
The Interplay Between Internal Experience and External Support During Startups' Early Internationalization

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Sincerely,

Filip Nordell & Bridgette Sliva
Gothenburg, Sweden. 2019-06-07

Abstract

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Title: The Interplay Between Internal Experience and External Support During Startups' Early Internationalization.

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Background and Problem: Although startups often want to expand abroad, they may underestimate the costs and efforts needed to internationalize early with just their internal experience. Hence, startups tend to apply for support processes from external facilitators. Thus, there is a need to understand the roles of previous internal experience and usage of external support during startups' early internationalization more thoroughly.

Purpose:

This study seeks to provide additional knowledge on how startups utilize external business facilitators in conjunction with their early internationalization to foreign markets. Furthermore, valuable internationalization support processes offered to startups by the external business facilitators will be identified to examine how internal experience within the startup affects their need and use of the external support processes.

Methodology: Multiple case study of six informants from different startups influenced by an abductive research approach used to analyze the theories and empirical evidence allowing for development and interpretation of new concepts.

Results and Conclusion:

There appears to be an interplay between previous internal experience and usage of external support during startups' early internationalization. Extensive internal experience appears to decrease the usage of external support and vice versa. Furthermore, startups utilize external support from multiple facilitators simultaneously, however, some external processes appear to be of greater importance. Whereas, less experienced startups are pushed by external facilitators to internationalize, the more business experienced entrepreneurs often created their own strategies.

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1. Introduction



The global business world of today is becoming more connected as foreign markets become more accessible for domestic enterprises due in part to technological improvements within transportation and communication digitalization (Dicken, 2015). Hence, at first sight, expanding internationally appears more tempting and achievable for these newly founded firms known as startups who often lack previous overseas business experience (Neubert, 2018). In order to assist startups with the process of internationalization, facilitators such as incubators, accelerators and various governmental agencies have emerged, offering their support and expertise (Engelman, Zen & Fracasso, 2015). With the expansion of these startups, new insights into the effects of previous business experience on both the external facilitator processes utilized as well as the overall effect on the internationalization process can be developed (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri and Venkataraman, 2010; Pauwels, Clarysse, Wright & Van Hove, 2016).

The perceived roles of the internal and external actors within the internationalization process has progressed over time (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Johanson and Vahlne 1990). Initially the role of the internal actors, and specifically their capabilities, was seen as one of the most influential aspects of internationalization (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). These capabilities were built up through experiential learning which would in turn help companies to overcome problems such as export readiness and the perceived cultural and institutional differences associated with internationalization (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Johanson and Vahlne 1990). Eventually, the role of external factors such as industry were also examined as they impacted the configuration and coordination of the expanding firms, thus helping them to create their competitive advantages (Porter, 1986). More recently, the role of the external facilitator has been examined, illustrating the ability of the capabilities of those outside the individual firm to influence a firm's internationalization process (Armanios, Eesley, Li & Eisenhardt, 2017).

There is a possibility that the role of facilitators within the internationalization process can vary depending on the specific facilitator and its individual goals. Facilitators are organizations that often work as business catalysts by assisting startups with the early internationalization process (Zhang, Wu & Zhao, 2016). Furthermore, the sophistication of these different facilitators can also vary. However, in general facilitators are providing startups with access to sophisticated business networks, advice and recommendations for adequate target regions, and monetary aid in order to ease the early internationalization to foreign markets (Mas-Verdú, Ribeiro-Soriano & Roig-Tierno, 2015; Albort-Morant & Oghazi, 2016; Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse & Groen,

2012). According to Zhang et al (2016) facilitators are further useful contributors to the prosperity of startups since they spur domestic entrepreneurs to be innovative and encourage them to establish businesses abroad. Shankar and Shepherd (2018) claim that facilitators can synchronize and fit startups' internal capabilities into suitable markets by providing networks with other analogous ventures which spur collaborations between new startups and more experienced firms. Furthermore, Shankar and Shepherd (2018) assert that more firms have realized and acknowledge the positive effect of either participating in or founding facilitator processes that can nourish new innovations and economic growth for themselves as well as for the startups.

1.1. Problem Discussion

.....
When seeking to internationalize, startups may benefit from more than their own internal capabilities (Engelman et al, 2015). In order to grow as an organization and capture more market shares, startups strive to expand internationally (Neubert, 2018). However, the process of becoming an international firm using only internal capabilities is expensive and highly time consuming (Ibid). In addition, some startups seem to overestimate their own capacity in terms of required knowledge as well as financial strength for international expansions (George, Wiklund & Sahra, 2005). Startups may possess the eagerness and will to go global, but simultaneously face difficulties evaluating suitable and reasonable foreign markets to target for their international growth (Ibid). According to Neubert (2018), startups are keen on penetrating new foreign markets relatively soon after their foundation. However, Engelman et al (2015) emphasize that startups need support when trying to enter new foreign markets. As startups often lack structure and experience, they consequently may have limited knowledge, business contacts and financial capacity in comparison to other more well-developed firms (Zhang et al, 2016; George et al, 2005). Therefore, the ability of the startups to absorb and utilize new external information and knowledge in ways that are useful may not be sufficient to internationalize on their own (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Consequently, external business facilitators are of great importance to these young and inexperienced startups as they can support their early internationalization to foreign markets (Zhang et al, 2016; George et al, 2005).

The various ways in which external facilitators can help startups continues to be examined. Bruneel et al (2012) state that the research on external business facilitators has been too uniform

and thereby fails to establish accurate and multifaceted conclusions on the implications of external business facilitators' cooperation with startups. The modern technologized society requires, according to Bruneel et al (2012), researchers to examine the interaction between startups and external facilitators. In specific, examine how the external facilitators can support ventures to ensure expansion and innovation (Bruneel et al, 2012). Hence, there are incentives for additional research being done on the extent to which startups are interacting with external business facilitator and how they utilize their support when internationalizing.

According to Albort-Morant and Oghazi (2016) external business facilitators strengthen startups' ability to develop into vital and sustainable corporations by, for instance, enhancing their sales on international markets. Startups that are not receiving help from external business facilitators, however, will have to overcome all challenges in conjunction with their pursuit to become international all by themselves spending precious time and money (Albort-Morant and Oghazi, 2016). Entrepreneurial, digital and highly technologized startups are believed to be expediting global business, yet Kraus, Palmer, Kailer et al (2018) assert that recent business research and models tend to not be fully applicable to modern startups and how they conduct business operations. Therefore, integration of findings from different theories and models may help illustrate the influence of different factors such as previous experience on the capacity of the entrepreneur (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataraman 2010). In turn, these findings on previous experience could be analyzed in conjunction with the early internationalization of the startup (Zaheer, 2018 as cited in Kraus et al, 2018). The problem therefore remains as to determine how this previous business experience may influence the use of external facilitators during the early internationalization of startups (Kraus et al, 2018).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

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The purpose of this study is to provide additional knowledge on how startups utilize external business facilitators in conjunction with their early internationalization to foreign markets. Furthermore, valuable internationalization support processes offered to startups by the external business facilitators will be identified in order to examine how internal experience within the startup affects their need and use of the external support processes.

1.3. Research Question

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How does the previous experience within the startups affect the utilization of the support processes offered by external facilitators during the startups' early internationalization?

1.4. Delimitation

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This thesis is solely focusing on startups originating from Sweden with fewer than 80 employees. In addition, the empirical evidence is exclusively based on firms that are either receiving or have received support from external facilitators during their early internationalization process. Furthermore, the startups chosen are those operating within the healthcare industry with less than 10 years of active sales or active product/service development.

2. Theoretical Framework



2.1. Presentation of the Theoretical Structure

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In order facilitate the understanding of the theoretical framework commonly used terms will be defined in section 2.2..Thereafter, the focus shifts to describe different internationalization views in section 2.3. Then in section 2.4., the internal experience of a startup will be discussed. Further, in section 2.5., the thesis will highlight different external support processes provided by facilitators to startups in conjunction with startups' early internationalization endeavors. Finally, in 2.6. the conclusive model, which combines the inputs from the different theoretical sections, will be presented.

2.2. Definitions

2.2.1. Startups

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Key attributes of startups seem to be newness and ability to grow. Often startups are companies that are working to resolve problems using non-obvious solutions in a process where success is not guaranteed (Robehmed, 2013). Often companies larger than 80 employees, with more than one office and revenues greater than \$20 million have surpassed being a startup (Robehmed, 2013). Kollman, Stöckmann, Hensellek and Kensbock (2016) describe startups as those companies that are younger than 10 years old which also have either highly innovative products and business models or are striving for significant sales and/or employee growth. For the purpose of this thesis, a startup is defined as a firm that has been actively conducting sales or sophisticated product/service development as well as employee growth during that 10-year lifespan. Thus, startups are companies still in their infant stages with the expected ability to grow (Robehmed, 2013).

2.2.2. Incubators, Accelerators and External Facilitators

.....
External actors can serve as facilitators to the early internationalization of startups in many different ways. Two common examples of facilitators are incubators and accelerators (Hathaway, 2016).

Incubator

A business incubator is an enterprise that assists start-up companies with various aspects of business that can be challenging for new and small companies including management training,

office space rentals and networking (Perdomo, Alvarez & Urbano, 2014). In many instances the success of a business incubator relies on its important role in sponsoring innovation, increasing technology development and spurring jobs creation which in turn leads to development for local, regional and national economies (Ibid).

Accelerator

Accelerators, in contrast to incubators, help to develop the growth of early stage companies through education, mentorship and financing over a rapid, fixed period of time (Hathaway, 2016). Whereas incubators can help startups to grow over a duration of anywhere from 1-5 years, accelerators commonly focus on rapid growth over a 3-6 month period (Ibid).

External Facilitator

Since both incubators and accelerators were utilized by the startups in this thesis, the term facilitator will be used to refer to all these types of external business actors who offered support to startups. When looking at the resources, the physical, human, financial and technological resources of the facilitators as well as the brand, reputation, network and information capabilities of the firm are its main assets (Perdomo, Alvarez & Urbano, 2014). These capabilities are often more difficult to build as they require time, skill and experience and are therefore some of the more valuable assets according to the entrepreneurs (Ibid). Items such as contacts, financing, network and synergies are the items most valuable to facilitators in this arena (Ibid).

2.3. Internationalization Views

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2.3.1. Internationalization Stages
.....

Within the subject of internationalization there are many well established theories, however, the frameworks of Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) as well as Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 1990) seem to be essential for young firm theory (Sapienza, Autio, George & Zahra, 2006). In Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) the authors discuss four different internationalization modes where each additional step requires further involvement from the internationalizing firm. The four stages of early internationalization are listed as: Stage 1: No regular export activities; Stage 2: Export activities via independent representatives or agents; Stage 3: Establishment of an overseas subsidiary; Stage 4: Overseas production and

manufacturing units. All of these stages combined are represented by Figure 1 (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975; Andersen, 1993).



Figure 1. *Early Internationalization*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019).

Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 1990) build on this idea by seeking to further explain the process by which early internationalization occurs for young firms based on behavioral theory in their original Uppsala Model. In this model, the firms go through a gradual process where they internationalize slowly but incrementally by entering new markets which have limited perceived cultural and institutional differences from their home countries, known as psychic distance, and small geographic distance (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Johanson and Vahlne, 1990). These firms appear to internationalize slowly due to lack of knowledge and experience (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Johanson and Vahlne, 1990). The theory is based on the idea of uncertainty avoidance in different cultures in the target markets as the firms develop their knowledge and experience internally through these sequential new market entries. This theory, however, does not account for the role of prior experience, knowledge or personal resources that may assist the firm in their endeavor to internationalize. Thus, the role of social networks and external facilitators who may assist with the internationalization process go largely unnoticed (Sapienza et al, 2006). Similarly, Andersen (1993) refers to the internationalization model presented by Cavusgil (1980) and shows a progressive model of export with continual increasing commitment similar to the original Uppsala Model (Andersen, 1993). Thus, both models seek to illustrate the behavioral paths that firms take to internationalization.

In a similar vein Porter's *Changing Patterns of International Competition* (1986) also examines the internationalization process but rather than map the stages, Porter reflects on the coordination, configuration and ultimately, the competitive advantages. Porter argues that a firm's industry must be screened and taken into consideration during internationalization as it directly affects the potential competitive advantages of the firm as well as the pattern of internationalization itself (Porter, 1986). In addition, a firm must understand how to organize

operations abroad through its configuration and how to transfer its products and knowledge globally through coordination (Ibid).

2.4. Internal Experience

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The following sections, 2.4.1., 2.4.2. an 2.4.3., will discuss various aspects constituting the internal experience of startups during their early internationalization with respect to different theories, depicted in Figure 2.

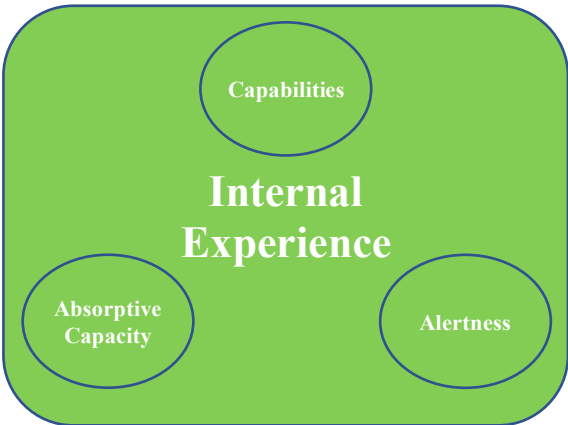


Figure 2. *Internal Experience*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019).

2.4.1. Capabilities

.....
The role of the internal resources of a company must still be taken into consideration when internationalizing however, as described by Barney (1991) in his resource-based view (RBV). According to Barney, Wright and Ketchen (2001), based on the ideas of Barney (1991), a firm’s ability to grow is dependent on its own internal capabilities and the way it controls its resources. Meaning a firm which manages to form a strategy which exploits all the internal assets and competences will be likely to expand and become a sustainable organization. The resources of a firm may depend in kind and scope, but in general the internal capabilities can be described as a firm’s knowledge, financial strength, networks, procedures, and managerial proficiencies (Barney et al, 2001). Depending on the capabilities existing within the firm, the internationalization process can be advanced or hindered (Barney, 1991). For example, increased knowledge and managerial proficiency can be seen as directly positively impacting the firm’s export readiness and thus advancing the internationalization process (Ibid).

2.4.2. Absorptive Capacity

.....
Cohen and Levinthal (1990) argue that whether a firm and its entrepreneurs can identify and utilize various external support from business facilitators depends on their absorptive capacity, meaning how well a firm is able to identify, evaluate and incorporate different information. The extent to which startups and entrepreneurs use the provided external support is influenced by their own experience and knowledge background (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). Firms with less experience and knowledge tend to enroll for external support and knowledge more often (Ibid). The absorptive capacity can further be developed by constructing sophisticated internal and external business networks and by investing in research and supplementary training of its employees, which is believed to yield the alertness to outside opportunities. Firms and employees with greater developed absorptive capacity are claimed to better foreseen and analyze its future upcoming need of different support processes from external facilitators (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Furthermore, Zahra and George (2002) also stress the value of startups and entrepreneurs to not only identifying experience and knowledge gaps but also to actively incorporate the complementing external expertise and experience from different actors outside the firms themselves into the own organizations.

In a similar sense Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri an Venkataraman (2010) seek to understand entrepreneurial opportunity and the gap that exists between technology creation and the markets that it creates. They explain that there are two factors that can affect how new information is used and distributed (Sarasvathy et al, 2010). The first way that affects the dispersal of knowledge is through having advantageous networks (Ibid). As Cohen and Levinthal discuss, prior knowledge creates absorptive capacity allowing persons to be able to use new information in valuable ways (Ibid). The second way is through entrepreneurs basing their decisions on previous experiences that are difficult to explain but instead are observed as intuition or hunches (Ibid). Ultimately, Sarasvathy et al (2010) posit that there is a need to integrate various approaches from theory in order to understand entrepreneurial opportunity more thoroughly.

2.4.3. Entrepreneurial Alertness

.....
According to Tang, Kacmar & Busenitz (2010) internationalization is about seeking opportunities. Meaning that an entrepreneur ought to be aware of the things going on within the industry. In order to be aware and responsive to different opportunities a startup should try to develop its own alertness (Ibid). Tang et al (2010) state that a startup with greater alertness will

more likely succeed capturing profitable opportunities. The alertness, and by extension the opportunity seeking and capturing, of startups' employees can according to Tang et al (2010) be stimulated and improved by conducting three steps: searching for information about the external business context, connecting previously-disparate information, and making evaluations on the existence of profitable business opportunities. The first step that involves scanning and searching for information, focus on vetting the external context, for instance the market or industry in which the startup is operating (Tang et al, 2010). The first step allows the entrepreneurs to utilize their absorptive capacity to understand different business opportunities. The second step, alertness association and connection, is focusing on an individual's ability to see patterns and correlations between different business opportunities. Entrepreneurs with experience from similar situations might possess a greater understanding of new business opportunities, howbeit, individuals with less experience can improve their ability to make logical reasonings by exposing themselves to complicated business operations. The last the step, involves evaluation of the opportunities and predictions of their outcomes. Meaning that opportunities which are considered as most beneficial are pursued (Ibid).

Nonetheless, the process from opportunity recognition to internationalization can be affected by both internal and external factors (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). Thus, in order to further understand the process of startups' internationalization the following theory, 2.5., will seek to examine which support processes offered by external business facilitators contribute to the early international expansion of startups.

2.5. External Facilitator Internationalization Support Processes

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Although foundational theory such as Barney (1991) focuses mostly on the internal capabilities of a company and the role of the industry, advancing theory shifted focus to the role of the external actors in capability building (Barney, 1991; McEvily & Zaheer, 1999). For example, McEvily and Zaheer (1999) argued that there was less research available on the sources of firm capabilities and thus sought to prove the important role of external sources of capabilities that firms utilize in various ways. In their research they strove to understand which firms used these available external processes and to what extent these regional institutions and facilitators contributed to firms' competitive capability development (McEvily & Zaheer, 1999). This literature comments on the role of external actors increasing the efficiency and time to market

for startups (Ibid). Increases in technology have reduced the psychic distance between countries and this increase in new technology has allowed for the creation of startups keen on making rapid internationalization, and thus showing the role of external actors in facilitating the internationalization of startups as increasingly important (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009; Armanios et al, 2017). For example, in the revisited Uppsala Model, Johanson and Vahlne (2009) explain the changes that have occurred in the business environments since 1977 in terms of business practices and theoretical advances (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). In the revised theory, the network is no longer linear and simple but rather a complex web of relationships with various suppliers and customers (Ibid). Rather than psychic distance, the role of uncertainty and the fear of outsidership are seen as the main barriers to internationalization and expansion (Ibid). Thus, through trust building and knowledge creation companies are able to expand their capabilities through a series of various relationships (Ibid).

Building on this, research has shown that facilitators such as institutional intermediaries can help entrepreneurs and startups by providing them with certifications and capability building training (Armanios et al, 2017). The capability building includes education to help the entrepreneurs make connections and thus help them increase their social and human capital (Ibid). For example, one study of facilitators showed that intermediaries helped entrepreneurs to gain business capabilities that they did not have internally (Ibid).

In a similar vein, Pauwels et al (2016) argues that startups preferably ought to enroll for support from external business facilitators in conjunction with their early internationalization. These provided support processes tend to include mentoring services, demonstration days, financial support, legal support, assistance choosing a target market and assistance in creating networks (Figure 3) (Leonidou, Samiee & Geldres-Weiss, 2016; Pauwels et al, 2016; Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Overall, the main purpose is for startups to obtain guidance and support during their early internationalization with respect to their various needs (Pauwels et al, 2016).



Figure 3. *External Support*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019) with influence from Pauwels et al (2016), Leonidou et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008).

2.5.1. Mentoring Services

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Since startups tend to have less experience when it comes to internationalization (Engelman et al, 2015), Pauwels et al (2016) argue that mentoring services should be provided to an enrolled startup before their internationalization attempt to a foreign market. Having an external mentor is, according to Kohler (2016), one the most crucial support process for a startup in conjunction with their early internationalization. Mentorship services comes in main different forms, but in general this type of process should include professionals associated to the external business facilitator with prior knowledge about the common obstacles with early internationalizations (Pauwels et al, 2016). According to Cohen and Hochberg (2014) and Kohler (2016) people from several different professions, such as investors, other entrepreneurs and professors, can work as mentors. The mentors should work as trusted and supportive guides (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014). The startups, with their entrepreneurial mindset, often tend to overrate their own capacity (George et al, 2005). Therefore, in terms of market knowledge, a mentor can ease the internationalization process by evaluating startups' expansion strategies (Pauwels et al, 2016). Further, a regular contact between the startup and mentor is recommended as repetitive communication enhances the likeliness of a mentor to constantly encourage the startups to pursue their internationalization aims (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014; Kohler, 2016).

2.5.2. Demonstration Days

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Another valuable support process for startups' early internationalization is to participate at demonstration days (Pauwels et al, 2016). These are days arranged by the external business facilitators where attractive players within the same or similar business fields of the startups are

gathered. For instance, these conventions attract investors and venture capitalists who are willing to invest in startups (Kohler, 2016). According to Cohen (2013) and Pauwels et al (2016) such gatherings are great possibilities for startups to showcase their products/services for future clients. Furthermore, demonstration days enable the startups to explain their product/service in detail for a larger number of people at the same time and create a great beneficial anticipation, reputation and recognition of their product/service (Cohen, 2013). Consequently, demonstration days are great opportunities for startups to get familiar with key industry actors and expand their own business networks (Pauwels et al, 2016). In addition, these meetings are cost and time efficient ways for startups with less financial strength to exhibit and promote their product/service for investors without having to travel to multiple offices (Cohen, 2013).

2.5.3. Financial Support

.....
One critical aspect of being a startup is the limited access to money, which is often the consequence of being a young organization (Pauwels et al, 2016). Financial support is not only desirable when conducting research and developing a product/service but is also a critical prerequisite for startups when internationalizing (Clarysse & Bruneel, 2007). Withal, Soetanto and Jack (2013) assert that startup's internal assets often fall short when the startups try to internationalize. George et al (2005) state that startups do not always realize how much money is required for an international expansion. In addition, the more technologized the startups is, the greater the need for money (Clarysse & Bruneel, 2007). Startups may have some early stakeholders who have made it possible to establish the corporation, yet they may still struggle economically when trying to internationalize their businesses (Kraus et al, 2018). Hence, Mas-Verdú et al (2015) claim that startups would benefit largely from applying for money from external business facilitators. Engelman et al (2015) asses that startups suffering from monetary deficits may experience a tardy internationalization. In the worst-case scenario, startups may not be able to internationalize at all due to their own financial difficulties (Engelman et al, 2015). A well-structured external business facilitator can help to overcome this problem by providing startups with access to either own financial sources or by counseling associates, such as banks, venture capitalists, angel investors, and governmental financial institutions and agencies with regards to each startup's unique demand for money (Aernoudt, 2004; Mas-Verdú et al, 2015; Engelman et al, 2015). The investment terms and structures vary for each startup and investor, but the investors are in general expecting something in exchange for their money,

for instance ownership shares and/or future returns (Fischer & de Rassenfosse, 2011; Sullivan & Harroch, 2018).

Nevertheless, startups ought to understand that some investors might be hesitant to invest in a young organization, claiming it as a hazardous and unpredictable investment especially if the structure of the startup is considered as weak or if the industry in which the startup is operating in is a relatively young one (George et al, 2005). According to Clarysse and Bruneel (2007) startups are often considered as perilous to invest in and lend money to, thereof startups experience great difficulties receiving banks loans, which further calls for seeking financial support from other external business facilitators. However, George et al (2005) claim that if the startups succeed with their internationalization larger annual profits are expected. Wherefore, startups ought to put an emphasis on possible future profitable return on investments when negotiating with investors (George et al (2005).

2.5.4. Legal Support

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In conjunction with an internationalization attempt there are many judicial aspects to bear in mind in terms of, for instance, applying for patents, certifications and licenses, tax payments, foreign laws, contract designs etc. (Symeonidou, Bruneel & Autio, 2017; Leonidou, Samiee & Geldres-Weiss, 2016). According to Leonidou et al (2016) many startups are deterred from internationalizing to a foreign market due complicated laws and restrictions. This can result in startups experiencing tardy internationalization processes which can be costly in terms of time but also in terms of delayed future profits. Some startups thereby never even try to pursuit their plans on becoming an international corporation (Leonidou et al, 2016). Consequently, Leonidou et al (2016) suggest that startups can benefit from obtaining jurisdictional support from lawyers associated to external business facilitators with vast experience and knowledge about international laws and business operations. External lawyers, and if needed additional affiliated accountants, which are according to Weber (2017) crucial assistants to startups, can support startups by analyzing different international tax systems and jurisdictions, and consequently come up with suggestions of what measures should be taken in order to overcome different bureaucratic obstacles in conjunction with the internationalization processes (Leonidou et al, 2016; Cohen & Hochberg, 2014).

2.5.5. Choosing a Target Market

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Choosing a target market can be difficult for startups when they lack the required knowledge, managerial capabilities and network to internationalize (Porter, 1986). This is often a problem because startups do not understand enough about the foreign markets that they wish to internationalize to or they lack the networks to gain insidership (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 1990; Bergek & Norrman, 2008). When acting by themselves firms, such as startups, may screen markets to find psychically close culture (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 1990). When working with a business facilitator however, these startups may find unexpected markets (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). The startups require managerial training and knowledge support about the institutional demands of international markets. Therefore, the external business facilitators' mediations help the startups to navigate through and understand these institutions and understand the diverse demands they entail in a country such as laws, regulations traditions, values and norms when choosing target markets (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Facilitators can also help by providing their own strategic focus in terms of geographic location, industry and sector (Pauwels et al, 2016). This can allow startups to understand their own placement in an industry or sector and who to target as the most willing or favorable clients (Ibid).

2.5.6. Creating Networks

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Startups often lack established entrepreneurial networks due to their newness (Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Lacking networks can cause startups to lose valuable opportunities for meeting others who can share in their knowledge and expertise (Ibid). This knowledge and expertise are vital to the survival of these startups and can reduce their uncertainty when internationalizing (Ibid). Thus, a solution to these networking problems is for startups to utilize external business facilitators' multiple options of networks (Pauwels et al, 2016). For instance, some external facilitators offer startup access to other startups, which have earlier obtained support from the very same facilitator, through an alumni network (Pauwels et al, 2016; Bergek & Norrman, 2008). Other network support may come in the form of networking events offered by facilitators so that startups can meet people such as investors, bankers and consultants from various business and financial institutions (Soetanto & Jack, 2013). In addition, startups can enlarge their network by being introduced to useful academic contacts from different universities and specialized scientists associated with the external facilitators (Ibid). Through making these connections, the facilitators act as a hub in the networks allowing startups the flexibility to utilize these connections when they are necessary (Ibid).

2.6. Conclusive Model

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Ultimately, the conclusive model shown in Figure 4 combines all the previous theories to illustrate the influence of internal experience on the usage of external business facilitators' support processes in conjunction with startups' early internationalizations.

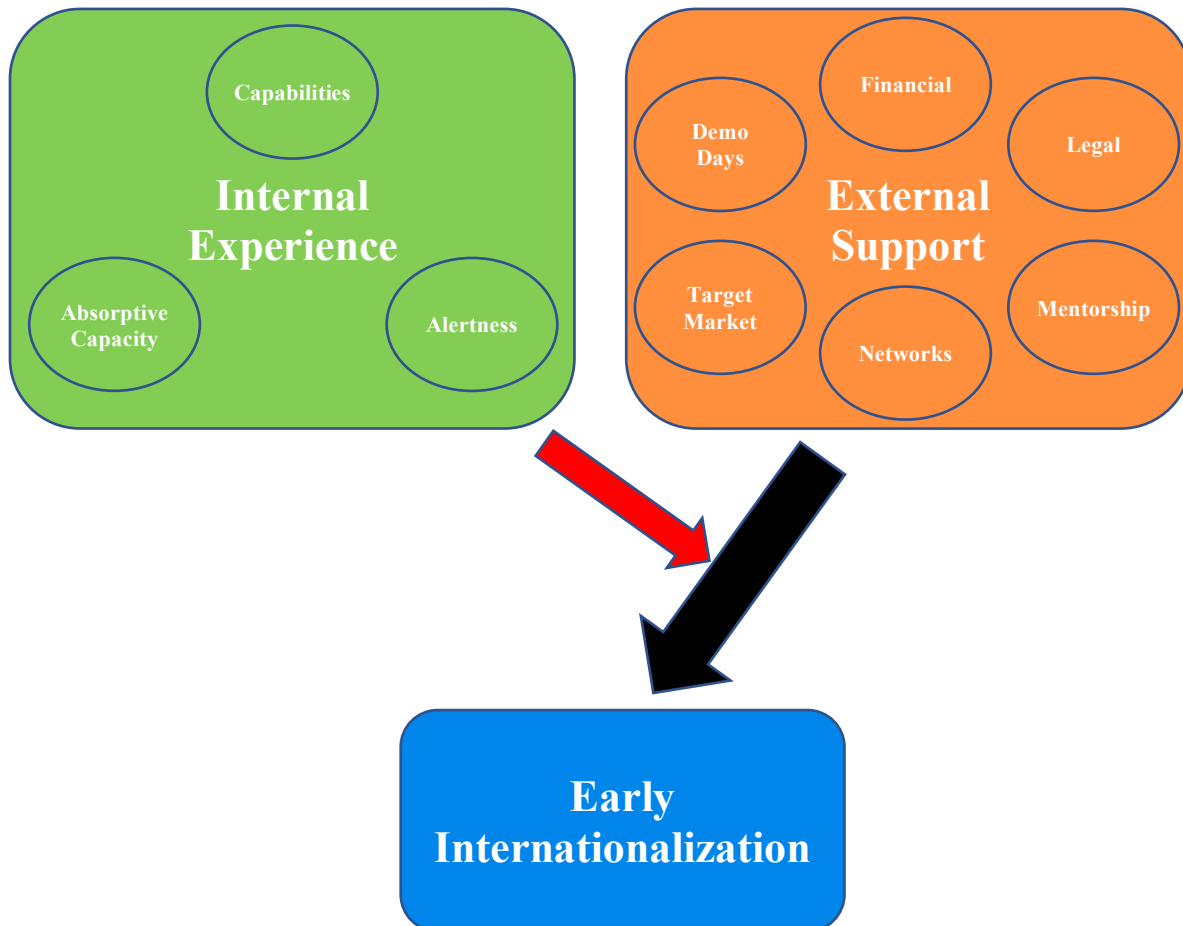


Figure 4. *A Model of Forces Influencing Startups' Early Internationalization*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019) with influence from Pauwels et al (2016), Leonidou et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008).

3. Methodology



3.1. Research Method

3.1.1. Justification of the Chosen Qualitative Research Methodology

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A researcher can choose to use a quantitative or qualitative method (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, in order to answer the research question of this thesis the qualitative approach will be utilized. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stress that a qualitative research method is suitable when a researcher must scrutinize a subject or phenomenon in detail. In addition, the qualitative research method is a versatile tool when both gathering and examining data and evidence (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Larsen (2009) states that one way of conducting a qualitative research approach is to perform physical interviews with the informants of a thesis. By conducting face-to-face interviews, the researcher can obtain more information from the informant than just verbal answers. When sitting in front of the other person the researcher can observe reactions such as facial expressions and body language. This is believed to reduce misconceptions and consequently increase the possibility of making more accurate and comprehensive observations on the certain topic (Larsen, 2009). In addition, face-to-face encounters tend to prevent earlier agreed meetings and interviews from being abated (Ibid).

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) argue that the qualitative research method has been widely used within the academic field of business because of its universal usage area on different topics and phenomena. One difficulty when doing research is that it might be difficult for a researcher to fully understand informants. However, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) argue that the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to observe and understand the issue from the informants' perspective. Despite this, some critics argue that the qualitative approach tends to be biased, as the research tends to deliberately or unintentionally bear the stamp of the author (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, Bryman and Bell (2011) assess that the qualitative method might lead to sweeping statements on separate observations that might be inapposite or impertinent for analogous research or the phenomenon in general.

The main argument regarding the choice of research method should first and foremost build upon the purpose of the study and what needs to be found with disregard to other matters (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Furthermore, the qualitative method is suitable to apply when researchers want to achieve a subtle and profound comprehension of the gathered data (Ibid). Since, the qualitative approach is considered as suitable for sophisticated dissection of complex and comprehensive issues and information from multiple sources, there are legitimate reasons

for choosing that method for this thesis in order to answer the research purpose. Moreover, researchers such as Frimodig and Torkkeli (2013) have utilized the qualitative research method when doing research on startups collaboration with external business facilitators easing market expansions. In addition, Pauwels et al (2016) and Frimodig and Torkkeli (2013) argue that research on facilitators' effects on startups' internationalization have been less prioritized in the academy. Isabelle (2013) stress that research on startups' perspective on this issue has been less conducted by prior researchers. Furthermore, Neubert (2018) stress that more qualitative research is needed to examine the outcomes of modern startups' expansions to foreign markets. Hence, more research on startups' early internationalization influenced by external business facilitators is demanded.

3.2. Research Approach

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3.2.1. Abductive

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The research of this thesis is inspired by the abductive tradition meaning that it will make analytical inferences and construct theories (Bryman & Bell, 2015.) According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) there is rarely a case where only one type of scientific research is used but rather research is often a combination of various forms of reasoning. For instance, making an analysis and drawing conclusions can result to some extent in old theories being edited or replaced with new notions and inputs, which can be regarded as a mix of deductive and inductive components (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Therefore the abductive approach is offered as a way to integrate both the inductive and deductive aspects of the study into one type of scientific research (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). While the inductive approach lets the empirical evidence guide the research with a goal of theory creation, the deductive approach will conversely begin with theory choice and allows for the theory to guide the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, the abductive approach combines these two and can be used to combine theory led and empirical evidence led research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By letting theory act as a guide rather than a necessity, the abductive approach allows the author to alter theories if they do not accurately represent the empirical evidence collected (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, one advantage of the abductive theory for this research is that it will allow for the use of theory as a guide during multiple case studies that also includes observations and findings. Since, this thesis aims at creating an empirical evidence template influenced by theories which can then be elaborated upon further in the conclusion and analysis, an abductive approach seems suitable and justified.

3.3. Theoretical Framework Development

3.3.1. Literary Sources

There are several alternatives on how to gather useful information for constructing a theoretical framework. According to Collis and Hussey (2014) two general groups of data, primary or secondary data, can be identified. Furthermore, there are some disparities between the two types of data set, where the primary one by its own name is considered as the first version of gathered information. Primary data is gathered first hand by the researcher and has not been edited by other prior researchers (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). For instance, one way of collecting primary data is by arranging meetings and/or making phone calls in order to interview the informants. In addition, a researcher can also obtain primary data by issuing written questions to the informants either electronically or by the regular post service (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

The other type of data, secondary data, can be considered as data that has been gathered and promulgated by other prior scientists (Larsen, 2009). According to Larsen (2009) publications such as dissertations, theses, articles and dispatches can be considered as secondary data when being gathered and utilized. Furthermore, one ought to bear in mind the concepts of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are considered as original primary data, which are made public for the first time. For instance, reports with raw statistics, and academic publications with new theories and scientific findings are regarded as primary sources. Secondary sources on the other hand are based on references to primary sources (Gothenburg University Library, 2018a; Stockholm University Library, 2018). For example, academic reports and articles that are examining and analyzing published primary data and findings are considered as secondary sources according to the Stockholm University Library (2018). In order to establish a theoretical framework in this thesis, scientific business articles and books have been utilized, as well as other academic publications, in order to find useful and valuable secondary sources and data.

3.3.2. Gathering of Literature

This thesis has utilized three different types of search engines when looking for academic publications, namely Gothenburg University Library (2018b), Google Scholar and Google. Gothenburg University Library has incorporated an extensive database of articles, journals,

dissertations etc., which has been highly valuable and practical for the thesis by guaranteeing access to different desirable academic publications. In addition, Gothenburg University Library has a sophisticated and comprehensive supply of printed academic books. Hence, useful literature for information gathering has been borrowed. Furthermore, Google Scholar has worked as an efficient tool when finding academic journals or articles that have been cited and referred to frequently. Google Scholar’s international reach and association to researchers across the globe has enabled us to get access to a diverse supply of information. However, articles that been cited relatively more frequently were prioritized when gathering knowledge. An article with a higher citation figure may demonstrate a greater academic acknowledgement with regards to its findings or theories. Google’s regular search engine has been utilized as a complementary alternative when necessary, for instance to find academic articles as well as news reports on the topic of this thesis.

In order to find applicable articles, journals and other types of literature within the comprehensive supply of information, keywords such as, “startups”, “external actors”, “early internationalization”, “internationalization”, “facilitators”, “entrepreneurial alertness”, “accelerators” and “incubators”, have been used in conjunction with the literature gathering.

3.4. Empirical Evidence Collection Methodology

3.4.1. Empirical Sources

The empirical evidence consists mainly of primary data gathered from interviews with the informants. Collis and Hussey (2014) states that the gathered data, thereby, will be based on each informant’s views and analysis of their experiences. Consequently, first hand interviews provided the thesis with exclusive and direct access to the information that has not been distorted or misinterpreted by any intermediary researchers. In addition, the interviews entailed the chance of asking immediate follow-up questions in order to clarify certain statements, which facilitated a more sophisticated comprehension of the informants’ experiences with regards to the startups’ early internationalization processes influenced by external business facilitators. Furthermore, the primary data was supplemented with secondary data. The secondary data, collected from each startup’s homepage, was utilized to delineate the background of each startup and their core businesses, with purpose of easing a greater understanding of the primary data.

3.4.2. Methodology for Sampling

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According to Collis and Hussey (2014) the most accurate and precise conclusion would be made if empirical evidence from the entire population of startups, which received support from external facilitators in conjunction with their early internationalization were gathered. Needless to say, that would not be achievable due to time and monetary restrictions. Hence, Collis and Hussey (2014) argue that research ought to utilize a sample when gathering information and analyzing a phenomenon. By doing so, researcher can conduct their studies in a more expedient way. Thus, this thesis has chosen to conduct a sample method when collecting data for the empirical evidence. Furthermore, this thesis uses a multiple case study where the responding startups all have obtained or are obtaining help from external facilitators with regards to their early internationalization. Which according to Bryman and Bell (2011) enables a comparison being made from the experiences of the different participating startups, where resemblances and disparities can be identified.

In order to get in touch with suitable informants for this thesis different qualified startups were contacted through a convenience sampling. A convenience sampling is defined as process where researchers utilize their own network contacts consisting of colleagues, companions, friends and so on, in order to approach different informants (Collis & Hussey, 2014). According to Bryman and Bell (2011) one can object that using such method may result in tendentious selection not based on randomness. However, the convenience sampling was an effective and fruitful method, resulting in establishing interviews with representatives from different startups. Estimating a suitable amount of informants for study is tough and challenging. However, a bigger sample size will automatically lead to higher academic trustworthiness for a study and its conclusion on a certain topic (Bryman & Bell, 2011). But, Bryman and Bell (2011) put an emphasis on that larger samples requires more money and that the study should proceed during a longer timeframe. Taking all that into consideration, this thesis interviewed six informants from separate startups. Every informant was offered and guaranteed anonymity, in order to ensure them feeling confident participating in the study as well as enabling them being outspoken and frank when being interviewed. However, all informants of this thesis gave their permission to publish their identities.

Moreover, each interview was characterized as semi-structured as well as qualitative. Meaning that a template and standardization of interview questions had been constructed (Bryman & Bell, 2013; Larsen, 2009). According to Bryman and Bell (2011) as well as Larsen (2009) semi-

structured interviews are favorable and helpful when the researchers wants to achieve consistency for all their interviews but still want to able to ask additional customized follow-up questions to an individual informant when needed. In addition, semi-structured interviews ease and expedite the process of analyzing the gathered empirical evidence, since the interviews can be categorized with regards to the constructed interview template (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.4.3. Sampling Choice and Justification

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Since this thesis examines the influence of external facilitators in the early internationalization of startups, the first step in choosing sample informants was to look for those which utilized external facilitators processes. In order to do this a convenience purposeful sampling method was employed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). From this sample the selected startups interviewed were those that self-identified to be in their early internationalization stage. The method also utilized a convenience method as it relied on the personal connections of both the authors of this paper as well as the advisor (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Whether the startups were large or had much funding was of less importance to the report even though these factors may ultimately affect the relationship between the external facilitators and the startups. As this thesis was written under a restricted timeline, startups that had offices in or near Sweden were prioritized. Regarding data collection, face-to-face, skype, and phone interviews were conducted with standardized open-ended questions to allow for coherence of data and easier cross comparison among the startups.

3.4.4. Collection and Execution of Empirical Material

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Primary data collection was performed in the form of face-to-face, skype and phone interviews at various locations depending on the needs of the informants. Prior to the interview, informants were told the purpose of the study as well as the credentials of the thesis authors. The interviews were performed using a set of standardized open-ended questions. Interviews started by advising informants about the safety and anonymity of their data as is required during primary data collection for thesis writing. Informants were also told that they could skip specific questions and review thesis materials before final publication in order to possibly modify inaccurate information. In addition, informants remained unknown to each other during the interview process. The format of the interviews included approximately 60 standardized open-ended questions based on the theoretical framework as well as secondary data. As the questions were set up in an open-ended format, the goal was to avoid yes or no answers to questions but

rather to get more descriptive responses which could assist in creating a more accurate analysis. All interviews took place during the month of March in 2019. The responses from the interviews were recorded with informants' permission via a sound recording device. This type of recording is seen as more advantageous than typing notes, as it allows for a higher level of focus for the interviewer (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, these audio recording can be revisited, thus facilitating the transcription of the narrative (Ibid). This transcription proved useful when comparing the answers of different informants in order to compare the standardized open-ended questions and how they varied by startup. A limited background on all the interviewed companies was also provided in order to give context to the background of the individual case.

3.5. Empirical Material Analysis Methodology

3.5.1. Analysis Template and Application

Qualitative analysis can be difficult as there is no standard process that is universally applicable, however, for this thesis a template was utilized in order to provide coherency (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), a template creates a general outline that can be used to link data from various sources. One main way data can be linked is through the use of themes. This analysis therefore is broken into themes that relate to the theoretical and empirical sections (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As not all of the empirical sections have equal importance, some themes and modifications to the structure have been applied in order to highlight the most important aspects.

In order to provide an objective viewpoint, this thesis attempts to remove inserting personal values when analyzing the results of the data. When categorizing the data some modifications were made and therefore it could be argued that there are some subjective elements to the report. However, this thesis attempts to rely mainly on the primary and secondary data, without outside influences as research done in this way can be seen as more reliable, accurate and scientific (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

3.5.2. Trustworthiness of the Findings: Reliability and Validity

When writing a thesis credibility is key and thus researchers must be aware of the reliability and validity of data when conducting research. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) explain the

importance of having a well-developed methodology that details the research process as it leads to a higher level of validity by providing coherence. Although providing reliable and valid data is one of the main goals of this thesis, Collis and Hussey (2014) note that qualitative data can often contain personal reflections from informants which could potentially be altered if anonymity is not promised. Therefore, in order to increase the likelihood of reliable and valid data, the interviews were conducted under the premise of confidentiality through a pledge of the researchers. The thesis also hopes to gain further reliability through the use of semi-structured questions that allowed for comparability across informants' responses. In contrast to non-structured interviews which do not provide reliable information, semi-structured interviews start with the same series of questions and therefore allow for some cross-comparability (Bryman & Bell, 2013). In order to gain higher levels of validity, the questions for informants were created with references to theoretical frameworks which emphasized the role of external facilitators. The references to theoretical frameworks were important as Larsen (2009) explains the importance of finding relevant data. Thus, it was important that the information collected during the interviews was applicable to the chosen thesis and in turn, the chosen theoretical frameworks. In an effort to provide transparency, the interview questions can be found in the appendix 8.1.

3.6. Ethical Stance

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Bryman and Bell (2011) discuss the presence of ethical issues at various stages during business research and specifically while conducting research. The authors focus on four main ethical principles namely: harm to informants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and use of deception. Bryman and Bell (2011) stipulate that all these principles have unique values but may also overlap in some areas. These ethical principles were highly regarded when conducting the data collection for this thesis and were implemented in a variety of ways. In order to prevent harm, informants participated of their own free will and permissions to publish their names were granted and obtained in non-obstinate manners. All data collected was kept confidential until publication and only used for analysis purposes by the authors. Informants were able to view the results of the report before publishing in order to object to any potentially false information. In addition, this thesis aims to protect informants from any possible turbulence with present/former employers and employees and external actors associated with the project.

3.7. Critique of the Methodology

.....
This report can be critiqued in five main areas namely sources, location, timing, informant quantity and validity. Regarding sources, this report gave priority to frequently quoted sources in order to increase theoretical backing. Although frequently quoted sources give validity to a thesis, they may lack relevance to the topic at hand. Therefore, for this report secondary sources with lower frequency of citation may have been more relevant and led to a more balanced proportion of secondary sources. Regarding location, all of the informants interviewed for this paper were limited to being in or near Sweden. Therefore, one could argue that this report may not be applicable to other countries located far away from Sweden. Interviewing informants situated far from Sweden could have given this report a more thorough picture of startups on an international scale. As for the timing of the interviews, informants were chosen based on the criteria of being in their early internationalization stages. Therefore, informants may not have had much time to reflect on the actions that they had performed recently or to realize the full extent of the results of their internationalization. Conversely, this quick turnaround also ensured that informants remembered recent actions they took. Finally, although this thesis strives provide valid and relevant data, authors such as Bryman and Bell (2013) argue whether qualitative data can be valid and instead assert that validity is more closely related to quantitative data. It may be the case that early internationalization for startups in other areas of the world have different experiences with different external facilitators. Since this thesis focused mainly on Sweden and nations near to Sweden, it may have been more thorough to interview startups from other remote countries.

4. Empirical Evidence



Following startups and informants (Figure 5) constitute the empirical evidence.

Startup	Informant	Type of Business	HQ	Interview Format
Mevia	Jesper Hassel	Medical Adherence	Gothenburg	Face-to-Face
Learning to Sleep	Micael Gustafsson	Digital Sleep Assistance	Malmö	Skype Video Call
Tendo	Sofie Woge	Robotic Grip Assistance	Lund / Odense	Voice Call
Operationskollen	Jesper Hessius	Digital Support for Patients	Vasteras	Voice Call
AddMovement	Mike Redford	Segway Wheelchair	Froson	Voice Call
Medfield Diagnostics	Stefan Blomsterberg	Agile Brain Scanning	Gothenburg	Face-to-Face

Figure 5. *Presentation of the Startups.* (Nordell & Sliva, 2019).

4.1. Mevia



Figure 6 & 7. Logo and Medical Adherence Solution. ©Mevia



Figure 8. *Jesper Hassel* ©Mevia

4.1.1. Introduction of Mevia and Jesper Hassel

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Mevia is a company founded in Gothenburg Sweden in 2014 which seeks to assist persons with medication adherence thus helping persons to take their medications consistently and at the right time. The company is a small startup with four employees of various backgrounds. The CEO and co-founder Jesper Hassel developed the company during his time at Chalmers School of Entrepreneurship. Hassel has a formal background in industrial engineering management and worked for other companies both in Sweden and abroad in various industries before starting Mevia. The idea for Mevia came during his Master's course at Chalmers in Gothenburg where students are required to work on a project that can hopefully develop into a company. In a project working with the packaging company Stora Enso, Jesper Hassel and his co-founder were able to figure out a way to successfully use some of the patents that Stora Enso already owned along with some new electronic technology in order to create a product and a service that could track if and when persons take their medications. In one version, the packaging (Figure 7) once opened will send an electronic signal to the service, letting them know that the medicine has been taken. The information is then utilized in a system that allows for monitoring of patients' adherence and allows Mevia to contact patients or send reminders if medication is not taken at the correct time. Since its initial development, Mevia has also begun to focus on its medication alert service as one of its key products.

Capabilities of the Entrepreneur

Regarding capabilities, the CEO and founder admits that coming from university and never having started a company before, his entrepreneur capabilities were limited when he first

started, however, he felt having lived abroad greatly influenced his mindset. As an avid traveler who did not spend most of his time in Sweden, he never felt limited to living or working solely in one country. As the company grew, he found that he developed capabilities without even realizing it through the process of doing new things.

Internationalization Process

For Mevia, the process of internationalization was rapid as it began as somewhat of an international company by working with a pharmaceutical company in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2014. The British customer was the main incentive for Mevia to focus its early internationalization efforts there. Unlike many other companies that begin development in the country of foundation, Mevia was pulled to the UK quickly by its customer. The CEO cited trust in the relationship with the customer as one of the main reasons the internationalization process was so easy. Even after this first initial client, the second client was also an international, operating out of Germany. It was not until last year that Mevia had its first paying Swedish client that was not the result of grant money or other governmental influences.

4.1.2. Influence of External Facilitators

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Regarding external facilitators, Mevia utilized the assistance of various ones such as Sahlgrenska Science Park, HealthTech Nordic, Business Sweden and university programs like Chalmers School of Entrepreneurship Bio/Gibbs, citing that promotion for Mevia through these various facilitators was important to the company. The company was able to utilize different processes from the various external facilitators that they worked with.

Mentoring Services

In terms of mentoring services Mevia did not have what they would consider to be a mentor in the typical sense but did enjoy the advice of project boards through their early days at Chalmers and were also able to make social connections through their contacts at Sahlgrenska Science Park. Although they did not receive “mentoring”, they did receive assistance from external facilitators who would give them general information about what was happening in the startup industry, potential markets to go into, and various events happening in the area. In addition, although they did not have a direct mentor whom they could call with specific questions, they mentioned that all the people that they had met through various facilitators and events were relatively callable and therefore accessible.

Demonstration Days

Although Mevia did not participate in any demonstration days directly with a facilitator, they had experience in pitching and experience through Chalmers University's master program which encouraged a pitching event at the end of the semester called Gibbs (now called Chalmers School of Entrepreneurship Bio). During this event the students are required to pitch the product they have been working on during the semester to a jury of industry actors. The main purpose of the pitch is not to gather funding but rather for the students to gain exposure for their products in the hope of gaining networks and furthering their newly budding businesses. Due to the unique nature of Mevia's product and its early customer base directly after creation of the company, Mevia did not have to employ the use of demonstration days as frequently as other less situated startups. Although they did not participate in many demonstration days, they did say that through working with Sahlgrenska Science Park they were able to do more individual pitches for their product that allowed them to gain exposure to potential partners or customers in the health technology sector.

Financial Support

In terms of financial support, Mevia relied on some financing from external facilitators to grow its business however, once again due to its early partnership and customer base, it was able to get much financing through sales. However, because of company expenses including research, development and employee salaries, the company is not yet profitable. Nevertheless, the valuation of the company continues to rise through the efforts of its four full time employees. In specific the company received support in 2015 through a financing round however, in general, the amount of grants the company has received has been relatively limited in their opinion. The company feels that it would have been able to internationalize without external support, however, they are unsure of how long they would have survived as they would need constant revenue in order to remain viable. Some funding from external facilitators such as the Swedish governmental organization trust Vinnova (Vinnova, n.d.), Region Vastra Gotaland and other angel investors were cited as "saving" the company two or three times over the course of their business life. While other external actors that are not public do invest in the company, it is usually in exchange for shares in the business.

Legal Support

As for legal support, Mevia employed the use of lawyers from Chalmers to help them with initial legal issues when internationalizing as well as some friends studying and practicing law.

Chalmers provided a certain level of legal advice to all its student in the program as the school essentially acted as investors or owners in the companies that the students created and knew that the success of startups associated with their school would be mutually beneficial. Mevia was also able to utilize some support processes from the Gothenburg area that give free legal advice to startups up to a certain limit. After initial counsel from free services, Mevia would ask if the issues were important enough to employ a paid lawyer and then would pay for those services with the company's own funds. The CEO also cited trust in partners as one of the main factors that led to fewer legal issues in the first place.

Finding a Target Market

Regarding finding a target market, Mevia relied mostly on the customer interest to lead internationalization efforts and relied little on the advice and expertise of external facilitators. The CEO commented on the strong pull of the customer saying, *"if you make 100 calls and one of those people goes 'Yeah, let us do this', you do not really care where it is"*. Currently, Mevia is still present in its early internationalized market of the UK even though it left the market briefly after supplier quality complications. They remain on this market through a customer that is based out of Canada that operates two companies, one in the UK and one in Spain.

Creating Networks

As for creating networks, the company relied on conferences and the input of Sahlgrenska Science Park and Chalmers in order to extend their network. The company cites Chalmers as a main influencing factor in building their networks as it has opened many doors. The network and name brand recognition of Chalmers allowed the company to easily connect with other companies that had also been started at Chalmers or with persons who recognized the school.

4.2. Learning to Sleep



Figure 9, 10 & 11. Logos and Digital Sleep Assistance ©Learning to Sleep



Figure 12. *Micael Gustafsson* ©Learning to Sleep

4.2.1. Introduction of Learning to Sleep and Micael Gustafsson

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In 2012 Micael Gustafsson and a business partner working as a cognitive behavioral therapist (CBT), discovered a market need for a digital online sleep assistance and CBT-coaching products for healthcare patients with insomnia difficulties. This resulted in the first steps towards founding the startup Learning to Sleep in order to develop a product and meet the market demands. Three years later in 2015 Learning to Sleep managed to realize their business idea as they commercialized their digital healthcare solution (Figure 11), which is believed to be more time efficient for the patients as well for the startup. Today, Micael Gustafsson is managing five employees as the CEO of Learning to Sleep at the headquarters in Malmo, Sweden.

Capabilities of the Entrepreneur

Gustafsson has a master's degree in social science, however, he emphasizes that his entrepreneurial mindset and capabilities have been developed through starting and controlling several other startups outside of the healthcare sector, for example in microbrewing, tourism and irrigation, prior to Learning to Sleep. Gustafsson describes himself as a senior entrepreneur with extensive knowledge about internationalization processes. In addition, Gustafsson is used to operating in foreign markets, such as Luxembourg. Since the healthcare sector has been a relatively new business field for Gustafsson, he deliberately conducted a vast information gathering about different nations' healthcare systems in order to launch Learning to Sleep.

Internationalization Processes

The Swedish domestic market became Learning to Sleep's first operation field in 2015. In May 2018 Learning to Sleep started evaluating the Norwegian market and in November 2018 they established their healthcare solution there. In addition, Learning to Sleep is expecting to expand to the UK in 2019. However, the reason for going to Norway was more coincidental than strategic since they found a suitable business partner in Norway, the private healthcare provider Capio. Gustafsson emphasizes that Norway and Capio turned out to be a good match for Learning to Sleep but claims that any country within Europe would have worked since the flights are shorter compared to America and Asia. Furthermore, the CEO states that cultural and legal issues are not really obstacles because business people realize that western societies have more similarities than differences. However, Learning to Sleep is operating under Capio's name in Norway and Gustafsson stresses that it is a trial and error process during the early internationalization of the startup.

When going international, Gustafsson estimates that there are three different ways of executing the operation. The first is to establish a partnership with another firm, like the case with Capio in Norway. The second alternative is to be incorporated into the different bodies of a public healthcare system, like Learning to Sleep has done in Sweden. Thirdly, is to penetrate a foreign market on your own by directly selling the healthcare solution to the patients, which Learning to Sleep attempts in the UK. The key aspect on how to internationalize, according to the CEO, is to look at the structure of foreign markets and the division between public and private healthcare providers. Consequently, Learning to Sleep is testing different internationalization strategies and business models to find out which ones are most suitable to utilize when internationalizing.

4.2.2. Influence of External Facilitators

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During the early internationalization of Learning to Sleep the firm has managed to do some parts on their own and others with support from external facilitators. One such external facilitator is HealthTech Nordic which aims at building networks and collaborations between Nordic healthcare enterprises as well as providing business guidance to the enrolled startups (HealthTech Nordic, n.d.). Furthermore, HealthTech Nordic receives money to operate from the European Union (EU) through a program called Interreg Oresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak (Ibid). When internationalizing to Norway, Learning to Sleep asked HealthTech Nordic, with whom Gustafsson had a prior business relationship, for translation support. However, Learning

to Sleep found suitable business contacts in Norway on their own. Gustafsson argues that external business facilitators, such as HealthTech Nordic, are skilled in helping startups with legal and monetary aid as well as introducing the startups to valuable networks, however, they cannot acquire customers since this is the responsibility of the startups. In addition, Gustafsson believes that his own experience of internationalization and wide network in Europe is the reason Learning to Sleep has been in less need of help from external business facilitators concerning finding suitable business partners. Furthermore, Gustafsson is used to traveling to places such as Portugal, Spain, UK, Germany and France, which has resulted in direct contacts with some of the biggest external business facilitators. Hence, Gustafsson assesses important business partners are only one call away. However, the CEO states when startups do not have personal business networks, external facilitators can play a role in helping the startup with the right connections. In addition, Gustafsson has only positive things to say about the business exchange with HealthTech Nordic especially with respect to the utilization of their limited budget. Where HealthTech Nordic is operating in a fruitful manner, Gustafsson assesses that other external business facilitators fall short. Gustafsson strongly believes other business facilitators could put less focus on teaching startups about different cultures and instead teach startups how to get street smart. Gustafsson further elaborates saying “*how to be street smart is typically something that you do not know if you have not done it before*”. Meaning that startups who are struggling financially should learn how to work different nations’ business systems. For instance, Learning to Sleep has tried to identify and explore all free consultancy services that are offered in different locations, such as in the UK or Germany.

Mentoring Services

In order to internationalize, Learning to Sleep has utilized different external facilitators, such as Minc in Malmo, Sting in Stockholm and Plug and Play located in Silicon Valley. Minc was extensively utilized in the beginning of Learning to Sleep’s lifespan but Gustafsson states that because of his background and experience the startup is in less need of mentorship. Instead, the CEO claims that he helps other startups to internationalize. However, Learning to Sleep has received technical help such as creating a website from an undisclosed external business facilitator.

Demonstration Days

Learning to Sleep has attended several different demonstration days and conventions. Some tickets had to be bought by themselves and others had been paid for by external facilitators. For

instance, Learning to Sleep visited the startup convention Slush in Helsinki, Web Summit in Dublin and Lisbon, London Tech Week, the annual healthcare convention Vitalis in Gothenburg, Him in Barcelona and Student Zero in California. Normally external business facilitators have arranged and paid for a joint-stand where Learning to Sleep can book meetings and demonstrate their healthcare solution for potential investors, partners and customers. However, the startup must cover their own travel expenses. Learning to Sleep has often paid for the convention tickets, however, the external business facilitators have managed to reduce the prices for them. Gustafsson stresses that even tickets to demonstration days can constitute high costs in the long-run. Hence, the startup must carefully evaluate each demonstration day and decide which ones are worth attending. Gustafsson states that Vinnova has some travel grants valued at 2000 EUR. Normally however, the startup cannot get that type of support and instead pays for it themselves. Regarding Vitalis, HealthTech Nordic had a joint-stand which the startup could utilize but the startup had to pay for the travel costs and entrance fee. Overall, Gustafsson is pleased with the outcomes of the demonstration days, but he emphasizes that the quality of the participants does shift. However, the CEO clarifies that some valuable business contacts have been established due to the demonstration days.

Financial Support

Gustafsson emphasizes that most startups do not realize how expensive and time-consuming it is to internationalize, and governmental and private facilitators tend to underestimate the time needed. Gustafsson stresses that all actors should be aware that an internationalization campaign usually takes years and not a few months. However, Learning to Sleep has obtained equity from private investors valued at 10 million SEK. Besides some minor monetary contributions through HealthTech Nordic, the startup has received sporadic contributions from Vinnova. Private financial investors own almost 50% of the ownership shares in Learning to Sleep. In the beginning most of the money was used to cover development costs of the startup's healthcare solution, while today it mostly finances sales and marketing costs. The CEO does not hesitate to say that Learning to Sleep would not have been able to internationalize without monetary injections from private investors. So far, the startup has not been able to achieve a return on investment.

Legal Support

Gustafsson says that Learning to Sleep has not been in any need of legal support. When establishing the business agreement in Norway with their partner, he believes the process was conducted in a correct manner by their partners' lawyers.

Finding a Target Market

When analyzing suitable target markets, the startup looked at how different nations' healthcare systems are structured. Markets with big private healthcare sectors or substantial growing private sectors combined with expected low internationalization costs were most desirable. Gustafsson argues that markets with large public healthcare sectors are slow and consequently take longer to penetrate. Hence, Learning to Sleep found that Norway, UK, Germany and Spain fulfilled their prerequisites. The CEO claims that Learning to Sleep has received a lot of advice on suitable target markets, but everyone says different things, so the startup decided to create their own strategy. Gustafsson stresses that there is no "one size fits all" solution for internationalization, instead startups should look at their specific needs and product/services in order to act quickly. The CEO reflects *"I think, the biggest mistake startups do is that they tend to overthink and just spend too much time sitting behind their desks trying to figure out where to internationalize, instead of just do it"*. In addition, Gustafsson stresses that speed is crucial, so it is better to go somewhere and fail than to sit at a desk wondering what could happen.

Creating Networks

The CEO describes himself as a person with a self-developed vast network consisting of startups and external business facilitators. At the early stages of Learning to Sleep, HealthTech Nordic had not yet developed a sophisticated network community, so Gustafsson and two other contacts spent nearly six months going back and forth to Brussels attending every startup and cluster organization conference they could find. During those conferences they collected business cards from different external facilitators to expand Learning to Sleep's network. Home in Sweden, the startup sent emails to every new interesting contact asking to collaborate, and the response was very positive. Consequently, Learning to Sleep was invited to different startups over the next six months in, for instance, Spain and Bulgaria. Gustafsson stresses that Learning to Sleep has only one criterion when talking to startups or external facilitators by saying *"we only work with people"*. If Learning to Sleep does not like the people behind the business facilitator or startup they do not reach out to them. The CEO states that it takes time to build networks and startups might not have that time. Nevertheless, the easiest thing for a

startup is to attend conventions and meet lots of other startups and facilitators. Luckily most people in the startup community tend to be welcoming and good business partners end up being friends who return favors. Gustafsson claims attending conventions is probably the best and cost-efficient way to build a network saying, *“I think that most startups will gain on having a huge network and getting external help will increase their ability to internationalize”*. As time evolves external business facilitators will gain more mass and importance, according to Gustafsson, having a larger impact on society. Nonetheless, the CEO tells other startups that they cannot expect the external facilitators to help them to get into public healthcare systems. However, the facilitators can help the startups to get a network of people and investors outside the healthcare system, which is beneficial to have as well.

4.3. Tendo

tendo
for people, not symptoms



Figure 13 & 14. *Logo and Robotic Grip Assistance* ©Tendo



Figure 15. *Sofie Woge* ©Tendo

4.3.1. Introduction of Tendo and Sofie Woge

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Tendo is a company that has developed a robotic grip assistance tool (Figure 14) to help people suffering from issues such as stroke and rheumatic disorders. Founded in 2016 by Sofie Woge, the idea for Tendo came as the result of a class the founder took during university which took place at NASA in Houston. The mission of the class was to create something that could enable long distance space travel to Mars. The result was a tool that astronauts could use as additional support during their spacewalks and to exercise their grip to maintain their strength and fine motor skills. The founder soon realized however, that the tool could also be used here on earth. The founder has family members with rheumatic diseases and quickly understood the possibility for her tool to be used a little bit closer to home. Woge used her education background in Product Design Engineering and Industrial Design from Chalmers and Lund to push her project forward. The company now employs four people full time, as well as three full time interns and two part time interns. Although the founder had previous internships before starting the company, none were in this field. She credits the experience of working for the startup for many of the non-engineering capabilities she has learned. She cites that learning by doing has been the most common mode of knowledge acquisition. The company itself has steadily grown, starting in Sweden where it remained for a year until expanding to Denmark in 2017 for two years to be part of the Odense robotic startup.

Capabilities of the Entrepreneur

Although Tendo's CEO had a formal education in engineering with both a bachelor and master's degree, the capabilities for running a startup were still necessary for the CEO to run her own company. Since she had not taken any formal classes in entrepreneurship or business

management, experience by doing was one of the main forms of knowledge acquisition. In cases such as at the Odense robotic startup, the capabilities of the external facilitators and the cluster within which the company was placed, affected the capabilities of the individuals within the company greatly.

Internationalization Process

The internationalization process for Tendo was largely the result of an opportunity to be part of one of the world’s most well-known robotics clusters. The cluster’s pull on Tendo was large as it was a great opportunity to work closely with hardware companies in the robotics sphere. Oftentimes advice is offered by persons involved with software or services however, hardware is a very specialized field where the pull of experts is extremely strong. The move to Denmark did not come without its difficulties however, as Tendo struggled with practical items such as registration and being allowed into the country. This came as a shock to the neighboring Swedish company as they, and the cluster’s organizers, assumed that the move would be relatively easy. Complications included moving Swedish citizens since Danish law required Danish citizenship or Danish CPR numbers in order to live and work within the country for a non-Danish company.

4.3.2. Influence of External Facilitators

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Tendo was also able to utilize the help of various external facilitators and clusters such as Odense Robotics cluster in Denmark, exploration programs such as the Robotic Union (a Horizon 2020 EU funded program which seeks to spur innovation), and various mentors from all over Europe (Europeiska kommissionen, 2014). By combining the resources offered from all these support processes, Tendo has been able to utilize a great of knowledge from various sources.

Mentoring Services

Within the mentoring services sphere, the CEO of Tendo has cited that the company received mentorship from one facilitator in Sweden before moving to Denmark, a similar mentorship in the Odense Robotics Cluster and finally mentors through the EU Horizon 2020 funded programs. The Swedish and Danish mentors were both seen as helping in the fields of business development mostly. They could contact different mentors depending on the questions they had and who would be more suited to answering. In the Odense Robotics Cluster, the founder said the free access to knowledge was extremely helpful and the small community of only five

companies in the cluster also helped by providing a more specialized and focused service to the few companies that were there. Tendo could either reach out to the mentors on their own or mentors would often stop by regularly to ask how things were going and if there was anything they could do to help. The EU funded programs on the other hand currently rely on a mentor living in different parts of Europe and therefore communication is a little more deliberate with planned Skype or Google Hangout meetings in addition to having additional bureaucratic dealings.

Demonstration Days

Tendo was able to participate in several Demonstration Days such as Sweden Demo Day in Stockholm in 2016 and Tech Barbeque in Copenhagen in 2017. The company sometimes gets financial assistance for all or part of these demonstration days depending on the event. For example, in an upcoming demonstration day in Norway, Tendo is the guest speaker and therefore in lieu of payment to speak gets free travel and exhibition at the show. During these demonstration days the range of actors in the industry that they meet varies from other tech startups, to some big banks and some universities. Overall, the CEO feels that the demonstration days are useful however, timing in going to them and meeting people is the most important aspect. And trying to balance networking with developing a product is a delicate balance.

Financial Support

Regarding financial support, Tendo received many awards early on in its founding that were granted to the creator so that she could continue with the development of the company. For example, the Sten. K Johnson award in Lund along with investments totaling approximately 3 to 4 million SEK were given. In addition, public funding from Vinnova and the Robert Union Horizon 2020 program were given. These public sources of funding were given without equity providing Tendo followed the rules of the agreement whereas other money was given in exchange for shares. Currently, Tendo is funded by external money as it does not currently sell a product. Most of the financial support goes towards hardware and software development for the product. The company states that very little would have been possible without this external funding.

Legal Support

In terms of legal support Tendo has sought help regarding taxes and the complications of being a multinational company. Since the tax system in Denmark was quite different from Sweden,

consultants were hired to help the company. Some support was offered by the Odense Robotics Cluster such as discounts to certain legal support when the company was just starting. After Tendo continued to work with this legal counsel however, prices were increased.

Finding a Target Market

Regarding external facilitators helping with finding a target market, Tendo did not mention any external actors helping with this choice. However, the CEO did say that external facilitator assistance was necessary for internationalization. She also said a large part of the choice was due to the ability to market the product in certain countries as it is a very specific product and they wanted a short time to market. Ultimately, they hope to begin selling the product in Scandinavia in 2020.

Creating Networks

In order to create networks, the CEO said that she relied on going to a lot of events and participating in *“every competition I could find... I mean 90% of the people that I have met on those competition did not get me to somewhere themselves, but they knew someone who knew someone who knew someone... So, like every new meeting maybe led to two new ones.”*. From these events the CEO formed an initial dispersed network and was able to more carefully pick who she wanted to be in her close network. She also credited a large part of her network to opportunities from the facilitator Ideon Innovation where they currently sit and from the Odense Robotics facilitator as it was a very helpful name within the robotics industry.

4.4. Operationskollen

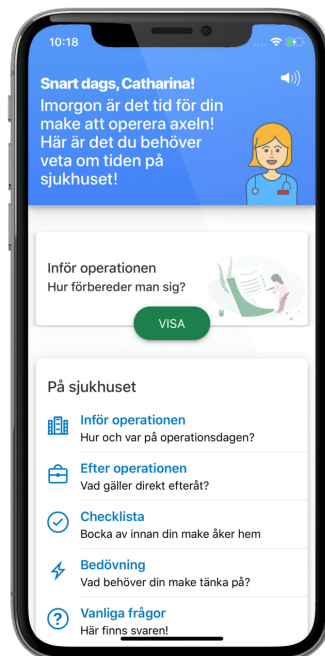
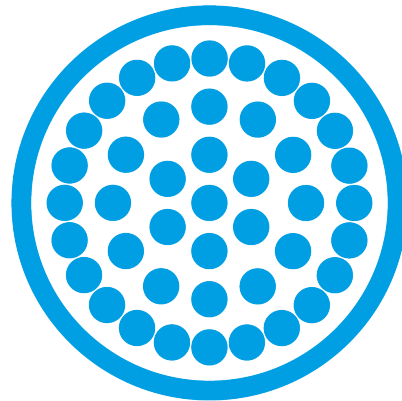


Figure 16 & 17. Logo and Operationskollen's Mobile Application ©Operationskollen



Figure 18. *Jesper Hessius* ©Operationskollen

4.4.1. Introduction of Operationskollen and Jesper Hessius

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In 2017 the physician Jesper Hessius and an orthopedic clinic in Vasteras launched a pilot study to develop a healthcare support tool to empower patients and their relatives within the Swedish healthcare system with their surgeries. In 2018, this resulted in the digital healthcare application and platform called Operationskollen (Figure 17), which makes the entire surgery procedure including the pre and after care more perspicuous. For instance, Operationskollen provides the connected patients with notifications and information about fasting, showering and physiotherapy. Today Operationskollen has three full time employees where Hessius is the CEO and their main customers are other healthcare providers. The patients can only use the application for free if their health care provider has integrated with Operationskollen. By utilizing Operationskollen patients can take an active role in conjunction with their surgeries and treatments. Consequently, Hessius assesses that Operationskollen creates great economic incentives for other healthcare providers to integrate with their modern digital healthcare solution. The CEO states that there are more support tools being introduced within the healthcare industry but most of them are only targeting professional healthcare providers. Therefore, Hessius wants to fill the perceived communication gap between the patients and their healthcare providers. Currently, Operationskollen is operating within three regions of the Swedish healthcare system, but they are planning to internationalize their product soon.

Capabilities of the Entrepreneur

Jesper Hessius' medical expertise has been key when founding the startup Operationskollen, since he is aware and accustomed to the common procedures before and after medical surgeries. Prior to Operationskollen, Hessius illustrated an entrepreneurial mindset by founding an app

development company in 2011. However, Hessius emphasized the other company was a sole proprietorship and managing Operationskollen as an incorporated business is quite different. Consequently, Hessius believes that he has developed his business management skill incrementally with the development of these startups.

Internationalization Processes

Despite not having operating on a foreign market yet, Operationskollen has initiated their plan to internationalize. Hessius estimates that Operationskollen will be present on a market overseas relatively soon. A few foreign markets have been identified so far, and English-speaking countries, more specifically Ireland and the Nordic countries are prioritized due to fewer language barriers. In addition, the CEO claims that Operationskollen’s sophisticated digital healthcare solution has a competitive advantage due to a lack of similar services from other competing firms. Moreover, Operationskollen’s main incentive for internationalizing is to enroll more patients to their service and simultaneously modernize foreign healthcare systems. However, Jesper Hessius underlines that Operationskollen is trying to investigate how to carefully structure and finance their internationalization attempts.

4.4.2. Influence of External Facilitators

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Although Operationskollen has not internationalized yet they are trying to engage with as many external business facilitators as possible since they believe these exchanges and collaborations could be beneficial. Operationskollen has therefore become a part of different external business facilitators such as HealthTech Nordic, Create and their associated investor Almi, as well as Sting and their program Ignite situated in the Stockholm region. In addition, Hessius states that the startup has been trying to enroll for the EU’s SME program but is still waiting for their response. Hessius further estimates that the collaborations with different external business facilitators will hopefully contribute to Operationskollen’s future internationalization plans.

Mentoring Service

At the moment Operationskollen has been assigned different mentors linked to the external business facilitators. Some mentors are internally employed by the business facilitators and others are external consultants paid and hired by the facilitators. Hessius, however, reflects on mentorship and asserts that they are more like useful contact persons. Meaning that Operationskollen interact with them ad hoc when in need of their external expertise. The interactions are estimated to once every 3-6 weeks. For instance, Hessius stresses that

Operationskollen is seeking for mentors with prior experience in private entities, public procurement systems, and public sector leadership, since the startup is in need of that knowledge as Operationskollen currently is selling their digital healthcare solution to public companies. In addition, the CEO stresses that public procurements are complicated and challenging aspects when running a private startup.

Demonstration Days

Operationskollen has participated at several different demonstration days during the last two years. According to Hessius the different external business facilitators working with Operationskollen have been keen on trying to organize or grant access to such events and conventions. For instance, Operationskollen was able to attend a demonstration event in Spain during 2018 due to its successful application to the Health 2.0 Europe conference. In addition, Hessius was able to participate in the healthcare conference Vitalis in Gothenburg in 2018, where the CEO showcased Operationskollen's business idea for potential investors and strategic partners. Events as such, have been fruitful for Operationskollen as they have been introduced to other healthcare actors and enhanced the startup's publicity. However, the demonstration days have not yet resulted in concrete investments from other players. During the demonstration days in Spain last year Hessius was introduced to useful Irish business partners, which has resulted in several web meetings and a business trip with these potential partners. Moreover, the external facilitator Sting's program Ignite has arranged multiple medtech demonstration days in Sweden that Operationskollen has attended. Hessius recalls that some demonstration days and travel expenses have been fully paid by the external business facilitators and others not. The entrance and convention fees for the demonstration days in Gothenburg and Spain have been paid by the external facilitators but not the lodging and travel costs. However, during the demonstration days in Dublin Ireland, Operationskollen has received financial contributions for both demonstration days as well as the travel and hotel expenses.

Financial Support

Operationskollen has received occasional financial contributions from external business facilitators during 2018. For example, the publicly funded Vinnova has approved a 300,000 SEK grant. In addition, the startup has obtained smaller monetary injections from the public startup investment organization Almi, which is connected to the external business facilitator Create. However, besides those contributions Operationskollen has not received any other

investments from other facilitators. Furthermore, Almi and Vinnova have not gained any shares in return for their contribution. Consequently, Hessius and his business partner have managed to keep total control of the startup and all its shares. Hessius states that the money received in 2018 has been utilized by Operationskollen during the same period. In 2019, however, Operationskollen became financially viable by successfully selling their healthcare solution to different customers. Hence, the CEO clarifies Operationskollen therefore has not needed further external contributions or investments. Hessius, emphasizes that Operationskollen is not currently in critical need of money from external facilitators, and in the future intends to only take in money or apply for contribution if it makes more sense. Operationskollen's largest cost is salaries, but Hessius does not think that their application and solution must go through any major changes in order to be applicable on foreign markets. The founder estimates that a more aggressive and intensive internationalization strategy, involving establishment of new partnerships and consultancy services, most likely will be more resource intensive, and that might open up for external contributions from other facilitators or organizations, such as support processes linked to the EU. However, the CEO stresses that Operationskollen is hoping to internationalize by themselves without taking outside investments. Hessius further elaborates saying it is not that they do not want to take in external money, it is just that Operationskollen do not want to have to take it.

Legal Support

Operationskollen has utilized judicial support in situations when writing different agreements and contracts. In addition, the startup has asked for legal advice and guidelines in order to operate within the law when it comes to, for instance, user data and privacy. The legal support has been co-financed by the external business facilitators, such as HealthTech Nordic. Furthermore, Operationskollen has a partnership with a tax firm as Hessius assesses that it facilitates the daily work for the startup which meanwhile can focus more on the core business.

Finding a Target Market

In order to find suitable foreign markets for Operationskollen's upcoming internationalization, Hessius states that the startup is trying to screen foreign nations' healthcare systems to understand how they are structured and whether they have similarities to the Swedish one, in which Operationskollen has experiences. However, the CEO also claim that the startup is aiming at finding markets which have larger private entities because that creates competition. Operationskollen consider that their digital healthcare solution has a competitive advantage

compared to other ventures’, hence they do not fear challenging and competing with other companies. Furthermore, language and culture barriers are something that Operationskollen is having in their minds when planning for their upcoming internationalization in order to be sure that there are less aspects affecting or restricting the startup operating in those potential markets. Having those business criteria, the startup evaluates markets within the EU as suitable ones for their internationalization. In addition, Hessius finds that nations within the EU already have a desirable and needed high level of digital infrastructure, as well as having sufficient transparency rules and regulations. Hessius assesses that there are probably suitable markets outside the EU as well in regards of the mentioned prerequisites, however, there might be other or additional factors that would play a greater role in establishing business elsewhere outside the EU. In order to evaluate different markets in the EU Operationskollen has also obtained external consultancy help from a business facilitator situated in Spain. Hessius hopes that the collaboration will result in a more sophisticated and deeper market analysis which consequently will lead to a narrower and more detailed plan for their choice of target markets when internationalizing. In April 2019 Hessius was invited to Dublin as Operationskollen was selected by the external business facilitator Startup Lighthouse to attend and present their healthcare solution during the event Medtech Deep Dive Week. Hessius states that the invitation enabled Operationskollen to pitch their business idea, and could be seen as an important stepping stone for the startup to establish business on Ireland in the future. Which later can be used as a springboard to reach and penetrate the UK market as well. However, the CEO stresses that the results and outcome of Brexit do come with some uncertainties whether or not Operationskollen should try to establish business within the kingdom.

Creating Networks

Thanks to Operationskollen’s early partnership with the healthcare clinic in Vasteras the startup has gained more credits as well trustworthiness when outreaching new customers. Without this collaboration Hessius believes that it would be harder to reach out to other healthcare providers as Operationskollen’s healthcare solution probably would be considered too unproven. The CEO further states that “*it would have been hard to find acceptance and very challenging to go out to the market with an unproven product*”. The clinic has also been helpful spreading the message about their successful partnership to other healthcare providers. This has been beneficial for promoting Operationskollen and their good reputation has consequently opened more doors to new partnerships and business networks. Hessius says that one thing led to another and that there was some sort of snowball effect as new contacts in turn introduced

further useful contacts. For instance, having meet Almi resulted in Operationskollen later enrolled for Vitalis and thereafter came in contact with HealthTech Nordic. The external business facilitators and their networks have motivated Operationskollen to think big and strive for internationalizing to other markets than just operating on the Swedish one. However, Hessius thinks that Operationskollen would have wanted to try to internationalize without the encouragement of the external business facilitator and their networks, but it would perhaps have taken a bit longer without that push. Hessius recalls that the new business contacts and external business facilitators tried to spur the startup's mindset, for instance Hessius recalls and exemplifies *“Do not just look at doing one thing at one hospital. Look at what would happen if you had the Swedish market? What is the next market? What is the next project and what is the next revenue stream? What is around the corner? Do not just trying to make things look perfect because you can get stuck in that treating your product as a baby and trying to find new ways of improving your product, but without necessarily improving the company”*. Furthermore, the CEO recommends other people starting startups to try to see what types of networks that they are surrounded by, as there are lots of helpful business people and organizations out there that really want startups to succeed.

4.5. AddMovement



Figure 19 & 20. *Logo and Segway Wheelchair* ©AddMovement



Figure 21. *Mike Redford* ©Addmovement

4.5.1. Introduction of AddMovement and Mike Redford

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Introduction of AddMovement and Mike Redford

AddMovement is a company that has developed a Segway type wheelchair called AddSeat (Figure 20) that allows disabled persons greater mobility by allowing them access to places with tough terrains. AddMovement was founded in 2012 by Marit Sundin a Paralympic gold medalist who came up with the idea from realizing the limitations in the market. After three years developing the product, Sundin hired Mike Redford as the CEO in 2015 to bring the company further in its sales and internationalization process. The company remains small with a few full-time employees at the headquarters in Froson while most of the work has been externalized. For instance, the company has worked to externalize its manufacturing, tax and accounting issues to keep product costs lower so that the company can focus on its core business processes.

Capabilities of the Entrepreneur

For this interview the capabilities of the original entrepreneur and the current CEO are distinct. The founder Sundin was able to use her capabilities in the Paralympic field to inspire others and push forward with an innovative new product while the CEO Redford was able to use his education and work experience to push the company forward. Redford has a well-rounded educational background with a Bachelor of Arts and an MBA as well as professional qualifications as an industrial engineer and a financial advisor. He had also worked for other companies and startups before although never in the wheelchair business.

Internationalization Process

AddMovement’s internationalization began before the current CEO was part of the company. AddMovement had first gone to Norway and then the Netherlands and then when Redford joined in 2015 the company pushed forward into Germany, America and Australia through various dealers. When asked why Norway was the first country to internationalize to, the answer was simply that it was convenient as it was both close to AddMovement’s Swedish headquarters and the language barrier was not great. In addition, the abundance of wealth in Norway provided customers that could pay for an advanced product and be early adopters. AddMovement at this time was able to move its product through stroke dealers in other countries doing the selling of the product for the company. The early struggles with internationalization for the company were mostly the result of the tiring nature of constant travel for the previous CEO Sundin who felt the role could be better suited to someone else. In addition, the struggles of language barriers remained and the lack of a refined strategy for the development of the company was missing in its early years. The developed strategy eventually led the company to seek markets that were larger than Scandinavia so the company could reach a larger percentage of disabled people.

4.5.2. Influence of External Facilitators

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AddMovement was able to work with various external facilitators such as Business Sweden, HealthTech Nordic, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Swedish Incubators & Science Parks, Almi and various crowdfunding events. By combining the various processes offered from all these external facilitators, AddMovement was able to procure additional knowledge and funding.

Mentoring Services

In terms of mentoring services AddMovement utilized the advice of mentors from various Swedish science parks. Mainly female business-oriented parks whose core focus was to enable the Swedish female entrepreneur. The meetings were consistent, however, according to Redford, the then CEO Sundin found the meetings and all the upkeep to be somewhat taxing especially at the beginning. She therefore eventually separated from those mentoring services to apply more time to her company. In Redford’s opinion a general weakness of these types of supports is that there is a *“bit too much focus on teaching her to do everything, rather than actually getting her to focus on the things that she should be focused on and getting other people who are professional to do the things that she is not good at.”*. In general, he said that

mentorships tend to be broad based and since they are attempting to fill general needs of knowledge, they end up not being useful for experienced entrepreneurs looking for specific information.

Demonstration Days

AddMovement was also able to participate in demonstration days throughout its development, both to the general public and to specific target audiences. The CEO commented that he felt the general demonstration days were less productive than the ones for targeted audiences. He found that general demonstration days had few people interested in your product and a myriad of other companies trying to sell their own products to often uninterested customers. He felt the general demonstration days could be useful for first time entrepreneurs, however, often they were somewhat impractical. For instance, the company had won a competition for one of the top 10 companies chosen by the EU for sustainable mobility startups, as a result they went on a tour to participate in multiple events. Although Redford felt that the tour was great exposure for the company, he did not feel that the exposure would lead to customers but rather the company got lost in the publicity of the event.

In contrast, when he had targeted events, he sees the potential customers get excited for AddMovement's product and how it can eventually change people's lives. To make the demonstration days more useful, Redford has advised external facilitators such as HealthTech Nordic advising them on improvements such as pre-screening investors and pitching companies to achieve efficient meetings with partners that fill their needs. Redford said "*What I need to know is that that person who is going to be listening is interested in my company. Now if I cannot convince him to invest in us, that is another matter.*", showing the need for efficiency in the demonstration days. The CEO realizes that part of the problem is the difference between the schedule of entrepreneurs which never really stops versus the science parks that run from 9 to 5. In the end however, he says that ultimately the science parks provide an invaluable service. Redford continues to explain that the assistance of some external facilitators, such as HealthTech Nordic, have been brilliant in helping them to arrange more personal meetings with people relevant for AddMovement. He mentions that since the focus of HealthTech Nordic is the health industry it helps companies utilizing their processes to gain hold of more niche and well-matched clients, easing the process of finding a target audience.

Financial Support

Regarding financial support AddMovement has relied on external facilitators such as Almi as well as various loans and crowdfunding. The CEO mentioned that one of the most difficult aspects of being a startup is the continuous need to find funding. Since AddMovement relies on hardware components the product is expensive to create. On top of that, salaries for employees and continued engineering require a large percentage of the budget. He said that while loans from facilitators such as Almi help initially, he does not like the idea of loans since they need to be paid back before the company is viable. AddMovement had utilized its full line of credit with Almi and then could not get any further loans from banks. So, in 2015 the company did a crowdsourcing campaign and was able to raise 1.1 million however, they are required to pay 11% on that amount and give personal guarantees which is expensive for a startup. Then in 2016 and 2017 the company did another two crowdfunding campaigns where they raised half a million SEK and 2.2 million SEK respectively. The crowdfunding in 2016 and 2017 was given in exchange for shares in the company which now accounts for approximately 10% of the ownership.

Legal Support

In terms of legal support AddMovement's CEO credits the assistance of external facilitators as being key in their business startup and internationalization. For example, Swedish Incubators & Science Parks was able to provide patent and tax lawyers assisting the startups with the legal procedures so that Redford could focus on the core business. They also advised them that market ownership and quick time to market was more valuable than a patent during their early days and to focus their time and funds on exposure. Redford did remark that if a contract went bad however, using the lawyers to settle the dispute would be rather expensive and mentioned that finding the correct partners in the first place was more important. In the end, the facilitators offered a bit of free consultancy and then after a certain number of hours the lawyers were paid their normal going rate which came out of AddMovement's budget.

Finding a Target Market

Although the legal support helped AddMovement to navigate their patents, some of the most helpful advice from the external facilitators in Redford's opinion was from the EIT Health for Global Scale Up, which advised the startups on nine different target markets. Redford said that the advice from this support process helped him to lead AddMovement away from France and towards the UK, Germany and the US for AddMovement's internationalization. In addition,

knowledge from Sting, EIT Health, Nordic Health and a project based out of Holland helped them to scale up globally. Other than the assistance from the external facilitators, AddMovement also stated that they looked for countries where there were two types of customers. Firstly, people who could afford their product. Secondly, customers who would be on the medical side selling to government departments which by extension could subsidize the product for end customers. Although AddMovement developed its own strategy of who to target, the information provided by external facilitators and the feeling of being part of a group helped the startup when targeting certain markets. The CEO said *“I think it helps when you, to a certain extent, are part of a group as well...for example, when we went to Manchester, in January with HealthTech Nordic, I had my own particular goals, but it was nice to go as a part of the group because, again, you saw how other people were dealing with it and you get ideas. And I think that that dynamic is really quite nice, I got to say.”*. Currently AddMovement is once again present in the earliest markets they internationalized to but this time with different partners or structures. The CEO mentions that he usually gives partners a year to see how well they work together and if nothing is happening either AddMovement or the partners will walk away. In Norway, the partner stayed the same, but the structure of the partnership has changed whereas in Holland they are working with a completely new company. In Holland, Redford says the reason to change partners was to get a new partner that was more experienced in the field. There have also been changes with dealers in Germany and the US in order to get a better fit with their product and the sales.

Creating Networks

In order to create networks Redford said that he tried to go to every event that he could to meet new connections. He even mentioned that one of the reasons he was hired as CEO of AddMovement was because the founder said that he turned up at every event she attended. He explained how participating in one conference in Toulouse led to the company being picked to apply for Innov8, another health conference in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which then led to them meeting a potential customer from Hong Kong. In the fast-paced world of startups you need to be willing to go to numerous events, talk to people and essentially *“keep preaching, it is a little bit you feel like an evangelist going around.”* He says being aware of what is out there in the market and determining who is the best for your company is also a vital skill necessary for CEOs. He said *“I know, I looked around, I am looking for all the time, who should I be talking to? Who are my next, my targets? If you want, I shall be hunting.”*

Redford also commented on the need to have a passion for what you do and to really love and believe in the product that you are selling. When talking to potential employees he says *“if you come to work for my company, you better prepare to be prepared to cry because, it is very emotional. You are talking about changing people’s lives. People who sit on the AddSeat, their lives have changed and the family around them, their lives have changed because all of the sudden people have freedom.”*.

In terms of help from external facilitators in creating networks, Redford mentioned the various conferences that helped him to meet more clients such as Startup Weekend in Toulouse, Innov8 in UAE and EA Tech, as well as HealthTech Nordic which helped the startup to be aware of these various events and gave the company an already established network. In addition, the CEO spoke about his previous network from past work experience when he first moved to Sweden and started a radio/TV station and newspaper. He said that the network he developed there kept evolving and that creating a network is all about *“getting out there and building the network and talking to people.”*. In general, he said that external facilitators were able to facilitate meetings but the work of finding potential partners was up to him. Overall, Redford says that he would highly recommend other startups to use external facilitators but *“you have got to say to yourself: Is it right for me?... Ask the question but do not necessarily take the advice as given.”*.

4.6. Medfield Diagnostics



Figure 22 & 23. *Logo and Agile Brain Scanning Device* ©Medfield Diagnostics



Figure 24. *Stefan Blomsterberg* ©Medfield Diagnostics

4.6.1. Introduction of Medfield Diagnostics and Stefan Blomsterberg

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Despite being founded and registered as an entity already in 2005 by professors at Chalmers, it was not until 2012 that Medfield Diagnostics began working on developing and commercializing a modernized brain scanning device (Figure 23). Since examining an injured skull and brain requires immediate examination and care, Medfield Diagnostics has developed a healthcare product that is utilized in conjunction with the pre-hospital care of injured patients. Meaning that their device is utilized by different professional healthcare practitioners before the patient arrives at the hospital. Consequently, Medfield Diagnostics has developed an agile and relatively lightweight six-kilogram device that can be stored and used in ambulances and helicopters. Once the screening of a patient’s skull is done the medical expertise can transmit the results through a tablet to a medical specialist, leading to a quicker and more accurate decision where to transfer the patient. By conducting a pre-hospital examination of the patient’s brain and skull in conjunction with, for instance a trauma or stroke, Medfield Diagnostics assesses that more patients are getting the right treatment faster as they are not transported to several incorrect hospitals before receiving the right medical attention. This reduces the risk of patients developing more serious sequelae due to an otherwise time-lagging treatment process. Consequently, it also benefits society as Medfield Diagnostics’ product increases the chances of getting patients back to work rather than using additional expensive healthcare treatments and public medical grants. In 2016, the mechanical engineer and former military officer Stefan Blomsterberg was appointed as the CEO of Medfield Diagnostics. During Blomsterberg’s leadership the startup has been working on getting a CE mark for their device. Meaning that their product fulfills all the necessary medical safety requirements for healthcare inventions decided by the EU (Swedish Standards Institute, n.d.). In addition, Blomsterberg and Medfield

Diagnostics workforce consisting of seven full time employees has put a big effort on commercializing and internationalizing the startup, and its invention, during 2019.

Capabilities of the Entrepreneur

In addition to Blomsterberg’s knowledge within mechanical engineering he also has extensive experience from previous jobs and leadership roles at other medical and healthcare companies. Before working for Medfield Diagnostics, the CEO has worked for the IVF company Vitrolife, Xvivo which is developing solutions for organ preservation in conjunction with transplantations, and Mölnlycke Health Care where he worked as a project manager director. All the previous workplaces have involved internationalizations processes, such as expansions to the US and China, in which Blomsterberg has had an active operating role. However, Blomsterberg stresses that the companies he worked for were more developed firms and more established on the European market compared to Medfield Diagnostics and could not be considered as startups.

Internationalization Processes

According to Blomsterberg the main reason for internationalizing is to get increased sales volumes. Blomsterberg further elaborates saying “*Sweden is a limited market when it comes to stroke and traumatic brain injuries. And you realize that the bigger European markets are very close by and you really need to be there*”. Despite that the CEO asserts that the startup has not yet commercialized their device, the startup has conducted several co-development operations with investors and medical expertise in Norway, UK, and Australia, simultaneously with their collaborations with Swedish doctors. The company hopes to have its first commercialization to the Norwegian and UK markets soon.

4.6.2. Influence of External Facilitators

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Mentoring Service

When it comes to mentoring support Medfield Diagnostics has not received substantial and repetitive support from external business facilitators however, the startup did obtain minor guidance from Region Halland. During the two days Region Halland provided the startup with a management team helping the startup with how to select markets, plan business strategies, develop marketing plans as well as guidance on entry mode choice and business models.

Demonstration Days

Medfield Diagnostics has had the opportunity to attend multiple demonstration days and conventions arranged by external business facilitators. Blomsterberg says it is difficult to recall all of them but gives an example of the annual healthcare conference Vitalis in Gothenburg and different European stroke conferences. In addition, the startup has had multiple close contacts and meetings with Business Sweden, Region Gothenburg, Sweden's Chamber of Commerce as well as Sahlgrenska Science Park. The demonstration days and contacts have made it possible for Medfield Diagnostics to pitch their business ideas and demonstrate their healthcare device. In addition, Blomsterberg further states that since the startup is listed on the public market the company has also done several company presentations for different potential investors, such as the organization Aktiespararna. The CEO estimates the firm has paid approximately 15,000-20,000 SEK for each presentation and they have been able to present their product for 20 minutes each time for physical present investors as well as broadcast the presentation for other spectators online. Blomsterberg claims that the startup usually does not have to pay for attending different demonstration days as they are often invited by the organizers.

Furthermore, Medfield Diagnostics has been part of the external business facilitator Sahlgrenska Science Park's and Business Sweden's startup program called "Bridge Market Check", which aims at helping Swedish ventures with their early internationalization attempt to the UK market (Sahlgrenska Science Park, 2019). Sahlgrenska Science Park and Business Sweden provided the startup with guidance on how to penetrate the UK market. The collaboration thereafter ended with a business exhibition in London, which Medfield Diagnostics paid for. Blomsterberg further says that the external business facilitators introduced them to different British ambulance organizations as well as for representatives of the National Health Service, NHS. The CEO says Business Sweden allocated two consultancies situated in London who were assisting Medfield Diagnostics' operation on the UK market. *"I told them what I wanted to do and they booked all the meetings, and they put together a report and did all administration work for me. So I got a really good presentation describing all the managing directors for the ambulance trusts, the clinical directors at the ambulance trusts, statistics from the ambulance trusts. I therefore have a good view of the UK market, when it comes to pre-hospital healthcare"* states Blomsterberg. The CEO asserts that the meetings did not focus that much on investors, as it more focused on giving access to the UK market by establishing contacts to different directors and medical experts connected to the ambulance trusts. Meaning

that Blomsterberg met actors interested in Medfield Diagnostics device with the sole purpose of increasing possibilities for stroke patients to get better quality of life.

Financial Support

Blomsterberg put a clear emphasis on the necessity of external financial contributions for startups. The CEO further elaborates by saying *“Startups, we do not have the muscles. Because nobody just comes to you with a hundred million. But when you get a portion of money you really need to select and do something with quality for a certain time, you really need to select what kind of activities you need to prioritize in order to move forward. And you need to decide if it is a marketing activity or as a product development activity. And then you need to have those questions on the table every day, every minute! I handle relationships with all the guys working here, we talk about what to do, what not to do in close collaboration. And the problem is what not to do, because you want to do everything!”*. According to Stefan Blomsterberg Medfield Diagnostics has received financial support from both private and public facilitators. For instance, the startup has obtained financial contributions from the Swedish public innovation agency Vinnova. In addition, the startup is highly involved in different projects with Chalmers covering business operations in China and Sweden, for instance the university partly financed a co-development of a pre-hospital test center in Lindholmen Science Park.

Furthermore, Medfield Diagnostics are seeking funds from the EU’s innovation and research fund Interreg (European Union, 2019). Medfield Diagnostics is also on the stock market so they receive risk capital from private investors in conjunctions with emissions. The CEO further believes that the firm has been quite successful when issuing stocks. Although the founders still possess most of the shares in the startup, smaller private actors are investing in the firm. Along with that, pensions funds, other institutions as well as different companies are buying their stocks.

However, one of Medfield Diagnostics major investors and collaborators is the Norwegian oil and gas enterprise Equinor, earlier known as Statoil. *“Equinor has been interested, because they work offshore, so they have a healthcare responsibility for their staff at the oil platforms. Meaning that they need to know more about the situation for their staff, if they have an accident. Meaning that they want to know if they are going to call for the helicopter or not, which is very expensive, and where to bring the patient. They are very much interested in our technology. So we have been working since 2015 in the study in Norway together, and they have bought the*

instruments from us and put them into the university hospitals in Stavanger and Bergen” says Blomsterberg. Thanks to this collaboration Equinor controls 12% of the startup’s shares and the financial status of Medfield Diagnostics has been more stable during the last year.

Stefan Blomsterberg stresses that the development processes, including consultant costs and device testing, are the most expensive and time-consuming parts of the firm. However, these are essential aspects for the firm since the development leads to future sales and revenues. Despite being financially stable at the moment, Blomsterberg evaluates that the money from external contributors has eased their work when trying to internationalize. However, currently the CEO does not think that the startup is in dire need of additional external money to succeed with their upcoming plans.

Legal Support

The startup has, according to Blomsterberg, obtained judicial support when establishing business partnerships with different private ambulance trusts in the UK however, this legal support was not provided by an external business facilitator as it was not available. Instead the startup has contacted different lawyers on their own. For instance, Medfield Diagnostics utilized legal help when reaching agreements with South Western Ambulance Service Trust, Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance Trust and King’s College Hospital.

Finding a Target Market

“I can say it is a little bit of a tradition within medtech that the UK market is one of the most interesting first markets to go to. And that is because there is a very good relationship between Sweden and UK when it comes to medtech. I mean, for instance, that is the tradition when I was at Vitrolife I participated in and was also a host of at least three meetings together with the ambassador from UK” elaborates Stefan Blomsterberg when motivating why Medfield Diagnostics has chosen to aim for the UK market as one of their early internationalization markets. Blomsterberg further stresses that the UK market also fulfills several of prerequisites of the startup. For instance, the startup considers the UK as politically right sized, a market open for private actors, having an existing technology interest as well as having sufficient payment models and different supporting organizations. Blomsterberg reflects on the matter that the target customers ought to not only look at the investment costs, instead look at the benefits of using it and the savings it does for the community by increasing the likeliness of getting sick people back to work and consequently increasing the GDP.

Creating Networks

The CEO claims that his previous established contacts should be divided into different categories such as science and business. The science contacts that Blomsterberg was introduced to during his time working for his previous companies have been less useful and applicable for Medfield Diagnostics mainly because the research fields do not match. However, his personal business contacts, including distributors situated in different nations around the world, have been utilized frequently.

Nonetheless, Medfield Diagnostics has been able to develop an extensive and sophisticated scientific network when it comes to microwaves. In addition, the startup has also established bonds with different medical experts domestically at Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Gothenburg. The startup works closely with doctors on different joint clinical studies and every clinical study has a steering committee led by the professor of the hospital who is usually also the principal investigator. Meaning that the studies are not own by the company, but by the principal investigators.

Furthermore, the Swedish contacts have introduced the startup to other physicians working at clinics abroad, for instance the Hunter Medical Research Institute in Newcastle Australia. Despite not having commercialized on the Australian market yet the startup has been involved in clinical collaborations with Australian doctors thanks to their partnership with the doctors in Sweden. *“That is also one of the reasons we are in Norway, and also in the UK, trying to commercialize there, because it is people know people who know people, and thereby we increase the network”* states the CEO. Blomsterberg estimates that the clinical collaborations will increase in numbers thanks to the enhanced networks.

When it comes to the networks provided by external business facilitators, such as Sahlgrenska Science Park, it has mostly involved business contacts and less often clinical science contacts. However, since being introduced to the UK market by Sahlgrenska Science Park the startup has been able to develop a comprehensive science network. In addition, Blomsterberg further elaborates on the collaboration saying *“together with the Bridge program with Sahlgrenska Science Park, we have got to know 70% additional names and so we started just to make a tour. And we met five of the most important people and the key opinion leaders out of those, and we also been visiting Cambridge University and spoke to people working with stroke and traumatic brain injuries there. And they got really thrilled”*. Consequently, Blomsterberg claims that the

support from external business facilitators has been useful for the startup's internationalization process and that has consequently influenced their interest for certain markets.

Moreover, Blomsterberg says Medfield Diagnostics is involved and interacting with several other external business facilitators, such as Swecare, Business Region Gothenburg, the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Lindholmen Science Park and Medtech West, in order to expand the startup's network. All those organizations are constantly arranging different seminars and, according to Stefan Blomsterberg, the medtech community in Gothenburg is relatively small. Hence, Blomsterberg further claims that most startups and corporate representatives know each other and are like best friends.

5. Analysis



5.1. Internationalization

5.1.1. Stages of Internationalization

The theories of Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and Cavusgil (1980) provide a general process for internationalization where companies start with little or no export activity early on, followed by export activities using independent representatives or agents, eventually creating overseas subsidiaries and offshore production and manufacturing, however this internationalization model neglects the role of the social networks and external facilitators who may influence the startup's stages of internationalization (Sapienza et al, 2006). When analyzing the various startups that were interviewed differences between the theory and the empirical evidence emerged in part due to the unique characteristics of the startups but also due to the various influences of external facilitators.

In general, through the empirical evidence one finds that these startups do not necessarily follow the paths laid out by Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and Cavusgil (1980) whether it be due to the product type, previous experience in the startup industry or financial restraints. For instance, whereas Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) assert that most companies will enter markets in a successive stages often starting slowly with a few moderate sales in the most psychically close markets, the startup Mevia was able to skip the first step of internationalization where there are no consistent sales as it started off with an initial customer in the United Kingdom rather than its home market of Sweden. This initial customer also allowed them to initially skip exporting through representatives and setting up an overseas subsidiary, which contradicts the old Uppsala Model of Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) that asserts external representatives are imperative for early companies to overcome the liabilities of foreignness. Although the startup did much work abroad, they were able to utilize the resources of their client rather than external sellers and manufacturers in order to produce their product and get it to market. In addition, whereas Stage 4 of the old Uppsala Model shows companies moving production overseas only after they have completed all previous stages, in the case of Mevia this stage was entered before stages one and two because the customer had a previous business connection who they felt could create components of the product (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). Therefore, Mevia employed a more modern component based model of selling both physical and service aspects of the product. For instance, they could sell the physical components such as the cardboard and traces that measure when someone takes their medicine or the service that tracks such a device and monitors the end consumer via an

application or both. This contradicts the old Uppsala Model of Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) as it shows that the ideas of psychic distance and liability of foreignness are less likely to influence the internationalization paths of the startups in this study and thus their decisions are based more on factors such as internal skills, personal connections and funding.

In a similar sense, Learning to Sleep utilized its own unique path of internationalization that contradicted the original Uppsala Model (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). Whereas the original Uppsala Model (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975) suggests that companies start in stage one by successively creating sales on their own, Learning to Sleep saw that their product was more of a service than a physical product and therefore did not rely on the normal export avenues of trying to gain notoriety for their product through inconsistent exports but moved directly into step two and employed the knowledge of certified sales persons (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). The company was able to recognize its own internal skills were not in selling and thus hired outside sellers immediately to promote the product. Dealers such as Capio Norway enabled the startup to sell immediately and directly to their target consumers. The company also contradicted the old Uppsala Model (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975) by omitting stage three of creating an overseas subsidiary since the company felt this step was not necessary for the startup's service/product which is offered via smartphone applications (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). This perhaps shows a way in which newer technology companies may alter the path of internationalization to fit the needs of their unique products. Since the core application is already created in this online based service, it only needs minor alterations to bring it to different international markets unlike more physical products which may require more alternations. Also, since the startup is still in its infancy, it may not be mature enough to require international subsidiaries at this stage due to its moderate volume of sales.

Tendo in contrast has a physical product and therefore according to the old Uppsala Model should follow a traditional path of internationalization (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). The company however, started its path of internationalization by utilizing stages three and four, creating an overseas subsidiary and overseas manufacturing before engaging in sales activities thus contradicting the established progression Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975). Since Tendo is still in its infant stages with no product currently on the market, it may utilize the other steps later during its internationalization process however, it is unique to note the difference in its path so far. One influencing factor in company's unique internationalization path seems to be due to the influence of various mentors and advice from

other companies in its incubator. According to Pauwels et al (2016), this mentorship can often help startups by providing knowledge about common early internationalization obstacles. Therefore, it appears that with the production of extremely advanced technology products, the need for overseas subsidiaries and manufacturing is more important than the initial sales and export of the product which Tendo was able to learn early on in its infancy due to mentorship. In this case of advanced robotic technology products, the quality of the product is most important according the CEO of Tendo. Therefore, in this case the startup will utilize its early resources to ensure the hardware components are of the highest quality and will utilize more resources in the initial research and development than with a less advanced product, creating an internationalization path that opposes the old Uppsala Model by focusing on quality through externalized specialization rather than incremental commitment (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975; Johanson and Vahlne, 1977).

Operationskollen in contrast to Tendo was mostly an application-based software and therefore interestingly followed the same internationalization path as Learning to Sleep, which was also an application-based software. Both Operationskollen and Learning to Sleep skipped stage one, two and four of the internationalization processes according to Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and rather began their internationalization by focusing on export via independent representatives or agents (stage two). Although this observation is only based on two startups, it does show that perhaps application software has a different internationalization path than manufactured physical products. Also, perhaps application software has more universal products that do not require overseas subsidiaries or manufacturing due to their unique nature. The lack of stages three and four according to Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) could also possibly be a result of the fact that both startups are in early in their internationalization process and thus have not gotten to stages three and four yet. In this case, it once again shows that application software requires less overseas management and manufacturing in general until the product greatly expands requiring more management and location-based services, going against the original Uppsala Model (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975).

AddMovement and Medfield Diagnostics on the other hand were the final two startups interviewed and both had physical hardware devices. Medfield Diagnostics followed the same internationalization path as Tendo, which was also a physical hardware company, yet AddMovement did not. AddMovement utilized steps one, two and four of using inconsistent export activities, independent representatives/agents and overseas manufacturing (Johanson &

Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). One reason for the differences in the internationalization path for AddMovement could be explained by lack of experience as the initial CEO had never led a company before. According to Johanson and Vahlne (2009), experience, and in specific insidership experience, is seen as playing a major beneficial role in a company's internationalization. The role of limited experience was seen in AddMovement's early stages as the company had a limited strategy attempting to sell its own product in order to achieve market recognition, thus utilizing step one of the original Uppsala internationalization process (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). After about two years of limited success the new CEO was brought in and the firm proceeded with steps two and four of the internationalization model provided by Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) using independent representatives/agents and externalizing some manufacturing and design components. Medfield Diagnostics on the other hand followed the exact same path as Tendo as it only externalized some aspects of manufacturing of stage four (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). Similar to Tendo, AddMovement required the best of technology in order to create a superior, medical, CE marked product that could hold up to rigorous customer scrutiny which thus affected the progression of its internationalization stages. Unlike AddMovement both Tendo and Medfield Diagnostics are still waiting to launch their products and perhaps after the release they will be more likely to move into the other stages of internationalization.

Overall, Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) originally posited a clear, four-stage path to internationalization based on psychic distance and increased commitment and international involvement however, other theory argued that factors such as product type and industry (Porter, 1986), internal experience (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990) and external support (McEvily & Zaheer, 1999) could influence the internationalization paths of startups more noticeably. For example, Porter (1986) argues that industry plays a large role in the way in which a company internationalizes. The cases examined in this paper showed some agreement with Porter (1986) as the internationalization paths of the startups appeared to deviate from the original Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) model yet depending on product type, seemed to follow similar internationalization paths. Therefore, the differences in the internationalization stages between the startups could be related to the type of product that the startup is selling. When the product is more high-tech hardware component sensitive, the startup seems to take more time in research and development and more likely to start internationalizing the manufacturing of the product in order to get the best components and most efficient pricing. Conversely, when the core of the product is software and services, such as in the more application-based startups of

Learning to Sleep and Operationskollen, the focus becomes selling through experienced independent sellers since the technology is already created and will only need minimal adaptations to various local contexts. Therefore, it may appear that the more service and application-based technologies are more focused on their internationalization paths and thus more willing to experiment with trial and error processes for their products and go against the original Uppsala Model if the industry requires it (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul , 1975; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

5.1.2. Founder Influences: Psychic Distance, Geographic Distance and Risk Aversion

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Whereas Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and Cavusgil (1980) illustrated the general stages of internationalization, Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 1990) commented on the thinking that accompanied this process in terms of psychic distance, geographic distance and risk aversion. The original Uppsala Model theorized that companies often internationalize to countries with a close psychic and geographic distance first as a form of risk aversion since cultures, languages and mores may often be more similar in these areas (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). In addition, in order to incrementally increase the sales of the product is it often safer to go to closer, more psychically close counties (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Vahlne, 1990). As the world has developed however, the startups interviewed seemed to show a different mindset and attitude towards distant cultures and in general appear more accepting than when Johanson and Vahlne theorized their original Uppsala Model in 1977.

According to Johanson and Vahlne (1977), psychic distance includes factors such as different languages, political systems or culture which ultimately create a feeling of distance between a home country and a psychically distance country. Johanson and Vahlne (1977) originally posited that this psychic distance would lead to companies internationalizing first in psychically similar countries with the home country usually being the first choice. Mevia therefore disagreed with this theory in the sense that the company did not feel there was any psychic distance between the international companies it worked with. The psychic distance of countries such as the United Kingdom was deemed low due to the CEO's previous experience growing up and working in different countries with a large network based in the United Kingdom. The language base was also English which most of the employees in the company were very comfortable speaking. The CEO said that most travel and further internationalization in his opinion was only hindered by the costs of flights rather than the psychic distance. As for

uncertainty avoidance, the CEO also seemed rather willing to take on new risks from psychic distance or geographic distance perspective however, he mentioned that he preferred to base internationalization decisions on customers that were willing to fund the move. In this sense, Mevia disagrees with the theory shown in the old Uppsala Model which shows psychic distance and geographic distance as being reasons a company would be slow to internationalize but perhaps show the role of uncertainty avoidance as still having a prominent influence (Johanson & Vahlne, 1990). In the case of Mevia, the company internationalized immediately, and psychic distance was never a factor. This could be because the United Kingdom is so close to Sweden that it did not seem extremely psychically or geographically distant, however, it is still the case that the company internationalized extremely quickly and seemingly without hesitation. Mevia in this sense was a unique startup that did not need to fear the costs associated with internationalization as much since they partnered early on and were able to rely more on the customer for support thus gaining an immediate insidership.

Whereas Johanson and Vahlne (1990) assert that every country has an intrinsic psychic distance that can make setting up businesses there more challenging for foreigners, Gustafsson from Learning to Sleep, felt that all European countries were fairly similar and that business practices worldwide were often even more harmonized and thus there was no great psychic distance when seeking to internationalize. This statement perhaps represents one of the exceptions found in the theory of Johanson and Vahlne (1977) where they assert that firms with considerable experience may be able to generalize past knowledge in markets with comparable environments. Although he agreed with theory of Johanson and Vahlne (1990) by recognizing that geographically close areas are easier for early internationalization due to time and financial constraints, he still stated that the startup first internationalized to Norway only due to an opportunity that presented itself. He also felt that if the opportunity had been in a different country other than Norway, Learning to Sleep would have easily set up in the different country and thus illustrated the role of funding as being a larger factor than psychic distance. As for the role of geographic distance, Johanson and Vahlne (1977) assert that there are major complications with distance between countries such as additional time and costs added which turn make the market less attractive. Gustafsson felt that since most places within Europe were physically close, the relative ease of transportation made internationalization anywhere within Europe relatively easy and thus somewhat disagrees with Johanson and Vahlne's assertion that geographic distance deters early internationalization. This shows that geographic distance is only considered lightly troublesome in terms of the time it takes to physically get

somewhere but can still be overcome if the opportunity is great enough. In general, Gustafsson's risk avoidance seemed relatively low as he was willing to set up the startup in most countries if the opportunity was fungible and presented itself. Overall, this shows a lack of feeling of psychic distance from the entrepreneur and thus goes against the theory presented by Johanson and Vahlne (1977; 1990). It could be theorized that this lack of feeling of psychic distance could also be the result of the extensive previous work experience of Gustafsson.

Although the theory from Johanson and Vahlne (1977; 1990) assigned a great importance to the role of psychic distance, geographic distance and risk uncertainty, the CEO of Tendo assigned low levels of importance to these factors. Within psychic distance, Johanson and Vahlne (1990) found that cultural differences between countries could make communication difficult however, the founder had already started the initial idea for the startup with NASA in Houston and thus had experience working with international teams. This international experience in combination with an opportunity at a world-renowned robotics facilitator, created a lower psychic distance between countries and thus the role of previous business experience seemed to eliminate the obstacle of psychic distance. As for the geographic distance, like the other startups interviewed, it seemed only to be limited by cost and time as the startup internationalized to Denmark which agrees with the findings of Johanson and Vahlne (1990) in that the geographic distance can create an obstacle for internationalization. Overall, the psychic distance seems relatively low, while the geographic distance appears low to moderate since the startup will hope to launch its product in Scandinavia first and although it internationalized early it was to a country only a few hours train south in Denmark. Thus, the company seemed to agree with the findings of Johanson and Vahlne (1990) slightly in the sense that psychic distance and geographic distance could make certain internationalization paths more difficult however, they also seemed to have a higher threshold for dealing with these obstacles due to various networks and previous experience that made them more navigable. The overall risk aversion of the startup was more towards developing a superior product rather than being afraid of internationalization in general which seems to contradict the findings of Johanson and Vahlne (1977). Thus, risk avoidance came in the form of developing the product for a longer period and perfecting the technology before the initial launch.

In the case of Operationskollen, Hessius said that psychic distance did play a role, as did geographic distance and risk aversion thus vehemently agreeing with the findings of Johanson and Vahlne (1977) which state that previous market knowledge and commitment can influence

the risks and opportunities that are perceived in a market which in turn influences the future activities and decisions of the firm. In the case of psychic distance, the startup was looking into the regulation aspects of different countries when internationalizing as well as making sure there were no ethical obstacles and the company seemed to limit itself to psychically close countries for early internationalization. In terms of geographic distance, this also seemed to affect the startup as the CEO was also a doctor and thus had a very limited time schedule and therefore sought to keep the startup close to Sweden at first once again illustrating the influence of the original Uppsala Model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1990). This affected his early internationalization as he tried to make the setup as easy as possible by first establishing the service with local hospitals. Hessius attempted to perfect the product almost too much before his initial launch which he recognized lost him time and was perhaps not necessary. He also tried to partner rather than fund and push the product further solely on his own. Overall, Operationskollen seemed to follow the original Uppsala Model the most closely of all the startups interviewed as it was strategically risk averse (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 1990).

Johanson and Vahlne (1977) state that the impact of previous commitments and experience are extremely important factors for firms when internationalizing. In the case of Addmovement the previous experience of Redford created an environment where the psychic distance seemed relatively low, while geographic distance was once again only a factor of time and funding. For the psychic distance, Redford who is originally from Britain, felt there was little difference operating anywhere within Europe and had even talked to potential Middle Eastern and Asian Partners at various conferences. Although Redford said that time and cost of travel could potentially affect the company's geographic distance, he was still able to travel to conferences in countries outside of Europe due to various opportunities and outside funding. As for risk aversion, Redford seemed very open to risk as he was willing to go anywhere and do anything for the startup that he believes in however, he balanced that attitude with a concrete internationalization strategy. Overall, the aspects of the risk avoidance in terms of psychic and geographic distance seemed to have little effect on this experienced and outgoing entrepreneur whereas the influence of experience seemed to have a much greater influence on the internationalization of the firm thus aligning with the revised model from Johanson and Vahlne (1977) that places more emphasis on experience and commitment of the business leader.

Finally, Medfield Diagnostics seemed to follow suit with most of the previous other startups by saying that psychic distance was less of a problem, geographic distance was only limited by

time and cost and the overall risk avoidance was relative to the opportunities presented. Their process agrees with the ideas of fluid networks found in Johanson and Vahlne (1990) which describes the subtlety of industrial networks which contain various types of bonds from spheres such as technical, social, legal, and administrative networks which cannot easily be observed by an outsider. The company internationalized early to Australia because a doctor contact at Sahlgrenska knew other doctors working in a similar field in Australia. Their reasoning for going to the UK early was based more on business than fear since they knew that the UK was highly privatized with various ambulance trusts who could pay for their higher priced product. Norway in a similar sense was chosen because one of their largest and most dedicated investors was from an oil company there that could use their product remotely on remote drilling fields. This shows the startup does not take psychic distance into account by fearing it but rather creates a strategic business plan first and analyzes which locations are the best for the startup. As for geographic distance, the startup soon realized that it would need the larger economies and funding that could be found in the UK and Germany and thus the business plan led the internationalization to these countries. The movement to different countries in the opinion of Blomsterberg is limited only by the regulations in each market and the potential reimbursement schemes available in those markets. Overall, Medfield Diagnostics seemed willing to go almost any country if the business plan was solid regardless of geographic or psychic distance thus showing a movement from the original theories of Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and leading towards concepts based more on network theory encompassing the importance of previous business experience and knowledge in a company's early internationalization. Their uncertainty avoidance was apparent in their product development as they conducted careful research in order to invent an exceptional product that help up to the highest safety regulations and standards. As is the case with most medical devices, the focus was on improving the life of the consumer and perhaps, ultimately saving it.

5.2. Resources: Industry, Capabilities and Networks

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In terms of resources, theory has argued whether the successful internationalization of the startup is due to the role of the industry and internal capabilities or whether it is due to the role of insidership and the company's network (Porter, 1986; Barney, 1991; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). For example, Porter (1986) says that the structure of the industry informs the competitiveness and thus coordination and configuration of resources which ultimately forms the competitive advantage of the firm. Therefore, in this model Porter argues that the firm's

industry must be taken into consideration when internationalizing as it affects not only competitive advantage but also the pattern or path of internationalization that the firm must take. In direct contrast Barney (1991) argues for the importance of the firm's own internal capabilities as the main motivating factor behind the success of the company. Here Barney argues that capabilities such as a firm's knowledge, financial strength, networks, procedures, and managerial proficiencies help the startup to expand and become sustainable. Barney (1991) also argues that depending on the capabilities existing within the firm, the internationalization process can either be accelerated or demotivated. Finally, in the revisited Uppsala Model provided by Johanson and Vahlne (2009), an argument is made for the role of the complex web of relationships between various suppliers and customers. These relationships form advanced networks that create a type of insidership for those involved. In this theory the fear of outsidership replaces psychic distance seen in the original Uppsala Model. As a result, the idea of relationship building through networking is seen as a key factor in international expansion.

When examining the startup Mevia under the lenses of industry, internal capabilities and outsidership, one can see that it truly is a combined effort of all three factors that allows the startup to be successful. In terms of industry, Porter (1986) asserts that the competitiveness of the industry directly affects the internationalization of the company and that coordination plays a large role in a company's success. Thus, Mevia being a digital technology startup has a complex product with both physical hardware as well as service-based software and thus manages its strategy accordingly by making use of increased coordination efforts across different international borders. The hardware is CE marked which means it meets the medical requirements to be sold all over EU. Although the CEO Hassel did not comment specifically on the sub-industry of adherence solutions, it appears to be a new and developing industry with high technology standards and perhaps lower competition than other more established industries. Barney (1991) conversely argues that it is the internal capabilities of the firm such as knowledge and network that lead to successful internationalization. This point is illustrated through Hassel's background in both engineering and management from Chalmers which seemed to help the startup advance in both product development as well as business strategy. In addition, the previous experience of the CEO living and working abroad seemed to have opened new networks. Since Hassel has friends and previous co-workers in different countries, he felt a fluidity in moving himself and the startup across various international borders. Finally, Johanson and Vahlne (2009) argue for the role of the network and the fear of outsidership as being the largest obstacles to internationalization. Hassel showed the need for insidership as he

expanded his network in Sweden by participating in various events, demonstration days and other external facilitator support processes which increased his network size. Thus, in the case of Mevia it appears that industry, capabilities and networks were all largely influential aspects of the company's early internationalization.

Although Porter (1986) argues for the importance of industry, Gustafsson from Learning to Sleep argues for the role of internal capabilities along with the role of insidership as the main motivating factors in the startup's internationalization. Learning to Sleep is a digital medical solution that helps patients to sleep better through therapy and online application tracking via cognitive behavioral therapy. Gustafsson however, who has participated in many startups across various industries, noted that the exact industry is not so important if there is some demand for the product. The importance of internal capabilities and skill was a large factor in the success of Learning to Sleep however, as Gustafsson had many years of experience in the entrepreneurship field with various startups across industries. This corresponds to the findings of Barney (1991) where the internal capabilities of the startup and the entrepreneur highly influence the internationalization strategy and work of the startup, and where the role of the external context plays a smaller role in comparison to the internal capabilities. He commented that once you create a certain number of startups you realize the strategy is the same. Thus, the more experience and skill in the leaders of the startup, the easier it is for the startup to internationalize. This goes hand in hand with the idea of being an insider in a network as often the more experience leads to more internal capabilities specifically within certain networks. Thus, Gustafsson started Learning to Sleep already having a large network based from previous startups that he could rely on. This relates to the idea of the importance of insidership as seen in Johanson and Vahlne (2009) where they argue that new knowledge is developed through relationship building. This can be seen in the case of Gustafsson as he was able to gain more efficient internationalization strategy information from his various networks than those without such strong relationships. He had already worked with several external facilitators such as the founders of HealthTech Nordic and knew which programs and resources would be most helpful for his startup. Gustafsson even went so far as to say that with his advanced experience he found he was often helping other startups more than the external facilitators were helping him. However, he did also say that the role of the external facilitators was invaluable as it provided the assistance needed to get startups up and running in the form of strong ties within the industry and connection to other actors and potential business partners.

Tendo on the other hand had a relatively inexperienced CEO in terms of entrepreneurship experience, yet the incorporation of industry, internal capabilities and network were all still apparent. Porter (1986) argues for the importance of coordination and configuration in order to create sustainable competitive advantages. Within the case of Tendo the industry was very high-technology based robotics combined with some medical knowledge and thus the founder realized that it would take increased knowledge in order to coordinate resources at an acceptable level. It appeared to be a highly skilled labor force with a few large hardware manufacturing actors located in a few geographical specialty areas. Woge realized the need to improve her internal capabilities so when the opportunity to go to Odense Robotics in Denmark appeared, she seemingly unquestionably took it. In addition, her background in design engineering from Chalmers and Lund along with previous experience working on international project with NASA in Houston developed both her engineering capabilities and cross-cultural understanding as well as her management capabilities. With that in mind, one can claim that in order to further develop her internal capabilities, which Barney et al (2001) stress to be of great importance in order to grow as firm, Woge utilized the external context and support. Thus, one can further state that the external environment and inputs contributed to the development and refinement of Tendo's internal capabilities and subsequently eased the internationalization of the startup. This is further in line with the statement of Barney (1991) saying that increased knowledge and managerial proficiency can have a positive impact on a firm's internationalization process. Finally, Woge also mentioned that she has some firsthand knowledge of the potential of the product because of relatives with different physical disabilities. These show that Tendo has a relatively experienced internal workforce from both international business and engineering aspects. As for the role of outsidership, the company seemed to agree with the revisited Uppsala Model in that it quickly realized the need to join a well-recognized network in order to help it along its internationalization path and this fear of outsidership was stronger than the potential liability of foreignness the company may have felt moving to a different country (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). Joining Odense Robotics seemed to help the startup to gain an immediate and exclusive network of robotics engineers and startups. This network helped the startup to expand geographically as well as build strong ties with other experts in the field. In addition, the notoriety that Tendo received early on from various awards and demonstration days led to good reputation that opened the doors to other networking opportunities.

In a similar vein to Tendo, Operationskollen also had an unexperienced entrepreneur leader which potentially affected its internationalization path. Theory from Porter (1986) remarks on

the importance of analyzing industry structure and competitors as well as understanding the buyer and the sources of buyer value. In the case of Operationskollen, Hessius followed this theory as the role of the industry in this case seemed to be the main motivating factor for creating the product since the developer, who was also a doctor, felt the tool could advance the medical process by allowing greater information flow between the doctor and the patient. The product which allowed patients up-to-date information on their medical procedures, helped with adherence to pre-surgery routines for the patient and allowed medical professionals to manage workflow, time to operation and costs. Overall, Hessius saw a need for the product in the market which currently was lacking this adherence technology. As for the internal capabilities, the CEO has a background of five years as a practicing medical doctor and was self-taught in software application. This unique combination of capabilities allowed for him to be able to develop and understand both sides of the application. His lack of knowledge in public procurements and internationalization however, led to him developing his network in a specific way that allowed for external facilitators to fill this role. Thus, the role of outsidership and networks combined with the thinking of Barney (1991) show how the internal capabilities of the startup in combination with the external capabilities of the network, together create the foundation necessary for internationalization. In this case, Hessius was able to utilize his required professional medical background to gain partnerships with his local hospital. In terms of network development, Johanson and Vahlne (2009) remark that insidership in relevant networks is imperative for internationalization. Hessius came across some of the downfalls of outsidership early on when trying to gather funding. He said that it was difficult to get people to investing an unproven product and that is why he needed the support of the public clinic and hospital to gain entry to a network that would allow for expansion. In addition to the hospital network, he also attended various events and joined HealthTech Nordic to expand his network and learn more about being an entrepreneur.

Redford of AddMovement, on the other hand, was an experienced entrepreneur and businessman who relied on his capabilities as a salesman and his network from previous business ventures to help internationalize and expand the startup. The role of industry in the case of AddMovement was a medical hardware technology that was CE-mark compliant and completely customizable. The industry itself was niche with few customers and somewhat low profit margins in comparison to the cost of the product. With regards to the relatively low number of potential customers combined with the high research and development costs of the product one can claim that the industry influenced AddMovement's and Redford's' choice of

desirable target markets. Hence, it is in line with the theory of Porter (1986) saying that the industry as such can influence the internationalization path of a startup and that the startup and CEO ought to carefully discern how to enact their internationalization process. The role of the internal capabilities of the startup could easily be seen as important since the original founder Marit Sundin saw the advantages of hiring an experienced entrepreneur to help internationalize the startup. Marit Sundin was the original creator of the AddSeat product however, she found that her lack of business experience made it difficult to push the startup farther. She instead hired Redford as the replacement CEO who had worked with previous startups in Sweden. Redford was able to utilize his previous network from other startups and his capabilities as an energetic salesman to attend various events across Europe and Asia. One can therefore claim that the actions made by AddMovement when hiring Redford and the utilization of Redford's prior developed capabilities is in line with the recommendations made by Barney (1991) and Barney et al (2001) that a startup with sophisticated and comprehensive internal experience and internal capabilities will achieve an improved internationalization process. The startup also conforms to the ideas of Johanson and Vahlne (2009) as it sought to limit its outsidership by becoming involved in a network within the Nordic region. Redford joined external facilitators such as HealthTech Nordic and Sweden Incubators & Science Parks, which he felt aligned with the strategy of the startup and could help further the startup's position. He continuously attended more conferences than he avoided all in the hopes of meeting the right potential customers. With his skillful and charismatic personality combined with his purposeful strategy, Redford ultimately showed the importance of not only joining a network but more importantly joining the right network.

Finally, the role of industry, internal capabilities and network in the case of Medfield Diagnostics' business experienced CEO Blomsterberg seem to follow a similar trajectory of the other startups in this study. Following Porter (1986) the company emphasized coordination and configuration of its resources in order to strategically improve its competitive advantage. Since the industry is in the medical technology sphere with highly specialized hardware component, the company was extremely careful in both its support activities of technology development and procurement gaining access to the highest quality technology and resources, as well as its primary activities such as outbound logistics in delivering the product to the end consumer. As the technology is a portable brain scanner for potential head trauma victims, it is very sensitive with little room for error any part of the coordination or configuration of the product. As for the role of internal capabilities, the education and business background of Blomsterberg provide a

wealth of knowledge for the startup. In addition, his background in the armed forces provides not only knowledge but also a potential network for the product. As a mechanical engineer with extensive previous experience in well-established medtech companies in Europe, Blomsterberg's capabilities add to Medfield Diagnostics' internationalization. This is similar to the theoretical findings of Barney (1991) and Barney et al (2001) which state that a startup, in this case Medfield Diagnostics, can increase its internal capabilities, such as managerial proficiency and certain highly requested expertise, in order to experience advancements in its internationalization process. In addition, his project manager experience in internationalization campaigns to the United States and China also helped the startup by providing an established network of potential vendors and customers. Although Blomsterberg did not have extensive startup experience, his internationalization experience and extensive network may overshadow that weakness. Thus, in the case of outsidership, Medfield Diagnostics appears to potentially be an outsider to entrepreneurship but an insider in the engineering network. According to Johanson and Vahlne (2009) the role of prior knowledge is seen as having an influencing effect on opportunity recognition and thus persons with certain previous business experience can serendipitously happen upon more opportunities. Therefore, Medfield Diagnostics matches the revisited Uppsala Model of Johanson and Vahlne (2009) by showing an established, strong network can assist a startup in its internationalization path.

Overall, in terms of industry, internal capabilities and network theory, these six startups show that it is truly a combination of all three aspects that make internationalization possible. In the six cases analyzed, the industries examined were similar and thus seemed to have the smallest effect on the internationalization of the startup however, the coordination and configuration of resources did seem to play an important role agreeing with Porter (1986). The choice of industry was also somewhat chosen before the startup was created and often based on the interests of the founder, stemming back to their previous formal education. Therefore, internal capabilities as well as the role of the network seemed to play a more vital part in the internationalization which are in line with the findings of Barney (1991), Barney et al (2001) and Johanson and Vahlne (2009), but this could be due to the limited industries examined. However, a few of the candidates interviewed also mentioned that with the correct capabilities, any somewhat viable product could be internationalized and profitable. Thus, perhaps that role of external networks and internal capabilities supersedes that of industry in today's highly connected world of consumers and producers showing a stronger alignment with the theories of Barney (1991), Barney et al (2001) and Johanson and Vahlne (2009) in comparison to Porter (1986). The

interviews also highlighted the importance of the CEO as a figurehead for a startup. As CEOs are becoming more public figures, their background informs potential customers about the startup and in sense becomes a form of marketing for the startup. Somewhat of a split was seen in CEOs with business experienced versus those with product development experience as those with more engineering backgrounds were more likely to focus on the technology of the startup and improving their business capabilities through external business facilitators. Those who already had business experience, however, did not seem to rely on external facilitators as much but rather created a strategy for the startup to flourish regardless of the product.

5.3. Entrepreneurship: Absorptive Capacity and Alertness

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Cohen and Levinthal (1990) argue that firms’ absorptive capacity, or ability to identify, evaluate and incorporate previous knowledge, affects their use of external business facilitator support. Thus, the previous experience and knowledge of entrepreneurs affects their use of these facilitators, where those startups with less experience and knowledge tend to enroll for external support more often (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). Tang et al (2010) assess that entrepreneurs or business leaders who are seeking new and economically beneficial business opportunities through internationalization ought to first initiate a screening process in order to find suitable target markets. This scanning process is believed to assist the entrepreneur by making them more aware and alert of the surrounding business context and its changes. After conducting a careful screening, the entrepreneur or business leader is expected to connect previously-disparate information in order to see eventual correlations and patterns, which consequently results in the leader or entrepreneur deciding whether to realize the opportunity. In addition, Tang et al (2010) state that entrepreneurs or individuals with greater experience possess a greater analytical understanding of business contexts and are more alert to their opportunities. However, business leaders and entrepreneurs with less experience can improve their analytical capability and alertness by exposing themselves for different internationalization attempts. Furthermore, Oviatt and McDougall (2005) stress that startups working within technology can internationalize quickly thanks to their unique inventions and ability to incorporate themselves into different business networks. In addition, Oviatt and McDougall (2005) claim that it is difficult to evaluate whether the characteristics of industry shape the startup or if it is the startups and the capabilities of the business leaders that form the industry and the overall business context. Overall, in the cases below it appears that the scanning process for most startups was similar and based on previous knowledge, however, the type of previous

knowledge that the founders had heavily influenced their opportunity realization and utilization of external facilitator assistance.

The CEO of Mevia Jesper Hassel's scanning process was strongly connected to his previous collaboration with Stora Enso in a joint-project during his studies at Chalmers, where he both identified and initiated the partnership with the corporation. Due to Hassel's experience working with Stora Enso and knowledge about their field of work, Mevia's founder and CEO became alert and realized the opportunity of combining products of Stora Enso with new digital engineering and healthcare thus illustrating an absorptive capacity. This indicates with regards to the theory of Tang et al (2010) that Hassel had been able to develop his alertness during his years at Chalmers by successfully connecting previous previously-disparate information, in this case original adherence solutions with implementation of new digital technology, and making evaluations and taking actions on the existence of profitable business opportunities for a modern digital adherence solution. The actualization of the business idea was helped by the fact that Hassel had little fear of not making future sales since the main customer, a British pharmaceutical company, was already on board and considering paying for the future work needed to create the product. This consequently resulted in the creation of Mevia's digital adherence solution for patients with relatively little fear or hesitation. While the CEO has product development and startup experience, his limited previous internationalization experience and absorptive capacity led to him utilizing the help of the British pharmacy customer more heavily than an experienced business person may have in order to internationalize. This is in line with the theories of Cohen and Levinthal (1990) saying that startups and their entrepreneurs own background, such as educational background and previous business experience, influence which external support processes a startup utilize and how they use it. In other words, Mevia was in greater need of external help with their internationalization endeavors than product development. Further, Mevia's usage of a British pharmaceutical company as springboard for penetrating the British market also corresponds to the theory of Cohen and Levinthal (1990) claiming that startups can develop and utilize internal and external networks in order to be more alert and absorptive to business opportunities.

In contrast, Micael Gustafsson of Learning to Sleep had previous business internationalization experience but not specific product development knowledge which affected his entrepreneurship path. Learning to Sleep's first screening process and alertness for future business opportunities was inspired by Gustafsson's business partner who has a proficiency

working as a CBT therapist. Hence, they both saw a market need for more efficient treatment among international patients with sleeping issues. In addition, Gustafsson's vast experience of startup internationalizations and detection of business opportunities was highly valuable and useful in establishing Learning to Sleep. Gustafsson and his co-founder understood that by implementing modern technology, CBT therapies could be conducted on a larger scale in less time and with fewer costs. Gustafsson's prior knowledge of startup internationalization and his extensive business network allowed the evaluation process of international business opportunities to be less intense and much quicker, aligning with the theory Tang et al (2010) and Cohen and Levinthal (1990) claiming that startups and entrepreneurs with extensive previous experience may possess a greater ability to understand and recognize new business opportunities and act more act more swiftly. In other words, Gustafsson's extensive experience appears to positively affect and stimulate his absorptive capacity and alertness to new opportunities. Thus, Gustafsson was less afraid of having an unfinished product or service before internationalizing. The CEO prefers to swiftly expand the business network of the startup early by conducting trial and error processes with the healthcare solution. The CEO said that he much preferred this way rather than losing momentum by spending an excessive amount of time sitting at a desk analyzing predictions of different markets and their potential business opportunities.

In a similar vein to Hassel from Mevia, Tendo's CEO Sofie Woge has previous product development experience however, she has less internationalization experience. The business idea of the startup was heavily influenced by Woge's previous work as a design engineer at NASA in Houston Texas. Knowing that her knowledge and creativity could be utilized in order reach a larger earthly audience, combined with having relatives with rheumatic disorders and grip difficulties, Woge became alert to the chance of supplying international markets with a new and improved gripping device. This shows that Woge has been able to use her absorptive capacity and alertness to combine prior separate information, in this case space engineering and healthcare, in order to come up with new grip assistant product for international costumers which is in line the statements of Tang et al (2010) and Cohen and Levinthal (1990). In addition, Woge's actions correspond to the theoretical statements of Zahra and George (2002) emphasizing the beneficial gain of incorporating external previous experience and research, in this case from NASA, into the startup. When evaluating what a realization of her business plan would result in the CEO took different factors into consideration. After obtaining different external grants and contributions she decided the opportunity was worth pioneering and

subsequently opened an office in Odense Denmark. This shows how less internationalization experience and absorptive capacity potentially led Woge to utilize Odense Robotics more extensively as an external partner to begin her internationalization process in Denmark.

During his early years as a practicing physician Jesper Hessius' search and scanning process for business opportunities evolved naturally as he clearly saw that contemporary healthcare systems could improve by applying digital support tools. Hessius' earlier knowledge and interest in technology and development of digital platforms appears to have positively affected his alertness to detecting and exploring different market needs and business opportunities, which is in a similar vein with the statements of Tang et al (2010). Knowing that multiple patients requested a greater understanding and information in conjunction with their surgeries which could be eased by the implementation of technology, Hessius founded his business idea. By fusing his medical expertise with his fondness of technology, Operationskollen was started. The CEO admitted that he is a perfectionist spending countless hours developing a thoroughly trustworthy product before expanding his network and going to new markets. His experience with product development appeared more developed than his internationalization experience and thus, similar to Hassel and Woge, he looked to external facilitators to support with his internationalization process to aid in his absorptive capacity. This corresponds to the theory of Tang et al (2010) which states that entrepreneurs tend to compensate for their less developed specific knowledge and experience in certain fields by applying for external support, or in this case, external internationalization support. Different business facilitators seem to have inspired the entrepreneur to think big and trace the next steps of the startup, emboldening the startup to conduct more trial and error experimentations.

Mike Redford of AddMovement, in contrast to the product development experience of Hassel, Woge and Hessius, had more internationalization and business experience which affected his entrepreneurial path. Redford, the mechanical engineer and sales person conducting an incessant scan and search for business opportunities, was first introduced to his business colleague Marit Sundin while attending a convention. Sundin, a Paralympic athlete, possessed extensive experience and knowledge from testing different wheelchairs and identified the need for more sophisticated and agile vehicles for people with different disabilities. By combining Redford's earlier developed alertness to different business opportunities and Sundin's genuine eagerness to equip the international market with more advanced and overachieving wheelchairs, there were few reasons to hesitate in forming a business partnership. Redford's expertise within

engineering, as well as his outgoing business personality, consequently resulted in the perfect mixture of joint interests with Sundin in pursuing to improve the life quality of disabled people through AddMovement. Thus, it seems that Redford's previous business experience led to him putting less emphasis on the inputs and guidance from external facilitators and instead he relied on his own previous experience. Consequently, one can claim with regards to Zahra and George (2002) that by hiring Redford, AddMovement successfully managed to incorporate external expertise and experience into the startup instead of relying solely on repeated support from external facilitators. Furthermore, the vast experience of Redford which substituted the usage of some external support corresponds to the theoretical statement of Cohen and Levinthal (1990) saying that entrepreneurs and startups with extensive expertise and experience tend to utilize external support less frequently.

Finally, the CEO of Medfield Diagnostics, Stefan Blomsterberg, like Gustafsson and Redford, possesses vast business experience and a more developed absorptive capacity from working for different companies producing healthcare products and solutions. However, the first scanning and search process of combining knowledge of microwaves and healthcare was initiated by the founders of Medfield Diagnostics, who are also professors at Chalmers with expertise in microwave technologies. Thus, by having Blomsterberg onboard, the startup has been more alert to different business opportunities by commercializing and exploring the international demands for a more portable brain scanning machine. In addition, Blomsterberg's capabilities within mechanical engineering have facilitated the process of searching and planning on how to coordinate the development of the smaller and more efficient brain scanning device. Moreover, Blomsterberg has been able to exploit his already existing business network in order to achieve a better outreach of the product, which is highly in line with the theories of Cohen and Levinthal (1990) and Sarasvathy et al (2010) who claim sophisticated developed networks and comprehensive previous experience generate greater absorptive capacity which influences and leads to better and faster business opportunity recognition that can be applied in new contexts. Furthermore, Blomsterberg has been very dedicated to creating sales and research partnerships as well as bringing in more investors and contributors by utilizing the networks of external business facilitators, such as Sahlgrenska Science Park and British ambulance trusts. Overall, it appears that those entrepreneurs with more previous business internationalization experience such as Gustafsson, Redford and Blomsterberg tend to rely more on their own experience when making decisions understanding the importance of gaining momentum in the early stages of internationalization endeavors. Whereas as the more product development

focused leaders such as Hassel, Woge and Hessius appeared to rely on external facilitators or customers to encourage their internationalization strategies due to fewer years working in different international corporations.

5.4. External Support Processes

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5.4.1. Mentoring Services

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Pauwels et al (2016) as well as Kohler (2016) argue that mentoring services are one of the most important support processes for a startup in conjunction with its early internationalization. However, when it comes to the startups in this thesis the tendency of receiving this type of support process and how the support process is performed varies from the different external business facilitators. The extent to which a startup has obtained mentoring services appears to depend on if the startup and its employees have had any earlier experience from running a startup and attempting to internationalize. When the experience within the startup falls short there appears to be a greater need of this type of external support. However, even though these support processes are offered, the frequency and intensity of interaction between the mentors and the mentees is not always consistent.

For instance, Mevia’s Jesper Hassel was not assigned with a specific mentor. Although, the startup did receive small amounts of guidance in the initial phases, the firm did not receive mentorship on a regular basis from Hassel’s former university Chalmers and Sahlgrenska Science Park. Learning to Sleep on the other hand has also been in less need of mentoring support services thanks to Gustafsson’s own vast experience from internationalizing earlier startups which does not fully match the statements of Kohler (2016) saying that external mentorship support is crucial for startups. Regarding Tendo, Sofie Woge, clarified that they have minor interactions with a few mentors. However, the communication between the startup and the external business facilitators were more ad hoc. Hessius the CEO of Operationskollen also claims that they have received different mentorship from external business facilitators on an intermittent basis, which differs from the theory of Cohen and Hochberg (2014) as well as Kohler (2016) where regular interactions and guidance from external mentors are advocated. It also appears that Operationskollen, a startup with less experience of internationalization, utilizes the support mostly for very specific purposes when they believe there is a shortage of knowledge among their employees. In a similar vein with Operationskollen, AddMovement’s CEO Mike Redford stresses they have mostly utilized this type of support process in

conjunction with tax matters, so the startup can focus on developing and selling their product. In addition, Redford states there is room for improvement for the external business facilitators, stating that instead providing general guidance on every aspect of business operations, the external business facilitators ought to focus on becoming experts and superior in a few niched issues. Medfield Diagnostics, however, only obtained mentorship support services for two days even though they were positive towards having more inputs from external business facilitators overall. It appears this startup, with its healthcare knowledge and previous internationalization experience from the CEO Blomsterberg, has been able to achieve progress with their internationalization without much input from external facilitators.

Overall, it appears that for most of the startups mentoring was only lightly used but when it was utilized it was for specific knowledge gain. This could be related to the fact that mentoring is time consuming and startups are often in a time crunch. In addition, the startups, such as Learning to Sleep, argued that mentorship support is sometimes too general and inefficient. Hence, startups can gain more from the mentorship when the external facilitators have exclusive and superior expertise within just a few fields than rather being average on multiple mentorship aspects. This aligns with theory from Armanios et al (2017) where they show that external actors helped entrepreneurs to gain business capabilities that they did not have on their own. It also shows a connection with McEvily and Zaheer (1999) as they showed the role of external actors to be important but utilized in different ways depending on the need of the startup.

5.4.2. Demonstration Days

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Demonstration days organized by external business facilitators are believed to offer startups a chance to efficiently create a greater awareness of their product or service by showcasing it for potential investors, potential partners, customers and other key actors within the industry (Kohler, 2016; Cohen, 2013; Pauwels et al, 2016). Micael Gustafsson, the CEO of Learning to Sleep, appears to be an expert and most alert when participating in different demonstration days and bonding with other useful business partners both domestically and abroad. Gustafsson also agrees with the theory of for instance Cohen (2013) that demonstration days are an effective support process in terms of interacting and establishing agreements with new interests. Several startups, such as Medfield Diagnostics, Mevia, Operationskollen and Learning to Sleep have either participated at the annual Swedish healthcare convention Vitalis or occasions arranged by Sahlgrenska Science Park where they have met and been presented to other useful companies or persons, which is in line with the statement of Pauwels et al (2016) that

demonstration days enable startups to meet valuable key actors in the industry. Furthermore, some external business facilitators such as HealthTech Nordic appear to have financially contributed to the startups by paying their entrance fees or reducing the prices. However, in other cases the startups have paid the entire fee by themselves. Nevertheless, the startups have occasionally been given grants for their travel and accommodation expenses by the Swedish innovation agency Vinnova.

In other situations, the startups, for instance Tendo, Medfield Diagnostics and Operationskollen, have been picked by external business facilitators to participate and showcase their healthcare solution on the main stage in return for not having to pay for either entrance fees or travel expenses. Mevia and Operationskollen believe that the demonstration days positively enhance their reputation and recognition, which by extension ease the process of reaching new customers, investors, establishing new networks and getting in touch with potential business partners. This is line with theories stated by Cohen (2013) and Pauwels et al (2016) that demonstration days can increase the exposure and brand awareness of the startup and as well leading to the establishment of new profitable business contacts. However, both Learning to Sleep and Tendo stress that one ought to conduct a careful process of deciding which demonstration days should be prioritized to participate in as the supply is vast. Redford and AddMovement, nonetheless, stress an important aspect that theories appear to have neglected, namely that most demonstrations days ought to be calibrated and refined as most of them seem to forget involving the focus of end-customers of the certain showcased products and service. Hence, the demonstration days often are perceived being too general and that the attention towards a specific startup is lost in murmur of all other non-affine healthcare startups. Consequently, startups could benefit from more customized demonstration days focusing solely one or a few specific illnesses or health care issues. As Redford and Blomsterberg stated, improving the quality of life for the patient ought to be the center of attention and planning.

5.4.3. Financial Support

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Theory such as Engelman et al (2015) indicates startups which are underfunded face larger difficulties when internationalizing and therefore are expected to experience a dull and stagnant expansion to foreign markets. Clarysse and Bruneel (2007) also mention startups require considerable capital when researching and developing products or services adjusted and suitable for international markets, and that the need for money increases the more technically advanced the startups are. Soetanto and Jack (2013), Kraus (2018) as well as George et al (2005)

asses that startups too often do not have enough of their own financial resources to internationalize or neglect the gravity of having them.

All the startups of this thesis appear to be of the same opinion that the financial side is the most demanding aspect when internationalizing. One might therefore claim that external financial support is one of the most important support processes a startup ought to receive in conjunction with their early internationalization or as Mike Redford and Micael Gustafsson emphasize, startups are always in dire need of money. Woge, the CEO and founder of Tendo, elaborates saying that very little would have been possible to achieve without obtaining money from external business facilitators. Gustafsson further claims, like George et al (2005), that startups still underestimate the economic cost of internationalization. Although, external business facilitators might be risk averse and hesitate to invest in startups, as stated by Clarysse and Bruneel (2007), Gustafsson insists that external business facilitators ought to be aware of the time and money needs of startups when internationalizing. One may, consequently, understand why the government innovation agency Vinnova or public funded Almi have been major financial contributors for all the startups in this thesis when private contributors fall short. Blomsterberg, Woge and Redford all stress the development of functioning technically advanced hardware is an extremely expensive parts of the startup, which is in line with the statements of Clarysse and Bruneel (2007). Although Mevia asses that an international campaign is possible without obtaining in external money, the CEO Jesper Hassel agrees with the theory of Aernoudt (2004) saying that it would be difficult in the long-run to become viable and long-lasting internationally. However, most startups connected to this thesis have managed to bring private investors onboard. Fischer and de Rassenfosse (2011) and Sullivan and Harroch (2018) assert that the investment structure of private contribution does shift, however, private investors often expect to get something in exchange, for instance ownership shares or guarantees, for their investments. This is the case for Learning to Sleep, Medfield Diagnostics, Tendo, Mevia, AddMovement, who have all received external capital from private business facilitators and contributors in return of ownership shares. Operationskollen is an exception compared to the other startups however, since Operationskollen has not yet obtained any money from private actors and therefore not given away any ownership shares. Despite not wanting to be forced into taking in external funds, the CEO Jesper Hessius claims that their upcoming internationalization might require external funding just like the other startups. Regarding the contributions from different governmental external business facilitators, the startups have not given away ownership shares in return. Nonetheless, one can claim, with all this evidence and

with regards to the theory, that financial support from external business facilitators is extremely valuable and important for startups in conjunction with their early internationalization endeavors.

5.4.4. Legal Support

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According to Lenidou, Samiee and Gelders-Weiss (2016) startups can be deterred from their internationalization process if they find that the laws and regulations in a foreign country are too complicated. Therefore, external facilitators seek to fill this need by offering processes such as legal advisory for business agreements, tax issues, patents, certification and licenses and other important legal issues (Symeonidou et al, 2017; Leonidou, Samiee & Geldres-Weiss, 2016). In the case of Mevia, some personal contacts as well as lawyers from Chalmers University were utilized. Interestingly, the CEO Hassel found that having a good relationship with partners was the most important aspect of legal agreements however, since it prevented large legal fees in case of later disagreements. Similarly, Learning to Sleep placed emphasis on reading through legal agreement and making sure the partnership was solid and thus avoided using lawyers from external facilitators. Consequently, the empirical evidence to some extent questions the theoretical statements of, for instance, Leonidou et al (2016) since legal issues appears not to completely deter startups from internationalizing. Instead the startups find a way to circumvent international legal issues by establishing solid and well-functioning business partnerships from the very beginning.

Nonetheless, one area the startups did seem to utilize in terms of legal services from external facilitators was for tax issues. Startups such as Tendo, Mevia and AddMovement seemed to use lawyers to help them with various tax issues. In the case of Tendo, the startup utilized lawyers connected to the Odense cluster where initial legal consultations were free and then there was a charge after a certain amount of advice. In addition to tax issues, the startup Operationskollen also utilized lawyers to help with legal data privacy knowledge and various writing agreements which were co-financed by external facilitators such as HealthTech Nordic. AddMovement's Redford also used the processes of different external facilitators to help with patent application and ownership structure advice. Redford also noted, in a similar vein to Hassel and Gustafsson, that finding the right partners and achieving mutual trust in the beginning is one of the most critical aspects of preventing future legal fees. This is in line with the statement of Johanson and Vahlne (2009) stating that trust building is key when startups want to expand. Consequently, this also shows that refraining from internationalizing is not a definite

consequence of complicated international laws and regulations, as was originally claimed by Leonidou et al (2016), since the companies ultimately find their own way to navigate the complications without necessarily hiring lawyers. Medfield Diagnostics differs slightly from the other startups however, as they did not use any external facilitator support for legal issues and thus mostly found their lawyers from outside sources on their own. Overall, it appears that the common theme from the startups regarding legal support was that they took it when offered by the external facilitators for free but otherwise they tried to avoid potential legal issues through good partnership relationships and trust. In addition, since most of the startups interviewed had internationalized within the EU, extensive legal support in terms of different international laws were not necessary at this stage of their internationalization process. In the end, legal support seemed to be one of the most underutilized and under offered processes in the interviews which could perhaps be related to the perceived high cost associated with this type of service. Hence, trust is utilized to compensate for the less usage of external legal support.

5.4.5. Choosing a Target Market

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According to theory, startups may oftentimes lack certain knowledge and capabilities needed to choose a correct target market and therefore external facilitators, through the role of mediation, can help the startups to navigate foreign institutions and items such as laws, regulation, traditions, values and norms that exist in other countries in order to find the best target (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 1990; Bergek & Norrman, 2008). From the interviews conducted however, most startups seem more aware of their products and its needs when internationalizing than theory gives them credit for. Although all the startups interviewed seemed to appreciate and utilize the target market assistance they received from external facilitators, the more experienced entrepreneurs cautioned startups to decide for themselves. Thus, the extent to which startups followed the advice of external facilitators for target market assistance depending greatly on the experience of the leader, with the most experienced gathering all the information possible from external facilitators and then making the decision themselves in the end. The internationalization paths of these startups could be largely influenced by external facilitators or customers if the startup was inexperienced, whereas more experienced leaders seemed to create a business strategy that was slightly more internally influenced by the startup and its product.

In the case of Mevia, the CEO was a graduate from Chalmers with relatively little internationalization experience when he entered into his first foreign market as the result of a customer who was in the foreign market at the time. In contrast, Learning to Sleep had Gustafsson at the helm who analyzed different nation's healthcare systems in order to find markets with large private healthcare sectors since that is what their specific product required. Although Learning to Sleep received a lot of advice from various external facilitators, the CEO mentioned that sometimes this advice can be conflicting and therefore at some point the startup needed to make the decision by themselves. In the case of Tendo, a relatively inexperienced CEO did not mention any specific external facilitators that helped the company to find a target market but Woge did mention that external facilitator assistance was necessary for the startup's internationalization. In a similar vein, Operationskollen, who is yet to internationalize, has employed the assistance of an external consultancy business facilitator situated in Spain as well as the external business facilitator Startup Lighthouse from Dublin to help the startup establish business in Spain and Ireland. AddMovement's experienced CEO Redford also mentioned the importance of external facilitators such as the EIT Health Program for Global Scale Up which helped him to gain information on nine target markets eventually swaying the startup away from internationalizing in France and towards the UK, Germany and the United States. He also mentioned that he received target market help from Sting Incubator, EIT Health and HealthTech Nordic however, he does insist that the startup developed its own strategy of who to target but utilized the information provided by external facilitators to influence that strategy. Consequently, the data gathered from Tendo, Operationskollen and AddMovement indicates in a similar vein to the theories of Pauwels et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008) that external facilitators provide useful information and guidance to startups about which foreign markets are suitable to internationalize to. Finally, Medfield Diagnostics seemed to follow the path of a startup with an experienced leader, similar to Learning to Sleep's Gustafsson, as Blomsterberg used his previous experience to push the startup towards the UK as its first target market. Overall, the startups interviewed seemed to utilize help regarding target markets to some extent which matches the theory provided by McEvily and Zaheer (1999) showing the role of external actors in increasing the efficiency and time to market for startups.

5.4.6. Creating Networks

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According to Bergek and Norrman (2008) startups often lack established entrepreneurial networks and thus, compared to companies with advanced networks, these startups can lose valuable opportunities to meet other experts who can engage in knowledge sharing. Thus, one

of the roles of external facilitators is to supply startups with an initial network that can help these startups become insiders (Bergek & Norrman, 2008; Soetanto & Jack, 2013). When analyzing the startups interviewed, it appears that one of the greatest tools external facilitators offer their clients is the initial network into a specific sector of network experts which is in line with the emphasized importance of external support when creating networks stated by Pauwels et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008). For some startups with previously established strong network ties, this aspect of external facilitators was utilized less frequently however, even in those cases external facilitators were used as means of marketing, information sourcing, gaining access to new ideas and potential partners, gaining a support network and influencing the startup industry positively.

In the case of Mevia, the startup built much of its network through external facilitators such as Sahlgrenska Science Park and the help of various support outlets from Chalmers University. Although not an external facilitator by definition, Chalmers University helped the startup to meet their initial customer, build their brand, utilize the brand of Chalmers and meet with other like-minded companies and persons at the university, which corresponds to the theoretical statements of Soetanto and Jack (2013) who claim that universities and associated scientists can be utilized as valuable external facilitators when internationalizing. Gustafsson in contrast built his network for Learning to Sleep when HealthTech Nordic was still developing its own network. Therefore, Gustafsson had to work to create his own network by attending as many startup and cluster organization conferences as he could in order to collect business cards and extend his network. He asserted however, the importance of the external facilitator in helping startups to create a network which increases their ability to internationalize, which is line with the theories of Pauwels et al (2016) and Soetanto and Jack (2013) who claim that external facilitators can act as a center and important building block when laying the foundation of a startup's network. Furthermore, it also corresponds to Bergek and Norrman (2008) who stress the necessity of networks for startups when internationalizing. Thus, in Gustafsson's opinion, creating a network is the responsibility of both the individual as well as the external facilitator and they must work in harmony to create a mutually beneficial relationship. Woge of Tendo had a similar experience as she tried to attend every competition she could find in order to expand her network while also asserting that a lot of her opportunity came through the external facilitators Ideon Innovation and Odense Robotics since they were such well-known names in the robotics industry. Further this matches the theory of Soetanto and Jack (2013) stating that business events arranged by external facilitators offers startups a great opportunity to interact

and establish contacts with various useful actors, such as product developers, investors and costumers. As stated by Soetanto and Jack (2013) external facilitators come in different shapes but all facilitators offer startups the flexibility of using their recognition and contacts when internationalizing. Regarding, for instance Operationskollen, an early partnership with a healthcare clinic in Vasteras helped them to gain trust from new customers. In addition, the clinic was able to promote the startup's product as well as connect the startup with other potential customers and partners. AddMovement's CEO Redford, like Gustafsson and Woge also attended every event possible in order to extend his network on his own but credits specific external facilitators with sending information about such events and helping him with the initial stepping stones of building a network. Although Redford still asserts that building a network is mostly up to the individual in terms of making connections, talking to people and making things happen, he also realizes the powerful influence of facilitators such as HealthTech Nordic who provided not only information but also an established name and brand to with while trying to internationalize. Consequently, this once again elucidates the resemblance with the theoretical findings of Soetanto and Jack (2013) illustrating external facilitators as the network hub for startups to utilize when early internationalizing. Finally, in the case of Medfield Diagnostics the experienced CEO claims that networks can ultimately be divided into different types and that external facilitators each have their own specific niche. The findings in these interviews align with the revised Uppsala Model from Johanson and Vahlne (2009) where they show that the network is no longer linear and thus fear of outsidership has replaced psychic distance. Thus, it appears that one of external facilitators' greatest roles could be to help new startups to navigate the complex webs of relationships that exists between customers and suppliers in addition to supplying an initial base network.

5.5. Analysis Conclusion

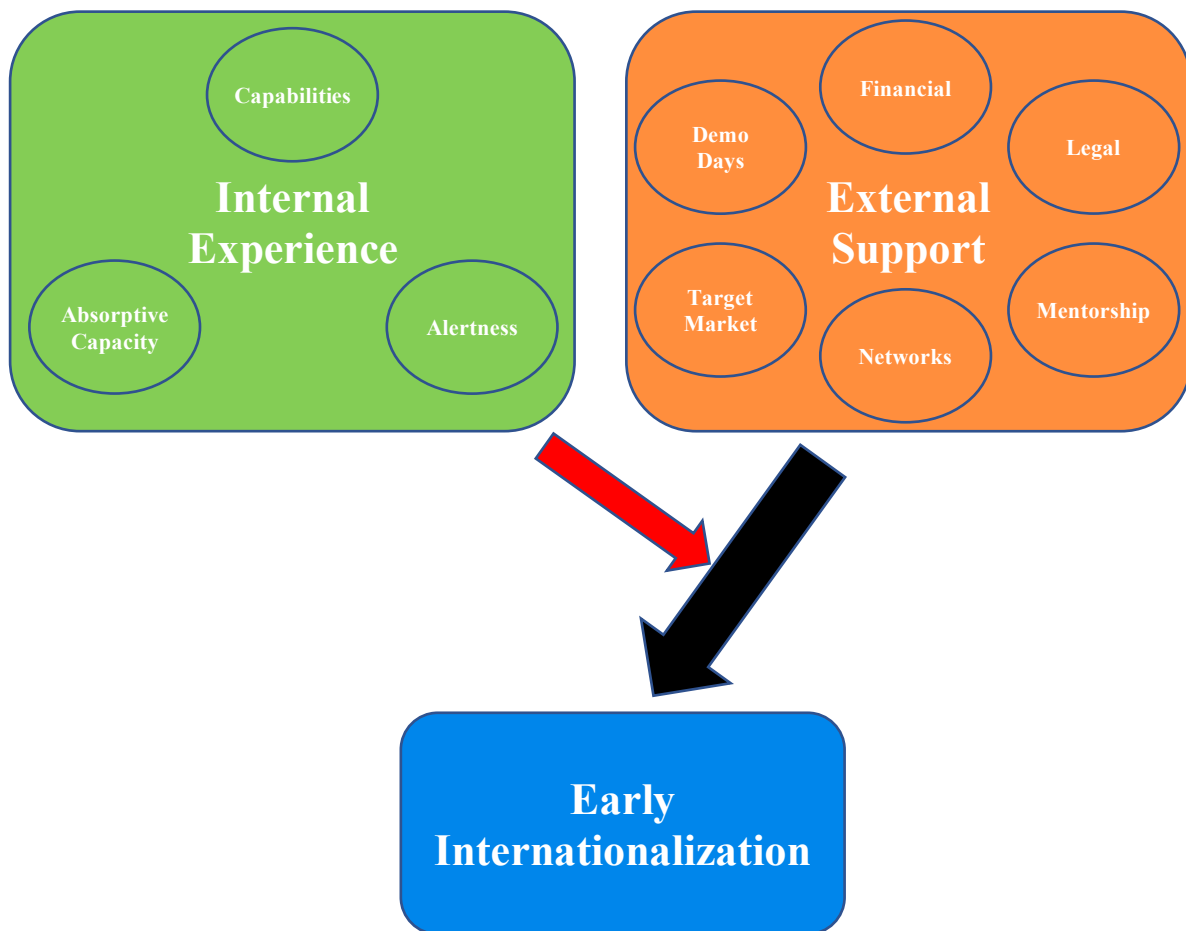


Figure 25. *A Model of Forces Influencing Startups' Early Internationalization*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019) with influence from Pauwels et al (2016), Leonidou et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008).

The conclusive model (Figure 25) outlines the overall process startups in this thesis follow in order to achieve their ultimate goal of early internationalization. This thesis finds that most startups do not follow the same internationalization stages and instead create their own unique paths that are mostly independent of the fears of psychic distance, geographic distance and risk aversion found in previous internationalization theory such as Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and Johanson and Vahlne (1990). By analyzing different factors such as industry, capabilities, networks, absorptive capacity and entrepreneurial alertness and comparing them to how the startups utilized external support processes, this thesis provides additional knowledge about which factors are the most influential in a startup's early internationalization. The findings show that the most important factors were capabilities, absorptive capacity and

alertness, which constitute the internal experience of a startup and directly affect the startup's use of external support programs (green box, Figure 25).

Theory shows that in order to achieve early internationalization startups may use different external support processes (orange box, Figure 25) from various external business facilitators to ease the process of internationalizing (Pauwels et al, 2016; Leonidou et al, 2016; Bergeck & Norrman, 2008). This thesis finds however that the extent to which a specific external support process, or several different support processes are utilized, tends to differ with regards to the level of internal experience within the startups. When the startups possess more experienced entrepreneurs or employees in terms of different business situations, such as prior internationalization endeavors and product/service development, there appears to be a lesser need of the corresponding external support process. This experience often comes in the form of sophisticated capabilities, absorptive capacity and alertness which allow the entrepreneur to recognize opportunities and more efficient methods of internationalizing (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; Barney, 1991; Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Tang et al, 2010). For instance, if a startup and its experienced entrepreneur already have a sophisticated and extensive internal business network from prior internationalization campaigns, then there is consequently a tendency for that startup and entrepreneur to be less dependent and not fully utilize the external network support offered by an external business facilitator. In other words, the red arrow in Figure 25 denotes the influencing affect that different levels of internal experience have on the utilization of various external support processes when trying to internationalize early.

The startups of this thesis have different levels of internal experience with regards to, for instance, years of working and educational and business background. Consequently, the total usage of external support processes from different facilitators differed somewhat depending on the previous business experience of the startup. Some startups utilized more external support processes from several different facilitators simultaneously, and other startups less so. However, the most frequently used external support processes, and possibly the most valuable ones when early internationalizing appear to be external financial and network support processes. Thereafter, choice of target market and demonstration days support seems to be the most utilized external support processes. Lastly, mentorship and legal external support appear to be the least used processes by startups in this thesis when early internationalizing.

6. Conclusion



6.1. Empirical and Theoretical Contributions

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This thesis strives to contribute an enhanced understanding of the early internationalization of startups, specifically how startups' internal experience influences their utilization of support from external facilitators. Furthermore, the support processes offered by external business facilitators were examined in order to determine which were most relevant for the startups in their internationalization process. In turn, this showed how the startups could more efficiently utilize the support offered to them. According to our findings all the support processes were used by the startups during their internationalization processes, however, to varying extents due to the different needs and settings of the startups.

When looking at the internationalization process one can conclude that startups do not always follow the same stages whether it be due to the sort of product/service, prior experience in the startup industry or financial limitations. For example, most of the companies with physical hardware products tended to spend more time on product development before and in conjunction with their early internationalization. The more service-based applications on the other hand were more willing to engage in trial and error processes. Therefore, some of the service-based companies started selling their product through experienced external sellers as their first step in internationalization while some of the hardware-based companies started their internationalization path by manufacturing and producing some components in foreign countries. In terms of previous experience and founder influences, the informants seemed to disagree with the original Uppsala Model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) and instead aligned more with the revisited Uppsala Model (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009), as they saw the world as more developed and had a more open attitude towards distant cultures and internationalization in general.

As for financial limitations and resources, previous theory, for instance Porter (1986), Barney, (1991) and Johanson and Vahlne (2009), argued whether industry, internal capabilities or a developed network aided the entrepreneurs the most in their internationalization. The informants analyzed in this research seemed to highlight that it was a combination of industry, internal capabilities and a developed network that made internationalization possible. Since, the companies were all in the same broad category of healthcare technology the ability to analyze the role of industry more specifically for this analysis was negligible. However, the role of internal capabilities and network theory seemed to highlight the ability of these

entrepreneurs to compensate for whichever resources they may have lacked by supplementing their shortcomings with processes offered by external facilitators (Barney, 1991; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). For example, those with less developed business experience seemed to rely on external facilitators more for general knowledge and business guidance whereas entrepreneurs more experienced in business seemed to utilize the external facilitators for more nuanced and specified information.

The results of this analysis agree with previous entrepreneurship theories, for instance Cohen and Levinthal (1990), in that the findings showed that more business experienced entrepreneurs often created their own strategies and only relied on external facilitators for niched and specific information. Most of the entrepreneurs in this thesis utilized a scanning process that was based on previous internal knowledge they already had, and then how much they utilized and searched for external facilitator input and assistance was largely related to the previous business experience of the startup. In the case of the less experienced startups, the external facilitators seemed to have more influence and often tried to push the startups to internationalize or initiate the expansion process quicker than they would have if they did not have this outside influence. The more experienced business leaders however, already understood the importance of a quick internationalization and came into the process with predeveloped internationalization strategies, sometimes even before the product development stages were completed.

Regarding the support processes, the factors of previous business experience, customization of support processes, cost of support processes, and availability of support processes seemed to influence startups' use of different external facilitators the most and in turn their internationalization paths. Due to these various factors, the usage of mentorship support services differed for the startups. Startups and entrepreneurs with less internationalization experience needed more external support while startups and entrepreneurs with more previous experience let the previous experience compensate for this support which is similar to the theoretical findings of Cohen and Levinthal (1990). However, the startups were in general more apt to receive this support when the external business facilitator possessed exclusive and superior expertise within just a few certain business areas. Demonstration days, on the other hand, were more frequently utilized by most of the startups. Although, similar to the external mentorships, the startups expressed that demonstration days should be calibrated and more specifically only focusing on a smaller number of target customers with likewise demands and preferences. Nonetheless, external financial support and contributions is indicated being one of

the most important support for the startups regardless of the previous experience of the entrepreneur since startups is in overall in constant need of money and the internationalization endeavors requires extensive financial resources. Consequently, the startups have applied for public contributions as well as private ones in exchange for ownership shares.

In terms of legal support, the cost and availability of services seemed to influence startups utilization the most as it appeared to be one of the costliest support processes when continually used and therefore most startups tried to avoid the need for it altogether. Thus, trust was a more important component in most of the startups partnerships to prevent legal issues. As for choosing a target market, the use of this support process was influenced by experience as the less experienced startups followed the advice of the external facilitators more closely while the more experienced startups tended to create their strategies on their own. Overall, however, most startups said that the external facilitators helped increase their efficiency and time to market in some way. Finally, creating networks was one of the most important support processes that external facilitators offer. Both experienced and inexperienced startups alike utilized this external support for its marketing potential, however, it seems that the more experienced entrepreneurs also relied heavily on previous strong network ties that had been developed over many years. Thus, the more experienced a startup became the less it relied on external facilitators to provide the initial and main network.

Regardless of the experience of the startups and their entrepreneurs, external financial and network support processes are indicated to be the most utilized in conjunction with early internationalization endeavors. Although external target market support processes and demonstration days are also heavily used, these appear to be somewhat influenced by the experience of the entrepreneur, with more experienced entrepreneurs compensating with their own previous experiences. Lastly, mentorship and legal advice support processes seemed to be the least utilized however, this could be due to the high financial costs often associated with legal support and the high time costs associated with mentorship. Furthermore, the startups have utilized support from different external business facilitators simultaneously and do not rely on only one external facilitator to provide all support processes needed. Consequently, it appears that for each startup the utilization of external facilitator support processes was unique depending on their previous experience and needs, and thus there was no one panacea that could be universally applied to the early internationalization of the startups.

6.2. Suggestions for Future Research

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In order to create a more accurate and thorough conclusion a greater number of companies and more types of informants could be used. A greater number of companies could be interviewed in order to analyze findings more thoroughly and see if the findings are applicable to all companies regardless of case specific factors. In addition, startups and informants could be used from various countries and industries and with different roles within the startups. The analysis of startups from different countries and industries could give a more nuanced perspective into whether external facilitator support processes are utilized the same around the world or whether the findings of this paper are specific to Swedish startups in the healthcare sector. In addition, various roles within the startups could provide more nuanced and detailed perspectives which the CEOs of the companies interviewed may have overlooked. In addition to startups, external facilitators could also be interviewed in order to determine their reasoning behind the support processes they provide and how they see these affecting the early internationalization of the startups that they work with. Finally, since financial support and networking support processes appeared to be the most utilized support processes, future research could focus more closely on these specific support processes in order to determine how the funds are utilized across different startups and how the networks are structured and utilized among various startups.

6.3. Implications for Practitioners

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The implications found through this thesis seem to indicate a need for startups to learn through experience by actively engaging in the early internationalization process. In addition, these startups ought to understand their individual company's capabilities as well as it wants and needs early on during its internationalization process, in order to determine which external facilitator support processes are of most importance to their internationalization. Startups and entrepreneurs with less business experience may need to utilize more external support in order to gain a broader expanse of information to supplement their own internal knowledge. Whereas the more experienced startups can often create their own individual strategy and determine which external information is most suited to their company's needs. In general, however, all startups regardless of experience, should not hesitate in applying for the support and guidance of the external facilitators that are offered free of charge. Thus, the overall way that external facilitator support processes should help startups is by providing niche expert information in order to fill the internal knowledge gaps, hence, providing the startups with a support system to fall back on when internationalizing early.

6.4. Implications for Research

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This thesis shows that previous business experience is a large factor in determining how startups and their entrepreneurs use different external facilitators' support when internationalizing early. Also, it shows that by focusing only on isolated aspects affecting early internationalization, such as Cohen and Levinthal's (1990) and Cohen's (2013) descriptions of support processes, research neglects to analyze how multiple aspects, such as those included in internal experience, can moderate a startup's early internationalization. Whereas Johanson and Vahlne (2009) point out the need for insidership in a network when internationalizing, this thesis shows that the role of previous business experience appears to be just as important. Once a startup has the previous experience, they often already have a formed network but more importantly they have a network of more useful persons for their specific business interest. Thus, according to Johanson and Vahlne (2009) just being inside a network is enough to early internationalize, yet these findings show that being part of the correct network and knowing how to utilize the resources it contains is actually more important. Nowadays networks are abundant yet if a startup joins the wrong network or cannot navigate it efficiently, it may in fact be more time consuming and less beneficial than not joining a network at all when internationalizing early. Furthermore, this thesis and research has continued the work of Pauwels et al (2016) in that it seeks to compare different startups and analyze how their utilization of various external facilitators impacts the entrepreneurial process in order to elucidate which external support processes are most important to startups during their early internationalization. In addition, Pauwels et al's (2016) suggests that future research ought to examine the possible request for customization of external support processes among startups and how that process could be executed. Hence, this thesis provides empirical evidence showing that startups do feel a need for more customized external support processes from facilitators when internationalizing early. Further, this thesis maps out external financial and network support as the most valuable processes for the startups. Thus, the customization of external financial and network support provides an interesting field for researchers to further examine.

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8. Appendix



8.1. Interview Questions to the Entrepreneurs of the Startups

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Description of the Firm and Capabilities

1. What is the core business of the startup?
2. Where and when was the startup founded?
3. How many employees are working for the startup?
4. What is your role within this startup?
5. For how long have you been working for the startup?
6. Have you worked for any other companies before?
7. What is your education background?
8. How would you describe yourself regarding your job? (social, hardworking, leader etc.)
9. How did you come up with the idea of your startup? (need for your product/service).
10. Do you feel you have improved your capabilities since being in this startup and if so which?

Internationalization questions

11. Which was the main incentive for you to internationalize to a foreign market?
12. Do you feel the external industry that you were in affected your ability to go abroad/to succeed?
13. To which foreign markets did you first internationalize to? When? Why? How?
14. What did you see as the start of your internationalization?
15. Did you export first, or did you set up an office abroad? Joint venture? Etc.

Opportunity Alertness and Influence of External Facilitators

16. Did you receive help from any external business facilitator in conjunction with your early internationalization?
17. If yes, which facilitators did you utilize?
18. How did you first get in touch? What was your goal in working with them? What was their goal in helping you?
19. How long did you work with them?
20. In which stages were they most helpful?
21. What processes did they help most with?
22. Were your capabilities influenced by external facilitators?
23. How did external facilitators influence your internationalization scan and search in general?
24. Your association and connection? (networks, meeting with people etc.)

25. Your evaluation and judgment? (choosing which markets to go in to, how to analyze the markets).
26. What could the external facilitators have helped more with/what was missing?
27. What do you consider were the main obstacles with that internationalization process?

External Support Processes

Mentoring Services

28. During your internationalization process did you ever receive any consistent and regular help from a certain mentor/contact person?
29. What did the mentor do for you?
30. Did the mentors provide you with knowledge and experience regarding your early internationalization? Or did they come up with an internationalization idea/strategy?
31. How frequently were you in contact? Daily basis, every week? Phone call or face-to-face meetings?

Demonstration Days

32. Have you ever been suggested by an external facilitator to visit/to participate at different conventions/conferences/demonstration days? (When and where? Name of the convention? Did you or the external facilitator have to pay for it?).
33. Which kinds of industry actors were you introduced to? (venture capitalists, investors, computer scientists, medical expertise, lawyers, etc).
34. Were you able to showcase or exhibit your product or service?
36. Do you consider that demonstration days have, to some extent, facilitated your process of internationalizing into a foreign market? (e.g. resulted in more investment or offers, business contacts, network entrance).

Financial Support

37. Have you received any financial support from external facilitators during the lifespan of your startup?
38. What is/was the structure of the investment? Shares, future return on investments in exchange for money?
39. How much of your startup is financed by external money/capital? (estimate, or %)
40. What parts of your business are most expensive and in need of external money?
41. Were you able or would you be able to internationalize without receiving external funding?
42. Have you been able to achieve a return on investment for the investors that you have worked with?

Legal Support

43. Have you needed legal support during your internationalization process? (For example, have you experienced any legal obstacles for your product or service in conjunction with your internationalization, such as. taxes, applying for patents, licenses, certifications, contracts, handling complicated foreign bureaucracy?). If yes, under what circumstances?
44. Did you ask for legal support from external facilitators? Did they fund the support, or did you have to pay a fee?
45. Do you feel this legal support helped your startup to internationalize?

Choosing a Target Market

46. What factors did you consider when selecting your first foreign markets? (Culture, geographical distance, bureaucratic system etc)
47. How did you execute the process of searching for a suitable foreign market and then acting?
48. Did you receive any suggestions from an external facilitator on which markets to target?
49. Do you have any earlier experience with internationalization processes from other companies you worked for?

Creating Networks

50. How did you go about forming your current network?
51. Did you have a previous network that you relied on?
52. Did you have any help from external facilitators to get in touch with other suitable business partners or networks?
53. Do you feel the network contacts you received through external facilitators aided in your internationalization?
54. If you met someone in a different country through a network did that influence your decision to internationalize to that country?

Last questions

55. Are you still present on the foreign markets that you early internationalized to?
56. In retrospect would you ask for external support in conjunction with your early internationalization?
57. Was external support necessary for the internationalization?
58. Would you suggest that other startups ask for external support in conjunction with their early internationalization process?
59. May we contact you if we need clarifications on certain parts that have been mentioned during the interview?

9. Illustration Clearances and Declarations



Figure

1. *Early Internationalization*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019).
2. *Internal Experience*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019).
3. *External Support*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019) with influence from Pauwels et al (2016), Leonidou et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008).
4. *A Model of Forces Influencing Startup Internationalization*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019) with influence from Pauwels et al (2016), Leonidou et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008).
5. *Presentation of the Startups*. (Nordell & Sliva, 2019).
6. *Logo*. ©Mevia.
7. *Medical Adherence Solution*. ©Mevia.
8. *Jesper Hassel*. ©Mevia.
9. *Logo*. ©Learning to Sleep.
10. *Logo*. ©Learning to Sleep.
11. *Digital Sleep Assistance*. ©Learning to Sleep.
12. *Micael Gustafsson*. ©Learning to Sleep.
13. *Logo*. ©Tendo
14. *Robotic Grip Assistance*. ©Tendo
15. *Sofie Woge*. ©Tendo
16. *Logo*. ©Operationskollen.
17. *Operationskollen's Mobile Application*. ©Operationskollen.
18. *Jesper Hessius*. ©Operationskollen.
19. *Logo*. ©AddMovement.
20. *Segway Wheelchair*. ©AddMovement.
21. *Mike Redford*. ©AddMovement.
22. *Logo*. ©Medfield Diagnostics.
23. *Agile Brain Scanning Device*. ©Medfield Diagnostics.
24. *Stefan Blomsterberg*. ©Medfield Diagnostics.
25. *A Model of Forces Influencing Startup Internationalization*. Created by authors (Nordell & Sliva, 2019) with influence from Pauwels et al (2016), Leonidou et al (2016) and Bergek and Norrman (2008).

Furthermore, the illustrations on each main chapter introduction can be found in the Microsoft Office program.

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