

Enhancing Export Performance Through Relationship Marketing Commitment

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Abstract. This study investigates the critical role of relationship marketing commitment in enhancing export performance among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in a globalized market. As globalization intensifies competition, firms must optimize their export strategies to achieve sustainable growth. The research identifies key factors that mediate the relationship between marketing commitment and export performance, emphasizing the importance of trust, communication, and cooperation. By addressing gaps in existing literature regarding the mechanisms through which relationship marketing influences export success, this study provides empirical evidence and a comprehensive framework for firms aiming to improve their international trade outcomes.

Keywords : Export Performance; Relationship Marketing; Export Commitment; SMEs

INTRODUCTION

Export performance is essential for international market success, functioning as a key mechanism for securing competitive advantages (Dahooie, Meidute-Kavaliauskiene, Vanaki, Podviezko, & Beheshti Jazan Abadi, 2020). As globalization reconfigures business landscapes, organizations are compelled to enhance their export performance in order to maintain a competitive edge. This enhancement encompasses the efficacy of marketing strategies, the establishment of international collaborations, and the capacity for cultural adaptability. The phenomenon of export performance, as a critical factor in achieving global market success, is increasingly being examined in research, particularly in relation to the role of relationship marketing commitment. Identifying factors critical for enhanced export performance is vital for enterprises seeking global growth. Research suggests that effective export performance relies on both internal competencies and external relationships (Zou & Stan, 1998). The Indonesian furniture industry serves as a significant catalyst for economic advancement via exportation. It ranks among the top global furniture exporters, with its wood-based products esteemed for superior quality in international markets (Arifin, 2024).

The importance of this study lies in its ability to fill gaps in the literature regarding the connection between relationship marketing commitment and export performance. Prior research indicates that relationship marketing significantly impacts a firm's success in global markets; nonetheless, the exact ways in which commitment enhances export performance remain inadequately explored. For example, research conducted by (Jamil et al., 2021) posits that trust and commitment are essential for nurturing enduring relationships, yet they do not explicitly link these relational dynamics to quantifiable export outcomes. Moreover, (Munawar, Rahayu, Disman, & Wibowo, 2019) emphasize the importance of management commitment in facilitating export success but neglect to explore the manner in which relational commitments enhance these capabilities. This study seeks to address these

deficiencies by offering empirical evidence regarding the direct effect of relationship marketing commitment on export performance.

The dichotomy of perspectives surrounding relationship marketing commitment further complicates the comprehension of its influence on export performance. On one side, (Morgan, 1994) contend that robust commitments foster positive buyer-seller relationships, which can improve performance indicators such as customer retention and satisfaction. On the other hand, certain scholars caution against the potential drawbacks associated with an overreliance on relational strategies, suggesting that such dependency may engender reliance on particular partners or impede innovation. This multifaceted perspective highlights the necessity for a thorough investigation into how relationship marketing commitment can be strategically employed to enhance export performance while concurrently mitigating associated risks.

Recent empirical investigations have elucidated a positive association among various dimensions of relationship marketing, including trust, communication, and cooperation, and their effect on export performance. For instance, (Jamil et al., 2021) elucidated that trust serves as a partial mediator in the association between relationship marketing practices and export performance within Pakistan's garment industry, thereby suggesting that enterprises should prioritize the cultivation of trust to augment their international trade results. This observation is congruent with the hypothesis that effective communication and collaboration amongst partners cultivate stronger relationships that ultimately yield enhanced performance metrics (Saleh, Ali, & Mavondo, 2014).

In light of the aims of this research, we endeavor to examine the manner in which commitment to relationship marketing impacts export performance across diverse industries. By scrutinizing this relationship, it becomes possible to delineate the critical factors that mediate the influence of commitment on export success. Prior studies have indicated that effective communication and the establishment of shared objectives between partners are pivotal mediators that enhance collaborative endeavors in international markets (Cannon & Perreault Jr, 1999). Furthermore, (Ismail, Alam, & Hamid, 2017) underscore that trust and commitment are indispensable for realizing favorable outcomes between exporters and importers, thereby reinforcing the necessity for this research focus.

Management commitment is of paramount importance in augmenting export performance through the implementation of relationship marketing initiatives. As posited by , (Munawar et al., 2019), management teams that exhibit strong commitment are predisposed to allocate resources towards the cultivation of partner relationships and the facilitation of collaboration among stakeholders. Such resource allocation not only enhances transaction efficiency but also engenders an atmosphere that is conducive to knowledge dissemination and innovation both of which are critical determinants of competitive advantage in the realm of international markets. Consequently, it is imperative to comprehend the interplay between management commitment and relationship marketing practices in order to optimize export performance.

Furthermore, it is crucial to examine the ramifications of cultural disparities on the dynamics of relationship marketing in international settings. The investigation conducted by (Xie, Reddy, & Liang, 2017) elucidates that cultural variables can significantly affect trust levels between partners, thereby influencing their propensity to engage in enduring commitments. Enterprises must adeptly navigate these cultural intricacies to forge effective relationships that bolster their export capabilities. This complexity accentuates the necessity

of customizing relationship marketing strategies to align with the diverse environments of various markets.

This research aspires to deepen our comprehension of how commitment to relationship marketing can profoundly impact export performance. By scrutinizing this pivotal variable within the framework of international business, we intend to devise a model that exporters can employ to fortify their relationships with partners and enhance their overall performance in global markets. As firms confront the intricacies of international trade, acknowledging the significance of relational dynamics will be vital for attaining competitive advantages and fostering long-term success.

METHOD

This research utilized a quantitative approach to explore the interconnections between relationship marketing, export commitment, and export performance in exporting entities. A sample of 177 participants was chosen through stratified random sampling to ensure diversity across different industries and firm sizes.

Data were gathered through structured questionnaires disseminated online to key decision-makers in the participating firms. The questionnaire aimed to evaluate three primary constructs: Relationship Marketing, Export Commitment, and Export Performance, using multiple indicators derived from established scales in prior research.

For the analysis, Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to examine the proposed relationships and assess the structural model. The analysis was performed using SmartPLS version 4.0 software, facilitating the evaluation of both measurement and structural models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Convergent Validity

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test

Indicator	Outer loading	AVE	Result
EC.1	0,742	0,630	Valid
EC.2	0,838		
EC.3	0,799		
EP.1	0,760	0,631	
EP.2	0,801		
EP.3	0,821		
RM.1	0,793	0,632	Valid
RM.2	0,795		
RM.3	0,797		

Source: Output data from SmartPLS version 4.0 (Processed)

Convergent validity testing in Table 1 shows that all indicators have outer loading values above 0.7, and AVE values for all variables above 0.5. This indicates that the indicators are valid in explaining their respective latent variables. For example, the outer loading values for the EC indicator range from 0.742 to 0.838 with an AVE of 0.630, while the RM indicator has an outer loading value between 0.793 to 0.797 with an AVE of 0.632. Thus, all indicators can be considered to meet the convergent validity criteria.

Reliability Test

Table 2. Composite reliability & Cronbach's alpha

Variables	Composite reliability	Croncach' alpha	Information
EC	0,727	0,711	Reliable
EP	0,709	0,707	
RM	0,711	0,709	

Source: Output data from SmartPLS version 4.0 (Processed)

All variables show Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7, indicating that the model has good internal consistency. Variables such as EC, EP, and RM each have quite high reliability values, so it can be concluded that all constructs in this study are reliable.

Inner Model

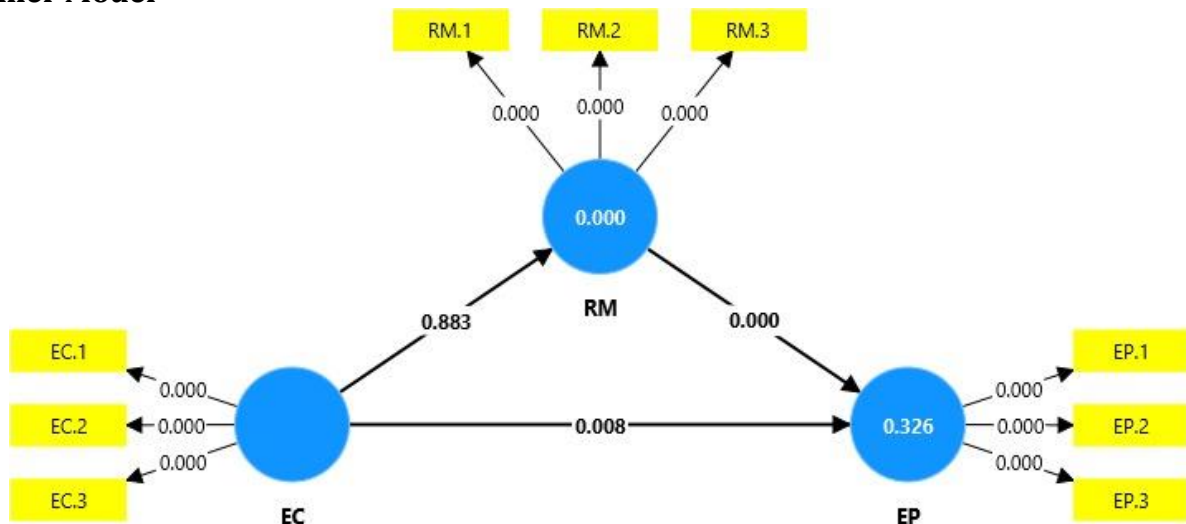


Figure 1. Structural Model

The image in Figure 1 also shows the structural relationship between variables, with connecting lines indicating the direction and strength of the relationship based on the path coefficient values. These results provide a visual representation of the contribution of each variable in the research model.

R-square

Table 3. R-square

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
EP	0,326	0,318
RM	0,000	-0,006

Source: Output data from SmartPLS version 4.0 (Processed)

Table 3 shows that the Export Performance variable has an R-square value of 0.326. This means that the independent variables in the model can explain about 32.6% of the variation in EP, while the rest is explained by other factors outside the model. In contrast, the Relationship Marketing variable has an R-square value of 0.000, indicating that RM is not explained by other variables in this model.

Mediation Test

Table 4. Path Coeffien

Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P value
EC -> EP	0,179	0,184	0,067	2,658	0,008
EC -> RM	0,014	0,028	0,097	0,148	0,883
RM -> EP	0,540	0,546	0,062	8,710	0,000

Source: Output data from SmartPLS version 4.0 (Processed)

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P value
EC -> RM -> EP	0,008	0,016	0,054	0,143	0,886

Source: Output data from SmartPLS version 4.0 (Processed)

In the direct relationship test Table 4, it was found that export commitment has a significant positive effect on export performance, while the effect of EC on relationship marketing is not significant. In addition, relationship marketing has a significant positive effect on export performance. However, the mediation effect test Table 5 shows that RM does not mediate the relationship between EC and EP, because the significance value does not meet the criteria (P-value > 0.05).

Hypothesis Test

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Analysis
EC -> EP	Coeffisien = 0,179
	P value = 0,008
	T statistics = 2,658
	T-tabel = 1,653
	T statistics > T-tabel
EC -> RM	Coeffisien = 0,014
	P value = 0,883
	T statistics = 0,148
	T-tabel = 1,653
	T statistics < T-tabel
RM -> EP	Coeffisien = 0,540
	P value = 0,000
	T statistics = 8,710
	T-tabel = 1,653
	T statistics > T-tabel

Source: Output data from SmartPLS version 4.0 (Processed)

The results of the hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 6. The relationship between EC and EP is significant, indicating that export commitment directly contributes to improving export performance. In contrast, the relationship between EC and RM is not

significant, indicating that export commitment does not affect relationship marketing. Meanwhile, the relationship between RM and EP is significant, indicating that relationship marketing plays an important role in driving export performance.

DISCUSSION

Research results indicate a significant positive correlation between relationship marketing commitment and export performance, particularly within small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This finding aligns with theoretical perspectives that emphasize the importance of relational dynamics in enhancing business outcomes. For instance, Morgan's (1994) commitment-trust theory posits that strong relational commitments can lead to improved performance metrics such as customer retention and satisfaction. However, while the current study confirms that export commitment positively influences export performance, it also reveals that this commitment does not significantly affect relationship marketing practices, as indicated by a p-value of 0.883. This suggests a complex interplay where firms may be committed to their export initiatives without necessarily translating that commitment into effective relational marketing strategies.

Previous research has established critical mediators in this relationship. For example, Jamil et al. (2021) highlighted trust as a partial mediator between relationship marketing practices and export performance in Pakistan's garment industry. This is consistent with findings from other studies that underscore the significance of communication and collaboration among partners as essential for successful international trade. The current research builds on these insights by demonstrating that effective communication and shared objectives are pivotal in enhancing collaborative efforts in global markets.

Empirical investigations further elucidate the dimensions of relationship marketing, revealing that trust, communication, and cooperation significantly impact export performance. The study indicates that while management commitment is crucial for fostering these relationships, it is equally important to navigate cultural differences that can affect trust levels between partners. Such cultural dynamics necessitate tailored relationship marketing strategies to align with diverse market environments.

Despite the significant findings regarding export commitment's positive effect on export performance, the lack of significance in the relationship between export commitment and relationship marketing raises important considerations. This disconnect may imply that organizations can be dedicated to their export activities without effectively engaging in relationship marketing strategies. The absence of a mediating effect of relationship marketing on the export commitment-export performance link suggests that firms should not solely rely on relational dynamics to enhance their international trade outcomes.

The discussion highlights the multifaceted nature of relationship marketing commitment and its influence on export performance while acknowledging the limitations posed by insignificant results. It emphasizes the need for firms to strategically leverage relational dynamics while balancing innovation and adaptability in their international endeavors. Future research should continue to explore these relationships across various industries and cultural contexts to deepen our understanding of how effective relationship marketing can enhance export performance while addressing the complexities introduced by non-significant findings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the critical influence of relationship marketing commitment on export performance among SMEs operating in global markets. By examining the interplay between relational dynamics and export success, the study contributes valuable insights into how firms can strategically leverage relationship marketing to optimize their international trade outcomes. As globalization continues to reshape business landscapes, recognizing the importance of relational dynamics will be essential for achieving competitive advantages and driving long-term success in international markets. Future research should further explore the complexities of these relationships across different industries and cultural contexts to develop a more nuanced understanding of how firms can enhance their export performance through effective relationship marketing strategies.

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