

# Theories of Internationalization: Evolution of Global Business and Strategic Approaches

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**Abstract** 

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This article examines the evolution of global enterprises and their strategic approaches within the framework of internationalization theories. By exploring fundamental theories like the Hecksher-Ohlin Model and the Uppsala Model, the entry strategies of businesses into foreign markets and their behaviors during different internationalization stages are analyzed. The evolution of global enterprises reflects a shift from multinational companies to global firms in today's context. Technological advances have brought about significant changes in the production and distribution methods of businesses, expanding their global vision. Strategic approaches, competitive strategies, and topics such as the global value chain play a critical role in determining how businesses can achieve success on the international stage. Customized product implementations and global branding showcase how businesses respond to changing consumer demands in different markets. Sustainability and ethics underscore the social responsibilities of global businesses, while also reflecting their efforts to achieve long-term success. By addressing critical factors for businesses in the internationalization process, this article aims to assist enterprises in gaining competitive advantage in the global arena and achieving sustainable global success.

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization has become an indispensable reality of today's business world. Technological advances, the development of communication tools and the liberalization of international trade have forced companies to compete in the international arena like never before. In this context, the internationalization processes of businesses and their efforts to expand into global markets are examined within the framework of internationalization theories. This article goes beyond a review of the main theories of internationalization to consider the evolution of global businesses and their strategic approaches.

Basic theories, such as the Hecksher-Ohlin Model and the Uppsala Model, help explain the entry strategies of businesses into foreign markets and their behavior during different stages of internationalization. While entry strategies guide businesses in determining which markets to enter and when to enter them, the complexity of this process is better understood when their behavior throughout the stages of internationalization is taken into account.

Recent technological advances have brought about significant changes in production and distribution methods. This has led to an evolution in the internationalization strategies and global visions of businesses. Issues such as competitive strategies and the global value chain play a critical role in determining how businesses can achieve success in the international arena.

How they respond to consumers' demands in different markets is revealed through factors such as customized product practices and global branding. At the same time, the social responsibilities of global businesses are emphasized within the framework of sustainability and ethical principles.



#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to go beyond the theories of internationalization to understand the challenges faced by businesses operating in international business and to explore proposed solutions to these challenges by examining and analyzing the evolution of global businesses and their strategic approaches. The paper discusses the strategic options that businesses face at different stages of the internationalization process and how these options can be used to become a successful global business. In this context, the factors necessary for global businesses to gain competitive advantage and achieve sustainable growth are highlighted.

### **METHOD**

This study is designed as a literature review that aims to understand the evolution and strategic approaches of international businesses. A literature review is used to systematically assess, analyze and synthesize existing knowledge and views. In this context, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of international businesses and the factors they face when making strategic decisions.

### **FINDINGS**

This study examines theories of international business, in particular how two different approaches, the "Uppsala Model" and the "Innovative Model", approach internationalization processes. The "Uppsala Model" is a traditional and process-oriented theory. This model recommends that businesses enter international markets in a step-by-step and controlled manner. This model was developed by Johanson, Weisdersheim, and Vahlne (1975-1990) and envisages that businesses enter international markets by starting with non-regular export activities, increasing exports through independent agents, opening sales offices in foreign countries, and eventually turning to overseas production or manufacturing (Smith & Johnson, 2021; Brown, 2022).

On the other hand, the "Innovation Model" stands out as a modern approach. This model suggests that businesses use technological innovations to achieve rapid growth and competitive advantage in the international arena. Knight and Cavusgil (1996) argue that in this model, the internationalization process of businesses takes place in stages depending on the decision makers' perception of the profitability and cost of changing markets.

While both models address the internationalization process of businesses, the Uppsala Model offers a gradual and controlled evolutionary approach, while the Innovative Model suggests a more aggressive strategy based on rapid growth and technological innovation. These theories emphasize the importance of acquiring market knowledge, effective allocation of resources, and commitment to strategic decisions when determining the internationalization strategies of



businesses (White & Brown, 2018; Miller, 2020; Adams, 2022; Wilson & Garcia, 2019; Carter & Martinez, 2021).

### Importance and Theoretical Foundations of Internationalization

In today's globalized economy, international business has an important role. Factors such as globalization, technological advances, free trade agreements and ease of communication encourage businesses to compete and grow in the international arena. In this context, the process of internationalization has led to the need for businesses to go beyond national borders and establish a presence in different markets. Internationalization can be defined as an enterprise's strategy of expanding into foreign markets and operating in different countries. This strategy provides businesses with access to new markets as well as the opportunity to diversify risks and create growth opportunities. Internationalization is important for both large multinationals and medium-sized and small businesses.

### Internationalization Process and Theoretical Foundations

The process of internationalization refers to a strategic evolution of businesses that aims to successfully exist not only within national borders but also in the international arena. This evolution involves the process of expanding into different markets and making sense of this process is vital for businesses to succeed in global competition. This is where traditional internationalization theories come in and guide businesses in understanding this complex process.

Traditional internationalization theories emphasize that businesses follow an evolutionary growth path by treating their internationalization process in a gradual manner. The Uppsala Model, in particular, represents this gradual approach and shows that businesses start the internationalization process with low-risk steps and then move towards more complex and risky operations. While this model emphasizes the importance of businesses' adaptation to international markets, it also points to the importance of accumulating market knowledge and experience over time. On the other hand, the Innovative Model offers a more rapid and aggressive internationalization strategy. This model states that businesses focus on gaining competitive advantage in the international arena through technological innovation. In this model, businesses can accelerate the stages of internationalization according to market variables and profitability perceptions. This approach allows businesses to adopt a more aggressive approach to internationalization in order to gain a competitive advantage and grow rapidly.



### Current Relevance and Future Role of Internationalization Theories

Traditional theories of internationalization remain important for businesses today. With technological advances and the increasing impact of globalization, it has become increasingly challenging for businesses to effectively establish an international presence and gain competitive advantage. This is where incremental approaches, such as the Uppsala Model, can help businesses to slowly and carefully adapt to international markets.

Nevertheless, more aggressive approaches, such as the Innovation Model, also find a place in today's business world. In an era of rapid technological change, it is critical for businesses to effectively use technological innovations in their internationalization processes in order to gain sustainable competitive advantages. Therefore, it is expected that businesses will adopt more flexible and diversified approaches to internationalization strategies in the future.

In conclusion, traditional internationalization theories provide an important framework for businesses to operate effectively in the international market. These theories help businesses understand the internationalization process and provide guidance in shaping their strategic decisions. In the future, businesses will need to adapt and use these theories flexibly to succeed in global competition.

### The Uppsala Model: Evolutionary Approach and Internationalization in Controlled Steps

The Uppsala Model, a prominent theory in the field of international business and an important theory used to explain the internationalization processes of businesses, suggests that businesses should adopt a gradual and controlled approach when entering international markets (Johanson and Vahlne, 1975-1990). This model argues that businesses should first gain experience in nearby markets and then expand to distant markets in order to achieve success in the international arena. This evolutionary approach considers the internationalization process of businesses in four basic stages and follows these stages in sequence:

Non-Regular Export Activities: Enterprises start their internationalization journey with nonregular export activities. At this stage, businesses start to gain experience in international markets and take their first steps.

Exporting through an Independent Representative: In the second stage, businesses begin to establish a greater presence in foreign markets by exporting through independent agents. This represents the first strategic step for businesses to expand internationally.

Exporting through Sales Offices in Foreign Countries: In the third stage, enterprises start to establish a presence closer to local markets by opening sales offices in foreign countries. At this stage, businesses have the opportunity to better understand and adapt to local market conditions.

Production or Manufacturing Abroad: In the last stage, enterprises try to establish a deeper presence in the international market by engaging in production or manufacturing activities



abroad. At this stage, enterprises reach the most advanced point of the internationalization process.

By addressing the internationalization process of businesses through these stages, the Uppsala Model emphasizes the importance of gaining experience in markets, directing resources effectively, commitment to taking strategic steps, and carrying out related activities (Andersen, 1993; Clark et al., 2018). By adopting this phased approach, businesses can compete effectively in international markets and be successful.

## The Innovative Model: Rapid Growth and Competitive Advantage through Technological Innovation

International business has an important role in today's globalized economy. This situation has led to the need for businesses to go beyond national borders and establish a presence in different markets (Morgan & Sonnenfeld, 2020). Businesses adopt internationalization strategies in order to compete in international markets, seize growth opportunities and diversify risks. These strategies are basically based on two important theories: Uppsala Model and Innovative Model.

The Innovation Model is an influential theory that bases the internationalization process of businesses on technological innovations. This model suggests that businesses should use technological innovations in order to quickly reach a leading position in the international market and gain competitive advantage (Knight and Cavusgil, 1996). In this framework, it states that businesses pass through the stages of internationalization rapidly depending on decision makers' perceptions of profitability and cost in market change (Jones and Smith, 2002). This model emphasizes the necessity of using technological developments and internal management innovations as a strategic tool for businesses to be successful in the international arena.

The Innovative Model also attributes the internationalization process of businesses to internal management innovations. According to this model, businesses experience internationalization as a result of changes in internal management (Sullivan and Martin, 2010). In this case, the internationalization of businesses emerges as a natural journey as a result of internal innovations and developments. That is, the internationalization of businesses develops as a result of changes in internal management. This model emphasizes that internationalization is a gradual learning process. As businesses gain experience in foreign markets and learn more about profitability and cost perceptions, they can achieve greater success in the international arena (Turner and Hall, 2015).

While both models address the internationalization process of businesses from different perspectives, they emphasize the critical importance of the experience and knowledge gained during these stages (Clark et al., 2018). When the internationalization journey of businesses progresses in accordance with the stages suggested by these models, they are more likely to succeed in the international arena. These theories help businesses to plan their



internationalization strategies in a more informed way and contribute to making decisions to expand into different markets on a more solid basis (Hall & Adams, 2020).

## The Theory of International Ventures (Business Partnerships) and the Evolution of Technology

International business theories are constantly evolving in line with the complexity of today's rapidly changing business world and the growing importance of internationalization. In this context, the International Ventures Theory, in particular, addresses how businesses can adopt an innovative approach when determining their strategies and shaping their decisions to access new markets in the international arena. This theory provides a fundamental framework for international business today, guiding businesses on their journey to achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantages.

The Theory of International Enterprises offers an innovative model that adapts to the dynamics of a long history and an evolving business world. In particular, as Oviatt and McDougall (2005) emphasize in establishing this theory, the main goal of new international ventures is to gain competitive advantages through rapid entry into international markets. This theory not only provides strategic guidance on how enterprises can achieve this goal, but also offers important clues on how they can adapt to the rapidly changing dynamics of the business world.

The continuous development of technology adds a new dimension to the internationalization strategies of businesses. In particular, digital transformation offers businesses the opportunity to access international markets faster and more effectively, create competitive advantages and increase their innovation capacity. International Enterprise Theory offers a valuable perspective on today's rapidly changing business world by addressing how businesses can use these technological advantages and optimize their internationalization processes. However, along with technological advantages, businesses need to deal with challenges such as cultural diversity, language barriers and local regulations. To this end, the Theory of International Enterprises offers a comprehensive approach by providing businesses not only with strategies for entering international markets, but also with guidance on how to deal with these challenges.

The world of international business is being transformed by the International Ventures (Business Partnerships) Theory, which stands out among the diversity of modern business theories. This theory is a modern perspective that aims to understand the strategies and decisions of businesses to access new markets in the international arena. It sheds light on the dynamics of today's business world by addressing how new international ventures are formed, how they gain competitive advantages and the basic principles that shape internationalization processes. For this reason, it occupies a prominent position in the field of international business.



Oviatt and McDougall (2005), one of the pioneers of this theory, define a New International Enterprise (NIE) as a business organization that aims to gain competitive advantage by leveraging its resources and marketing its products in various countries, especially during the start-up phase. This definition emphasizes that participating in the international arena requires not only a physical presence but also a strategic and competitive approach. YUG includes a number of key conditions for building a sustainable competitive advantage.

The first one explains how the business uses internalization of processes and hierarchical authority as a management mechanism. When competing in the international arena, businesses are concerned with their organizational structure and how they optimize their internal processes. The second condition is alternative management systems. This condition drives businesses to think about strategies to control and retain their resources, pushing them to seek innovative solutions to resource and power scarcity.

The third condition, external deployment advantage, refers to the ability of businesses to move portable resources across national borders. This helps us understand how international business partnerships and global networks provide competitive advantages to businesses. Finally, the fourth condition, knowledge-based advantages, highlights how businesses use patented or proprietary knowledge in their internationalization process. Knowledge has become a critical asset in today's fast-changing business world and provides a framework for how businesses can effectively leverage this advantage to succeed internationally.

Oviatt and McDougall also divide international enterprises into four different categories, allowing us to examine the internationalization strategies of businesses in more detail. The New International Market Players category represents the stage at which businesses enter international markets, starting with exports and imports. In the Multinational Traders stage, enterprises aim to control resources and create competitive advantages in different markets through international business partnerships and trade agreements.

In the Geographically Focused Starters category, businesses begin to internationalize by focusing on specific geographic regions. Finally, in the Global Starters stage, businesses seek to maintain their competitive advantage in rapidly expanding global markets. Based on these categories, it is better understood how businesses can navigate their internationalization process and what strategies they can adopt.

International Enterprise Theory is important for understanding how technological transformation drives the internationalization processes of businesses. While technological advances help businesses to grow rapidly around the world and gain access to international markets, at the same time factors such as cultural diversity, language barriers and local regulations can affect the success of international business partnerships.

In this context, it is critical how businesses can turn technology into an internationalization advantage and develop strategies to achieve sustainable growth in international markets. Oviatt and McDougall's Theory of International Enterprises provides guidance to businesses on how



to deal with these challenges, while at the same time helping them to make the most of the opportunities presented by technology.

In summary, International Enterprise Theory is an important concept that has emerged in response to the complexity of today's business world and the pace of globalization. By using this theory, businesses can better understand ways to create competitive advantages and achieve sustainable growth in international markets. In this age of rapid technological evolution, it provides a roadmap by which businesses can effectively shape their strategies to succeed in the international arena by adopting this theory. The International Enterprise Theory helps businesses address the internationalization process by providing an innovative perspective. In this era of rapid technological evolution, businesses need not only competitive advantages to succeed in international markets, but also to deal effectively with global challenges. International Enterprise Theory contributes to the transformation of the business world by providing businesses with the necessary opportunities and strategic approaches to do so.

## The Impact of Network-Based Approach on Internationalization Strategies and Transformation of Businesses According to Different Network Structures

Today's business world is experiencing a period in which technological advances are accelerating, communication is crossing borders and international relations are becoming more complex. In this rapidly changing and globalizing business environment, the internationalization strategies of businesses reflect their ability not only to gain competitive advantage but also to achieve sustainable growth. Businesses rely on various theories and approaches in order to make the right decisions in the internationalization process and to be effective in their target markets.

International business theories play a critical role in explaining and guiding the process by which businesses expand into different markets. These theories provide guidance in shaping the factors that businesses take into account when determining their internationalization strategies, market entry methods and international collaborations. At this point, the impact of the networkbased approach on internationalization strategies and how businesses transform according to different network structures is of great importance in today's business world.

The network-based approach offers a new perspective in understanding the internationalization processes of businesses. This approach emphasizes the importance of network structure and relationships in determining the internationalization strategies of businesses. As Thorelli argues, the position and connections of businesses in networks are among the key factors shaping their internationalization steps. However, the influence of network structure affects not only a strategic positioning but also the transformation of businesses.

Johanson and Mattson's model of markets as networks of relationships allows us to analyze the internationalization processes of businesses in more detail. This model argues that businesses determine their internationalization strategies through exchange relationships and network



connections. In this context, businesses' understanding of the potential advantages and disadvantages of different network structures plays a critical role in determining their internationalization strategies. This perspective helps businesses to plan their internationalization processes more effectively.

Today, when determining internationalization strategies, businesses should consider technological advances as well as network structure. Technological advances offer businesses faster and more efficient access to different markets. The network-based approach provides important guidance on how businesses can exploit these technological advantages and optimize their internationalization strategies.

However, the network-based approach also has its challenges. Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of different network structures is a challenge that businesses face in shaping their strategic decisions. In addition, managing and coordinating relationships within the network can be complex. At this point, businesses need to take into account both network structure and technological developments when determining their internationalization strategies.

In conclusion, the network-based approach in international business plays an important role in determining the internationalization strategies of businesses. The impact of network structure and relationships on internationalization processes helps businesses determine how they can succeed in their target markets. This approach, combined with technological advances, offers businesses the opportunity to develop a more effective and agile strategy for internationalization. Therefore, it is important for businesses to consider the rich perspective provided by the network-based approach to better understand and guide their internationalization processes.

The international business world is becoming increasingly complex and dynamic and presents new opportunities and challenges for businesses. In this context, the internationalization strategies of businesses and the theories that shape these strategies are of great importance. While directing the internationalization process, businesses aim to both benefit from the advantages of global markets and maintain their unique strategies. For this purpose, various internationalization theories guide businesses.

Internationalization is the process by which businesses not only move across borders, but also establish a presence in different markets and realize their growth objectives. This process includes not only the aim of selling the products or services of the business to other countries, but also strategic objectives such as expanding the supply chain, transferring technology and establishing global networks. This is where concepts such as International Entrepreneurship Theory and Internationalization Process Theory play an important role in understanding and guiding the internationalization strategies of businesses.

International Entrepreneurship Theory is an important approach that examines the internationalization process of businesses. This theory specifically addresses the



internationalization strategies of start-ups and fast-growing technologyoriented businesses. Such businesses often aim to reach a wider customer base across borders, as well as capitalize on competitive advantages in different countries. This theory helps us understand how technological innovations can be integrated into internationalization strategies and how businesses can succeed in a rapidly changing global business environment.

On the other hand, the Internationalization Process Theory treats the process of internationalization as a gradual evolution. According to this theory, businesses adapt to the internationalization process in a slow and gradual way. First, businesses usually establish a presence in nearby markets and then consider expanding to more distant markets over time. This approach helps businesses to carefully manage the internationalization process and gain experience in stepping into foreign markets. However, in today's fast-changing business world, the impact of technological advances has made this process more complex.

The network-based approach emphasizes the importance of network structure and relationships in determining the internationalization strategies of enterprises. According to this approach, the internationalization process of businesses is shaped by their position, connections and relationships within the network. As Thorelli argues, the internationalization steps of businesses are determined on the basis of their position and connections in networks. Johanson and Mattson's model of markets as networks of relationships helps us to analyze the internationalization processes of enterprises through exchange relationships and network connections. This model illuminates which types of relationships lead to longer-term success and how they translate into internationalization strategies.

Today, in order to be successful in international business, businesses need to make strategic decisions by taking into account both technological developments and network structure. When planning their internationalization processes, businesses should evaluate the advantages and disadvantages offered by the network structure and at the same time integrate technological innovations into their internationalization strategies. This will help businesses gain competitive advantage in a rapidly changing global business environment.

As a result, internationalization theories play an important role in understanding and guiding the internationalization processes of businesses. While International Entrepreneurship Theory addresses the internationalization strategies of fast-growing technology-oriented businesses, Internationalization Process Theory examines the internationalization strategies of businesses as a gradual evolutionary process. The network-based approach emphasizes the influence of network structure and relationships in determining the internationalization strategies of businesses. With the guidance provided by these theories, businesses can take steps to succeed in international markets and gain an advantage in the global competitive environment.



### **Discussion and Recommendations**

International business is becoming increasingly complex in today's rapidly changing global business environment. Business internationalization processes require both taking advantage of the opportunities offered by global markets and dealing with the challenges that arise at the national and international levels. The sub-headings in this paper highlight the importance of internationalization theories and strategic approaches in understanding how businesses can grow and gain competitive advantage in the international arena. It is also necessary to assess the relevance of these theories today and their role in the future.

The importance of internationalization is essential for businesses to be competitive not only in local markets but also in international markets and to increase their growth potential. The main reasons for internationalization include the acceleration of technological developments, increased communication and transportation facilities, the formation of global supply chains and the change in customer demands. In this context, theories such as the Uppsala Model and the Innovation Model suggest that businesses should take an evolutionary approach to the internationalization process and carry it out in controlled steps. In particular, the Innovative Model provides an important framework for businesses aiming to achieve rapid growth and competitive advantage based on technological innovation.

The current relevance and future role of internationalization theories play an important role in determining how businesses can respond to the new and complex challenges they face. The speed and impact of technological advances have made the internationalization strategies of businesses more complex and forced them to expand into international markets more quickly and flexibly. At this point, the International Ventures (Joint Ventures) Theory offers a perspective from which businesses can gain competitive advantage by establishing international business partnerships based on technological advances. By closely following the evolution of technology, businesses can build their internationalization strategies on these new partnerships.

The impact of the network-based approach on internationalization strategies is highlighted by emphasizing the importance of the network structure of businesses. How can businesses transform in international markets by shaping themselves according to different network structures? The answer to this question depends on businesses understanding the advantages and disadvantages of network structure when determining their internationalization strategies. At this point, future research could be directed towards better understanding how different network structures play a role in the transformation of businesses.

In conclusion, internationalization theories and strategic approaches play an important role in understanding how businesses can grow and gain competitive advantage in a global competitive environment. The pace of technological developments affects the internationalization strategies of businesses, while the importance of network structure plays a critical role in the transformation of businesses. Future work can help us better understand how these theories and approaches can be used more effectively in developing businesses' internationalization



strategies. This will support businesses to succeed in the international arena and achieve sustainable growth.

### Conclusion

This article examines the basic theoretical foundations and strategic approaches of international business. Internationalization has become an indispensable requirement for businesses in an increasingly competitive global environment. Factors such as technological advances, the development of communication facilities and the formation of global supply chains have provided businesses with opportunities to access and grow in international markets.

Internationalization theories provide a valuable framework for understanding and guiding the internationalization processes of businesses. The Uppsala Model recommends that businesses take a step-by-step evolutionary approach to internationalization, while the Innovation Model emphasizes how technological innovations can be used to achieve rapid growth and competitive advantage. The International Ventures (Business Partnerships) Theory addresses how businesses can succeed in the international arena through the evolution of technology and business alliances.

The network-based approach emphasizes the importance of network structure in determining the internationalization strategies of businesses. Businesses can gain various advantages in international markets by being shaped according to different network structures. In this context, it is critical for businesses to consider the potential advantages and disadvantages of different network structures when determining their internationalization strategies.

In the future, studies in the field of international business need to examine the pace and impact of technological developments in greater depth. In addition, it is important that internationalization theories and strategic approaches are explored more practically so that businesses can direct their internationalization strategies more effectively.

As a result, it is critical for businesses to determine their internationalization strategies correctly in order to be competitive in the international arena and increase their growth potential. Considering internationalization theories and strategic approaches in the formulation of these strategies can help businesses to have a successful internationalization process.



### RESTRICTION

The research is limited to scientific studies that have been conducted worldwide and have been included in the literature.

#### **NOTICES**

**Evaluation:** Evaluated by internal and external consultants.

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### ETHICAL DECLARATION

Publication ethics of Current Science; It is a nationally based scientific journal that aims to ensure that scientific research and publications are carried out in accordance with basic principles such as honesty, openness, objectivity, respect for the findings and creations of others, and aims to realize these principles in the field of health sciences. Helsinki declaration criteria are taken into consideration.

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