

*Full Length Research Paper*

# State-of-the-art current research in international entrepreneurship: A citation analysis

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Accepted 19 November, 2013

This article applies a literature-based analysis in its discussion of the research field of international entrepreneurship. It uses bibliometric citation analysis as its primary investigative method. The basis of the citation analysis was formed by articles coming from a number of electronic publication databases that contained the term "international entrepreneurship" in their titles, and which could thus be clearly categorized into this research field. The 40 publications identified in this manner resulted in a database of 2,659 citations. Upon observing the citation analysis and the clusters of topics that result, it becomes clear that the research on international entrepreneurship is influenced by the scientific fields of international business, entrepreneurship theory, SME internationalization, and born global/international new venture theory.

**Key words:** International entrepreneurship, state of the art, bibliometrics, citation analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

International entrepreneurship (IE) is a new field of research that continues to grow and develop. It has come increasingly into the focus of scientific research over the past decade (Acs et al., 2003). IE research kicked off with the JIBS article "Towards a theory of international new ventures" by Oviatt and McDougall (1994) who used a case study of 24 international new ventures (INV) to show that the internationalization behavior of companies who have been active on international markets from the moment of their founding is insufficiently described and explained by classical theories of international business (IB) research. This means that there is a demand for an own field of research dealing with the development of IE. The following years saw the emergence of a multitude of publications on IE coming from all kinds of scientific arenas, and that had their focus on a wide variety of issues as they developed their theoretical concepts and laid the foundation of their research frameworks.

The research field of IE has its origin in classical IB as well as classical entrepreneurship (ENT) research (Zahra and George, 2002; Dimitratos and Jones, 2005; Keupp and Gassmann, 2009). IE can thus be interpreted as an intersection between IB and ENT, even though a universal definition (that is, a general understanding of IE from a holistic perspective) continues to be lacking.

Researchers have placed different demands on future IE research, which can sometimes stand in contrast to one another. For example, McDougall and Oviatt (2000) call for compelling theoretical constructs, while Covello and Jones (2004) would like to see clear methodical direction. Still others expect a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach in method design, as well as in how results are interpreted (Dana et al., 1999).

Future research requires an extensive depiction of the current state-of-the-art of IE research. This is where this article sets on. It conducts a thorough citation analysis as a means to identify focal points and trends, as well as inconsistencies and research gaps within IE. This citation analysis will identify the foundations of IE research that has been done up to this point, and bundle them into topic clusters.

## DEFINITIONS

Early definitions of IE tend to focus on the internationalization behavior of INVs. Oviatt and McDougall (1994) define INVs as "a business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources from and the sale of outputs to foreign markets" (p. 11). This definition is based on the assumption that the firm's internationalization is driven by the desire to increase its sales volume and market share in foreign markets. However, this definition does not take into account the fact that some firms may internationalize for other reasons, such as to access new markets or to diversify their risk. Additionally, the definition does not specify the scope of the firm's internationalization, such as whether it is limited to a single product or service or whether it covers multiple products or services across different countries. Furthermore, the definition does not provide a clear distinction between internationalization and globalization, which are often used interchangeably. Internationalization refers to the process of expanding a firm's operations into foreign markets, while globalization refers to the process of creating a truly global presence through the use of various forms of technology and communication. In this article, we will use the term "international entrepreneurship" to refer to both the process of internationalization and the resulting phenomenon of globalization.

multiple countries" (p. 31). This definition has been used as a foundation by a number of empirical studies (Shrader et al., 2000; Aspelund and Moen, 2005; Mudambi and Zahra, 2007), and its wide usage initially led to IE being seen as the equivalent of research on the internationalization of new, small companies that were just getting started. And to be sure, the empirical and conceptual studies that follow this approach today comprise the majority of IE research. However, the authors of more recent publications have intended to get off of this beaten path, arguing that the approach of IE as a research field actually unifies ENT and IB theory. Nevertheless, empirical and theoretical studies that integrate both IB as well as ENT research approaches have until now been in short supply, or downright non-existent (Keupp and Gassmann, 2009). Previous studies mostly apply only IB or ENT thinking. Additional complexity is also found in the different characteristics of IB and ENT research: While IB research over the course of the past decades has enjoyed a relatively stable, theoretically and empirically robust understanding (as seen, for example, in Dunning's eclectic paradigm, the Uppsala model or transaction cost theory), ENT research on the other hand is relatively new, and lacks these kinds of time-tested, proven models and studies (Low, 2001; Cooper, 2003; Busenitz et al., 2003).

Reflecting on their definition from 1994, Oviatt and McDougall (2005b) recognize how they did not focus on the connection between ENT and IB in their earlier work, and instead only concentrated on a small section of IE as they conducted their INV analysis. A re-working of their definition resulted in a new understanding of IE by the authors: "International Entrepreneurship is the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities – across national borders – to create future goods and services. It follows, therefore, that the scholarly field of international entrepreneurship examines and compares – across national borders – how, by whom, and with what effects those opportunities are acted upon" (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005b; p. 7).

## RESEARCH APPROACH

### Method and Database

A citation analysis will be applied to structure the literature found in the research field of IE. A citation analysis is a bibliometric method that has been used since the beginning of the 1970s to determine a publication's or author's influence on research and/or science. According to Broadus (1987), "bibliometrics is the quantitative study of physical published units, or of bibliographic units, or of the surrogates for either" (p. 373). Diodato (1994) expands on this by stating how bibliometrics can be understood as the analysis of written communication that serves mathematical-statistical methods. As a bibliometric tool, citation analysis "summarizes events that have no apparent interconnection into a pattern that helps identify the 'classics' among research and events that have achieved a breakthrough in the development of a discipline, or that have strongly impacted the events that result from it" (Lawani, 1981, p. 310).

According to Roth and Gmür (2004), in particular the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) played important roles in the development and acceptance of citation analysis as a scientific method. They are credited with making available the digital citation data on the publications that are found in leading scientific journals.

Citation analysis furthermore assumes that literature references in scientific publications refer to work that reflects the conceptual associations of scientific ideas (Garfield, 1979). The references to literature are considered citations from the perspective of the source cited. Another assumption that the citation analysis is based upon is the fact that authors cite other publications only when these works communicate useful, important findings and serve as a workable basis for the scientific paper that they are writing (Klingemann, 1988). From this, Voeth et al. (2006) conclude that "(...) publications that are repeatedly cited by different authors represent central contributions to research, and as such have had a strong impact on it" (p. 8). They also mention how citation analyses also allow the structure of a scientific discipline to be investigated. Here, the origin of sources and the citation frequency of different works and/or authors are examined. Compared to other approaches such as expert surveys, a citation analysis has an advantage in how it achieves an inter-subjectively testable result because its findings are independent of the subjective viewpoints and opinions of the interviewed experts. Another advantage of this approach is that it presents a "real time" state of current research (Tahai and Meyer, 1999).

In light of the facts mentioned in the discussion above, citation analysis seems to be a suitable instrument for identifying structure and developmental patterns in IE research. This paper will also attempt to determine which theoretical focal points and influences have had an impact on IE research. All relevant articles were identified via the title search "International Entrepreneurship" using the electronic databases EBSCO (EconLit, Business Source Premier, Academic Search Premier), ProQuest ABI/Inform Global, Springer Standard Collection, Elsevier ScienceDirect Complete, SAGE Humanities and Social Science, Emerald Management Xtra Plus, Wiley Interscience SSH, JSTOR). To ensure the quality of the dataset, only those publications were used that have been published in English in well-known scientific journals or edited volumes. Dissertations, working papers, or conference presentations were not included in the analysis. This search identified 40 journal articles (Table 1) which will be examined by the bibliometric citation analysis in the following. The results of the citation analysis are comprised of the works most frequently cited in the basis IE articles, and which in turn have the strongest influence on the research field of IE. The references coming from these 40 publications created a total database of 2,659 citations that form the foundation of the citation analysis.

## ANALYSIS OF THE BASIS PUBLICATIONS

A thorough look at the 40 IE publications (Table 2) is needed to interpret and evaluate the results of the citation analysis. All of these publications appeared between 1993 and 2009. 39 of them appeared between 1999 and 2009. 2006 saw the greatest amount of publications (10). Between 1999 and 2009, most of the publications appeared in journals dealing with the field of management (14) and IE (14). Eight publications came from entrepreneurship journals, while five came from the field of international business.

McDougall was the most-cited author. Her publications represented almost 5% of the total investigated, followed by Oviatt, whose publications comprised nearly 4%. The

**Table 1.** Overview of the IE publications analyzed.

Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal
Alon, I.	2004	International market selection for a small enterprise: A case study in international entrepreneurship	SAM Advanced Management Journal
Beamish, P.	1999	The role of alliances in international entrepreneurship	Research in Global Strategic Management: International Entrepreneurship
Buttriss, G. J. and Wilkinson, I.F.	2006	Using narrative sequence methods to advance international entrepreneurship theory	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
Chandra, Y. and Coviello, N.	2009	Broadening the concept of international entrepreneurship: 'Consumers as international entrepreneurs'	Journal of World Business
Coviello, N. and Jones, M.	2003	Methodological issues in international entrepreneurship research	Journal of Business Venturing
Dana, L.	1999	Theoretical foundations of international entrepreneurship	Research in Global Strategic Management
Dana, L. and Wright, R.	2009	International entrepreneurship: Research priorities for the future	International Journal of Globalisation and Small Business
De Clercq, D., Sapienza, H., Sandberg, W. and Crijns, H.	2006	The role of learning in international entrepreneurship	Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth
Dimitratos, P. and Jones, M.	2005	Future directions for international entrepreneurship research	International Business Review
Etemad, H. and Lee, Y.	2003	The knowledge network of international entrepreneurship: Theory and evidence	Small Business Economics
Fernhaber, S., Gilbert, B. and McDougall, P.	2008	International entrepreneurship and geographic location	Journal of International Business Studies
Fillis, I.	2007	A methodology for researching international entrepreneurship in SMEs	Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development
Fink, M., Harms, R. and Kraus, S.	2008	Cooperative internationalization of SMEs: Self-commitment as a success factor for international entrepreneurship	European Management Journal
Fletcher, D.	2004	International entrepreneurship and the small business	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development

**Table 1.** Contd.

Giamartino, G., McDougall, P. and Bird, B.	1993	International entrepreneurship: The State of the Field	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice
Hindle, K.	2006	A measurement framework for International entrepreneurship policy research: From impossible index to malleable matrix	International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business
Hisrich, R., Honig-Haftel, S., McDougall, P. and Oviatt, B.	1996	Guest editorial: International entrepreneurship: Past, present, and future	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice
Hohenthal, J.	2007	Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods in research on international entrepreneurship	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
Ibeh, K.	2005	Toward a greater level of international entrepreneurship among smaller agribusiness firms: Resource levers and strategic options	Management International Review
Jones, M. and Nummela, N.	2008	International entrepreneurship: Expanding domain and extending our research questions	European Management Journal
Katz, J. and Shepherd	2005	An introduction to the special volume on international entrepreneurship	Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth
Keupp, M. and Gassmann, O.	2009	The past and the future of international entrepreneurship: A review and suggestions for developing the field	Journal of Management
McDougall, P. and Oviatt, B.	2000	International entrepreneurship: The intersection of two research paths	Academy of Management Journal
Mort, G. and Weerawardena, J.	2006	Networking capability and international entrepreneurship	International Marketing Review
Mtigwe, B	2006	Theoretical milestones in international business: The journey to international entrepreneurship theory	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
Nummela, J.	2006	Qualitative research methods in international entrepreneurship: Introduction to the special issue	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
O'Cass, A. and Weerawardena, J.	2009	Examining the role of international entrepreneurship, innovation and international market performance in SME internationalisation	European Journal of Marketing
Omar, M., Nwanko, S. and Richards, D.	2008	Determinants of international entrepreneurship of UK companies	World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development

**Table 1.** Contd.

Omar, M., Nwanko, S. and Richards, D.	2008	Determinants of international entrepreneurship of UK companies	World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development
Oviatt, B. and McDougall, P.	2008	A Framework for understanding accelerated international entrepreneurship	Research in Global Strategic Management: International Entrepreneurship
Oviatt, B. and McDougall, P.	2005	Defining international entrepreneurship and modeling the speed of internationalization	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice
Pisano, V., Ireland, R., Hitt, M. and Webb, J.	2007	International entrepreneurship in emerging economies: The role of social capital, knowledge development and entrepreneurial actions	International Journal of Technology Management
Servais, P., Zucchella, A. and Palamara, G.	2006	International entrepreneurship and sourcing: International value chain of small firms	Journal of Euromarketing
Seymour, R.	2006	Hermeneutic phenomenology and international entrepreneurship research	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
Sinkovics, R. & Bell, J.	2006	Current perspectives on international entrepreneurship and the Internet	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
Styles, C. and Seymour, R.	2006	Opportunities for marketing researchers in international entrepreneurship	International Marketing Review
Turcan, R., Maekelae, M., Sorensen, O. and Roenkoe, M.	2009	Mitigating theoretical and coverage biases in the design of theory-building research: An example from international entrepreneurship	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal
Wennberg, K. and Holmquist, C.	2008	Problemistic search and international entrepreneurship	European Management Journal
Wright, R. and Dana, L.	2003	Changing paradigms of international entrepreneurship Strategy	Journal of International Entrepreneurship
Wright, M., Westhead, P. and Ucbasaran, D.	2007	Internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and international entrepreneurship: A critique and policy implications	Regional Studies
Zahra, S., Korri, J. and Yu, J.	2005	Cognition and international entrepreneurship: Implications for research on international opportunity recognition and exploitation	International Business Review

**Table 2.** Overview of publication years and research fields.

Year of publication	No. of publications	Management	International Business	Entrepreneurship	International Entrepreneurship
1993	1			ENT	
1996	1			ENT	
1999	2	RGSM (2)			
2000	1	AMJ			
2003	3			JBV, SBE	JIE
2004	2	SAM		ERD	
2005	5	MIR	IBR (2)	ETP	AEFEG
2006	10	IMR (2), JEM			JIE (5), AEFEG, IJESB
2007	5		RS	JSBED	JIE, IJTM, IETE
2008	6	EMJ (3), RGSM	JIBS	WREMS	
2009	5	JM, EJM	JWB	IJWBE	IEMJ

Abbreviations: ETP, Entrepreneurship theory and practice; RGSM, Research in Global Strategic Management; AMJ, Academy of Management Journal; JBV, Journal of Business Venturing; SBE, Small Business Economics; JIE, Journal of International Entrepreneurship; SAM, SAM Advanced Management Journal; ERD, Entrepreneurship and Regional Development; IBR, International Business Review; AEFEG, Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth; MIR, Management International Review; IMR, International Marketing Review; JEM, Journal of Euromarketing; IJESB, International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business; IJTM, International Journal of Technology Management; IETE, International Entrepreneurship: Theoretical Foundations and Empirical Analysis; RS, Regional Studies; JSBED, Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development; EMJ, European Management Journal; JIBS, Journal of International Business Studies; WREMS, World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development; JM, Journal of Management; JWB, Journal of World Business; IEMJ, International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal; EJM, European Journal of Marketing; IJWBE, International Journal of World Business and Entrepreneurship.

**Table 3.** Amount of citations per author.

Author	Cited in what % of the publications	Absolute amount of citations
McDougall	4.63	123
Oviatt	3.99	106
Coviello	2.22	59
Zahra	2.03	54
Jones	1.99	53
Johanson	1.96	52
Wright	1.69	45
Knight	1.58	42
Shane	1.54	41
Cavusgil	1.47	39
Beamish	1.43	38
Vahlne	1.32	35
Dunning	1.13	30
Ireland	1.02	27
Bell	0.98	26

work by Coviello, Zahra, Jones and Johanson each represented around 2% of the total publications. The 15 most-cited authors are shown in Table 3. An analysis of the sources cited shows that IE is very strongly influenced by literature-based research. The development of different internationalization models is used to describe IE as it emerges over the course of time. Models and theories are then developed based upon this work.

Here, the need for empirical testing of these kinds of models can be clearly seen.

### Analysis of the cluster publications

A total of 16 publications were identified among the basis publications that were cited there at least ten times.

These publications can therefore be considered as the most influential upon IE research. They are seen Figure 1, which makes clear which authors of the basis publications cite these works. The middle of the graphic shows the most-cited publications, which are located on the gray circles shaded around the author name(s). The size of the shaded gray circles indicates the citation frequency, that is, the larger the circle, the more frequently the publication was cited. Table 4 provides a list of the authors, publication years, titles, and journals that each publication appeared in.

The number a publication is quoted by other authors is interpreted as an indicator for its impact in terms of the quality of the transported insights and for the influence on shaping the respective academic field (Klingemann, 1988; Yue and Wilson, 2004). To identify those imperative publications within a research field, bibliometry suggests to cluster publications which are cited with a certain frequency either in terms of author clusters or in terms of content clusters (Voeth et al., 2006). With this aim, we clustered these 16 articles thematically according to their titles and content, which revealed four topical research clusters within IE research:

### ***Cluster 1: (International) entrepreneurship theory***

Five publications are found in the (international) entrepreneurship theory cluster, which were published from 2000 to 2005 and cited by 26 of the 40 works on international entrepreneurship. McDougall and Oviatt's (2000) work was cited a total of 19 times, while the publications by Coviello and Jones (2004) as well as Zahra and George (2002) were each cited 12 times. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) were cited 11 times, Jones and Coviello (2005) 10 times. In their work, McDougall and Oviatt (2000) develop a definition of IE that continues to influence the IE research field to this day. They define IE as "a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behavior that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organizations" (p. 903). 19 of the 40 IE publications orientate themselves according to this definition. Jones and Nummela (2008) for example see this definition as an "ultimate" IE definition because it contains both IB as well as ENT elements. They furthermore see it as an essential starting point for future research. Keupp and Gassmann (2009) consider this definition by McDougall and Oviatt as an all-encompassing, accurate description of IE and use it as the starting point for their literature-based research: "To determine which articles were relevant to the field of IE, the coders reviewed the articles and classified them as within or outside the domain of IE, using McDougall and Oviatt's (2000) definition" (p. 605). Dimitratos and Jones (2005) even see the McDougall and Oviatt definition as a giant step forward in IE research in how it disentangles IE from its previously equal identification with the BG/INV phenomenon, and even integrates

companies other than just BG/INVs into its work.

Coviello and Jones (2004) provide a review of the methodical approaches that have so far been applied in IE research, analyzing a total of 55 empirical studies in terms of their timeframes, research contexts, sample compositions, data pools, and evaluations. They came to the conclusion that previous empirical studies do no justice to the crossover between IB and ENT, and use only either a theoretical ENT or IB construct. The authors also identify in all studies inconsistencies in the use of indicators and control variables. Furthermore, they show that the sample construction on the one hand does not allow a comparison between the different industries and countries, while at the same time noting a lack of long-term studies. Mort and Weerawardena (2006) apply the recommendations by Coviello and Jones for improving sample constructions as they correspondingly develop their own sample. Seymour (2006) cites the work of Coviello and Jones to support the discussion on why IE also needs to be observed from the perspectives of other branches of research to help achieve a better overall understanding of it.

Zahra and George (2002) provide a literature-based review of the research field of IE, along with potential pathways for future research. The authors trace the development of the understanding of IE research by taking a look at its different definitions over the course of time, followed by their own definition. They define IE as "the process of creatively discovering and exploiting opportunities that lie outside a firm's domestic markets in the pursuit of competitive advantage" (p. 11). They also analyze the results of past studies, identifying different factors that could have an influence on IE, and from this develop a theoretical framework for it. This model contains company-specific, strategic, and environmentally-specific factors that influence IE. Zahra and George describe IE using three dimensions: the degree of internationalization, the speed of internationalization, as well as the regional and/or country-specific focus of internationalization, followed by an outlook for future research. This IE definition runs into criticism by Mtigwe (2006), who feels that, compared to the definition by McDougall and Oviatt (2000), this definition does not factor in risk components, even though risk-taking is a central element of ENT research. O'Cass and Werawardena (2009) on the other hand are very much in agreement with Zahra and George's definition, as it integrates exactly those ENT characteristics described and proven by Shane and Venkataraman.

In their publication, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) show the lack of an established framework in ENT research, indicating how entrepreneurship "has become a broad label under which a hodgepodge of research is housed" (p. 217). Both authors in their work place the existence, discovery, and capitalization on entrepreneurial opportunities in the spotlight of entrepreneurship, identifying variables that describe these dimensions, and

**Table 4.** Most-cited sources, results of the citation analysis.

Author	Year	Title	Source
Autio et al.	2000	Effects of age at entry, knowledge intensity and imitability on international growth	Academy of Management Journal
Bell	1995	The internationalization of small computer software firms: A further challenge to stage theories	European Journal of Marketing
Bloodgood et al.	1996	The internationalization of new high-potential U.S. ventures: Antecedents and outcomes	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice
Coviello and Jones	2004	Methodological issues in international entrepreneurship research	Journal of Business Venturing
Coviello and Munro	1997	Network relationships and the internationalization process of small software firms	International Business Review
Johanson and Vahlne	1990	The mechanism of internationalisation	International Marketing Review
Johanson and Vahlne	1977	The internationalization process of the firm: A model of knowledge development and increasing foreign commitment	Journal of International Business Studies
Jones and Coviello	2005	Internationalization: Conceptualizing an entrepreneurial process of behaviour in time	Journal of International Business Studies
Knight and Cavusgil	1996	The born global firm: A challenge to traditional internationalization theory	Advances in International Marketing
Madsen and Servai	1997	The internationalization of born globals: An evolutionary process?	International Business Review
McDougall and Oviatt	2000	International entrepreneurship: The intersection of two research paths	Academy of Management Journal
McDougall et al.	1994	Explaining the formation of international new ventures: The limits of theories from international business research	Journal of Business Venturing
Oviatt and McDougall	1994	Toward a theory of international new ventures	Journal of International Business Studies
Reuber and Fischer	1997	The influence of the management team's international experience on internationalization behaviors of SMEs	Journal of International Business Studies
Shane and Venkataraman	2000	The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research	Academy of Management Review
Zahra and George	2002	International entrepreneurship: The current status of the field and future research agenda	Book Chapter

and deriving them from ENT literature. Oviatt and McDougall (2005a) follow Shane and Venkataramann's approach, showing that EO as an ENT construct is a

feasible ENT component in the definition of IE. Other researchers also follow this approach by Shane und Venkataramann, discussing in particular the discovery

and maximization of entrepreneurial opportunities within an international context (Hindle, 2006; De Clercq et al., 2006).

Jones and Coviello (2005) have a second publication in the IET cluster that describes a three-step process for the development of a construct explaining IE. This construct is based on an IB and ENT model as a means to unify both research fields in one single construct. In their work, Fink et al. (2008) draw from this publication to support the importance of "self commitment" in the context of IE. Styles and Seymour (2006) agree with their argument, and based on this develop their own IE definition from a marketing perspective: "International entrepreneurship is the behavioral processes associated with the creation and exchange of value through the identification and exploitation of opportunities that cross national borders." (p. 135).

Figure 2 shows the essential influence of the definition by McDougall and Oviatt (2000) on IE publications released to date; 19 of them have applied it to their work. It is also made clear that the ENT dimensions as shown by Shane and Venkataraman (2000) are roundly accepted by IE research, with 11 of the publications referring directly to them. The IE definition provided by Zahra and George (2002) also applies them in how it sees the identification and maximization of entrepreneurial opportunities as ENT components. This was cited 12 times.

### ***Cluster 2: International business***

Three publications are found in the International Business cluster; two are by Johanson and Vahlne. Their study from 1977 developed a model to describe the internationalization process of companies, which in the following years came to be known as the Uppsala Model of Internationalization. It continues to influence research on internationalization to this day. IE research is also influenced by this model, which was cited 17 times in the IE publications that were analyzed. The influence of the Uppsala model on IE research becomes even clearer when looking at the publication by Johanson and Vahlne (1990), which also discusses the Uppsala model, and was cited by 12 of the IE publications. The third publication by Autio et al. appeared in 2000, and was cited by a total of 11 of the IE publications.

Johanson and Vahlne (1977) developed a model to describe the internationalization processes of companies. This model presents a four-step process of internationalization which begins with irregular export activities, and concludes with an overseas production operation. Over the course of the internationalization process, the enterprise generates an increasing amount of knowledge as it dedicates more and more resources to internationalization. This model is based on the empirical work done by Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) who investigated the internationalization of four Swedish

companies and discovered that their internationalization occurred as an incremental process. In literature, the Uppsala model is mostly cited in the historical development context of IB theory, and is derived for new approaches that describe IE (Mtigwe, 2006; Wright et al., 2007). While Mtigwe and Wright et al. primarily address the incremental process of internationalization, other researchers focus on the learning theoretical aspect, as well as the psychological distance aspect of the Uppsala model, as done example, by Wennberg and Holmquist (2008) who value the model as a good description of the development of a company as it makes its way towards becoming a multinational corporation. On the other hand, both criticize how the Uppsala model is not suitable for explaining when and why a company sets the internationalization process in motion. Thirteen years later, Johanson and Vahlne (1990) renewed the discussion of the Uppsala model in reference to the criticism that had been made regarding it up to that point in time, as well as the model's limitations. Here, they identified the importance of networks for a company's internationalization process. This article, an expansion of the Uppsala model, is along with the article from 1977 the most frequently cited as it relates to the historical development of IB research (Chandra and Coviello, 2010). Other researchers such as Dana and Wright (2009) discuss the Uppsala model's validity from a BG/INV perspective.

Using an empirical study of 59 Finnish companies in the electronics industry, Autio et al. (2000) investigated company age upon entry into international markets, knowledge intensity, and imitability as a competitive advantage as they all relate to the international growth of a company. Here, they discovered that the newer a company is at the start of its internationalization, and the higher its knowledge intensity, the faster the process of internationalization will be. Of particular note are their findings dealing with the sequence of the internationalization process. Compared to other studies investigating the internationalization behavior of new enterprises that found that these companies skip over some steps of the internationalization process (Oviatt and McDougall, 1994), Autio et al.'s results show that the internationalization process of the companies examined is more of an incremental one, thus confirming the internationalization theory of Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 1990). This was the case for new enterprises as well. They come to the conclusion that, due to their limited resources, new enterprises are not in a position to skip over entire internationalization steps at an early stage. What instead characterizes these companies is how they take the individual steps more quickly (Autio et al., 2000). These findings incorporate the thinking of example, Oviatt and McDougall (2005a) as they develop a model that describes the speed at which companies internationalize and integrate factors that influence the speed at which internationalization occurs.

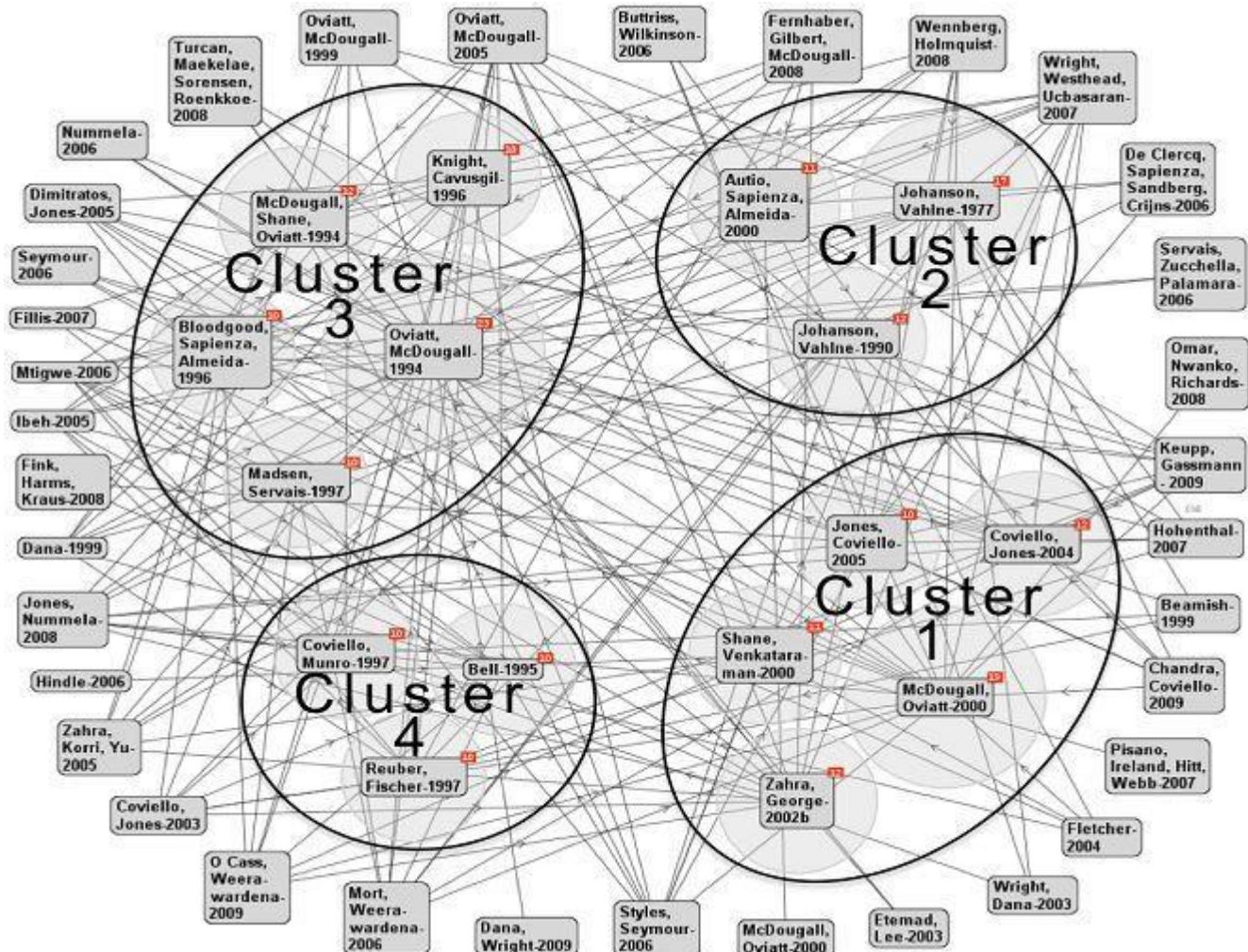


Figure 1. The most-cited publications.

Figure 3 makes clear that the concept of incremental internationalization as originally described by Johanson and Vahlne (1977) continues to influence IE research to this day. A total of 23 IE publications base themselves on this concept. Publications that view IE from a born global perspective (Oviatt and McDougall, 1999) challenge this internationalization construct, because the existence of companies can be empirically proven who from their foundation onwards internationalize and/or skip over individual steps in the internationalization model. Newer publications on the other hand that understand IE as a kind of “crossroads” between IB and ENT apply the Uppsala model as essential in IB research, drawing elements from it, e.g. the learning theory approach of the model as it relates to ENT research constructs (Wright et al., 2007).

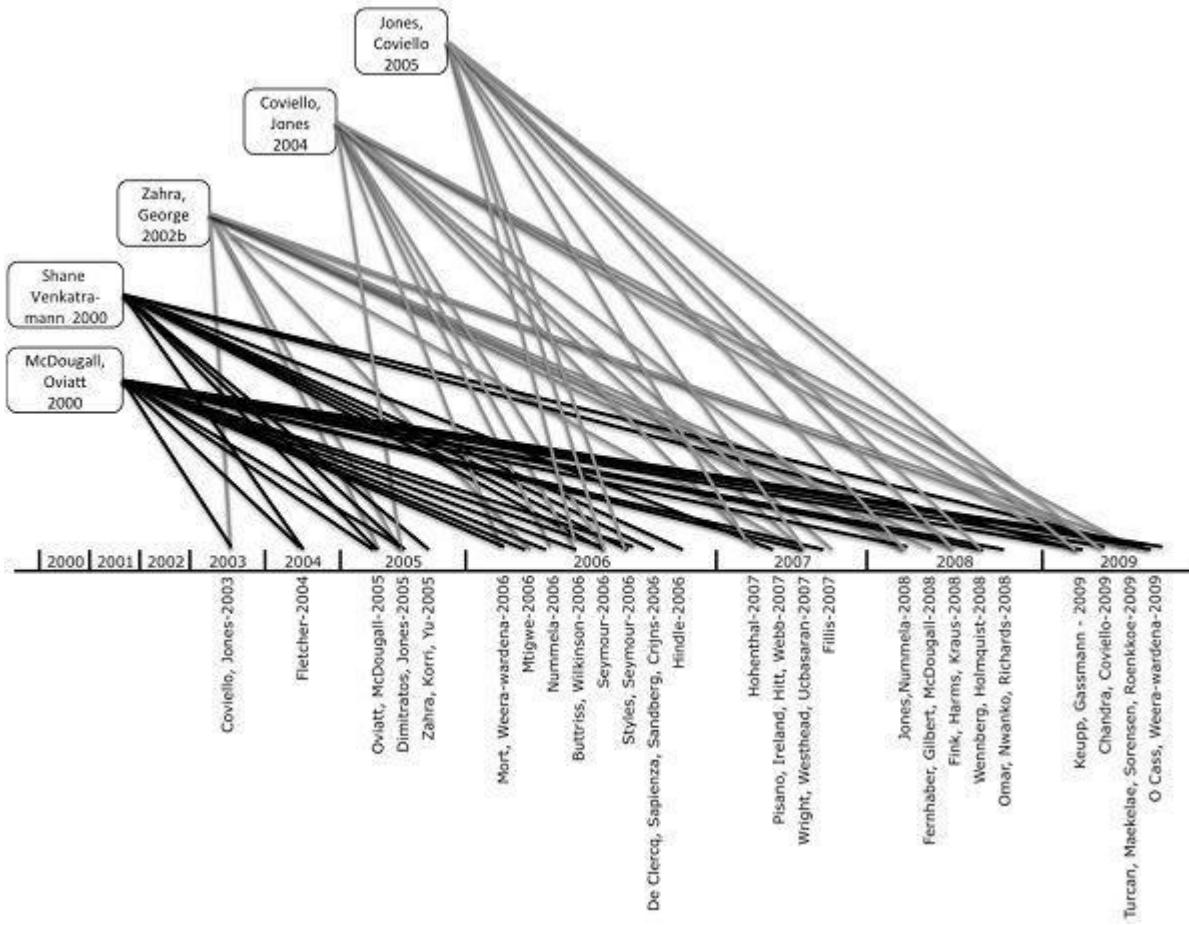
The Uppsala model of internationalization by Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 1990) continues to strongly influence IE research. As an explanatory tool for the internationalization of companies from an ENT perspective, it

remains an essential element of IE research.

### Cluster 3: Born Global/INV

Five articles are found in the born global/INV cluster, which all appeared between 1994 and 1997. They were cited in a total of 26 of the 40 IE basis publications. Most frequently cited was the 1994 work by von Oviatt and McDougall (23), followed by McDougall et al. (1994) (12). Bloodgood et al. (1996), Knight and Cavusgil (1996), and Madsen and Servais (1997) each had 10 citations. The paper published in 1994 by Oviatt and McDougall in the Journal of International Business Studies “Toward a theory of international new ventures” is today the publication having the greatest influence on IE research.

While observing the internationalization behavior of companies, the authors identify a specific group of companies that they refer to as “International New Ventures” (INV). These are companies that are active on international



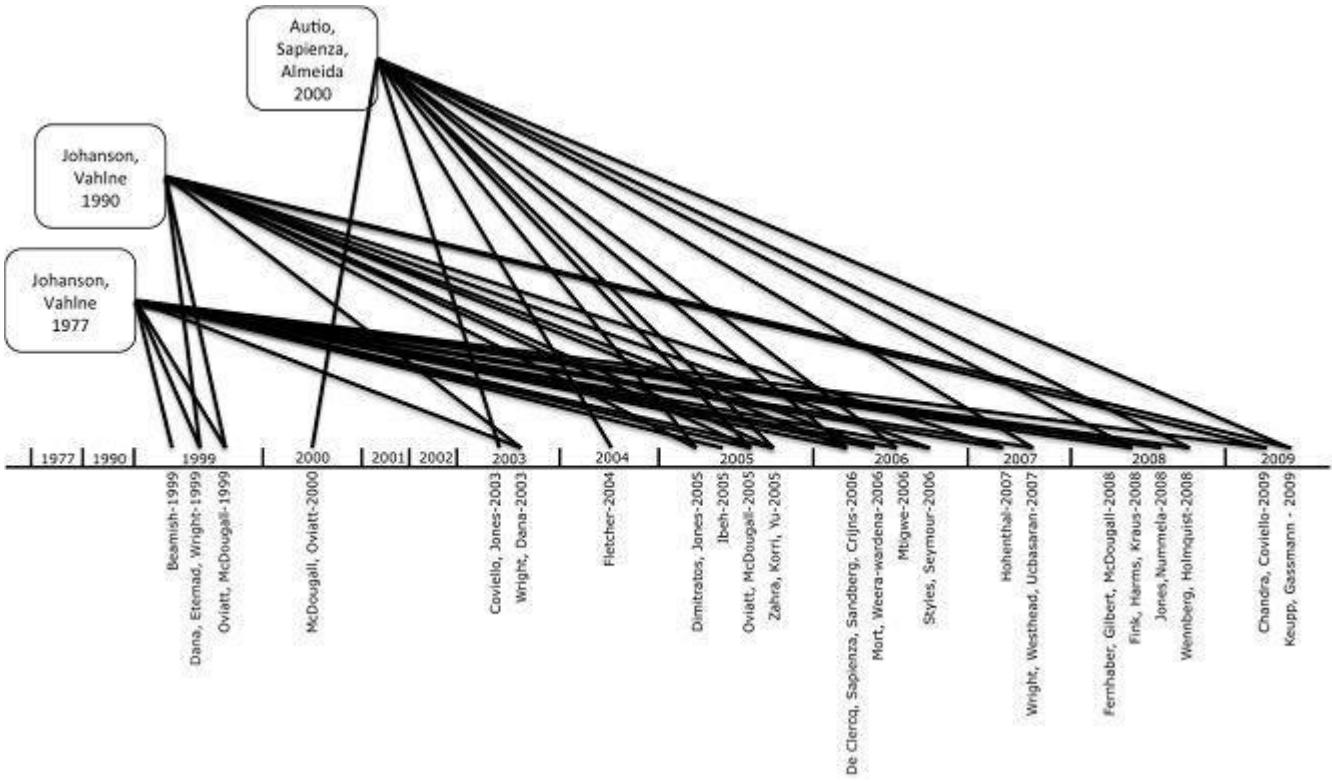
**Figure 2.** The influence of McDougall and Oviatt's (2000) and Shane and Venkataraman's (2000) definitions on IE publications.

markets from their foundation onwards. The authors define INVs as "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" (p. 49), coming to the conclusion that classical internationalization models that describe it as an incremental, step-by-step process are not suited to sufficiently explain the internationalization behavior of the companies in question. Oviatt and McDougall (1994) show that management experience in particular has a positive influence on the pace of internationalization. Hohenthal (2006) refers to this aspect to demonstrate the development of a new, integrated methodical approach. Other authors such as Dimitratos and Jones (2005) cite the article by Oviatt and McDougall to show the development of the IE research field and its origin in BG/INV research.

McDougall et al. (1994a) also apply Oviatt and McDougall's INV definition. Applying a case study approach, they looked at the internationalization behavior of 24 companies. In line with Oviatt and McDougall, they determined that classical internationalization models are

not suited to accurately describe the internationalization behavior of INVs, because these particular models are used to describe the internationalization behavior of MNEs and/or are derived from them. When compared to INVs, MNEs have a different resource setup and look back on a different kind of history. Hence the lack of suitability of classical internationalization models to describe INVs. McDougall et al. (1994b) identify three central factors to explain the internationalization behavior of INVs: (1) the company's founder, (2) why internationalization is done, and (3) the kind and form of international activities. They show that it is the INVs in particular whose founders have international experience that pursues internationalization as a growth strategy right from the start. They also apply hybrid structures (network alliances, strategic partnerships) for internationalization. Keupp and Gassmann (2009) cite McDougall et al. (1994) as they discuss the dominant role that a company's characteristics, experiences, and social networks play when it wants to internationalize early on.

Bloodgood et al. (1996) also applied the INV definition by Oviatt and McDougall (1994) as they investigated the



**Figure 3.**The influence of the IB cluster publications on IE research.

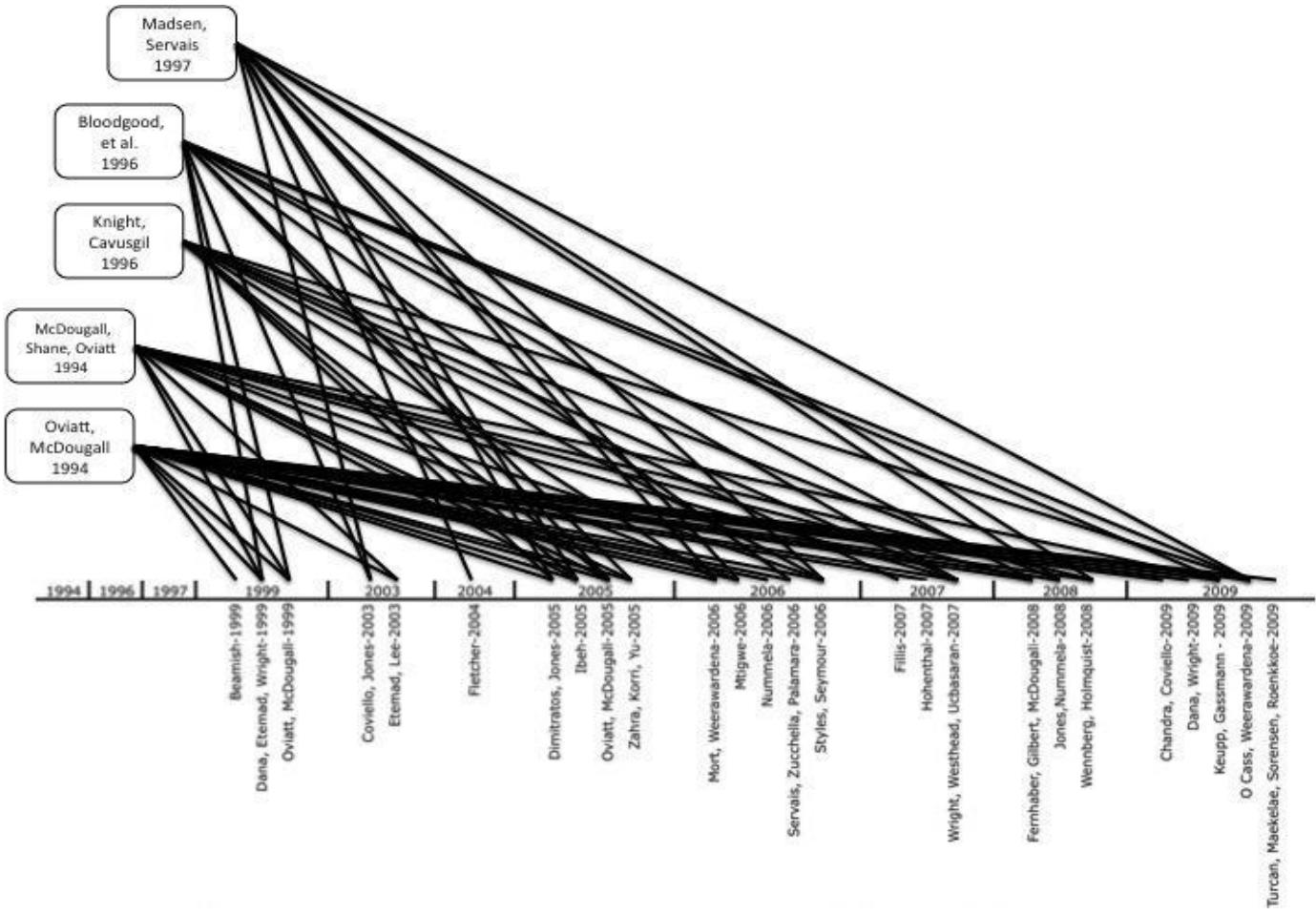
internationalization behavior of 61 new enterprises in the USA. Here, they found that when companies aim to achieve competitive advantages, a direct relation exists between internationalization and product differentiation. Additional success factors include the international experience of the board of directors, and the size of the company at the point when it decided to go public. Bloodgood et al. (1996) see that the level of internationalization at the time of going public corresponds positively to company profit two years after becoming publicly traded. Servais et al. (2007) cite the aspect highlighted by Bloodgood et al. that the entrepreneur plays an important, essential role in an organization's inter-nationalization. Bloodgood et al. were able to show that companies that in particular have high profit levels are much more frequently involved in international activities, and to a greater extent, than those companies who have only low amounts of profit or none at all. With this being said, Wright et al. (2007) criticize this kind of focus that looks exclusively at internal factors.

Knight and Cavusgil (1996) apply Rennie's (1993) term "born globals" to their work. As opposed to Oviatt and McDougall (1994), these authors define a company as an early internationalizer if it is active on international markets within the first two years of its founding. They furthermore add that BG companies are characterized by a high level of technological orientation. They also found that BG company products are unique among the

competition, possessing a high level of added value.

Madsen and Servais (1997) provide an overview of the scientific literature published so far on the topic of BGs. Using this overview, they show the limitations of Johanson and Vahlne's (1977) Uppsala model of internationalization, providing open questions, suggestions, and directions for future research. Many authors cite Madsen and Servais when they describe the development of the IE research field. For instance, O'Cass and Weerawardena (2009) cite them when explaining why the term IE was ambivalently applied for such a long time to the BG phenomenon.

Figure 4 makes clear the strong influence of Oviatt and McDougall's 1994 definition of INVs on IE research that continues to this day. And there's no sign of this influence letting up: Over the past 15 years, Oviatt and McDougall have been cited with a high level of consistency among all kinds of different research thematic dealing with the topic. However, a change can be seen over the years regarding the content-related context in which Oviatt and McDougall are cited. In earlier IE publications, the definition of INVs is used interchangeably with the definition of IE, particularly when it comes to the argumentation against incremental stage models of internationalization (Dana et al., 1999). Later on, the citation context of Oviatt and McDougall changes with IE publications. Research now sees their definition as the starting point for, or even the start of IE research (Autio, 2005) and the phenomenon



**Figure 4.**The influence of the BG/INV cluster publications on IE research.

of INV's and/or born globals as a domain found within IE research (Keupp and Gassmann, 2009).

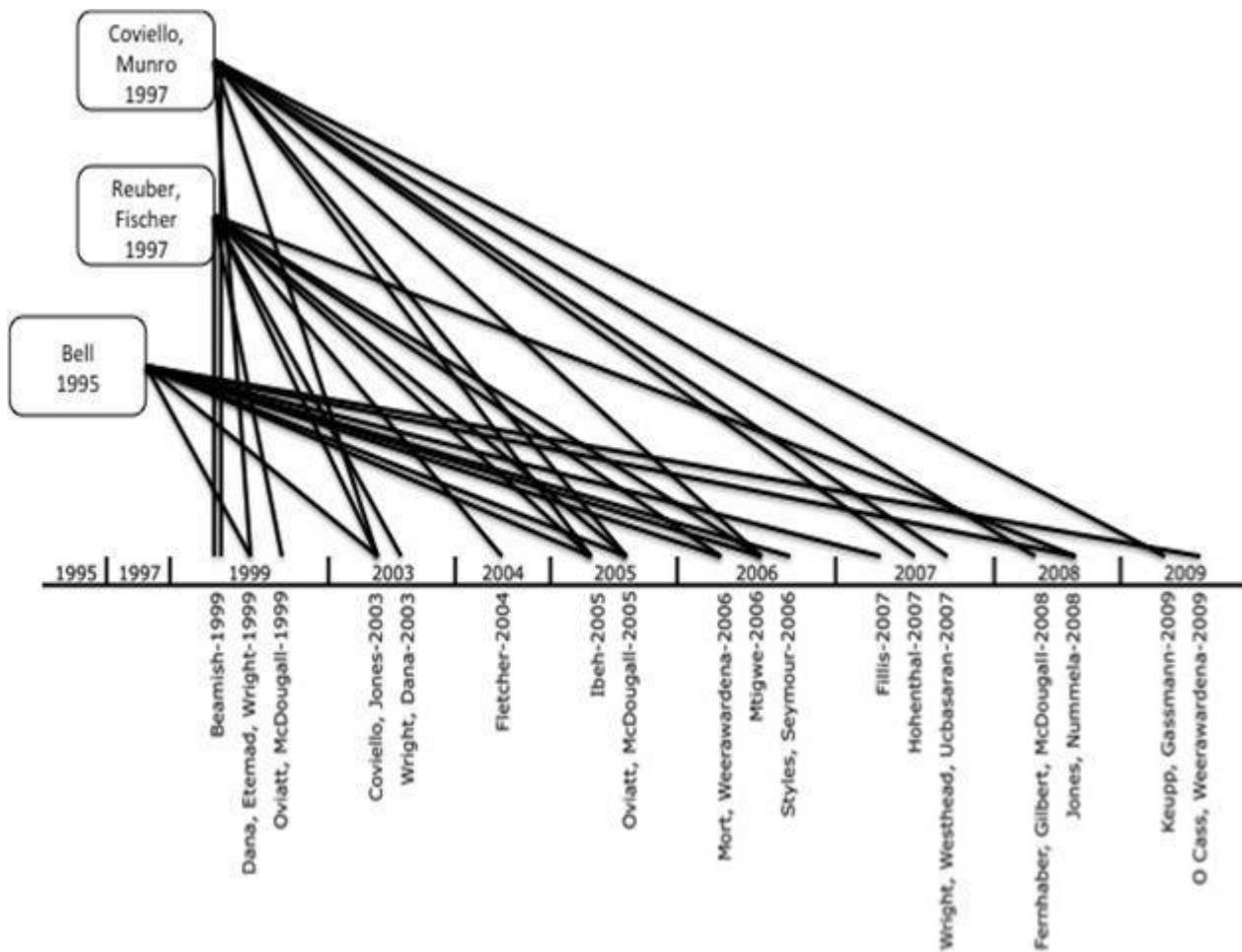
Many researchers have shown in literature reviews how IE research has emerged from BG/INV research. This makes the publications in the BG/INV cluster important for understanding IE research. Compared to other clusters, there are a high amount of citations, which can partially be explained by the fact that the majority of these works appeared between 1994 and 1996, and have had well over a decade to become established in IE research.

#### **Cluster 4: SME Internationalization**

A total of three studies are found in the SME internationalization cluster. They were published between 1995 and 1997. 18 of the 40 IE publications analyzed cite at least one of these SME internationalization works. The papers by Bell (1995), Coville and Munro (1997), and Reuber and Fischer (1997) were each cited ten times. In terms of the pure number of citations, the SME internationalization cluster when compared to the others is the

one having the lowest amount of influence on IE research.

Bell (1995) applied an empirical investigation to study the internationalization behavior of 187 small software firms in Finland, Ireland, and Norway. Here, he showed that this behavior cannot be explained using the Uppsala model of internationalization, that is, the results did not indicate a step-by-step, incremental internationalization in companies. Other stages models by Bilkey and Tesar (1977), Cavusgil (1980), and Czinkota (1982) which postulate a less rigid "establishment chain" sequence can be partially confirmed. Bell's results allow the conclusion to be made that although internationalization can in fact be explained by the models in question, inter-nationalization processes in companies do not occur in such a deterministic fashion as the models would expect. This argument is applied by Mort and Weerawardena (2006) who investigate the networking capabilities and/or the networks of a company as a contributing factor in their rapid internationalization. Oviatt and McDougall (2005a) as well as Mort and Weerawardena cite Bell's findings to support the integration of a company's networks into their



**Figure 5.** The influence of the SME internationalization cluster publications on IE research.

models that show how rapidly internationalization occurs. Covielo and Munro (1997) also investigated the internationalization behavior of companies using a case study of Canadian software firms. Here, they looked at the influence of network relationships and their impact on the internationalization process by expanding the traditional stage model to include a network perspective. Their results found that a mixture of formal and informal networks influence the internationalization process, especially regarding what international markets are chosen, as well as how the market is entered. They also have a positive influence on a company's international growth. The findings by Covielo and Munro are cited by Wright and Dana (2003) in their review of the different IE perspectives and influences. As is the case with Bell, Covielo and Munro are cited when models contain network perspectives that are derived from the literature.

Reuber and Fischer (1997) investigated the internationalization behavior of SMEs using an empirical investigation of 58 software SMEs in Canada. The results of their investigation show that companies whose management possesses international experience have a

stronger tendency towards developing international strategic partnerships. They also require less time after founding to achieve international turnover, which leads to a greater degree of internationalization. Mtigwe (2006) cites the publication by Reuber and Fischer to provide reasons why companies are able to skip some of the steps of internationalization, or even internationalize after only a few years of being in business. Mtigwe sees the international experience of upper management as an essential reason and/or requirement for achieving this. Fernhaber et al. (2008) also apply this argument, deriving from it their hypothesis that they are subsequently able to confirm: The more international experience the top management of a company has, the more this company will profit from international industry clusters.

Figure 5 shows which IE publications the SME internationalization publications are cited in. Their influence visibly decreased between 2007 and 2009. Many IE researchers cite Bell (1995), his argumentations, and his results to make clear that classic the internationalization behavior of companies (Mtigwe, 2006; Filis, 2007).

## **International Entrepreneurship Theory**

As the results of the citation analysis show, the research field of IE is comprised of both ENT and IB research elements. The scientific community is of the common view that the emergence of the research field of IE is a result of the discovery of special phenomena, that is, the so-called born globals and international new ventures (INVs).

### **Development**

Oviatt and McDougall (1994) as well as McDougall et al. (1994a) show that companies exist which are active on international markets the moment that they start doing business. As a result, classic models of internationalization are sometimes not sufficient for describing the internationalization process.

Zahra and George (2002) show that the first research on IE was done in 1988 (which at the time was not yet known as IE research). Morrow (1988) discussed the age of internationally active entrepreneurs, presenting the hypothesis that advantages in technology combined with a high degree of cultural awareness makes access to new markets easier, regardless of the size of the company or how long it is been in business. One year later, McDougall (1989) conducted the first empirical investigation within this research field, which examined the differences in behavior between internationally active and non-active companies and the effects of internationalization on economic success. This saw McDougall provide the first definition of IE: "International entrepreneurship is defined in this study as the development of international new ventures or start-ups that, from their inception, engage in international business, thus viewing their operating domain as international from the initial stages of the firm's operation" (p. 390). This definition makes clear that in the early years, IE was understood as a realm of ENT research, with its focus being the internationalization behavior of young enterprises.

Building on these findings, Oviatt and McDougall (1994) formulated the INV model, which they understand as "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." (p. 31). Studies by other researchers were also emerging at the same time that investigated the behavior of INVs and BGs. Although these works differ in how they view the phenomena of INV/BG, they all agree on the need for more extensive, more comprehensive research on the topics (Giamartino et al., 1993; Zahra, 1993a; Zahra and Schulte, 1994). Wright and Ricks' (1994) paper also mentions the growing significance of IE as a research field, although this publication is remarkable for another reason: In their definition of IE, Wright and Ricks cut it loose from the BG/INV phenomena. For them, IE involves

both new as well as established companies, and therefore needs to be observed from both perspectives. They understand IE as "a firm-level activity that crosses national borders and focuses on the relationship between business and the international environment in which they operate" (p. 687).

This is in line with Zahra (1993a) who notes this point in particular, defining IE as "the study of the nature and consequences of a firm's risk-taking behavior as it ventures into international markets" (p. 5). A comparison of the definition by Oviatt and McDougall (1994) with those by Wright and Ricks (1994) and Zahra (1993a) makes clear the two trains of thought that existed at the time on the topic of IE. First, IE as an observation of the internationalization behavior of young enterprises and startups as suggested by Oviatt and McDougall (1994), and second, the somewhat more holistic perspective of IE as a process occurring in both established companies and young enterprises.

Subsequent years saw the holistic viewpoint prevail. In 1996, even McDougall and Oviatt regressed from their viewpoint, now understanding IE as "new and innovative activities that have the goal of value creation and growth in business organizations across national borders" (p. 23). They expanded this definition in 2000, incorporating entrepreneurial elements such as degree of innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking: "A combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behavior that crosses or is compared across national borders and is intended to create value in business organizations" (p. 903). Including classic entrepreneurship constructs into IE was a significant step towards how it is understood today.

Shane and Venkataraman (2000) expand the understanding of IE by a further component, seeing it as a dynamic process. They define "international entrepreneurship dynamics" as "the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services" (p. 218). Zahra and George (2002) extend their definition of IE by adding a process perspective, defining it as "the process of creatively discovering and exploiting opportunities that lie outside a firm's domestic markets in the pursuit of competitive advantage" (p. 11). Coviello (2006) as well as Mathews and Zander (2007) understand IE as a process occurring over time, and feel it should be viewed as such.

This perspective of IE makes clear why it today is defined as the intersection between ENT and IB. This understanding of the topic was first formulated by Oviatt and McDougall (2005a), who determined that IE should be observed using studies that unify constructs from both IB and ENT.

### **Dimensions**

According to Zahra and George (2002), the dimensions observed in IE research can be classified into three categories: the extent and/or degree of internationalization;

**Table 5.** IE research dimensions (Zahra and George, 2002, p. 14)

Degree/extent of internationalization	Speed of internationalization	Focus of internationalization
McDougall (1989)	Roberts and Senturia (1996)	Roberts and Senturia (1996)
McDougall et al. (1994)	Fontes and Coombs (1997)	Reuber and Fischer (1997)
Brush (1995)	Lindquist (1997)	Burgel and Murray (1998)
Bloodgood et al. (1996)	Reuber and Fischer (1997)	Zahra et al. (2000b)
McDougall and Oviatt (1996)	Burgel and Murray (1998)	
Karagozoglu and Lindell (1997)	Zahra et al. (2000b)	
Burgel and Murry (1998)		
Zahra et al. (2000a)		
Zahra et al. (2000b)		

the speed of internationalization; and the focus of internationalization. Table 5 provides an overview of the different IE research dimensions. Noticeable is how the majority of the studies are based upon the extent/degree dimension of internationalization. And when looking at these particular studies, it becomes clear that the degree of internationalization is measured primarily in terms of the amount of turnover achieved abroad. These dimensions have been researched using different variables, which can be divided into three overall factor categories: strategic, environmental, and company-specific.

Generic strategies functional strategies (marketing, production, distribution), and market entry strategies are all investigated when examining the influence of strategic factors. All kinds of researchers have been able to demonstrate that a product differentiation strategy has a positive effect on the international development of companies. Oviatt and McDougall (1995) show that product differentiation has a positive influence on the speed of internationalization in particular, while Bloodgood et al. (1996) show that a differentiation strategy positively correlates with the degree of internationalization. Further studies prove that a product having a USP is important for internationalization (Fontes and Coombs, 1997) and that it pays to have good product quality when internationalizing (Holmlund and Kock, 1998).

A different picture emerges when looking at the influence of marketing strategy on internationalization. In her investigation, McDougall (1989) shows how INVs have to invest less in a marketing and distribution strategy than those companies who are only active on the domestic market. Roberts and Senturia (1996) indicate that product attributes have a positive influence on the speed of internationalization. In the work by Bloodgood et al. mentioned above, it becomes clear along with the results already presented that there is a negative relation between marketing differentiations and the degree of internationalization. Here, the authors were able to determine a marginally significant relationship.

In terms of the marketing strategy and its impact on internationalization, companies operating within a niche, and who have internationally active customers are

“holding good cards” when it comes to internationalization (Fontes and Coombs, 1997). McDougall (1989) furthermore shows that by entering the market, INVs achieve far greater scale effects than those companies that are only active on the domestic market. The significance of the “external environment” for the internationalization of companies has been examined in a number of studies using different kinds of variables. And interestingly, it is found that the pressure coming from the competition plays only a minor role. McDougall showed as early as 1989 that there are no differences in the perception of the competitive intensity of the domestic market between INVs and companies that do not internationalize. These findings are consistent with those by Karagozulu and Lindell (1998), whose work finds that the competitive situation on the home market was a reason to internationalize for only a quarter of those companies who were currently doing so. The real motivations for internationalization ranged from reaching greater levels of turnover, to achieving a competitive technology. Coviello and Munro (1995) also show that limited growth perspectives on the domestic market are one of the main reasons for wanting to achieve rapid internationalization. It is also clear that the intensity of international competition has a positive influence on the pace of internationalization in high-tech companies, which is also supported by McDougall’s (1989) findings. The institutional environment also has an impact on the internationalization behavior of companies. Mitchell et al. (2000) were able to show a significant effect regarding this. And in this context, George and Prabhu (2000) show that effective institutional mechanisms positively influence entrepreneurial behavior in up-and-coming, developing markets. Bloodgood et al. (1996) indicated that the higher an industry’s margins, the lower the level of internationalization will be in it. A positive, albeit non-significant, relationship is that between turnover growth of an industry and the degree of internationalization of the companies within it. Nevertheless, the industry itself has an influence on internationalization. Burgel and Murray (1998) discovered that service companies displayed a lower tendency towards internationalization than

manufacturing enterprises. Company-specific factors have also been researched along with strategic and environmental aspects. One focus here is the investigation of the influence of company size on internationalization behavior. This has produced diverging results. Bloodgood et al. (1996) and Zahra et al. (2000) are able to show a positive correlation between company size and the degree of internationalization. Reuber and Fischer (1997) on the other hand identify a non-significant, negative correlation between company size and internationalization behavior; a similar picture is seen when observing the amount of employees. Burgel and Murray (1998) determine that internationally active high-tech startups have a significantly larger amount of turnover and more employees than companies that do not internationalize. Westhead et al. (2001) finds the opposite to be true; no differences in the amount of employees can be found between companies that export and those that do not. Varying results also emerge when looking at the influence of company age on internationalization. Here, Reuber and Fischer (1997) see both a positive as well as a negative correlation in the same study. Zahra et al. (2000) see a positive correlation, while Westhead et al. (2001) do not identify any impact of company age when comparing exporting and non-exporting companies.

The influence of company management on internationalization behavior has also been investigated. Many studies have proven that a company whose management possesses international experience internationalizes more rapidly and successfully (Oviatt and McDougall, 1995; McDougall and Oviatt, 1996), and even displays a higher degree of internationalization. And it is not just professional experience abroad that can have a positive influence. Training and education obtained internationally are shown to be factors as well (Burgel and Murray, 1998; Bloodgood et al., 1996). The relationship between company resources and internationalization has also been investigated. Unique, immaterial resources are a requirement for rapid, successful internationalization (Oviatt and McDougall, 1995). Burgel and Murray (1998) note that companies that do not internationalize more frequently describe their products as being less innovative than those companies that do internationalize. In their investigation, both identify a relationship between spending on research and development and the internationalization of companies. Internationalizing startups display a higher reconstruction and development/turnover ratio than that found in companies that do not internationalize.

## Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to present the state-of-the-art of current IE research. To achieve this, all 40 of the basis publications identified from a database search having the words "International Entrepreneurship" in their title were

investigated using a bibliometric citation analysis. By analyzing not less than 2,659 citations in total as well as by applying a novel and innovative method of analysis with the citation analysis, this article goes beyond existing narrative literature analyses on the research field on IE and delivers more accurate results especially in terms of visualization. The results of the citation analysis identified 16 sources that were cited by the 40 (teams of) authors the most often, and which can therefore be considered as the foundational works of IE research. These 16 foundational works were thematically arranged into four different clusters: IE theory (Cluster 1), international business (Cluster 2), BG/INV (Cluster 3), and SME internationalization (Cluster 4). These clusters represent the theories and research trends that to date have influenced IE as a research field the most. This article was accordingly able to show that IE as a research field is influenced largely by research on IB, ENT, and BG/INV, as well as by research on the internationalization of SMEs. When looking at the influence of research trends on IE over the course of time, it becomes clear that at the start, all four of the clusters impacted IE research. As research developed, however, things were "sorted out", and a focus on IB and IET resulted. SME-INT and BG/INV can thus be seen as early phenomena within IE research. Here, IB research saw the emergence of the stage model of internationalization, which in turn saw BG/INV theory later develop out of ENT research as a critical reaction to it. A large scale survey of both IB and ENT researchers regarding the possible differences seen in the internationalization elements of SMEs and/or young enterprises could be helpful in achieving a common understanding accepted by and incorporating both disciplines, and which would place future research on a common foundation.

All future research requires a unified theoretical framework. This paper was able to show that IE is a relatively new field of research that still needs to develop its own theoretical parameters. IE research has so far been strongly influenced by ENT or IB researchers who have mostly built upon the theories of their "native" disciplines. IE as an independent, free-standing research field needs to define itself. A universal understanding of the field and an accepted construct that is sufficiently nested in empiricism continues to be lacking. We encourage interdisciplinary research teams with members from the fields of ENT, IB, and SME to assemble to work together in further developing, empirically testing, and proving an effective theoretical framework for this field.

In terms of business practice, internationalization is of course always a highly context-specific phenomenon. Whereas for smaller European countries, the home market is often not sufficient enough, so that internationalization is a quasi-obvious decision, larger home markets such as Germany, Great Britain or even more so the US, it is very often not necessary because of not yet exhausted local customer bases. In Africa, for example,

example, business is very often small-scale and based on local trade, so that internationalization is only seldomly a topic (so far, empirical studies come mostly from South Africa and Nigeria). Therefore size, age and cultural context of a company play important roles in the decision whether to internationalize or not. This article has shown different pathways to internationalization, as can be derived from the topic clusters and its existent publications.

To the limitations of this article belongs the disadvantage of the bibliometric citation analysis as a method of identifying "key publications" that is never clear whether the citations are applied in a positive or negative context (Matzler et al., 2001; Roth and Gmür, 2004). But even when a citation is only applied to refute its usefulness or applicability, however, such instances normally have no real impact on the overall evaluation results of such large datasets. Besides that, citation analysis can indeed only envision existing, that is, backward-oriented research, but can not show where exactly a research field is evolving to, topic-wise. The presented work informs about where IE research comes from and where it is now and can only give indications where it goes. However, knowing the path IE research went is the best basis for forming expectations for future development. Furthermore, the "clustering" of the key publications resulting from the citation analysis is of course highly dependent on subjective evaluation of the researcher and might therefore be biased.

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