



# Enhancing Export Performance through Proactive Export Market Development Capabilities and ICT Utilization

Olimpia C. Racela<sup>a</sup> and Amonrat Thoumrungroje<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Marketing, Mahidol University International College, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand; <sup>b</sup>Department of International Business Management, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand

## ABSTRACT

This study examines how exporters from an emerging economy improve their performance by investigating the impact of export market dynamism, information and communication technology (ICT) utilization, and proactive export market development capabilities on export performance. Data from a self-administered mail survey of 239 Thai exporters were analyzed using structural equation modeling. Findings indicate that export market dynamism positively influences utilization of Web 2.0 and ICT network software, along with proactive export market development capabilities, which enhance export performance. However, while ICT network software fosters proactive export market development capabilities, we discovered the unfulfilled potential of Web 2.0 application.

## KEYWORDS

Export performance; Web 2.0; information and communication technology (ICT); proactive export market development capabilities; emerging markets

## Introduction

The investigation of factors determining export performance has long been a focus of international marketing researchers (e.g., Aaby & Slater, 1989; Durmaz & Eren, 2018; O'Cass & Julian, 2003). Recent advances in transportation, communication and information technology—along with global financial shocks, regional economic integration, and the convergence of customer preferences—have complicated the identification and satisfaction of customer needs, which affect export performance (Mathews, Constanza, Perks, Healy, & Wickramasekera, 2016). To cope within such dynamic international market environments, exporters must rely on timely pertinent information to reduce international market uncertainty and to identify and exploit market opportunities in order to sustain their export performance. As revealed by Li and Ogunmokun (2000), the exporters' ability to monitor changes in overseas markets and to connect to their foreign distribution counterparts significantly enables them to be more flexible in their strategic actions. This signifies the role of instantaneous information and communication

with export partners in serving overseas markets. Exporters have long relied on some forms of communication and information technology (e.g., fixed-line telephone, facsimile machine, networked computers, etc.) as a means for efficient communication, information sharing, and the facilitation of transactions with their distant customers (e.g., Alarcón-del-Amo, Rialp-Criado, & Rialp-Criado, 2018; Chelariu & Osmonbekov, 2014). However, as modern mobile digital communications, Web-based technologies, and Internet-based applications continue evolving rapidly at much cheaper costs, new sets of benefits, costs, and risks emerge for firms. Despite the significant impact of such technologies on business, less than three percent of articles published in the international marketing literature have examined digital contexts (Watson, Weaven, Perkins, Sardana, & Palmatier, 2018). Thus, a better understanding of the use of such technologies by international marketers is warranted. Moreover, research focusing on emerging market exporters is still lacking.

Exporters in emerging markets, where technology infrastructure may be less sophisticated than those in developed markets, are generally faced