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# The Influence of Environmental, Organizational and Managerial Factors on Export Decisions and Export Performance

Lin Han Shao

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THÈSE PRÉSENTÉE POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE DOCTEUR DE  
L'UNIVERSITÉ DE BORDEAUX

ÉCOLE DOCTORALE : ENTREPRISE, ÉCONOMIE, SOCIÉTÉ

SPÉCIALITÉ : SCIENCES DE GESTION

*Par*

**Lin Han SHAO**

**L'influence des facteurs environnementaux, organisationnels et  
managériaux sur les décisions d'exportation et  
les performances d'exportation**

Sous la direction de M. Jean-François TRINQUECOSTE

et Mme Tatiana BOUZDINE-CHAMEEVA

Soutenue le 21 Octobre 2020

### **Composition du jury**

**Chantal Ammi**, Professeur, Institut Mines-Télécom Business School, *Présidente*

**Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameeva**, Professeur, Kedge Business School, *Co-directrice de thèse*

**Jacques Jaussaud**, Professeur, Université de Pau, *Rapporteur*

**Michael Korchia**, Professeur, Kedge Business School, *Rapporteur*

**Jan Schaaper**, Maître de Conférences HDR, IAE de Bordeaux, *Examinateur*

**Jean-François Trinquecoste**, Professeur, Université de Bordeaux, *Directeur de thèse*

*L'université n'entend donner aucune approbation ni improbation aux opinions émises dans les thèses : ces opinions doivent être considérées comme propres à leurs auteurs.*

## ABSTRACT

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Export performance is an important research part of export study. It relates to the relative success or failure of the efforts of a firm or nation to sell domestic goods and services to other nations. Extensive empirical research has been carried out to identify and study the determinant factors of successful export performance. However, the factors associated with the export success are numerous and complicated such as that from country, firm, managerial, and cultural level etc. exemplified by the three major axes of organizational, environmental, and managerial factors in the work of (Leonidou et al. 2002). The research aims to find how export performance is affected by environmental, organizational, managerial factors, especially, the psychic business distance and cultural distance, relationship management, international business travel, firms' financial capabilities and complementary capabilities. For the way firms can successfully export to distant countries is not fully understood (Lages et al., 2009). The relationship operation to distant countries remains surprisingly under-examined (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), specially, psychic distance – the extent to which the norms and values of two countries differ due to their distinct national characteristics (Ford, 1984, p. 102), when it comes to the potential interplay between business distance and cultural distance with managerial factors. The other observation is that international business depends gradually on transmitting complex information through vis-à-vis communication (Cristea, 2011). Companies vary in their performance because they use their resources in different ways (Shuleska et al. 2016). International business travel plays very important role in export business, especially for wine business, as the export managers practice ritual international business travel to meet the overseas prospective customers, organize wine tasting, participate in international wine fairs. Nevertheless, up to now, we have known very little about the impact of such travel on export performance.

Hence, the thesis is organized as follows. First, we present a bibliometric study by analyzing 1344 publications from 1990 to 2019 which gives a systematic bibliometric overview of the past export performance literature. Second, we examine the interacting effect of the two forms of psychic distance (business and cultural) on export relationship management. Specifically, this research examines the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of business distance on different dimensions of relationship management and financial export performance. This research builds on a sample of 174 French export executives who were asked to rate their views of their relationship with their Chinese business counterpart in the wine trade,

and their related performance. Third, we examine the impact of international business travel on export performance by integrating organizational factors (annual turnover) and strategic management (complementary capability) into the analysis with equally 174 French wine exporting firms.

The systematic bibliometric study and two empirical studies reveal meaningful results which shed light on the export literature study and provides numerous contributions on the theoretical, methodological, and managerial levels related to export performance.

**Keywords:** Export Performance, Bibliometric study, France export firms, Relationship management, Business distance, Cultural distance, International business travel, Annual turnover, Complementary capabilities

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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To my father Ming Hui SHAO and my son Timéo

## PUBLICATIONS & CONFERENCES

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### Publications

1. Lin Han Shao, Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameeva and Renaud Lunardo (2019). “The interacting effect of business and cultural distances on relationship management and export performance: the case of wine export between France and China.” *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, © Emerald Publishing Limited [ISSN 0885-8624] [DOI 10.1108/JBIM-04-2019-0142].
2. Lin Han Shao, Jean-François Trinquécoste (2020). Organizational and managerial impact on export performance: Annual turnover, international business travel, and complementary capability of the French wine business. (Submitted to *Journal of Small Business Management* on 22nd April 2020)
3. Lin Han Shao, Jean-François Trinquécoste (2020). Bibliometric analysis of global research trends on export performance: 1990–2019. (submit to *Journal of Marketing Trends* in process)

### Conferences

1. Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameeva, Lin Han, Shao (2019) “Modelling the factors affecting wine export performance: the case of France and China”, The 13th Annual International Conference of the American Association of Wine Economists (AAWE), July 2019, Vienna.
2. Tatiana Bouzdine- Chameeva, L.H. Shao, (2019) “Export performance in wine sector”, Internal academic seminar ISVV, 21 January 2019.
3. Lin Han SHAO (2018) “How to Improve Export Performance in the Wine Trade Between France and China?”, International WBM Western Business & Management Conference, September 2018, Bordeaux, France.

## THESIS CONTRIBUTIONS

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The thesis is composed of three independent articles focused on export performance (one bibliometric study and two empirical studies). The results of the three articles shed light on the export performance literature and provide numerous contributions on the theoretical, methodological, and managerial levels related to export performance.

First, the bibliometric study, which considers 1344 publications from 1990 to 2019 on export performance reveals the most influential papers, authors, journals, organizations and countries, investigates research trend, examines social networks through co-authorship, explores country collaboration including co-word and co-citation networks and bibliographic coupling. This part fills the bibliometric research gap in export performance research.

Second, the first empirical study exposes the strong positive effects of relationship management, relationship investment, and communication quality on financial export performance. Another important finding of this research concerns the different effects of the business and cultural dimensions of psychic distance: while the former positively affects relationship management, the latter negatively moderates the effect of business distance on relationship management. The originality of this research lies in identifying the interaction effect of the business and cultural dimensions of psychic distance, with cultural distance revealed as a boundary condition for the effects of business distance on relationship management.

Third, for the second empirical study, the findings reveal a positive effect of international business travel on export performance, a positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel, and an indirect positive effect of annual turnover on export performance. We also confirm the positive effect of complementary capabilities on export performance satisfaction and an indirect positive effect of international business travel on export performance through complementary capabilities, providing new and important theoretical and managerial implications.

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## GLOSSARY & ACRONYM

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**AVE (Average variance extracted):** a measure of the amount of variance that is captured by a construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error.

**Bibliometrics:** the use of statistical methods to analyze books, articles, and other publications. Bibliometric methods are frequently used in the field of library and information science. The sub-field of bibliometrics concerns itself with the analysis of scientific publications.

**Bibliographic coupling:** a similarity measure that uses citation analysis to establish a similarity relationship between documents. Bibliographic coupling occurs when two works reference a common third work in their bibliographies.

**Bib Excel:** designed to assist a user in analyzing bibliographic data, or any data of a textual nature formatted in a similar manner. The idea is to generate data files that can be imported to Excel, or any program that takes tabbed data records, for further processing.

**Bib format:** a style-independent text-based file format for lists of bibliography items, such as articles, books, and theses. File names usually end with bib formed by a list of entries, with each entry corresponding to a bibliographical item.

**Business distance:** the perceptions of differences across markets in the economic environment, the legal and political system, business practices, market structure.

**Cultural distance:** differences in cultural values, norms, and traditions, a dimension that derives from Hofstede's (1991) dimensions of national culture, or the 'national cultural characteristics of the home and host countries' including the dimensions of individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity.

**Co-authorship:** the state of coauthor, one of two or more people who write a book, article, report, etc. together.

**Co - word:** is a content analysis technique that uses patterns of co-occurrence of pairs of items (i.e., words or noun phrases) in a corpus of texts to identify the relationships between ideas within the subject and areas presented in these texts.

**Co-citation:** a semantic similarity measure for documents that makes use of citation relationships. Co-citation is defined as the frequency with which two documents are cited together by other documents.

**CSV:** a comma-separated values file is a delimited text file that uses a comma to separate values. Each line of the file is a data record. Each record consists of one or more fields, separated by commas. The use of the comma as a field separator is the source of the name for this file format.

**Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA):** a multivariate statistical procedure that is used to test how well the measured variables represent the number of constructs.

**Composite reliability:** called construct reliability, a measure of internal consistency in scale items and scale reliability overall preferred with CFA.

**CFI(The Comparative Fit Index):** analysis of the model fit by examining the discrepancy between the data and the hypothesized model, while adjusting for the issues of sample size inherent in the chi-squared test of model fit.

**CMIN/DF:** the minimum discrepancy divided by its degrees of freedom as a measure of model fit.

**Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ):** a test that measures how expectations compare to actual observed data (or model results). The data used in calculating a chi-square statistic must be random, raw, mutually exclusive, drawn from independent variables, and drawn from a large enough sample.

**Convergent Validity:** a parameter refers to the degree to which two measures of constructs that theoretically should be related, are in fact related.

**CI (Confidence Interval):** a range of values to include a population value with a certain degree of confidence lying between an upper and lower interval.

**Control variable:** the term refers to variables that are not of primary interest (i.e., neither the exposure nor the outcome of interest) and thus constitute an extraneous or third factor whose influence is to be controlled or eliminated.

**DV (Dependent variable) :** in mathematical modeling, statistical modeling and experimental sciences. Independent variables are controlled inputs. Dependent variables represent the output or outcome resulting from altering these inputs.

**Discriminant Validity:** which determines whether the constructs in the model are highly correlated among them or not.

**Degrees of freedom:** the number of independent values that a statistical analysis can estimate.

**Export performance:** the relative success or failure of the efforts of a firm or nation to sell domestically - produced goods and services in other nations.

**Free Trade:** a trade policy that does not restrict imports or exports by imposing regulations and duties on imports and exports.

**Factor loading:** how much a factor explains a variable. Loadings can range from -1 to 1.

**GFI (The Goodness-of-Fit Index):** a measure of fit between the hypothesized model and the observed covariance matrix.

**General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT):** a legal agreement signed on 1947 after World War 2 between many countries, whose overall purpose was to promote international trade by reducing or eliminating trade barriers such as tariffs or quotas.

**GDP (Gross Domestic Product):** the monetary value of all finished goods and services made within a country during a specific period. GDP provides an economic snapshot of a country, used to estimate the size of an economy and growth rate. GDP can be calculated in three ways, using expenditures, production, or incomes.

**IV (Independent variable):** a variable to investigate whether it consequently brings change in another variable.

**Mediation:** in statistics, a mediation model seeks to identify and explain the mechanism or process that underlies an observed relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable via the inclusion of a third hypothetical variable, known as a mediator variable.

**Moderation:** in statistics and regression analysis, moderation occurs when the relationship between two variables depends on a third variable. The third variable is referred to as the moderator variable or simply the moderator.

**Model fit:** assess how well the proposed model captured the covariance between all the items or measures in the model.

**Mercantilism:** a policy that is designed to maximize the exports and minimize the imports for an economy. An economic theory and practice common in Europe from the 16th to the 18th century that promoted governmental regulation of a nation's economy for the purpose of augmenting state power at the expense of rival national powers.

**Process Macro Hayes:** for mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis for SPSS.

**Protectionism:** the economic policy of restricting imports from other countries through methods such as tariffs on imported goods, import quotas, and a variety of other government regulations.

**Psychic distance:** perceived differences between a home country and a "foreign" country regardless of physical time and space factors which differ across diverse cultures.

**P-close:** a measure of how well the model fits the data.

**Probability level:** the probability of not rejecting the null hypothesis given that it is true.

**Resource-based view (RBV):** a managerial framework used to determine the strategic resources a firm can exploit to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

**Scopus:** Elsevier's abstract and citation database launched in 2004. Scopus covers nearly 36,377 titles from approximately 11,678 publishers, of which 34,346 are peer-reviewed journals in top-level subject fields: life sciences, social sciences, physical sciences and health sciences.

**RIS (file format):** a standardized tag format developed by Research Information Systems, Incorporated (the format name refers to the company) to enable citation programs to exchange data.

**RMSEA (The root mean square error of approximation):** to avoid issues of sample size by analyzing the discrepancy between the hypothesized model. The RMSEA ranges from 0 to 1, with smaller values indicating better model fit.

**SD (Standard deviation):** which measures the amount of variability or dispersion of data from the mean.

**Scale reliability:** the degree to which the measure of a construct is consistent.

**Standard error:** which measures how far the sample mean of the data is likely to be from the true population mean.

**Structural equation modelling (SEM):** which includes a diverse set of mathematical models, computer algorithms, and statistical methods that fit networks of constructs to data. SEM includes confirmatory factor analysis, confirmatory composite analysis, path analysis, partial least squares path modeling, and latent growth modeling.

**SPSS Statistics:** a software package used for interactive, or batched, statistical analysis.

**SPSS Amos:** use structural equation modeling (SEM) to test hypotheses on complex variable relationships and gain new insights from data.

**SME (Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises):** Businesses whose personnel numbers fall below certain limits. Small and medium-sized enterprises consist of enterprises which employ less than 250 persons and either have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million or a balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

**The Great Depression:** a severe worldwide economic depression began in the United States that took place during the 1930s. It started in 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s. The timing of the Great Depression varied in most countries.

**The Industrial Revolution:** known as the First Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain in the mid- 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was exemplified by the transition from hand production to new manufacturing processes, such as machine production, new chemical manufacturing (e.g. iron production), the increasing use of steam power and water power, the development of machine tools, and the mechanized factory system.

**VOS viewer:** a software tool for creating maps based on network data and for visualizing and exploring these maps.

**Validity:** called construct validity, refers to the extent to which a measure adequately represents the underlying construct that it is supposed to measure.

**World War II:** known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945.

**World Trade Organization (WTO):** an intergovernmental organization that replaces GATT in 1995 which is concerned with the regulation of international trade between nations.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1. Free Trade History

Trade, by the definition of Cambridge dictionary, is an activity of buying and selling, or exchanging, goods and/or services between people or countries<sup>1</sup>. The history of trade can be traced back to the ancient times, and it thrived in Egypt, Greece, and Rome accelerating the ancient civilization (Sako, M. 2019). Sea trade and Silk Road connecting China to the Middle East and the West opened further the market (Sako, M. 2019). Free trade can be interpreted as the free market applied to international trade in which the trade of goods and services between or within countries flows freely without government-imposed restrictions and interventions. Trade barriers include tariffs, non-tariff barriers such as taxes, regulatory legislation, quotas etc. (Fouda, R. A. N. 2012). The raise of a true revolution of free trade saw its beginning in 1840 in Great Britain, best embodied by the reduction of the regulations and duties on imports and exports from the unilateral side of Great Britain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>2</sup>. British industrial revolution in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century made the United Kingdom the first economy in Europe and the most influential industrial power in the world economy during the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, which directly accelerates the change of trade policy from mercantilism to free trade in 1840s. The free trade policy helped the Dutch and the British, among other sea powers, cultivated and reaped richness from overseas.

It was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that the classical economists Adam Smith conceptualized the notion of freedom of trade in his manuscript – “The wealth of nations”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trade>

<sup>2</sup> British Free Trade, 1850-1914: Economics and Policy at

<https://www.ehs.org.uk/dotAsset/11cabff5-3f6a-4d69-bba0-1086d69be6c7.pdf>

(Smith and Edwin 2003). Why Adam Smith supports freedom of exchange? As he said, “it is the maxim of every prudent master of a family, never to attempt to make at home what it will cost him more to make than to buy” (Smith and Edwin 2003). His postulates: it is always preferable of specializing in producing things in which we are more efficient than other countries, let other countries produce what they are more efficient than us (Smith and Edwin 2003). Another classical economist David Ricardo deepened free trade theory by developing the classical theory of comparative advantage to explain why countries engage in international trade even when one country's workers are more efficient at producing every single good than workers in other countries. David Ricardo based his argument on the two countries, England and Portugal. In this now famous example, Ricardo illustrated that Portugal is more productive, and needs less time and labor in producing wine and cloth than England. But as a country with a long history of wine making, it has a higher comparative advantage in wine production than cloth. Whereas, in England, it has a higher comparative advantage in cloth production than wine. If Portugal specializes in producing wine and import cloth, and England specializes in producing cloth and import wine, both countries could make the most of its comparative advantage. Friedrich Von Hayek, the Nobel laureate economist, dedicates his life to defend liberalism against state intervention. For him, spontaneous order is always preferable to formed order because it is inherently more effective in guiding human choices. Merchant exchanges are pacifying because they are respectful of individual freedom, as no one can be forced to carry out an exchange that he does not want (Hayek 1978).

The free trading system is boon or bane, glory or doom? It remains always controversial because gains from trade are not evenly distributed within countries (Sako, M. 2019). A strong argument lies on infant industries, because of the immaturity, they would struggle against international competition, and liberalizing international trade necessarily produces job losses and declining wages in sectors with intense import (Sako, M. 2019). That’s

why the U.S. President Trump upholds firmly protectionism trade policy and starts trade war with China by imposing tariffs and other trade barriers on imported goods from China in 2018. In his words, it is for protecting U.S. Jobs. However, protectionism results in deadweight loss (Fouda, R. A. N. 2012). It has been estimated by the economist Stephen P. Magee (1976) that the benefits of free trade outweigh the losses as much as 100 to 1 (Magee P. S. 1976; Fouda, R. A. N. 2012). Moreover, as a chairman of the American Federal Reserve, “Alan Greenspan has criticized protectionist proposals for leading to an atrophy of competitive ability. The protectionist route will refrain more efficient industries from expanding because of the limited scope, as result, the overall output and economic welfare will suffer” (Fouda, R. A. N. 2012).

According to Frederic Bastiat, "when goods cannot cross borders, armies will" (Fouda, R. A. N. 2012). History is not lacking example “Great Depression” in 1930. Ignoring a warning petition by 1028 prominent economists, US President Hoover put some tariffs to 100% points. More than 25 other governments hit back within a year by passing similar laws and “world trade came to a grinding halt”, and “the entire world was plunged into the Great Depression” for the next ten years leading to World War II (Fouda, R. A. N. 2012). Under this background, the international world called upon a general meeting to try to solve this crisis. That’s why the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) was signed in 1947 with the objectives of encouraging international trade and reducing tariffs as possible superseded by World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995(Fouda, R. A. N. 2012; Sako, M. 2019). The most striking “multilateral” GATT in the post-war is in response to the restrictive and discriminatory trade blocs of the 1930s, which had slumped the economy and contributed to the outbreak of the second World War.<sup>3</sup> The freedom of goods and service flow around the world contributes not only to the healthy economic growth of a country and the firms, but also to the peace of the

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<sup>3</sup> World Trade Report (2011). “B. Historical background and current trends”

world. From the historical, economical point of view, we are motivated to investigate the factors susceptible of affecting export performance.

## **2. World Trade Statistics**

According to the recent WTO Annual Report of 2019, WTO has currently 164 members, representing 98 per cent of world trade. The volume of world merchandise trade, as measured by the average of exports and imports, grew by 3.0 per cent in 2018, just above the 2.9 per cent increase in world GDP over the same period with 19.67 trillion US\$ value of world merchandise trade in 2018 and 5.63 trillion US\$ value of world trade in commercial services.<sup>4</sup> **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** present respectively the detailed information of the world merchandise trade and the world commercial services trade.

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<sup>4</sup> WTO (2019). “World Trade Statistical Review 2019”

## World merchandise trade in 2018

The volume of world merchandise trade, as measured by the average of exports and imports, grew by 3.0 per cent in 2018, just above the 2.9 per cent increase in world GDP over the same period.



**Figure 1 world merchandise trade in 2018<sup>5</sup>**

The value of merchandise increased by 10% in 2018 driven by high energy price. China was the world's leading merchandise trader in 2018. Clothing was the most dynamic product among manufactured goods. Asia was the main contributor in the increase of global import.

<sup>5</sup> WTO (2019). "World Trade Statistical Review 2019"

## World trade in commercial services in 2018

Trade in commercial services recorded strong growth for the second year in a row, rising by 8 per cent.

US\$  
**5.63**  
trillion

Value of world trade  
in commercial  
services in 2018



### Commercial services trade

Information and communication technology recorded the highest export growth (15 per cent) among services sectors in 2018, led by computer services.



### United States

World's leading  
commercial services  
trader in 2018

Growth in exports of commercial services was highest in the Commonwealth of Independent States (12 per cent) in 2018, partly due to the FIFA World Cup in Russia.

**17%**

Growth in world exports  
of computer services  
in 2018



China was the leading exporter of commercial services (by value) among developing countries, with exports increasing by 17% in 2018.



**16.2%**

Growth of least-  
developed countries'  
services exports in 2018

**Figure 2 world trade in commercial services in 2018<sup>6</sup>**

Trade in commercial services increased by 8% in 2018. U.S. leads the world commercial services export. The most remarkable growth in the commercial service is the computer science

<sup>6</sup> WTO (2019). "World Trade Statistical Review 2019"

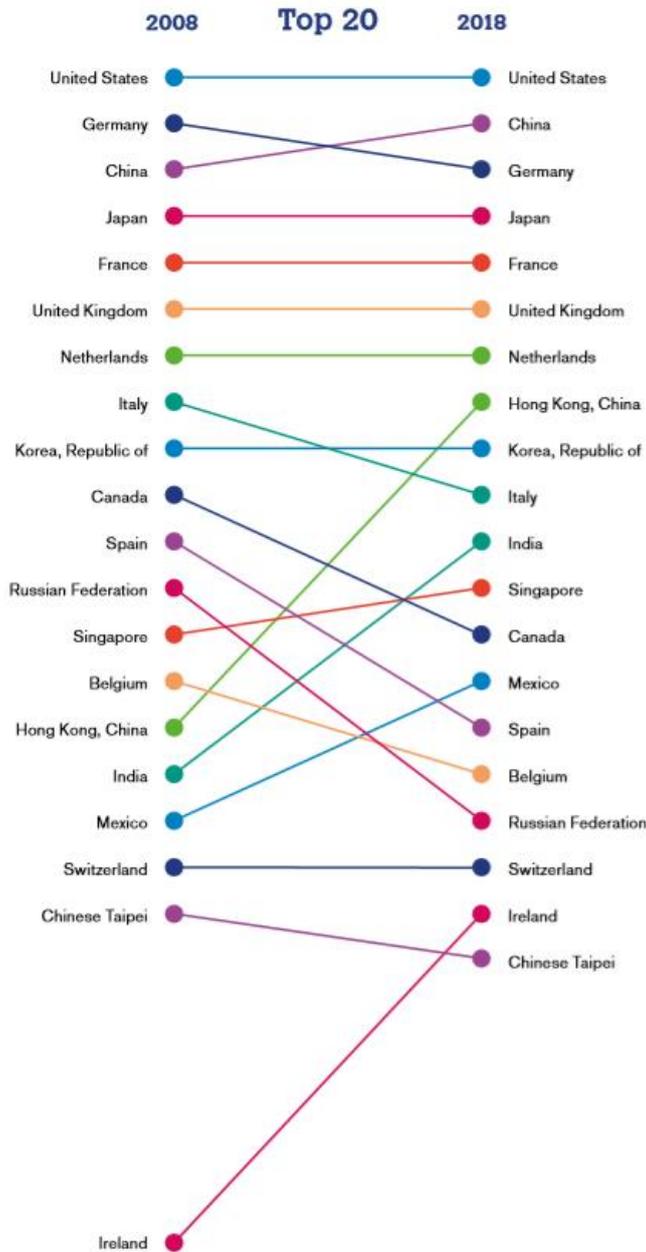
with 17% growth. China was the leading exporter of commerce services by value among the developing countries in 2018.<sup>7</sup> In both merchandise and commercial services trade, the import and export business accelerates the speed of the trade flow around the world.

**Figure 3** shows world's leading traders of good and services both in 2008 and 2018. As we can see, the top 5 of the World's leading trader in goods and services are United States, China, Germany, Japan, and France in both 2008 and 2018.

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<sup>7</sup> WTO (2019). "World Trade Statistical Review 2019"

**World's leading traders of goods and services, 2008 and 2018**  
(US\$ billion)



Source: WTO-UNCTAD-ITC estimates.

**Over the past ten years, Hong Kong China, India, Mexico and Ireland rose the most in world rankings among the top 20 traders of goods and services.**

**Figure 3 World's leading traders of good and services, 2008 and 2018<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>8</sup> WTO (2019). "World Trade Statistical Review 2019"

Roberto Azevêdo, the Director-General of WTO stressed that the ten leading traders in 2018 represented more than half of world trade, with the top five accounting for around 37 per cent of global transactions. Developing economies are playing an increasingly important role in world trade, with significant increases in their rankings among the world's leading exporters and importers. High energy prices contributed to growth in merchandise exports in 2018. Exports of fuels and mining products grew by 23 per cent while manufactured goods and agricultural products grew by 8 per cent and 5 % respectively.<sup>9</sup> From the world trade statistics, we see the key role that import and export business plays in the growth of trade. The developing economies start to play important role in world trade. The abundance of goods and services flow benefits every country, furthermore every human being. We believe that the abundance of import-export business between countries and firms contributes significantly to the wealth of the nation. Hence, we would like to explore in this dissertation the important factors that could affect, promote export performance both on theoretical and managerial level.

### **3. Export Performance Literature Review**

We used qualitative approach for the export performance literature review. Because qualitative study is holistic approach in orientation, treating the phenomenon as a whole system and searching for patterns that lie within its bounds (Park and Park 2016). The qualitative method provides a basis for a "thick" description of discovery (Park and Park 2016). Export performance is an important research part of export study. It is defined as the relative success or failure of the efforts of a firm or nation to sell domestically produced goods and services to other nations (Mehran and Mostafa 2010). Extensive empirical research has been carried out

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<sup>9</sup> WTO (2019). "World Trade Statistical Review 2019"

to identify and study the determinant factors of successful export performance (Aaby and Slater 1989; Dean et al. 2000; Zou and Stan 1998; Karelakis et al. 2008). Research on the firm's export performance date back to the early 1960s with the pioneering work of Tookey (1964), export performance research has proliferated later, and researchers attempted to identify the factors associated with success in exporting (Katsikeas et al. 2000). There are numerous grounded studies on the determinants of export performance published during the past fifty years (see Bilkey 1978; Zou and Stan 1998; Chetty and Hamilton 1993; Aaby and Slater 1989; Leonidou et al. 2002; Morgan et al. 2004). These researchers legitimized and built solid theoretical foundation for export performance research (Zou and Stan 1998).

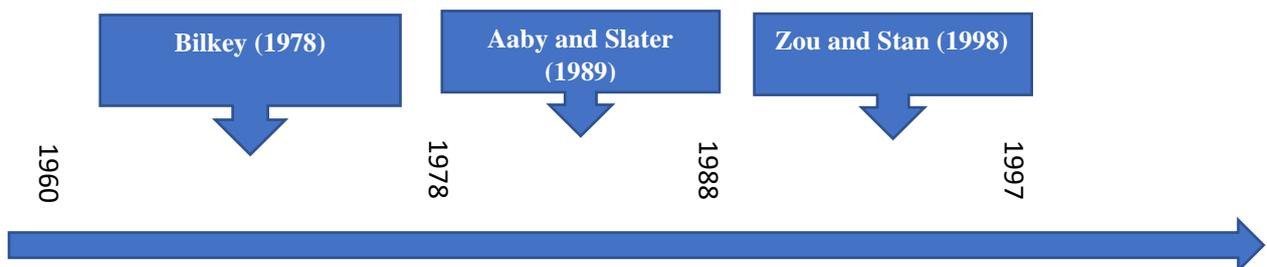
Research in export performance has been in constant increase since 2000s. Export performance attracted widely attention because it is complicated. The inquiries in its success are associated with numerous factors such as that from country, firm, managerial, and cultural level etc. The determinants of export performance consist of three axes of factors which are respectively from the organizational, environmental, and managerial levels (Leonidou et al. 2002). It is important for us to raise the questions as what, how, by whom, the export performance has been studied in the past literature? How export performance is affected from the organizational, environmental, and managerial perspectives? We propose detailed description of our research questions in the section of research questions.

The review of the past export performance literature aims to give an overview over export performance research. Two major research trajectories are revealed. They are respectively the determinants of export performance and the measurement of export performance.

### 3.1 Major Research Trajectory: The Determinants of Export Performance

Research on the firm's export performance dates to the early 1960s with the pioneering work of Tookey (1964), who first identified the factors associated with success in exporting (Katsikeas et al., 2000). Export performance research follows two major research trajectories. In the past, a handful of remarkable works have tried to decrypt the determinants of export which has significantly strengthened the theoretical foundation of export performance research, legitimizing the academic inquiry (Zou and Stan, 1998). As time passes, the research interest of the determinants of export performance increases rather than decline. The synthesis on the determinants of export performance are divided into two timespans (1960s-1998) and (1998-2015). In other words, the literature of the early years and the literature of contemporary times. There are some excellent works aimed at synthesizing the determinants of export performance during the timespan (1960s-1998) see **Figure 1**.

- **Time span (1960s-1998)**



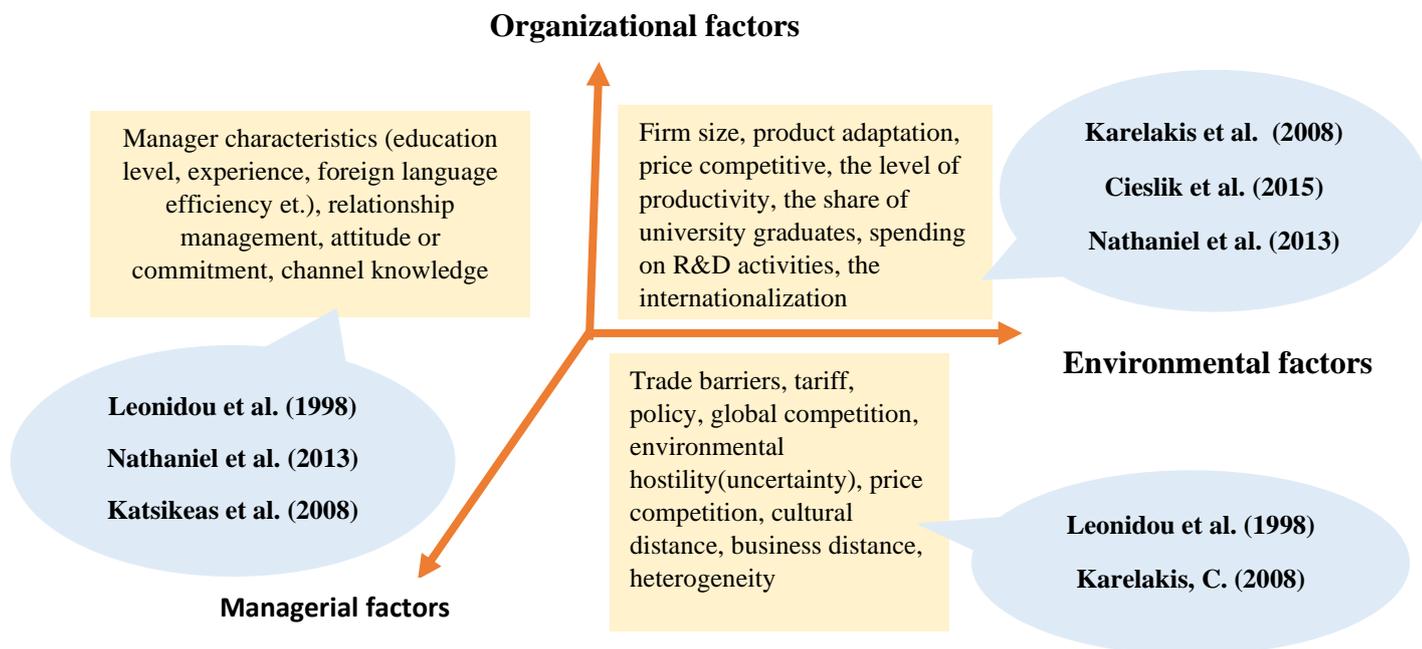
**Figure 1. The synthesis of export performance from 1960s to 1998**

Bilkey (1978) integrated nearly all of the available literature of export behavior since the early 1960s and strengthened the important role played by government policy inference e.g. devaluation of the currency and removal of obstacles to exporting, and highlighted management quality as the greatest single determinant of a firm's export success. Almost ten

years later, Aaby and Slater (1989) classified the results of empirical export performance literature from 1978 to 1988, and found that the company size by itself is not important factor unless being linked to financial strength and economy scales. According to this study, firms with firmer commitment to export, more experience and higher competence tend to perform better, however export success through technology depends on good management. Twenty years after the synthesis of export performance by Bilkey (1978), Zou and Stan (1998) synthesize the empirical literature of the determinants of export performance from 1987 to 1997. Zou and Stan (1998) stated the contradictory standpoints of different researchers. For example, Cavusgil and Zou (1994) contended that export performance is determined mainly by export marketing strategy and some internal organizational factors (e.g. export commitment, international experience) (Zou and Stan 1998). The external factors and other internal factors have only indirect effects on export performance (Cavusgil and Zou 1994). While other researchers (see Donthu and Kim, 1993; Holzmuller and Kasper, 1991) posit direct effects for all potential determinants of export performance including external and internal (Zou and Stan, 1998).

- **Time span (1998-2015)**

The previous export performance research consists of three major axes of organizational, environmental, and managerial perspectives (Leonidou et al. 2002). In the following text, the determinants of export performance are synthesized by following specifically the three axes of factors see **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2. The synthesis of export performance from 1998 to 2015**

On the organizational level, a set of three distinct capabilities has been identified: organizational learning capabilities (e.g., open-mindedness to innovation, commitment to learning, etc.), relationship capabilities (information sharing, communication quality, etc.), and quality capabilities (customer focus, employee involvement, etc.), influencing export-related relationship and economic performance (Lages et al., 2009). Cieslik et al. (2015) argued that firms' export performance is positively related to the level of productivity, firm size, the share of university graduates, spending on R&D activities and the internalization of firms. Silverman, M. et al. (2003) found the positive impact of resource commitment on export performance by studying the U.S. wine industry. Kinder and Slavova (2009) demonstrated that the shifting from a loose network towards a network capable of advocacy, service delivering and stimulating new forms of partnering is an urgent need for the Bulgarian wine network. Nathaniel et al. (2013) argued that the stronger networking capabilities and a more organic

structure<sup>10</sup> enhance impact of innovation on export performance. Barthelem (2014) demonstrated that a high status and a good international reputation of wine estate increase the export in the Bordeaux wine trade. Karelakis et al. (2008) found that the determinants of export performance of Greek wine industry rely on the firm level (firm size, product adaptation, price competitive, channel knowledge, beneficial relationship with distributors) along better understanding of the challenge and threats of a hostile external environment.

Environmental factors influence how and to what degree control mechanisms impact export performance (Mysen, 2013). “Environmental factors” are the determinants of self-administration behavior of persons (Le Sage et al., 1999). They are also used to describe the economic environment of companies. Leonidou et al. (1998) emphasized that the effect of external factors such as trade barriers, tariff, global competition on impairing export performance. Karelakis, C. (2008) stressed the environmental hostility, price competition, heterogeneity as crucial external role played in export context. Several articles pointed that competitive intensity and customer dynamism are the key determinants of environmental uncertainty affecting competitive advantage of firms (Miller and Eriesen 1982; Nathaniel et al. 2013; Germann et al. 2013). There is a need in studying how developing export is affected by internal factors (internal fiscal problems, reduced domestic market opportunity, trade deficits, currency devaluations, capital transfers and import restrictions) in the slow growth economies.

In terms of managerial perspectives, the main research on export performance stressed the role of managerial characteristics and their influences on export. The importance of positive attitude or commitment of manager on export is studied. Leonidou et al. (1998) pointed out that management is critical and decisive in developing successful export business leading to the further research about the propensity to initiate exports, advancement along the export

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<sup>10</sup> Structural organicity is to reflect level of autonomous decision making in the firm and measured it drawing from autonomy scale. (Jambulingham et al. 2005; Nathaniel et al. 2013).

development path, aggressiveness of export behavior. According to Katsikeas et al. (2008) firm managers must place a higher priority on export markets and match it with appropriate resource allocations.

These findings indicate that organizational, environmental, and managerial factors strongly affect export performance. There is a unidirectional causal relationship: managerial, organizational, and environmental factors influencing the firms' export targeting and marketing mix that in turn affect export performance (Diamantopoulos et al. 2014). As the management of the seller-buyer relationship has long been identified as a strong antecedent of business performance (Day et al. 2013; Jap and Ganesan 2000; Kusari et al. 2013; Kumar et al. 2016).

The quality of the interactions between a producer and a foreign seller in the export process has thus far been neglected. In the main body of this thesis, the first empirical study will investigate the role of relationship management in export performance under environmental factors (business distance and cultural distance). The second empirical study investigates the effect of the organizational factor (annual turnover), managerial factor (international business travel, complementary capability) on export performance. The detailed research question, research method and research findings will be illustrated and discussed in the two chapters.

### **3.2 Major Research Trajectory: Export Performance Measures**

Another major trajectory in the export performance research is lying in the conceptualization and measurement of export performance. Despite a noticeable increase in the quantity and quality research about export performance, there is little agreement in the literature about a conceptual definition of export performance and its operational definition (Shoham, 1998). According to Katsikeas et al. (2000), the inconsistent and conflicting results

of export performance come from the difficulties in measuring the export performance construct. Criteria for evaluating export performance of individual firms are elusive (Aaby and Slater, 1989), as for the conceptualization of export performance, dozens of names have been used by researchers to label export performance, and a wide variety of measures have been used (Zou and Stan, 1998). The most used dimensions are rate of growth in export sales and percentage of total sales accounted for by exports (Aaby and Slater, 1989). Zou et al. (1998) developed a generalized export performance measure - the EXPERF scale comprising three dimensions (financial export performance, strategic export performance, and satisfaction with export venture) that can be applied to multiple countries. Katesikeas et al. (2008) synthesized the measures of export performance and found that the most frequently used measures are export sales intensity, export sales growth, export profitability, export sales volumes.

This export performance literature review reveals two major research trajectories of export performance: the determinants of export performance during two timespan (1960s-1998) and (1998-2015) and the measurement of export performance. This exploratory study does not aim to give inductive generalization but develop an initial understanding and a sound base of export performance for the further research.

#### **4. Research Questions**

The general research question of this dissertation focuses on the determinant factors of export performance from organizational, environmental, and managerial perspectives, from which we developed three sub-questions. Each sub-question deals with a specific problem related to export performance. The first research question relates to the bibliometric study, such as what, how, by whom the export performance has been studied in the previous export

performance literature. The last two questions deal more with the empirical side of export performance. The detailed information is developed in the following text.

**Question 1: what are the research patterns of export performance during the past 30 years?**

Objective: Export performance has been studied for about 60 years by now. Researchers first attempted to identify the factors associated with success in exporting (Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan 2000). Since then, export performance research has proliferated. Much of the knowledge regarding successful export practices is fragmented, and there has been no comprehensive review and synthesis of the export literature since Bilkey (1978) and Aaby and Slater (1989). However, to our best knowledge, there is no one systematic bibliometric study of this field. Pritchard (1969) introduced bibliometrics as the application of statistical methods to the media of communication. Despite considerable interest in export performance research, no bibliometric analyses of export performance can be found. In response, our study provides an overview of the research pattern and trends for the past 30 years which is useful for policy makers, researchers, and funders interested in advancing export performance agenda.

A comprehensive bibliographic review and synthesis of export performance research would be of great value to academic researchers, because it fills not only the gap of bibliometric research in this field but also provides an overview of past research, revealing the underlying developing patterns and a vision for future research. In response, this study aims to assess publication growth; analyze publications to find the most influential publications, the most productive authors, journals, organizations, and countries; and map the co-authorship, co-citation networks of authors, bibliographic coupling, country collaboration, and co-wording in the field of export performance from 1990 to 2019.

**Question 2: How relationship management, business and cultural distance impact export performance?**

Objective: Which factors affect export performance, and how? This research aims to investigate the interacting effect of two forms of psychic distance (business and cultural) on export relationship management. Specifically, this research examines the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of business distance on different dimensions of relationship management and financial export performance.

Export relationships are characterized by the interaction between a producer (or seller) and a buyer from two different countries engaged in the exchange of goods, what remains surprisingly under-examined is the role of the valence of these interactions. This lack of knowledge is even more surprising considering that studying how their interaction affects export performance could deepen understanding of relationship operations (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014). In this regard, the way firms can successfully export to distant countries is not fully understood (Lages et al., 2009). Specifically, psychic distance – or the extent to which the norms and values of two companies differ due to their distinct national characteristics (Ford, 1984, p. 102) – could determine many aspects of strategic performance (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014; Ebrahimi & Banaeifard, 2018). Thus, examining the role of distance in export performance would seem particularly relevant. Although prior research has investigated this issue (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014; Sousa & Bradley, 2005; Sousa & Lengler, 2009; Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998; Berry et al., 2010), and provided evidence for the effects of psychic distance in export performance, current literature presents some limitations that call for further research. A first limitation lies in that these studies have been mainly conducted in the US and Brazil, which prevents their generalization beyond these cultures. A second limitation – of

greater importance – relates to the investigation of psychic distance in these studies. Although psychic distance refers to a bidimensional construct – composed of business (i.e., perceptions of differences across markets in the economic, legal and political environment, Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) and cultural (i.e., perceived differences in cultural values, norms, and traditions; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) distances –, the aforementioned studies do not consider the potential interplay between these dimensions. However, one may argue that business distance may affect export performance differently depending on cultural distance. Hence, investigating the potential interaction that may exist between the dimensions of psychic distance could reveal insightful.

**Question 3: How organizational factor (annual turnover), international business travel and strategic management (complementary capability) impact export performance?**

Objective: International business depends gradually on transmitting complex information through vis-à-vis communication (Cristea, 2011). Business officials favor vis-à-vis meetings over phone or online communication (*Forbes*, 2009; *Harvard Business Review*, 2009). In the wine exporting business, we see that managers have international business travel to meet overseas prospective customers, organize wine tastings, and participate in international wine fairs. Nevertheless, up to now, we have known very little about the impact of such travel on export performance. Resource-based view (RBV) indicates that companies are essentially “a bundle of resources and capabilities” that are the primary determinants of their strategy and performance (Das and Teng, 2002). Companies vary in their performance because they use their resources in different ways (Shuleska *et al.*, 2016). In-person meeting in overseas business is one way how companies allocate their resources, and it involves a fixed expense

(Cristea, 2011). Overseas business travel is expensive because of expenditures on airline tickets, accommodations, restaurants, and so on. It could become overwhelming costly to do this kind of travel, especially for SMEs. At present, the issue of international travel still lacks convincing evidence to support strong correlations between leader-member exchanges and the objective performance and is worthy of further examination (Amadiou and Viviani, 2010). The objective of this study is to explore how companies optimize their resources, capabilities, and export performance especially with regards to international business travel. By integrating RBV theory and strategic management strategies, we examine this issue using an approach less often applied to the wine exporting business, especially regarding to overseas business travel (Kieser *et al.*, 2001; Yu and Landsay, 2016).

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of international business travel on export performance by drawing RBV theory and integrating organizational factor (annual turnover) and strategic management (complementary capability) in the analysis in the context of France wine export. This helps to understand how international business travel influences export performance, how annual turnover impacts export performance through international business travel? How other strategic factors optimize the effect of international business travel on export performance?

## **5. Empirical Research Context- Export Firms in French Wine Industry**

The two empirical studies build on a sample of 174 French export executives who were asked to rate their views of their relationship with their Chinese business counterpart in the wine trade, and their related performance. The first empirical study focuses on the role of psychic distance in export performance, we decided to examine export business between two countries with different cultures, and consequently characterized by some psychic distance.

A sample of French managers exporting wine to China was selected. This choice was made for the following reasons. First, with global sales from wine exports amounting to US\$35.5 billion in 2017<sup>11</sup>, wine is widely subject to exportation, making this product suitable for the study of export performance. Second, in 2017, French exports amounted to US\$10.3 billion, representing 29.1% of total wine exports, ranking France first in terms of wine exportations. Third, wine consumption constantly increases in China, showing 80% growth since 2000 (i.e. from 1.73 to 1.79 billion hl from 2016 to 2017)<sup>12</sup>. Wine imports follow the same trend (i.e. 745 million liters of wine imported to China during the year 2017—16.9% increase in volume and 18% increase in value) and in terms of country of origin, France remains the first wine importer for China<sup>13</sup>. Fourth, France and China have very different cultures<sup>14</sup>, with France more individualist and China more collectivist, making the distance between these two countries interesting for the current study. Fifth, international business travel is a common way to conduct business in the wine export. These factors led us to select wine as the context for this study, and France and China as the countries of interest.

Data were collected over 6 months from June to December 2017 at four international wine events in France (Bordeaux Vinexpo<sup>15</sup> in June, Lyon tasting<sup>16</sup> in October, Paris grand tasting<sup>17</sup> in December, and Bordeaux tasting<sup>18</sup> in December). On administering the questionnaire, each potential respondent was asked whether s/he had direct import-export trade with China and knowledge of the business relationship with their Chinese business counterpart. In total, 174 complete surveys were collected.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.worldstopexports.com/wine-exports-country/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/425098/china-wine-consumption/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.decanter.com/wine-news/exporting-wine-to-china-countries-384383/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/china,france/>

<sup>15</sup> Vinexpo, <http://www.vinexpo.com/fr>

<sup>16</sup> Lyon tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/lyon-tasting-2017/>

<sup>17</sup> Paris grand tasting, <https://www.grandtasting.com/>

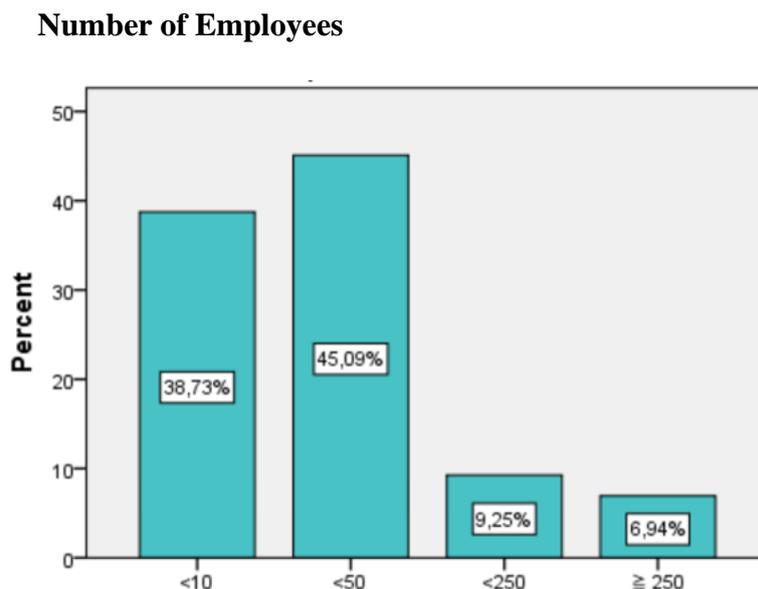
<sup>18</sup> Bordeaux tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/bordeaux-tasting-2017/>

The 174 French wine export firms are analyzed to present a clear view over the export firms' profile and the export managers' demographic characteristics. The correlation between the variables provides basic information about their relationship. This chapter is composed of two parts. The first part describes the profile of French wine export firms and the correlation between variables. The second part illustrates the profile of export managers.

## 5.1 The characteristics of French wine export companies

### Number of employees of French wine export companies

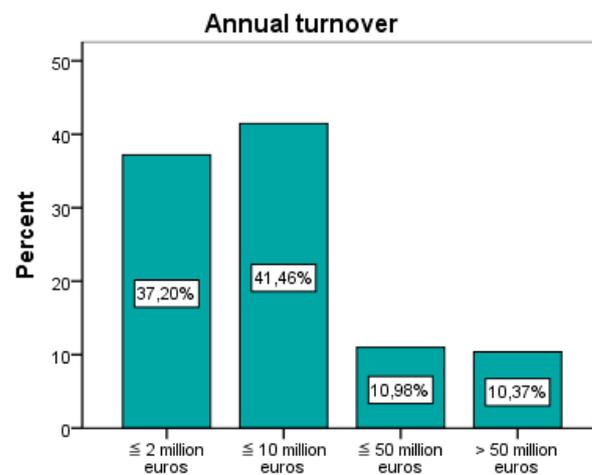
**Figure 1** indicates that most of French wine export companies have less than 50 employees with 38.73% less than 10 employees, and 45.09% ranging from 11 to 50 employees. Only 6.94% companies surpass 250.



**Figure 1: Number of employees of French wine export companies (N=174)**

## Annual turnover of French wine export companies

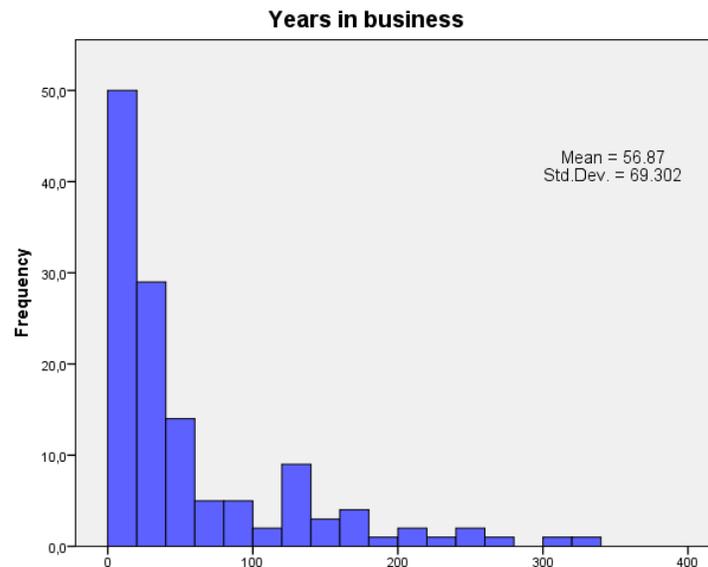
**Figure 2** indicates that most of French wine export companies have annual turnover less than 10 million euros with 37.20% less than 2 million euros, and 41.46% between 2 million euros and 10 million euros. Only 10.37% companies surpass 50 million euros.



**Figure 2: Annual turnover of French wine export companies (N=174)**

### Years in business of French wine export companies

**Figure 3** indicates that most of French wine export companies have been in business less than 100 years with 56.87 as mean year and 69.302 as standard deviation. We could also perceive that there is a minority of companies having been in business for more than 200 years, even 300 years, which is the typical trait of the chateau with several generations in wine business.



**Figure 3: Years in business of French wine export companies (N=174)**

### Export experience (in years) of French wine export companies

**Figure 4** indicates that 40.35% companies have export experience more than 21 years, and 23.98% have export experience less than 5 years, around 25% companies are between 6 and 20 years.

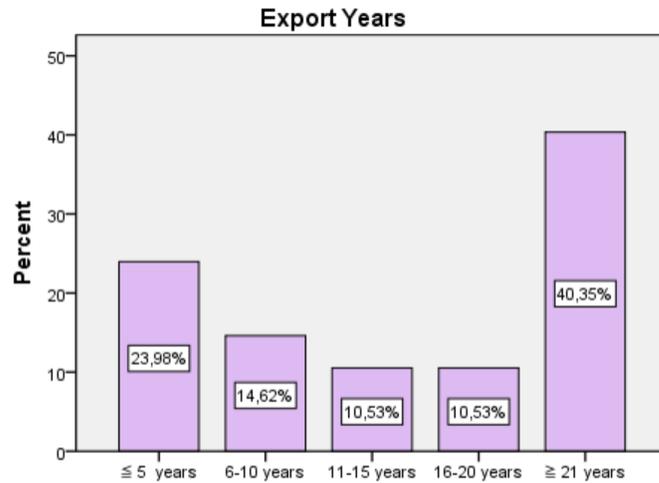


Figure 4: Export experience (in years) of French wine export companies (N=174)

**Export experience (in years) and annual turnover clustered bar**

Figure 5 and Table 1 indicate that annual turnover and years in export business are positively correlated (.362, P<0.01).

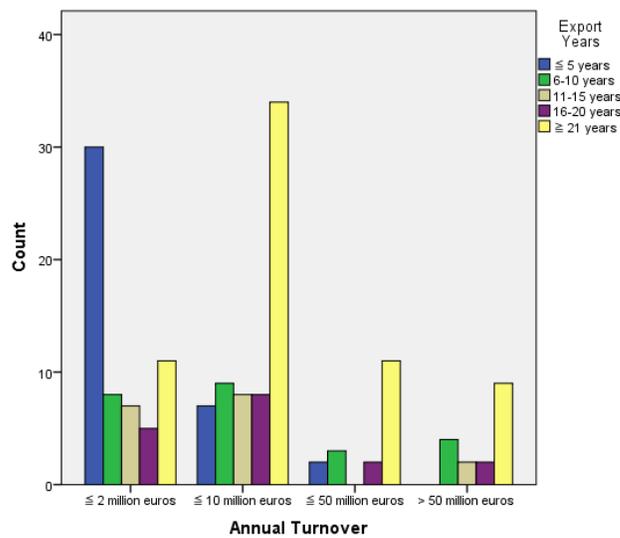


Figure 5: Export experience (in years) and annual turnover clustered bar (N=174)

**Table 1: Correlation analysis - French wine firms and export characteristics**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Annual Turnover	1						
2. Number of employees	.732**	1					
3. Years in business	.056	.126	1				
4. Import Export Years	.362**	.372**	.216*	1			
5. Export performance Satisfaction	.014	-.017	.074	-.141	1		
6. Complementary capability	.081	.051	.105	.004	.539**	1	
7. International business travel	.320**	.285**	.182*	.099	.240**	.189*	1

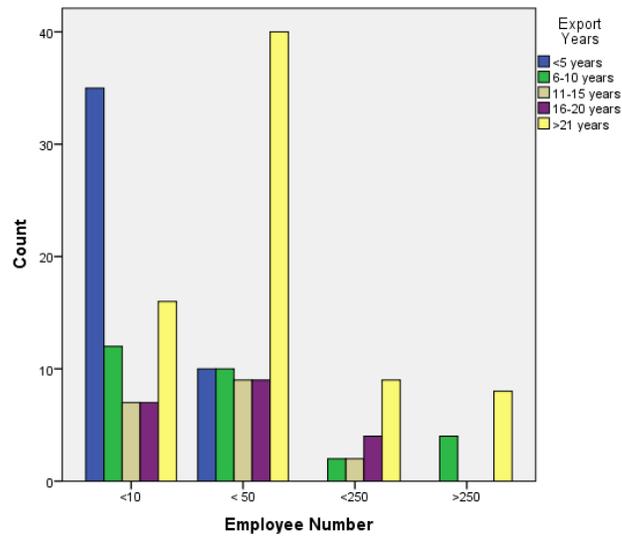
\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As shown in **table 1**, we can see that annual turnover is strongly correlated with the number of employees ( $= .732, P < 0.01$ ). Import-export years of company is correlated with annual turnover ( $= .362, P < 0.01$ ), with the number of employees ( $= .372, P < 0.01$ ), and with years in business ( $= .216, P < 0.05$ ). Complementary capability is correlated with export performance satisfaction ( $= .539, P < 0.01$ ). International business travel is correlated with annual turnover ( $= .320, P < 0.01$ ), with the number of employees ( $= .285, P < 0.01$ ), with years in business ( $= .182, P < 0.05$ ), with export performance satisfaction ( $= .240, P < 0.01$ ), with complementary capability ( $= .189, P < 0.05$ ).

### **Export experience (in years) and employee number clustered bar**

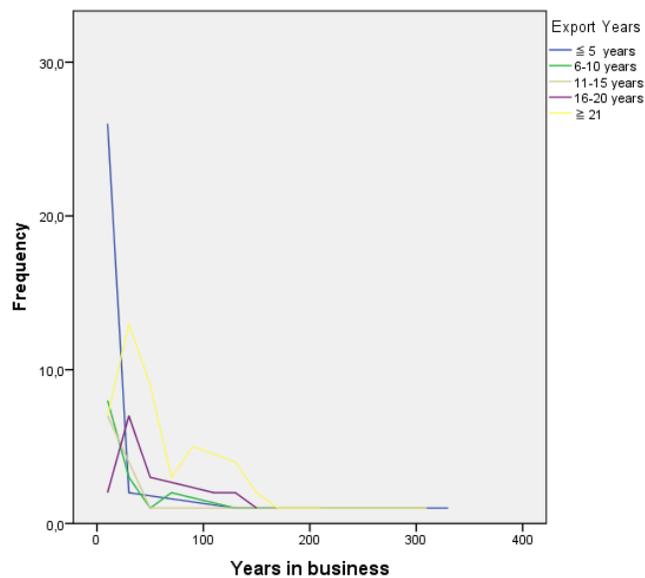
**Figure 6** and **Table 1** indicate that annual turnover and employee number are positively correlated ( $.372, P < 0.01$ ).



**Figure 6: Export experience (in years) and number of employees clustered bar (N=174)**

### Export experience (in years) and years in business clustered bar

**Figure 7** and **Table 1** indicate that export experience (in years) and years in business are positively correlated (.216,  $P < 0.05$ ).

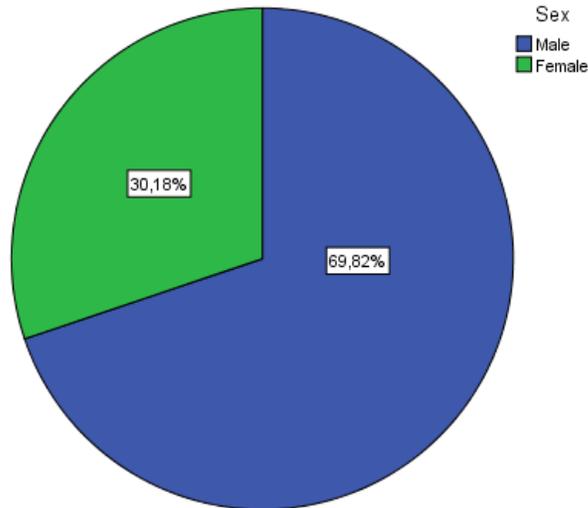


**Figure 7: Export experience (in years) with years in business multiple line (N=174)**

## 5.2 Profile of the French wine firms' managers

### Gender pattern of French wine firms' managers

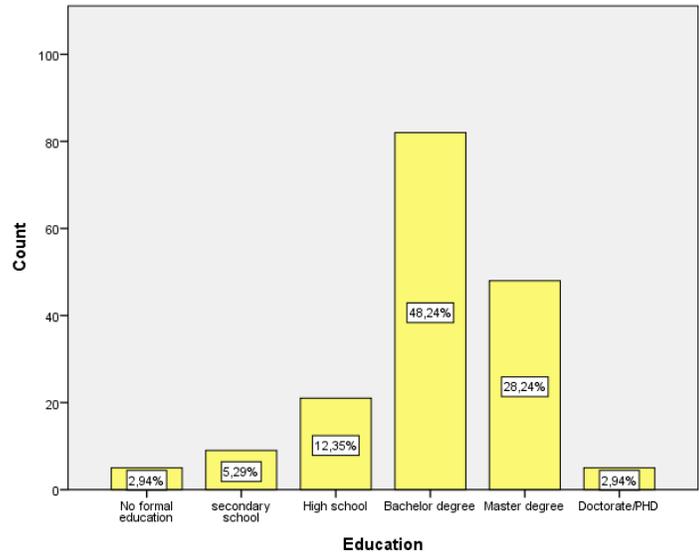
**Figure 8** indicate that the male managers account for almost 70%, with the rest 30% female managers.



**Figure 8: Gender representation (N=174)**

### Education level of French wine firms' managers

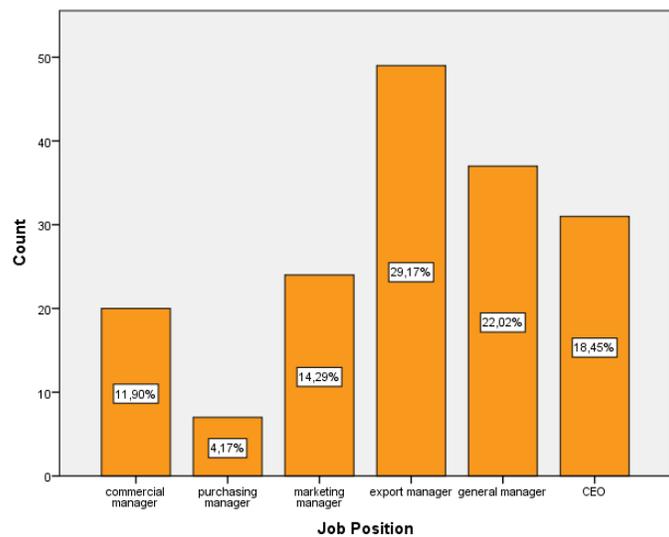
**Figure 9** indicates that most of French wine firms' managers receive bachelor's degree (48.24%), master degree (28.24%) with doctorate degree (2.94%), around 20% have high, secondary school or no formal education.



**Figure 9: Education level (N=174)**

**Job positions of the samples**

**Figure 10** indicates the job positions of the managers with CEO (18.45%), export manager (29.17%), general manager (22.02%), marketing manager (14.29%), commercial manager (11.90%), purchasing manager (4.17%).



**Figure 10: Job position (N=174)**

### Years of export experience

Figure 11 indicates the years of export experience of the managers, managers with export experience less than 5 years accounts for 31.95%, more than 21 years accounts for 20.71%, around 50% between 5 years and 20 years.

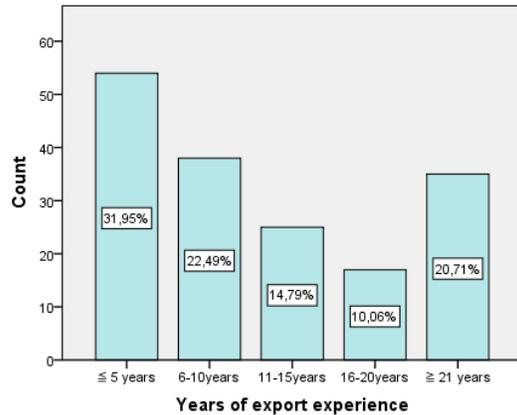


Figure 11: Years of export experience (N=174)

### Proficiency of language

Figure 12 indicates that most of managers have no language difficulty when they communicate with their Chinese business partners, but around 25% have some difficulty.

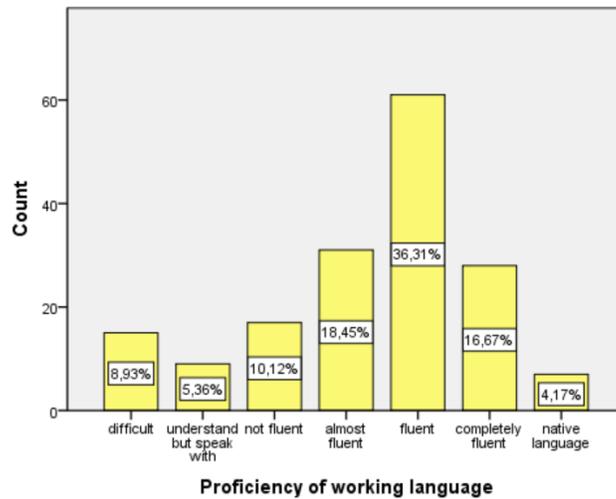
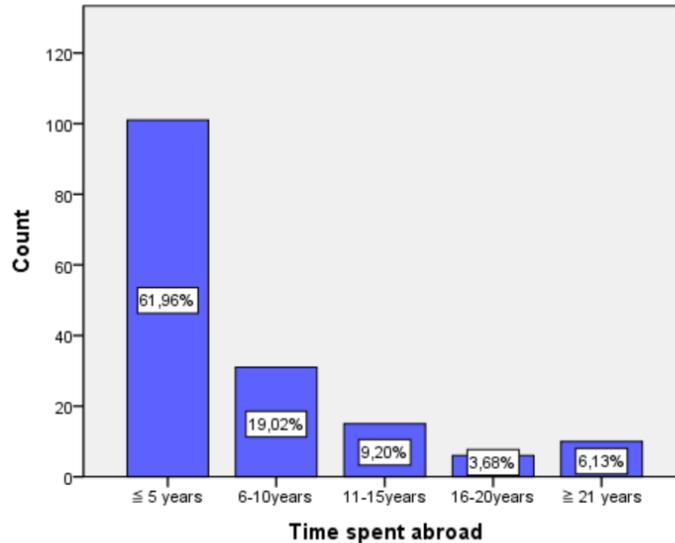


Figure 12: Proficiency of working language (N=174)

## Time spent abroad

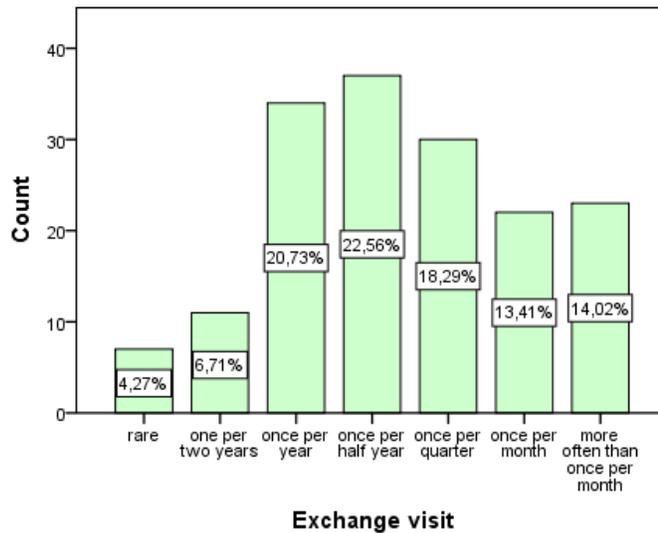
**Figure 13** indicates that most of managers have foreign living experience with 61.96% less than 5 years, 19.02% between 6 years and 10 years, and around 20% more than 10 years.



**Figure 13: Time spent abroad (N=174)**

## International business travel frequency

**Figure 14** indicates the frequency of international business travel: rare ( 4.27%), once per two years ( 6.71%), once per year (20.73%), once per half year (22.56%), once per quarter (18.29%), once per month (13.41%), more than once per month (14.02%).



**Figure 14: International business travel frequency (N=174)**

### 5.3 Conclusion

France is the second largest wine production country and the first wine exporter to Chinese wine market. However, there is very few researches of the profile of French wine export firms and the demographic characteristics of the managers. This study fills this gap. The presentation in figures gave thoughtful views over the French wine firms and export managers.

As for French wine export firms, they are mostly S.M.E(Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) with 83.82% companies having less than 50 employees, 78.66% companies with less 10 million euros of annual turnover. These wine companies have usually long history with some dating back to 200 or 300 years ago. 40.35% companies have more than 21 years' export experience, 38.6% companies have less than 10 years' export experience.

Then correlation analysis of variables reveals the basic relationship information. Annual turnover is strongly related to the number of employees. Export years is related to annual turnover, employee number, years in business of companies. Complementary capability is correlated with export

performance satisfaction. International business travel is correlated with annual turnover, employee number, years in business and complementary capability.

As for managers, around 70% are male, 30% are female. 76.48% have bachelor's degree or master degree, 2.94% have no formal education, 2.94% have doctorate. They have different job positions with 29.17% export managers, 22.02% general managers, 18.45% CEO. For export experience, managers with export experience less than 5 years accounts for 31.95%, more than 21 years accounts for 20.71%, around 50% between 5 years and 20 years. Most of managers encounter no language obstacles when they communicate with their Chinese business partners, but around 25% have some difficulty. Most of managers have foreign living experience with 61.96% less than 5 years, 19.02% between 6 years and 10 years, and around 20% more than 10 years. Most of managers have international business travel once, twice, or more twice per year.

Concerning company size, companies with fewer than 50 employees are more represented. Concerning company size, companies with fewer than 50 employees are more represented and account for 45.09%. The sample can thus be considered representative for wine export companies in France according to France Agri Mer<sup>19</sup>, and in China following China Statistical Yearbook 2015<sup>20</sup>.

## **6. Research Design and Methodology**

The three research questions are independent, and each of them has specific research purpose. Hence, the research methods chosen for treating each question are different and specific. Below we explain the research design and the methods used for the analysis.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.statista.com/>

<sup>20</sup> China Statistical Yearbook

**Methods for Question 1: what are the research patterns of export performance studied during the past 30 years?**

In order to answer this question, we use systematic bibliometric approach, because, first, to our best knowledge, there is no one bibliometric study in export performance field. Second, according to Yu et al. (2018), bibliometrics has been used to analyze publications to find the most influential publications, authors, journals, organizations and countries, research trend (Yu et al., 2018). Furthermore, network visualization can show vividly social networks such as co-authorship, country collaboration, co-word, and bibliometric networks, e.g. co-citation networks and bibliographic coupling.

The data for this study was extracted from Scopus on August 22, 2019. The term *export performance* was used as a search topic identified in the titles, abstracts, and keywords to gather all the publications. The time span was set from 1990 through 2019, and the document type was limited to articles in the English language. Accordingly, a total of 1344 articles were found. The data were exported in different formats, such as .txt, .csv, .ris, and .bib, for further use.

Hence, we analyzed the publications data in the export performance field from different angles by combing bibliometrics with social network methods with the help of Bib Excel, Excel, SPSS, VOS viewer software. For the analysis, Bib Excel was used for the data merges and data cleaning. Bib Excel was designed by Olle Persson in the early 1990s to assist users in analyzing bibliographic data and generating data files that can be imported to Excel and other tabbed data program for further processing (Astrom et al. 2009). Afterward we gathered the data to analyze in Excel 2019 and SPSS statistics 22 to show the publication trends and the most influential authors, articles, institutions, journals, and countries in the export performance field based on the total number of

publications, total citations, average citation per publication, and h-index (Yu et al. 2018; Zyoud et al. 2018). Finally, we employed the VOS viewer developed by Van Eck and Waltman (2010) to generate a network visualization through co-authorship, author co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and collaboration between countries (Krauskopf 2018; Yu et al. 2018). We also created the co-occurrence frequencies, and the whole structure and correlations of terms extracted from the titles, abstracts, and keywords in the export performance field (Özköse and Gencer 2017; Zyoud et al. 2018).

**Methods for Question 2: How relationship management, business and cultural distance impact export performance?** (The interacting effect of business and cultural distances on relationship management and export performance: the case of wine export between France and China (empirical study))

As for this question, we use quantitative approach to test the hypothesis. The quantitative approach helps to generalize and justify the hypothesis suggested in the conceptual model. According to (Park and Park, 2016), “quantitative research is a deductive approach which use hypothesis testing to achieve the research goals in controlled and contrived studies, which plays a crucial role in the justification of research, whereas that qualitative methods are not good for justification” .

This research builds on a sample of 174 French export executives who were asked to rate their views of their relationship with their Chinese business counterpart in the wine trade, and their related performance. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to assess the measurement model. Hence, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first employed to test the measurement model fit by examining the standardized factor loadings from latent variables to indicator variables, the chi-square test, and fit indices. The CFA provides results allowing a thorough examination of

measurement validity. The hypothesis and the structural model fitness were tested using the Process macro, as it enables testing models that simultaneously include mediators and moderators, making it suitable to test the mediations, moderations, and moderated - mediations posited in the model.

**Methods for Question 3: How organizational factor (annual turnover), international business travel and strategic management (complementary capability) impact export performance?**

With respect to the same data as the previous empirical study, we used equally confirmatory factor analysis to assess the measurement model fit and conducted mediation analysis to test the hypothesis and the structural model fitness.

## **7. Theoretical, Methodological and Managerial Interests of the Dissertation**

Numerous works have tried to decrypt the determinants of export performance and the measurement of export performance (see Zou et al., 1998; Leonidou et al., 2002; Morgan et al., 2004)). These works have significantly strengthened the theoretical foundation of export performance research, legitimizing the academic inquiry in the field of exporting (Zou and Stan, 1998). However, as time passes, the research interest of the determinants of export performance increases rather than decline, because the nature of export performance is intricated, and much of the knowledge regarding successful export practice is fragmented (Aaby and Slater, 1989). This dissertation shed light on different theoretical, methodological, and managerial levels.

## Theoretical Interests

Regarding the theoretical interests, first, the major research trajectories will be revealed, the determinants of export performance are synthesized during two timespan (1960s-1998) and (1998-2015), and we illustrate how export performance is measured is in the past literature.

Second, export performance has been studied by around 60 years, however, to our best knowledge, there is no one bibliometric study of this field. In response, our study aims to provides an overview of the research pattern and trends for the past 30 years.

Third, the detailed descriptive analysis of export firms and export managers of France wine industry provides basic characteristics of export players. This will help the future researchers understand the export field better.

Fourth, this study makes several contributions to international business management research. Export relationships are characterized by the interaction between a producer (or seller) and a buyer from two different countries engaged in the exchange of good. The way firms can successfully export to distant countries is not fully understood (Lages et al., 2009) mainly because of the lack of clarity of the role of the valence of the interactions between business distance and cultural distance. This deficiency of knowledge is even more surprising considering that studying how their interaction affects export performance. We shed light on this research gap and analyze the interaction of cultural and business psychic distance and their impact on relationship management.

Fifth, international trade has become increasingly dependent on the transmission of complex information, often realized via face-to-face communication (Cristea, 2011). Export managers practice ritual international business travel to meet the overseas prospective customers, organize wine tasting, participate in international wine fairs. However, we know quite little about its impact

on export performance. This study fills this research gap by exploring how international business travel influences export performance, how organizational factor impacts export performance through international business travel. How do other strategic factors optimize the effect of international business travel? We provide originality of this study by integrating organizational factor (annual turnover), the behavior of the firm (international business travel) and strategic management (complementary capability) in the analysis – an approach scarcely used in the exporting context (Kieser, Beck and Tainio 2001; Yu and Landsay 2016).

### **Methodological Interests**

The export performance literature review regards a theoretical view on the subject, we adopted an exploratory literature review to discover the past research trajectory and research interests. Moreover, the bibliometric analysis was adopted to analyze global publication trend from 1990 to 2019 in the export performance field. For the two empirical studies, we employed quantitative method by using Structural equation modelling (SEM) to assess the measurement model. Hence, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first employed to test the measurement model fit. The hypothesis and the structural model fitness were tested using the Process macro, as it enables testing models that simultaneously include mediators and moderators posited in the model.

### **Managerial Interests**

First, this dissertation gives overall review of free trade history, its evolution, and the actual world trade statistics. This provides managers and export manager insights about free trade and import and export phenomenon. The descriptive analysis of export firms and managers of French

wine industry presents an overview of the characteristics of the export firms of wine trade especially. The empirical study deepens managers' understanding of relationship management and the interaction of how business and cultural distances in relation to export performance, and to the relationship management. This study sheds also lights on how to optimize export performance through international business travel by integrating with organizational factor as annual turnover and managerial factor as complementary capabilities.

## 8. General Research Plan

As discussed above, the general research question of this dissertation focuses on the determinant factors of export performance. There are in total three specific sub-questions linked to export performance. The general scheme of the dissertation is presented in the following table.

### General Scheme of The Dissertation

<b>General Introduction</b>		
<b>Body</b>	Chapter1	Bibliometric analysis of global research trends on export performance: 1990 - 2019
	Chapter2	The interacting effect of business and cultural distances on relationship management and export performance: the case of wine export between France and China
	Chapter3	The organizational and managerial impact on export performance: annual turnover, international business travel and complementary capability of French wine business
<b>General Conclusion</b>		

# CHAPTER 1

## **Bibliometric analysis of global research trends on export performance: 1990–2019**

### **ABSTRACT**

Export performance has been studied since the 1960s. Our study aims to provide an overview of the research patterns and trends since the 1990s for policy makers, researchers, and funders interested in advancing export performance issues.

In this article, we analyze 1344 publications about export performance published between 1990 and 2019 from different angles by combining bibliometrics and social network methods with the help of Bib Excel, Excel, SPSS, and VOS viewer software. Publication trends, the most influential publications, and the most productive authors, journals, organizations, and countries are analyzed through bibliometrics. The co-authorship and co-citation networks of authors, bibliographic coupling, country collaboration, and co-wording of title, abstract, and keyword networks are mapped.

To our knowledge, this is the first systematic bibliometric study of export performance which will shed light on this field's worldwide research. We have found that export performance research has increased by about three publications per year during the studied period. We also were able to identify the most influential publications; the most productive authors, journals, organizations, and countries; as well as the networks of co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, country collaboration, co-wording of titles, and abstracts.

**Keywords:** Export performance, Bibliometric analysis, Social networks, Terms co-occurrence network

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research on firm export performance dates to the early 1960s with the pioneering work of Tookey (1964). Researchers first attempted to identify the factors associated with success in exporting (Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan 2000). Since then, export performance research has proliferated. There have been numerous studies published since then on the determinants of export performance (see Aaby and Slater 1989; Bilkey 1978; Chetty and Hamilton 1993; Madsen 1989; Zou and Stan 1998). Despite a noticeable increase in the quantity of research about export performance since the 1990s, there is little agreement in the literature about a conceptual definition of export performance and its operational definition (Shoham 1998). According to Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan (2000), export performance remains one of “the most widely researched, but least understood and most contentious, areas of international business research, due to difficulties in conceptualizing, operationalizing, and measuring the export performance construct, often leading to inconsistent and conflicting results”. Much of the knowledge regarding successful export practices is fragmented, and there has been no comprehensive review and synthesis of the export literature since Bilkey (1978) and Aaby and Slater (1989).

Pritchard (1969) introduced bibliometrics as the application of statistical methods to the media of communication. Scholars define bibliometrics as the discipline that studies bibliographic material quantitatively (Merigo et al. 2015). Bibliometric studies have been done to assess research trends in a wide range of areas, including management, economics, psychology, behavior, health, ecology, and so on (Merigo et al. 2015; Zyoud et al. 2018).

Based on mathematics and statistics, bibliometrics has been used to analyze publications to find the most influential publications, authors, journals, organizations, and countries (Yu et al. 2018). Furthermore, network visualization can vividly show social networks such as co-authorship, country collaboration, co-word, and bibliometric links, for example, co-citation networks and bibliographic coupling, by analyzing information more intuitively (Yu et al. 2018). Co-wording is the co-occurrence of terms extracted from the title, abstract, and keyword fields of a dataset so that research topics can be found and the bibliometric social networks can be visualized (Callon et al. 1983; Yu et al. 2018). Yet despite considerable interest in export performance research, no bibliometric analyses of export performance can be found.

A comprehensive bibliographic review and synthesis of export performance research would be of great value to academic researchers, because it fills not only the gap of bibliometric research in this field but also provides an overview of past research, revealing the underlying developing patterns and a vision for future research. In response, this study aims to assess publication growth; analyze publications to find the most influential publications, the most productive authors, journals, organizations, and countries; and map the co-authorship, co-citation networks of authors, bibliographic coupling, country collaboration, and co-wording in the field of export performance from 1990 to 2019.

This article is organized as follows. First, we describe the data collection procedure and analysis methods used in this bibliometric study. Furthermore, we describe and discuss the analysis results. Finally, we draw the conclusion by describing the contributions of this article and the implications for the future research.

## 2. DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study was extracted from Scopus on August 22, 2019. Scopus was chosen as the search engine because it is the largest abstracting and citation database of peer-reviewed literature covering the fields of science, technology, medicine, social science, and arts and humanities. It indexes content from 24 600 active titles and 5 000 publishers, and it is rigorously vetted and selected by an independent review board.<sup>21</sup> We applied the following steps to retrieve the research related to export performance: first, the term *export performance* was used as a search topic identified in the titles, abstracts, and keywords to gather all the publications. The time span was set from 1990 through 2019, and the document type was limited to academic publications in the English language. Accordingly, a total of 1344 articles were found. The data were exported in different formats, such as .txt, .csv, .ris, and .bib, for further use.

For the analysis, Bib Excel was used for the data merges and data cleaning. Bib Excel was designed by Olle Persson in the early 1990s to assist users in analyzing bibliographic data and generating data files that can be imported to Excel and other tabbed data program for further processing (Astrom et al. 2009). Afterward we gathered the data to analyze in Excel 2019 and SPSS statistics 22 to show the publication trends and the most influential authors, articles, institutions, journals, and countries in the export performance field based on the total number of publications, total citations, average citation per publication, and h-index (Yu et al. 2018; Zyoud et al. 2018).

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus>

Furthermore, we employed the VOS viewer developed by Van Eck and Waltman (2010) to generate a network visualization through co authorship, author co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and collaboration between countries (Krauskopf 2018; Yu et al. 2018). According to Van Eck and Waltman (2010), the bibliometric networks visualized by VOS viewer are based on distance, and each network consists of many node-generated visualizations of similarities (VOS). Each node represents one publication, author, term, and so on; the size of the node and the label font size indicate the co-occurrence frequencies or occurrence value; the distance between two nodes represents their relatedness and similarity, indicating the co-occurrence frequencies between two nodes (Nunen et al. 2018; Yu et al. 2018). The VOS viewer clustering method was applied to cluster topics in different groups. Each cluster was marked with a different color whose value relates to its relationship between nodes (Nunen et al. 2018; Van Eck and Waltman 2010; Waltman, van Eck, and Noyons 2010). The most important terms extracted from the titles, abstracts, and keywords were obtained by co-occurrence frequencies of these terms, and the whole structure and correlations among terms in the export performance field were mapped and clustered for the better understanding of the main topics in the field (Özkose and Gencer 2017; Zyoud et al. 2018).

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

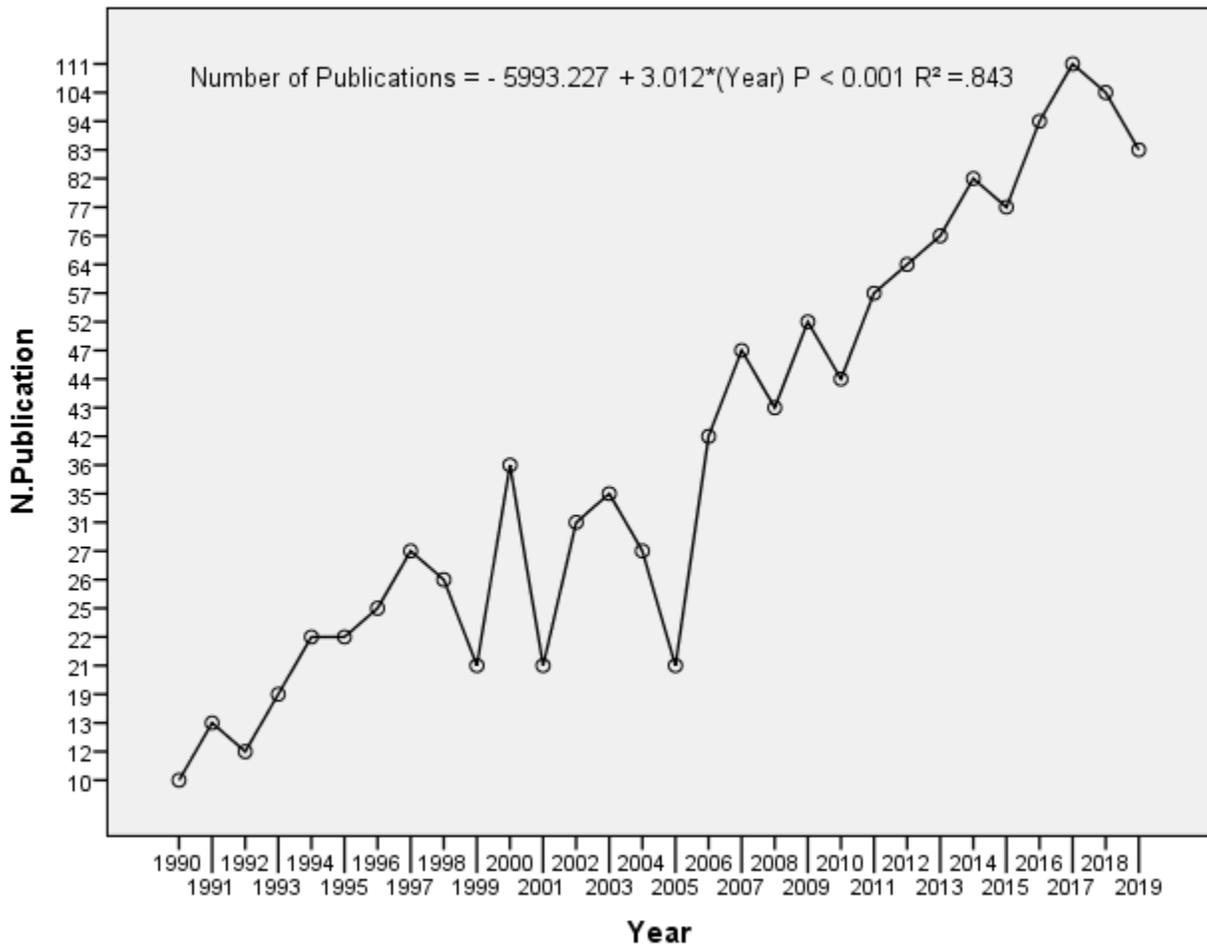
#### **3.1. Publication output and growth trend**

This study outlines the bibliometric indicators of the scientific research related to export performance from 1990 through 2019. We limited the document type to research articles in English. There were a total number of 1 344 publications during the study period. In 1990,

there were only 10 publications, and 83 publications were found as of August 22, 2019. The publications were categorized under various subjects such as business, management, and accounting; economics, econometrics, and finance; social sciences; environmental sciences; agricultural and biological sciences; engineering; decision sciences; and so on.

“The number of peer-reviewed publications is an important indicator to measure the development trend of a scientific research discipline or subject” (Nunen et al. 2018). SPSS statistics 22 was used to analyze the publication trends on export performance. We ran a simple linear regression, in which the annual number of publications was chosen as the dependent variable and the year as an independent variable. **Figure 1** shows that there is a strong significant positive linear relationship between the two variables indicating a high level of publication productivity during the study period in the field of export performance (the gradient  $\beta = 3.012$ ;  $R^2 = 0.843$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). The number of publications increased by about three for each year of the study except during 1999, 2001, and 2005, when a decline could be observed. There is not clear explanation for the decline in the number of publications during those three years. Generally, export performance research is still in steady growth. The stable increase means that there are consistent interests in export performance research, and a maturity point in export performance research has not yet been reached. After all, this field lacks a consensus on conceptualizing, operationalizing, and measuring the export performance construct (Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan 2000).

**Figure 1** Yearly distribution of publications on export performance and its trend analysis (1990–2019)



### 3.2 Authors and coauthor collaboration

The 1344 publications on export performance are written by 2343 authors. **Table 1** lists the top 10 most productive authors according to the number of publications. Some other indicators appear as well to provide more details about the authors and their influence, such as the affiliated institutions, country, total number of citations, average number of citations per publication, and an h-index.

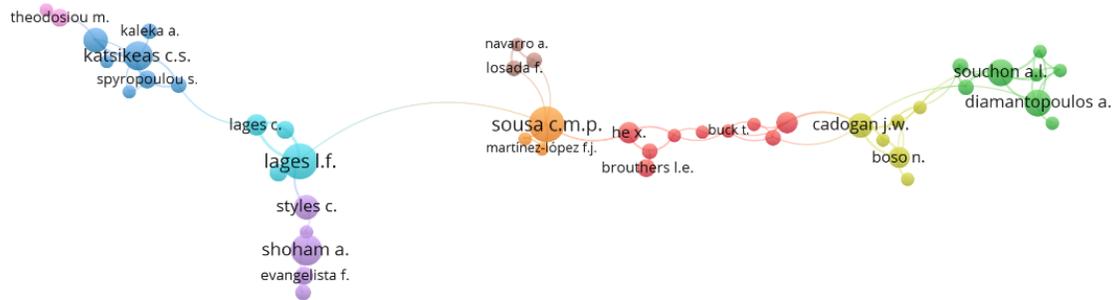
Lages and Sousa turn out to be the most productive authors, both with 14 articles published on export performance, followed by Shoham (11 articles), Katsikeas (10 articles), Souchon (9 articles), Diamantopoulos (9 articles), Cadogan (8 articles), Leonidou (8 articles), Styles (8 articles), and Poncet (7 articles). But, Katsikeas is ranked first according to the total number of citations (1167) and average number of citations per publication (116.7) followed by Lages, Shoham, Leonidou, Sousa, Styles, and so on. Souchon ranks the fifth most productive author, but the total number of citations and average number of citations per publication are much lower ranked at ninth. All authors come from different countries and institutions, which are presented in detail in **Table 1**.

**Table 1** Top 10 most productive authors publishing on export performance

No.	Author Name	Institution	Country	Number of Publications	Total Number of Citations	Average Number of Citations per Publication	H-index
1	L.F. Lages	Universidade Nova de Lisboa	Portugal	14	850	60.71	12
2	C.M.P. Sousa	Molde University College	Norway	14	568	40.57	9
3	A. Shoham	University of Haifa	Israel	11	699	63.55	11
4	C.S. Katsikeas	Leeds University Business School	UK	10	1,167	116.7	10
5	A.L. Souchon	Loughborough University	UK	9	177	19.67	7
6	A. Diamantopoulos	University Vienna	Austria	9	485	53.89	8
7	J.W. Cadogan	Lappeenranta University of Technology	Finland	8	455	56.88	6
8	L.C. Leonidou	University of Cyprus	Cyprus	8	608	76	7
9	C. Styles.	University of New South Wales (UNSW)	Australia	8	528	66	8
10	S. Poncet.	Paris School of Economics	France	7	81	11.57	5

The co authorship network is analyzed with VOS viewer. The average number of authors per publication is 1.74 ( $n=2343/1344$ ). In the analysis, we set the minimum number of documents by an author as 3; 118 authors met the threshold. Some of the 118 authors in the network are not connected to each other. The largest set of connected authors consists of 47 authors. The result of the co authorship network is presented in **Figure 2**. The size of node and the label font size indicate the amount each author has published, the link between them means their collaboration, and the distance between two nodes represents their similarity. There are nine clusters of authors shown in different colors in the cooperation network. The main researchers of each cluster are, respectively, Sousa, Lages, Shoham, Katsikeas, Diamantopoulos, Losada, Brouthers, Cadogan, and Theodosiou. Other researchers are linked to one of the main researchers. The information is presented in detail in **Figure 2**. As for the authorship, the possibility of bias should be noted due to different names used by authors in their publications, for example, due to marital changes (Nunen et al. 2018). A mandatory allocation of a unique digital identity of researchers (such as ORCID) could provide a solution for this problem (Chiu and Ho 2007; Nunen et al. 2018).

**Figure 2** Co authorship network on export performance



### 3.3 Top-cited articles, bibliographic coupling, and author co-citation networks

There is a general assumption that the number of citations reflects a publication’s influence, fame, and quality (Nunen et al. 2018; Ugolini et al. 2015). **Table 2** shows the top 10 most cited publications on export performance. The most cited article published on export performance is “the determinants of export performance: a review of the empirical literature between 1987 and 1997” by Zou and Stan (1998) with 119 times citation. As we can see from the table, the top-cited articles focus mainly on the determinants, conceptualization, and measurement of export performance, marketing strategy, and firm resources. The important articles identified in the table are useful for researchers to read to gain a better understanding of the export performance field.

**Table 2** Top 10 most cited articles publishing on export performance

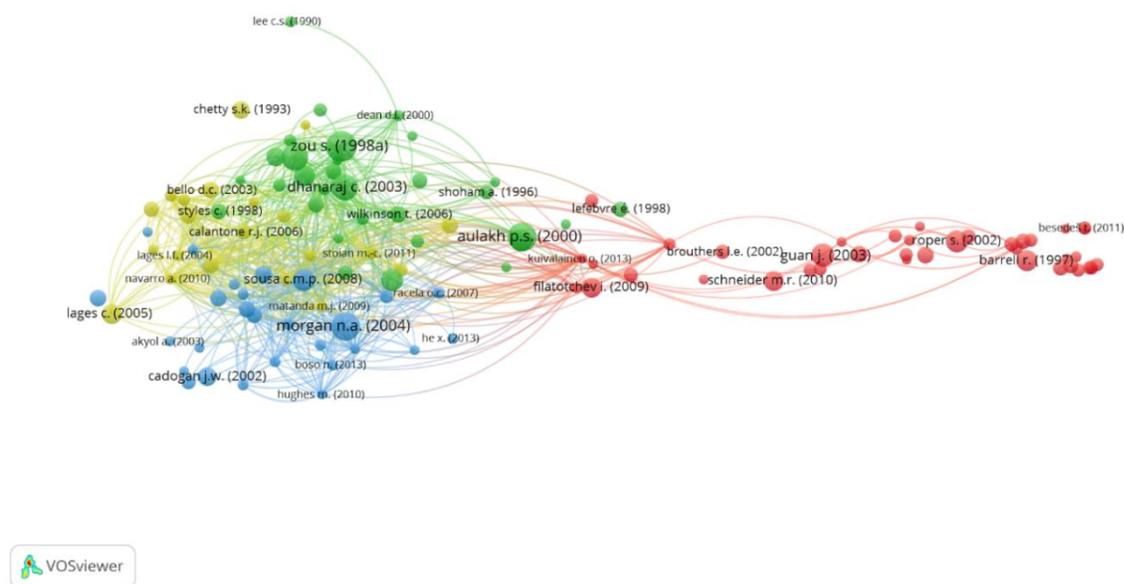
No.	Times Cited	Author	Article Title	Year	Journal
1	119	S. Zou, S. Stan	“The determinants of export performance: A review of the empirical literature between 1987 and 1997”	1998	International Marketing Review
2	85	C.S. Katsikeas, L.C. Leonidou, N.A. Morgan	“Firm-level export performance assessment: Review, evaluation, and development”	2000	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
3	73	L.C. Leonidou, C.S. Katsikeas, S. Samiee	“Marketing strategy determinants of export performance: A meta-analysis”	2002	Journal of Business Research
4	63	S.T. Cavusgil, S. Zou	“Marketing strategy-performance relationship: An investigation of the empirical link in export market ventures”	1994	Journal of Marketing
5	63	N.A. Morgan, A. Kaleka, C.S. Katsikeas	“Antecedents of export venture performance: A theoretical model and empirical assessment”	2004	Journal of Marketing
6	55	J. Barney,	“Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage”	1991	Journal of Management
7	53	A. Shoham	“Export performance: A conceptualization and empirical assessment”	1998	Journal of International Marketing
8	47	S. Zou, C.R.Taylor, G.E. Osland	“The EXPERF scale: A cross-national generalized export performance measure”	1998	Journal of International Marketing
9	43	M.J. Melitz	“The impact of trade on intra-industry reallocations and aggregate industry productivity”	2003	Econometrica
10	42	*C. Dhanaraj, P.W. Beamish	“A resource-based approach to the study of export performance”	2003	Journal of Small Business Management

Bibliographic coupling is the opposite of co-citation (Van Eck and Waltman 2010). Two publications are bibliographically coupled if a third publication is cited by both publications; in other words, bibliographic coupling concerns the overlap in the reference lists of publications (Kessler 1963; Van Eck and Waltman 2010).

Assessing bibliographic coupling has become more popular in recent years (Boyack and Klavans 2010) because it offers a more direct indication of the relatedness of publications compared to co-citation. The more references two publications have in common, the stronger the bibliographic coupling relation is between the publications (Van Eck and Waltman 2010). VOS viewer was used to analyze and visualize the bibliographic coupling of publications on export performance. To be

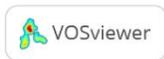
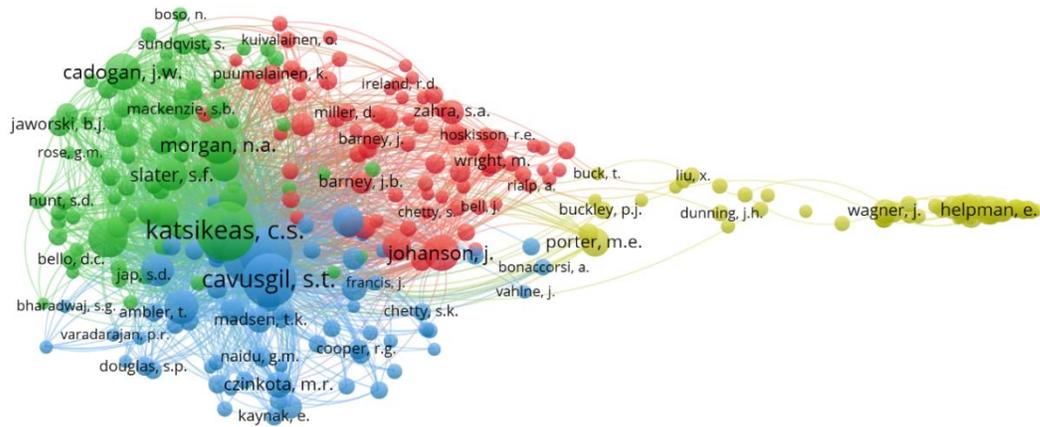
included in the analysis, a minimum of 50 citations for each publication was required; 129 publications meet the threshold. The results of the bibliographic coupling of publications on export performance is presented in **Figure 3**. Each node represents a publication. Large nodes represent papers that have many common references. Small nodes represent papers with fewer common references. The distance between nodes represents the level of affinity. The closer two publications are located to each other, the more strongly they are related to each other based on bibliographic coupling, in other words, they cite more the same publications (Van Eck and Waltman 2014). Colors indicate clusters of publications that are strongly related to each other. There are four main clusters which are represented respectively by four publications. VOS viewer shows the first author and the year of publication. They are S. Zou (1998), N.A. Morgan (2004), J. Guan (2003), C. Lages (2005). which reflects indirectly four major research areas under export performance.

**Figure 3** Bibliographic coupling of publications on export performance



Co-citation is defined as two publications being cited by the same publication (Small, 1973; Yu et al. 2018). This concept is used later in this article to study relations between researchers (White and Griffith, 1981). “The more two authors are cited together, the more similarities between them can be assumed” (White and Griffith 1981). The sense of lesser and greater affinity between pairs of authors is operationalized in their co-citation counts (White 2003). Links between authors and dominant authors define specialties, and links between dominant authors connect specialties to a discipline (White 2003). VOS viewer is used to analyze and visualize the co-citation of authors through analyzing the number of references to publications on export performance. There is a total of 57 057 references, including 34 993 authors cited in the 1 344 publications on export performance. To be included in the co-citation map, a minimum of 50 citations of an author is required; 287 authors met the threshold. The result of the author co-citation analysis is presented in **Figure 4**. The size of the node and the label font size represent the author and the co-citation counts, that is, the larger a node, the more an author has been co-cited. The link between two authors means that they have been cited by the same publication. The distance between nodes represents their relatedness and similarity. The co-citation map shows how the authors cluster together. There are four main clusters shown in different colors in the author co-citation network represented respectively by Katsikeas in the green cluster, Johanson in the red cluster, Cavusgil in the blue cluster, and Helpman in the yellow cluster. Other researchers are linked to one of the main researchers. The four clusters reflect four major disciplines related to export performance research, and each discipline is represented by the dominant authors who are linked to other researchers.

**Figure 4** Co-citation of highly cited authors in the references of publications on export performance



### 3.4 The most important institutions, journals, and countries publishing on export performance

Table 3 shows the top 10 most productive institutions that contribute to export performance research based on the number of publications. The World Bank leads with 12 publications on export performance followed by Durham University, and so on.

**Table 3** Top 10 most productive institutions publishing on export performance

No.	Institution	Country	Number of Publications
1	The World Bank	USA	12
2	Durham University	UK	4
3	Management Science Economics and Business Faculty Brawijaya University	Indonesia	4
4	Department of Economics, Monash University	Australia	3
5	Institute of Economics, Zagreb	Croatia	3
6	Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Natal	South Africa	3
7	NBER	USA	3
8	Aston Business School, Aston University	UK	3
9	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics	Pakistan	3
10	Loughborough University	UK	3

**Table 4** summarizes the top 10 most important journals in terms of the number of publications they have on export performance. *International Business Review* ranks first with 43 publications on export performance, reflecting 3.20 percent of total publications followed by *Journal of International Marketing*, and so on.

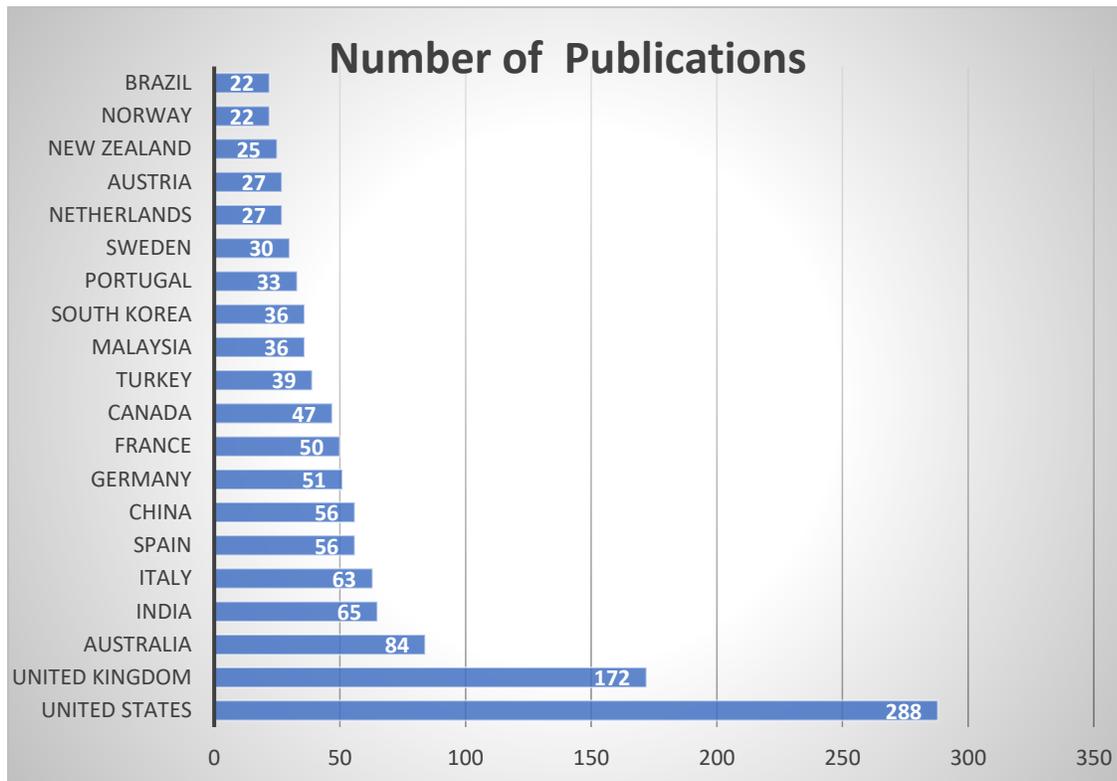
**Table 4** Top 10 most important journals publishing on export performance

No.	Journal	Number of Publications	Percentage of Total
1	<i>International Business Review</i>	43	3.20
2	<i>Journal of International Marketing</i>	42	3.13
3	<i>International Marketing Review</i>	34	2.53
4	<i>World Economy</i>	31	2.30
5	<i>Journal of Global Marketing</i>	25	1.86
6	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	23	1.71
7	<i>Journal of International Trade and Economic Development</i>	20	1.49
8	<i>World Development</i>	18	1.34
9	<i>Applied Economics</i>	18	1.34
10	<i>Journal of World Business</i>	16	1.19

Note: The top 10 most productive journals account for 20.09% of total publications.

**Table 5** summarizes the top 20 most productive countries publishing on export performance in terms of the number of publications. The United States is the most important country contributing to export performance research with 288 publications followed by the United Kingdom (172 publications), Australia (84 publications), India (65 publications), Italy (63 publications), and so on. The details of the other countries are shown on **Table 5**.

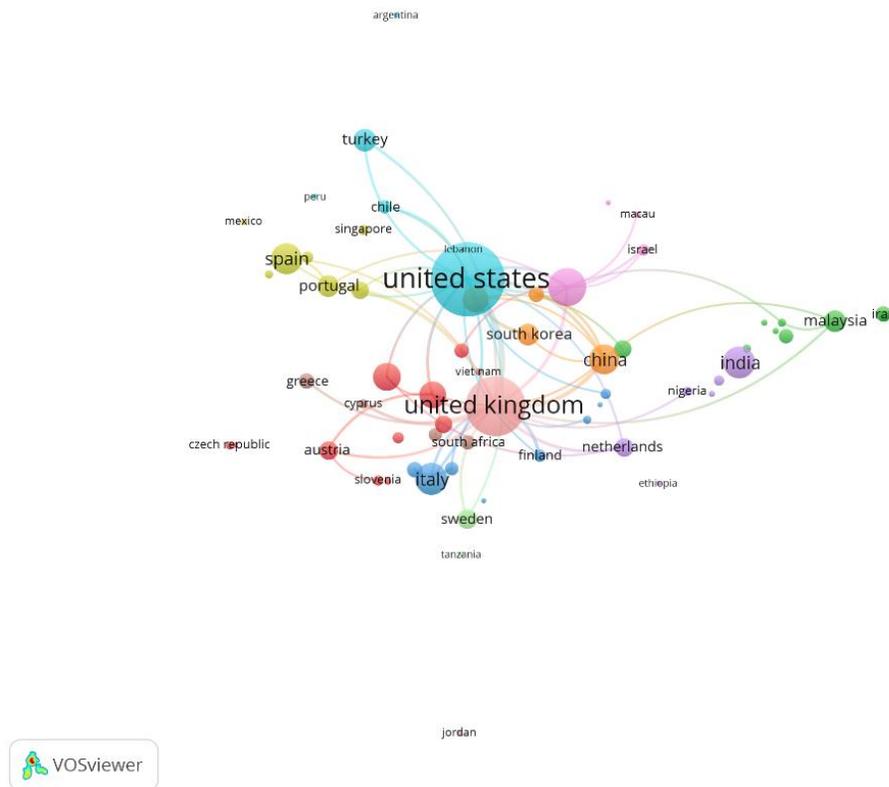
**Table 5** Top 20 most productive countries publishing on export performance



The country collaboration network on export performance is shown in **Figure 5**. VOS viewer was used to analyze and visualize the country collaboration. There are 177 countries publishing on export performance. To be included in the analysis, a minimum of three publications in a country was required; 66 countries met the threshold. The size of the node and the label font size represent the country; the size of node represents the number of publications. The link between two countries means that they have collaborated in the publication. The distance between nodes represents their relatedness. There are 11 clusters shown in different colors in the country collaboration network represented respectively by the United States, the United Kingdom, China, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Austria, Spain, and Greece. The United States and the United Kingdom are the most prolific countries in terms of producing publications related to export

performance from 1990 through 2019, as well as the most active countries in the international collaboration networks. This emphasizes the significance of global networking and its impact on research output (Zyoud et al. 2018).

**Figure 5** Coauthor collaboration network by country on export performance



### 3.5 The topics being published in export performance

What are the main research areas related to export performance? An analysis of the co-occurrence of terms in the titles, abstracts, and keywords can provide insight into the main topics and research trends (Nunen et al. 2018). In our study we retrieved a total of 19 115 terms from titles, abstracts, and keywords in the 1 344 publications on export performance to establish the terms co-occurrence network. VOS viewer was used to analyze and visualize the terms as well as to generate clusters

that can be associated with research topics (Krauskopf 2018). The scientific landscape of the main research areas related to export performance is presented in **Figure 6** and **Figure 7** along with time information. Shown in **Figure 6**, there are three main clusters in red, green, or blue. Each cluster is characterized by the most frequently used terms related to one specific research area. The red cluster is related mainly to environmental factors with representative terms such as *export, growth, demand, price, market, country names, exchange rate, economic, income, regulation, world, concern*, and so on. The blue cluster is related mainly to organizational factors with representative terms such as *productivity, innovation, firm characteristic, export decision, input*, and so on. The green cluster is related to research methods with representative terms such as *literature, research, theoretical model, survey, SMES, SEM, conceptual framework, exploratory study*, and so on. **Figure 7** shows the terms with high co-occurrence frequencies from 2008 to 2014. The color of a term indicates the term's average publication year (Nunen et al. 2018). The terms are divided into four main periods and each has its own color. Terms that are used more toward 2008 are economic factors such as *growth, demand, price, economic, income, exchange rate*, and so on in purple; terms used more toward 2010 are organizational factors such as *export, trade, state, manufacturing, firm characteristic, productivity*, and so on in deep green. Toward 2012, most research focused on research methods and measurement with commonly used terms such as *literature, resource, SMES, survey, satisfaction, psychic distance*, and so on in light green. Toward 2014, most research focused on research methods with terms such as *SEM, RBV, mediating effect, construct*, and so on in yellow.





We describe below the most interesting results, which we have found in our study. Export performance research has increased by about three publications per year during the study time. This steady growth can be explained by the increasing import-export trade during the past decades. The most cited article published on export performance is “The determinants of export performance: a review of the empirical literature between 1987 and 1997” by Zou and Stan (1998). There are 2343 authors responsible for the 1344 publications on export performance. Among all the authors, Sousa, Lages, Shoham, Katsikeas, Diamantopoulos etc. stand out forming cooperation networks with other authors. The bibliographic coupling reveals four main clusters of publications which imply four research areas under export performance represented by S. Zou (1998), N.A. Morgan (2004), J. Guan (2003), C. Lages (2005). The authors co-citation networks reveal four main clusters represented respectively by Katsikeas, Johanson, Cavusgil and Helpman. According to (White 2003), links between authors and dominant authors define specialties and the connection of specialties within a discipline. Hence, the dominants publications, authors, and the links between them could provide the bird’s eye view of export performance, furthermore, give future researchers the guiding directions for developing their own.

Among all the institutions, the World Bank leads in the number of authored publications. The International Business Review ranks first in publishing articles on export performance. There are 177 countries that publish on export performance. The United States and the United Kingdom are the most prolific countries in producing publications related to export performance during the study period. The United States and the United Kingdom are also two countries the most connected to other countries and the most active countries in the international collaboration networks. This emphasizes the significance of global networking

and its impact on research output (Zyoud et al. 2018). International research collaboration should be encouraged to advance export performance research.

Word co-occurrence analysis of terms in the titles, abstracts and keywords can provide insight in main topics and research trends (Nunen et al. 2018). The terms retrieved from titles, abstracts, and keywords establish the terms co-occurrence pattern. There are three distinctive clusters which help us understand the field better. The first cluster is related mainly to environmental factors with representative terms such as *export, growth, trade, price, demand, world, comparison, concern, exchange rate, manufacturing, economic, finance, market, regulation, concern, income, country names (Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Latin America, Indonesia, Africa, Canada etc.)* and so on.

The second cluster is related mainly to organizational factors with representative terms such as *productivity, firm level, firm characteristic, input, Chinese exporter, new product, product innovation, process innovation, export decision, foreign ownership,* and so on.

The third cluster is related to research methods with representatives terms such as *literature, research, SMES, export firm, survey, resources, theoretical model, SEM(structural equation modeling), insight, construct, exploratory study, psychic distance, export performance, satisfaction, export, marketing, reliability, future research, mediating effect, conceptual framework,* and so on.

This systematic bibliometric study is very useful and specific in export research. The term co-occurrence pattern provides the future researchers not only different research interests of export performance on environmental and organizational level, but also the research

methods. The factors on the environmental and organizational levels are the most popular research interests in export performance research. The detailed lists of the keywords are useful for inspiring future researchers about the direction they could choose for their research on export performance. The most frequent methods used in the export performance research are *SMES, theoretical model, SEM, conceptual framework, exploratory study, mediating etc.* which gives indices on how the research in this area is conducted. To understand the import-export field better, we suggest the future researchers to expand the databases into the international business, import-export trade, and analyze the data on a broader level.

## CHAPTER 2

### **The interacting effect of business and cultural distances on relationship management and export performance: the case of wine export between France and China**

#### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose** – This research aims to investigate the interacting effect of two forms of psychic distance (business and cultural) on export relationship management. Specifically, this research examines the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of business distance on different dimensions of relationship management and financial export performance.

**Design/Methodology/Approach** – This research builds on a sample of 174 French export executives who were asked to rate their views of their relationship with their Chinese business counterpart in the wine trade, and their related performance.

**Findings** – A first finding lies in the strong positive effects of relationship management, relationship investment, and communication quality on financial export performance. A second and important finding relates to the different effects of the business and cultural dimensions of psychic distance: while the former positively affects relationship management, the latter negatively moderates the effect of business distance on relationship management.

**Research limitations/Implications** – One limitation pertains to the focus on France and China as the only countries involved in the current research. Future research could investigate whether the results replicate in different countries. Further studies would also be needed to enrich the relationship management dimensions and test whether the effects observed here replicate in relation

to other dimensions.

**Practical Implications** – For export managers, this research offers a better understanding of business and cultural distance, and their effects on relationship structuring. Specifically, our results indicate that cultural distance matters more than business distance, meaning that business distance can help relationship management only when cultural distance is low. In addition, the results indicate that wine producers might gain from communicating openly with their business counterparts, for instance, by clearly explaining the business objectives, or through continuous interactions, and temporal and financial investments.

**Originality Value** – The originality of this research lies in identifying the interaction effect of the business and cultural dimensions of psychic distance, with cultural distance revealed as a boundary condition for the effects of business distance on relationship management. The inclusion of marketing and financial aspects constitutes a further original aspect.

**Keywords**

Business and cultural distances; Export performance; Relationship management; Wine trade; France; China

## **Introduction**

Skyrocketing innovation in information technology, improvements in logistics, and free trade agreements have led to profound changes that contribute to increased internationalization and reduced transaction costs (Gunasekaran, Subramanian, & Papadopoulos, 2017). By making it easier to do business abroad, these changes also contribute to the emergence of strong economies, such as China and India, and make the world a playing field of commerce where competitors have equal opportunities (Friedman, 2005). Due to these changes, exporting has become a common practice for firms (Morgan, 1997; Hansen Gillespie, & Gencturk, 1994), and international business researchers have thus dedicated wide attention to export performance. The role of successful exporting on both organizational and national prosperity has gained much support in recent decades (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Piercy, 1998), with exporting positively related to firm productivity and size (Cieslik, Michalek, & Mycielski, 2015).

In this context of increasing importance given to export, research has started investigating the conditions leading to successful export strategies. Prior studies provide evidence for the effect of firm innovativeness on export performance (Lages, Silva & Styles, 2009), especially when the export market environment is competitive (Boso, Story, Cadogan, Micevski, & Kadic Maglajli, 2013). Some other determinants of firm export – including competence, export channel knowledge, product adaptation, competitive pricing, environmental hostility, price competition, and channel relationships – have also been identified, for instance, in the context of Greek wine export (Karelakis, Mattas, & Chrysochoidis, 2008). However, since export relationships are characterized by the interaction between a producer (or seller) and a buyer from two different countries engaged in the exchange of goods, what remains surprisingly under-examined is the role of the valence of these interactions. This lack of knowledge is even more surprising considering that studying how their interaction affects export performance could deepen understanding of relationship operations (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014).

In this regard, the way firms can successfully export to distant countries is not fully understood (Lages et al., 2009). Specifically, psychic distance – or the extent to which the norms and values of two companies differ due to their distinct national characteristics (Ford, 1984, p. 102) – could determine many aspects of strategic performance (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014; Ebrahimi & Banaeifard, 2018). Thus, examining the role of distance in export performance would seem particularly relevant. Although prior research has investigated this issue (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014; Sousa & Bradley, 2005; Sousa & Lengler, 2009; Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998; Berry et al., 2010), and provided evidence for the effects of psychic distance in export performance, current literature presents some limitations that call for further research. A first limitation lies in that these studies have been mainly conducted in the US and Brazil, which prevents their generalization beyond these cultures. A second limitation – of greater importance – relates to the investigation of psychic distance in these studies. Although psychic distance refers to a bidimensional construct – composed of business (i.e., perceptions of differences across markets in the economic, legal, and political environment, Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) and cultural (i.e., perceived differences in cultural values, norms, and traditions, Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) distances –, the previous studies do not consider the potential interplay between these dimensions. However, one may argue that business distance may affect export performance differently depending on cultural distance. Hence, investigating the potential interaction that may exist between the dimensions of psychic distance could reveal insightful. Therefore, in this research, we suggest and test the notion that the cultural dimension of psychic distance may affect the role of business distance on export performance. Further, we aim to identify the underlying mechanisms that explain why psychic distance can lead to changes in export performance.

To achieve these goals, this research first builds on strategic fit theory (Venkatraman, 1989) to propose a theoretical framework of the effects of the interaction between the business and

cultural dimensions of psychic distance and export performance. Then, this research examines this theoretical framework in one business that represents a strong candidate for trade – as evidenced by its growth in world consumption, which increased from 240 Mhl in 2014 to 246 Mhl in 2018<sup>1</sup>, thus being a suitable context for our study: wine. Importantly, to test the role of psychic distance in the export performance of this product category, two countries that highly differ in their culture – thus exhibiting some large psychic distance – are here chosen: France and China. These countries have been chosen due to the newly developing wine consumption countries in Asia such as China, Japan, Singapore and Korea, whose wine consumption has significantly increased during the last decade, making them represent export markets of high potential (Lee, 2009). Further, since 2000, China steadily keeps one of the leading positions in wine consumption growth in the world<sup>2</sup>. Finally, France, a uncontested leader in premium wines production, is ranked the first exporter of wine and spirits in Chinese market for more than two decennia and shows a stable growth for bottled wine, e.g. by 14.6% in volume and by 16.4% in value in 2017 compared to 2016. Given what precedes, wine exports between France and China were chosen for the context of this study.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we build on the existing international business literature on psychic distance to propose a series of hypotheses regarding how such distance can affect export performance. Then, we present the data collection process and our findings.

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<sup>1</sup> The OIV report 2018 (p.8) at <http://www.oiv.int/public/medias/5958/oiv-state-of-the-vitiviniculture-world-market-april-2018.pdf> and the OIV presentation in 2019 <http://www.oiv.int/fr/vie-de-loiv/bilan-de-loiv-2019-sur-la-situation-vitivinicole-mondiale>

<sup>2</sup>The statistics displays 0,8 billion hl growth of the wine consumption volume in China from 2000 to 2017: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/425098/china-wine-consumption/>

Finally, we describe the theoretical and managerial contributions of the current research, and discuss avenues for future research on the role of psychic distance in export performance.

## **Theoretical background**

### *Export performance*

Current research on export performance – referring to the extent to which the firm has achieved its product market performance objectives (Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidas, & Hult, 2016) – has adopted three main perspectives: the organizational view, the environmental approach, or the relationship capabilities (information sharing, communication quality, etc.), and quality capabilities (customer focus, employee involvement, etc.), influencing export-related relationship and economic performance (Lages et al., 2009). Cieslik et al. (2015) identified another set of skills, and argue that export performance depends on productivity, firm size, share of university graduates, R&D expenditure, and internalization. In the US, Silverman, Sengupta, and Cataldi (2003) identified resource commitment as a determinant of export performance, while Boso et al. (2013) highlighted the need for strong networking capabilities and an organic structure, or a structure that supports autonomy in decision making. Focusing on the Greek wine industry, Karelakis et al. (2008) show that export performance requires performing strongly in several aspects in terms of competitive advantage, such as export channel knowledge, product adaptation, competitive price, and distributor support.

Turning to environmental factors, these influence how and to what degree control mechanisms impact export performance (Mysen, 2013). Among these factors, environmental

hostility, price competition, and heterogeneity are shown to be strong barriers to export performance (Karelakis et al., 2008). Competitive intensity has also been revealed as a key determinant of environmental uncertainty (Miller & Friesen, 1982; Boso et al., 2013; Nathaniel et al., 2013), leading to decreases in firm export performance. However, the systematic analysis of Leonidou et al. (1998) emphasizes the heavy focus of export performance research on the role of trade barriers, tariffs, and global competition. Such focus has precluded clear knowledge of how firms can develop in countries that experience declining growth in the economy as result of internal fiscal problems, reduced domestic market opportunities, trade deficits, currency devaluations, capital transfers, or import restrictions.

In terms of managerial perspectives, research has stressed the importance of managerial skills in planning and finance (Cavusgil & Naor, 1987), a positive attitude or commitment to export (Leonidou et al. 1998; Katsikeas et al., 2008), with higher priority on export markets and sufficient resource allocations likely to increase export performance. Similarly, Leonidou et al. (1998) point out that management is critical and decisive in developing a successful export business.

These findings indicate that organizational, environmental, and managerial factors can strongly influence export performance. While the three main types of determinants of export performance have received empirical support (Diamantopoulos, Ring, Schlegelmilch, & Doberer, 2014), the quality of the interactions between a producer and a foreign seller in the export process has thus far been neglected. As the management of the seller-buyer relationship has long been identified as a strong antecedent of business performance (Day, Fawcett, Fawcett, & Magnan, 2013; Jap & Ganesan, 2000; Kusari, Hoeffler, & Iacobucci, 2013; Palmatier, Scheer, Evans, & Arnold, 2008; Kumar et al., 2016), we next investigate the role of relationship

management in export performance.

### *Relationship management and export performance*

Customer relationship management, or relationship marketing, has long been recognised as critical for value creation and performance (Ernst, Hoyer, Krafft, & Krieger, 2011; Payne & Frow, 2005; Reinartz, Krafft, & Hoyer, 2004). Relationship management – defined as the “marketing activities directed towards establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 22) – views communication, commitment, and trust as the key variables that explain successful business relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994. Anderson & Narus, 1998; Ravald & Gronroos, 1996), as well as the relationship benefits that result from such successful relationship (Ulaga and Eggert, 2006; Palmatier, 2008).

Relationship management thus sees the quality of such communication as a core component of relationship marketing (Palmatier et al., 2006; Swift, 2000). Communication quality derives from information transmission and includes aspects such as the accuracy, timeliness, adequacy, and credibility of information exchanges (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). Such communication is deemed the ‘glue’ that holds the relationship together (Mohr & Nevin 1990; Jalal Ahamed et al., 2013), and as such, is a key factor of success. However, communication refers not only to information sharing but also the ability to understand each other’s codes (Lages & Montgomery, 2005). In this regard, open and frequent communication is essential to create and maintain a solid inter-organizational relationship, which may lead to higher export performance (Ural, 2009; Jalal Ahamed & Skallerud, 2013).

Another aspect of relationship management lies in a long-term relationship orientation. Such

orientation is the perception of the interdependence of outcomes where both the supplier's and the joint outcomes are expected to benefit the buyer in the long term (Ganesan, 1994; Kelly & Thibaut, 1978). A long-term orientation is deemed critical to sustain competitive advantage and develop the mutual dependence of outcomes, such that joint relationship outcomes are expected to profit from the relationship in the long run (Ganesan, 1994). Among the benefits of long-term commitment in a channel relationship is the enhancement of business performance (Anderson & Weitz, 1992). In explaining how and why relationship capabilities are performance enhancing, Larson (1992) finds that a long-term orientation in a business relationship leads to performance-enhancing operational and strategic integration (Ha & Stoel, 2008).

Beyond mere long-term orientation, De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci (2001) state that relationship investment is needed for relationship quality and ultimately behavioral loyalty, a crucial determinant of business performance. Developing healthy relationships with partners cannot be achieved overnight and requires not only good communication quality and long-term relationship commitment, but also relationship investment, or 'time, effort, spending, and resources focused on building a stronger relationship' (Palmatier et al., 2006, p. 138).

Therefore, we propose:

**H1:** Relationship management – pertaining to (a) communication quality, (b) long-term relationship, and (c) relationship investment – positively influences financial export performance.

*Psychic distance and relationship management: the need to distinguish between business and*

## *cultural distance*

Psychic distance refers to the distance between the home market and foreign market resulting from the perception of both cultural and business differences (Dow, 2000). Even though we find psychic distance appears to be one of the key elements in the field of international marketing, the literature exhibits a lack of consistency with respect to its effects (Griffith & Dimitrova 2014). One reason for such inconsistency could lie in the conceptualization itself of psychic distance. Seeing psychic distance as unidimensional construct (e.g. Håkanson, 2014, Sousa & Lengler, 2009) may help in understanding the influence of a manager's perception of distance between host and home markets on strategic choices. However, this view of distance could be too straightforward, as different types of distance may exist. To this regard, Evans, Mavondo, and Bridson (2008) proposed two components of psychic distance: business and cultural. We next describe each type of distance and explain their role in relationship management and export performance through the lens of strategic fit theory (Venkatraman, 1989), proven effective in international marketing research to explain export performance (e.g., Chen, Sousa, & He, 2016; Hultman, Robson, & Katsikeas, 2009; Katsikeas et al., 2006). This theory posits that firms should align their strategy with their environment, and when the strategy fits the environment, firm performance increases (Lukas, Tan, & Hult, 2001). Aligning or fitting with the environment requires the ability to minimize the psychic distance between a firm and its customers to better understand and do business with them.

The first type of psychic distance – business distance – concerns perceptions of differences across markets in the economic environment, the legal and political system, business practices, market structure, and language (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014). Such distance originates in

demographic, geographic, and political institutions, making some countries more different or distant than others (Whitley, 1992). This approach is close to the administrative and economic view of distance that Ghemawat (2001) proposed. A basic assumption is that firms are less likely to instigate and continue business relations with countries that are perceived to be distant and thus dissimilar. On the contrary, the perception of some cultural proximity – and thus lower psychic distance – to a company in a foreign market will encourage business with that company. In this regard, Karelakis et al. (2008) suggest that similarities in culture, habits, traditions, and market infrastructure lead to more effective and efficient export operations. Business practices in general, political and legal systems, and marketing infrastructure are external and often uncontrollable (Jalal et al. 2013). Some scholars approach distance in a transaction-cost perspective, arguing that business distance increases uncertainty thus increasing the perception of risk and the cost of doing business (e.g. Hennart & Larimo, 1998). In one of the pioneering works on this subject, Shawna & Lane (1996) suggested multinational corporations to perform a careful evaluation of not only economic factors but also political factors in decision making. Managers need to exceed their competence, as the unexpected change can be very costly. Jalal et al. (2013) reveals that a stronger relationship could possibly neutralize the negative impact of business distance on export performance. Recently, Brett (2017) as well as Mostafiz et al. (2019) emphasizes that a clear understanding of how cultures influence interests and priorities could bring global environment benefits in the intercultural negotiations. What precedes highlight that when export managers perceive greater risk in the operating environment, they structure firm operations to reduce it (Azar & Drogendijk, 2016; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014; Pekovic et al., 2016). Hence, although business distance might at first sight impede relationship management, one could argue that when managers perceive some business distance with a market customer, they employ some risk reduction strategies. These risk reduction strategies may include investing time, effort, and money to better understand the foreign market and to be able to engage in long-term relationships with

that distant customer. Since these efforts and investments in long-term orientation are components of relationship management – and given the afore predicted positive effect of relationship management on export performance – we propose the following:

**H2:** Business distance positively influences relationship management (H2a), which thus mediates the effect of business distance on export performance (H2b).

The second type of distance refers to cultural distance, a dimension that derives from Hofstede's (1991) dimensions of national culture, or the 'national cultural characteristics of the home and host countries' (p. 29-30). Cultural distance includes the five dimensions of individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and masculinity/femininity. A country is said to be culturally distant from another when differing in one of these dimensions. More generally, cultural distance pertains to perceived differences in cultural values, norms, and traditions (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), playing an important role in social exchanges. Such distance may impede relationship management and export, as it disturbs the flow of information between the firm and its foreign customers, making it difficult to implement favorable importer-exporter relationships (Durand, Turkina, & Robson 2016). A basic assumption is that the greater the cultural distance between the home and the host country, the less the similarity in national culture, and the subsequent facilitation of interactions (Manev & Stevenson, 2001). Hence, cultural distance could be a barrier to interaction among people and business performance.

However, as with business distance, managers who perceive substantial cultural differences and subsequent environmental uncertainty when expanding into culturally distant markets may

implement strategies to interact and integrate with the market environment (Azar & Drogendijk, 2016). Through efforts to incorporate cultural diversity into their operations and adapt to the partner, the relationship might become more effective (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014). In support of this assumption, research shows that firms operating in more culturally distant countries tend to invest more time and resources to understand the greater perceived cultural differences, and increased performance is observed in more psychically distant host-country markets than psychically close markets (Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014). Hence, we hypothesize that:

**H3:** Cultural distance positively influences relationship management.

*Considering the interaction effect of cultural and business distance*

In international business, although the construct of psychic distance is particularly useful for understanding export performance (Conway & Swift, 2000; Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998), its use has two potential limitations. A first limitation lies in the fact that research on the role of psychic distance in export performance mostly conceptualizes and measures distance as a unidimensional construct (e.g. Sousa & Lengler, 2009; Berry et al., 2010, Westjohn & Magnusson, 2017), although some refined and more precise conceptualizations exist (Berry, Guillén, & Zhou, 2010 ; Prime, Obadia, & Vida, 2009 ; Sousa & Bradley, 2006). Different definitions of psychic distance exist in literature and some argue for including individual values

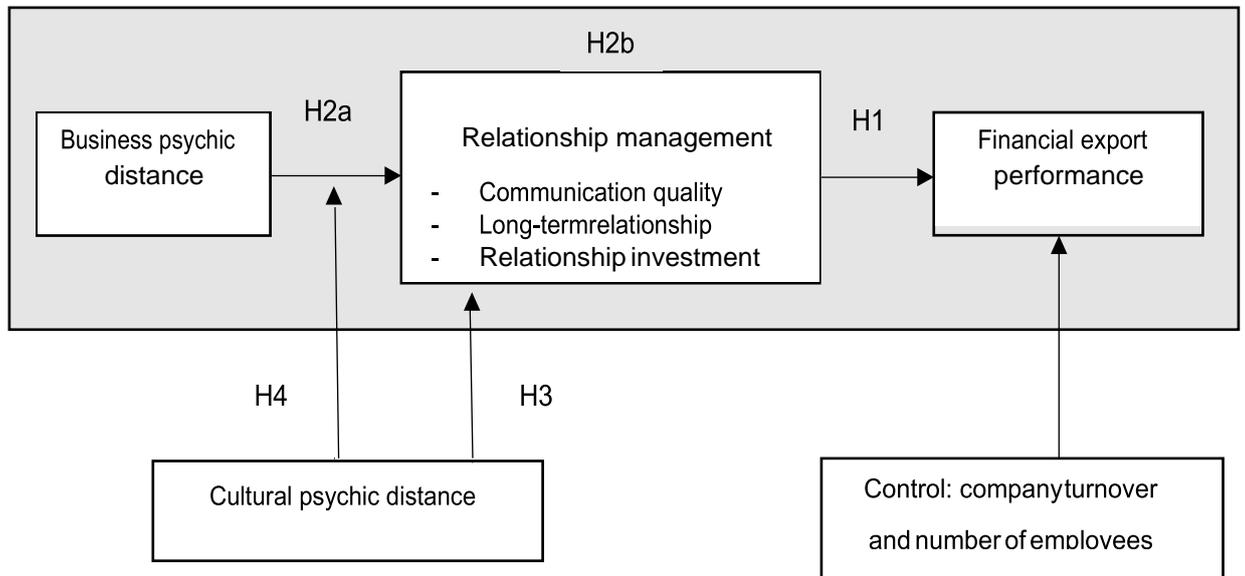
of the managers into measuring this distance (i.e. Sousa & Bradley, 2006) though this model is restricted to psychological context and deficient in generalization. A second limitation relates to the view of distance in these studies as either simply an antecedent of performance (Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001; Evans et al., 2008; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) or a moderating variable (Westjohn & Magnusson, 2017), while dimensions of distance may instead interact.

The assumption of an interaction between the business and cultural dimensions of distance has recently been suggested by Westjohn and Magnusson (2017), who proposed that “psychic distance interferes with export relationships because it complicates the flow of Information between the firm and its foreign market customers” (p. 75). Following this view, it might be the case that for managers who perceive some business distance with a foreign partner, the efforts made to overcome such barriers and to create strong relationships with this partner can succeed only if the cultural distance is low. As cultural distance could contribute to misunderstandings and impede the overall effectiveness of interpersonal communication (Jalal & Skallerud, 2013), it might be more easily overcome, and reduce the likelihood of business distance preventing strong relationship management, when low (versus high). When high cultural distance may become a strong barrier to relationship management, regardless of business distance. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H4: Cultural distance moderates the effect of business distance on relationship management, such that the positive effect of business distance on relationship management is stronger when cultural distance is low (versus high).

Our hypotheses lead to the following theoretical model.

**Figure 1.** The theoretical model



## Methodology

### Procedure and sample

Due to our focus on the role of psychic distance in export performance, we decided to examine exports between two countries with different cultures, and consequently characterized by some psychic distance. Hence, a sample of French managers exporting wine to China was selected.

This choice was made for the following four reasons.

First, with global sales from wine exports amounting to US\$35.5 billion in 2017<sup>4</sup>, wine is widely subject to exportation, making this product suitable for the study of export performance. Second, in 2017, French exports amounted to US\$10.3 billion, representing 29.1% of total wine exports, ranking France first in terms of wine exportations. Third, wine consumption constantly increases in China, showing 80% growth since 2000 (i.e. from 1.73 to 1.79 billion hl from 2016 to 2017)<sup>5</sup>. Wine imports follow the same trend (i.e. 745 million liters of wine imported to China during the year 2017— 16.9% increase in volume and 18% increase in value) and in terms of country of origin, France remains the first wine importer for China<sup>6</sup>. Fourth, France and China have very different cultures<sup>7</sup>, with France more individualist and China more collectivist, making the distance between these two countries interesting for the current study. These factors led us to select wine as the context for this study, and France and China as the countries of interest.

Data were collected over 6 months from June to December 2017 at four international wine events in France (Bordeaux Vinexpo<sup>8</sup> in June, Lyon tasting<sup>9</sup> in October, Paris grand tasting<sup>10</sup> in December, and Bordeaux tasting<sup>11</sup> in December). In terms of administering the survey to French managers exporting wine to China, we first conducted a pre-test in the form of field interviews with twenty export managers to refine and clarify the different measures to include in the final survey. In this phase, 8 items were deleted due to export managers' lack of clarity in understanding.

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4 <http://www.worldstopexports.com/wine-exports-country/>

5 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/425098/china-wine-consumption/>

6 <https://www.decanter.com/wine-news/exporting-wine-to-china-countries-384383/>

7 <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/china,france/>

8 Vinexpo, <http://www.vinexpo.com/fr>

9 Lyon tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/lyon-tasting-2017/>

10 Paris grand tasting, <https://www.grandtasting.com/>

11 Bordeaux tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/bordeaux-tasting-2017/>

On administering the questionnaire, each potential respondent was asked whether s/he had direct import-export trade with China and knowledge of the business relationship with the Chinese business counterpart. In total, 174 complete surveys were collected. Of the respondents, 70% were male. Concerning company size, companies with fewer than 50 employees are more represented and account for 45.09%. The sample can thus be considered representative for wine export companies in France according to FranceAgriMer<sup>12</sup>, and in China following China Statistical Yearbook 2015<sup>13</sup>.

## Measures

All the measures used in the survey were drawn from prior research. The business dimension of psychic distance was measured with an adapted 8 item-scale (Evans et al., 2008; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014;  $\alpha = .82$ ) dealing with the specificities of the legal, political, and economic environment, as well as business practices. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which the foreign market differs from the home market in these matters (anchored at 1 = totally the same, and 7 = totally different). Cultural distance was then measured using Hofstede's (1991) 12-item scale, widely used and validated in prior research (Evans et al., 2008). This measure includes 3 items that relate to power distance, 4 items that capture uncertainty avoidance, 2 items that focus on individualism/collectivism, and 3 items that assess masculinity/femininity. Respondents were asked to indicate the cultural distance between the foreign market and their home market on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = totally the same, and 7 = totally different;  $\alpha = .84$ ).

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12 <https://www.statista.com/>

13 China Statistical Yearbook

The index of business and cultural distance was calculated in accordance with Griffith & Dimitrova (2014) using the following formula:

$$BD/CD = \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{(I_j - 1)^2 / V_j}{n}$$

Where BD or CD represents business or cultural distance between the Chinese market and the French market,  $I_j$  represents the index of the  $j$ th business or cultural dimension from the Chinese market, 1 denotes the home market (the French market),  $V_j$  is the variance of the index of the  $j$ th dimension

Then, to avoid common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), export performance was measured prior to assessing relationship management. As financial performance directly reflects the commercial profits in a business relationship, we used financial performance as our measure of export performance. In this regard, the EXPERF Scale of Zou et al. (1998) was developed as a generalized export performance measure that can be applied in the context of multiple countries. Since financial export performance can be seen as a function of both customer satisfaction and strategic performance (Acikdilli, 2015; Diamantopoulos et al., 2014), this scale integrates both objective (financial and strategic) and subjective (satisfaction with the export venture) measures. Hence, we measured financial export performance using this scale, and more precisely, the three items export sales, export profits, export growth of Zou et al. (1998;  $\alpha = .78$ ). The detailed items are shown in Table 1. Respondents then assessed the relationship management with the foreign customer. Based on the previous studies, relationship management is conceptualized as a higher-order construct that includes involvement, communication quality, and long-term relationship orientation

(Krasnikov & Jayachandran, 2008). The measure assesses three types of relationship efforts: financial bonding, social bonding, and structural bonding, reflecting how business partners perceive the resources, efforts, and attention of the other agent in the relationship (Liang & Wang, 2007 ; De Wulf et al., 2001 ; Ha & Stoel, 2008). Therefore, relationship management was measured through adapting an 8-item three-dimensional scale from previous research (Lages et al., 2009 ; Krasnikov & Jayachandran, 2008 ; Liang & Wang, 2007). Three items assess communication quality (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Jalal Ahamed & Skallerud, 2013;  $\alpha = .82$ ), 3 items focus on long-term relationship (Anderson & Weitz, 1992; Larson, 1992;  $\alpha = .90$ ), and 2 items relate to relationship investment (Krasnikov & Jayachandran, 2008; Lages et al., 2009;  $\alpha = .76$ ; see Table 1).

Finally, the survey asked respondents to inform on the annual turnover and number of employees of their company, as these variables could affect financial export performance (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014, Boso et al., 2013). These measures were then used as covariates in the analyses to minimize the spuriousness of findings.

**Table 1.** Measurement items, scale reliability, composite reliability, and factor loading

Variables and items	Factor loading
<b>Communication quality</b> (composite reliability = 0.84; alpha= 0.82, AVE= 0.64)	
CQ1- We openly communicate with this partner	0.81
CQ2- We have continuous interaction with this partner	0.87
CQ3- The objectives and goals and information are clearly communicated to this partner	0.72
<b>Long-term relationship</b> (composite reliability =0.91; alpha= 0.90; AVE= 0.64)	
LTR1- Maintaining a long-term relationship with this partner is important for us	0.90
LTR2- We focus on long –term goals in this relationship	0.92
LTR3- We believe that over the long run, our relationship with the partner will be profitable	0.83
<b>Relationship investment</b> (composite reliability = 0.60; alpha= 0.76; AVE=0.78)	
RI1- We make significant investments in building a strong Relationship with this partner	0.74
RI2- We devote considerable time and effort to the relationship with this partner	0.85
<b>Financial performance</b> (composite reliability = 0.74; alpha=0.78; AVE=0.59)	
FP1- Exporting to this importer has been very profitable	0.75
FP2- Exporting to this importer has generated a high volume of sales	0.85
FP3- The exports with this importer have achieved rapid growth	0.68
Measurement model fit (N=174); Chi-Square= 51.559; Degree of freedom=38; Probability level= .07; CMIN/DF: 1.357; GFI: .946; CFI: .925; RMSEA: .045; SRMR: .0532 P-close: .570	

## Results

### Measure validation

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to assess the measurement model. SEM has the advantage of correcting for measurement error in the measures as the possibility of Type II errors (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Hence, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first employed to test the measurement model fit by examining the standardized Factor loadings from latent variables to indicator variables, the chi-square test, and fit indices. The CFA provides results allowing a thorough examination of measurement validity. The Model  $\chi^2=51.55$  with 38 degrees of freedom (df) yielded a goodness of fit index (GFI) of .94, a comparative fit index (CFI) of .92, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) of .045, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of .0532 indicating that the model fits the data well. Table 1 shows the standardized factor loading estimates, which are all above 0.6 (ranging from 0.68 to 0.92), significant at  $p < .001$ . These loadings facilitate the computation of the average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability estimates. The AVE estimates range from .59 to .78, and the construct reliability estimates from .76 to .90. The composite reliabilities were all above 0.6, ranging from 0.60 to 0.84. Each variance extracted equaled or exceeded the squared correlation estimate between the constructs (Table2). Considered in total, the results suggest good model fit and sufficient convergent and discriminant validity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

**Table 2.** Convergent and discriminant validity.

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
1. Financial performance	4.67	1.18	.77					
2. Communication quality	5.12	1.26	.443**	.80				
3. Long-term relationship	6.16	1.15	.274**	.446**	.88			
4. Relationship investment	5.20	1.19	.406**	.393**	.510**	.80		
5. Business distance	8.58	3.37	.144	.227**	.211	.168*	-	
6. Cultural distance	6.86	2.66	.097	.089	.163*	.144	.531**	-

Notes: \*:  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ ; the square roots of AVE are on the diagonal;

- not applicable; SD: Standard deviation.

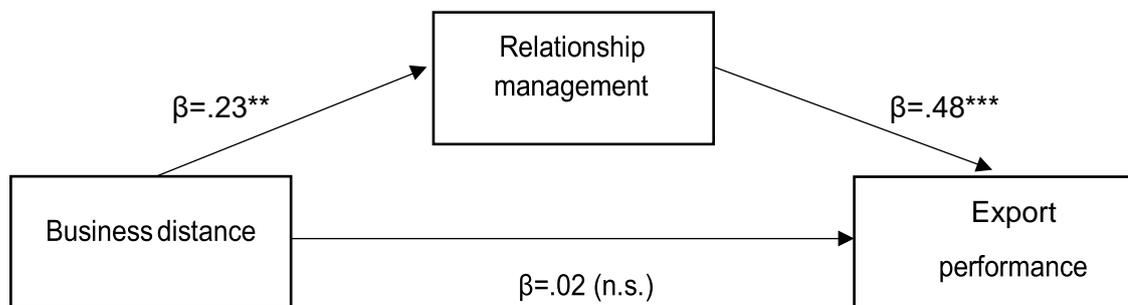
### Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis and the structural model fitness were tested using the Process macro, as it enables testing models that simultaneously include mediators and moderators, making it suitable to test the mediations, moderations, and moderated mediations posited in our model. Further, this macro enables the use of a bootstrapping procedure to counteract the assumption of normality of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect ( $a \times b$ ) as required by the Sobel test (Hayes, 2013). Bootstrapping is a computer-based technique that can be used to infer the sampling distribution of almost any statistics via repeated samples drawn from the sample itself (Chong & Choo, 2011).

To test hypotheses H1 and H2, a mediation analysis was performed (Process macro, model 4, 5000 bootstrap samples). Business distance was included as the independent variable, export performance as the dependent variable, and relationship management as the mediator. The firm's annual turnover and number of employees served as covariates. The results revealed a positive effect of business distance on relationship management ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 3.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ), supporting H2a. The results also revealed a positive effect of relationship management on

export performance ( $\beta = .48, t = 6.49, p < .001$ ), supporting H1, and a significant indirect effect of business distance on export performance through relationship management ( $\beta = .11, S.E. = .05, 95\% CI = .020; .212$ ). Of note, the direct effect of business distance on export performance was not significant ( $p > .05$ ), indicating full mediation (see Figure 2). A significant indirect effect combined with an insignificant direct effect reflects full mediation (Baron and Kenny 1986; Hayes 2009)

**Figure 2.** The mediating role of relationship management in the effect of business distance relationship management



Note : \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; n. s.: non-significant

Overall, these results provide evidence for the hypothesized mediating effect of relationship management H2b. Further analyses were performed to better understand the role of relationship management using the same procedure but with the distinct dimensions of communication quality, long-term orientation, and investment simultaneously included as the mediating variables. The results show positive effects of communication quality ( $\beta = .34, t = 4.39, p < .001$ ) and investment ( $\beta = .28, t = 3.54, p < .001$ ) on export performance, but not long-term orientation ( $\beta = -.02, t = -.30, p > .05$ ). Further, the mediation analysis also revealed a mediating effect of communication quality ( $\beta = .07, S.E. = .03, 95\% CI = .017;$

.153) and long- term orientation ( $\beta = .04$ , S.E. = .02, 95% CI = .001; .109), but not investment ( $\beta = -.05$ , S.E. = .02, 95% CI = -.051; .024), making communication quality the underlying mechanism that explains the effect of business distance on export performance.

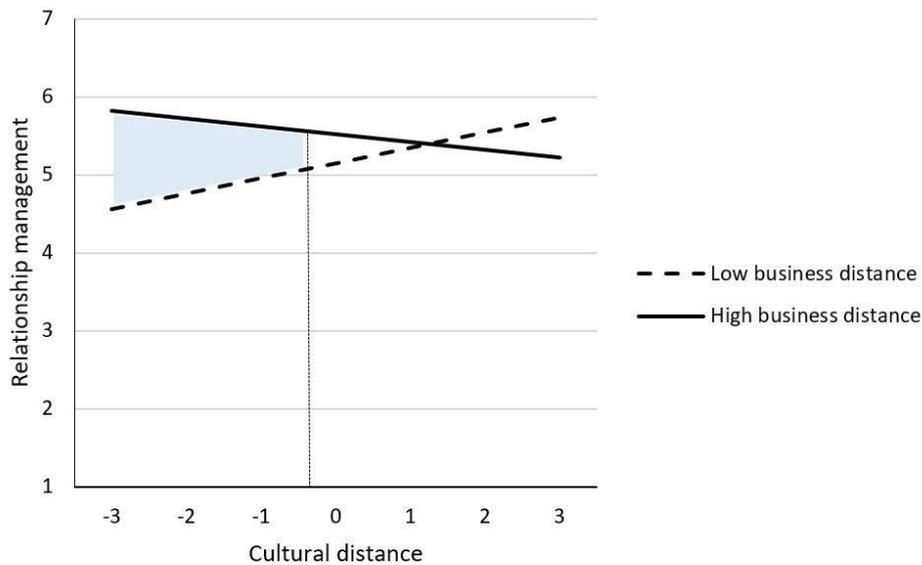
**Table 3.** Regression coefficients

<b>Direct and interacting effects</b>						
	<b>IV</b>	<b>DV</b>	<b>Sign of the</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
	<b>Predicted relationship</b>					
H1	Relationship management	Export performance	+	.48	< .001	Supported
H2a	Psychic business distance	Relationship management	+	.23	<.01	Supported
H3	Psychic cultural distance	Relationship management	+	.04	>.05	Not supported
H4	Psychic cultural distance	Effect of business on relationship management	Negative moderation	-.017	<.001	Supported
<b>Indirect effects</b>						
	<b>IV</b>	<b>DV</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>95%CI</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	
H2b	Psychic business distance	Export performance	Relationship management	.020;.212	Supported	
	Psychic business distance	Export performance	Communication quality	.017;.153	Supported	
	Psychic business distance	Export performance	Long-term orientation	-.051;.024	Not supported	
	Psychic business distance	Export performance	Investment	.001;.109	Supported	

Notes: CI=Confidence Interval

Hypotheses 3 and 4 – respectively the direct and moderating effects of cultural distance were then tested. Instead of relying on dichotomizing the moderating variable, we tested the hypotheses using a floodlight analysis (Spiller, Fitzsimons, Lynch, & McClelland, 2013) and Process macro (5000 bootstraps). Floodlight analysis is simple effects tests in moderation analysis which reports ranges of significance using Johnson Neyman test termed as a “floodlight.” (Spiller et al. 2013). Here, business distance was included as the independent variable, the second-order variable of relationship management as the dependent variable, and the continuous variable of cultural distance as the moderating variable. Annual turnover and number of employees served as covariates. The results brought further support for the positive effect of business distance ( $\beta = .19, p < .05$ ) and the lack of a direct effect of cultural distance ( $\beta = .04, p > .05$ ). H3 is thus not supported. Interestingly, and as predicted, the results show their significant interaction ( $\beta = -.017, p < .001$ ). We graph this interaction in Figure 3, using the Johnson–Neyman technique for identifying regions in the range of the moderator variable in which the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is and is not significant (Hayes and Matthes 2009). The Johnson-Neyman point occurs at a value of cultural distance of  $Z = -.14$ , indicating that business distance leads to significantly greater relationship management for all values of cultural distance below  $-.14$  (see Figure 3). The covariates had no effect ( $p$ 's  $> .05$ ). On Figure 3, – the moderating effect of cultural distance is exposed – when cultural distance is lower, the effect of business distance on relationship management is higher, vice versa. For illustrative purposes, the shadow shows the moderation difference. Overall, these results support H4 and the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of Business distance on relationship management.

**Figure 3.** Relationship management as a function of perceived business distance and cultural distance



## Discussion

This study aimed to examine the distinct effects of business and cultural distance on relationship management and export performance. Hence, this research first examined whether relationship management – here conceptualized as communication quality, long-term orientation, and relationship investment – plays a mediating role in the effect of business distance on export performance. The second important goal was to investigate the potential interacting effect of cultural and business distances on relationship management. In other words, this research has adopted a novel approach of psychic distance, predicting that the dimension of cultural distance could moderate the effect of another dimension of psychic distance, namely, business distance. The data from managers who operate in France and export wine to China provide empirical support for most of the hypotheses, providing theoretical and managerial contributions that are presented below.

## Theoretical contributions

This study makes several contributions to international relationship management research. The first theoretical contribution to the literature lies in the light we shed on the notion that the different dimensions of cultural and business psychic distance can interact to affect relationship management. This study confirms that psychic distance should not be considered a unidimensional construct, as is sometimes the case in international business literature (e.g., Håkanson, 2014 or Westjohn & Magnusson, 2017), but as a multidimensional construct. Identifying the interacting effect of cultural and business distance suggests that research should not see distance as only an antecedent of relationship management and subsequent performance (Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001; Evans et al., 2008; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014). Rather – as supported by our results and reflected by the interaction between the cultural and business dimensions – psychic distance is a complex construct (Berry et al., 2010). Yet, conceptualizing psychic distance and introducing both the cultural and business dimensions, and administrative or political dimensions (Berry et al., 2010; Prime et al., 2009; Sousa & Bradley, 2006), would add another perspective to existing studies. Our findings support the multidimensionality by clarifying how a better match between cultural and business dimensions can be created.

Second, through the preceding identified moderating role of cultural distance, this research also contributes to the literature on psychic distance by highlighting the importance of cultural distance. This result constitutes a novel insight and sheds light on the importance of cultural distance over business distance because business distance exerts a positive effect on relationship management only at low values of cultural distance. When cultural distance becomes too high, business distance does not lead to successful relationship management. Such result complements the literature on the role of psychic distance on performance by showing that even though business distance can end up in more

export performance (Azar & Drogendijk, 2016; Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), export performance can be achieved only when no substantial cultural differences are perceived. From a more theoretical standpoint, our result also prompts research aiming to consider the distinct aspect of distance when examining the role of psychic distance in relationships between firms engaged in world trade. Further, the current research also calls for research that helps draw some hierarchy between the psychic distance dimensions.

A third contribution of this research lies in the positive impact of business distance relationship management. While there has been little consensus on the influence of psychic distance (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), and although one might believe that distance impedes good relationships between foreign companies (Karelakis et al., 2008; Kim & Kim 1993; Slangen, Beugelsdijk, & Hennart, 2011), our results provide empirical evidence for the Positive effect of business distance. Hence, our results are consistent with the work of Brouthers and Brouthers (2001) and Griffith and Dimitrova (2014) who find that firms operating in more culturally distant countries tend to outperform firm operating in more culturally close countries due to tending to invest greater time and resources. However, this result should be understood by considering cultural distance, since business distance exerts positive effects only when cultural distance does not exceed a certain threshold. Hence, the results help reconcile the mixed results in previous research on the effects of psychic distance, suggesting the existence of a moderating variable, which has been identified here as cultural distance.

A fourth contribution lies in the identification of the mediating role of relationship management, which can thus be considered as the underlying mechanism that explains the effect of business distance on export performance. To this regard, the three-dimensional

conceptualization of relationship management helps gain clearer understanding of how this variable affects export performance. While Griffith and Dimitrova (2014) show that business and cultural distance have unique effects on structuring the export relationship, in their model, export relationship is measured with only one dimension (i.e., the complementarity of capabilities among partners). In our model, we conceptualized and measured export relationship as a higher-order construct composed of the three dimensions of communication quality, long-term relationship, and relationship investment. In so doing, we confirm the positive impact of business distance on export relationship management and subsequently on export performance, but only through the mediating effect of communication quality and investment.

Finally, this research presents and tests a model that builds on – but also extends – the existed conceptualizations of relationship management (communication quality, long-term relationship, relationship investment) and financial export performance, using two countries that widely differ in terms of business distance (economic environment, legal and political system, business practices) and cultural distance (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/ femininity). The proposed extended model includes the four dimensions of relationship management, which yet, have not been used for measuring the impact on export performance. Although we refer to existing studies on this subject (e.g. Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014; Jalal Ahamed et al. 2013; or Lages et al. 2009), we thus nevertheless, conceptualized and measured the concepts of distance and relationship management using respectively multi-item scales and econometric data that enabled us to provide more rigorous results.

## Managerial implications

Export managers, especially those in – or working with – developing countries, should act to develop and maintain a higher relationship quality to achieve success in both the short and long term. In this regard, working with Chinese companies with the aim to maintain profitable relationships might require some guidelines, which our paper aims to provide. In the face of economic, political uncertainty, efforts could be made not only on the corporate level but also on the governmental level. In the specific context of China, it is important to mention that on one hand, during the recent years, Chinese government has been increasing industrial competition, geopolitical uncertainty and protectionist sentiments that might challenge the sustainability of foreign trade growth (China economic report, 2017, p.11, p.14). On the other hand, China has launched several projects aimed at facilitating the international business and economy growth such as 13th Five-Year Plan and Belt<sup>14</sup> and Road, for which China pledged significant funds for promoting infrastructure, trade, and connectivity along the “New Silk Road<sup>15</sup>”. These apparently contradictory moves, which prevent from appraising the exact business distance between China and other countries, may challenge the export managers that aim to work with Chinese companies. This research aims to provide some guidelines and offer perspectives for export managers – especially for those working with China or countries with similar business and cultural distance – on relationship management and its impact on financial export performance.

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14 The 13th Five-Year Plan points to an increased emphasis on innovation, improved resource allocation, manufacturing, IT, services as well as low-carbon growth

15 The Silk Road Economic Belt is a development strategy proposed by the Chinese government that focuses on connectivity and cooperation between Eurasian countries including the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the ocean-going Maritime Silk Road (MSR). The initiative was known in English as the One Belt and One Road Initiative (OBOR) until 2016

A first recommendation derives from the clear interplay between psychic business distance and cultural distance, an effect that scholars have so far paid little attention to. Having evidenced that the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of business distance on relationship management should aid export managers in better matching the strategies to business partners. Cultural distance is revealed as a boundary condition for the effects of business distance on relationship management, suggesting that managers need to adapt and adopt diverse strategies when structuring and operating the relationship with foreign counterparts. The cultural distance acts as a valve in the international relationship management, which can either enhance or block the relationship. When export managers perceive very high cultural distance between their home and host market, we suggest them to understand the differences by investing more time, resources, and efforts to incorporate cultural diversity, for the relationship becomes more effective. To this end, knowing whether business dimensions are universal or not across different cultures and acquiring greater knowledge of the values and social norms of the focal country would allow reducing cultural distance with foreign counterparts. To this regard, in our case of France-China wine trade the knowledge of language (Chinese or French respectively) and the cross-cultural events (e.g. short tours, wine tastings, etc.) organized by companies were indicated as the tools which stimulate interest, build trust and positively contribute into a better understanding between business partners.

Due to the focus of the current research on China, a second managerial implication that derives from the interactions of business and cultural distances refers to the need for export managers that trade with China to consider the characteristics of this country. Chinese culture is characterized by two aspects: the importance of guanxi (Lee & Dawes, 2005), and its high degree of collectivism (Hofstede, 1980). The concept of guanxi refers to interpersonal

relationships, among which dyadic business relationships (Hwang, 1987). Such guanxi reveals important because of the collectivism that exists in the Chinese society: in China, individuals aim to maintain harmony between persons and appreciate reciprocal relationship of respect and courtesy (Zhang & Neelankavil, 1997; Bouzdine-Chameeva et al. 2014; Zhang, 2017). Hence, when export managers work with their Chinese counterparts, the relationship may be Improved if these characteristics of the Chinese culture are kept in mind. By complying with the Chinese rules, export managers might reduce the cultural distance that exists between their home country and China. Given the importance of cultural distance that has been revealed by our results and the moderation analysis, the compliance to the collectivist mindset of Chinese individuals should end up helping relationship quality and subsequently export performance.

Third, relationship management has a strong positive effect on financial export performance and mediates the effect of business distance, especially the communication quality and investment components. Hence, our results suggest export managers should communicate openly with the business counterpart, clearly explaining the business objectives, and continuously interact with business partners to boost export performance. Modern technologies and new tools can enrich the possibilities for real-time communication and information exchange leading to more frequent interactions in-between business partners and therefore to more efficient business operations.

Fourth, and on a broader level, we believe that our findings of this research can also benefit export firms, professional training programs, business schools and universities for developing curricula aimed at educating and sensitizing export managers or students the unique effects of the psychic business and cultural distance on relationship operation as well as export performance. The scales of psychic business and the cultural distance scales can be

used as tool to measure export managers and student's perception of business distance and cultural distance to certain markets. Furthermore, it would be helpful by providing adaptive strategies to have an effective relationship, which in turn positively influence financial export performance.

#### Limitations and further research

This study is limited in the unique context of wine trade sector, and of France - China export performance as the only countries involved in the current research. Yet, "greater specificity of the unique business and cultural distance may lead to a better understanding of industry and between different countries" (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014, p. 62). Due to this focus on only two countries, which prevents generalization beyond these countries, future research may consider testing the supported interaction effect of cultural and business distance in other countries to ensure that the effect replicates beyond the context of wine exportation between France and China.

Our research presents an in-depth quantitative investigation, and the revelatory case Findings are rich and likely significant for further theory development, with regard to psychic distance in relationship management. The current research focused on the two most widely recognized dimensions of distance that affect export performance, namely, business and cultural distance. However, previous research has recognized the existence of other types of distance, such as Ghemawat's (2001) four-dimensional approach of cultural, administrative, geographic, and economic distance. Although we recognize the difficulty in conceptualizing and measuring the different forms of distance (Berry et al., 2010), we also believe that business and cultural distance might not be the only dimensions that affect relationship management, nor that they are the only dimensions that interact. Most

importantly, we find the need to enrich the relationship management dimensions.

Additionally, future research could test whether the effects observed here replicate in relation to other dimensions. Broader consensus is needed in the operational conceptualizations of psychic distance and its measurements. Further, despite our reliance on relationship management literature, trust was not included as a mediator between business distance and performance in our model. Previous research has emphasized how complex the link between psychic distance and trust is (Leonidou, Barnes, and Talias 2006) and further research may investigate if the interaction between the business and cultural dimensions of psychic distance may also affect trust. By doing so, more knowledge would be gained on the elicitation of the important variable of trust as a potential outcome of psychic distance.

Finally, our findings on the interacting effect of business and cultural distance on relationship management also argue for further investigation versus psychic distance dimensions contingent approaches (e.g., Sousa & Bradley, 2006; Khalil, 2019; Brett, 2017 and, Sánchez-Gutiérrez et al., 2019) to export performance measurements. First, consistent with both previous (e.g., Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) and very recent studies (e.g., Faroque et al., 2017; Ratajczak-Mrozek et al., 2019) we find evidence of a mediation effect of communication quality and investment components on export performance, though possibly geared to different objectives (networking, or collaborative culture development) or individual values of the managers). Simultaneously the importance of these factors suggests to us the necessity to verify whether contingent multidimensional approaches may be more effective than universal approaches as has been hitherto suggested.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Organizational and managerial impact on export performance: Annual turnover, international business travel, and complementary capability of the French wine business**

#### **ABSTRACT**

This research is to examine the impact of international business travel on export performance by drawing on resource-based view (RBV) theory and integrating organizational factors (annual turnover) and strategic management (complementary capability) into the analysis of French wine exporting. The findings reveal a positive effect of international business travel on export performance, a positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel, and an indirect positive effect of annual turnover on export performance. We also confirm the positive effect of complementary capabilities on export performance satisfaction and an indirect positive effect of international business travel on export performance through complementary capabilities, providing new and important theoretical and managerial implications.

**Keywords:** International business travel, Annual turnover, Complementary capability, Export performance, French wine export

## ***Introduction***

International business depends gradually on transmitting complex information through vis-à-vis communication (Cristea, 2011). Business officials favor vis-à-vis meetings over phone or online communication (Forbes, 2009; Harvard Business Review, 2009). There are studies that analyze how “short-term skilled labor movements” improve companies’ worldwide production and dissemination of knowledge through business trips (Andersen and Dalgaard, 2011; Hovhannisyan and Keller, 2015). According to Piva *et al.* (2018), “mobility through business visits is an effective mechanism to improve productivity”. In the wine exporting business, we see managers use international business travel to meet overseas prospective customers, organize wine tastings, and participate in international wine fairs. Nevertheless, up to now, we have known very little about the impact of such travel on export performance. Resource-based view (RBV) indicates that companies are essentially “a bundle of resources and capabilities” that are the primary determinants of their strategy and performance (Das and Teng, 2002), specifically with regard to financial, human capital, and intellectual property resources that are the origin of their competitive advantages (Galbreath, 2017). To understand how company acquires and sustains competitive advantages, Shuleska *et al.* (2016) argue that companies vary in their performance because they use their resources in different ways. The objective of this study is to explore how companies optimize their resources, capabilities, and export performance especially with regards to international business travel. We explore how international business travel influences export performance, how organizational factors affect export performance through international business travel, and how other strategic factors optimize the effect of international business travel. By integrating RBV theory and strategic management strategies, we examine this issue using an approach less often applied to the wine

exporting business, especially regarding to overseas business travel (Kieser *et al.*, 2001; Yu and Landsay, 2016).

Interesting facts about this case are found through a detailed look at the specific conditions and characteristics of SMEs, especially assessing the suitable strategy for SMEs (Lee *et al.*, 1999; Kraus *et al.* 2007; Votoupalova *et al.*, 2015). Firstly, social exchange theory focused on uneconomic interpersonal exchange (Das and Teng, 2002). Later, this theory is applied to assess organizational and interorganizational exchange (Das and Teng, 2002). Wine firms consider developing collaborative relationships with foreign distributors through frequent, accurate, reliable communication, and an adequate exchange of information (Karelakis *et al.* 2008). However, closer ties do not really predict better performance (Cannon and Perreault, 1999; Palmatier *et al.* 2008). In-person meetings in overseas business involve a fixed expense (Cristea, 2011). Overseas business travel is expensive because of expenditures on airline fare, accommodations, restaurants, and so on. It could become overwhelming costly to do this kind of travel, especially for SMEs. Most companies have instituted business travel restrictions, including limitations on the frequency of travel (Harvard Business Review, 2009). Whereas some companies pay less attention on frequent and expensive short-term international business trips in terms of cost control (Latta, 2004), and the employers don't consider whether the money spent on oversea business trips benefits export performance. Dwyer *et al.* (1987) posit that "the real or anticipated costs outweigh the benefits of relational exchange" and maintaining the business partnership entails resources (Palmatier *et al.* 2008). At present, the issue of international travel still lacks convincing evidence to support strong correlations between leader-member exchanges and the objective performance and is worthy of further examination (Amadiou and Viviani, 2010). To address this research gap, we examined the effect of international business travel on export performance in the wine sector. This study draws on RBV theory and integrates organizational factors (annual turnover), the behavior of the firm

(international business travel), and strategic management (complementary capability), export performance into the analysis, providing approach originality scarcely used in the wine exporting context (Kieser *et al.* 2001; Yu and Landsay, 2016)

We take the French wine industry as our study context, and French wine export firms for our data collecting sample. There are three reasons for this decision. First, the French wine industry plays an important worldwide role in terms of wine production and wine exportation. Second, most French wine traders are SMEs, usually family-owned business with fewer than 10 employees. They have stronger tradition in wine making, and less experience in overseas business and management. Third, international business travel is a common way to conduct business in the wine export. These three reasons provide us with an ideal setting to examine the different effects of organizational factors (annual turnover), international business travel, and strategic management (complementary capabilities) on export performance. The detailed information of the French wine industry will be presented in the next section. Then, the relative literature is discussed, and the hypotheses are put forward. Afterwards, the data collection and measures are introduced under the research methods section. The following section focuses on the data analysis and the findings. Finally, we draw conclusions, and then discuss the findings from theoretical and managerial perspectives, present limitations of the study.

### ***The French Wine Industry***

For well over a century, France has been renowned for its opulent way of living as exemplified through its sophisticated, sought-after wines. Wine is a product closely related to the terroir, which means the specific location, soil, climate, and distinct topography and geography are paired with specific grape varieties. The fame of French wines also comes from historical and

legal origins. In 1855, Napoleon III classified the Bordeaux wine chateaux of Médoc, Sauternes, and Barsac during the universal exposition in Paris.<sup>22</sup> The first-growth (Premières Crus Classés) Château Lafite Rothschild, Château Latour, Château Margaux, Château Haut-Brion, and Château Mouton-Rothschild<sup>23</sup> are still enjoying unprecedented reputation in the wine industry. Protected designations of origin (PDO) as AOC (Appellation d'origine contrôlée) in France have also made a great contribution to French wines' success (Ditter and Brouard 2014).

France is famous not only for its wine quality but also for its quantity. According to the OIV (2018) report, 7.5mha of global area are under vines in 2017, and France accounts for 10 percent (754,000ha) of wine-producing regions, the second largest country under vines after Spain, with 5.5 million tons of grapes and 36.7 million hl wine produced in 2017, ranking second after Italy by volume (OIV 2017). France exported 14.9 million hl of wine in 2017 and was the first in terms of export value (8,989 million euros), occupying 30 percent of the market share (OIV 2018). For decades, the wine and spirits sector has been second in terms of export in France just behind the aerospace industry, but it hit a new record despite a stronger euro exchange rate in 2017 (Reuters 2018). According to Chinese customs information, France is ranked as first in exporting wine and spirits to the Chinese market with a stable growth for bottled wine increasing 14.05 percent in volume and 8.84 percent in value in 2017 compared to 2016 (Decanter 2018).

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.winespectator.com/articles/the-1855-bordeaux-classification-3491>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.bordeaux.com/fr/Notre-Terroir/Classements/Grand-Cru-Classes-en-1855>

In France wine sector, the average size of vineyards is 14.5 ha characterized by high fragmentation (Agrifrance 2018), with numerous players in the competitive market, of which Groupe GCF (Grands Chais de France), Castel, and Maison Louis Jadot are the leading players.<sup>24</sup> But, most are SMEs. They are usually family-owned and family-run business with fewer than 10 employees (Agrifrance 2018). There are 85,000 people working in the wine sector, with 1,500 wine traders (négociants) making wine by buying grapes, growing grapes in their own chateaux, or buying bulk and bottled wine from private wineries and cooperatives. About 600 wine cooperative groups of wine growers share winemaking, storage, selling, and bottling processes, representing 48 percent of wine production in volume.<sup>25</sup> Most SME wine traders think it's difficult to invest in exporting and the cost is the main obstacle (Agrifrance 2018).

There are many international and local wine fairs, such as Vinexpo, Prowine, Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair, ViniSud, and so on, aimed at building a bridge between wine buyers and producers and matching market demand and needs.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the international wine fair business travel, wine managers also travel to other countries to meet potential customers, promote products, get access to market information, and so on.

Given this context, the French wine industry provides us ideal setting for our study due to its economic and commercial importance in exportation, its unique characteristics, and its common business travel practices. The phenomenal wine trade makes it easy for us to collect data and to generalize its effects on export.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190218005158/en/2018-Country-Profile-Wine-Market-France-2022>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.intervin.fr/etudes-et-economie-de-la-filiere/chiffres-cles>

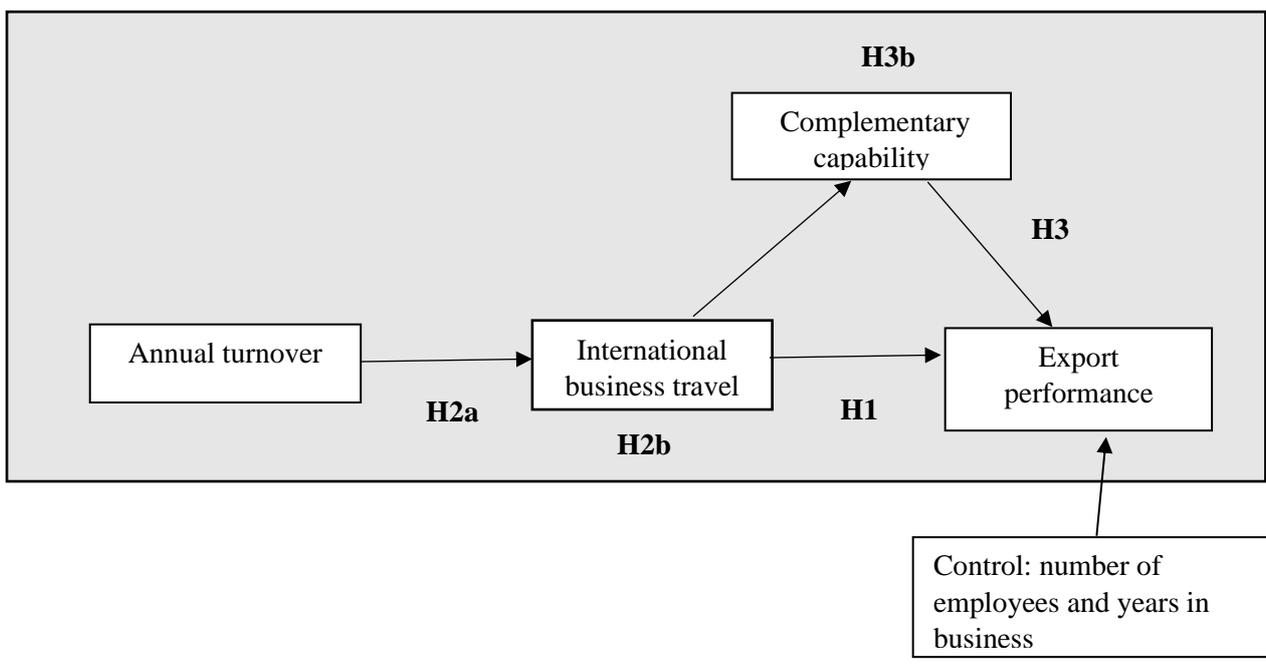
<sup>26</sup> <http://helicopter-view.com/blog/top-12-major-international-wine-trade-shows-events>

## *Theory and Hypotheses*

This section reviews our research through a theoretical lens. The conceptual model is created by integrating RBV theory (annual turnover), firm behavior theory (international business travel), and strategic management (complementary capability) to examine their impact on export performance. The purpose of our hypothesis aims at finding the influence of international business travel on export performance and determine how other organizational and managerial factors affect or optimize export performance through international business visits.

The research hypotheses are developed based on the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Conceptual Model**



## **The Direct and Mediating Effects of International Business Travel on Export**

### **Performance**

“Social exchange theory perspective sheds light on different patterns of relationship development over time and how different kinds of resource exchanges contribute to venture growth in a reciprocal transfer of financial or social resources” (Yu *et al.* 2018). Wine firms look to communicate more frequently with foreign business partners than other industries to obtain timely information and get a broader view over the export market. (Karelakis *et al.* 2008). They travel internationally to visit business partners overseas, which provides the special occasion of direct, long, and deep face-to-face interactions, facilitating effective communication. Face-to-face interactions are information-rich not just by what someone says but also from “the tone of voice, facial expression, body language, and pacing” (*Harvard Business Review* 2009). Business officials unanimously consent that the maintenance of productive relationships depend on the deeper, more profitable bonds with customers and business partners, for which the face-to-face meetings are indispensable. (*Forbes* 2009). This simple business practice brings exporters not only the latest market news, customer needs, trends, and so on but also enhances their relational closeness and mutual understanding. Given the advantages of face-to-face meetings, we suggest the positive effect of international business travel on export performance satisfaction. Drawing on our previous discussion, we suggest international business travel positively influences export performance. Therefore, we propose our first hypothesis as follows:

*H1: International business travel to visit overseas business partners positively affects export performance satisfaction.*

Firm size is considered specifically as a proxy of resources (Bonaccorsi 1992; Diamantopoulos *et al.* 2014). We measure firm size and its financial capacity by annual turnover (Votoupalova *et al.* 2015). Most small business owners will probably recognize and be cautious about the costs of international trade, because exploring opportunities for international trade is a big investment (Brendan 2012). In-person business meetings concerning international trade necessitates financial supports (Cristea 2011). Greater sales turnover might cover the extra costs (Zeriti *et al.* 2014). Therefore, we suppose the firm's financial capability is an extremely important aspect when considering the investment in such international business travel.

Another consideration for businesses is the smaller size of SMEs, specifically their limited financial recourses, so they are much more sensitive to the costs associated with international business trade. SMEs are not capable of coping with the adverse impacts of globalization when "operating in a global environment" (Dileep 2012), and they suffer from the lack of financial resources and information or skilled labor forces (Paunovic and Prebezac 2010; Toulouva *et al.* 2015). For this, a higher priority must be placed on export markets allocated with appropriate resource. A positive relational bond in exchange for valuable resources contributes to the growth of wine-related ventures (Yu *et al.* 2018). In the wine export business, international business travel to foreign business partners is the most important business ritual for developing and maintaining activities and politics with foreign distributors. And business travel is extremely important for increasing profits, boosting sales, developing supplier partnerships, and sparking innovation (Brendan 2012). Drawing on these arguments, thus, we put forward our first cluster of hypotheses:

*H2a: An export firm's annual turnover positively influences international business travel.*

*H2b: International business travel positively mediates the impact of annual turnover on export performance.*

## **The Mediating Effect of Complementary Capability**

Export relationships is regarded as “interorganizational relationships containing a bundle of accumulated tangible and intangible resource stocks” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014). Earlier study has indicated that “similar partner resources in a portfolio create redundancy and that dissimilar resources are beneficial” (Cui 2013). Dissimilar resources imply diversity, which generates synergy by “sharing and combining knowledge from different partners” (Cui 2013). Collaborating with firms from diverse backgrounds creates capability diversity and gains the complementary benefits, as a result, firms being pushed beyond their comfort zone to learn and grow, thus providing a stronger foundation between complementary capabilities and export performance (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014).

The similarity in a partnership minimizes uncertainties and the risks, as it helps understand the operation of partners, on the contrary, the complementary relationships imply risk and adventure. (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Jap 1999). “Dissimilar partners may not support alliance continuity, and dissimilarity in resources suggests diversity, which provides opportunities for synergy, but it also involves coordination difficulty that may prevent the synergy from being realized” (Cui 2013). Export companies need to be more adaptive and flexible in this case to reconfigure resources and coordinate processes (Lu *et al.* 2010; Shuleska *et al.* 2016). Intense negotiation is needed on this occasion. Face-to-face meetings underscore the pivotal role not only in maintaining a successful business relationship but also in bridging cultural gaps (*Harvard Business Review* 2009). Frequent international business travel guarantees the effective communication process. People are more likely to exchange in a relationship comprising both effective and instrumental elements (Yu *et al.* 2018). Drawing on the foregoing discussion, we suppose the positive impacts of complementary capability on

export performance, which also mediates the effect of international business travel on export performance. Therefore, we put forward our second cluster of hypotheses:

*H3a: Complementary capability positively affects export performance satisfaction.*

*H3b: Complementary capability positively mediates the effect of international business travel on export performance.*

## **Methods**

We use a quantitative methodology to test the hypotheses discussed in the prior section for our study. We describe the detailed approach in this section.

### **Data Collection and Sample**

To address our research questions, firstly, we conducted the survey on French wine companies involved in exporting to China, because France is ranked the first exporter of wine and spirits to the Chinese market in 2017 (Decanter 2018). Table 1 offers the demographic characteristics of 174 respondents of French wine companies for our sample. As we can see, the wine firms are diverse in terms of annual turnover, employee number, export experience (by years), and the respondents are diverse with respect of sex, education, export experience, and international business travel frequency.

**Table 1**  
**Demography of the respondents**

<b>Demographic Category</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (of 174)</b>
<b>Annual Turnover (million euros)</b>	
0-2	61
3-10	68
11-50	18
50 +	17
<b>Employee Numbers</b>	
1-10	67
11-50	78
51-250	16
250+	12
<b>Firm's Export Experience (years)</b>	
0-5	41
6-10	25
11-15	18
16-20	18
20+	69
<b>Sex of Respondents</b>	
Male	118
Female	51
<b>Education of Respondents</b>	
No formal education	5
Secondary school	9
High school	21
Bachelor's degree	82
Master's degree	48
Doctorate	5
<b>Export Experience (years)</b>	

0-5	54
6-10	38
11-15	25
16-20	17
20+	35
<b>International Business Travel Frequency</b>	
Rare	7
Once per two years	11
Once per year	34
Once per half-year	37
Once per quarter	30
Once per month	22
Once more than once per month	23

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The data were collected from participants in international wine expositions in 2017 over a 6-month period. The actors are, respectively, from the Bordeaux Vinexpo<sup>27</sup> in June, Lyon tasting<sup>28</sup> in October, Paris grand tasting<sup>29</sup> in December, and the Bordeaux tasting<sup>30</sup> in December. We administrated the survey by first doing a pretest with nearly 20 export managers through field interviews. The pretest helped us to refine and clarify the survey items and ensure the comprehension of the items by the export managers. Eight items were excluded due to the lack of clarity in understanding by export managers.

Before handing out the questionnaire, each potential respondent was asked whether she/he were involved in direct import-export trade with China and had decent knowledge of the business relationship with their Chinese business counterpart. In total, 174 completed surveys were

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<sup>27</sup> Vinexpo, <http://www.vinexpo.com/fr/>.

<sup>28</sup> Lyon tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/lyon-tasting-2017/>

<sup>29</sup> Paris grand tasting, <https://www.grandtasting.com/>.

<sup>30</sup> Bordeaux tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/bordeaux-tasting-2017/>

collected for our analysis. As we can see in Table 1, most of the French wine companies are SMEs, with 83.82 percent having fewer than 50 employees and 78.66 percent having less than 10 million euros of annual turnover in 2017. Of the respondents, 70 percent are male. They have different educational levels, export experience, and international business travel frequency. The sample can thus be considered representative for wine export companies in France according to FranceAgriMer.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the figures of the annual sales category in Table 1 proves that the sample consisted of wine firms in all major levels, demonstrating the representativeness of the industry (Deloitte 2010; Yu and Landsay 2016). Despite the difficulty of collecting data on small businesses (Mullen *et al.* 2009; Yu and Landsay 2016), particularly for international businesses (Stump *et al.* 1998; Yu and Landsay 2016), we succeeded in collecting 174 complete usable surveys through face-to-face questionnaires with export managers, which provided strong data strength for our analysis in comparison to 65 usable surveys about the New Zealand SME wine exporting firms found in the study of Yu and Landsay (2016).

## **Measures**

We drew and adapted all measures from prior research except the international business travel facet, which was developed from the field interviews with export managers. Table 2 presents correlations.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.statista.com/>

**Table 2 Variables Correlations**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Annual Turnover	N.A.						
2. Employee Number	.732**	N.A.					
3. Years in business	.056	.126	N.A.				
4. Import Export Years	.362**	.372**	.216*	N.A.			
5. Export performance Satisfaction	.014	-.017	.074	-.141	<b>.78</b>		
6. Complementary capability	.081	.051	.105	.004	.539**	<b>.82</b>	
7. International business travel	.320**	.285	.182*	.099	.240**	.189*	N.A.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Notes: The square roots of AVE are on the diagonal in bold; N.A.= Not applicable

*Annual Turnover* The annual turnover measure was drawn from the classification of micro businesses and the SMEs in Votoupalova *et al.* (2015). Turnover is the total sales generated by a business in a specific period referred to as gross revenue or income. It is a useful measure of a business's health and performance.<sup>32</sup> However, firms' performance data, especially on SME operations and performance, are rarely "publicly available, and managers are often extremely sensitive about sharing information of this nature" (Deng *et al.* 1995; Yu and Landsay 2016). Thus, we measured annual turnover by four category ordinal variables shown in Table 1 (0–2 million euros, 3–10 million euros, 11–50 million euros, and more than 50 million euros) (Votoupalova *et al.* 2015).

*International Business Travel* The international business travel measure was developed from the field interview with export managers. Social exchange frequency has been measured by a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree") (Jalal Ahamed and Skallerud 2013; Ural 2009). However, it does not reflect the international business travel

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.simplybusiness.co.uk/knowledge/articles/2018/05/what-is-business-turnover/>

frequency. Perceptual measure is not always considered ideal because of the perceptual bias issues (Ketokivi and Schroeder 2004; Yu and Landsay 2016). After the field interview with export managers, we developed a more precise measure of international business travel frequency as shown in Table 1 through a seven-category ordinal variable (rare, once per two years, once per one year, once per half-year, once per quarter, once per month, more than once per month).

*Complementary Capabilities* Complementary capabilities are found in the degree to which “firms complete each other by supplying distinct capabilities” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Jap 1999). We measured the complementary capabilities by three items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”) suggested by (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014): (1) “We complement each other’s capabilities in this relationship.” (2) “Our different strengths have been useful to the relationship.” (3) “We have combined our separate abilities, which has enabled us to achieve goals that could not be achieved otherwise.”

The results for the three items are shown as follows: the respective factor loadings are .82, .78, and .73,. “The composite reliability of the construct” is .82 and “the average variance extracted (AVE)” is .60. These findings suggest that “the scale accurately captures the latent construct” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014).

*Export Performance Satisfaction* We measured satisfaction with export performance following Griffith and Dimitrova (2014) and Zou *et al.* (1998) through three items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”): (1) “The export performance with this importer has been very satisfactory.” (2) “The export with this importer has fully met our expectations.” (3) Export sales targets and objectives with this importer are always met.

The three items are in line with previous research “capturing satisfaction with performance in international marketing” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Robson *et al.* 2012). We followed the measures validation analysis suggested by Griffith and Dimitrova (2014) and Robson *et al.* (2012), the results for the three items are presented as follows: the respective factor loadings are .82, .91, and .72, “the composite reliability of the construct” is .86, and “the AVE” is .67. Table 3 shows the detailed information of “the measurement items, factor loadings, composite reliabilities, alpha and AVE for complementarity of capabilities, and satisfaction with export performance, and these results prove that the scale captured well the latent construct. (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Robson *et al.* 2012).

*Control Variable* “To minimize spuriousness of findings” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014), we use organizational variables, for example, years in business and employee number, as control variables in our study. Because of skewed data, the logarithm of years in business was used to compute the new variable. None of the control variables impacted export performance satisfaction.

*Common Method Bias* Taking into consideration “potential common method bias resulting from using perceptual data”, we first adopted the recommendations of Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) and Yu and Landsay (2016). The questions were mixed, and respondents were told that the survey is confidential, their answers are only based on their opinion (Yu and Landsay 2016). Second, we did “Harman’s (1976) one-factor test” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Yu and Landsay 2016). “An analysis of the data identified multiple factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 in the unrotated factor structure” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014). We found that 45.3 percent of the total variance is explained by the largest factor (well below 50 percent),

indicating “common method variance (CMV) is not a concern” (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Yu and Landsay 2016).

**Table 3**

**Measurement Items, Scale Reliability, Composite Reliability, and Factor Loading**

<b>Factors and Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
<b>Complementary capability</b> (composite reliability = 0.82; alpha = 0.82; AVE = 0.60)	
We complement each other’s capabilities in this relationship.	0.82
Our different strengths have been useful to the relationship.	0.78
We have combined our separate abilities, which has enabled us to achieve goals that could not be achieved otherwise.	0.73
<b>Export performance satisfaction</b> (composite reliability = 0.86; alpha = 0.85; AVE = 0.67)	
The export performance with this importer has been very satisfactory.	0.82
The export with this importer has fully met our expectations.	0.91
Export sales targets and objectives with this importer are always met.	0.72
X <sup>2</sup> (8)	21.75
GFI	0.96
CFI	0.97
NNFI	0.95
IFI	0.97
N	174

## ***Data Analysis and Results***

### **Measure Validation**

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to measure the 174 samples of French wine companies. SEM has “the advantage of correcting for error in the measures and, as such, reduces the possibility of Type II errors” (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). We assessed the measurement model fit by using Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through IBM SPSS AMOS(Griffith and Dimitrova 2014), and found that “the measurement model produced a chi-square value” of 21.75 with 8 “degrees of freedom” and a “CMIN/DF ratio” of 2.72 under 5, suggesting an adequate fit (Wheaton *et al.* 1977). “The incremental fit index (IFI)” was 0.97, “comparative fit index (CFI)” was 0.97, “goodness-of-fit index (GFI)” was 0.96, and “non-normed fit index (NNFI)” was 0.95, indicating that the model fit the data well (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014). Table 3 shows standardized factor loadings of the indicators range from 0.72 to 0.91(over 0.50), significant at  $p < .001$ . The average variance extracted (AVE) were all higher than 0.5, ranging from 0.6 to 0.67. The Cronbach’s alpha for reliability were all above 0.7, ranging from 0.82 to 0.85. Composite reliabilities were all above 0.6, ranging from 0.82 to 0.86. Given as evidence, the results approve convergent validity (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Hair *et al.* 2010).

The discriminant validity was assessed by testing the AVE (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Griffith and Dimitrova 2014). Table 2 shows that the square root of the AVE for complementary capability (.82) and export performance satisfaction(.78) are all higher than the correlation in the corresponding rows and columns, which confirms the discriminant validity (Griffith and Dimitrova 2014; Jalal Ahamed and Skallerud 2013).

## Hypothesis Testing

We conducted analysis by using the Process Macro Hayes to test the hypothesis and the structural model fitness, because it tests models by simultaneously assessing the mediators, which is suitable in our case to test the mediation posits in our model. Furthermore, Process Macro Hayes has the advantage of using a “bootstrapping procedure to counteract the assumption of normality in the sampling distribution of the indirect effect ( $a \times b$ ) as required by the Sobel test” (Hayes 2013). The aggregate measures were created for each construct by summing its scale items (Nathaniel *et al.* 2013).

To test hypothesis H1, H2a, and H2b, we performed the mediation analysis (Process Macro, model 4, 5,000 bootstrap samples) (Lunardo and Ponsignon 2019). Annual turnover was included as the independent variable, export performance satisfaction as the dependent variable, and international business travel as the mediator. The firm’s years in business served as the covariate. The findings disclosed a positive impact of international business travel on export performance satisfaction ( $\beta = .26, t = 3.28, P < 0.05$ ), supporting H1. The results also disclosed a positive impact of annual turnover on international business travel ( $\beta = 0.27, t = 3.68, P < 0.001$ ), supporting H2a, and a significant indirect effect of annual turnover on export performance satisfaction through international business travel ( $\beta = 0.07, S.E. = 0.03, 95\% CI = .019; .152$ ), supporting H2b. In addition, the direct effect of annual turnover on export performance satisfaction was not significant ( $P > .05$ ), indicating full mediation of international business travel.

To test hypotheses H3a and H3b, we also looked at the mediation analysis (Process Macro, model 4, 5,000 bootstrap samples) (Lunardo and Ponsignon 2019). International business travel was included as the independent variable, export performance satisfaction as the dependent

variable, and complementary capability as the mediator. The firm's years in business and employee number served as the covariate. The findings disclosed a positive effect of complementary capability on export performance satisfaction ( $\beta = .49, t = 7.52, P < 0.001$ ), supporting H3a. The findings also disclosed a significant indirect impact of international business travel on export performance satisfaction through complementary capabilities ( $\beta = 0.09, S.E. = 0.05, 95\% CI = 0.002; 0.186$ ), supporting H3b. Table 4 presents the hypotheses validations.

**Table 4**  
**Regression Coefficients**

<b>Direct Effects</b>					
IV	DV	$\beta$	P.		
Validation					
H1: International business travel	Export performance satisfaction	.26*	< 0.05	Supported	
H2a: Annual turnover	International business travel	.27***	< 0.001	Supported	
H3a: Complementary capabilities	Export performance satisfaction	.49***	< 0.001	Supported	
<b>Indirect effects</b>					
IV	DV	M	95% CI		
Validation					
H2b Annual turnover	Export performance satisfaction	International business travel	.019; .152	Supported	
H3b International business travel	Export performance satisfaction	Complementary capabilities	.002; .186	Supported	

Notes: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ , CI = confidence interval.

## *Discussions*

### **Theoretical Implications**

Previous research suggests studying export performance from different perspectives (Karelakis *et al.* 2008; Li and Ogunmokun 2001). “Institutional theory does not adequately explain how internal dynamics and characteristics might affect institutionalized practices” (Galbreath 2017). In our study, we examined export performance by integrating organizational factors (annual turnover) and firm behavior theory (international business travel), as well as managerial factor (complementary capabilities)—an approach rarely used in an exporting context—providing originality for this study (Kieser *et al.* 2001; Yu and Landsay 2016). We confirmed the point view of Shuleska *et al.* (2016) that firms vary in their performance as a result of “variances in the way they deploy the resources they possess”; for example, the firm’s annual turnover doesn’t affect export performance, except that the company makes an investment in it, for example, through international business travel.

The French wine industry has a rich legacy. The demographic description of French wine firms and managers sheds light on its rich and varied character. From our 174 complete surveys about the French wine industry, we know that most French wine companies are SMEs with 83.82 percent of companies having fewer than 50 employees and 78.66 percent companies having less 10 million euros of annual turnover in 2017. To our knowledge, there hasn’t been that much analysis of the demographic characteristics of French export managers and export firms. This study fills this gap.

International business travel is a very important business practice in the wine trade, but it is also an overwhelming expenditure because of airline tickets, accommodations, and food. But, we found little research regarding its effect on export performance. Through our study, we discovered a positive effect of international business travel on export performance satisfaction. International business travel has a more positive effect on export performance when the overseas business counterparts have higher complementary capabilities. The results of this study fill the gap in knowledge about the impact of international business travel and issues concerning the level of complementarity, annual turnover, and export performance between cross-border travel and trade (Hovhannisyan and Keller 2015).

We also found that a firm's financial capacity (annual turnover) positively affects international business travel. Annual turnover has no effect on export performance satisfaction, but it has an indirect impact on export performance through international business travel, which contributes to firm behavior theory as well as export performance theory.

### **Managerial Implications**

International business travel is an effective way of communication because it is a face-to-face, direct, and information-rich interaction, particularly for a foreign business partners when time and space keep them apart most of the time. This business practice works well with business partners of complementary capabilities because the fundamental aspects of complementary capabilities lie in diversity, which means more risks. Firms needs more synergetic efforts to smooth the communication process and reconfigure the resources so that international business travel can augment communication effectiveness.

Firms with high annual turnover show no effect on export performance. However, annual turnover does affect indirectly export performance through business travel. In other words,

companies should invest financially and managerially in exporting business in order to have a satisfactory export performance. We found a positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel. However, the French wine sector is mostly made up of SMEs (family and artisanal firms); 83 percent wine companies have fewer than 50 employees. These small structures are often fragile and indebted. Wine firms are far more accustomed to producing wines than to focusing on management (Aytac *et al.* 2016). The high cost of international business travel may cause burden to these firms or may keep them from exploring foreign markets. To address this, we suggest that government, IT firms, or wine associations such as “CIVB (Le Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux)” find innovative ways to reduce communication costs and look for efficient and effective ways to work with foreign business partners, for example, specific promotion campaigns (Farinelli *et al.* 2017). We also advocate the suggestion of Hovhannisyan and Keller (2015): “lowering fares of international passenger air travel might yield substantial gains in terms of economic growth across countries”.

## ***Conclusion***

The objective of this research was to examine the impact of international business travel on export performance by drawing on RBV theory and integrating an organizational factor (annual turnover), firm behavior theory (international business travel), and strategic management (complementary capability) into the analysis in the export context. All the hypotheses have been confirmed. The results revealed the positive impact of international business travel on export performance, the positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel, and the indirect positive impact of annual turnover on export performance satisfaction through international business travel. We also confirmed the positive impact of complementary capabilities on export performance satisfaction. Finally, we uncovered a positive indirect

impact of international business travel on export performance through complementary capabilities, providing brand-new theoretical and managerial implications as to overseas business travel, especially for SMEs in international business.

Although this study provides new insight for resource-based view theory, firm behavior theory, and the export performance literature, it does have limitations. First, we captured export performance through one facet of measurement “export performance satisfaction”. Export performance could also be measured using both “economic and strategic dimensions” (Zou *et al.* 1998). Second, we measured financial capabilities by annual turnover, but it could also be measured by other financial variables such as annual balance sheets (Votoupalova *et al.* 2015). Third, this work is based solely on the French and Chinese wine export-import trade. We also suggest studying this model in other trades or applying it to a general export trade. In addition, international business travel is a costly business practice, but it works well with foreign business partners of higher complementary capabilities. We suggest for future research to find other strategic management methods to enhance the effect of international business travel on export performance.

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

## Global Findings and Discussions

The objective of this dissertation is to answer our research questions associated with export performance. It is important first to remind our general research question: what are the determinants of export performance on organizational, environmental, and managerial levels? We analyzed our research question via three sub – questions: one bibliometric study and two empirical studies related to export performance. Each sub-question has a specific research purpose related to export performance. Question 1: what are the research patterns of export performance during the past 30 years? Question 2: How relationship management, business and cultural distance impact export performance? Question 3: How organizational factor (annual turnover), international business travel and strategic management (complementary capability) impact export performance?

We adopted multiple methods to address the research questions. First, the exploratory qualitative study was used to explore export performance literature, because qualitative research treats the phenomenon as a whole system and searches for patterns that lie within its bounds (Park and Park 2016). Furthermore, we used bibliometric quantitative analysis to analyze 1344 publications from 1990 to 2019 of export performance to find the most influential publications, authors, journals, organizations and countries, research trend, social networks such as co-authorship, country collaboration, co-word and co-citation networks and bibliographic coupling. The main objective of these studies is to enrich the theoretical foundations of export performance. We have attempted to answer what, how, by whom the

export performance has been studied in the previous export performance literature, and provide solid understanding of the past export performance knowledge such as research trajectory, the three axes of determinants of export performance from organizational, environmental, and managerial perspectives, export performance measurement, past research social networks, and research trends. This part fills the bibliometric research gap and the synthesis of the determinants of export performance of the past sixty years.

The two empirical studies aim to find how the factors on organizational, environmental, and managerial levels affect export performance in a specific way. We adopted quantitative method to analyze the effects of the factors from different groups on export performance. The first empirical study investigates the interacting effect of two forms of psychic distance (business and cultural) on export relationship management, specifically, the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of business distance on different dimensions of relationship management and financial export performance. We find also the positive impact of business distance on relationship management, and the mediating role of relationship management as the underlying mechanism that explains the effect of business distance on export performance.

The second empirical study examines how international business travel influences export performance, how organizational factor impacts export performance through international business travel? How other strategic factor optimizes the effect of international business travel on export performance? For the two empirical studies, we used the quantitative approach by analyzing the relationship of 174 French export executives with their Chinese business counterpart in the wine trade. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to assess the measurement model by Spss Amos. Hence, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first employed to test the measurement model fit. The hypothesis and the structural model fitness

were tested using the Process macro, as it enables testing models that simultaneously include mediators and moderators, making it suitable to test the mediations, moderations, and moderated - mediations posited in the model. As for research contributions, we divided it into three groups: theoretical contributions, managerial implications, and methodological contributions. In the dissertation, we have export performance literature review, the systematic bibliometric study, the detailed analysis of the demographic characteristics of French wine export firms and managers, together with two empirical studies. The contributions are numerous both on theoretical, methodological, and managerial levels.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

From the theoretical perspective, our first contribution lies on synthesizing the determinants of export performance from two timespan (1960s-1998) and (1998-2015) which gives an overview over the past export performance research and its research trajectories. Export performance literature view reveals also the three axes of determinants of export performance from organizational, environmental, and managerial points of view and the measurement of export performance. This develops an initial understanding and the basic knowledge of export performance for the further research.

The second contributions shed light on the fact that this is the first ever bibliometric study of export performance field. By analyzing 1344 publications from 1990 to 2019 in the export performance field, we found out the publication trend, the most influential publications and the most productive authors, journals, organizations and countries and the social networks such as co-authorship, co-citation networks of authors, bibliographic coupling, country collaboration, co-word of titles, abstracts and keywords patterns. Our study provides an overview of the research pattern and trends for the past 30 years and novel inspirations for policy makers, researchers, and funders interested in advancing export performance agenda. Especially, the

word co-occurrence analysis of terms in the titles, abstracts and keywords provides insight in main topics and research trends (Nunen et al. 2018). The terms co-occurrence network shows **three main clusters on environmental level, organizational level, research methods**, alternatively, three main research topics. They are related mainly to **environmental factors** with the representative terms such as “export”, “growth”, “demand”, “price”, “market”, “country”, “exchange rate”, “economic”, “income”, “regulation”, “world”, “concern” etc., **organizational factors** with the representative terms such as “productivity”, “innovation”, “firm characteristic”, “export decision”, “input” etc. and **research methods** with the representative terms such as “literature”, “research”, “theoretical model”, “survey”, “SMES”, “SEM”, “conceptual framework”, “exploratory study” etc.. This result is generally consistent with our finding of literature review about the three categories of determinants of export performance from organizational, environmental and managerial levels, although the managerial level does not stand out as the other two levels, but it shows in the cluster of methods such as “commitment”, “adaptation”, “satisfaction” etc.. The term co-occurrence pattern shows not only various research interests from environmental and organizational perspectives, but also the most common methods used in export performance research. The most popular research interests in export performance research are the factors on the environmental and organizational levels. The detailed lists of the terms of the three clusters provide useful and specific information about export performance research for future researchers about export performance.

The third theoretical contribution is that we gave detailed descriptive analysis of the export firms' profile and the export managers' demographic characteristics. As for French wine export firms, they are mostly SME. (Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) with 83.82% companies having less than 50 employees, 78.66% companies with less 10 million euros of annual turnover. These wine companies have usually long history with some dating back to

200 or 300 years ago. 40.35% companies have more than 21 years' export experience, 38.6% companies have less than 10 years' export experience. As for managers, around 70% are male, 30% are female. 76.48% have bachelor's degree or master's degree, 2.94% have no formal education, 2.94% have doctorate. They have different job positions with 29.17% export managers, 22.02% general managers, 18.45% CEO. For export experience, managers with export experience less than 5 years accounts for 31.95%, more than 21 years accounts for 20.71%, around 50% between 5 years and 20 years. Most of managers encounter no language obstacles when they communicate with their Chinese business partners, but around 25% have some difficulty. Most of managers have foreign living experience with 61.96% less than 5 years, 19.02% between 6 years and 10 years, and around 20% more than 10 years. Most of managers have international business travel once, twice, or more twice per year. These results will provide the future researchers with a clear overview over the French wine export firms, furthermore, give them insights for the future relative research.

The fourth theoretical contribution relates to the finding of the strong positive effects of relationship management, relationship investment, and communication quality on financial export performance, equally, the positive effects of business distance on relationship management, and the important finding of the negative moderating effects of cultural distance on the effect of business distance on relationship management. This analysis makes several contributions to international relationship management research. First, we shed light on the notion that the different dimensions of cultural and business psychic distance can interact to affect relationship management.

This result constitutes a novel insight and sheds light on the importance of cultural distance over business distance because business distance exerts a positive effect on relationship management only at low values of cultural distance. When cultural distance

becomes too high, business distance does not lead to successful relationship management. The contribution of this research lies also in the positive impact of business distance on relationship management. Our results provide empirical evidence for the positive effect of business distance, but business distance exerts positive effects only when cultural distance does not exceed a certain threshold. Hence, our results help reconcile the mixed results in previous research on the effects of psychic distance, suggesting the existence of a moderating variable identified here as cultural distance. Moreover, the identification of the mediating role of relationship management, which can thus be considered as the underlying mechanism that explains the effect of business distance on export performance. In our model, we conceptualized and measured export relationship as a higher-order construct composed of the three dimensions of communication quality, long-term relationship, and relationship investment. We confirmed the positive impact of business distance on export performance through the mediating effect of communication quality and investment.

The fifth theoretical contribution is associated with the novel finding of the positive effect of international business travel on export performance, the positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel, the indirect positive effect of annual turnover on export performance satisfaction through international business travel as well as the indirect positive effect of international business travel on export performance through complementary capabilities, providing new and important theoretical implications. In our study, we examined export performance by integrating organizational factors (annual turnover) and firm's behavior theory (international business travel) as well as managerial factor (complementary capabilities) – an approach rare used in exporting context, providing originality of this study. International business travel has more positive effect on export performance when the foreign business counterparts are with higher complementary capabilities. The results fill the gap of scarce

knowledge about effect of international business travel and issues regarding the degree of complementarity between cross-border travel and trade. We found also that firm's financial capacity (annual turnover) positively affects international business travel and confirmed the indirect effect of annual turnover on export performance satisfaction through international business travel, these empirical findings contribute to the firm behavior theory as well as export performance research.

### **Managerial Implications**

Regarding the managerial aspects, our contributions are also numerous. We provide the export firms important insights on different levels: export firms' and export managers' characteristics, international relationship management, the effects of psychic distance (business distance and cultural distance) in the import-export relationship, the effects of organizational factor ( annual turnover, international business travel), managerial factor ( complementary capability) on export performance.

Our first managerial contribution lies in the detailed descriptive analysis of France wine export firms and export managers. This gives export managers the overview over the France export industry, its demographic characteristics such as employee number, annual turnover, business year, export experience. For managers, it regards the sex, education level, job position, export experience, language ability, business travel frequency to China per year.

The second contribution relates to the understanding of the effects of psychic business distance and cultural distance on international business relationship management as well as export performance. For export managers, especially those working with China or countries with similar business and cultural distance – on relationship management and its impact on

financial export performance. Relationship management has a strong positive effect on financial export performance and mediates the effect of business distance, especially the communication quality and investment components. This research aims to provide some guidelines and offer perspectives for export managers to develop and maintain a higher relationship management quality to achieve success. Hence, our results suggest export managers should communicate openly with the business counterpart, clearly explaining the business objectives, and continuously interact with business partners to boost export performance. Modern technologies and new tools can enrich the possibilities for real-time communication and information exchange leading to more frequent interactions in-between business partners and therefore to more efficient business operations.

Third, the finding of the evidence of the moderating role of cultural distance in the effect of business distance on relationship management should aid export managers in better matching their strategies to business partners. Cultural distance is revealed as a boundary condition for the effects of business distance on relationship management, suggesting that managers need to adapt and adopt diverse strategies when structuring and operating the relationship with foreign counterparts. The cultural distance acts as a valve in the international relationship management, which can either enhance or block the relationship. When export managers perceive very high cultural distance between their home and host market, we suggest them to understand the differences by investing more time, resources, and efforts to incorporate cultural diversity, for the relationship becomes more effective.

Fourth, on a broader level, we believe that our findings of this research can also benefit export firms, professional training programs, business schools and universities for developing curricula aimed at educating and sensitizing export managers or students the

unique effects of the psychic business and cultural distance on relationship operation as well as export performance. The scales of psychic business and the cultural distance scales can be used as tool to measure export managers and student's perception of business distance and cultural distance to certain markets. Furthermore, it provides the adaptive strategies to have an effective relationship, which in turn positively influence financial export performance.

Fifth, international business travel is an effective way of communication, as it is face-to-face, direct, information-rich interaction, particularly, for a foreign business partner when time and space apart them for most of the time. We confirmed the positive impact of international business travel on export performance satisfaction. This business practice works well with business partners of complementary capabilities because the fundamental aspects of complementary capabilities lie in diversity which means more risks. Firms needs more synergetic efforts to smooth the process and reconfigure the resources for which international business travel guarantees the communication effectiveness.

Sixth, we found the positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel, and that firms with high annual turnover has no effect on export performance. However, it has indirect positive effect on export performance through international business travel. In other words, company should invest financially and managerially on export market in order to have satisfactory export performance.

Finally, in the case of France wine sector, most of export wine firms are SMEs (family and artisanal firms), 83% wine companies have less than 50 employees. These small structures are often fragile and indebted, wine firms are far more accustomed to producing wines than to management (Aytac et al. 2016). The high cost of international business travel may cause burden to the firms or keep them from exploring foreign market. On this aspect, we suggest government, IT firms or wine associations such as CIVB (Le Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin

de Bordeaux) to find an innovative way to reduce the communication cost e.g. specific promotion campaigns (Farinelli et al. 2017) and novel social media for enhancing the communication effectiveness in import-export trade. We also advocate the suggestion of Hovhannisyan and Keller (2015), the liberalization of international passenger air travel, by lowering fares, facilitating administrative processes, might yield substantial gains in terms of economic growth across countries.

### **Methodological Contributions**

As we have five sub-research questions, and each is independent. For resolving each specific research question, the research method is different. Hence, the methodological contributions of the thesis are numerous.

For the first methodological contribution, we adopted qualitative method by reviewing the past export performance literature which provides a basis for a "thick" description of discovery (Park and Park 2016). We divided the export performance literature into two timespan (1960s-1998) and (1998-2015) to synthesize the research trajectory to give an overview over export performance of the past research.

Second, we used bibliometric study to analyze 1344 publications from 1990 to 2019 in the export performance field from different angles by combing bibliometrics with social network methods with the help of Bib Excel, Excel, SPSS, VOS viewer software. To our best knowledge, it is the first bibliometric study in export performance field. We found the most influential publications, authors, journals, organizations and countries, research trend, and network visualization presents the social networks such as co-authorship, country collaboration, co-word, and bibliometric networks, e.g. co-citation networks and bibliographic coupling.

Third, we did descriptive analysis of 174 French wine export firms to present a clear view over the export firms' profile and the export managers' demographic characteristics. This is a first systematic descriptive analysis of the French wine exports done in the literature.

Fourth, we used quantitative study to test the two empirical studies. This research builds on a sample of 174 French export executives who were asked to rate their views of their relationship with their Chinese business counterpart in the wine trade, and their related performance. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to assess the measurement model. Hence, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first employed to test the measurement model fit by examining the standardized factor loadings from latent variables to indicator variables, the chi-square test, and fit indices. The CFA provides results allowing a thorough examination of measurement validity. The hypothesis and the structural model fitness were tested using the Process macro, as it enables testing models that simultaneously include mediators and moderators, making it suitable to test the mediations, moderations, and moderated - mediations posited in the model.

## **Global Conclusion**

The major goal of the dissertation is to find how export performance is affected by factors from various perspectives. The export performance literature review and the systematic bibliometric study confirm that the determinants of export performance are composed of factors on organizational, environmental, managerial level. The empirical studies find that whatever the determinants of export performance are on organizational, environmental, managerial level, their effects on export performance are not independent. The factors of different groups influence directly or indirectly each other and furthermore export performance. The understanding of the mechanism and nature behind the function of these factors is the key

to achieve competitive export advantages and export performance. In this dissertation, we examined the business distance, cultural distance on environmental level; relationship management, international business travel, complementary capabilities on managerial level; and annual turnover on organizational level. The two empirical studies related to export performance help answer how export performance is affected from organizational, environmental, and managerial perspectives in specific way. The dissertation has numerous contributions as we discussed above. It is the first systematic bibliometric study in export performance. The exploratory export performance gives the basic understanding of the determinants of export performance during two-time spans. The first empirical study provides originality by examining the interacting effect of business and cultural distance on relationship management and export performance. The second empirical study integrates factors on organizational and managerial levels, export performance into the analysis to examine the effect of international business travel on export performance, which is a creative approach rarely used in export research context.

### **Research Limitations**

The limitations of our research are constraint to the two empirical studies which otherwise helps us to see the further research path. First, the empirical study is limited to the unique context of wine trade sector of France and China export performance. Although our research presents an in-depth quantitative investigation, and the revelatory case findings are rich and likely significant for further theory development, particularly with regards to psychic distance in relationship management. The sample prevents us from generalize the empirical findings beyond the research sector.

Second, we focused on the two most widely recognized dimensions of distance: business and cultural distance, which affect export performance. However, previous research has recognized the existence of other types of distance, such as administrative, geographic, and economic distance etc. Business and cultural distance might not be the only dimensions that affect relationship management, nor that they are the only dimensions that interact.

Third, we believe it's important to enrich the relationship management dimensions in consideration of the strong effects of the relationship management on export performance. Finally, our findings on the interacting effect of business and cultural distance on relationship management also argue for further investigation versus psychic distance dimensions contingent approaches to export performance. We found evidence of a mediation effect of communication quality and investment components on export performance, simultaneously, the importance of these factors suggest to us the necessity to verify whether contingent multidimensional approaches may be more effective than universal approaches as has been hitherto suggested.

Fourth, the second empirical study provides new insight for resources-based view, firm behavior theory and export performance literature, however, the limitation are confined to the measurement of export performance. We measured one dimension of export performance in our analysis. Export performance could be measured on multiple dimensions such as satisfaction, financial and strategic dimensions. Furthermore, we measured firms' financial capabilities by annual turnover, other financial variables like annual balance sheet could be included in the analysis.

The French and Chinese wine export- import trade gives specificity to this work, but it can't generalize beyond the sample zone. In addition, international business travel is a costly

business practice, it works well with foreign business partners of higher complementary capabilities. It will be useful to enrich the managerial aspects to optimize the effect of international business travel on export performance.

### **Further Research**

We reach finally to the end of this pilgrimage and come to the further research axes. First, as discussed above, our samples are based on two countries France-China, which prevents generalization beyond the research sector. We strongly suggest the future research consider testing the supported interaction effect of cultural and business distance in other countries to ensure that the effect replicates beyond the context of wine exportation between France and China. Second, we strongly recommend the future research to consider other types of distance. Broader consensus is needed in the operational conceptualizations of psychic distance and its measurements. Third, we find the need to enrich the relationship management dimensions. Whether the effects observed here replicate in other relationship management strategies. Fourth, we suggest the future research to test the model with three dimensions (satisfaction, strategic performance, financial performance) of export performance measurement - the EXPERF scale (Zou et al. (1998) comprising strategic export performance, financial export performance, export performance satisfaction or with objective numbers ( export sales, volumes, sales growth). In addition, international business travel is expensive, we find complementary capabilities between firms optimize its effect on export performance. It will be useful to include other the managerial aspects such as ( the market information management, the adaptability of market channel innovation and social media) in the model and verify whether they optimize the effect of international business travel on export performance.

### Summary of the Chapters of Dissertation & Research Results

Chapters	Objectifs	Methods	Results
<b>1</b>	Bibliometric analysis of global research trends on export performance: 1990–2019	The term "export performance" was used as a search topic identified in the titles, abstracts, and keywords to gather all the research publications from 1990 through 2019 in Scopus. A total of 1344 articles were found. BibExcel was used for the data merges and data cleaning. Data files were imported to Excel and SPSS statistics 22 to analyze the publication trends and the most influential authors, articles, institutions, journals, and countries in the export performance field based on the total number of publications, total citations, average citation per publication, and h-index. VOSviewer was employed to generate a network visualization through coauthorship, author co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and collaboration between countries, co-word pattern.	The publication trend, the most influential publications and the most productive authors, journals, organizations and countries are analyzed; The co-authorship, co-citation networks of authors, bibliographic coupling, country collaboration, co-word of titles, abstracts and keywords networks
<b>2</b>	The interacting effect of business and cultural distances on relationship management and export performance: the case of wine export between France and China (empirical study)	With sample of 174 French export executives in the France wine trade, quantitative analysis of Structural equation modelling (SEM), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was adopted to test the measurement model. Process macro was used to test hypothesis, the mediators and moderators posit in the model.	Strong positive effects of relationship management, relationship investment, and communication quality on financial export performance; the different effects of the business and cultural dimensions of psychic distance: while the former positively affects relationship management, the latter negatively moderates the effect of business distance on relationship management.
<b>3</b>	The organizational and managerial impact on export performance: annual turnover, international business travel and complementary capability of French wine business (empirical study)	Structural equation modelling (SEM), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the measurement model and Process macro to test hypothesis, the mediators posit in the model with 174 French wine export firms as sample.	The positive effect of international business travel on export performance, the positive effect of annual turnover on international business travel, the indirect positive effect of annual turnover on export performance through international business travel, the indirect positive effect of international business travel on export performance through complementary capabilities

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### Export-Import questionnaire

Dear all, Our research is aimed at addressing the impact of export-import relationship management and relationship quality on business performance under French and Chinese culture within the business context of wine sector. Thank you for helping us to answer this questionnaire.

First, please think of one of your Chinese business partners to answer the following questions.

With regards to this partner, how do you classify the following sentences?

#### Communication quality

Q2: We openly communicate with this partner (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Q3: We have continuous interaction with this partner (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Q4: The objectives and goals, accurate informations are clearly communicated to this partner (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Q5: Our communication with this partner is timely (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

#### Long-term relationship

Q6: Maintaining a long-term relationship with this partner is important for us (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Q7: We focus on long –term goals in this relationship (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Q8: We believe that over the long run, our relationship with the partner will be profitable (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Q9: We are willing to make sacrifices to help this partner from time to time (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

### Relationship investment

**Q10:** We work hard to strengthen this partner's relationship with us (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q11:** We make significant investments in building a strong relationship with this partner (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q12:** We devote considerable time and effort to the relationship with this partner (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Relationship Quality

With regards to your previously selected partner, how do you classify the following statements?

#### Trust

**Q13:** The partner has been open in dealing with us (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q14:** This partner is trustworthy (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q15:** I believe in this partner's integrity and reliability (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q16:** I feel confident in doing business with this partner (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Satisfaction

**Q17:** Our relationship with this partner is marked by a high degree of harmony (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q18:** It's easy to do business with this partner (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q19:** In general, we are satisfied with our business with this partner (1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Complementarity of Capabilities

**Q20:** We complement each other's capabilities in this relationship. (Scale: 1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q21:** Our different strengths that have been useful to the relationship. (Scale: 1 = "strongly disagree," and 7 = "strongly agree")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q22:** We have combined our separate abilities that have enabled us to achieve goals which could not achieve otherwise. (Scale: 1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

With regards to your previously selected partner, how do you classify the following statements?

#### Financial performance

**Q23:** Exporting to this importer has been very profitable (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q24:** Exporting to this importer has generated a high volume of sales (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q25:** The exports with this importer have achieved rapid growth (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Strategic performance

**Q26:** The export venture with this importer has improved our global competitiveness (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q27:** The export venture with this importer has strengthened our strategic position (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q28:** The export venture with this importer has significantly increased our export market share (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q29:** Export venture with this importer quickly generated the sales of our new product (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Satisfaction with export venture

**Q30:** The performance of export venture with this importer has been very satisfactory (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q31:** The export venture with this importer has fully met our expectations (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q32:** Export sales targets and objectives with this importer are always met (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 7 = “strongly agree”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Business psychic distance

With regards to your selected partner, to which extent do you think you are different in the business aspects?

### Difference in the economic environment

**Q36:** Difference in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q37:** Difference in banking capacity. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q38:** Difference in level of demand for goods and services. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Difference in the legal and political system

**Q39:** Difference in stability of political structure. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q40:** Difference in consumer protection legislation. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q41:** Difference in competitive practices legislation. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Difference in business practices

**Q42:** Difference in terms and conditions of employment (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q43:** Difference in credit and financial arrangements with banking institutions (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q44:** Difference in use of contracts in business dealings (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Business in the market structure

**Q45:** Difference in physical distribution systems (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q46:** Difference in a number of large multiple chains in the market sector (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Q47:** Difference in number of direct competitors (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Cultural psychic distance

With regards to your previously selected partner, to which extent do you think you are different in the following cultural aspects?

#### Difference in power distance

Q48: Degree of inequality among people (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q49: Salary range between the highest and the lowest payroll of your companies (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q50: Importance of social status symbols.(1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Difference in uncertainty avoidance

Q51: Openness to change and openness to innovations.(1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q52: Tolerance of differences (i.e., religious, political, or ideological)(1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q53: Reliance on the rules (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Difference in individualism / collectivism

Q54: Importance of loyalty to close groups (i.e., family and friends) (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q55: Recognition of a right to privacy (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q56: Freedom of the press (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#### Difference in masculinity/femininity

Q57: Importance of caring for others. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q58: Importance of material success. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q59: Degree to which women are expected to be assertive and ambitious. (1 = “totally the same,” and 7 = “totally different”)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## Profile of your firm

**Q60:** Number of employees

- <10 (1)
- <50 (2)
- <250 (3)
- $\geq$  250 (4)

**Q61:** Annual turnover (Euros)

- $\leq$  2 million euros (1)
- $\leq$  10 million euros (2)
- $\leq$  50 million euros (3)
- > 50 million euros (4)

**Q62:** Years the firm has been in business

(            )

**Q63:** Your firm's Import-Export experience (in years)

- $\leq$  5 years(1)
- 6 - 10 years(2)
- 11-15 years(3)
- 16- 20 years(4)
- $\geq$  21 years(5)

**Q64:** Number of countries to which you export

- $\leq$  5 (1)
- 6 - 10 (2)
- 11-15 (3)
- 16- 20 (4)
- $\geq$  21 (5)

**Q65:** The most important export destination for your company is (            )

## Your Profile

**Q66:** Sex

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

**Q67:** Job position

- CEO (1)
- General manager (2)
- Export manager (3)
- Marketing manager (4)
- Purchasing manager (5)
- Commercial manager (6)

**Q68:** Education

- No formal education (1)
- Secondary school (2)
- High school (3)
- Bachelor degree (5)
- Master degree (6)
- Doctorate / PHD (7)

**Q69:** Years of your work experience in import-export

- $\leq 5$  years(1)
- 6 - 10 years(2)
- 11-15 years(3)
- 16- 20 years(4)
- $\geq 21$  years(5)

**Q70:** Proficiency of work language

- difficult
- understand but speak with
- not fluent
- almost fluent
- fluent
- completely fluent
- native language

**Q71:** Time spent abroad (Years)

- $\leq 5$  years(1)
- 6 - 10 years(2)
- 11-15 years (3)
- 16- 20 years(4)
- $\geq 21$  years(5)

**Q72:** Ethnicity (origins)

- Chinese (1)
- French (2)
- Others, please specify (8) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q73:** Exchange Visits with this partner

- More often than once per month (1)
- Once per month (2)
- Once per quarter (3)
- Once per half year (4)
- Once per year (5)
- Once per two years (6)
- More rare than once per two years (7)

**THANK YOU**

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THÈSE PRÉSENTÉE POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE DOCTEUR DE  
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ÉCOLE DOCTORALE : ENTREPRISE, ÉCONOMIE, SOCIÉTÉ  
SPÉCIALITÉ : SCIENCES DE GESTION

*Par*

**Lin Han SHAO**

**L'influence des facteurs environnementaux, organisationnels et  
managériaux sur les décisions d'exportation et  
les performances d'exportation**

Sous la direction de M. Jean-François TRINQUECOSTE  
et Mme Tatiana BOUZDINE-CHAMEEVA

Soutenue le 21 Octobre 2020

**Composition du jury**

**Chantal Ammi**, Professeur, Institut Mines-Télécom Business School, *Présidente*

**Tatiana Bouzdine-Chameeva**, Professeur, Kedge Business School, *Co-directrice de thèse*

**Jacques Jaussaud**, Professeur, Université de Pau, *Rapporteur*

**Michael Korchia**, Professeur, Kedge Business School, *Rapporteur*

**Jan Schaaper**, Maître de Conférences HDR, IAE de Bordeaux, *Examineur*

**Jean-François Trinquecoste**, Professeur, Université de Bordeaux, *Directeur de thèse*

## Résumé

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La question de la performance des entreprises à l'exportation est une composante importante de l'ensemble des questions de recherche possibles tenant à l'exportation. Elle concerne le succès ou l'échec relatif des efforts d'une entreprise ou d'une nation pour vendre des biens et des services nationaux à d'autres nations. Des recherches empiriques approfondies ont été menées pour identifier et étudier les facteurs déterminants de la réussite des performances à l'exportation. Cependant, les facteurs associés au succès à l'exportation sont nombreux et complexes, comme ceux du pays, de l'entreprise, de la gestion, du niveau culturel, etc. ; ils gravitent autour de trois grands axes que sont les facteurs organisationnels, environnementaux et de gestion (Leonidou et al. 2002). La présente recherche vise à déterminer comment les performances à l'exportation sont affectées par les facteurs environnementaux, organisationnels et managériaux, en particulier la distance psychique et culturelle, la gestion des relations, les voyages d'affaires internationaux, les capacités financières des entreprises et les capacités complémentaires. Car la manière dont les entreprises peuvent exporter avec succès vers des pays lointains n'est encore pas totalement comprise (Lages et al., 2009). Le fonctionnement des relations avec les pays lointains reste étonnamment sous-examiné (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), en particulier la distance psychique - la mesure dans laquelle les normes et les valeurs de deux pays diffèrent en raison de leurs caractéristiques nationales distinctes (Ford, 1984, p. 102), lorsqu'il s'agit de l'interaction potentielle entre la distance commerciale et culturelle et les facteurs managériaux. L'autre observation est que le commerce international dépend progressivement de la transmission d'informations complexes par le biais de la communication (Cristea, 2011). Les performances des entreprises varient parce qu'elles utilisent leurs ressources de différentes manières (Shuleska et al. (2016). Les voyages d'affaires internationaux jouent un rôle très important dans les affaires d'exportation, en particulier pour le commerce du vin, car les responsables des exportations pratiquent des voyages d'affaires internationaux rituels pour rencontrer les clients potentiels à l'étranger, organiser des dégustations de vin, participer à des foires internationales du vin. Néanmoins, jusqu'à présent, nous savons très peu de choses sur l'impact de ces voyages sur les performances à l'exportation.

La thèse est donc organisée comme suit : nous avons d'abord réalisé une étude bibliométrique en analysant 1344 publications de 1990 à 2019, ce qui nous donne un premier aperçu des connaissances mises au jour concernant notre sujet. Deuxièmement, nous avons fait un travail

empirique en étudiant l'effet d'interaction de deux formes de distance psychique (commerciale et culturelle) sur la gestion des relations à l'exportation. Plus précisément, cette recherche examine le rôle modérateur de la distance culturelle dans l'effet de la distance commerciale sur différentes dimensions de la gestion des relations et des performances financières à l'exportation. Cette recherche s'appuie sur un échantillon de 174 cadres français à l'exportation à qui il a été demandé de donner leur avis sur leur relation avec leur homologue chinois dans le commerce du vin, et sur leurs performances en la matière. Troisièmement, un autre travail empirique examine l'impact des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation en se fondant sur la théorie resource-based view (RBV) et en intégrant les facteurs organisationnels (chiffre d'affaires annuel) et le management stratégique (capacité complémentaire) dans l'analyse des exportations françaises de vin.

L'étude bibliométrique et deux études empiriques révèlent des résultats significatifs qui éclairent l'étude de la littérature sur l'exportation et apportent de nombreuses contributions sur les plans théorique, méthodologique et managérial liés aux performances à l'exportation. L'étude bibliométrique recense les publications, les auteurs, les revues, les organisations et les pays les plus influents, les tendances de la recherche, les réseaux sociaux tels que la co-écriture, la collaboration entre pays, les réseaux de « co-mot » et de « co-citation » et le couplage bibliographique. Cette partie comble le manque de recherche bibliométrique dans la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation. La première étude empirique constate les forts effets positifs de la gestion des relations, de l'investissement relationnel et de la qualité de la communication sur les performances financières à l'exportation. Une deuxième conclusion importante concerne les différents effets des dimensions commerciales et culturelles de la distance psychique : alors que la première affecte positivement la gestion des relations, la seconde modère négativement l'effet de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations. L'originalité de cette recherche réside dans l'identification de l'effet d'interaction des dimensions commerciales et culturelles de la distance psychique, la distance culturelle étant révélée comme une condition limite pour les effets de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations. Pour la deuxième étude empirique, les résultats révèlent un effet positif des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation, un effet positif du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur les voyages d'affaires internationaux et un effet positif indirect du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur les performances à l'exportation. Nous confirmons également l'effet positif des capacités complémentaires sur la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation et un effet positif indirect des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation grâce

aux capacités complémentaires, ce qui apporte de nouvelles et importantes implications théoriques et managériales.

Mots-clés : Performance à l'exportation, Étude bibliométrique, Entreprises françaises à l'export, Gestion des relations, Distance commerciale, Distance culturelle, Voyages d'affaires internationaux, Chiffre d'affaires annuel, Capacités complémentaires

## **1. Analyse documentaire des performances à l'exportation**

L'analyse documentaire sur les performances à l'exportation donne un aperçu des recherches passées sur les performances à l'exportation. Cette section est composée de trois parties. Dans la première partie, les principales trajectoires de recherche seront révélées. La deuxième partie contribue à synthétiser les déterminants des performances à l'exportation sur deux périodes (1960-1998) et (1998-2015). La troisième partie illustre la façon dont les performances à l'exportation sont mesurées.

### **1.1 Principales trajectoires de recherche**

Les recherches sur les performances à l'exportation de l'entreprise remontent au début des années 60 avec le travail de pionnier de Tookey (1964), qui a été le premier à tenter d'identifier les facteurs associés au succès à l'exportation (Katsikeas et al., 2000). Depuis lors, les recherches sur les performances à l'exportation se sont multipliées.

La recherche sur les performances à l'exportation suit deux grandes trajectoires de recherche : les déterminants des performances à l'exportation et la mesure des performances à l'exportation. Au cours des cinquante dernières années, il existe une poignée de travaux remarquables pour décrypter les déterminants des performances à l'exportation (voir Bilkey, 1978 ; Zou et Stan, 1998 ; Chetty et Hamilton, 1993 ; Aaby et Slater, 1989 ; Leonidou et al. 2002 ; Morgan et al. 2004) et la mesure des performances à l'exportation (voir Zou et al. 1998 ; Shoham, 1998 ; Katsikeas et al. 2000). Ces travaux ont considérablement renforcé le fondement théorique de la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation, légitimant ainsi la recherche universitaire dans le domaine de l'exportation (Zou et Stan, 1998). Au fil du temps, l'intérêt de la recherche sur les déterminants des performances à l'exportation augmente plutôt qu'il ne diminue. Dans la deuxième partie, la synthèse des déterminants de deux périodes (1960-1998) et (1998-2015) donne un aperçu clarifiant.

Une autre idée-force de la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation est l'incohérence qui réside dans la conceptualisation et la mesure des performances à l'exportation. Malgré une augmentation notable de la quantité et de la qualité des recherches sur les performances à l'exportation, il y a peu d'accord dans la littérature sur une définition conceptuelle des performances à l'exportation et sur leur définition opérationnelle (Shoham, 1998). Selon Katsikeas et al. (2000), bien que les performances à l'exportation restent l'un des domaines les plus largement étudiés, il est aussi l'un des moins compris et des plus controversés en raison

des difficultés rencontrées à conceptualiser, à opérationnaliser et à mesurer le concept de performance à l'exportation ; ce qui conduit souvent à des résultats incohérents et contradictoires. Une grande partie des connaissances concernant les pratiques d'exportation réussies est fragmentée et il n'existe pas d'examen et de synthèse complets de la littérature sur l'exportation depuis Bilkey's (1978) (Aaby et Slater, 1989). De nombreuses études ont été publiées au cours des 30 dernières années sur les déterminants des performances à l'exportation (voir Aaby et Slater, 1989 ; Bilkey, 1978 ; Chetty et Hamilton, 1993 ; Madsen, 1987 ; Zou et Stan, 1998).

## **1.2 Les déterminants des performances à l'exportation**

L'étude des performances à l'exportation remonte aux années 1960 et a attiré l'attention croissante des chercheurs depuis lors. Ici, les déterminants des performances à l'exportation sont divisés en deux périodes (1960-1998) et (1998-2015), en d'autres termes, la littérature des premières années et la littérature de l'époque contemporaine. Il existe d'excellents ouvrages visant à synthétiser les déterminants des performances à l'exportation au cours de la période 1960-1998.

### **- Période (1960-1998)**

Bilkey (1978) tente d'intégrer presque toute la littérature disponible sur le comportement des exportations depuis le début des années 60 et renforce le rôle important joué par l'inférence des politiques gouvernementales, par exemple la dévaluation de la monnaie et la suppression des obstacles à l'exportation, et souligne que la qualité de la gestion est le plus grand déterminant du succès d'une entreprise à l'exportation. Près de dix ans plus tard, Aaby et Slater (1989) classent les résultats de la littérature empirique sur les performances à l'exportation de 1978 à 1988, et constatent que la taille de l'entreprise en elle-même n'est pas un facteur important, à moins qu'elle ne soit liée à la solidité financière et à l'échelle de l'économie, et que les entreprises ayant un engagement plus ferme à l'exportation, plus d'expérience et des compétences plus élevées ont tendance à obtenir de meilleurs résultats ; cependant la réussite à l'exportation grâce à la technologie dépend d'une bonne gestion. Vingt ans après la synthèse des performances à l'exportation de Bilkey (1978), Zou et Stan (1998) font une synthèse de la littérature empirique sur les déterminants des performances à l'exportation de 1987 à 1997 et exposent les points de vue contradictoires de différents chercheurs. Par exemple, Cavusgil et Zou (1994) soutiennent que les performances à l'exportation sont principalement déterminées par la stratégie de commercialisation des exportations et par certains facteurs organisationnels

internes. Ces mêmes auteurs (Cavusgil et Zou (1994) affirment que les résultats à l'exportation sont principalement déterminés par la stratégie de commercialisation des exportations et par certains facteurs organisationnels internes (par exemple, l'engagement à l'exportation, l'expérience internationale), et que les facteurs externes et les autres facteurs internes n'ont qu'un effet indirect sur les résultats à l'exportation. Inversement, d'autres chercheurs (voir Donthu et Kim, 1993 ; Holzmuller et Kasper, 1991) avancent des effets directs pour tous les déterminants potentiels des résultats à l'exportation, y compris les facteurs externes et internes (Zou et Stan, 1998).

### **- Période (1998-2015)**

La recherche précédente sur les performances à l'exportation comprend trois grands axes : le premier concerne les perspectives organisationnelles, le second les composantes environnementales et le troisième les caractéristiques managériales (Leonidou et al. 2002). Dans les lignes qui suivent, les déterminants des performances à l'exportation sont synthétisés en suivant l'ordre précédemment évoqué de ces trois mêmes axes.

Au niveau organisationnel, un ensemble de trois capacités distinctes a été identifié : les capacités d'apprentissage organisationnel (par exemple, ouverture d'esprit à l'innovation, engagement à apprendre, etc.), les capacités relationnelles (partage de l'information, qualité de la communication, etc.) et les capacités de qualité (orientation client, implication des employés, etc.), qui influencent la performance économique (Lages et al., 2009). Cieslik et al. (2015) affirment que les performances des entreprises à l'exportation sont positivement liées au niveau de la productivité, de la taille de l'entreprise, de la proportion de diplômés universitaires, des dépenses en activités de R&D et à l'internalisation des entreprises. Silverman, M. et autres (2003) constatent l'impact positif de l'engagement des ressources sur les performances à l'exportation en étudiant l'industrie viticole américaine. Kinder et Slavova (2009) démontrent que le passage d'un réseau informel à un réseau capable de défendre des intérêts, de fournir des services et de stimuler de nouvelles formes de partenariat est un besoin urgent pour le réseau viticole bulgare. Nathaniel et al. (2013) affirment que les capacités de « réseautage » plus fortes et une structure plus organique<sup>33</sup> renforcent l'impact de l'innovation sur les performances à l'exportation. Barthelem (2014) montre qu'un statut élevé et une bonne réputation internationale des domaines viticoles augmentent les exportations de vin de Bordeaux. Karelakis et al. (2008)

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<sup>33</sup> Structural organicity is to reflect level of autonomous decision making in the firm and measured it drawing from autonomy scale. (Jambulingham et al. 2005; Nathaniel et al. 2013).

constatent que les déterminants des performances à l'exportation de l'industrie vinicole grecque reposent sur le niveau de l'entreprise (taille de l'entreprise, adaptation du produit, prix compétitif, connaissance des canaux, relation bénéfique avec les distributeurs) ainsi que sur une meilleure compréhension du défi et des menaces d'un environnement extérieur hostile.

Les facteurs environnementaux influencent la nature et l'intensité du rapport qui existe entre mécanismes de contrôle et les performances à l'exportation (Mysen, 2013). Leonidou et autres (1998) mettent l'accent sur l'effet de facteurs externes tels que les barrières commerciales, les droits de douane, la concurrence mondiale sur la dégradation des performances à l'exportation. Karelakis, C. (2008) souligne l'hostilité environnementale, la concurrence des prix, l'hétérogénéité comme étant le rôle externe crucial joué dans le contexte des exportations. Plusieurs articles soulignent que l'intensité de la concurrence et le dynamisme des clients sont les principaux déterminants de l'incertitude environnementale qui affecte l'avantage concurrentiel des entreprises (Miller et Eriesen 1982 ; Nathaniel et al. 2013 ; Germann et al. 2013). Il est nécessaire d'étudier comment le développement des exportations est affecté par des facteurs internes (problèmes fiscaux internes, réduction des opportunités sur le marché intérieur, déficits commerciaux, dévaluations des devises, transferts de capitaux et restrictions à l'importation) dans les économies à faible croissance.

En termes de perspectives managériales, les principales recherches sur les performances à l'exportation soulignent le rôle des caractéristiques managériales et leurs influences sur l'exportation. L'importance de l'attitude positive ou de l'engagement du manager à l'exportation est étudiée. Leonidou et al. (1998) soulignent que la gestion est essentielle et décisive dans le développement d'une activité d'exportation réussie ; ce qui conduit à des recherches plus approfondies sur la propension à initier des exportations, l'avancement sur la voie du développement des exportations, ou encore l'agressivité du comportement à l'exportation. Selon Katsikeas et al. (2008), les gestionnaires doivent accorder une plus grande priorité aux marchés d'exportation et l'assortir d'une allocation de ressources appropriée.

Ces résultats indiquent que les facteurs organisationnels, environnementaux et de gestion affectent fortement les performances à l'exportation. Il existe une relation causale unidirectionnelle : les facteurs managériaux, organisationnels et environnementaux influencent le ciblage des exportations et le marketing mix des entreprises qui, à leur tour, affectent les performances à l'exportation (Diamantopoulos et al. 2014). La gestion de la relation vendeur-

acheteur a longtemps été identifiée comme un fort antécédent des performances commerciales (Day et al. 2013 ; Jap et Ganesan 2000 ; Kusari et al. 2013 ; Kumar et al. 2016).

La qualité des interactions entre un producteur et un vendeur étranger dans le processus d'exportation a jusqu'à présent été négligée. Dans la deuxième partie de la thèse, la première étude empirique examinera le rôle de la gestion des relations dans les performances à l'exportation en fonction de facteurs environnementaux (distance commerciale et distance culturelle). La deuxième étude empirique examine l'effet du facteur organisationnel (chiffre d'affaires annuel), du facteur managérial (voyages d'affaires internationaux, capacité complémentaire) sur les performances à l'exportation. La question de recherche détaillée, la méthode et les résultats de la recherche seront illustrés et discutés dans les textes suivants.

### **1.3 Mesure des performances à l'exportation**

Les critères d'évaluation des performances à l'exportation des entreprises individuelles sont insaisissables (Aaby et Slater, 1989). Quant à la conceptualisation des performances à l'exportation, des dizaines de critères ont été utilisés par les chercheurs pour désigner les performances à l'exportation, et une grande variété de mesures est observable (Zou et Stan, 1998). Les dimensions les plus couramment utilisées sont le taux de croissance des ventes à l'exportation et le pourcentage des ventes totales représenté par les exportations (Aaby et Slater, 1989). Zou et ses collaborateurs (1998) affirment que de nombreuses études sont controversées quant à l'effet des facteurs corrélés au succès à l'exportation en raison de l'absence de consensus sur une mesure unifiée de la performance à l'exportation, d'où l'élaboration d'une mesure généralisée de la performance à l'exportation - l'échelle EXPERF comprenant trois dimensions (performance financière à l'exportation, performance stratégique à l'exportation et satisfaction à l'égard de l'entreprise d'exportation) - qui peut être appliquée à plusieurs pays. Katesikeas et al. (2008) synthétisent les mesures de la performance à l'exportation et constatent que les mesures les plus fréquemment utilisées sont l'intensité des ventes à l'exportation, la croissance des ventes à l'exportation, la rentabilité des exportations, ainsi que les volumes de ventes à l'exportation.

Cette étude passe en revue la littérature sur les performances passées à l'exportation et vise à donner un aperçu des recherches passées sur les principales trajectoires de recherche et les déterminants des performances à l'exportation sur deux périodes (1960-1998) et (1998-2015), ainsi que sur la mesure des performances à l'exportation. Cette littérature générale sur les performances à l'exportation ne vise pas à donner une généralisation inductive mais à

développer une compréhension initiale et une base solide des performances à l'exportation pour la suite de l'étude.

## **2. Questions de recherche**

La question de recherche générale de cette thèse se concentre sur les facteurs déterminants des performances à l'exportation d'un point de vue organisationnel, environnemental et managérial, à partir desquels nous avons développé trois sous-questions. La première question de recherche concerne l'étude bibliométrique. Les deux dernières sous-questions de recherche sont des études empiriques. Chaque sous-question traite d'un problème spécifique lié aux performances à l'exportation. Les informations détaillées sont développées dans le texte suivant.

### **2.1 Question 1 : quels sont les recherches bibliométriques des performances à l'exportation au cours des 30 dernières années?**

Les recherches sur les performances des entreprises à l'exportation remontent au début des années 1960 avec les travaux pionniers de Tookey (1964). Les chercheurs ont d'abord tenté d'identifier les facteurs associés au succès à l'exportation (Katsikeas, Leonidou et Morgan 2000). Depuis lors, les recherches sur les performances à l'exportation ont proliféré. Une grande partie des connaissances concernant les pratiques d'exportation réussies est fragmentée, et il n'y a pas eu d'examen et de synthèse complets de la littérature sur l'exportation depuis Bilkey (1978) et Aaby et Slater (1989). Pritchard (1969) a introduit la bibliométrie comme application des méthodes statistiques aux moyens de communication. Pourtant, malgré un intérêt considérable pour la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation, on ne trouve aucune analyse bibliométrique des performances à l'exportation. Un examen bibliographique complet et une synthèse de la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation sont pourtant d'une grande utilité potentielle pour les chercheurs universitaires, car ils sont de nature à fournir une vue d'ensemble des recherches passées - révélant les modèles de développement sous-jacents – ainsi qu'une vision de la recherche future. Forte de ce constat, la première étude réalisée dans le cadre de cette thèse vise à évaluer la croissance des publications, à identifier et à analyser celles qui sont les plus influentes, ainsi qu'à répertorier les auteurs, les revues, les organisations et les pays les plus productifs ; elle a également pour objectif de dresser la carte des réseaux de coauteurs, de co-citations d'auteurs, de couplage bibliographique, de collaboration entre pays et de co-écriture dans le domaine des performances à l'exportation de 1990 à 2019.

## **2.2 Question 2 : Quel est l'impact de la distance commerciale, la distance culturelle et la gestion des relations sur les performances à l'exportation?**

Les relations à l'exportation sont caractérisées par l'interaction entre un producteur (ou un vendeur) et un acheteur de deux pays différents engagés dans l'échange de biens. Ce qui reste étonnamment sous-examiné est le rôle de la valence de ces interactions. Ce manque de connaissance est d'autant plus préjudiciable que l'étude de la manière dont leur interaction affecte les performances à l'exportation pourrait approfondir la compréhension des opérations de la relation (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014). À cet égard, la manière dont les entreprises peuvent exporter avec succès vers des pays lointains n'est pas entièrement comprise (Lages et al., 2009). Plus précisément, la distance psychique - ou la mesure exprimant le degré avec lequel les normes et les valeurs de deux entreprises diffèrent en raison de leurs caractéristiques nationales distinctes (Ford, 1984, p. 102) - pourrait déterminer de nombreux aspects de la performance stratégique (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014 ; Ebrahimi & Banaeifard, 2018). Ainsi, l'examen du rôle de la distance dans les performances à l'exportation semble-t-il particulièrement pertinent. Bien que des recherches antérieures se soient penchées sur cette question (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014 ; Sousa & Bradley, 2005 ; Sousa & Lengler, 2009 ; Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998 ; Berry et al., 2010), et aient fourni des preuves des effets de la distance psychique sur les performances à l'exportation, la littérature actuelle présente certaines limites qui appellent des recherches plus approfondies. Une première limite réside dans le fait que ces études ont été principalement menées aux États-Unis et au Brésil, ce qui empêche potentiellement leur généralisation au-delà de ces pays et de ces cultures. Une deuxième limite - plus importante - concerne l'étude de la distance psychique dans ces études. Bien que la distance psychique soit une construction bidimensionnelle - composée de distances commerciales (c'est-à-dire les perceptions des différences entre les marchés dans l'environnement économique, juridique et politique, Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) et culturelles (c'est-à-dire les différences perçues dans les valeurs, les normes et les traditions culturelles, Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014) -, les études susmentionnées ne prennent pas en compte l'interaction potentielle entre ces dimensions. Toutefois, on peut avancer que la distance commerciale peut affecter différemment les performances à l'exportation en fonction de la distance culturelle. Par conséquent, l'étude de l'interaction potentielle qui pourrait exister entre les dimensions de la distance psychique pourrait être très instructive. Par conséquent, dans cette recherche, nous testons la notion selon laquelle la dimension culturelle de la distance psychique peut affecter le rôle de la distance commerciale sur l'exportation.

### **2.3 Question 3 : Comment le facteur organisationnel (chiffre d'affaires annuel), les voyages d'affaires internationaux et la gestion stratégique (capacité complémentaire) influent-ils sur les performances à l'exportation?**

Le commerce international dépend progressivement de la transmission d'informations complexes par le biais de la communication vis-à-vis (Cristea, 2011). Les responsables des entreprises privilégient les réunions par téléphone ou la communication en ligne (Forbes, 2009 ; Harvard Business Review, 2009). Dans le secteur de l'exportation de vin, on constate que les dirigeants d'entreprises effectuent des voyages d'affaires internationaux pour rencontrer des clients potentiels à l'étranger, organiser des dégustations de vin et participer à des foires internationales du vin. Néanmoins, jusqu'à présent, nous savons très peu de choses sur l'impact de ces voyages sur les performances à l'exportation. La vision fondée sur RBV indique que les entreprises ont essentiellement "un ensemble de ressources et de capacités" qui sont les principaux déterminants de leur stratégie et de leurs performances (Das et Teng, 2002). Les performances des entreprises varient parce qu'elles utilisent leurs ressources de différentes manières (Shuleska et al., 2016). Les réunions entre personnes dans les entreprises à l'étranger sont l'une des façons dont ces mêmes entreprises emploient leurs ressources, et cela implique une dépense fixe (Cristea, 2011). Les voyages d'affaires à l'étranger sont coûteux en raison des dépenses liées aux billets d'avion, à l'hébergement, aux restaurants, etc. Dans l'avenir Il pourrait devenir encore plus coûteux de faire ce type de voyage, en particulier pour les PME. À l'heure actuelle, la question des voyages internationaux manque encore de preuves convaincantes pour étayer les fortes corrélations entre les échanges organisés par les membres dirigeants et les performances objectives ; ce point mérite certainement d'être examinée plus avant (Amadiou et Viviani, 2010). L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner comment les entreprises optimisent leurs ressources, leurs capacités et leurs performances à l'exportation ; notamment en ce qui concerne les voyages d'affaires internationaux. En intégrant « RBV » et les stratégies de gestion mises en œuvre, nous examinons cette question en utilisant une approche peu souvent appliquée aux entreprises exportatrices de vin, notamment en ce qui concerne les voyages d'affaires à l'étranger (Kieser et al., 2001 ; Yu et Landsay, 2016).

## **3. Méthodes de recherche**

### **3.1 Méthodes de recherche pour l'étude bibliométrique**

Nous avons utilisé une méthode quantitative (analyse bibliométrique) en analysant 1344 publications de 1990 à 2019 dans le domaine des performances à l'exportation. Les données de

cette étude ont été extraites de Scopus le 22 août 2019. Scopus a été choisi comme moteur de recherche parce qu'il s'agit de la plus grande base de données de résumés et de citations de littérature évaluée par des pairs couvrant les domaines de la science, de la technologie, de la médecine, des sciences sociales et des arts et des lettres. Il indexe le contenu de 24 600 titres actifs et de 5 000 éditeurs, et il est rigoureusement examiné et sélectionné par un comité d'examen indépendant<sup>34</sup>. Nous avons appliqué les étapes suivantes pour récupérer les recherches liées aux performances à l'exportation : tout d'abord, le terme "performance à l'exportation" a été utilisé comme sujet de recherche identifié dans les titres, les résumés et les mots clés pour rassembler toutes les publications. La période a été fixée de 1990 à 2019, et le type de document a été limité aux articles en langue anglaise. En conséquence, 1 344 articles ont été trouvés au total. Les données ont été exportées dans différents formats, tels que .txt, .csv, .ris et .bib, pour une utilisation ultérieure. Basée sur les mathématiques et les statistiques, la bibliométrie a été utilisée pour analyser les publications afin de trouver les publications, auteurs, revues, organisations et pays les plus influents (Yu et al. 2018) à l'aide des logiciels BibExcel, Excel, SPSS VOSviewer. En outre, le logiciel VOSviewer permet de visualiser les réseaux sociaux tels que le co-parrainage, la collaboration entre pays, les mots associés et les liens bibliométriques - par exemple les réseaux de co-citation et le couplage bibliographique en analysant les informations de manière plus intuitive (Yu et al. 2018). La co-rédaction – qui est fondée sur la co-occurrence de termes extraits des champs de titre, de résumé et de mot-clé d'un ensemble de données – permet de révéler les sujets de recherche et de visualiser les réseaux sociaux bibliométriques (Callon et al. 1983 ; Yu et al. 2018).

### **3.2 Méthodes de recherche pour les deux études empiriques**

Nous avons utilisé les mêmes méthodes de recherche pour les deux études empiriques. Plus précisément, La méthode quantitative employée se fonde sur la modélisation par équations structurelles (MES) pour évaluer le modèle de mesure. Par conséquent, une analyse factorielle confirmatoire (CFA) a d'abord été utilisée pour tester l'ajustement du modèle de mesure en examinant les charges factorielles standardisées des variables latentes aux variables indicatrices, le test du khi-deux et les indices d'ajustement. L'hypothèse et l'adéquation du modèle structurel ont été testées à l'aide de la macro Processus, car elle permet de tester des

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus>

modèles qui incluent simultanément des médiateurs et des modérateurs, ce qui permet de tester les médiations, les modérations et les modérés - médiations postées dans le modèle.

La recherche s'appuie sur un échantillon de 174 cadres français à l'exportation, à qui il a été demandé de donner leur avis sur leur relation avec leur homologue chinois dans le commerce du vin, et sur leurs performances en la matière. En raison de l'accent mis sur le rôle de la distance psychique dans les performances à l'exportation, nous avons décidé d'examiner les activités d'exportation entre deux pays de cultures différentes, par conséquent caractérisées par une certaine distance psychique. C'est pourquoi nous avons sélectionné un échantillon de managers français exportant du vin en Chine. Ce choix a été fait pour les raisons suivantes : tout d'abord, les ventes mondiales de vin à l'exportation s'élevant à 35,5 milliards de dollars US en 2017<sup>35</sup>, le vin est largement sujet à l'exportation, ce qui rend ce produit adapté à l'étude des performances à l'exportation. Deuxièmement, en 2017, les exportations françaises s'élevaient à 10,3 milliards de dollars US, soit 29,1 % des exportations totales de vin, ce qui place la France au premier rang en termes d'exportations de vin. Troisièmement, la consommation de vin est en constante augmentation en Chine, affichant une croissance de 80 % depuis 2000 (soit de 1,73 à 1,79 milliard d'hl de 2016 à 2017)<sup>36</sup>. Les importations de vin suivent la même tendance (745 millions de litres de vin importés en Chine en 2017, soit une augmentation de 16,9 % en volume et de 18 % en valeur) et, en termes de pays d'origine, la France reste le premier exportateur de vin pour la Chine<sup>37</sup>. Quatrièmement, la France et la Chine ont des cultures très différentes<sup>38</sup>, la France étant plus individualiste et la Chine plus collectiviste, ce qui rend la distance entre ces deux pays intéressante pour la présente étude. Cinquièmement, les voyages d'affaires internationaux sont une façon courante de faire des affaires dans le domaine de l'exportation du vin. Ces facteurs nous ont amenés à choisir le vin comme contexte de cette étude, et la France et la Chine comme pays d'intérêt.

Les données ont été collectées sur une période de 6 mois, de juin à décembre 2017, dans quatre régions viticoles internationales à l'occasion de grands événements commerciaux en France (Bordeaux Vinexpo <sup>39</sup> en juin, dégustation à Lyon <sup>40</sup> en octobre, grande dégustation en

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.worldstopexports.com/wine-exports-country/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/425098/china-wine-consumption/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.decanter.com/wine-news/exporting-wine-to-china-countries-384383/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/china,france/>

<sup>39</sup> Vinexpo, <http://www.vinexpo.com/fr>

<sup>40</sup> Lyon tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/lyon-tasting-2017/>

décembre<sup>41</sup>, et dégustation de Bordeaux en décembre<sup>42</sup>). En ce qui concerne l'administration du questionnaire, nous avons d'abord réalisé un pré-test sous la forme d'entretiens sur le terrain avec vingt responsables des exportations afin d'affiner et de clarifier les différentes mesures à inclure dans l'enquête finale. Au cours de cette phase, 8 points ont été supprimés en raison de l'absence de responsables des exportations ainsi qu'en raison de certaines difficultés de compréhension rencontrées. Lors de l'administration du questionnaire, il a été demandé à chaque répondant potentiel s'il avait un commerce direct d'import-export avec la Chine et s'il connaissait la relation commerciale avec son homologue chinois. Au total, 174 questionnaires complets ont été recueillis. Parmi les répondants, 70 % étaient des hommes. En ce qui concerne la taille des entreprises, les entreprises ayant moins de 50 salariés sont plus représentées (45,09 %). L'échantillon peut donc être considéré comme représentatif des entreprises exportatrices de vin en France selon FranceAgriMer<sup>43</sup>, et en Chine selon le China Statistical Yearbook 2015<sup>44</sup>.

#### **4. Plan général de recherche**

La thèse est organisée comme suit, tout d'abord, nous avons fait l'étude bibliométrique en analysant 1344 publications de 1990 à 2019 qui vise à donner un aperçu bibliométrique sur les performances passées à l'exportation. Deuxièmement, nous avons effectué un travail empirique en étudiant l'effet d'interaction de deux formes de distance psychique (commerciale et culturelle) sur la gestion des relations à l'exportation, plus précisément le rôle modérateur de la distance culturelle dans l'effet de la distance commerciale sur différentes dimensions de la gestion des relations et des performances financières à l'exportation. Troisièmement, nous avons effectué le deuxième travail empirique pour examiner l'impact des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation en nous appuyant sur RBV et en intégrant les facteurs organisationnels (chiffre d'affaires annuel) et le management stratégique (capacité complémentaire) dans l'analyse des exportations françaises de vin.

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<sup>41</sup> Paris grand tasting, <https://www.grandtasting.com/>

<sup>42</sup> Bordeaux tasting, <http://www.terredevins.com/evenements/bordeaux-tasting-2017/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.statista.com/>

<sup>44</sup> China Statistical Yearbook

## Schéma général de la thèse

<b>Introduction générale</b>		
<b>Corps principal</b>	Chapitre 1	Analyse bibliométrique des tendances mondiales de la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation : 1990 - 2019
	Chapitre 2	L'effet conjugué des distances commerciales et culturelles sur la gestion des relations et les performances à l'exportation : le cas de l'exportation de vin entre la France et la Chine
	Chapitre 3	L'impact organisationnel et managérial sur les performances à l'exportation : chiffre d'affaires annuel, voyages d'affaires à l'étranger et complémentarité de l'activité viticole française
<b>Conclusion générale</b>		

## 5. Conclusion

L'objectif prioritaire de cette thèse est évidemment de répondre à notre question de recherche associée aux performances à l'exportation. Il est important de rappeler celle-ci: comment les performances à l'exportation sont-elles affectées aux niveaux organisationnel, environnemental et managérial ? Pour cela, nous avons divisé notre question de recherche en trois sous-questions : une étude bibliométrique et deux études empiriques liées aux performances à l'exportation. Chaque sous-question a donné lieu à un objectif de recherche spécifique lié aux performances à l'exportation. L'étude bibliométrique confirme que les déterminants des performances à l'exportation sont constitués de trois groupes de facteurs au niveau organisationnel, environnemental et managérial. Les études empiriques révèlent que les déterminants des performances à l'exportation ne sont pas indépendants. Quels qu'ils soient au niveau organisationnel, environnemental ou managérial, ils s'influencent directement ou indirectement les uns les autres. La compréhension du mécanisme, de la nature et de la loi qui

sous-tend la fonction de ces facteurs est la clé pour obtenir des avantages compétitifs à l'exportation et des performances en la matière. Dans cette thèse, nous avons examiné la distance commerciale, la distance culturelle au niveau environnemental, la gestion des relations, les voyages d'affaires internationaux, les capacités complémentaires au niveau de la gestion et le chiffre d'affaires annuel au niveau organisationnel. Nous avons cherché à comprendre comment ils interagissent les uns avec les autres et ont un impact sur les performances à l'exportation. Les deux études de recherche empirique liées aux performances à l'exportation aident à répondre à la question de savoir comment les performances à l'exportation sont affectées de manière spécifique du point de vue de l'organisation, de l'environnement et de la gestion. La première étude empirique étudie l'effet d'interaction de deux formes de distance psychique (commerciale et culturelle) sur la gestion des relations à l'exportation, plus précisément le rôle modérateur de la distance culturelle dans l'effet de la distance commerciale sur différentes dimensions de la gestion des relations et des performances financières à l'exportation. Nous mettons au jour l'impact positif de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations, et le rôle de médiation de la gestion des relations comme mécanisme sous-jacent qui explique l'effet de la distance commerciale sur les performances à l'exportation. La deuxième étude empirique révèle un effet positif des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation, un effet positif du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur les voyages d'affaires internationaux et un effet positif indirect du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur les performances à l'exportation. Nous confirmons également l'effet positif des capacités complémentaires sur la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation et un effet positif indirect des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation grâce aux capacités complémentaires, ce qui apporte de nouvelles et importantes implications théoriques et managériales.

La conclusion comporte trois perspectives : les contributions de la recherche, les limites de la recherche et la poursuite de la recherche. Les contributions de la recherche sont composées de contributions théoriques, de contributions méthodologiques et de contributions managériales.

## **5.1 Contributions à la recherche**

Dans cette thèse, nous essayons de répondre à notre question centrale : comment les performances à l'exportation sont-elles affectées dans une perspective organisationnelle, environnementale et managériale différente ? Les contributions sont nombreuses, que ce soit sur le plan théorique ou sur le plan méthodologique ou encore du point de vue managérial.

### 5.1.1 Contributions théoriques

Les premières contributions mettent en lumière le fait qu'il s'agit de la toute première étude bibliométrique sur le domaine des performances à l'exportation. En analysant 1344 publications de 1990 à 2019 dans le domaine des performances à l'exportation, nous avons découvert la tendance des publications, les publications les plus influentes et les auteurs, revues, organisations et pays les plus productifs, ainsi que les réseaux sociaux tels que la co-propriété, les réseaux de co-citation d'auteurs, le couplage bibliographique, la collaboration entre pays, la co-motorisation des titres, les résumés et les modèles de mots-clés. Notre étude fournit une vue d'ensemble du schéma et des tendances de la recherche au cours des 30 dernières années et des inspirations nouvelles pour les décideurs politiques, les chercheurs et les bailleurs de fonds intéressés à faire avancer le programme de performance des exportations. En particulier, l'analyse de la cooccurrence des termes dans les titres, les résumés et les mots clés donne un aperçu des principaux sujets et des tendances de la recherche (Nunen et al. 2018). Le réseau de cooccurrence des termes montre trois groupes principaux, alternativement, trois sujets de recherche principaux. Ils sont principalement liés aux facteurs environnementaux avec les termes représentatifs tels que "exportation", "croissance", "demande", "prix", "marché", "pays", "taux de change", "économique", "revenu", "réglementation", "monde", "préoccupation" etc, les facteurs organisationnels avec les termes représentatifs tels que "productivité", "innovation", "caractéristique de l'entreprise", "décision d'exportation", "intrans" etc. et les méthodes de recherche avec les termes représentatifs tels que "littérature", "recherche", "modèle théorique", "enquête", "PME", "SEM", "cadre conceptuel", "étude exploratoire" etc. Ce résultat est généralement conforme aux conclusions tirées de l'analyse de la littérature sur les trois catégories de déterminants des performances à l'exportation aux niveaux organisationnel, environnemental et managérial.

La deuxième contribution théorique concerne la constatation des effets positifs forts de la gestion des relations, de l'investissement relationnel et de la qualité de la communication sur les performances financières à l'exportation, ainsi que les effets positifs de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations, et la constatation importante des effets modérateurs négatifs de la distance culturelle sur l'effet de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations. Cette étude apporte plusieurs contributions à la recherche sur la gestion des relations internationales. Tout d'abord, nous mettons en lumière l'idée selon laquelle les différentes dimensions de la distance culturelle et de la distance psychique des entreprises peuvent interagir pour affecter la gestion des relations. Cette étude confirme que la distance psychique

ne doit pas être considérée comme une construction unidimensionnelle, comme c'est parfois le cas dans la littérature commerciale internationale (par exemple, Håkanson, 2014 ou Westjohn & Magnusson, 2017), mais comme une construction multidimensionnelle. L'identification de l'effet d'interaction de la distance culturelle et commerciale suggère que le chercheur ne devrait pas considérer la distance comme un simple antécédent de la gestion des relations et des performances à l'exportation qui en découlent (Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001 ; Evans et al., 2008 ; Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), mais plutôt comme une construction complexe en interaction (Berry et al., 2010).

Ce résultat constitue un nouvel éclairage et met en lumière l'importance de la distance culturelle par rapport à la distance commerciale, car la distance commerciale n'exerce un effet positif sur la gestion des relations qu'à des valeurs faibles de distance culturelle. Lorsque la distance culturelle devient trop importante, la distance professionnelle ne conduit pas à une bonne gestion des relations. La contribution de cette recherche réside également dans l'impact positif de la distance professionnelle sur la gestion des relations, car il n'y a guère eu de consensus sur l'influence de la distance psychique (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014), nos résultats fournissent des preuves empiriques de l'effet positif de la distance professionnelle, mais la distance professionnelle n'exerce des effets positifs que lorsque la distance culturelle ne dépasse pas un certain seuil. Par conséquent, nos résultats aident à concilier les résultats mitigés des recherches précédentes sur les effets de la distance psychique, en suggérant l'existence d'une variable modératrice identifiée ici comme la distance culturelle. En outre, l'identification du rôle médiateur de la gestion des relations, peut donc être considérée comme le mécanisme sous-jacent qui explique l'effet de la distance commerciale sur les performances à l'exportation. Dans notre modèle, nous avons conceptualisé et mesuré la relation d'exportation comme une construction d'ordre supérieur composée des trois dimensions de la qualité de la communication, de la relation à long terme et de l'investissement dans la relation. Nous avons confirmé l'impact positif de la distance commerciale sur les performances à l'exportation par l'effet médiateur de la qualité de la communication et de l'investissement.

La troisième contribution théorique est associée à la nouvelle découverte de l'effet positif des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation, de l'effet positif du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur les voyages d'affaires internationaux, de l'effet positif indirect du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation par le biais des voyages d'affaires internationaux ainsi que de l'effet positif indirect des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation par le biais de capacités complémentaires,

ce qui fournit des implications théoriques nouvelles et importantes. Les recherches précédentes suggèrent d'étudier les performances à l'exportation sous différents angles (Li et Ogunmokun 2001 ; Karelakis et al. 2008), et la théorie institutionnelle n'explique pas suffisamment comment les dynamiques et les caractéristiques internes peuvent affecter les pratiques institutionnalisées (Galbreath, J. 2017). Dans notre étude, nous avons examiné les performances à l'exportation en intégrant les facteurs organisationnels (chiffre d'affaires annuel) et la théorie du comportement des entreprises (voyages d'affaires internationaux) ainsi que le facteur managérial (capacités complémentaires) - une approche rarement utilisée dans le contexte de l'exportation, ce qui confère à cette étude son originalité (Kieser, Beck et Tainio 2001 ; Yu et Landsay 2016). Nous avons constaté l'effet positif des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation. Les voyages d'affaires internationaux ont un effet plus positif sur les performances à l'exportation, lorsque les homologues étrangers ont des capacités complémentaires plus élevées. Les résultats comblent le manque de connaissances sur l'effet des voyages d'affaires internationaux et les questions relatives au degré de complémentarité entre les voyages et le commerce transfrontaliers (Hovhannisyan et Keller 2015). Nous avons également constaté que la capacité financière de l'entreprise (chiffre d'affaires annuel) a un effet positif sur les voyages d'affaires internationaux et confirmé l'effet indirect du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation grâce aux voyages d'affaires internationaux, ces résultats empiriques contribuent à la théorie comportementale des entreprises ainsi qu'à la recherche sur les performances à l'exportation.

### **5.1.2 Contributions managériale**

En ce qui concerne les aspects managériaux, nos contributions sont également nombreuses. Nous apportons aux entreprises exportatrices des éclairages importants à différents niveaux : gestion des relations internationales, effets de la distance psychique (distance commerciale et distance culturelle) dans la relation import-export, effets du facteur organisationnel (chiffre d'affaires annuel, voyages d'affaires internationaux), et enfin, influence du facteur managérial (capacité complémentaire) sur les performances à l'exportation.

La première contribution concerne l'identification et l'approfondissement de la compréhension des effets de la distance psychique et culturelle sur la gestion des relations d'affaires internationales ainsi que sur les performances à l'exportation. Il s'agit plus précisément d'appréhender ces effets - pour les responsables des exportations, en particulier ceux qui

travaillent avec la Chine ou des pays ayant une distance commerciale et culturelle similaire - sur la gestion des relations et sur son impact sur les performances financières à l'exportation. La gestion des relations a un effet positif important sur les performances financières à l'exportation et sert de médiateur en ce qui concerne l'effet de la distance commerciale. Sont particulièrement concernés la qualité de la communication et les éléments d'investissement. Cette recherche vise à fournir quelques lignes directrices et ambitionne d'offrir des perspectives aux responsables des exportations afin de développer et de maintenir une meilleure qualité de gestion des relations pour atteindre le succès. Nos résultats suggèrent que les responsables des exportations devraient communiquer ouvertement avec leurs homologues, en expliquant clairement les objectifs commerciaux, et qu'ils devraient également interagir en permanence avec leurs partenaires commerciaux pour stimuler les performances à l'exportation. Les technologies modernes et les nouveaux outils peuvent enrichir les possibilités de communication et d'échange d'informations en temps réel, ce qui entraîne des interactions plus fréquentes entre les partenaires commerciaux et donc des opérations commerciales plus efficaces.

Deuxièmement, la découverte de preuves du rôle modérateur de la distance culturelle dans l'effet de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations devrait aider les responsables des exportations à mieux adapter leurs stratégies à leurs partenaires commerciaux. La distance culturelle se révèle être une « condition limite » pour les effets de la distance commerciale sur la gestion des relations, ce qui suggère que les responsables doivent s'adapter et adopter des stratégies diverses lorsqu'ils structurent et exploitent la relation avec leurs homologues étrangers. La distance culturelle agit comme une soupape dans la gestion des relations internationales, qui peut soit améliorer soit bloquer la relation. Lorsque les responsables des exportations perçoivent une très grande distance culturelle entre leur marché d'origine et leur marché d'accueil, nous leur suggérons de comprendre les différences en investissant plus de temps, de ressources et d'efforts pour intégrer la diversité culturelle, car la relation devient plus efficace.

Troisièmement, à un niveau plus large, nous pensons que les résultats de cette recherche peuvent également bénéficier à des entreprises exportatrices, aux programmes de formation professionnelle, aux écoles de commerce et aux universités pour l'élaboration de programmes d'études visant à éduquer et à sensibiliser les responsables des exportations ou les étudiants à

l'exportation. Ces résultats soulignent les effets uniques de « l'entreprise psychique » et de la distance culturelle sur le fonctionnement de la relation ainsi que sur les performances à l'exportation. Les échelles du commerce psychique et de la distance culturelle peuvent être utilisées comme outil pour mesurer la perception des responsables de l'exportation et des étudiants quant à la distance commerciale et culturelle de certains marchés. En outre, il fournit les stratégies d'adaptation nécessaires pour avoir une relation efficace, qui à son tour influence positivement la performance financière des exportations.

Quatrièmement, les voyages d'affaires internationaux sont un moyen de communication efficace, car ils constituent une interaction directe, face à face, et riche en informations. C'est tout particulièrement le cas pour un partenaire commercial étranger lorsque le temps et l'espace les séparent la plupart du temps. Nous avons confirmé l'impact positif des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation. Cette pratique commerciale fonctionne bien avec des partenaires commerciaux ayant des capacités complémentaires, car les aspects fondamentaux des capacités complémentaires résident dans la diversité, ce qui signifie plus de risques. Les entreprises ont besoin d'efforts plus « synergiques » pour faciliter le processus et reconfigurer les ressources ; l'efficacité de la communication est garantie par les voyages d'affaires internationaux.

Cinquièmement, nous avons constaté l'effet positif du chiffre d'affaires annuel sur les voyages d'affaires internationaux. Les voyages d'affaires internationaux ont un effet positif indirect sur les résultats à l'exportation. En d'autres termes, l'entreprise doit investir financièrement et en termes de gestion sur le marché de l'exportation afin d'obtenir des résultats satisfaisants à l'exportation.

Enfin, dans le cas du secteur viticole français, la plupart des entreprises viticoles exportatrices sont des PME (entreprises familiales et artisanales) ; 83% des entreprises viticoles y ont moins de 50 employés. Ces petites structures sont souvent fragiles et endettées ; les entreprises viticoles sont beaucoup plus habituées à la production de vin qu'au management (Aytac et al. 2016). Le coût élevé des voyages d'affaires internationaux peut constituer une charge pour les entreprises ou les empêcher d'explorer les marchés étrangers. Sur ce point, nous suggérons aux gouvernements, aux entreprises informatiques ou aux associations de producteurs de vin telles que le CIVB (Le Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux) de trouver un moyen innovant de réduire les coûts de communication, par exemple par des campagnes de promotion spécifiques (Farinelli et al. 2017) et de nouveaux médias sociaux pour améliorer l'efficacité de

la communication dans le commerce import-export. Nous défendons également la suggestion de Hovhannisyanyan et Keller (2015), selon laquelle la libéralisation du transport aérien international de passagers, en abaissant les tarifs, en facilitant les processus administratifs, pourrait apporter des gains substantiels en termes de croissance économique entre les pays.

### **5.1.3 Contributions méthodologiques**

Les méthodes de recherche varient en fonction de chaque sous-question de recherche spécifique. Ainsi, les apports méthodologiques de la thèse sont nombreux.

Pour la première contribution méthodologique, nous avons utilisé l'étude bibliométrique pour analyser 1344 publications de 1990 à 2019 dans le domaine des performances à l'exportation sous différents angles en combinant la bibliométrie avec les méthodes des réseaux sociaux à l'aide des logiciels BibExcel, Excel, SPSS, VOSviewer. Il s'agit, à notre connaissance, de la première étude bibliométrique dans le domaine des performances à l'exportation. Nous avons trouvé les publications, les auteurs, les revues, les organisations et les pays les plus influents ainsi que la carte des réseaux de coauteurs, de co-citations d'auteurs, de couplage bibliographique, de collaboration entre pays et de co-écriture dans le domaine des performances à l'exportation. Ensuite, nous avons effectué une analyse descriptive de 174 entreprises françaises exportatrices de vin afin de présenter une vue claire du profil des entreprises exportatrices et des caractéristiques démographiques des responsables des exportations. Il n'existait pas préalablement d'analyse descriptive de ce type dans le secteur des vins français à l'exportation. Troisièmement, nous avons utilisé une étude quantitative pour tester les deux études empiriques qui s'appuient sur un échantillon de 174 cadres français à l'exportation à qui il a été demandé d'évaluer leur point de vue sur leur relation avec leur homologue chinois dans le commerce du vin, et sur leurs performances en la matière. La modélisation par équations structurelles (SEM) a été utilisée pour évaluer le modèle de mesure. Ainsi, une analyse factorielle de confirmation (CFA) a d'abord été utilisée pour tester l'ajustement du modèle de mesure en examinant les charges factorielles standardisées des variables latentes aux variables indicatrices, le test du khi-deux et les indices d'ajustement. L'AFC fournit des résultats permettant un examen approfondi de la validité des mesures. L'hypothèse et l'adéquation du modèle structurel ont été testées à l'aide de la Macro Processus, car elle permet de tester des modèles qui incluent simultanément des médiateurs et des modérateurs, ce qui permet de tester les médiations, les modérations et les médiations modérées postées dans le modèle.

## 5.2 Limites de la recherche

Les limites de notre recherche sont liées aux études empiriques qui, autrement, nous aident à envisager la suite des recherches. Premièrement, l'étude empirique est limitée au contexte unique du secteur du commerce du vin de la France et de la performance des exportations chinoises. Pourtant, "une plus grande spécificité de la distance commerciale et culturelle unique peut conduire à une meilleure compréhension de l'industrie et entre les différents pays" (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2014, p. 62). Cette unicité du secteur étudié constitue une limite bien que notre recherche présente une enquête quantitative approfondie, et que les résultats du cas révélateur soient riches et probablement importants pour le développement ultérieur de la théorie, en particulier en ce qui concerne la distance psychique dans la gestion des relations. L'échantillon nous empêche de généraliser les résultats empiriques au-delà du secteur de la recherche. Deuxièmement, nous nous sommes concentrés sur les deux dimensions les plus largement reconnues de la distance : la distance commerciale et la distance culturelle, qui affectent les performances à l'exportation. Cependant, des recherches antérieures ont reconnu l'existence d'autres types de distance, comme l'approche quadridimensionnelle de Ghemawat (2001) de la distance culturelle, administrative, géographique et économique. Bien que nous reconnaissons la difficulté de conceptualiser et de mesurer les différentes formes de distance (Berry et al., 2010), nous pensons également que les distances commerciale et culturelle ne sont peut-être pas les seules dimensions qui affectent la gestion des relations, ni qu'elles sont les seules dimensions qui interagissent. Troisièmement, nous pensons qu'il est important d'enrichir les dimensions de la gestion des relations en tenant compte des effets importants de la gestion des relations sur les performances à l'exportation. Enfin, nos conclusions sur l'effet d'interaction de la distance commerciale et culturelle sur la gestion des relations plaident également en faveur d'une étude plus approfondie par rapport à des approches contingentes des dimensions de la distance psychique (par exemple, Sousa & Bradley, 2006 ; Khalil, 2019 ; Brett, 2017 et Sánchez-Gutiérrez et al., 2019) pour mesurer les performances à l'exportation. Nous avons trouvé des preuves d'un effet de médiation des composantes « qualité de la communication » et « investissement sur la performance à l'exportation » ; simultanément, l'importance de ces facteurs nous suggère la nécessité de vérifier si les approches contingentes multidimensionnelles peuvent être plus efficaces que les approches universelles comme cela a été suggéré jusqu'à présent.

Quatrièmement, la deuxième étude empirique fournit de nouvelles perspectives pour la vision basée sur les ressources, la théorie du comportement des entreprises et la littérature sur les

performances à l'exportation. Cependant, la limitation se limite à la mesure des performances à l'exportation sur la base d'une seule dimension (les performances à l'exportation), puisque les performances à l'exportation pourraient également être mesurées à partir de dimensions économiques et stratégiques (Zou, Taylor et Osland 1998). En outre, nous avons mesuré les capacités financières des entreprises par le chiffre d'affaires annuel ; il pourrait également être mesuré par d'autres variables financières comme le bilan annuel (Votoupalova et al. 2015). Le commerce d'exportation et d'importation de vin français et chinois donne une spécificité à ce travail, mais il ne peut pas être généralisé au-delà de la population couverte par l'échantillon. En outre, les voyages d'affaires internationaux sont une pratique commerciale coûteuse, qui fonctionne bien avec des partenaires commerciaux étrangers ayant des capacités complémentaires plus élevées. Il sera utile d'enrichir les aspects managériaux pour optimiser l'effet des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation.

### **5.3 Recherches complémentaires**

Nous arrivons enfin à la section des recherches complémentaires. Tout d'abord, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, nos échantillons sont fondés sur deux pays : la France et la Chine, ce qui empêche toute généralisation au-delà de la zone de recherche. Nous suggérons évidemment que les futures recherches envisagent de tester l'effet d'interaction soutenu de la distance culturelle et commerciale dans d'autres pays afin de s'assurer que l'effet se reproduit au-delà du contexte de l'exportation de vin entre la France et la Chine. Deuxièmement, nous recommandons fortement que les recherches futures envisagent d'autres types de distance, afin de déterminer si les effets observés ici peuvent se reproduire en relation avec l'approche quadridimensionnelle de Ghemawat (2001) de la distance culturelle, administrative, géographique et économique. Un consensus plus large est nécessaire dans les conceptualisations opérationnelles de la distance psychique et de ses mesures. Troisièmement, nous constatons la nécessité d'enrichir les dimensions de la gestion des relations. Les effets observés ici se répètent ou non dans d'autres stratégies de gestion des relations. Quatrièmement, nous suggérons que les recherches futures testent le modèle avec trois dimensions de mesure des performances à l'exportation - l'échelle EXPERF (Zou et al. (1998) comprenant les performances stratégiques à l'exportation, les performances financières à l'exportation, la satisfaction des performances à l'exportation - avec des mesures objectives (ventes à l'exportation, volumes, croissance des ventes). En outre, les voyages d'affaires internationaux sont coûteux, nous constatons que les capacités complémentaires entre les entreprises optimisent leur effet sur les performances à l'exportation. Il pourra être utile

d'inclure d'autres aspects de gestion dans le modèle et de vérifier s'ils optimisent l'effet des voyages d'affaires internationaux sur les performances à l'exportation.

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