, the strategic vision and the international orientation of the leader are important explanatory factors (Roberts, Senturia, 1996, Moen, 2002).

SMEs may have price or non-price competitiveness that gives them a competitive advantage. SMEs of rapid and early internationalization consider themselves to be the owners of a source of competitive advantages in foreign markets through their expertise, unique product features, low prices, better technical services, etc. (Evangelista, 2005). They are internationalizing early to exploit these competitive advantages.

Even though there are early and fast-growing SMEs that are created by founders with no international network (Rasmussen, Madsen, 2002), the majority of studies show that the network is a crucial factor in creating a new international company (Ibeh 2003, McDougall, Oviatt, Schrader, 2003). Madsen, Serves (1997) are interested in the networks in which the company and the founder are active during the creation period. Due to the scarcity of resources, SMEs of early and rapid internationalization seek and maintain collaborative relationships with external network organizations that can provide them with additional information, Strengthening, then the company's ability to select and evaluate foreign markets (Evangelista 2005).

Holding the right information at the right time and knowing foreign markets are important for SMEs rapid and early internationalization. They are likely to encounter different resource constraints: relatively low financial and human resources, as well as other material resources (Freeman, Edwards, Schrader, 2006). To overcome these constraints, they can use their experience and knowledge of foreign markets (Audio, Sapiens, Almeida, 2000). The company can reduce the uncertainty and risks associated with international development by collecting information on foreign markets and analyzing them.

Burgle & Murray (1998) have shown that start-ups that have not internationalized tend to offer less innovative products. Environmental constraints, including limited growth in the domestic market, play a role when firms plan to approach foreign markets (Covelo & Munro, 1995; Karagozoglu & Liddell, 1998). The more global an industry is, the more its businesses tend to internationalize (Covelo et al., 1995). However, it has also been established that the gross margins of an industry were negatively related to the degree of internationalization of the companies that constituted it (Blood good, Sapiens, & Almeida, 1996). Although the vast majority of research in the field of internationalization focuses on production companies, we, nevertheless, have research results on service companies that venture abroad, and thus an interesting overview of the relationship between the industrial sector of a company and the schema of its internationalization. What comes out of this is that Firms fail to achieve the degree of export of industrial firms (Erramilli 1991, Winsted & Patterson 1998). Another study by Erramilli & Rae (1993) showed that the specificities of the skills of a service provider in the process of internationalization exerted a significant influence on the choice of its approach to foreign markets.

A large body of research has shown that the rate of innovation is related to globalization, and SMEs of rapid and early internationalization need to develop new products or production processes to succeed in global markets. Freeman, Edwards, Schrader (2006) find that innovation, proactively and risk-taking are part of the organizational culture that requires the start-up and success of an SME in the process of rapid and early internationalization. According to Lanai, Gabriel son and Gabriel son (2006), the main innovation is often developed before the creation of the company and this is a reason for the existence of the company. For Obviate, Patricia and McDougall (1995), most successful SMEs of rapid and Early Internationalization go on the market by selling a single product or service. To enter the main markets and SME of REI must therefore have a competitive advantage that will allow it to win the competition against local companies that have a good knowledge of their market.

If there are many competitors and international clients of a company, managers are more likely to consider entry into foreign markets (Obviate, Patricia, McDougall, 1997). This has been confirmed by Anderson (2002): his study finds that, although a company resolutely decides to stay in a region, it can be trained internationally because of the close links with suppliers, buyers,

partners and international competitors. When suppliers or buyers of a company are inserted into global chains, the company will be pushed by its partners to new foreign markets.

Table 1: Determinants of rapid and early internationalization of SMEs

Determinants	Author (s)	Explanation of the factor
The characteristics of leader and the management team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hutchinson, Quinn and Alexander (2006), ✓ Michel, Hambrick, (1992) ✓ Dichtl, Koeglmayr, Mueller, (1990) ✓ Chetty, Campbell-Hunt, (2004), ✓ Evangelista, (2005). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ demographic factors : age, sex, education, commercial and industrial experiences ○ psychological factors: personality, attitudes, needs, traits
	McDougall, Oviatt et Shrader (2003).	the international experience of the leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Roberts, Senturia, (1996), ✓ Moen, (2002). 	The managerial attitude, the strategic vision and the international orientation of the manager
The environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coviello & Munro, (1995) ✓ Karagozoglu & Lindell, (1998). 	limited growth in the domestic market
The industrial sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (Coviello and al., 1995). 	The more global an industry is, the more these companies tend to internationalize rapidly
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bürgel & Murray (1998) 	primordial factor of precocity of internationalization, especially for start-ups
Possession of competitive advantages,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evangelista, (2005). 	the SME has a price or non-price competitiveness abroad
The use of networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ibeh 2003 ; McDougall, Oviatt, Shrader, (2003). ✓ Madsen, Servais (1997) 	Due to the scarcity of resources, SMEs of REI seek and maintain collaborative relationships with other organizations.

Speed to acquire information	✓ Freeman, Edwards, Schrader, (2006)	The company can reduce the uncertainty and risks associated with international development by collecting information on foreign markets and analyzing them.
Characteristics of the local market and partners	✓ Oviatt, Patricia, McDougall, (1997) ✓ Andersson (2002)	there are many competitors and international clients of a company, partners inserted into global chains

Source: Literature Review (adapted by the authors)

In this exploratory study, we want to know if the factors extracted from the literature review also explain the rapid internationalization of Moroccan SMEs in the agric-food sector, or are there any other determinants that contribute to explain this phenomenon?

The exploratory study will also allow us to identify the specificity of these SMEREI in the Moroccan context.

Methodology, field and results

Multiple case studies

We carry out an exploratory study whose objective is the STUDY of the determinants that contributed to the acceleration of the pace of internationalization of exporting SMEs in the agro-food sector in Morocco.

Collection of qualitative data

Our qualitative sample is composed of six SME exporters from the agri-food sector, for reasons of confidentiality, their name will not be revealed; we will name them: BC, IO, **CONSO**, **CONO**, **APOIS**, **ANS**. This choice was based on the criteria mentioned below, some were picked up from the literature review, and others are justified by the specificities of this study:

1) The choice of the official definition of Moroccan SME:

Since the law 53-00 forming "Charter of the SME" of July 23, 2002, this category of company has an "official" definition. According to article 1 of this law, the SME is a company managed and / or administered directly by the natural persons who are the owners, co-owners or shareholders and which is not owned more than 25% of the capital or vote rights by a company, or jointly by several companies, does not meet the definition of the SME. It must meet the following criteria:

Table 2: Definition Criteria for Moroccan SMEs

TYPE OF COMPANY	STAFF	SALES OR TOTAL BALANCE SHEET	
SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED	□□200 people	□□75 millions DH	□□50 millions DH

BUSINESS			
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Source: SME Charter of 23 July 2002

- 2) The first export is made as soon as the company is established (Knight, G. and Cavusgil, T.2004);
- 3) Sale of products in several countries (Knight, G. and Cavusgil, T.2004);
- 4) The six cases are from different branches of agribusiness and operate in different cities in Morocco.

The Agri food Industry and Moroccan exports:

The Agro-Food Industry represents one of the driving sectors of the Moroccan economy and benefits from a strong agricultural base and strong government support. It contributes nearly 29% to industrial added value and 25% to employment.

The agric-food sector occupies a prominent place in terms of trade flows nationally and internationally. This is thanks to the strategies adopted in the framework of the Green Morocco Plan (GMP). Indeed, these strategies have made it possible to develop the external competitiveness of agric-food products. In addition, agric-food exports have increased by 34% since 2008. At the end of August 2016, agric-food exports reached a value of 31 billion dirham's.

The exports are mainly composed of: Citrus fruits, tomatoes, canned olives, preparations and canned fish. As for the destination of agric-food products, the European market has the largest share of the total exported.

In addition, according to the recent economic and financial report of the Ministry of Finance, the momentum created by the Green Morocco Plan (GMP) has made it possible to position Morocco as the 3rd largest exporter of agric-food products in the MENA region and in the 4th rank on the African continent. The promotion of the Morocco Export Label has also consolidated the competitive positioning of Morocco, which is currently the 3rd largest exporter of canned olives.

It is also suggested that given the country's strategic position, it would be more appropriate to expand destination markets to Africa and Asia, which are experiencing accelerating population growth and urbanization.

Table 1: Sample presentation of six case studies

SMEs	City	area of export activity	Creation date	CA to export	Date of first export after creation
IO	Taourirt	olives	1994	100%	since creation
ANS	Berkane	Canned Vegetables, Fruits-canned	2000	100%	since creation
CONO	Casablanca	Early vegetables	1992	75%	since creation

CONSO	Agadir	Canned animal and vegetable	2003	75%	since creation
BC	Taroudant	Citrus	1990	100%	since creation
SPOIS	Laarache	Shrimps	2006	100%	since creation

Source: Prepared by the authors

Our qualitative study was based on ten semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the managers of each company. With an average duration of two hours, for IO and ANS companies based on the face-to-face technique, with regard to other companies, and on the basis of a semi-directive telephone interview with managers or directors lasting from 30 minutes to an hour and a half.

The discussion was transcribed at the same time of the interview, focusing on the main axes of our study objective.

Interview analysis method

There are several methods of data processing and analysis of qualitative studies in social sciences, including content analysis where data can be processed by different methods, thematic analysis: opinions, co-occurrence analysis, analysis of stereotypes, analysis of evaluative propositions: attitudes, frequency analysis.

In the latter, there are several possibilities of calculating the frequency of the elements: 1) the frequency of the interviews (respondents) where the statement of a thematic category was pronounced; 2) the frequency of statements in the same thematic category; 3) the frequency of the words of the utterances of the same thematic category, and 4) the frequency of the signs contained in the statements of the same thematic category. The calculation of the average frequency among respondents who share the same theme (thematic category) indicates its relative importance for these respondents. An important limitation of the study of frequencies must however be recalled: the value of frequencies is strongly linked to the structure of the sample. It is important to consider the characteristics of the sample in the analysis.

In our study, exploring the determinants of the rapid and early internationalization of SMEs by studying 6 cases of exporting agribusiness SMEs in the Kingdom and a total of 10 interviews, 12 interview segments were coded and categorized in 4 thematic categories. . Of these, only 3 appeared in more than 7 interviews. These last categories were selected for the analysis. The three most frequent elements are related to: "characteristics of the leader" (9/10), "characteristics of the industry" (8/10), "characteristics of the environment" (6/10), .This concerns the most common statements in the interviewed speeches. Indeed, these statements are reported by more than 50% of respondents, which can be an index of popularity of these opinions in this group.

Results, Analysis and Discussion:

The orientation of the leaders of the six international companies since their creation was to increase sales, seek new markets for their products, minimize the risk of saturation of the local market, and create more value for the business.

The management team of these four SMEREI, **IO**, **ANS**, **BC**, **APOIS**, has shown that they had a vision to integrate the international scene even before the creation of the company, and justify this by their type of product which is not intended for the local market because of several factors: the first is relative to the price and the second concerns the Moroccan consumer culture (*interviewee n° 3*).

The factor of psychological distance does not have a great influence on the speed of the export. This was clear in the interviews where the leaders move quickly in geographical areas with a big psychological gap such as Russia, Brazil, the United States, Romania, or Canada, but in the case of **CONO**, (*interviewee 2*), he explains that there is a predominance of the European Zone in Moroccan exports, especially that of the agric-food sector, due to the number of free trade agreements signed by Morocco, the promotion of exports to EU countries, partnerships, subsidies and aid with the EU ... etc. The psychological gap is even more minimized with countries of the Gulf where the similarity in culture, language and especially religion, accelerate the pace of internationalization of Moroccan SMEs.

With respect to the factor of the leader's international experience, and in all six cases, the managers did not have a great international competence, but they had a prior knowledge of the targeted foreign market, generally visited and studied during a trip or at a meeting with professionals and experts in the field at exhibitions and fairs abroad.

The leaders in the company **CONO**, **CONSO**, **APOIS**, have no professional or specialized training in agric-food or international trade, which explains this rapid vision of internationalization. But they all have previous experience in their field of activity, which has a significant influence. For the SME **BC**, a member of the management team studied abroad, he holds a degree in engineering in quality management and is experienced in agribusiness in two European countries.

The CEO of SME **BC** explains that having more expertise in the field, and contacts and relationships with industry professionals in the foreign market (business friends, federations, associations) is a key factor which can accelerate or Decelerate the internationalization of SMEs.

In the 10 interviews, the leaders implicitly show two main factors, which are the proactivity and the tolerance to risk and their strong relation with the culture of the country ... the perception of the uncertainty, the perception of the time, the desire of adventure especially when making such a strategic decision to undertake international business since childhood, contrary to a gradual internationalization of the SME where risk decreases with time, given the organizational learning.

Figure 4: Determinants of the rapid and early internationalization of SMEs in the agri-food sector

SME environment	Characteristics of the industry	Characteristics of the leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National culture (perception of risk, popular culture, speed of gain, perception of risk and time,) ✓ Organizational culture ✓ Expanding opportunities abroad ✓ Multiplication of competitors and saturation of the local market ✓ ICT development ✓ Development of means of transport and logistics ✓ Orientation of international buyers and suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exportable industry not intended for the local market before the creation of the company ✓ Industry with internationally competitive products (quality / price) ✓ Industry based on available resources and low costs. ✓ Industry encouraged by the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Age, international orientation ✓ Experience in the field internationally ✓ Membership in a network and building business relationships abroad ✓ Identifying business opportunities

Source: Results of the exploratory study

Conclusion

Our results and analyzes are likely to contribute to the theoretical development of the new field of research in international entrepreneurship. After an overview extracted from the literature review, on the factors of the internationalization of newly created small and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs of rapid and early Internationalization according to our name, we conclude in this paper that there are three main categories of determinants: the characteristics of the leader and the management team, the environment of the SME, and the Enterprise, regrouped by Edam, (2004). This categorization is explained by the similarity of the factors influencing the pace of internationalization of INV, (global Born, REIC). Our work has taken the same path as that of Edam, (2004), the theoretical and empirical exploration and the regrouping of the determinants influencing this rate of acceleration or deceleration to integrate the international scene, in a context of exporting SMEs in the agribusiness sector, led by Moroccans, and its first export was from its inception in several countries. Our results showed that two important variables were added to the category "environment", that of the national culture, as mentioned by Greet Hosted, (2001): "Certain national and cultural factors (Hosted, 2001) , especially the collective and hierarchical aspects of Asians compared to Westerners, can hinder early and rapid internationalization since they affect the behavior of leaders dictated by traditional business methods. (Zhang & Dodgson, 2007). Liu et al. (2008) point out that: in the case of private Chinese enterprises, many entrepreneurs are poorly educated with little experience, their

company is not technological and their size in terms of numbers of employees does not influence internationalization . It would really be constraints of the environment that would dictate their internationalization routines and the competitive positions of these firms. Moroccan culture has shown that it plays an important role in taking risks on the international stage despite impatience accompanied by a short-term vision and a quick gain, plus organizational culture, and saturation of the local market. We have changed the name of the category "business" by "industry" because according to our study each industry can have its specific factors. If we take, for example, the agri-food industry in Morocco involving shrimps, anchovies, or Clementine's, it is an industry intended abroad as soon as the company is founded, or when it comes to high technology; on the other hand, in other areas of activity, the industry can itself be a factor in decelerating the speed of internationalization of the SME.

Our research perspectives for this study is to conduct a quantitative study with a representative sample of SME exporters in the agric-food sector to explore new determinants, study the same phenomenon in the 12 regions of Morocco to measure and understand the degree of influence of the Moroccan culture on this precocity of internationalization, a comparative study between two different sectors (agric-food and textile for example) to determine the level of influence of the industry factor. All these elements should allow us to have a better exploration and understanding of new determinants specific to agribusiness SME with rapid and early internationalization in the Moroccan context.

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