

**SME Management Consulting Firms
Internationalising in a Turbulent Business
Environment: A Dynamic Capability
Perspective from Developed and
Emerging Economies**

Enitan Okusaga

**Kingston Business School,
Faculty of Business and Law
Kingston University**

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Law in candidacy for the degree of**

Doctor of Business Administration

ABSTRACT

This study draws on the dynamic capabilities view to investigate how SMEs management consulting firms', in a turbulent international marketplace successful grow. SMEs shows that the processes of successful international growth, the act of gaining and sustaining competitive operations have often failed, especially in a turbulent business landscape. Through a qualitative case study, we argue that international growth success depends on subtle and continual orchestration of key interrelated internal and external factors. Factors such as the environment, continual reconfiguration of the firm assets pool (resources, processes and structures) and the constant alignment of the business model and strategic options are key determinants of successful international growth. We use the dynamic capabilities approach to discuss and to explain the importance of these determinates and how they contribute to successful SMEs international growth in a turbulent business environment across both developed and emerging economies.

A generalised framework has been proposed as an outcome, which might act as a point of reference for SMEs owner/managers of management consulting firm considering international growth. The study provides useful practical implications for both UK and Nigeria SMEs management consulting firms currently seeking international growth opportunities. The study contributes to the literature in the field of SMEs international growth, strategic management and turbulent business environments concerned dynamic capabilities with SME management consulting firm internationalisation in a turbulent business environment highlighting the main factors that should be considered.

Keywords: small to medium-sized enterprise (SME), internationalisation, service sector, management consulting, dynamic capabilities and critical success factor (CSF).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIB	Academy for International Business
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CEDAR	Centre for Enterprise Development and Research
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSF	Critical Success Factor
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HR	Human Resources
ICSB	International Council for Small Business
ICT	Information Communications Technology
INV	International New Ventures
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ISBE	International Small Business and Enterprise
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information Technologies
KIF	Knowledge-Intensive Firm
MBA	Master's of Business Administration
MD	Managing Director
MNE	Multi-National Enterprise
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OLI	Ownership (O), Location (L) and Internalization (I) advantages
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PSF	Professional Service Firm
RBV	Resource-Based View
R&D	Research and Development
RESER	European Association for Research on Services
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SNA	Social Network Analysis
UK	United Kingdom
UKTI	United Kingdom Trade and Investment
USA	United States of America
VAT	Value Added Tax
VP	Vice President

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1 INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter aimed to introduce the study, state the research problem, the research objectives and explain the study's implementation approach, demarcate and outline the scope of the study, define the research limitations. This is followed by an introduction to the study and an explanation of the background and experiences of the researcher. The context of the study, viz. Small and Medium Sizes (SMEs) internationalising in a turbulent business environment, the lack of optimal international approach within the SMEs management consulting business sector. From this business and management problem emerged the research problem, emerged the purpose of the study, and the research objectives of the study.

The chapter then explores the basics of operating in a turbulent international markets environment where particular strategic positions are rapidly eroded, and strategic planning can quickly become irrelevant. The importance of dynamic capabilities within management consulting sector was outlined since the global economy has become more open and the sources of innovation are more geographically diverse, and the need for multiple innovations to be combined to achieve marketplace success has become important.

Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

1.2 Research Foundation

Previous research has shown that SMEs are operating in a highly dynamic and turbulent business environment (Coviello, 2018; Coviello & Martin, 2018; Pekkola, Saunila, Rantanen, 2016). Also, past research conclusively proves that internationalisation provides a multitude of benefits for SMEs including better survival prospects, increased revenue and growth, better innovative capability and improved productivity (Wu & Deng, 2020; Aslan, 2017; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015; Kelley, Lee & Lee, 2012). However, with an increase in environmental turbulent, firms are facing more and more difficulties in identifying and exploiting appropriate business strategies (North & Varvakis, 2018; Heirati, O'Cass, Schoefer, & Siahtiri, 2016). Since, the act of gaining and sustaining competitive operations in highly turbulent business environments has become more demanding and challenging (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016). To compete, survive and grow, firms must be able to anticipate, respond and adapt to the changing business environment, satisfy different stakeholders and explore all possible performance dimensions (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Wernerfelt, 2016). Achieving a good fit requires that the firm can continually assess its internal structures, change its processes, have a dynamic business strategy and continually evaluating the importance of exogenous events (Doorn, Heyden & Volberda, 2017; Schmitt, Raisch, Volberda, 2016; Heirati et al., 2016; Wernerfelt, 2016; Albert, Kreutzer & Lechner, 2015).

The existing literature in the field of strategic management, service operation entrepreneurship and internalisation has emphasised the importance of firm resources for the successful implementation of strategies; yet, little is known about how a firm can align its resource choice and operations decisions in the value chain (Doorn et al., 2017; Winter, 2017; Amit & Han, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Schmitt et al., 2016). The challenge of predicting the changes occurring in the market required information which may not always be readily available; even if the information is available, it may not be reliable for decision making due to the passage of time (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016). Furthermore, managerial decisions in SMEs are highly influenced by the external environment, specifically from clients and the competition (Coviello, 2018; Autio, 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016). In addition, in highly turbulent business environments, there is a need to consider a greater number of factors in managerial decision making (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016; Heirati et al., 2016; Albert et al., 2015).

The higher the environmental uncertainty the less easy it is for businesses to forecast and plan for the future (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016; Heirati et al., 2016; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). Therefore, the act of gaining and sustaining competitive operations in highly turbulent business environments has become more demanding and challenging (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016; Heirati et al., 2016; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). In comparison to MNEs, SMEs are confronted with more threats than opportunities; even under a stable business environment, SMEs face challenges to the maintenance of their strategic position (Cavusgil & Knight,

2015). This might be since SMEs, in general, have limited access to resources, lack of resources to achieve economies of scale advantage or differentiation through market management (Martina, Javalgib & Cavusgil, 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016). This is in addition to time, money, information and human capital. Consequently, firm management is facing difficulties in gaining and sustaining competitive operations in highly turbulent business environments, in which traditional methods of planning appears to be less efficient (North & Varvakis, 2018).

Therefore, some of the methods found in the current literature may not sufficiently meet the requirements of a highly turbulent business environment (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016). One of the key important challenges is, the current literature in the field of strategic management, service operations and service internationalisation has given less importance to understanding how SMEs anticipate and respond to the changing business environment (Martina et al., 2017; Pratono, 2016). The traditional theories on how firms internationalise are challenged (Forsgren, 2002). The traditional internationalisation perspectives have paid less attention to smaller firms increasingly entering the global market, which is problematic since smaller firms are not *"smaller versions of big businesses ...Smaller businesses deal with unique size-related issues as well, and they behave differently in their analysis of, and interaction with the environment"* (Schuman & Seeger, 1986, cited in Coviello & McAuley, 1999, p. 228). However, accelerating globalisation continues to create a new and fierce dynamic business environment, driving the internationalisation of not only large but to a higher extent, also smaller firms (Knight & Liesch, 2016;

Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Gjellerup, 2000). This rapid globalisation of the world economy has therefore increased the chances for marketing services across national broader in recent decades (Omrani et al., 2019; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Elia, Margherita & Petti, 2016).

According to Elia et al., (2016) and Axinn and Matthyssens (2002), the development of an almost unlimited global economy has been encouraged foremost by the growth of low-cost technology, reduced trade barriers and the opening up of formerly closed markets (Bagheri, Mitchelmore & Bamiatzi, 2019; Ahmad, Abu Bakar & Ahmad, 2019; North & Varvakis, 2018). Similarly, with the speed of globalisation hastened by the advancement in technology, service firms and, in particular service SMEs, are finding lower entry barriers, making it easier to internationalise (Bagheri et al., 2019; Pekkola et al., 2016; Elia et al., 2016; Netland & Alfnes, 2007). Consequently, the growth of the service sector can be observed both in the developed and emerging economies (Ball, Lindsay, & Rose, 2008; Javalgi, Griffith, & White, 2003). Despite the growing importance of the service sector, internationalisation remains an elusive and largely invisible business area (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Javalgi & Martin, 2007). Academic literature to date has not kept up, with the pace in reflecting the increasing significance of the service sector, and some authors have noted the need for further research on internationalised SMEs service firms (Javalgib & Cavusgil, 2017; Pekkola et al., 2016; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Brouthers & Brouthers, 2003; Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2003).

The extant literature review indicates that growth in all service categories has been observed in both emerging and developed economies (WTO, 2007a, 2017; Javalgi et al., 2012; UNCTAD, 2007a). One of the sub-sectors of the services industry that are becoming increasingly more internationally focused is the professional service sector to which management consulting firm belongs. According to the UNCTAD report on professional services trade (UNCTAD, 2005, 2007); professional services are one of the fastest-growing sectors in world economies, experiencing double-digit growth. In developed economies, the fastest growing sector in knowledge-based services (e.g., management consulting, engineering, architectural, education, information technology, biotechnology), which has grown at an average annual rate of 10% to 12% over several years (Styles, Patterson, & La, 2005). Also, the 2017 World Trade Report indicates that growth in services has averaged approximately 10% per year. Despite the rise in importance of services and knowledge-based services, there is limited research on factors that drive export success in this sector (WTO, 2017; Ruzzier et al., 2006; Knight, 1999, 2000, 2015).

A review of extant literature indicates that previous research on service internationalisation has focused on the choice of service entry mode and the level of foreign direct investment (FDI) (Knight, 2000, 2015), with a lack of attention to SMEs professional service firms. The majority of prior research examining SMEs has been non-random case studies (Bilkey & Tesar, 1977; McDougall & Oviatt, 1996; Boter & Holmquist, 1996) with a focus on exporting of manufacturing firms which may limit the applicability of previous research to professional service firms (Brouthers & Brouthers,

2003; Coviello & McAuley, 1999). The underrepresentation of research on SMEs management consulting firm and the focus on manufacturing in the past is perhaps partly due to the lower numbers of SMEs management consulting firm within the service sector internationalising compared to manufacturing, but also perhaps due, to the difficulty of intangibility inherent with services.

Additionally, research also suggests that internationalisation varies within service categories (Styles, Patterson, & La, 2005); differences exist in the ease and pace of service internationalisation (Javalgi, Griffith, & White, 2003; Lovelock & Yip, 1996; Patterson & Cicic, 1995). Although studies of international services exist, research on SMEs management consulting internationalisation is virtually non-existent. The lack of professional services SMEs research is notable considering the reported contribution of professional services to worldwide employment, production, and trade (WTO, 2007b 2017; UNCTAD, 2007b). Consequently, it has been inferred that there is insufficient knowledge on the internationalisation of small firms (Pekkola et al., 2016; Bilkey & Tesar, 1977) since the typical unit of analysis has been large multinational firms (Westhead & Wright, 2001).

Furthermore, a review of international services marketing literature by (Gherhes et al., 2016; Cicic, Patterson, & Shoham, 2002) finds the amount of empirical research conducted in services is strikingly limited and gaps remain in the examination of the antecedents to service internationalisation and performance (Costa, Soares & de Sousa, 2016; Hutchinson, Alexander, Quinn, & Doherty, 2007). Also, Ruzzier et al., (2006)

also contend that the absence of SME service research in internationalisation studies has been striking. This point was echoed in the previous study by Knight (2015) which states that the gaps in extant service literature are "*very considerable.*" The limited amount of service literature indicates that service internationalisation may be a function of several key factors: (1) the intensity of human involvement or customer contact in the service and the corresponding labour intensity, (2) the extent of customisation and cultural adaptation, and (3) the degree of tangibility (Knight, 1999, 2015). Thus, little is known about service internationalisation among service sectors and factors contributing to global expansion.

Extent literature also stated that international service research over the decade has largely focused on specific industries and MNEs. Almost all of the empirical research on SME firms internationalisation has focused on the manufacturing industry with a few studies conducted in services (Coviello, 2018) and service firm internationalisations tended to be sector-specific, such as; architecture (Masurel, 2001), business services (O'Farrell et al., 1998; Bryson et al., 1993), computer software (Bell, 1995, Coviello et al., 1999), engineering consultancy (Coviello et al., 1998, Coviello & Martin, 1999), and retailing (Hutchinson et al., 2007).

Thus, understanding how events related to dynamic capabilities take place and how it helps to create a complete picture of dynamic capabilities (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Helfat et al., 2007). It is augured that there is a lack of frameworks to support continual strategic planning, frequent assessing implementation approaches and monitoring among

SMEs. This indicates that internationalisation requires a dynamic decision support system to help owner/managers and decision-makers in making strategic decisions on a rolling basis. With this line of reasoning, this study, therefore, argued that better alignment between resource choice, strategic planning, operations decisions and competitive priorities underpinned by a dynamic capability is the key to successful SMEs management consulting firm internationalisation approach in a highly turbulent business environment.

1.2.1 **Background of the Study**

The current literature in the field of operations and strategic management has given less importance to understanding how SMEs anticipate and respond to the changing in a complexities and uncertainties business environment. The fact that SMEs can be international players is particularly evident across both the developed and emerging economies (Gherhes, Williams, Vorley & Vasconcelos, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). When examining countries, such as Nigeria and the UK that have a long international trading history. Particularly, with the UK that have technologically oriented products, active domestic competition, organised firm financial support systems, the willingness and ability to expand internationally, and low barriers for transcending country borders. This study focuses on how SMEs succeeds internationally across both the developed and emerging economy where SMEs significantly contributes to gross domestic products (GDP) (World Bank, 2017; PwC, 2016 Rhodes, 2016; the UK, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2012). To allow for comparison, this study

focuses particularly on how SMEs management consulting firms across both the developed and emerging economy succeed in their international growth journey.

The greater the complexities and uncertainties in the business environment, the higher the level of environmental turbulence experienced by a firm. How far the business landscape of firms can be explained only by environmental influence or internal adaptation or combinations of both is still a matter of debate. The dynamic capability of a firm is rapidly emerging as a primary model of competitive advantage that is explicitly focused on conditions of environmental change (Teece, 2009, 2018; Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013) and as a strategic tool in terms of firm management (Zollo, Bettinazzi, Neumann & Snoeren, 2016; Barreto, 2010; Helfat et al., 2007; Lopez, 2005). Scholars have stated that for firms facing a rapidly changing environment, the strengthening of their dynamic capabilities is a key concern. (Helfat and Winter, 2011; Pavlou and El Sawy, 2011).

The study specifically concentrates on how the SME firms recombined their capabilities in the area of opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration to grow successfully in a turbulent internationally. The study further scrutinised the role of dynamic capabilities and strategic adaptation as strategic tools of the highest order in terms of firm management and strengthening capabilities in a turbulent international growth. Dynamic capabilities are described as the processes required to reconfigure existing resources into new functional competencies.

Rapidly changing clients demands continues to generate more complexities and uncertainties in an already turbulent international business environment, especially within the SMEs service sector. Hence, the importance of dynamic capabilities within the management consulting sector has increased. In addition to rapidly changing clients demands, the global economy has become more open and the sources of innovation are more diverse, geographically and organisationally (Aslan, 2017; Teece, 2009, 2017; Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016), and multiple innovations have to be combined to achieve marketplace success (Teece, 2009, 2014, 2018; Somaya & Teece, 2007). Consequently, firms that can anticipate and react to the changes emerging in their environment have better opportunities to grow and to be profitable than do their slower rivals (Gherhes et al., 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). Dynamic capabilities are an example of an approach that lacks empirical studies in the SME management consulting firm context.

Studies focusing on SMEs have become increasingly popular in international business studies in the last couple of decades. However, SME internationalisation research to date has largely focussed on the manufacturing sector and research on the internationalisation of service industry firms is rather scarce (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Pla-Barber & Ghauri, 2012; Pla-Barber, Sanchez, & Madhock, 2010). Also, because each SME firm is unique, new findings seem to emerge more or less continuously (Gankema et al., 2000; Rao & Naidu, 1992). This study takes the view that these new findings, aside from broadening the research base, also arguably

create room for new studies by combining existing findings and approaches from both developed and emerging economies.

Consequently, there are significant gaps in SMEs research on service firms internationalisation in a turbulent environment, and in particular SMEs management consulting firm and to the author's knowledge, none that focuses specifically on dynamic capabilities interplay when engaging in constantly changing international activities. This study, therefore, aims to address this research gaps by examining how SMEs management consulting firm in the service sector successfully internationalisation in a turbulent international environment, analysing the roles of dynamic capabilities interplay in the international growth process. It is in this context that the study is grounded. This study, therefore, provides fresh insights by studying the phenomenon of service SMEs international growth across the developed and emerging economy, through the dynamic capabilities approach. The main emphasis of the study is on the application of dynamic capabilities, the processes underlying them and successfully internationalisation. SME management consulting firms experiencing international growth both in the developed and emerging market are a suitable target group for studying dynamic capabilities because this is an under-researched area and international growth demonstrates that these SMEs contribute significantly to the country's GDP.

Finally, this study focusses on understanding how dynamic capabilities contribute to and constitutes critical success factors (CSFs) within this context of SME successful international growth. It is argued that the greater

the complexities and uncertainties in the business environment, the higher the level of environmental turbulent experienced by a firm (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn, Heyden & Volberda, 2017; Pratono, 2016). Therefore, international growth strategy, management of the firm change processes and continually evaluating the importance of exogenous events is not just a phenomenon that applies to MNEs alone.

1.2.2 Research Problem

In a fast-changing turbulent international business landscape, the higher the environmental uncertainty the less easy it is for businesses especially SMEs to forecast and plan for the future. Hence, the act of gaining and sustaining competitive operations in highly turbulent business environments has become more demanding and challenging. The general business problem is there is a high failure rate of new small business operating in turbulent international business environments in their first 3 years of operation. The specific business problem is that some new small business owners lack business strategies to sustain their businesses beyond the first 3 years of operation.

Therefore, to be successful in turbulent international business environments, a firm needs to continuously keep pace with changing business environments, adopt a fixable business strategy and maintain the streamlined resource. To this effect, there is a consensus amongst business practitioners and academic researchers that there is a need for a better understanding of optimal strategies that enable successful and sustainable strategy particularly when a new small firm is embarking on international

expansion in a turbulent business environment (Teece, 2018; Mazzei et al., 2017; Gherhes et al., 2016; Zucchella & Magnani, 2016).

Service firms are internationalising more rapidly than before, but in the process, they often rely on relevant studies within the manufacturing sector (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Costa et al., 2016; Javalgi & Martin, 2007; Axinn & Matthysens, 2002). Javalgi and Martin (2007) stated that there is an evident need to develop a comprehensive understanding of the strategic issues that influence the internationalisation of service firms. This study agrees with the view according to Javalgi and Martin (2007) that literature about internationalisation in the service sector is a relatively new field in terms of building and testing theories.

1.2.3 Research Questions

To sustain competitive operations, a firm first to be competitive (Amit & Han, 2017; Child, Hsieh, Elbanna, Karmowska, Marinova, Puthusserry, Tsai, Narooz, Zhang, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Chandler & Hwang, 2015; Child, 1972). To be competitive, a firm needs to continuously streamline its resource choice, and operations decisions with the pace of change in business environments (Schilke, Hu, Helfat, 2018; Teece, 2018; Peteraf & Leih, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). However, gaining and sustaining competitive operations in changing business environments depends on the firm's ability to formulate strategic plans and policies, align resource choice and operations decisions in the value chain, and make appropriate choices for its competitive priorities (North & Varvakis, 2018; Teece, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Albert et al., 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013). The basic idea is to

create superior value from the firm resources and capabilities. Therefore, this study focuses on the impact of dynamic capability on firm performance and tries to explore the basis on which a firm can gain and sustain competitive operations in changing turbulent international business environments. On a more specific note, this study seeks to address the following questions:

1. How do small to medium-sized management consulting firm achieve success in an international turbulent business environment?
2. How are resources adapted to gain and sustain competitive advantage in an international turbulent business environment?
3. How are their strategies adopted and integrated into an international turbulent business environment?
4. What constitutes dynamic capabilities, how is it identified in theory and recognised in practice in the context of SMEs?

1.2.4 The Purpose Aim and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how SME management consulting firms successfully achieve international growth in a highly turbulent business environment and to explore the roles of dynamic capabilities and business strategies in the processes. Therefore, this study focuses on the impact of dynamic capabilities in enabling successful business strategies in a turbulent business environment. Thus, exploring the basis on which a

firm can gain and sustain competitive international operations in changing business environments.

The aims are:

- To advance knowledge and narrows the gap on the SME management consulting firm international growth in a turbulent business environment both in the developed and emerging economies and contributes to knowledge on how SME management consulting firms successfully internationalise.
- To better understand the internal and external operating environment that allows SMEs to meet the success expectations of different stakeholders and extend firm longevity.
- To understand, compare and contrast the operations of SMEs firms operating in the developed and emerging economy for operational variations.
- Expand the knowledge pool on managing the internal and external operating environment faced by SMEs management consulting firms international growth.

The objectives are:

1. To recognise critical events and to analyse which of these had a decisive impact on the study of international growth.
2. To identify the interplay of dynamic capabilities in the context of the international growth of SMEs.

3. To show examples of dynamic capabilities interplay that successfully contributed to the international growth of the SMEs studied.

The logic that will be followed in this study is grounded in (Helfat, 2007, p. 2) who suggest that the transformation of an organisation through additions, deletions, or modifications to its resource base entails processes for achieving these changes. It is not enough that we know what organisations do - which markets they enter, which products or services they introduce, how fast they grow, which firms they acquire and so on - we must also know how they do it. Thus, understanding how events related to dynamic capabilities take place can help us create a complete picture of dynamic capabilities (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Helfat, 2007). It is assumed that international growth brings more dynamics or turbulent to SMEs' business.

Therefore, this study focuses on the international growth approach of SMEs mainly from the aligning resource choice and operations decisions in the value chain; suggesting firms often need to adopt multi-focus strategies and lastly firms need to focus continually on both internal and external influences exert pressure on strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring. The results of this study are not only of interest for managers and decision-makers but also for future researchers who wish to delve further into the field of dynamic capabilities interplay internationalisation process.

1.2.5 Justification for the Study

The study is important on several theoretical, experimental and practical grounds. These are touched on throughout the thesis and the implications of the findings for both policy and practice are examined in some detail in section 8.2.

Thus, the justification of this study is based on: firstly, to understand how successful SMEs entrepreneur managers gain and sustain performance in international turbulent business environments; secondly, to enable SMEs management consulting firms initiate, influence their present actions and identify better competitive priorities when embarking on international growth in turbulent international business environments; thirdly to present a framework for SMEs management consulting firms on aligning resource choice and operations decisions during international growth, which can significantly improve decision making.

The focus on service SMEs is justified since, services represent the dominant economic sector, in terms of employment, for many emerging markets and most developed economies (World Bank, 2014, 2017). Service sector firms represent the largest share of global foreign direct investment (FDI) flows accounting to 65% of world inward FDI stock in 2016 (UNCTAD, 2017). Management consulting firm has been specifically chosen for their sector-specific characteristics as well as the significant involvement of the researcher in this field. Management consulting firm, by their nature, necessitates high customer interaction, communication and cultural awareness. The UK and Nigeria were specifically chosen as both have

significant numbers of management consulting firm. Nigeria has the second-largest consulting market in Africa, the largest been South Africa (World Bank, 2017; PwC, 2016). According to the UK Management Consultancies Association, the UK consulting market is the largest outside the USA. Furthermore, the UK consulting industry revenues for 2016 were estimated at £5.5bn (MCA, 2016).

1.2.6 Significance of the Study for UK SMEs

The UK is a developed economy an estimated 5.5 million private-sector enterprises at the start of 2016, these enterprises employed an estimated 23.9 million people, and had an estimated combined annual turnover of £3,100 billion (Rhodes, 2016). SMEs together accounted for 99.9 per cent of all enterprises, 59.1 per cent of private-sector employment and 48.8 per cent of private sector turnover. In 2016, SMEs accounted for an estimated at £1,589 billion turnovers in UK economic activities (Rhodes, 2016). Almost all of these businesses (99.2 per cent) were small (0 to 49 employees). Only 30,000 (0.6 per cent) were medium-sized (50 to 249 employees) and 6,000 (0.1 per cent) were large (250 or more employees). These percentages have remained fairly stable since 2000 (Rhodes, 2016; the UK, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2012).

In the UK the manufacturing sector accounted for 5% of businesses, 10% of employment and 15% of turnover. Whereas, the service industries accounted for 74% of businesses, 79% of employment and 72% of turnover (House of Commons, 2016). Furthermore, the service sector is inherently different from the manufacturing sector (WTO; 2017; Ruzzier, Hisrich &

Antoncic, 2006; Brouthers & Brouthers, 2003; Knight, 1999, 2015; Coviello & McAuley, 1999). Whilst, services have gained importance in world economies (WTO, 2007b, 2017), in comparison researches on service internationalisation is limited (Pla-Barber et al., 2010; Knight, 2000, 2015; Javalgi et al., 2003).

Effective decision making is dependent upon the informed decision-making ability of an entrepreneurial and their management team to be successful in a turbulent international environment. Findings from this study may provide SMEs business entrepreneurial with a better understanding of the activities that go into business strategies that can contribute to the survival of a new small business. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by improving the survival rate of SMEs, which may help improve the U.K. economy through increased tax revenue and job creation.

1.2.7 Significance of the Study for Nigerian SMEs

Nigeria is an emerging economy with a population of more than 180 million people and has the largest market in Africa (World Bank, 2017; PwC, 2016). According to PwC, the Nigerian economy is expected to be in the top 10 in the world in 2050 with a projected GDP of \$6.4 trillion (World Bank, 2017; PwC, 2016). According to Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), an agency of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the total estimated number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as at 2016 stood at 37.1 million (NBS, 2016). The total number of people employed by the MSME sector as of 2016 is 60 million representing 84.02% of the total labour force in the country (NBS, 2016). In 2016, MSMEs

contribution to the Nation's GDP in nominal terms stood at 48.47%. Furthermore, Nigeria's services sector output ranks as the 63rd largest worldwide and 5th largest in Africa (World Bank, 2017) and the contribution of the services 54.6% to Nigeria GDP.

The data from this study may contribute to positive social change by educating entrepreneurial on strategies to sustain their business in the turbulent international marketplace. Positive social change may result if the new small business owner/manager can become a viable member of the local community by creating jobs, reducing unemployment, and increasing tax revenue.

1.2.8 Researcher's Background

The researcher is a practising change and technology management consultant with several years of multinational enterprises (MNEs) experience within the service sector. In recent time, the researcher has been significantly involved within the SME service sector, in particular, the management consulting sub-sector, assisting clients with strategic change activities including international growth. During this time the researcher had been wondering why some SME management consulting seem to achieve international growth success whereas others fail to do so. The researcher key questions to its clients are "Where do you want to go?" first, and then "How do you want to get there?" Perhaps not an 'academic' question, but the question reflects the realities of the researcher consulting engagements. These led to: "How can I assist my SME clients within the service sector, with limited resources, to engage in turbulent international

markets, since progressively more SMEs are attracted to international markets to expand?" in a turbulent international markets environment where particular strategic positions are rapidly eroded and strategic planning can quickly become irrelevant, so the traditional concept of strategic processes has become inadequate for better performance.

In these markets, it is impossible to predict which competencies or strategies will be successful and for how long. Therefore, traditional strategic approaches seemed inadequate in a turbulent business environment which causes firms to be less effective. Consequently, firms that can anticipate and react to the changes emerging in their environment have better opportunities to grow and to be profitable than do their slower rivals. The strategic priorities and resource utilisation of firms operating in a turbulent business environment must, therefore, enable firms to re-allocate available resources as priorities and demands continually changing. Firms operating within such business environment must be able to continuously adapt, innovate, and even change the firm to survive and thrive in evolving market conditions.

To this extent, an investigation of the practitioner literature was conducted and did not unearth appropriate existing approaches that seem to address the problem within the SME service sector. Consequently, an additional academic literature review was deemed necessary. The researcher found a fresh and interesting approach from the literature in dynamic capabilities. This approach seemed to be suitable for adapting to the context of international growth aspect of SMEs. During the pre-understanding phase,

the literature review and discussions with other postgraduate students showed that dynamic capabilities are often described in a very complex and abstract manner. The researcher soon decided that one of this study's targets would be to provide concrete examples of how dynamic capabilities interplay take place in 'real-life' and specifically in the international growth of SMEs management consulting firms operating in the developed and emerging economy.

1.3 Outline of the Dissertation

The study begins with a discussion of the previous literature, continues with methodological considerations. Chapter 1 introduces the background of the study as well as discussing the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 begins with a brief positioning of the study by introducing some findings from the previous literature. Next, the chapter describes the UK and Nigeria context from the perspective of the international growth of SMEs. However, the chapter's main emphasis is on the concept of dynamic capabilities. First, the chapter introduces several definitions for the term and explains the classification of dynamic capabilities used in the study. Then the processes selected for study in this research (opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration) are discussed in more detail.

Chapter 3 developed conceptual formwork which is based on findings from the literature. In the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), the focus lies on the philosophical underpinnings of the study and on more operational issues,

such as introducing the advancement of research and case-selection processes, as well as introducing data-collection and data-analysis methods and finally it describes the study's plan by identifying the proposed time scales for completion of the current research study. Chapter 5 describes the analysis of the empirical data collected by the methodological process laid out in Chapter 4 by explaining how SMEs in the management consulting firm internationalise. An overview of the four case studies established and a within-case analysis is performed followed by a cross-case analysis to explain critical success factors and the interplay of dynamic capabilities.

Chapter 6 describes the findings of the study by discussing certain critical events behind the international growth of the management consultant SMEs in this study. The chapter is laid out as follows: the first section introduced the findings. The second section outlined critical success as identified from the empirical findings. The final section discussed how the interplay of dynamic capabilities influenced success. The chapter 7, the summarises the empirical findings of the study. Outlined the managerial and policies implication of the study by providing useful practical implications for UK SMEs management consulting firms currently seeking international growth opportunities in turbulent markets. The next section outlining the contribution of the study to knowledge development. This is followed by the study's limitation and finally future study opportunities.

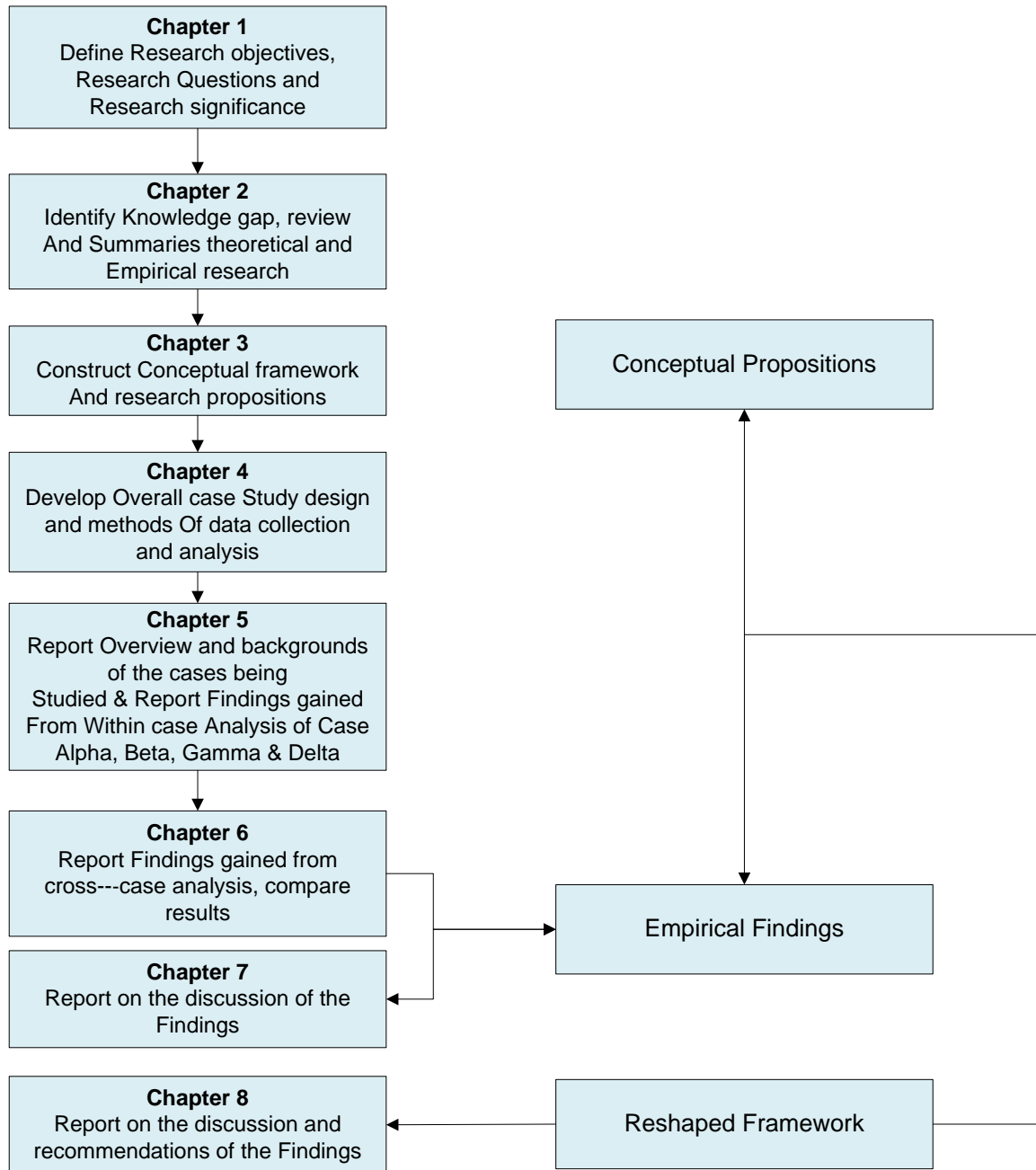


Figure 1 - Positioning of the study

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter aimed to review the literature and to provide a theoretical background to the study. The literature review chapter commenced with literature review protocols and the chapter is split into three sections. The first section discusses the theoretical and empirical foundation of the study. This section primarily discusses the main antecedent theories and empirical studies on dynamic capabilities, SMEs, strategic management and international entrepreneurship to understand, explore and explain how and why certain firms can adapt in turbulent environments, while others do not. It is first necessary to consider the literature on each of these concepts, before proceeding to an examination of ancillary section. An examination of these concepts encompassing contemporary views and frameworks, together with an examination of underlying themes within those frameworks. This is to establish the main theoretical and empirical perspective on optimal business growth in a turbulent business environment. The limitations of existing research are then considered, followed by a review of recent developments within the literature, and the limitations which remain.

In the ancillary section, the scope of this review is then extended to address the topics of growth, internationalisation, Services on SMEs firms operating

in a turbulent business environment in general from the founding concepts.

The final section summary of the nexus between concepts across the research traditions thus integrating the fields of strategic management, entrepreneurship and SMEs were crucial in this study. This is followed by the direction research and study questions are positioned in the theory.

2.1.2 Literature Review Protocol

The theoretical information required for this study was obtained through a literature search using both hard copy and electronic media. The choice of literature databases searched was based on the level of appropriateness of the databases to the topics being reviewed. Validation by peer review, purpose, scope, authority and format formed the basis of the evaluation of the content of each source prior to the inclusion of these secondary and tertiary data sources in the literature review. Literature review followed the systematic process described by Macpherson and Jones (2010), Denyer and Tranfield (2008) and Webster and Watson (2002). A comprehensive database was established by selecting relevant articles in various steps with a keyword search from several literature databases, giving access to a broad spectrum of strategic management, international business, service, international entrepreneurship and business journals.

This includes EBSCO/Business Source Complete, Proquest/ABI Inform, and Science Direct for the string “(internationalisation, international entrepreneurship, services, SMEs, dynamic capabilities) AND management consultancy*” in title, abstract and keywords. This search resulted in about a thousand articles. Some relevant articles are invariably overlooked in

such a search while a lot of irrelevant articles were found. To overcome these shortcomings, a manual scan of the titles and abstracts of all volumes and issues of leading relevant internationalisation, international entrepreneurship, services, SMEs, dynamic capabilities and business journals was conducted. The process then reviewed the abstracts of all articles of literature base for relevance. The excluded articles were either not related to internationalisation, international entrepreneurship, SMEs, dynamic capabilities as defined.

Using this approach, the review begins to cross over from internationalisation management into international entrepreneurship, Services, SMEs, dynamic capabilities literature. The review aims to cover the two key domains (Table 1 - Literature Review Protocol) of SMEs internationalisation, service and dynamic capabilities and their intersection in terms of stream I, II and III respectively. Table 1 below details the databases referred to during this review. The first three with their comprehensive searching of a wide number of journals in the fields of interest were explored with Google Scholar used as a cross-check at the end. The table also details the keywords used to form the search string applied to the databases discussed.

	Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3
Databas e	Scopus	Scopus	Scopus
	ABI/INFORM (ProQuest)	ABI/INFORM (ProQuest)	ABI/INFORM (ProQuest)
	EBSCO (Business Source Premier)	EBSCO (Business Source Premier)	EBSCO (Business Source Premier)
	Google Scholar	Google	Google Scholar

	Scholar		
Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic management, internationalisation • entrepreneurship • Dynamic capabilities • Antecedent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services sector • Professional service • SMEs • Learning • Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services sector • Professional service • Dynamic capability* • SMEs • entrepreneurship
Search Strings	[internationalisation AND SMEs (Dynamic* OR Capabilit*)] AND [(marketing OR strategy OR Antecedent)]	[(performance) OR (design OR configure* OR structure)] AND [(Change OR uncertainty OR innovation OR learning)]	[internationalisation AND entrepreneurship (SMEs*)] AND [service OR Professional service) AND (Dynamic capabilities Antecedent AND)]

Table 1 - Literature Review Protocol

Having conducted the searches elaborated above, the papers extracted were evaluated. In the first round, this was limited to those published in the scholarly journals. Citation analysis was also used to identify the intellectual core of research on domains of focus on the assumption that citation counts are a valid measure of prominence and influence. This is a standard assumption for bibliometric analyses (Di Stefano et al., 2010). Finally, the quality appraisal in terms of their contribution, underlying theories and methodology are conducted. The review conducted has contributed to a better understanding of phenomena of interest, formulation of the research question, development of research conceptual framework and research design.

2.2 Theoretical and Empirical Foundation

This study crosses the boundaries of various fields of research traditions. The theoretical positioning of this study, therefore, lies at the intersection of four established research traditions that overlap in many respects: namely strategic management, dynamic capabilities, international entrepreneurship and SMEs. To be more specific, the focus is on dynamic capabilities. However, the dynamic capabilities approach alone is insufficient to form the theoretical frame for this study consequently other approaches are needed. Thus, supplementing the dynamic capability framework with insights gained from other research traditions allows for a more comprehensive picture of international SME management consulting firm across both developed and developing countries. A multidisciplinary study can often enhance scientific knowledge development by combining several different research traditions, studies and findings. This is particularly true in business studies and behavioural sciences, where the origins of the fields belong in other sciences (Winter, 2017; Nelson & Winter, 1982). The study draws from several different, albeit overlapping, research traditions. The theoretical approach starts with strategy as a separate concept followed by dynamic capabilities then entrepreneurship which is then followed by developing international entrepreneurship.

The need for an integrated approach is highlighted in previous studies on SME internationalisation; According to Coviello, (2018) and Coviello, & McAuley (1999) SME internationalisation is best understood through the integration of major theoretical frameworks because comparative approaches to the study of internationalisation are beneficial to the understanding of the overall concept (Knight & Liesch, 2016). Furthermore,

Costa et al., (2016) Etemad and Wright (2003) concur that SME behaviour, as a holistic process, cannot be explained fully by anyone existing theory and therefore insight must be drawn from various theoretical traditions.

Several scholars have contended that service international growth is too broad a concept to be defined exclusively by one theoretical framework (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Coviello & Martin; 2018; Knight & Liesch 2016). Etemad and Wright (1999, 2003) concur that SME behaviour, as a holistic process, cannot be explained fully by anyone existing theory and therefore insight must be drawn from various theoretical models (Costa et al., 2016). Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, (2015) and Coviello, McDougall, & Oviatt, (2011), clearly mentioned in their review article that internationalisation theories should be supported with “multi-theoretical perspectives”. Autio (2005) called for an “integrated explanation” and Mathews and Zander (2007) called for “careful consideration of existing theories and variables and integrate them”. It is further supported by literature that SME internationalisation is best understood through the integration of major theoretical frameworks because comparative approaches to the study of internationalisation are beneficial to the understanding of the overall concept (Knight & Liesch, 2016).

Dynamic capabilities are concerns on how organisations emerge, develop, grow, change, decline and rejuvenate over time and thus drawing from a range of theoretical perspectives to understand a firm’s growth and survival is imperative (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Wernerfelt, 2016; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat, 2007). A multi-theoretical perspective is further supported by dynamic capabilities framework which is positioned as an integrative framework that partly

draws from insights of some of the theoretical perspectives as outlined above while simultaneously integrating new facets into the consideration (Teece, 2014, 2017, 2018; Barney, 1991, 2017; Winter, 2017; Teece et al., 2016; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Teece et al., 1997; Nelson & Winter, 1982).

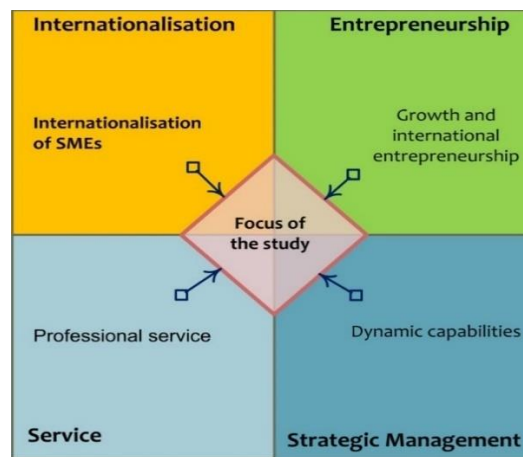


Figure 2 - Positioning of the study

International entrepreneurship, strategic management, dynamic capabilities and growth all interconnect with strategic decisions of the firm's management. Therefore, integrating the fields of strategic management, international entrepreneurship, firm growth and services were crucial in this study. Since no single theory was able to provide an extensive understanding of the complex role of SMEs operating in a turbulent international business landscape, dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurship and international growth of firms.

For example, whereas international business studies have to a certain extent neglected to examine growth in small firms, it is a well-researched area in the context of entrepreneurship (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Liesch, Hakanson, McGaughey, Middleton, & Cretchley,

2011). The roots of dynamic capabilities are based on evolutionary economics (Winter, 2017; Nelson & Winter, 1982) whereas internationalisation studies, for example, often refer to the behavioural theory in firms (Cyert & March, 1963). Furthermore, dynamic capabilities studies also often refer to the behavioural theory in firms (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Teece, Peteraf & Leih 2016; Teece, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2017; Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). This underlines the need to study the phenomenon by combining several research traditions. According to Augier (2009) and Teece (2017), the dynamic capabilities framework borrows some insights from the behavioural theory of the firm, transaction cost theory, and evolutionary theory. In the following sub-sections, the theories utilised in this study are introduced in light of previous research.

2.2.1 Dynamic Capabilities Perspectives

According to literature, the dynamic capabilities framework provides a powerful lens for studying strategic change in firms (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Zollo et al., 2016; Peteraf et al., 2013; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Barreto, 2010). Dynamic capabilities describe a firm's capacity (i) to sense and shape opportunities and threats, (ii) to seize opportunities, and (iii) to maintain competitiveness through enhancing, combining, protecting, and, when necessary, reconfiguring the firm's intangible and tangible assets (Hernández-Linares, Kellermanns & López-Fernández, 2020; Amit & Han, 2017; Teece, 2007).

There have been slight differences between researchers when defining the term 'dynamic capabilities. Primc & Čater, (2016) and Easterby-Smith et al.,

(2009) explain this by stating that scholars who have provided definitions for dynamic capabilities have come from different research traditions and have therefore viewed the phenomenon with different lenses, reflecting their different backgrounds (Barney, 2017; Winter, 2017; Amit & Han, 2017). Indeed, the literature review indicates that some scholars emphasise the patterned and routine aspects of dynamic capabilities, whereas others focus on the entrepreneurial facets of management (Teece, 2017, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Teece et al., 1997). For example, Madsen (2010) makes a distinction between different definitions by dividing them into three groups: definitions focusing on the results of dynamic capabilities (Amit & Han, 2017; Primc & Čater, 2016; Zollo et al., 2016; Griffith & Harvey, 2001), definitions focusing on the presence of external conditions (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 1997) and definitions focusing on abilities or activities which make the firm dynamic (Helfat & Winter, 2011; Zahra et al., 2006; Zollo & Winter, 2002).

Several authors (Barney, 2017; Teece, 2007, 2014; Helfat, 2007; Winter, 2003) have stated that if a firm possesses capabilities but lacks dynamic capabilities, it has a chance to make a competitive return for a short period but cannot sustain supra-competitive returns for the long term except due to chance. For example, Teece, (2018) and Teece et al., (1997) observed that winners in the global marketplace have demonstrated timely responsiveness, rapid and flexible product innovation, along with managerial ability to effectively coordinate and redeploy internal and external competencies (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Aslan, 2017; Teece, 2018; Zollo et al., 2016). They term this ability to achieve new forms of competitive advantage '*dynamic capabilities*', to emphasise two aspects of the strategy that previously were not the main focus: *Dynamic*: to

emphasise the capacity to renew competencies to achieve alignment with the changing business environment; and *Capabilities*: to emphasise the key role of strategic management in adapting, integrating and reconfiguring internal and external organisational skills, resources and competencies, to match the requirements of the environment (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Amit & Han, 2017; Song & Jing, 2017; Primc & Čater, 2016). They define dynamic capabilities as the “firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments”. (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Barney, 2017; Winter, 2017) To comprehend the definition clarification of organisational competencies and core competencies is needed. Teece et al., (1997), define organisational competencies as “firm-specific assets that are assembled in integrated clusters to enable distinctive activities to be performed” and core competencies as competencies that “define firm's fundamental business”.

Eisenhardt and Martin (2000), on the other hand, define dynamic capabilities as “the firm's processes that use resources such as, specifically the processes to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources to match and even create market change”. Dynamic capabilities thus are “organisational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die”. According to Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) managers deploy dynamic capabilities to alter the resource base to generate new value-creating strategies (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020). Winter (2003) definition of dynamic capabilities is the broader concept of organisational routine: “an organisational capability is a high-level routine (or collection of routines) that, together with its implementing input flows, confers upon an

organisation's management a set of decision options for producing significant outputs of a particular type".

The three approaches could be considered complementary rather than substitutive. Table 3 shows, in chronological order, some of the key definitions of dynamic capabilities emerging from previous literature.

Author	Definition
Augier and Teece (2009)	The ability to sense and then seize new opportunities, and to reconfigure and protect knowledge assets, competencies, and complementary assets with the aim of achieving a sustained competitive advantage.
Alsos et al., (2007)	On the basis of their literature review Alsos et al. argued that there are four generic dimensions of dynamic capabilities. These are (1) external observation and evaluation, (2) external resource acquisition, (3) internal resource reconfiguration and (4) internal resource renewal.
Helfat et al., (2007)	A dynamic capability is the capacity of an organisation to purposefully create, extend, or modify its resource base.
Cillo et al., (2007)	Dynamic capabilities are processes based on knowledge – they especially regard knowledge creation, knowledge integration and knowledge reconfiguration.
Wang and Ahmed (2007)	A firm's behavioural orientation constantly to integrate, reconfigure, renew and recreate its resources and capabilities and, most importantly, upgrade and reconstruct its core capabilities in response to the changing environment to attain and sustain competitive advantage.
Eisenhardt and Martin (2000)	The firm's processes that use resources – specifically the processes to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources – to match or even create market change. Dynamic capabilities are therefore the organisational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve

	and die.
Lee et al., (2002)	A newer source of competitive advantage in conceptualising how firms are able to cope with environmental changes.
Rindova and Taylor (2002)	Dynamic capabilities evolve at two levels: a microevolution through “upgrading the management capabilities of the firm” and a macroevolution associated with “reconfiguring market competencies”.
Zahra and George (2002)	Dynamic capabilities are essentially change-oriented capabilities that help firms redeploy and reconfigure their resource base to meet evolving customer demands and competitor strategies.
Zollo and Winter (2002)	A dynamic capability is a learned and stable pattern of collective action through which the organisation systemically generates and modifies its operating routines in pursuit of improved effectiveness.
Winter (2003)	Those that operate to extend, modify or create ordinary (substantive) capabilities.
Sapienza et al., (2006)	Capabilities are configurations of routines and resources that allow an organisation to achieve its goals (Nelson & Winter 1982), whereas dynamic capabilities reflect a firm’s ability to reconfigure its capabilities to adapt to its environment.
Helfat (1997)	The subset of the competencies/capabilities which allow the firm to create new products and processes and respond to changing market circumstances.
Teece et al., (1997)	The firm’s ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments.

Table 2 - Key definitions of dynamic capabilities emerging from previous literature

According to the literature, the dynamic capabilities framework additionally incorporates the perspective of innovation-based competition and the ‘creative destruction’ of existing competencies through ‘entrepreneurial’

actions (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Ibeh et al., 2019; George, Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Parida, Lahti & Wincent, 2016; Schumpeter, 1934), and thus, does not solely focus on reactive adaptation and change, but also the potential of organisations to actively shape their environments (Amit & Han, 2017; Teece et al., 2016; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The essence of the dynamic-capabilities approach is that competitive success arises from the continuous development, alignment and reconfiguration of firm-specific assets (Ince & Hahn, 2020; Teece, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Augier & Teece, 2006; Teece et al., 1997; Teece & Pisano, 1994). In other words, dynamic capabilities directly affect the firm's resource base, which in turn is the source of the firm's competitive advantage (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009).

Similarly, dynamic capabilities are innovation-based and distinguishable from a firm's operational capabilities (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Song & Jing, 2017; Teece, 2014; Helfat and Winter, 2011; Pavlou and El Sawy, 2011; Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009; Zahra et al., 2006). Helfat and Winter (2011) note that operational capabilities are ordinary in the sense they help a firm in the present by maintaining the *status quo*, but this leaves the firm vulnerable to environmental change. The great majority of researchers see dynamic capabilities as processes related to a firm's ability to reconfigure its resource base so that the firm can respond better to changes that occur in its operational environment (see Table 3). Also, the dynamic capability is not an ad hoc problem-solving event or a spontaneous reaction (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Song & Jing, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Helfat, 2007). In other words, scholars and authors underline that dynamic capabilities are concerned with the intentional change of the

resource base (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020; Ince & Hahn, 2020; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009).

Probably the most discussed difference between the fundamental views of Teece et al., (1997) and Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) is related to the relationship between dynamic capabilities and the pace of change in a firm's business environment. According to Teece et al., (1997), dynamic capabilities occur only in rapidly changing environments whereas Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) explain that dynamic capabilities are at play in both stable and dynamic environments. The latter view is supported; for example, by Ambrosini, Bowman & Collier, (2009) who suggest that in stable environments dynamic capabilities are often small adaptations of resources, whereas in high-turbulent environments more radical modifications and changes in the resource base are needed. Zollo and Winter (2002, p. 340) support this by stating that firms integrate, build and reconfigure their competencies even in environments subject to lower rates of change. Consequently, this distinction is not discussed any further and, from the viewpoint of this study, it can be argued that current international markets are very seldom stable.

There have been diverging views regarding assumptions about the degree of heterogeneity in firms' dynamic capabilities. The majority of researchers have (implicitly or explicitly) assumed that dynamic capabilities are essentially firm-specific and unique (Teece et al., 2016; Barreto 2010; Teece et al., 1997). However, some researchers (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) have suggested that commonalities can exist between the dynamic capabilities of different firms. Although these views usually note that there is no such thing as exactly similar dynamic capabilities across firms they do suggest

that some common features can be found in the dynamic capabilities of different kinds of firms. This study supports the latter view: that although dynamic capabilities are firm-specific, common characteristics can be found when the abstraction level of the examination is increased. Consequently, the study follows a logic similar to Barreto (2010, p. 273), in the literature review, in which the author suggests that it is possible to conceptually assume commonalities across firms in one (or more) dynamic capabilities related dimensions, and also assume the remaining ones are idiosyncratic.

Despite its growing popularity, the development of the dynamic capability framework has not gone unchallenged and received some criticism (Kuuluvainen, 2013). Arend and Bromiley (2009, p. 75), for example, criticise the “... (1) unclear value-added relative to existing concepts; (2) lack of a coherent theoretical foundation; (3) weak empirical support; and (4) unclear practical implications.” Williamson (1999, p. 1093) criticises the capabilities perspective and especially the dynamic capabilities framework regarding “...obscure and often tautological definitions of key terms; and failures of operationalisation.” Other authors echo the critique of vague or confusing definitions that make it difficult to capture the construct (Danneels, 2008; Winter, 2003). The lack of empirical research on dynamic capabilities is a reason for concern for several scholars (Newbert, 2007; Williamson, 1999). Another point of criticism regarding the capability perspective is that the field is lacking micro-foundations that explain how individual-level abilities are leveraged to collective organisational-level constructs like organisational capabilities or routines (Abell, Felin & Foss, 2008; Felin & Foss, 2005).

Although the dynamic capabilities construct has been criticised for being vague and elusive (Kraaz & Zajac 2001), mysterious and confusing (Winter, 2003), abstract and intractable (Danneels, 2008) and obscure and tautological (Williamsson, 1999), there have been several recent responses to the criticism including, for example, new definitions of the concept. In particular, the new definition by Helfat et al., (2007) – *“a dynamic capability is the capacity of an organisation to purposefully create, extend, or modify its resource base”* – has been gaining support. This definition can also be considered suitable for guiding the understanding of the dynamic capabilities concept in this study.

Some Scholars refers to dynamic capabilities as complex and tacit (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Dierickx & Cool, 1989), causally ambiguous, difficult to observe and difficult to conceptualise, operationalise and measure. There is a lack of clarity about the nature of dynamic capabilities, and even disagreement about whether such capabilities even exist (Winter, 2003: 991). This makes it imperative to introduce greater clarity about their content, domain, conceptualisation, and operationalisation.

2.2.1.1 Enablers/Construct of Dynamic Capabilities

Construct are enablers, or triggers, which have an impact on the successful development and deployment of dynamic capabilities (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020; Ince & Hahn, 2020; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). Dynamic capabilities are a multidimensional construct of interrelated and complementary dimensions (Teece, 2004; 2018; Barney, 1991, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Barreto, 2010). Dynamic capabilities include the ability to identify the need for change, to formulate a response, and to implement appropriate measures (Ince & Hahn, 2020;

Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Teece, 2017, 2018; Winter, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Helfat, 2007). They involve sensing the need for change, learning about how to respond to opportunities and threats, and accomplishing reconfiguration (Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). Sensing may capture the first facet. Sensing capability comprises a firm's ability to recognise shifts in the environment that could impact the firm's business based on the current capability position (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020; Ince & Hahn, 2020; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Teece, 2007, 2017; Barney, 2017).

Thus, sensing relates to the recognition of opportunities and threats and the monitoring of the current capability endowment (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Teece, 2009, 2014; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Barreto, 2010). The second fact, the formulation of response, may be based on learning. Teece (2017) and Teece et al., (2007) already propose learning as a core element of dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2007, p. 1341). The formulation of a response by shaping opportunities is also a learning function, as it involves learning about customer needs as well as technologies and/or business models to address them adequately (Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013). Learning in this context relates to knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, and knowledge sharing (Teece, 2007, 2018; Barney, 2017; Tavassoli, Bengtsson & Karlsson, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Verona & Ravasi, 2003; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The third facet may be captured by reconfiguration.

Based on the understanding of the organisation as a certain configuration of capabilities and resources, in this study, any type of alteration of this

configuration is termed reconfiguration. Reconfiguration is the final chain in a procedural perspective on dynamic capabilities and is widely accepted as a core element of dynamic capabilities (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020; Ince & Hahn, 2020; Teece, 2007, 2017; Barney, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Barreto, 2010; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Reconfiguration relates to the internal creation of new capabilities and the integration of newly created or acquired capabilities (Barney, 2017; Amit & Han, 2017; Capron & Mitchell, 2009; Lavie, 2006). Also, the literature review indicated that history often plays an essential role in the development of dynamic capabilities. For example, it has been stated that *“dynamic capabilities reside in large measure with the enterprise’s top management team”* but because of path dependency they *“are impacted by the organisational processes, systems, and structures that the enterprise has created to manage its business in the past”* (Teece 2007, p. 1346).

Previous literature has concluded that, for an organisation to learn, four general processes have to be followed (Aslan, 2017; Tavassoli, Bengtsson & Karlsson, 2017; Winter, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Zucchella & Scabini 2007, p. 106–107; Zollo & Winter 2002). First, organisations generate or acquire knowledge through distinct knowledge creation processes (e.g. learning from experience and imitation). Second, for the learning process to continue, the members of an organisation must interpret and understand the new knowledge. Third, already-interpreted knowledge has to be shared and integrated into the organisation. Once the new knowledge is distributed, it has to be stored in the organisation’s memory, or institutionalised, so that others can use it when they need it (Aslan, 2017; Tavassoli et al, 2017; Winter, 2003, 2017; Zollo & Winter, 2002; Crossan et al., 1999). In this way, organisations change their routines and capabilities

and create new ones (Zucchella & Cabini 2007, p. 107). Therefore, learning enables new product opportunities or promising international market niches to be identified. Consequently, the importance of practice and experience (experiential learning) in the development of dynamic capabilities is often underlined (Hernández-Linares, et al., 2020; Ince & Hahn, 2020; Amit & Han, 2017; Teece, 2017; Teece et al, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013).

2.2.1.2 Evolution of Dynamic Capability

Intellectual antecedents to dynamic capabilities approach include evolutionary economics (Winter, 2017; Nelson & Winter, 1982), the resource-based view of the firm (Wernerfelt, 2016, Kuuluvainen, 2013) and organisational learning (Aslan, 2017; Doorn et al., 2017; Argyris & Schon, 1978). Dynamic capabilities have its genesis in Schumpeterian competition (Schumpeter, 1934), where competitive advantage is based on the creative destruction of existing resources and the novel reconfiguration of new with potentially rent-generating functional competencies (Teece & Pisano, 1994; Teece, 2007, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). The emerging literature on dynamic capabilities draws on the resource-based view of the firm which states that the firm's resources are an essential structure for innovation (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Aslan, 2017; Barney, 2017; Winter, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece & Pisano, 1994; Nelson & Winter, 1982). The resource-based view emphasises the selection and accumulation of synergistic combinations of resources see detailed below and the dynamic capabilities view stresses the reconfiguration of existing resources into new functional competencies

(Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat, 2007; Wang & Ahmed, 2007; Zucchella & Cabini 2007).

Since the mid-1990s, several scholars have contributed theoretical and empirical to research that has highlighted various aspects of dynamic capabilities (Teece, 1997, 2007; Teece et al.,1997, Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt and Martin; 2000; Teece & Pisano, 1994; Nelson & Winter, 1982). Most notable contributions to dynamic capabilities literature include seminal articles by Teece, 1997, 2007; Teece et al.,1997) and (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt and Martin; 2000) and a research note by (Winter, 2003). Generally, it is assumed that dynamic capabilities are deployed to effectuate change and adaptation in positions (Teece, 2017, 2018; Teece et al., 1997), resource configurations (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) or zero-level/operating capabilities (Winter, 2003).

The resource-based view, therefore, cannot be ignored while the dynamic capabilities approach is reviewed. The resource-based view argues that resources that are simultaneously valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and imperfectly substitutable (VRIN) are a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 2017). The underlying assumptions of the resource-based view are that resources are heterogeneously distributed across firms and that this heterogeneity can be sustained over time. This explains how some firms can earn super-profits in equilibrium and, as such, it is essentially a static view (Barney 2001a and b). It is argued that dynamic capabilities are an extension of the resource-based view while they govern the rate of change of a firm's resources and, notably, its VRIN resources. These resources –

that is, the firm's resource base – then enable a firm to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Zollo, 2016; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009).

2.2.1.3 Dynamic Capabilities in Comparison with other Frameworks Explaining Adaptation and Change

Dynamic capabilities are closely related to change; thus, against the background of its desired explanatory contribution, the dynamic capabilities frameworks are compared with other theoretical approaches aiming at the explanation of successful adaptation and change (Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Zollo et al., 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). Volberda (2011) describes several different approaches that focus on the challenge of adaptation to exogenous environmental change (Amit & Han, 2017; Barney, 2017; Doorn et al., 2017). Some of these approaches are briefly introduced to show similarities and differences between the dynamic capabilities framework and other approaches referring to adaptation and change and to show which frameworks provided insights that found consideration within the dynamic capability framework.

The resource-based view – RBV (Barney, 1991; Barney et al., 2001) emerged as a promising framework for explaining the internationalisation of SMEs. According to RBV, physical, human, and organisational assets are resources that can be used to implement value-creating strategies for a competitive advantage (Wernerfelt, 1995). Firm resources are comprised of assets, capabilities, processes, routines, and knowledge possessed by the venture (Covin & Slevin, 1990). Following the RBV, Knight et al., (2004) assert that firms possess unique firm resources and capabilities which explain rapid internationalisation and the source of advantages gained by these firms.

“Born-global” literature also emphasises prior experience as contributing to rapid Internationalisation (Martina et al., 2017).

The RBV states that firm heterogeneity and firm-specific resources create a sustainable competitive advantage and that advantage creating resources are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, referred to as the VRIN framework (Barney, 1991). Resources encompass three general categories: physical capital resources, human capital resources, and organisational capital resources. *Physical capital resources* encompass physical technology, property, plant, equipment, and access to raw materials. *Human capital resources* include the - training, experience, judgment, intelligence, relationships, and insight of individual managers and workers in firms (Jones, Sambrook, Pittaway, Henley & Norbury, 2014; Wyton & Payne, 2014) and *organisational capital resources* involve the firm’s reporting structure, planning processes, control and coordination systems, and information relations among workers within the firm, between firms, and its environment.

Peng (2001) reviewed the usage of resource-based approaches within international business research and noted that many scholars in international business have turned to resource-based theories as the core questions asked within the resource-based view and international business studies have turned out to be similar. In Peng’s view, an essential contribution to international business studies to the resource-based view has been the identification of international knowledge and experience as a valuable, unique and hard-to imitate resource that differentiates firms in global competition. However, although past research has offered a few examples of resource-based or capabilities-based studies on small firm

internationalisation (Roth, 1995; Luo, 2000) it can still be stated that the absence of SME research in resource-based internationalisation studies has been striking (Ruzzier et al., 2006).

Population ecology (Hannan & Freeman, 1977) assumes that managerial intention and managerial action has little or no impact on adaptation and that successful organisations are selected by the environment based on resource scarcity and competition (Lewin & Volberda, 2011; Lewin & Volberda, 1999). Moreover, due to internal pressures and structural inertia, organisations suffer from an inability to actively adapt to changing conditions. *Institutional theories* explain the similarity and stability of organisational arrangements in a certain population, which is due to the perceived legitimacy of the specific arrangement in a given context (Lewin & Volberda, 2011; Lewin & Volberda, 1999; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). While usually not be regarded as a theory explaining organisational change and being weak in explaining the internal dynamics of change, the neo-institutional theory explains the occurrence of change and adaptation as stemming from the dissatisfaction of groups of organisations or subpopulations with the given arrangements and their respective actions to change these given arrangements (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996).

Within the **industrial organisation framework** (Porter, 1980, 1985) adoption is based on a managerial choice regarding profitable industries, the capturing of profitable positions within these industries, and the protection of these valuable positions. *Transaction cost theory* (Williamson, 1975, 1985) explains organisational adaptation mainly through balancing adequate institutional arrangements between market and hierarchy, seeking for the cost-minimizing institutional arrangement. The *behavioural*

theory of the firm (Cyert & March, 1963) explains adaptation through managerial decision making regarding the allocation of resources and the engagement in innovation activity. The firm's ability to adapt to changes is thereby determined by the availability of slack resources and the strategic intent to allocate slack resources to innovation (Lewin & Volberda, 2011; Lewin & Volberda, 1999).

The evolutionary theory of the firm (Nelson & Winter, 1982) assumes that firms accumulate knowledge during their existence and command a repertoire of unique skills and know-how which is embedded in complex routines. Tacit knowledge and routines enable firms to search for novel solutions that allow adaptation to change conditions (Lewin & Volberda, 2011; Lewin & Volberda, 1999). However, these routines are regarded as being relatively unreceptive towards change and suppress the attention span and the absorption of new knowledge as they direct the search focus on fields which are related to prior knowledge. As a consequence, organisational routines may become a major source of inertia and inflexibility (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). A recent reconceptualization of routines, however, argues that the interplay between ostensive (structure of the routine) and performativity (specific actions by specific actors within the routine) aspects of a routine provide permanent opportunities for variation, selection, and retention of new practices, making routines to a potential source of flexibility and change (Feldman & Pentland, 2003).

Contingency theory (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) assumes that firms have to achieve a "fit" with the conditions given by their environment. In this approach organisational forms vary between more static and more flexible organisational designs, while the former is better

suited for more stable environments and the latter is adequate in more dynamic environments. Organisational adaptation thereby refers to the ability of managers to adequately interpret external conditions and to implement appropriate organisational designs (Lewin & Volberda, 2011; Lewin & Volberda, 1999). The emphasis here is on reactive adaptation and the ability to actively influence the environmental conditions is largely ignored.

The ***strategic choice perspective*** (Miles & Snow, 1978) expands this approach by taking into account the various ways in which organisations interact with their environment and how managerial strategic choices are also able to actively shape the environment.

Organisational learning theory (Huber, 1991; Argyris & Schon, 1978) assumes that organisations have some unique skills for learning, unlearning, or re-learning based on experience, which allows them to align with their environment. This learning process, which is both reactive and proactive, enables the development of insight and knowledge as well as the association of the appropriateness of past actions and the potential usefulness of future actions. In this framework, organisations stay vital by balancing local and expanded search to accomplish their most fundamental functions and at the same time remain open for continuous reflection and monitoring to meet the challenges of external change and internal inertia (Lewin & Volberda, 2011; Lewin & Volberda, 1999).

Within the context of the above theoretical perspectives, dynamic capabilities can further be distinguished from the more practical approach of change management. By denoting that dynamic capabilities focus on

firm-level abilities and mechanisms that drive the development of novel resource and capability combinations and in consequence enable adaptation or market-making. While change management is a structured organisational process aiming at shifting firms from a current state to a desired future state by providing guidelines and tactics that encourage individuals and groups within the firm to contribute to the desired change by adjusting their behaviour or the performance of work tasks.

The dynamic capabilities framework thereby builds on the fundamental understanding of the resource-based perspective (detailed above) in which competitive advantage stems from the exploitation of firm-specific resource and capability bundles (Teece, 2017, 2018; Barney, 1991, 2017; Winter, 2017; Wernerfelt, 1984, 2016; Penrose, 1959), but expand this perspective to the question how firms first develop firm-specific resource and capability bundles and how they renew their resource and capability configurations to respond to shifts in their environment (Teece, 2014, 2017, 2018; Teece et al., 1997).

Furthermore, the dynamic capabilities framework borrows some insights from the behavioural theory of the firm, transaction cost theory, and evolutionary theory (Teece, 2014, 2017; Augier & Teece, 2009). The dynamic capabilities framework thus incorporates managerial decisions regarding resource allocations for capability development or innovation activities (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Aslan, 2017). Additionally, the dynamic capabilities framework acknowledges the existence of a transaction and switching costs in the case of resource or capability transfer and the advantages of certain coordination mechanisms under specific circumstances (Albert et al., 2015).

Moreover, the dynamic capabilities framework recognises the attempt of organisations to build and exploit valuable knowledge assets.

The dynamic capabilities framework additionally incorporates the perspective of innovation-based competition and the 'creative destruction' of existing competencies through 'entrepreneurial' actions (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Mazzei et al., 2017; Schumpeter, 1934), and thus, does not solely focus on reactive adaptation and change, but also on the potential of organisations to actively shape their environments (Teece et al., 2016; Teece, 2007, 2012; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The essence of the dynamic-capabilities approach is that competitive success arises from the continuous development, alignment and reconfiguration of firm-specific assets (Teece, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Augier & Teece, 2006; Teece et al., 1997; Teece & Pisano, 1994). In other words, dynamic capabilities directly affect the firm's resource base, which in turn is the source of the firm's competitive advantage (Barney, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). However, dynamic capabilities do not appear out of anywhere; they are typically the outcome of experience and learning within the organisations (Amit & Han, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016). This approach of dynamic capabilities integrates the strategic choice perspective and the behavioural theory of the firm.

Dynamic capabilities acknowledge and incorporate the organisational learning theory process; similar to international stage theory and new venture theory's acknowledgement of resources as playing an important role in international expansion. Particularly, the important role of knowledge in firm internationalisation and links it with the past actions of the firm and the potential usefulness of such actions for the future.

Another key perspective again acknowledged by dynamic capabilities is the knowledge-based view (*KBV*) which asserts that knowledge is a key factor contributing to firm internationalisation. The *KBV* agrees that knowledge and learning are key factors contributing to firm Internationalisation, and firms are sources of knowledge. Also, to acknowledge the central role of resources, the *KBV*, like dynamic capabilities, examines the process by which specific firm capabilities evolve and develop over time.

Having established the key elements of dynamic capabilities, the next step is to examine the turbulent environment, strategy management, entrepreneurship (including growth and strategic entrepreneurship), SMEs internalisation and their relationship to identify and bring together their point of intersection. Such is the focus of the subsequent sections below.

2.2.2 Turbulent Market Environment

The international business marketplace today is probably most dynamic, and the extant literature shows that in a turbulent market environment there is a need for the changing of traditional rules, business models and ways of thinking. In the literature, turbulent in the business environment has been described using different terms. For example, changes in the external environment (market, technology, demand, customer requirement or competition), uncertainty, unpredictability, unstable, complexity (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Albert et al., 2015; Kreutzer & Lechner, 2015), variability, complexity and Lilliberality (Child et al., 2017; Child, 1972), unfamiliar, hostile, heterogeneous (Wernerfelt, 2016; Miller, 1987), munificence, dynamism and complexity, uncertain, complex, dynamic, volatile (Albert et al., 2015),

and dynamism, complexity, munificence and hostility (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). However, the majority of the terms used to describe turbulent in the business environments are concerned in a way with the firm's capabilities or market uncertainty.

A stable environment does not change much, and when it does change, the change is predictable; but in a turbulent business environment, on the other hand, there are many unexpected changes. It has been acknowledged by scholars that change and dynamism in a turbulent business environment is an environment characterised both by several changes occurring rapidly and simultaneously and by a situation where only the most optimistic see the possibility of a return to a more stable environment in the foreseeable future (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016; Borch & Batalden, 2015). A synthesis of the foregoing elements leads to a definition of turbulence as, "a dynamic, complex, and unpredictable condition that is subject to both rapid and multi-dimensional change".

Subsequently, a turbulent international marketplace environment can be caused by the state of, and interaction between, environmental factors. For example, turbulent in a business environment can be caused by a combination of environmental factors such as business cycles, sudden economic disturbances (i.e. financial crises), changing consumer lifestyles and behaviour, mergers leading to oligopolies, growth in importance of information overproduction, the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few and the downsizing trend in business (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Child et al., 2017; Pratono, 2016; Zollo et al., 2016; Child, 1972; Miles & Snow 1978; Learned et al., 1965).

Turbulent is sometimes caused by an industry's strategic assets being undermined, for example, a legal monopoly or dominance due to high entry costs or protection by legislation being removed (Child et al., 2017; Borch & Batalden, 2015). Furthermore, turbulent can be as a result of rapid and unexpected changes in the firm's environmental subdimensions such as technology, customers, competitors, government regulations and new product launches. Dynamism also implies that a firm cannot only rely on historical data as they are often used to. (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; George et al., 2016; Zollo et al., 2016) Dynamism is an inherent condition of an environment, that is, it is continually changing, but the extent of this change varies for different organizations or environments (North & Varvakis, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015).

In summation, it is reasonable to say that turbulent in the business environment is the measure of the difference between market uncertainty as experienced by a firm and its capability (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016; Albert et al., 2015). This is due in part that two firms operating in the same business environment may have experienced different opportunities, competition and performance depending upon their capability (North & Varvakis, 2018; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Zollo et al., 2016).

2.2.3 Strategic Management Perspectives

The literature on the topics of strategy and strategic management is both extensive and diverse Teece, 2018; Schmitt et al., 2016; Chandler & Hwang, 2015; Porter, 1980, 2015; Mintzberg, 1987; Chandler, 1962. Strategic management is a process that guides how to approach the basic work of the organisation to ensure the continuous renewal and growth of the firm

and more particularly to provide a context for developing and implementing the strategy that drives the firm's operations (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Zollo et al., 2016; Porter, 1980, 2015; Davidsson & Wiklund, 2013; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013; Ireland, Covin & Kuratko, 2009; Miles & Snow 1978; Learned et al., 1965). Strategic management is found in three publications of that time. The founders are Chandler, (1962); Ansoff, (1965); and Andrews and his colleagues, (1965, 1971). The first publication, 'Strategy and Structure', included the roles of managers in making long-term decisions, assigning resources, and defining plans so that decisions work. Additionally, it was demonstrated that a change in strategic direction could fundamentally change an organisation (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Pettigrew et al., 2014; Rumelt, 2011).

Ansoff (1965) viewed strategy management in the same way and discussed current popular concepts such as competitive advantage. Andrews and his colleagues (Andrews, 1971; Learned, Christensen, Andrews, & Guth, 1965) view was an extension of Chandler's with some additional concepts presented such as 'competitive advantage', as well as the influence of an uncertain environment'. These have become important additions in current strategic management, and the concept of 'uncertain environment' forms the basis of the SWOT analysis (Porter, 1980, 2015). Traditional and conventional approaches to strategy focus on the question "Where do you want to go?" first, and then "How do you want to get there?" These approaches to strategy entail the selection of attractive markets, choosing a defensible strategic position and building core competencies (Pettigrew et al., 2014; Rumelt, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1999:65). However, in turbulent markets, a particularly strategic position is quickly eroded, and strategic planning can become irrelevant, so the traditional concept of

strategic processes has become inadequate for better performance. Traditional approaches to strategy also emphasise strategic positioning by acquiring or building valuable resources as the basis of creating sustained competitive advantage and superior, long – term performance (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Rumelt, 2011). The importance of resources, which includes physical, human and organisational assets that have been used to implement value-creating strategies, is the core of the resource-based view (Pettigrew et al., 2014; Kylaheiko, Sandstrom & Virkkunen, 2002; Barney, 1986: 656 and Wernerfelt, 1984:171, 1995:171).

In this view, resources form the basis of unique value-creating strategies and their related activity systems that address specific markets and customers in distinctive ways, and in so doing, lead to competitive advantage – for example, core competencies (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990:79) and configurations (Collis and Montgomery, 1995,1998:70; Porter,1996:61). However, Lopez (2005:661) and Eisenhardt and Martin (2000:1105) have pointed out that the resource-based view of the firm does not adequately explain how and why some firms achieve competitive advantage in turbulent markets. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000:1105) have also stated that the resource-based view misidentifies the locus of long-term competitive advantage in the turbulent market environment, overemphasises the strategic logic of leverage and reaches a boundary condition in these markets. In summation Ireland, Hitt, Camp & Sexton, 2001 suggest that strategic management involves the actions, decisions and commitments designed to achieve competitive advantage and earn above-average returns (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Pettigrew et al., 2014; Rumelt, 2011).

2.2.3.1 Adaptive Capability

The role of strategic management in organisational adaptation processes. Miles & Snow (1978) define organisational adaptation as a “dynamic process of adjustment to the change and environmental uncertainty, of maintaining an effective alignment with the environment while internal interdependencies are efficiently managed.” Child (1997), as cited above, models the strategic adaptation process as the sum of two dynamics: internal structuring (internal actions addressed to adapt organisational agents to new environment conditions) and external structuring (actions that modify the company’s relationship with its environment, such as launching new products or changing suppliers). “*Capabilities*” highlights the key role of strategic management in adaptation, integration and recreating an organisation’s inner and outer skills, resources and competition factors so that these would better fit the requirements of a changing operational environment (Borch & Batalden, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Sapienza et al., 2006). As a consequence, the strategic adaptation process is performed through a set of activities including process development, product development, research, or new organisation deployment. (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017).

Floyd & Lane (2000) build on these same ideas to create a new definition of strategic adaptation that they call strategic renewal. Their definition of strategic renewal expands the concept of adaptation to changes in core competencies and/or the strategic positioning of the company. Key competences are socially complex combinations of assets, knowledge, and skills on which the firm’s ability to create differentiated products and services are based and distinguish it from competitors (Barney, 1991,

Leonard Barton, 1992; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). The strategic positioning, however, refers to the place in the market occupied by a company determined by the scope of its products relative to those of its competitors (Porter, 1980, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2014).

Later, Eunni et al., (2003) conceptualised adaptation strategy as a firm's ability, on one hand, to obtain the correct alignment of strategy, structure, and culture (internal alignment) to position it competitively in the market, and on the other hand, alignment with its environment to successfully face changes in its environment (external alignment). (Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016). To measure the strategic adaptability of a company, Eunni et al., (2003) group some internal alignment measures: corporate leadership (see also Collins and Porras, 1994 and Donaldson and Lorsch, 1983), strategic planning, and approach to workers (see also Delery and Doty, 1996; Youndt et al., 1996, Becker and Gerhart, 1996). He also has groups for measuring external alignment: market and customer focus, technological and innovation capacity, strategic partnerships, and corporate social responsibility (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Aslan, 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2010; Hamel and Prahalad, 1994).

SME context is one in which adaptive behaviours would seem especially important (Coviello, 2018; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). Compared with MNE firms SME firms are more vulnerable to environmental forces, especially given the limited financial resource and debt capacity of SMEs, their frequent over-dependence on a limited product/service line and their tendency to rely on a niche market (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015). In addition many SMEs also suffer from a relatively

limited market presence subjecting them to significant demand fluctuations, aggressive competitor incursions and lack of support from suppliers and distributors (Autio, 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Schindehutte & Morris, 2001). For example, Aldrich & Auster (1986) discuss the liability of smallness in terms of problems in raising finance, few tax advantages and proportionately greater cost from regulation at least compared to MNE.

Research on firm adaptation has tended to emphasise the adaptive capacity of firms or the extent to which particular strategies reflect more or less able to adapt (Barney, 2017; George et al., 2016). According to Schindehutte and Morris, (2001) much of this work builds on Miles & Snow (1978) strategy typology in which a firm's product-market orientation is characterised by reactor, defender, analyser or prospector. In essence, it could be suggested that is a continuum moving from reactor to prospector. Some scholars Coviello, (2018), Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, (2015) and Schindehutte & Morris, (2001) have provided evidence to indicate a relationship between reliance on any of these four strategies and firm's performance is predicated on (a) the fit between the selected strategy and firms structure and (b) the dynamics of the external environment in which the firm operates.

Furthermore, the importance of reconfiguring existing resources into new configurations of functional competencies and view reconfiguration as the outcome of dynamic capabilities (Barney, 2017; Teece et al., 2016; Wang & Ahmed, 2007). For a firm to have an adaptive ability resource must be deployed so current routines are exploited to maintain stability and sustain existing rules. On the other hand, resource deployment must also support

the exploration of alternative routines, goals and opportunities (Lant & Mezias, 1992).

In a turbulent market environment, traditional strategic approaches are inadequate, and this type of behaviour causes organisations to be less effective (Teece, 2018; Autio, 2017; Crossan, White, Lane and Klus, 1996:20 and Hamel, 1995:22). Therefore the strategic processes used by businesses operating in a turbulent market environment must enable firm to re-allocate available resources as priorities and demands change (Barney, 2017; George et al., 2016; Fowler, King, Marsh & Victor, 2000) as well as be able to continuously adapt, innovate, and even change themselves to survive and thrive in evolving market conditions (Barney, 2017; George et al., 2016; Eisenhardt & Tabrizi, 1995:84; Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001:1229).

The strategic adjustment process can be triggered by any change in the environment or by an internal proposal of strategic innovation (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Aslan, 2017). The external alignment or response includes all decisions and actions beyond the firm's boundaries (actions of interoperation and exchange of information with customers, suppliers, competitors and/or the social environment). This view is consistent with previous strategic management literature affirming that, at the firm level, there is a set of capabilities that enables the firm to survive by structuring internally and externally, and to have success in the medium- and long-term, thriving in a turbulent, dynamic environment (Child, 2007).

In summation, a turbulent business environment requires certain innovative actions when markets face changes. For example, changes in the

external environment such as the market, technology, demand, customer requirement or competition. (Bagheri et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Aslan, 2017; Chandler & Hwang, 2015). “Capabilities” highlights the key role of strategic management in adaptation, integration and recreating an organisation’s inner and outer skills, resources and competition factors so that these would better fit the requirements of a changing operational environment (Doorn et al., 2017; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Sapienza, Autio, George, & Zahra, 2006). Also, organisational structure reconfiguration is associated with dynamic capabilities; by reconfiguring their business units, firms can recombine their resources and adapt to environmental changes (Rumelt, 2011; Karim, 2006). Similarly, resource divestment can also be seen to reflect a firm’s dynamic capabilities (e.g. Moliterno & Wiersema 2007).

2.2.3.2 Evolution of strategy and strategic management

As noted above, the literature on the topic of strategy is both discrete and diverse. The term *strategy* commonly refers to the plans, objectives, and long-term goals of the organisation. Whipp (1999) noted that strategy originated in the military and was thought to have originated in Greece. However, the concept of strategy, as found in business literature (Teece, 2018; Rumelt, & Schendel, & Teece, 1994, Mintzberg, 1987;) can be found to date back to the early 1960s, when the body of knowledge known as strategic management was introduced for corporations to ‘wage their wars’ in business terms. A more detailed examination of existing research indicates strategy as establishing direction (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, Lampel, 1998); purposeful action (Child, Hsieh, Elbanna, Karmowska, Marinova, Puthusserry, Tsai, Narooz, Zhang, 2017; Drucker, 1985); fit both within the

organisation, and with the external environment (Porter, 1996). Mintzberg and Waters (1982) acknowledge the complexity of strategy as a concept in their reference to “that vague concept called the strategy” (p. 465), but later address this complexity by suggesting strategy is essentially a combination of objectives both deliberate and emergent which produce the actual or realised strategy of an organisation. Thus, over time the complexity of strategy has been acknowledged and addressed from a variety of perspectives.

Having established the key elements of strategy and strategic management, the next step is to examine the entrepreneurship and their interconnection with dynamic capabilities, strategic management to identify their connection.

2.2.4 Entrepreneurship Perspectives

The extant literature review suggested that entrepreneurship has been examined in detail by academics, researchers, and industry professionals (Mazzei, Ketchen & Shook, 2017; George et al., 2016; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013). This includes disciplines such as economics (Schumpeter, 1934), psychology (Beugelsdijk & Smeets, 2008; McClelland, 1962), sociology (Kalberg, 2012; Weber, 1905), and anthropology (Barth, 1969). Such detailed examination across several disciplines has led to entrepreneurship being linked with many concepts. The theories on entrepreneurship thus vary in their acceptance of the central elements and respective emphasis on different aspects within entrepreneurship.

To date, there is still no consensus on the definition of an entrepreneur, and the elements which characterise entrepreneurship (Hitt et al., 2017;

Carlsson, Braunerhjelm, McKelvey, 2013; Blackburn, Hart, Wainwright, 2013; Sarasvathy, Venkataraman, Dew, Velamuri, 2003; Hitt et al., 2001; Hitt, Bierman, Uhlenbruck, & Shimizu, 2003). Thus, the theories of entrepreneurship are diverse and at times conflicting (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Gherhes et al., 2016). While elements such as risk, innovation, and reward are recurring themes within the literature, the consensus has not yet been achieved regarding a single comprehensive definition of entrepreneurship (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; George et al., 2016). As research continues to examine the complexities of entrepreneurship, new aspects emerge, to provide a more complete and comprehensive understanding of this topic. For example, within the field of *sociology* identified entrepreneurs as charismatic leaders whom others want to follow; breaking the constraints imposed by established norms to create change (Kalberg, 2012; Weber, 1905). Weber examined the changing social values and subsequent acceptance of entrepreneurship over time and across different cultures. Whereas, in *economic* the focus primarily is on the relationships inherent in entrepreneurial situations, rather than the individuals involved. For example, specific emphasis was placed on analyzing the history of the industrial corporation (Chandler & Hwang, 2015; Chandler, 1990). In contrast, *psychology* studies on entrepreneurship have focused on personality traits and patterns of behaviour. These studies identify entrepreneurs as risk-takers and social deviants, with a high need for achievement (Hitt et al., 2017; Blackburn et al., 2013; McClelland, 1962).

A further distinction is made in the literature regarding different aspects and levels of entrepreneurship. Research at the individual level tends to focus on the nature and characteristics of entrepreneurs, emphasising skills of discovering and identifying opportunity (Donckels & Miettinen,

2019; George et al., 2016; Sarasvathy, Venkataraman, Dew, Velamuri, 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), and the need for achievement (McClelland, 1962).

Based on scholarly literature review, the term *entrepreneurship* is often linked with new business creation (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Blackburn et al., 2013; Sarasvathy et al., 2003; Drucker's 1985), small business management (George et al., 2016; Covin & Slevin, 1990), and the concept of owner management or self-employment. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition is that put forward by Hisrich, Peters & Shepherd (2010) who present entrepreneurs as those creating something of value to improve economic efficiency, assuming financial and social risk in the process, and receiving resulting rewards: monetary, individual satisfaction through achievement, and independence. This definition effectively incorporates the fundamental concepts of innovation (Schumpeter, 1934) through opportunity identification (Blackburn et al., 2013; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), social and economic change Drucker's (George et al., 2016), risk (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015), and reward (McClelland, 1962) Thus, it can be argued an entrepreneur is one whose decisions and behaviour influence the future and are influenced by their vision of it.

Thus, by extension, an entrepreneurial activity can be identified as an activity which encompasses the elements of opportunity identification, capacity to renew and adapt competences to changes in the external environment and creation of value with the intention of reward in some form, be it growth, profit, or otherwise (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Mazzei et al., 2017). Particularly, the core principles of entrepreneurship identified in the research at both the individual and firm-level are similar to the

position of Drucker's (1985) on entrepreneurial management. These principles include innovation, opportunity recognition, proactivity and vision (Aslan, 2017). Hence these core principles can be viewed as fundamental to entrepreneurship as a concept, just as in the case of dynamic capabilities.

In summation, in research on entrepreneurship provides a logic to link strategic management and dynamic capabilities (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Teece 2016, 2018; Zahra et al., 2006). According to the RBV, entrepreneurial managers are heterogeneous resources, and habitual entrepreneurship encourages dynamic capabilities which create new resource configurations (Barney, Wright, & Ketchen Jr., 2001). As stated by Barney (Barney, 1991; 2001, p. 628), *"Entrepreneurial alertness, entrepreneurial knowledge, and the ability to coordinate resources are resources in their own right."*

Given the importance of entrepreneurship and the significant impact of business activity on a country's economy, arguably an enhanced understanding of a more systematic approach towards the intersection of strategic management, dynamic capabilities, strategic entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship offers significant benefits (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2017).

2.2.4.1 Strategic Entrepreneurship

A review of the extant literature refers to strategic entrepreneurship as the intersection of entrepreneurship and strategy (Hitt et al., 2017; Mazzei et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2001) is identified as encompassing elements such as governance and top management teams (Ireland et al., 2001), networking

and internationalisation (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2001). The literature further indicated that the emergence of strategic entrepreneurship is originally rooted in the field of economics (Hitt et al., 2001; Schumpeter, 1934) and later in the field of management (Drucker, 1985; Mintzberg, 1973). Fundamentally the study of strategic entrepreneurship includes the combination of actions conspicuously entrepreneurial in nature such as *focusing on opportunity*, with actions essentially of a strategic nature such as *creating competitive advantage* (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2001).

strategic entrepreneurship is concerned with a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage of established firms as a result of entrepreneurial and managerial activities (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2017; Zucchella & Magnani 2016; Ireland et al., 2009). Strategic entrepreneurship incorporates the concept of entrepreneurship and strategic management, focusing on entrepreneurial action with a strategic perspective (Hitt et al., 2017; Zucchella & Magnani 2016). Furthermore, the literature contends that the field of entrepreneurship and strategic management are mutually supportive and in that way that enhances the value of outcomes by creating synergy. This is supported by scholarly review (Hitt et al., 2017; Ireland et al., 2009). Previous studies have therefore suggested entrepreneurship and strategic management research can be synthesised to better understand how entrepreneurship functions for firms (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2017; Kor et al., 2007).

This concept may be viewed as an extension of entrepreneurial strategy-making, being a mode of strategy, which integrates multiple strategies and the external environment (North & Varvakis, 2018; Mazzei, Ketchen &

Shook, 2017; Mintzberg & Waters, 1982); the ability to make quick decisions in a changing environment (Teece, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016; Albert et al., 2015), using it as a concept particularly when managing turbulent market environment, Eisenhardt et al., (2000) propose six fundamental processes to make strategic entrepreneurship a standard strategic practice. These processes include improvisation, co-adaptation or collaboration, patching, regeneration, experimentation and time-pacing. This six process framework is similar to the six domains of strategic entrepreneurship identified by Ireland et al., (2001), as they develop the notion of strategic entrepreneurship as a field of study. They identify innovation (creating and implementing ideas), networks (providing access to resources), internationalisation (adapting quickly and expanding), organisational learning, growth, top management teams and governance.

These domains were subsequently revised by Hitt et al., (2017) to include external networks and alliances, resources and organisational learning, innovation and internationalisation as they developed the notion of strategic entrepreneurship as both a field of study and a specific concept. Ireland et al., (2017) identify four important dimensions of strategic entrepreneurship. Specifically, an entrepreneurial mindset is described as one encompassing insight, alertness, and flexibility to use appropriate resources. Entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial leadership are referred to as that which fosters and supports the search for an entrepreneurial opportunity; such that innovation and creativity are expected. Strategic management of resources essentially involves the management of financial, human, and social capital (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Teece, 2018); while applying creativity to

develop innovations are referred to as identifying novel combinations to achieve both radical and incremental innovation.

The integration of these dimensions, Ireland et al., 2009 contend, results in wealth creation. The three prominent models of strategic entrepreneurship are by Hitt & Ireland, (2017) Hitt et al., (2017), Ireland et al., (2001), and Hitt et al., (2001). A key commonality among the models is a framework involving six key dimensions. To the extent that the individual dimensions are similar within each model, they have been grouped and presented accordingly. These models have similarity with dynamic capabilities model which include the ability to identify the need for change, to formulate a response, and to implement appropriate strategic base (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Teece, 2018; Winter, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016). It is reasonable to state that insight gained from these prominent models albeit overlapping, extend the debate on multifaceted need developing an evolving base picture.

2.2.4.2 International Entrepreneurship

Several studies have influenced the early development of international entrepreneurship research (Ibeh et al., 2019). For example, studies on alliances and cooperative strategies (George et al., 2016; Steensma et al., 2000), SME internationalisation (Lu & Beamish, 2001), entry modes (Zacharakis, 1997), cognition (Mitchell et al., 2000), knowledge management (Song & Jing, 2017; Kuemmerle, 2002), and technological learning (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Bagheri et al., 2019; Zahra et al., 2000) all played their role in the development of international entrepreneurship research stream.

According to Zahra and George (2002), the term “*international entrepreneurship*” first appeared in a short article by Morrow in 1988. Morrow (1988) suggested that advancements in technology, declining cultural barriers and increasing cultural awareness have opened once-remote foreign markets to all kinds of firms, small firms, new ventures as well as established firms. Soon thereafter, McDougall’s (1989) empirical study comparing domestic and international new ventures paved the way for academic study in international entrepreneurship (McDougall & Oviatt, 2005, p. 537). According to entrepreneurship literature, international entrepreneurship researchers have different backgrounds (e.g. entrepreneurship, economics, marketing and sociology), which underlines the multidisciplinary nature of the research field. Recently, scholars have looked to entrepreneurship research to gain an understanding of firm internationalisation (McDougall & Oviatt, 2000, 2005).

There is no commonly agreed and comprehensive theoretical framework for international entrepreneurship (Zucchella & Scabini 2007, p. 1) and some researchers have been pointing out the need to expand the boundaries of international entrepreneurship to also include more mature firms. For instance, Zahra and Garvis (2000) suggest that the stream should also focus on firms of different ages and sizes that show entrepreneurial attitude as they venture into international markets. However, in their extensive literature review of international entrepreneurship studies published between 1994 and 2007, Keupp and Gassman (2009, p. 608) show that 149 of the 197 articles they reviewed were empirical and, with two exceptions, all of these empirical articles used samples of small and young firms. The authors also show that almost all previous studies restricted their analyses to one or more of the following: (1). the propensity

of small and young firms to internationalise (2). What small new firms that have internationalised do to penetrate markets and/or to survive and how their international performance differs (3). The demographic and cognitive characteristics of individual entrepreneurs or groups of entrepreneurs and their actions in the course of internationalisation. This finding supports the argument that a great majority of international entrepreneurship research has emphasised the antecedents of the decision by new firms to internationalise (Ibeh, Crick & Etemad, 2019; Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Zahra, 2005).

Indeed, internationalisation is an entrepreneurial strategic choice (Ibeh et al., 2019; Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Sapienza et al., 2006) that drives information needs and the distribution of information for competitive analysis, resource allocation, and strategy development (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Zahra, Neubaum, & El-Hagrassey, 2002). Stevenson and Jarillo (1990, p. 23), defines entrepreneurship as *“a courageous managerial value creation process through which an individual engages innovative, proactive, calculated risk-taking behaviour designed to prosecute foreign business opportunities presented by multinational market successes and imperfections for financial and non-financial rewards”*. An alternative definition of international entrepreneurship offered by Styles and Seymour incorporates the concept of exchange as put forth by the marketing discipline. Styles and Seymour (2006) define international entrepreneurship as *“the behavioural processes associated with the creation and exchange of value through the identification and exploitation of opportunities that cross national borders.”*

Initially (Oviatt & McDougall, 2000, p. 903) defines entrepreneurship as *“...a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behaviour that crosses*

national borders and is intended to create value in organisations". According to this definition, firm size and age are not a limiting factor. However, the definition of international entrepreneurship has been recently revised to *"the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities -across national borders -to create future goods and services"* (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005, p. 540). They explained their definition as follows: (a) *Discovery*: refers to finding innovative opportunities; (b) *Enactment*: means to proactively put opportunities into use acquiring a competitive advantage; (c) *Evaluation*: is required to interpret the actions taken developing experience and knowledge; (d) *Exploitation*: refers to the future development of the opportunity (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005, p. 540).

2.2.4.3 Firm Growth

Firm growth has been one of the most discussed topics in entrepreneurship research (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; George et al., 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Davidsson et al., 2002). Empirical research on growth persistence often comes from economics literature (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Teece et al., 2016; Helfat, 2007). The growth strategy and management of a firm are to maintain a dynamic fit between the firm international growth strategy (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Schmitt, Raisch & Volberda, 2016), what the firm has to offer (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2017; Heirati, et al., 2016) and what the environment dictates (Pratono, 2016; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Miles & Snow, 1978; Learned et al., 1965). Previous studies have found several factors (e.g. the industry life cycle and the firm's experience curve, see Helfat, 2007) which explain firm growth (Hitt, et al., 2017). The issue has been intensively studied and in 1998 Ardichvili, Cardozo, Harmon,

Vadakath, found that at least 105 studies were focusing on growth in new and/or small firms.

Among the most well-known growth theories are models created by Greiner (1972) and Churchill & Lewis (1983). However, this study will build more upon the ideas of Edith Penrose (1959) who understood growth as an evolutionary process based on the cumulative growth of collective knowledge about the external business environment and on internal capital and human resources, for which production diversification, and the roles of administration, as well as mergers and acquisitions, are all relevant.

On one hand, the general prerequisites for growth have been suggested to be: (1). *entrepreneur's growth orientation*; (2). *adequate firm resources for growth*; and (3). *the existence of a market opportunity for growth* (Hitt, et al., 2017; Davidsson, 1991). Storey (2016,1994) again suggests that three key factors are influencing the growth rate of a small independent firm. These are: (1). *the entrepreneurs' background and access to resources*; (2). *the firm itself*; and (3). *the strategic decisions are taken by the firm once it is trading*. On the other hand, Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Gibb & Davies, 1990; state that there are four types of approaches to firm growth: (1). *Personality-dominated approaches, exploring the influence of personality and capability on growth, including the entrepreneur's personal goals and strategic business aspirations* (Storey, 2016; Chell & Haworth, 1992); (2). *Firm development approaches, seeking to characterise the growth pattern of the firm across stages of development and the influence of factors affecting the growth process* (Gherhes, et al., 2016; Scott & Bruce, 1987); (3). *Business management approaches, paying attention to the importance of business skills and the role*

of functional management, planning, control and formal strategic orientation in terms of shaping the growth and performance of the firm in the marketplace (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Storey, 2016); and (4). Sectoral and broader market-led approaches focusing on the identification of growth constraints and opportunities relating to small firm growth in the context of regional development or the development of specific industrial sectors such as high-technology small firms (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Gherhes et al., 2016; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017; Smallbone, Welter & Ateljevic, 2014). Having established the key elements of entrepreneurship, the next step is to examine processes and their point of intersection which is the focus of the following section.

2.2.5 Process

The literature review indicated that there are different views concerning the meaning of the term “process”. Van den Ven (1992) notes that while the term “process” is commonly used to refer to a collection of concepts, theory relating to the process should address the issues of how and why such processes unfold over time. This is important for two reasons: firstly, to ground the conceptual basis of a process study and secondly to guide the design and conduct of related research (Kuuluvainen, 2013).

2.2.5.1 A process view of the dynamic capability framework

Literature review further indicated that the dynamic capabilities framework is based on the use of processes (Zollo et al., 2016; Winter, 2017). A dynamic capability is not a resource but a process that has an impact on resources (Zollo et al., 2016; Teece et al., 1997; Winter, 2003, 2017). While capabilities are about competing today, dynamic capabilities are more

future-oriented (Teece, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). They view dynamic capabilities as consisting of processes such as opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration (Teece et al., 1997). A firm's performance in these processes is closely related to the capabilities that the firm possesses (Teece et al., 1997).

Dynamic capabilities have also been described as the drivers behind the creation, evolution and reconfiguration of other resources into new sources of competitive advantage (Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017; Doorn et al., 2017; Henderson & Cockburn, 1994); while Eisenhardt and Martin (2001) have specifically defined dynamic capabilities as the firm's processes that use resources – specifically the processes to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources – to match and even create market change. Dynamic capabilities thus are the organisational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die. A dynamic capability is not a resource but a process that has an impact on the resource (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015).

For example, in the search for new business opportunities, managerial capabilities play a significant role (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat & Eisenhardt, 2004). This view is supported by (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Winter, 2017, Easterby-Smith & Prieto, 2008; Zahra et al., 2006; Winter, 2003). These organisational processes consist of operational capabilities (Winter, 2003) which permit the firm to earn income in the present. Dynamic capabilities are higher-level capabilities which modify and change operational capabilities (Ambrosini et al., 2009; Winter, 2003; Danneels, 2002; Collis, 1994). The difference between operational and dynamic capabilities is further illustrated by Zahra et al.,

(2006, p. 921) who state that a new routine for product development is a new operational capability but the ability to change such capabilities is a dynamic capability. This view is supported by Easterby-Smith & Prieto (2008, p. 237) who suggest that *“there is a distinction between dynamic capabilities and operational capabilities with changes in the latter being the visible outcome of dynamic capabilities”*.

In summation, underlying organisational processes are the mechanisms which connect dynamic capabilities, strategy management and strategic entrepreneurship (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Hitt et al., 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Hitt et al., 2009; Helfat, 2007).

2.2.5.2 A process view of strategy management

Through the progressive development of literature on strategy, an increasing acceptance of strategic management as a process emerges (Pettigrew, Cornuel & Hommel, 2014; Verreynne, 2005; Hart, 1992; Pettigrew, 1987). According to Van de Ven (1992, p. 169), strategy research has used the term in three ways. These are (1) process as a logic that explains a causal relationship, (2) process as a category of concepts referring to actions and (3) process as a sequence of events describing change over time. Pettigrew (2002) states that of these three approaches, only the third explicitly and directly observes the process in action and therefore can describe and account for how some entity or issue develops and changes over time (Pettigrew et al., 2014; Rumelt, 2011).

Despite different views concerning the content of the “process”, there are also commonalities among the definitions. Most definitions see that process studies particularly address “how” questions, namely one or more

aspects of “how strategies are formed, implemented and changed” (Chakravarthy & White, 2002). Furthermore, strategy processes are concerned with mechanisms, and invariably these mechanisms involve administrative systems and organisational practices, not to mention the role of managerial behaviour in decisions and actions taken in the organisation.

2.2.6 Internationalisation

The literature has often used the term “internationalisation” as amounting to the international growth of the firm. In other words, international growth has been implicit in the process of internationalisation. It is, therefore, possible to make the distinction between growth that firms gain from their home markets and growth gained from international markets. In this study, international growth is understood as a change process in which firms expand the magnitude, scale, and/or breadth of their operations and develop their organisation while expanding their international operating scope. Internationalisation is a phenomenon researched extensively over the last few decades from a variety of viewpoints and several scholars have contributed theoretical and empirical to research on internationalisation (Jianga, Kotabe, Zhang, Hao, Paul, Wang 2020; Wu & Deng, 2020; Martina et al., 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Knight, 1999, 2015; Ruzzier & Hisrich, 2006; Ruzzier et al., 2006); consequently, a series of meanings and definitions have been developed.

In general, internationalisation is the growth of a firm outside its national boundaries; in more detail, it is concerned with the growth and development of foreign markets (Jianga et al., 2020; Wu & Deng, 2020;

Zucchella & Scabini 2007). Although there have been numerous definitions for internationalisation, this study follows the guidelines provided by Welch and Luostarinen (1988, p. 36) who suggest that internationalisation is “*the process of increasing involvement in international operations.*” Internationalisation is therefore often seen as one type of firm growth; in other words, the growth process is firmly entwined with the firm’s other activities.

2.2.6.1 Evolution of internationalisation

The extant literature review further suggested that from a historical perspective, the beginning of study about internationalisation in the late 1950s and 1960s concentrated on multinational enterprises (MNEs) and their international activities or foreign direct investment (FDI) activities. Before that period, intellectual antecedents to internationalisation or international economic development was conducted under trade theories in which distinctions can be made between traditional and modern trade theories. *Traditional trade theories* broadly focused on the supply side of the economy; examples of those ‘early’ internationalisation theories are absolute cost advantage theory (Smith, 1776), comparative cost advantage theory (Ricardo, 1817), and the Heckscher-Ohlin model (Ohlin, 1933). As a counterweight to the foremost trade theories, several other perspectives were introduced such are; an *economic perspective* which describes MNEs internationalisation process approach (Product life cycle theory, industrial organisation theory and the eclectic paradigm); the *behavioural perspective* emphasised the behaviour of MNE, for example, Penrose’s (1959) theory of the growth of the firm, and Cyert & March’s (1963) behavioural theory of the firm; this perspective highlighted the importance of the context of the

firm in terms of their relationships and networks and; resource-based view perspective. The theories mentioned above will be briefly discussed in the subsection below.

2.2.6.2 SME international Perspectives

According to the literature review, a standard international definition of the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) does not exist (OECD, 2017). SMEs are defined differently in the legislation across countries, in particular since the dimension “small” and “medium” of a firm are relative to the size of the domestic economy (OECD, 2017). There have been calls for greater convergence in defining SMEs to facilitate comparative studies (OECD, 2004, 2017), the usage of different definitions persists. The most common references are from the legal definitions for SMEs based on employment, turnover and asset thresholds, varying for firms located in North America (< 500 employees), Europe (< 250 employees) and Japan (< 300 employees).

For statistical purposes, the OECD refers to SMEs as the firms employing up to 249 persons, with the following breakdown: micro (1 to 9), small (10 to 49) and medium (50-249). This provides for the best comparability given the varying data collection practices across countries, noting that some countries use different conventions. For this study, an SME is defined using the European Union’s definition [< 250 employees, $\leq \text{€ } 50$ million turnover or a balance sheet total of $\leq \text{€ } 43$ million] since the empirical research is being undertaken in the UK and for ease of comparability with other European studies (see Table 3.1 for a full definition). Since the European Commission adopted this definition in 2003, it has been useful in giving a clear standard for European firms.

A review of SME literature finds consistent reporting of SME leapfrogging through internationalisation stages, multiple strategies being pursued simultaneously and evidence of both supporting and contradictory findings of SME internationalisation via incremental stages (Wu & Deng, 2020; Autio, 2017; Child et al., 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Bell & Loane, 2010). Evidence of accelerated internationalisation infers that prior theories do not explain the internationalisation of small, knowledge-intensive, and service-intensive firms (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Bowen, 2019; Knight, 1999, 2015; Rialp, Rialp, & Knight, 2005). The authors concluded that one theoretical framework does not capture the complex SME internationalisation process. In general, research on SMEs increased in the early 1990s to understand the challenges and behaviour of small firms. A review of the extant literature shows that several scholars have contributed theoretical and empirical to research that has highlighted various aspects of internationalisation (Coviello, 2018; Autio, 2017; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015; Bell & Loane, 2010; Fillis, 2001; Coviello & McAuley, 1999).

In general terms, studies focusing on the international growth of SMEs can be divided into two research streams (Wu & Deng, 2020; Child et al., 2017; Gherhes et al., 2016). First stream focuses on international new ventures that are international from inception; the second stream examines the internationalisation of established SMEs. The first studies stream of internationalisation is especially interested in firms which are international from their inception (i.e. born global and international new ventures: Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Bowen, 2019; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Knight 2015; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015; Buckley, 2009, 2011; Liesch et al., 2011). Researchers within this stream have examined both the antecedents and consequences of internationalisation (Wu & Deng, 2020; Autio, 2017;

Hånell, Pervez & Ghauri, 2016; Autio, Sapienza, & Almeida, 2000; Zahra & Garvis, 2000). A review of SME literature on SME international growth (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Bowen, 2019; Rialp et al., 2005) reveals that early internationalisation of small firms is evidenced across the globe and is not a country or industry-specific, an observation also noted by (Coviello, 2018; Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee, 2018; Coviello & McAuley, 1999). These authors note that early internationalisation may be most similar to the knowledge-based view. Several researchers perceive “born-global” firms and international new ventures as entrepreneurial firms whose managers perceive the world as their marketplace from inception. In comparison to exporters, “born-global” firms and INVs generally are niche marketers.

An examination of how dynamic capabilities facilitate the survivability of SME social enterprises (Ince & Hahn, 2020) concluded dynamic capabilities significantly influenced sensing and seizing capacity of the firms. Also, a comprehensive national study of 2424 Swiss SMEs, Hollenstein (2005) noted a significant amount of international activities among high-tech and knowledge-intensive SME compared to other SMEs. Results indicate that human capital and R&D resource advantages, which provided innovating capabilities, were the most important drivers of Internationalisation (Bowen, 2019; Leonidou et al., 2018; Hollenstein, 2005) “Born-global” research also concurs. Additionally, a study of 186 “born-global” firms in Denmark and 106 located in the U.S. attributes the success of “born-global” firms to leveraging intangible resources comprised of know-how, skills, and managers’ experiences of managers (Leonidou et al., 2018; Autio, 2017; Knight, Madsen, & Servais, 2004).

The second stream also looks at the internationalisation of established yet small firms. The majority of the studies in this stream focus on various aspects of SME export activities in terms of the antecedents and the process of exporting and export performance (Coviello, 2018; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Autio, 2017; Hånell et al., 2016; Bell & Loane, 2010). This body of literature factors contributing to small firm internationalisation in which several authors conclude that management significantly influences international activities (Autio, 2017; Loane, Bell & Cunningham, 2014; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009) by affecting the speed, mode, and direction of internationalisation (Leonidou & Katsikeas, 1996; Chetty & Hamilton, 1993; Aaby & Slater, 1989; Zou & Stan, 1998;). Additionally, a review of the export literature by Leonidou, Katsikeas, and Piercy (1998) finds that both objective and subjective managerial factors influence SME internationalisation. Objective factors, such as education, experience, and foreign exposure, positively influence international expansion, with experience having a strong effect. Subjective perceptions of opportunities and barriers, and managers' attitudes toward risk were also found to affect SME internationalisation.

Study finds that in some cases, firm size (Holden, 1986) and resources affect the internationalisation of small firms (Moen, 1999). Bilkey and Tesar (1977) found smaller firms were more likely to export as opposed to entering foreign markets in a manner that required greater investment (Liesch et al., 2011). An examination of 164 Japanese SMEs in 19 industries by Lu and Beamish (2001) concluded that SMEs face a liability of foreignness when first entering international markets. However, liabilities of foreignness are reduced through experience (Knight & Liesch, 2016; Lu & Beamish, 2001). However other research finds size not impeding

internationalisation; small firms can overcome their small size (Baird, Lyles, & Orris, 1994). According to Wolf and Pett (2007), there is no significant difference between small and large firm export intensity. Prior studies indicate that small firms are: (1) less affected by adverse external changes than large firms, (2) able to adapt prices to currency fluctuations more quickly, (3) more flexible, and (4) willing to take on greater risk (Ali & Swiercz, 1991).

A study of SMEs by Liesch et al., (2011) concluded that size was not a barrier to internationalisation and that SMEs find unique ways to overcome smallness. Cavusgil & Knight, (2015) found no significant relationship between firm size and the propensity to export. Westhead, Wright, Ucbasaran, and Martin (2001) argue that the ability to export is not a function of firm size and age but more importantly, entrepreneurial human capital and the internal resources of the firm (Knight & Liesch 2016; Liesch et al., 2011). SMEs face not only the same challenges as larger firms, but also potential deficiencies in resources not present in larger firms (Wu & Deng, 2020; Knight & Liesch 2016; Westhead, Wright, & Ucbasaran, 2004; Bilkey & Tesar, 1977). Fisher, Kuratko, Bloodgood & Hornsby, (2017) provide empirical evidence that small firm internationalisation and sales growth is the result of innovation, product differentiation, and top management experience (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Aslan, 2017); and that internationalisation is higher in ventures emphasising product differentiation strategies (Coviello, 2018; OECD, 2017). These authors also noted that industry-specific conditions often drive the rate of internationalisation. Internationalisation studies of small retail firms conclude that retail SMEs are successful at offering differentiated products since smaller retailers cannot compete directly with large firms on price

(Hutchinson, Alexander, Quinn, & Doherty, 2007; Hutchinson, Quinn, & Alexander, 2006).

In summation, a review of the extant literature shows World trade is growing fast and, opens up several opportunities for the SME sector to take advantage of (Jianga et al., 2020; WTO, 2017; OECD, 2017). SMEs all over the world are thus internationalising at a faster rate today and therefore the theories that can explain and guide internationalisation are of extreme importance than ever before (Coviello, 2018; Leonidou et al., 2018; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015). Key strategic activities have been reviewed in the literature and the extant literature suggested that the characteristics of the firm define its strategic activities (Jianga et al., 2020; Martina et al., 2017). In the case of SMEs, strategic activities are usually less formal (Wu & Deng, 2020; Beaver & Prince, 2004): SMEs tend to focus mostly on the implementation of strategy, rather than the other phases, especially its formulation. Literature also reveals that SMEs that spend more time on strategic activities tend to be more successful than those that do not (Jianga et al., 2020; WTO, 2017; OECD, 2017; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

2.2.6.3 Barriers to SME internationalisation

Barriers to SME internationalisation are well documented (Leonidou et al., 2018; Leonidou et al, 2002; Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Piercy, 1998; Morgan & Katsikeas, 1997a; Leonidou & Katsikeas, 1996). Barriers to SME internationalisation include: (1). a lack of strategic resources, such as an experienced manager to oversee the international expansion process, (2). operational deficiencies, such as the ability to use the marketing mix to meet foreign market requirements, (3). informational related barriers,

which entail limited intelligence generating capabilities, and (4). process-based restrictions, or problems in the communication process needed to create and deliver the product (Shuman & Seeger, 1986). Yet SMEs exhibit successful internationalisation and at speeds greater than resource-rich MNEs. Furthermore, the process of SME international is not systematic and is in direct contrast to the traditional stage process of internationalisation (Morgan & Katsikeas, 1997b). Factors found to be the driving forces of SME internationalisation that overcome barriers include prior international experience, foreign travel, and the number of foreign languages spoken (Leonidou et al, 2018; Hutchinson, Quinn, & Alexander, 2006). A review of small firm internationalisation literature spanning several decades by Lu and Beamish (2001) notes that innovative thinking, creativity, opportunity recognition, and risk-taking positively influence firm Internationalisation (Leonidou et al, 2018). Wolf and Pett (2007) state that an entrepreneurial orientation aids in overcoming size barriers for international growth.

2.2.6.4 Service Firm

Extent literature stated that several changes took place which fundamentally affected the international marketing of services (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Costa et al., 2016; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016 Bell et al., 2004; Lovelock & Yip, 1996; Patterson & Cacic, 1995). The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) paved the way for the growth of services internationally (Fieleke, 1995). Reduced barriers to foreign market entry resulting from trade agreements and technology developments supported global service expansion (WTO, 2007a, 2014). This study supports the position that international services are so complex that externally valid theories may

never emerge (Radulovich, Javalgi & Scherer, 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Costa et al., 2016; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Clark et al., 1996). One group of researchers has suggested that there is no need for specific theories of service firm internationalisation because the existing theories of internationalisation are directly applicable to the service context or could be adapted to the context of service firms (Radulovich et al., 2018; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Buckley et al., 1992; Boddewyn et al., 1986). Other groups of researchers have found that patterns of internationalisation in the service sector differ from those in the manufacturing sector (Erramilli & Rao, 1993). Javalgi and Martin (2007) concluded that theories based on manufacturing firms provide a strong theoretical background for further extension and modification of the existing research to a multinational service context, but there is still a need to develop new theories that combine the various theoretical constructs to explain and predict a service firm's behaviour.

According to several studies (Jianga et al., 2020; Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Erramilli, 1990) service firms usually, follow one of the following described internationalisation patterns. *First*, a service firm can internationalise through a customer following approach. *Second*, service firms can internationalise as a reaction to a competing service firm's actions. *Finally*, internationally active service firms can be called market seekers. These three patterns can be linked to the Network approach. Jianga et al., (2020), Radulovich et al., (2018), Wirtz & Lovelock, (2016) and Erramilli and Rao (1993) have identified that the internationalisation of service firms has mostly been done through foreign direct investment and contractual arrangements. Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016 and Lovelock and Yip (1996) offer a service classification framework to aid in understanding the ease of global service expansion (Coviello, 2018;

Autio, 2017; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Cainelli, Evangelista, & Savona, 2006). The service categories include people-processing services, possession-processing services, and information-based services (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015).

People-processing services involve a transfer of an intangible product to a physical person, such as in the case of barbers or health care providers. The distinguishing factor of people-processing services is that the customer takes part in service production. Similarly, the customer or service provider must often travel to the other party and use equipment for the service to take place. For this reason, geographic proximity to the customer is important. People-processing services must also adapt to the local culture to overcome local market barriers or hire individuals who possess education and work experience in the foreign market (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Radulovich et al., 2018; Fisher et al., 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016 Bloodgood, Sapienza, & Almeida, 1996). As a result of service variability, standardised service solutions are difficult, and customer involvement in service production inhibits the ability to gain economies of scale. *Possession-processing services* differ from people-processing in that a service is performed on a physical product to enhance its value to the consumer. Dry cleaning or car repair are examples of this category. Similar to people-processing services, a possession-processing service most often is brought to the consumer or the customer may travel to the service to partake of its benefits (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016). Geographic presence is also an integral part of this service type. Due to the standardisation of the service, possession-processing services are more amenable to Internationalisation

since the service provider need not cope with cultural and customer differences to any great extent (Knight, 2015).

Information-based services are the result of insight from data or information collection, analysis, and interpretation. Information-based services globalise with greater ease since they may be delivered via electronic means. Customers do not need to be physically close to the service provider; hence, geographic proximity is not critical (Radulovich et al., 2018; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). Examples of information-based services include banking, accounting, legal services, insurance, health, or consulting services. Information-based services can easily be split between centralized back-office processing and front-office local delivery to facilitate global expansion and economies of scale. Customisation may also be offered using supplementary services that reflect the local market willingness to pay for differentiation (Wang et al., 2016).

Another well-recognised service classification framework that describes service inseparability is found in foreign market entry mode literature. The framework, proposed by Erramilli and Rao (1990), differentiates between "*hard services*" and "*soft services*." Hard services (architectural/engineering, consultants, and computer/information technology firms, banking services and research) permit separation of production from consumption and are not affected by inseparability (Radulovich et al., 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Wang et al., 2016). Alternatively, soft services (healthcare, restaurants, and hairstyling salons) involve simultaneous service creation and consumption, which requires the physical proximity of partners. Therefore, hard services are easier to internationalise (Radulovich et al., 2018; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018;

Erramilli & Rao, 1993). An extensive review of international new venture literature finds that certain factors consistently appear to facilitate early service internationalisation, including strong previous international experience, market knowledge, market commitment, unique intangible assets based on knowledge management, high-value creation from product differentiation, technological innovativeness, narrowly defined customer markets, a customer orientation, close customer relationships, and flexibility (Radulovich et al., 2018; Fisher et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Wang et al., 2016). A similar list of factors is also noted by Knight (2015) and McDougall, Oviatt, and Shrader (2003).

2.2.6.5 Service Characteristics

Extent literature stated that services are “*performances, rather than objects, they cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched in the same manner in which goods can be sensed*” (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985). In contrast to goods, services are typically created during consumption and the customer is often involved and physically present during the consumption process. Service literature suggests that there are different dimensions relevant to service product types (Fisher et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016; Styles, Patterson, & La, 2005). More importantly, these differences among services are posited to affect the global spread and replication of services in the international marketplace (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Lovelock & Yip, 1996). One of the most prominent service categorisations describes four key characteristics that differentiate service products from physical goods: *intangibility*, *heterogeneity*, *inseparability*, and *perishability* (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Lovelock & Yip, 1996; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985; Lovelock, 1983).

Service characteristics	Definition (Knight, 1999)	Researchers
Intangibility	Products are 'performances' in opposite to physical goods cannot be touched, transported or stored	Boddewyn et al (1986), Erramilli (1990), Enderwick (1992), Clark et al., (1996), Lovelich and Yip (1996), Winsted and Patterson (1998), Knight (1999, 2015), Javalgi et al., (2003)
Inseparability	Production cannot be separated from consumption	Erramilli (1990), Enderwick (1992), Winsted and Patterson (1998), Knight (1999, 2015), Javalgi et al., (2003), Lovelock and Yip (1996)
Heterogeneity	Unlike most physical products, no one service performance is identical to another. Services are often customized.	Erramilli (1990), Enderwick (1992), Winsted and Patterson (1998), Knight (1999, 2015)
Perishability	Cannot be stored – Must be consumed at the time they are produced.	Erramilli (1990), Enderwick (1992), Lovelock and Yip (1996), Winsted and Patterson (1998), Knight (1999, 2015)
Persistence of international differences	Services are often people-centred, thus prone to culture.	Clark et al., (1996), Knight (2015, 1999)

Table 3 - Service categorisations

Intangibility differentiates the nature of the service act and who or what is the recipient of the service (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017;

Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Lovelock, 1983). According to Lovelock (1983), tangible services are directed at people's bodies (healthcare, hair-cutting, transportation) or other physical possessions (landscaping, laundry service, freight transportation). Intangible services are actions directed at people's minds (education, museums, and information services) or toward other intangible assets (banking, legal services, accounting, securities, and insurance).

Heterogeneity describes the degree of service uniqueness provided to each consumer, such as in the case of financial, consulting, and accounting services. Heterogeneity is present when services vary from consumer to consumer. For example, professional financial services are customised to deliver varying degrees of consumer financial risk, investments, time frames, and goals for each service client based upon individualized consumer objectives (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016). In contrast, homogeneity of services infers that there is a high degree of service consistency, such as in the form of a standard quality, a reliable service, and consistent service delivery. Examples of service homogeneity include consistent delivery of a pre-recorded entertainment program (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016).

Inseparability refers to the simultaneous production and consumption of goods, such as when the customer is a co-producer of the service. Examples of inseparable services include air travel and hotel services. In contrast, separability refers to the degree to which the customer is not involved during service production and need not be present during service consumption. For example, professional financial managers receive and invest funds from clients without the consumer is present. Therefore, some

services lend themselves to the separation of the production and consumption processes, as well as the separation of the service provider and consumer. Separable services may be more easily internationalised (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016).

Lastly, **perishability** indicates that a service may not be captured and stored for later use, such as in the case of hotels. Rooms are either occupied or not occupied, and service capacity use varies accordingly. In contrast, examples of non-perishable services include music recordings of entertainment artists, news broadcasts, and educational video-recorded instructional classes. In these services, the creation of the service product may take place at a different time from service consumption (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016).

Although Wirtz & Lovelock, (2016) and Lovelock's (Lovelock, 1983) service classifications provide greater clarity of differences between goods and services. These authors state that several changes in services have taken place: (1) the addition of a service component to many manufacturing products has blurred service versus product categories, (2) replacement of humans with automation and improvements in quality have reduced variability or heterogeneity, and (3) advancements in information technology and outsourcing have enabled the separation of the service creator from the user. These evolutionary changes have led to services that do not fit neatly into services categories. Therefore, a closer examination of service characteristics is warranted.

The service industry includes a broad range of services such as banking, travel and tourism, health care, and insurance real estate services,

equipment leasing, hotel and restaurants, tourism, telecommunications, and professional service firms (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016). This research focuses on professional services, which involve highly skilled human assets. Human assets possess specialised knowledge for professional service creation and delivery (Harsch & Festing 2020; Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Hitt, Bierman, Uhlenbruck, Shimizu, 2006; Greenwood & Empson, 2003). Professional services, a subsector of services, encompasses law firms, accounting firms, engineering consulting firms, and management consulting firms.

As a type of knowledge-based firm, professional service firms create value through the hiring, development, and use of human capital (Hitt et al., 2003; Lepak & Snell, 1999). Professional service firms that are “intensive in their inputs of technology and human capital” are known as knowledge-based firms (Styles, Patterson, & La, 2005, p. 105). Knowledge-intensive firms include legal services, engineering consulting, project management, and information technology firms. Regarding SMEs professional service, the confidential nature of private small businesses has made conducting research on professional service SME internationalisation difficult (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016).

However, a few studies of large MNE law firms have advanced our understanding of professional service internationalisation (Brock, Yaffe, & Dembovsky, 2006; Hitt, Bierman, Uhlenbruck, & Shimizu, 2006; Kor & Leblebici, 2005). Research indicates that expansion of professional law firms has been accomplished by deploying expatriates to foreign locations while training foreign employees in domestic locations. After training,

foreign employees are transferred back to their home country to staff local offices. Professional service Internationalisation, such as in the case of law firms, relies heavily upon the intellectual property, specialist expertise, and knowledge; all of which are key intangible drivers of successful international performance (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Anderson & Gatignon, 1986; Erramilli & Rao, 1990, 1993).

Professional services characteristics require different competencies. In recognition of the unique characteristics of services, a service-dominant logic (S-D logic) has evolved. S-D logic addresses special service competencies and the customer's role in value creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Lusch, Vargo, & O'Brien, 2007). Service dominant logic recognises the customer as a co-partner or operant resource in the exchange who interacts with firm resources for co-creation of value (Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). These service factors affect separability and internationalisation. S-D logic contends that service value is dependent upon competencies in acquiring knowledge from customers, leveraging resources for value creation, and adapting to a dynamic environment (Lusch et al., 2007). Therefore, professional service international expansion involves consideration of the competencies required of service personnel, or a service firm's human capital (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016).

Since service classes vary by (1) the extent of customer contact, and (2) the degree of service customisation (Lovelock, 1983), these factors affect the skills needed by the service provider and the ease of service transfer across borders (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016). Customised professional services require greater involvement,

increased communication, and may involve the transfer of power and control to the service provider who defines the nature of the service. In the case of highly customised services, professional service employees diagnose the nature of the service need, design a service solution, and deliver the service to the satisfaction of the customer. This process involves the professional service personnel exercising judgment on behalf of the client to create a customised service solution (Radulovich et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016).

With highly customised products, service creation and delivery may also entail a high degree of face-to-face contact, which requires that the service personnel possess judgment, discretion, and adaptation skills (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2017; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016; Patterson & Cicic, 1995). Strong interpersonal skills, technical skills and cultural sensitivity are vital to engineering, medical, and legal services in international contexts. High levels of face-to-face contact are prevalent among professional services, such as architectural, legal, property consulting, insurance brokering, customised software, and computer systems services (Styles et al., 2005). Thus, human capital is a key resource for a professional service firm. Prime examples of knowledge-intensive professional services that require extensive professional training and highly skilled service personnel include financial, legal, medical, and engineering/architecture services. (Jones et al., 2014; Wyton & Payne, 2014).

2.3 Chapter Conclusion

In summation, this chapter has examined the literature extensively on dynamic capabilities, SME internationalisation, strategic entrepreneurship,

strategy and strategic management, to identify elements common to these constructs, thereby providing the opportunity to determine their point of intersection, the literature on dynamic capabilities, SME internationalisation and strategic entrepreneurship. The literature on the relationship between dynamic capabilities, strategic entrepreneurship and strategy, and the topic of strategic management was subsequently examined and compared to themes considered central to the founding concepts to consider the fundamental elements of dynamic capabilities, strategic entrepreneurship.

Limitations within the literature were then identified, such as the need for integrated approach since no single theory was able to provide an extensive understanding of the complex role of SMEs, turbulent international business landscape, dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurship and international growth of firms. This then led to reviewing recent developments in dynamic capabilities and strategic entrepreneurship in literature which effectively address some of these limitations and highlight a change in the direction of dynamic capabilities research. Lastly, a review of strategic entrepreneurship in the context of SME managing consulting both on policy and practice was conducted to identify the potential application and benefits of dynamic capabilities strategic entrepreneurship within this domain.

Key findings derived from a review of the literature on dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurship, strategic entrepreneurship and strategic management revealed six elements fundamental across the disciplines. Collectively these elements represent dynamic capabilities and strategic entrepreneurship both a field of study and a specific concept at the intersection of entrepreneurship and strategy, which is relevant to SME business activity at

all levels. Given these findings, the following chapter presents a framework of dynamic capabilities which incorporates the core elements of strategic entrepreneurship discussed and presented in this chapter and addresses the limitations identified within contemporary research.

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter builds on the concepts detailed in the literature review and develops the study's conceptual framework for SME internationalisation in a turbulent market environment. Essentially, this framework incorporates elements from dynamic capability, strategic management, strategic entrepreneurship by drawing on findings and conclusions in Chapter 2, to present a more complete account of successful SMEs internationalisation in a turbulent market environment.

This chapter argues that for SME management consulting firms to internationalise, gain and sustain competitive operations, with a turbulent business environment there must be a fit between the firm's operations and underlying strategies. Indeed, it is reasonable to argue that to survive and grow with a turbulent business environment, a firm must be able to adapt to changes occurring in the business environment, continually assess the environmental factors which intern allows a firm to formulate better strategies and better allocate resources to respond to changes in the business environment.

The conceptual framework is therefore based on how organisations in the turbulent marketplace emerge, develop, grow, change, decline and rejuvenate over time. Thus, conceptualising dynamic capabilities as a firm's ability to recognise shifts in the environment, the formulation of a response, and reconfiguration. This provides the basis for the proposed methodology which is described in Chapter.

3.2 Developing the Study's Conceptual Framework Development

During the literature review, it was found that there are forces, such as dynamic capabilities (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Teece, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013); strategic entrepreneurship (Hitt et al., 2017; Mazzei et al., 2017; George et al., 2016; Hitt et al., 2001); adaptive capacity of a firm, (North & Varvakis, 2018; Song & Jing, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Child et al., 2017; Barney, 1991, 2017; Child, 1997; Leonard Barton, 1992; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990, Miles & Snow, 1978), organisational processes (Winter, 2003, 2017), a firm's history (Teece, 2018; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Teece et al., 1997), manager's capabilities (Teece, 2007, 2014) which underpinned success in the turbulent international marketplace.

The conceptual framework (Figure 3) used in this study is created by combining the findings introduced in the previous chapter. In other words, the study studies how SMEs have achieved growth from international markets, and the role of organisational processes and dynamic capabilities in this development. Therefore, dynamic capabilities occupy a central place within this study and have been established in the previous chapter how it provides logic to, and sometimes interconnect and overlapped with some research traditions within the field of strategic management, entrepreneurship, strategic entrepreneurship. For example, dynamic capabilities encompass the organisational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die (Teece, 2018; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Kuuluvainen, 2013). This is similar to entrepreneurship which embraces identifying and

exploiting external opportunities to create new economic activities, while strategic management embraces a set of actions to produce competitive advantage and maintain what has been created (Hitt, et al., 2017; George et al., 2016; Hitt et al., 2009; Venkataraman & Sarasvathy 2001). The approaches could be considered complementary rather than substitutive and should be view as a multidimensional construct of interrelated and complementary dimensions.

Conceptualisation began by extracting major categories of dynamic capabilities from literature and subsequently, investigate how those categories of dynamic capabilities are related to the nature of strategic entrepreneurship by additional review of the literature. From this base position, five major categories were derived across the research traditions which are: environmental sensing (opportunity search), opportunity seizing (resource acquisition), transformation (resources refrigeration), strategic flexibility, entrepreneurial orientation and organisational learning. The identified categories and corresponding literature sources are summarised in Table 4.

This study uses these categories as a base for developing a conceptual framework to explain sources of sustainable performance of established firms. This is because of the limitations detailed in Chapter 2 and the subsequent analysis of the fundamental elements of international growth in a turbulent market environment, it may be argued that a successful SME internationalisation approach is a combination of these elements. Collectively these elements represent strengths of a firm and a potential source of advantage.

Dynamic Capabilities Categories	Corresponding Resources
Opportunity Search (Sensing)	Teece (2018), Barney (2017), Primc & Čater, (2016), Patterson (2015), Dixon (2014), Lin (2014), Li (2014), Martelo (2013), Kuuluvainen, (2013), Chang (2012), Cheng (2012), Petit (2012), Cui (2011), Kazozcu (2011), Martelo (2011), Pavlou (2011), Roy (2011), Barreto (2010), Hung (2010), Helfat et al., (2009), Teece (2007), Wang (2007), Menguc (2006),
Resource Acquisition (Seizing)	Chassagnon (2015), Lin (2014), Li (2014), Daniel (2014), Dixon (2014), Kuuluvainen, (2013), Steiber (2013), Martelo (2013), Jantuneu (2012), Chang (2012), Cheng (2012), Petit (2012), Yung (2012), Cui (2011), Evers (2011), Martelo (2011), Barreto (2010), Helfat et al., (2009), Anand (2009), Kachaner (2008), Teece (2007), Wang (2007), Adner (2003), Menguc (2006), Eisenhardt (2000).
Resource Reconfiguration (Transforming)	Helfat, & Raubitschek, (2018), Sune (2015), Lin (2014), Li (2014), Daniel (2014), Dixon (2014), Kuuluvainen, (2013), Zhan (2013), Cheng (2012), Jantuneu (2012), Petit (2012), Yung (2012), Chang (2012), Roy (2011), Cui (2011), Evers (2011), Pavlou (2011), Kazozcu (2011), Chirico (2010), Barreto (2010), Wu (2010), Kachaner (2008), Teece (2007), Wang (2007), Zahra (2006), Wu (2006), Hobday (2005), Helfat (2003), Eisenhardt (2000), Teece (1997),
Entrepreneurial orientation	Teece (2018), Primc & Čater, 2016, Chassagnon (2015), Dixon (2014), Eriksson (2014), Steiber (2013), Wu (2013), Chang (2012), Yang (2012), Roy (2011), Chirico (2010), Hung (2010), Zhou (2010), Anand (2009), Alegre (2008), Herrmann (2007), Wang (2007), Weerawardena (2007), Menguc (2006), Ahuja (2001),
Organisational learning	Winter (2017), Patterson (2015), Schneckenberg (2015) Eriksson (2014), Zhan (2013), Steiber (2013), Mahroum (2013), Wu (2013), Jantuneu (2012), Argote (2012), Chang (2012), Yang (2012), Chien (2012), Pavlou (2011), Martelo (2011), Zheng (2011), Chirico (2010), Hung (2010), Wu (2010), Anand (2009), Alegre

	(2008), Liao (2008), Wang (2007), Cepeda (2007), Teece (2007), Wu (2006), Zahra (2006), Zollo (2002), Eisenhardt (2000), Teece (1997),
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Table 4 - Dynamic capabilities Categories and the Corresponding Resources.

3.2.1 Turbulent International Marketplace Environment

In this study, the concept is referred to high levels of change in the international marketplace environment, which has resulted in increased unpredictability and uncertainty, making it difficult for firms to map cause-effect relationships between different variables in decision making (Doorn et al., 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Borch & Batalden, 2015; Todorova & Durisin, 2007). Similarly, the term market dynamism refers to the rate of changes in the international market environment. This also takes account of changes in the composition of internal customers to need and their requirements (Heirati et al., 2016; Pratono, 2016; Jaworski & Kohli 1993), the volatility in the international market environment including changes in product/service offerings and competitor moves, and changes in the services process (North & Varvakis, 2018; Germain et al., 1994).

This study supports the assertion that in the turbulent international marketplace, it is impossible to predict which competencies or strategies will be successful and for how long. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that a dynamic and rapidly changing business environment influence the firms in its ability to survival, growth and performance. This view finds support in the works of (Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017; Amit & Han, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016). Therefore, to survive and grow, a firm must be able to continually adapt to changes occurring in the business

environment, whether they be economic, social or political. (Doorn et al., 2017; Zollo et al., 2016) According to Heirati et al., (2016), competitive intensity and environmental turbulent both influence firm performance. This is in addition to the developments in the field of technology, science, innovations and fast-changing client needs have equally generated more complexities and uncertainties in the business environment (Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017).

The strategic processes used by businesses operating in a turbulent environment must enable the organisation to continuously adapt, innovate, and even change themselves to survive and thrive in evolving market conditions (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Child, 2017; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt and Tabrizi, 1995:84, Galunic and Eisenhardt, 2001:1229) as well as be able to re-allocate available resources as priorities and demands change (Teece, 1997, 2007, 2017; Fowler et al, 2000:357). This perspective is consistent with what is termed by the literature as dynamic capabilities. According to Branzei and Vertinsky (2006:75), sustained innovativeness depends on each firm set of dynamic capabilities.

The greater the complexities and uncertainties in the business environment, the higher the level of environmental turbulent experienced by a firm. At the same time, these factors are the source of opportunities, as well as the cause of dynamism, complexity and uncertainty in the business environment (North & Varvakis, 2018; Pratono, 2016; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989). In other therefore to support managerial efforts to gain, sustain and competitive in turbulent international market environments it is argued that there must be a fit

between a firm's operations and strategies. In practice, such strategies can be best achieved through competitive priorities, for example, competitive priorities help to ensure that a firm's operations are following its strategies (North & Varvakis, 2018; Wernerfelt, 2016; Borch & Batalden, 2015).

3.2.2 International Growth

In this study, the concept of internationalisation is the international growth of SMEs management consulting firms. According to international entrepreneurship theory, the key to internationalisation nowadays is the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship, originally conceived by Schumpeter (1934), refers to a person or a function across an organisation. An entrepreneurial model of strategy discussed in the early writings of economists was described as a search for new opportunities where the goal of the organisation is growth (Lawyer, 1945) informs the concept of this study. Therefore, in this study, the growth strategy and management of a firm are to maintain a dynamic fit between the firm international growth strategy (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn, Heyden & Volberda, 2017; Schmitt, Raisch & Volberda, 2016), what the firm has to offer (Heirati, et al., 2016) and what the environment dictates (Pratono, 2016; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Miles & Snow, 1978; Learned et al., 1965).

3.2.3 Dynamic Capabilities

In this study, the concept of dynamic capabilities will be referring primarily to the highest-order dynamic capabilities, the sensing, seizing, and transforming competencies that aggregate and direct the various ordinary capabilities and the second-order dynamic capabilities. The highest-order capabilities are those on which top management is (or should be) most

focused in a turbulent environmental state such as changing technology landscape and/or changing client needs (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019; Teece, 2018; Kuuluvainen, 2013). They are the most relevant for in turbulent marketplace especially in innovation and selection of business models that address the challenges and opportunities the firm is endeavouring to solve/exploit (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). Dynamic capabilities thus are the organisational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die (Doorn et al., 2017; Gherhes et al., 2016; Borch & Batalden, 2015).

3.2.3.1 Opportunity Search - Sensing

Sensing refers to the management of different sources of information and knowledge that need to be translated into leading problems and unmet service needs before a more focused conceptualisation of new service solutions follows in the seizing phase (Song & Jing, 2017; Primc & Čater, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Hertog et al., 2010). Literature suggests that service firms should actively engage in sensing and establish formal processes for this approach. Searching for new growth potential from abroad can be challenging for SMEs management consulting firm because building an extensive picture from the competition in certain markets demands that management gathers knowledge concerning recent and predicted changes in the local market environment (Song & Jing, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013).

As Teece et al., (1997) note, a firm must have the ability to evaluate its environment and continuously develop new ideas and, as a consequence, new business opportunities. According to Teece (2009, 2014), the micro-

foundation of *sensing* might include (but is not limited to) the following processes: to identify target market segment, changing customer needs; to tap into exogenous technology; to tap innovation (from suppliers and co-implementors) and; to direct internal R&D and select new technologies.

Thus “Organisations must develop information-processing mechanisms capable of detecting trends, events, competitors, markets, and technological developments relevant to their survival.” (Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017) The type of information, the frequency of sensing, the filtering mechanisms will depend on the level of dynamism of the environment; basically, on how often changes are expected (North & Varvakis, 2018; Song & Jing, 2017; Wernerfelt, 2016; Schmitt et al., 2016). In general, there have been two slightly different views concerning the relationship between opportunity search processes and dynamic capabilities (Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). One stream suggests that opportunity search processes are the same as dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2009, 2014; Augier & Teece, 2007), whereas the other stream suggests that opportunity search processes are not dynamic capabilities in and of themselves. Instead, they are managerial and organisational processes that underpin and enable the deployment of dynamic capabilities (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat, 2007). This study leans towards the latter view and opportunity search processes are understood as one class of processes underpinning dynamic capabilities. This again consists of operational capabilities such as capabilities to scan the market environment efficiently (Primc & Čater, 2016; Lee et al., 2002; Zollo & Winter, 2002) and to generate new ideas (Kuuluvainen, 2013; McKelvie & Davidsson, 2006). However, both

streams admit that opportunity search processes are important elements in dynamic capabilities.

3.2.3.2 Resource Acquisition - Seizing

Teece (2009) defines *seizing* as the structures, procedures, designs and incentives for identifying that changes are required once a new technological or market opportunity is sensed. This includes four micro-foundations: selecting the decision-making protocols; delineating the customer solution and the business model; selecting the enterprise boundaries to manage complements and control platforms and building loyalty and commitment (Schilke et al., 2018; Amit & Han, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013). According to Helat and Raubitschek (2018) and Helfat (2007) one of the most important 'how' questions related to dynamic capabilities concerns how firms can build or acquire new resources and capabilities. After a firm's managers have observed new business opportunities, they must figure out how to interpret new events and developments, which technologies to pursue and which market segments to target (Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). The selection of new resources comprises an important dynamic managerial capability (Song and Jing, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Helfat et al., 2007, p. 117) because of resources, in general, have a critical role in the success of the firm (Amit & Han, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). Helfat and Peteraf (2015) state that firms often need new resources to respond to changing customer demands and changes in the external environment.

As a result, the ability to obtain new resources – whether physical, financial, or human – is critical to support the firm as it grows (Barney, 1991, 2017).

One key resource that can have a positive effect on a firm's growth is technology (Bagheri et al., 2019; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). This is because new technological knowledge may complement, and therefore, leverage the firm's knowledge output (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Kuuluvainen, 2013). Consequently, new technological knowledge improves a firm's services processes or products and, eventually, the firm's performance (Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013). However, it is more likely that new technologies may have a positive effect on a firm's performance when the firm already has enough resources (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Scuotto et al., 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017), which can be updated or replaced with newer technologies. On the other hand, there is always a risk that management could decide to invest in the wrong resources. For example, when an SME negotiates with a major partner in a situation of asymmetric power balance, the counterpart may try to manipulate the SME's management (Coviello, 2018; Autio, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013). One solution to this challenge is the development of personal business associates where confidence may provide access to supplementary resources, thereby reducing the risk of opportunism and, as a consequence, transaction costs (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Madsen, 2010, p. 10). In other words, social networks are important enablers of efficient resource acquisition processes.

3.2.3.3 Resource Reconfiguration - Transformation

Surviving in changing market situations requires the firm to be able to modify its resource base. This can be done, for example, by integrating acquired resources with the resource base already possessed by the firm

(Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017). This kind of integration can be illustrated by the form of new product innovations where a firm's ability to integrate and combine assets (including knowledge) often plays a major role (North & Varvakis, 2018; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Teece, 2009). According to Teece's framework is called *managing threats and transforming*. In the face of changing environments, the enterprise might have to reconfigure and re-assign existing capabilities and potentially develop new ones (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019 North & Varvakis, 2018). The micro-foundations included in this capability include decentralisation and near decomposability: adopting loosely coupled structures, embracing open innovation, developing integration and coordination skills (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Kuuluvainen, 2013); governance: achieving incentive alignment, and minimising agency issues; co-specialisation: managing strategic fit so that asset combinations are value-enhancing and knowledge management: learning, knowledge transfer, achieving know-how and intellectual property protection (North & Varvakis, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Borch & Batalden, 2015).

From the viewpoint of a firm's international growth, capabilities related to reconfiguration which are essential because growth is often related to R&D, product or service innovation and the ability to gain a competitive advantage in product or service markets (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013). By opening new markets to the firm, new products or services provide firms with momentum for market share growth and improved profitability (Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Zahra & Nielsen, 2002) and it is, therefore, obvious that reconfiguration processes are intertwined with opportunity search as well as resource acquisition processes (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Scuotto et al., 2017;

Kuuluvainen, 2013). However, firms must do much more than simply allocate large expenditures to R&D to sustain superior performance (Lecerf & Omrani, 2019; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017).

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the transformation of existing resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment (Teece, 2017, 2018; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Wang & Ahmed, 2007). Furthermore, the proposition gives support to the position that dynamic capability is not a resource but a process that has an impact on the resource. While capabilities are about competing today, dynamic capabilities are more future-oriented (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009).

3.2.3.4 Entrepreneurial orientation

In this study, the concept of entrepreneurial orientation is based on the process of strategic choice of key decision-makers regarding new market entries and has recently emerged as a core component of success in new product development (Coviello, 2018; Autio, 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016).

Existing studies have identified components of innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness as forms of entrepreneurial orientation (Hitt et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2009; Venkataraman & Sarasvathy 2001). These components are essential for management in established firms to overcome organisational inertia while facilitating innovative activities and accepting unfamiliar change. Furthermore, an entrepreneurial activity can be identified as an activity which encompasses the elements of opportunity identification, capacity to renew and adapt competences to changes in the external environment and creation of value

with the intention of reward in some form, be it growth, profit, or otherwise. Particularly, the core principles of entrepreneurship identified in the research at both the individual and organisational level are similar to the position of Drucker's (1985) on entrepreneurial management. These principles include innovation, opportunity recognition, proactivity and vision.

Entrepreneurship thus embraces identifying and exploiting external opportunities to create new economic activities, while strategic management embraces a set of actions to produce competitive advantage and maintain what has been created (Hitt, Ireland, Sirmon & Trahms, 2017; Hitt et al., 2009; Venkataraman & Sarasvathy 2001). Hence these core principles can be viewed as fundamental to entrepreneurship as a concept, are highly correlated to dynamic capabilities. Entrepreneurial orientation is another core category of dynamic capabilities appearing across the scholarly journals.

3.2.3.5 Organisational learning

The scholarly journal investigated classify organisational learning as a key driving force of dynamic capabilities (Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Aslan, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Helfat et al., 2009; Zollo & Winter 2002). It involves how firms build, supplement and organise knowledge and routines around their activities (Zucchella & Magnani, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). The learning process mediated via experience accumulation and knowledge evolution cycle can nourish the development of operating routines and can form dynamic capabilities (Schilke et al., 2018; Zollo & Winter 2002). The absorptive capability of scanning and absorbing external knowledge from diverse technology sources and development capability of creating new

knowledge by integrating and sharing absorbed knowledge comprise the knowledge evolution cycle (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). Possessing this kind of knowledge increases firms' abilities to perceive international opportunities (Zucchella & Scabini 2007, p. 43).

3.2.4 International Entrepreneurship

This study acknowledges that there is a clear linkage between dynamic capabilities and international entrepreneurship studies because, for example, opportunity search processes are essential for both approaches. Similarly, according to the process view of international entrepreneurship, dynamic factors (e.g. the process of organisational learning) are important constructs beyond the international growth of the firm and hence it is suggested that dynamic capabilities have an entrepreneurial nature (Donckels & Miettinen, 2019; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015; Zucchella & Scabini 2007). Therefore, it is not surprising that previous studies (e.g. Zucchella & Scabini 2007, 27; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015;) have found that dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurship approaches (e.g. Venkataraman 1997) share the common issue of resource mobilisation and combination as fundamental activities that have to be renewed over time to search for new opportunities and create a dynamic resource base that is difficult to imitate for competitors.

3.2.5 Processes

This study aims to capture changes that have played a major role in the international growth of selected SMEs by identifying and describing these critical events in as much detail as possible and then analysing them

through a theoretical framework built to guide the study. Dynamic capabilities consist of processes such as opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013). A firm's performance in these processes is closely related to the capabilities that the firm possesses (Winter, 2017; Teece et al., 1997).

All these approaches (dynamic capability, international growth entrepreneurship) can be studied through processes, and the process approach plays an essential role in this study (Kuuluvainen, 2013). Process research brings a ready-made empirical base for the topic of dynamic capabilities that also sheds light on its nature. If we apply the methods and approaches of process research to the questions raised by dynamic capabilities, further progress in research on dynamic capabilities can be made (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt and Martin 2000). For example, in the search for new business opportunities, managerial capabilities play a significant role (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Eisenhardt, 2004). This view is supported by (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Easterby-Smith & Prieto, 2008; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Zahra et al., 2006; Winter, 2003).

These organisational processes consist of operational capabilities (Winter, 2003) which permit the firm to earn income in the present. This study's research objectives (see chapter 1.2.4) are "how" questions and this fact encourages the use of a process approach in the study. A process perspective to internationalisation assists the development of the study's framework since dynamic capabilities and growth approaches often acknowledge the role of process. Consequently, like firm growth,

internationalisation can be understood as a change process by which firms expand their activities internationally, over the national borders of the firm's country of origin (George et al., 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Ruzzier et al. 2006), and it is, therefore, justifiable to take a closer look at the development of process research in international business. Therefore, to increase understanding of the development of a firm's international growth, it is necessary to study the processes that are a major influence on a firm's development.

3.2.6 Nexus of Strategic Entrepreneurship and Dynamic Capabilities

A further review of 30 research documents relevant to strategic entrepreneurship was conducted to establish a conceptual link between dynamic capabilities and strategic entrepreneurship. The literature on entrepreneurship that conceptually discusses strategic entrepreneurship or in a broader scope, that discusses corporate entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial strategy and management as a source of firms' wealth creation are included in the review.

There is a clear linkage between dynamic capabilities and strategic entrepreneurship studies because, for example, opportunity search processes are essential for both approaches Ibeh, Crick & Etemad, 2019; George et al., 2016). Equally, it is not surprising that previous studies (e.g. Zucchella and Scabini 2007, 27) have found that dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurship approaches (Venkataraman et al., 2003; Venkataraman, 2001) share the common issue of resource mobilisation and combination as fundamental activities that have to be renewed over time to search for

new opportunities and create a dynamic resource base that is difficult to imitate for competitors. Furthermore, the linkage extends to dynamic factors such as the process of organisational learning which are important constructs across both views. Essentially the six fundamental processes detailed by Eisenhardt et al., (2000), and the six domains put forward by Hitt et al., (2001), have been modified to reflect elements considered central to strategic entrepreneurship. Hence, it was contended that categories of dynamic capabilities derived in previous sections are highly correlated with the essence of strategic entrepreneurship. These six fundamental processes are briefly discussed below.

3.2.6.1 Environmental sensing – Opportunity Sensing

Similar to dynamic capabilities environmental sensing is the detection of the opportunity that constitutes the core of entrepreneurship, both individuals and firm (Song & Jing, 2017; Ireland et al., 2009). Recognising entrepreneurial opportunities may create favourable circumstances that lead to positive entrepreneurial actions (George et al., 2016). Entrepreneurs' perception of undiscovered opportunities is a major driver of firm-level heterogeneity and superior absorptive capacity (Hitt et al., 2017; Mazzei et al., 2017; Ireland et al., 2009). Ireland et al., (2003) suggested that recognising the entrepreneurial opportunity is an essential component of an entrepreneurial mindset and required to successfully engage in strategic entrepreneurship. Practice analysing environmental events and trends facilitates opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial behaviour (Hitt et al., 2017; George et al., 2016).

3.2.6.2 Opportunity Seizing

As with dynamic capabilities, the activities of opportunity seizing to exploit the opportunity are major components of strategic entrepreneurship (Ireland et al., 2009; Ireland et al., 2003). Ireland et al., (2003) proposed entrepreneurial action such as determining timing associated with launching strategy required to exploit an entrepreneurial opportunity comes into the framework of strategic entrepreneurship. Similarly, resource orchestration process of bundling resources and leveraging capability of creating market-oriented value is an essential part of strategic Entrepreneur (Hitt et al., 2017; Song & Jing, 2017). The capability to connect an organization to the broader ecosystem, i.e., outside partners and experts, by strategic alliancing or expansion of the network is also discussed as an essential component of opportunity seizing in the literature (Aslan, 2017; Hitt et al., 2001; Ireland et al., 2001). The relationship between the external environment and the firm affects long-term survival (Hitt et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2011). The firm can acquire resources necessary to seize opportunities by knowledge spillover effect, by interacting directly or indirectly, intentionally and unintentionally with other firms (Tavassoli et al., 2017).

3.2.6.3 Strategic Flexibility

Previous studies on strategic entrepreneurship also emphasise flexibility in resource use and organisational structure as requirements of entrepreneurial firms (Ireland et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2001). Strategic flexibility allows entrepreneurial firms to renew or adjust strategic plans to stay abreast of environmental changes and thereby minimize risk and maximize profit (Elia et al., 2016; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013; Entrialgo et al.,

2000). In volatile environments, developing new combinations of resources and thereby creating sustainable economic value is at the centre of entrepreneurial creativity (Kor et al., 2007; Zahra et al., 2006; Schumpeter 1961). Successfully established firms may develop dynamic portfolios of opportunities with reconfigured resources and diversified products to minimize waste of resources (Hitt et al., 2011; Ireland et al., 2003). Also, an effective transition between exploration and exploitation processes is vital to a firm's successful engagement in SE (Ireland & Webb, 2009).

3.2.6.4 Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation corresponds to entrepreneurial culture as a category of entrepreneurship (Ibeh et al., 2019; Ireland et al., 2009; Stevenson & Jarillo 2007). Ibeh et al., (2019) and suggested that experimenting with a novel, emerging, and pioneering technologies may enable established firms to overcome bureaucracy and create breakthrough inventions (Ahmad et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial culture, in which new innovative ideas are expected with an appropriate reward system and failure is tolerated, can facilitate continuous searching for entrepreneurial opportunities and sustainable competitive advantage of firms (Ireland et al., 2003; Brown et al., 2001; Kanter, 1985).

3.2.6.5 Organisational Learning

Organisational learning is also among emphasised competences of established firms in the existing literature on strategic entrepreneur. Knowledge sharing and Organisational learning are associated with

motivation, opportunity, and ability to act within the corporate entrepreneurial context (Schilke et al., 2018; Aslan, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Turner & Pennington 2015). Organisational learning occurs in a form of knowledge spillovers among individuals or across departments with different functions within firms (Aslan, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016). The more knowledge spillover takes place within a firm or among different firms, the more outcomes at the organisation level can be brought (Tavassoli et al., 2017). Collaboration and coordination to integrate knowledge with external partners or within a firm should be encouraged for successful Organisational learning and new knowledge creation, reducing the likelihood that a firm's competences will become outdated (Aslan 2017; Zahra & Nambisan 2012; Ireland et al., 2001).

Conceptual Framework

Dynamic Capabilities Categories	Corresponding Resources	Relevant categories of dynamic capabilities
Entrepreneurial perception/alertness, Recognizing(detecting) entrepreneurial opportunities	Brown et al., (2001), Entrialgo et al., (2000), Ireland et al., (2003), Ireland et al., (2009), Kor et al., (2007), Stevenson and Jarillo (2007)	Opportunity Search (Sensing)
Opportunity exploitation, Timely decision-making, Entrepreneurial leadership, bundling resources, Leveraging capabilities, Organisational networks, Strategic alliancing	Aslan (2017), Brown et al., (2001), Hitt et al., (2001), Hitt et al., (2011), Ireland et al., (2001), Ireland et al., (2003), Ireland et al., (2009), Ireland and Webb (2009), Song and Jing (2017), Tavassoli et al., (2017), Zahra and Nambisan (2012)	Resource Acquisition (Seizing)
Strategic change/renewal/flexibility, Business model reconstruction, Structuring the resource portfolio/real options, (Transition between) exploration and exploitation, Creating/combining resources)	Elia et al., (2016), Kuratko & Audretsch (2013), Hitt et al., (2011), Ireland et al., (2009), Ireland and Webb (2009), Kor et al., (2007), Ireland et al., (2003), Brown et al., (2001), Hitt et al., (2001), Entrialgo et al., (2000),	Resource Reconfiguration (Transforming) Strategic flexibility Service or Product diversification)
Entrepreneurial orientation,	Ahmad et al., 2019, Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018, Song &	Entrepreneurial

Conceptual Framework

<p>Proactiveness/competitive aggressiveness, Risk-taking/innovative behaviours, Experimenting (with novel technologies), Reward system (for entrepreneurship), Growth orientation</p>	<p>Jing (2017), Tajeddini and Mueller (2012), Hitt et al., (2011), Ahuja and Lampert (2001), Aslan (2017), Brown et al., (2001), Entrialgo et al., (2000), Gürbüz and Aykol (2009), Kanter (1985), Ireland et al., (2001), Ireland et al., (2003), Ireland et al., (2009), Ireland and Webb (2009), Stevenson & Jarillo (2007).</p>	<p>orientation</p>
<p>Organisational learning, Organisational networks/collaboration, Knowledge absorption/share/integration,</p>	<p>Aslan (2017), Ireland et al., (2001), Ireland and Webb (2009), Kanter (1985), Kor et al., (2007), Tavassoli et al., (2017), Zahra and Nambisan (2012)</p>	<p>Organisational learning</p>

Table 5 – Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Entrepreneurship: Conceptual Bridge

3.2.7 Nexus Adaptive Capability and Dynamic Capabilities

Adaptation is a multi-faceted construct that includes dynamic capability, the internal capacity to adapt, the strategy or approach for adopting, and the actual amount of adaptation that occurs. The capacity to adapt can be a function of limited resources, deliberate inefficiency and the firm's variation in standard practice and marketplace turbulent market environment (North & Varvakis, 2018; Doorn et al., 2017; Schindehutte & Morris, 2001; Miles, 1982).

Based on this argument and available literature it is possible to propose some antecedents explaining adaptation in SMEs. For example, some successful SMEs do not explicitly practise or display linear strategic approaches (Autio, 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Knight, 2015). The necessity for strategic behaviour depends on the characteristics of the firms (i.e. the compacity of demand emanating from to internal and external of the firm) and the owner/ entrepreneur involved (i.e. personal background and objectives) (Knight & Liesch, 2016; Schindehutte & Morris, 2001). From the discussion above, strategic adaptation can be viewed as a process composed by a set of external responses (new products, new services, new ways of relationships with suppliers and customers, vertical integration or disintegration, expansion or contraction of domestic markets, etc) and internal responses (redefining the firm's architecture, firms chart, incorporating new knowledge, process reengineering, new incentive systems, change in a firm's culture, etc).

In an international turbulent market environment in particular competitive advantage can be gained by creating a series of temporary advantages. The strategic logic here is according to Eisenhardt and Brown (1999), in a turbulent market environment, the firm strategy should focus on strategic processes and adaptation more than on strategic positioning (Hitt et al., 2017; Mazzei et al., 2017). Since in a turbulent marketplace, it is impossible to predict which competencies or strategies will be successful and for how long (Teece, 2018). The implication is that it for SMEs is more important to build firm-level strategic processes that enable dynamic strategic repositioning than it is to build any particular defensible position. These new strategic processes turn on change and add economic value by enabling managers to mobilise and reconfigure the firm's success to capture market opportunities faster than the competition.

Therefore the strategic adaptive processes used by firms operating in a turbulent environment must enable the firm on to continuously adapt, innovate, and even change themselves to survive and thrive in evolving market conditions (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; North & Varvakis, 2018; George et al., 2016; Zollo et al., 2016) as well as be able to re-allocate available resources as priorities and demands change (Fowler et al, 2000). This perspective is consistent with what is termed in the literature as dynamic capabilities. According to Branzei and Vertinsky (2006), sustained innovativeness depends on each firm set of dynamic capabilities. From a Schumpeterian perspective, dynamic capabilities enable a firm to innovate and make that innovation profitable over and over again (North & Varvakis, 2018; Zollo et al., 2016; Schumpeter, 1934).

To summarise, strategic adaptation can be viewed as a process composed by a set of external responses (new services, new products, new ways of relationships with partners and clients, vertical integration or disintegration, expansion or contraction of domestic markets, etc) and internal responses (redefining the firm's structure, Organisational chart, incorporating new knowledge, process reengineering, new incentive systems, change in an organization's culture, etc). Furthermore, organisational structure reconfiguration is also associated with dynamic capabilities; by reconfiguring their business units, firms can recombine their resources and adapt to environmental changes (Karim, 2006). Similarly, resource divestment can also be seen to reflect a firm's dynamic capabilities (Moliterno & Wiersema, 2007).

3.2.8 Identifying the relationship between dynamic capabilities strategy management and strategic entrepreneurship

As detailed in the previous sections, the development of dynamic capabilities, strategic management and strategic entrepreneurship reveals a clear relationship across these concepts. Processes are the mechanisms that make these concepts happen (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat, 2007). Process research, acting as a bright, brings a ready-made empirical base to the topic of dynamic capabilities that also sheds light on its nature. If we apply the methods and approaches of process research to the questions raised by dynamic capabilities, further progress in research on dynamic capabilities can be made (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000).

It is therefore important to understand the process to understand the operation of strategic management (Pettigrew et al., 2014; Verreyne, 2005; Hart, 1992; Van de Ven, 1992;) dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2018; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat, 2007) and strategic entrepreneurship (Mazzei et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2017; George, et al., 2016; Carlsson et al., 2013). It is, therefore, difficult to observe these concepts unless it is put into use and processes are the mechanisms that make it happen (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat, 2007).

This study's research objectives (see chapter 1.2.2) are on "how" questions and this fact encourages the use of a process approach in the study. This study aims to capture changes that have played a major role in the international growth of selected SMEs management consulting firms (and hence make it possible to study the role of dynamic capabilities in this development) by identifying and describing these critical events in as much detail as possible and then analysing them through a conceptual framework built to guide the study.

In other words, when we are observing these concepts, we are observing the underlying processes. This, the study suggests, is the only reasonable way to study these concepts in the internationalisation a firm. Organisational processes, which can be understood as "*the sets of actions that repeat over time and allow managers to accomplish some business task*" (Bingham et al., 2007, p. 27), Process research brings a ready-made empirical base to these components and also sheds light on their nature. If we apply the methods and approaches of process research to the questions raised by dynamic capabilities, further progress in research on

dynamic capabilities can be made (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Furthermore, all these approaches can be studied through processes and the process approach played an essential role in this study. This study, therefore, takes the position that it is essential to understand the processes to understand the operations of constructs.

Finally, a process perspective to internationalisation assists the development of the study's framework since dynamic capabilities, strategy management and strategic entrepreneurship approach often acknowledge the role of process. Consequently, internationalisation can be understood as a change process by which firms expand their activities internationally and it is, therefore, justifiable to take a closer look at the development of process research in international business.

3.3 Proposed Conceptual Framework

This initial framework conceptual framework (Figure 3) forms the basis of this study. It has been established that these concepts (dynamic capabilities, strategic entrepreneurship and adaption capacity) are not mutually exclusive but rather are highly correlated within the context of SME and thus can be grouped under entrepreneurs' managerial capabilities corresponding to how entrepreneurs act to achieve their goals (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Jianga et al., 2020; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Ibeh et al., 2019; Hitt et al., 2017; Carlsson et al., 2013; Blackburn et al., 2013; Sarasvathy et al., 2003).

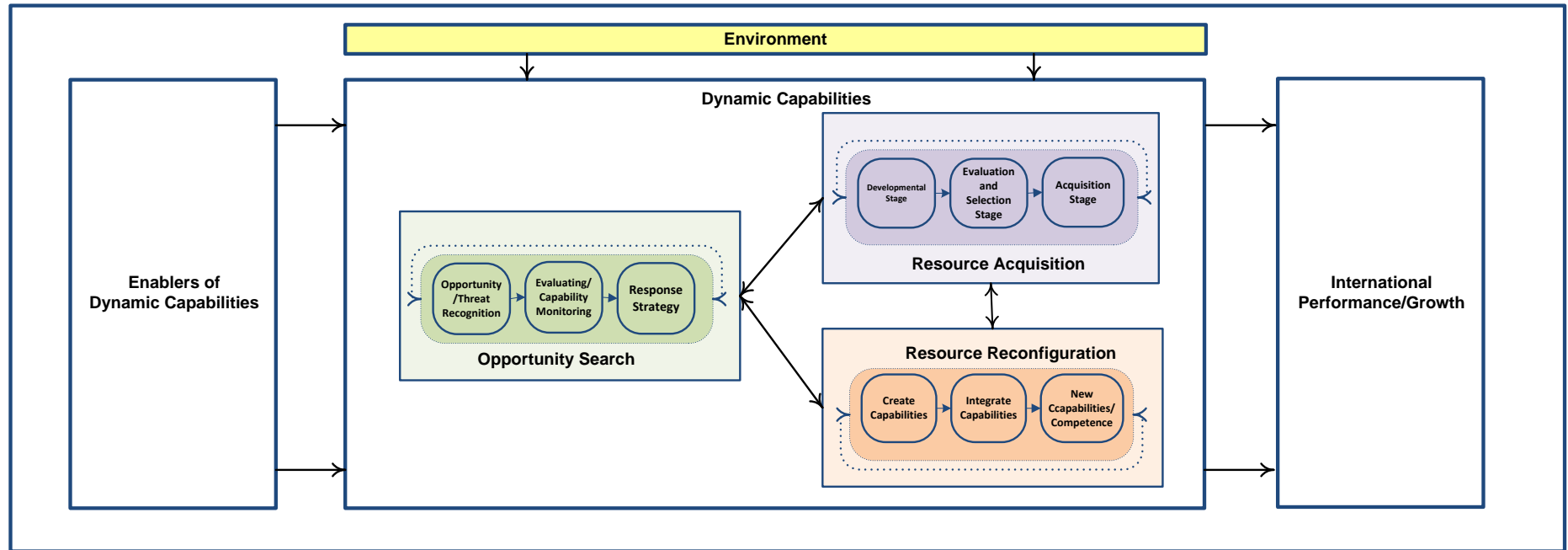


Figure 3 – Conceptual Framework Diagram Adapted from (Teece, 2009, p.49)

3.4 The Research Propositions

A proposition is a statement about concepts that may be judged true or false if it refers to observable phenomena. Hypothesis, on the other hand, is a proposition that is formulated for empirical testing (Cooper & Schindler, 1998). Thus, propositions in research are especially useful in new researching areas and that can be observed and described, to generate new theories and contribute to the development of a body of knowledge. By the development, a set of propositions that establish the relationship between objects in systematic way theories can be formed (Henning, 2004). A theory is a system of ideas and abstracts that organises knowledge about the social world (Neuman, 2000). This research element is described in Section 3.3.

The literature review reported on in Chapter 2, shows a paucity of literature and research on the SME management consulting firms operating in a turbulent international marketplace. Thus, this study's approach to building theory will be a valuable contribution to this field of study. This study uses propositions rather than hypotheses for the following reasons:

- The subject area, SME management consulting firms operating in a turbulent international marketplace, is relatively new and there is a paucity of literature and research in this area. Since this study is not based on any previously derived research model specific to the subject area, the use of propositions enables the study to be approached from a much more pragmatic and meaningful viewpoint.

- Observable phenomena, SME management consulting firms operating in a turbulent international marketplace are observable and describable phenomena.

As already established, dynamic capabilities can be used to assist a business in developing new methods, exploiting new markets, and continually refining strategy in a changing turbulent international marketplace (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Teece, 2018; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Winter 2017). Eventually fostering growth, improve the firm's competitive position, and allow opportunities to be identified within the turbulent international marketplace in which it operates (North & Varvakis, 2018; Zollo et al., 2016).

Accordingly, the first proposition is such that:

3.4.1 **Proposition 1 - P1**

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

This proposition states that in a rapidly changing marketplace implementing dynamic capabilities increase. The proposition has been empirically tested, with a strong theoretical grounding in the work of (Wernerfelt, 2016; Teece, 1997; Teece & Pisano, 1994). These researchers have observed that winners in the global marketplace have demonstrated timely responsiveness, rapid and flexible product innovation, along with managerial ability to effectively coordinate and redeploy internal and

external competencies. This proposition supports the position across all organisation, dynamic capabilities are the organisational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). Therefore, is not limited to a specific context and is later supported by researchers such as Helfat et al., (2007) who have over time, reached the same conclusion. This proposition is predicated on assumes that dynamic capabilities are deployed to effectuate change and adaptation in positions in businesses (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Teece, 2017, 2018), resource configurations (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Winter, 2003; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) Furthermore, proposition gives support to the position that dynamic capability is not a resource but a process that has an impact on the resource.

3.4.2 Proposition 2 - P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm's strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive.

This proposition is similar to the notions put forward by others such as (Teece, 2017, 2018; Peteraf & Leih, 2016; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Somaya & Teece, 2007), on how organisations emerge, develop, grow, change, decline and rejuvenate over time. The proposition further supports the view that the visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the transformation of existing resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015).

This proposition is further supported by Bloodgood et al., (1996) which provide empirical evidence that small firm continual adaptation and transformation of resources.

Capabilities are about competing today, dynamic capabilities are more future-oriented (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Barney, 2017; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). This position is further supported by Teece (2018) which stated that opportunities to grow profitably require that a firm has the capabilities to continuously innovate and adjust its service offerings, product offerings, structures and routines. Therefore, the firm needs not only new resources but also the capabilities to innovate and change those resources into new combinations as the firm grows.

Thus, this proposition supports the view that dynamic capabilities are an instrument of *continual adaptation and transformation of resources* benefit SMEs (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). SMEs that spend more time on strategic activities of *continual adaptation and transformation of resources* tend to be more successful than those that do not (WTO, 2017; OECD, 2017; Chandler & Hwang, 2015; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

3.4.3 Proposition 3 - P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

This proposition emphasises the key role of innovation capacity processes is in adapting, integrating and reconfiguring internal and external

organisational skills, resources and competencies, to match the requirements of the turbulent international marketplace. This position is theoretically and supported by (Aslan, 2017; Elia et al., 2016; Turner & Pennington, 2015; Teece et al., 2007) that “dynamically competitive firms do not simply build defences to competition; they help shape competition and marketplace outcomes through innovation, entrepreneurship and semi-continuous asset orchestration and business reconfiguration”.

According to literature, innovation is often referred to as the specific set of activities that offer competitive advantages to a company. Innovation can be identified directly with the concept of dynamic capability and strategic adaptation (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Song & Jing, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Eunni et al, 2005). The innovation process requires active orchestration of both tangible and intangible assets by entrepreneurs and managers. Since innovation enhances the competitiveness of firms (Song & Jing, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Neely & Hii, 1998) in dynamic environments, firms should have the capabilities to innovate (Winter, 2017; Nelson & Winter, 1982; Zollo & Winter, 1999:339; Teece et al, 1997). This is true whether the context is SMEs or large firms, and understanding this orchestration is at the centre of the dynamic capabilities approach (Teece et al., 2016; Augier & Teece 2009). Hence, the same literature about innovation practices gives detail about how one can find specific innovation practices or capabilities into each dimension of dynamic capability and strategic adaptation.

Innovation process requires active orchestration of both tangible and intangible assets by entrepreneurs and managers. This is true whether the context is SMEs or large firms, and understanding this orchestration is at

the centre of the dynamic capabilities approach (Elia et al., 2016; Turner & Pennington, 2015; Augier & Teece, 2009). In other words, opportunities to make profits require that a firm has the capabilities to continuously innovate and adjust its service offerings, product offerings, structures and routines (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Aslan, 2017; Teece, 2014). Consequently, the firm needs not only new resources but also the capabilities to innovate and change those resources into new combinations as the firm grows.

This proposition, therefore, states that successful international growth of an SME management consulting firms, operating in a turbulent environment, depends on the use of dynamic capabilities which are the firm routines by which firms achieve innovative new resource configurations in the turbulent marketplace by transforming existing resources into new functional competencies that better match the dynamism environment. The proposition further supports the view that innovation developments in the field of technology, science and fast-changing client needs have generated more complexities and uncertainties in the business environment (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). Thus, innovation developments needed to keep pace to match the requirements of the turbulent international marketplace (Aslan, 2017). This proposition supports the position firms that innovate and react to the changes emerging in their environment have better opportunities to grow and to be profitable than do their slower rivals (Bagheri et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017).

3.4.4 Proposition 4 - P4

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

This proposition is similar to the notions put forward by others such as This proposition is similar to the notions put forward by others such as (Barney, 2017; Teece et al., 2016; Wang & Ahmed, 2007). The importance of reconfiguring existing resources into new configurations of functional competencies and view reconfiguration as the outcome of dynamic capabilities. This is further supported by (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020) Hitt et al., (2001) and Eunni et al., (2003) detailing configurations of functional competencies is underpinned by strategic adaptative capacity behaviour is important in a turbulent marketplace.

Organisational structure reconfiguration is associated with dynamic capabilities. By reconfiguring existing business units, firms can recombine their resources and adapt to environmental changes (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Karim, 2006). Reconfiguration of resources to create value-adding strategies and competitive advantage a perspective consistent with the dynamic capabilities view. Similarly, resource divestment can be seen to reflect a firm's dynamic capabilities (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Moliterno & Wiersema 2007). The reconfiguration as the outcome of dynamic capabilities requires active orchestration of both tangible and intangible assets by entrepreneurs/managers. This is particularly imperative within

the contest of SME management consulting firms operating in the turbulent international marketplace.

This proposition supports the assertion that in the turbulent international marketplace, it is impossible to predict which competencies or strategies will be successful and for how long. This proposition supports the position that reconfiguration is needed. This involves a firm having an adaptive ability and resource must be deployed so current routines are continually exploited to sustain reconfiguration capability. Reconfiguration must also support the exploration of alternative approaches (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Lant & Mezias, 1992).

3.4.5 Proposition 5 – P5

Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on the growth and direction of the firm.

This proposition is essentially grounded in Drucker's (1985) and Ireland et al., (2017) notion that managers play a key role in their firm's ability to adapt to changing circumstances because their decisions concerning strategy or organisation lie at the heart of the firm's performance. In today's economy, success requires that Entrepreneur behave in an intensely entrepreneurial manner and build into their organisation the capacity to sense and seize opportunities and then transform and reconfigure them as further opportunities and competitive forces dictate (Ibeh et al., 2019). In other words, managers have to be able to build dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2018; Augier & Teece 2009). However, a

manager's capability to do this depends on factors such as motivation, skills and experiences (Ireland et al., 2017; Mazzei et al., 2017; Zahra et al. 2006), and the dynamic capabilities that emerge over time in a firm are enabled by a series of decisions managers make on resource investments (Hitt et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2017; George, et al., 2016; Helfat et al. 2007).

The proposition supports the view that dynamic capabilities do not appear out of anywhere; they are typically the outcome of experience and learning within the firms. This approach of dynamic capabilities integrates the strategic choice perspective and the behavioural theory of the firm.

3.5 Chapter Conclusion

Accordingly, a theoretical framework of dynamic capabilities has been established and illustrated. This framework is essentially based on the dynamic capabilities supplemented by strategic entrepreneurship literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and the conclusions drawn from that literature. To examine this framework in a practical context, appropriate research methods were considered and evaluated. These methods are presented in the following chapter.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Chapter Summary

Within the literature, research on the topic of dynamic capabilities within the context of SME remains rooted in theory with limited progress to examine this concept in a practical context. (Teece & Pisano, 1994) and Teece et al., (1997) earlier study included limited references to practical examples but was superseded by later research of new theoretical models and conclusions. Accordingly, this study was designed to encompass both a theoretical and practical approach, reviewing the literature on dynamic capabilities to develop a preliminary framework, and subsequently examining that framework in the context of six firms which have conducted activity recognised as both international SME and operate in a turbulent marketplace. Thus, the research question of *“How are SME business strategies adapted and integrated to gain and sustain competitive advantage in an international turbulent business environment?”* is explored and examined from both a theoretical and practical perspective.

This chapter details the research design and methodology adopted for this examination, outlining the relevant paradigms and specific methods of research employed for this study. It describes the research stages and the elements of the research process, focusing on the data collection

methodology (primary and secondary) and the methods that were used to explain how the instrument was designed, the nature of measurement, the soundness of measurement and the data preparation and the data analysis methods. The chapter described the elements of the research process, the method used to collect data as described followed by the techniques and procedures used to obtain and analyse data. The chapter then presented the data analysis of the research material which comprised of several phases due to the nature of the research process.

4.2 Philosophical Underpinnings

Ontology is the study or theory of being. It relates to our perspectives or beliefs about reality and the nature of reality. Epistemology is the enquiry into the nature of reality. It relates to our knowledge of reality. Methodology refers to the processes and methods used to uncover that knowledge. Studies emerging from the field of international business research that addresses phenomena within environments that are volatile, or dynamic are often dominated by positivistic perspectives. This can be partly explained by the fact that the main emphasis of the field has been in quantitative studies. This study contends that there are different views concerning the classifications of science and thus approaches to scientific enquiry. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 1): *"All social scientists approach their subject via explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated"*. Literature often presents subjectivist and objectivist approaches as opposite ends of a continuum where one end represents a very objective view of the world and the other one a very subjective view of the world. However, it is good to keep in mind that these two approaches are only two extremes on the

continuum, not the only possible alternatives. Therefore, it is more useful to see these two approaches as complementary rather than as two opposite extremes (Remenyi et al., 1998).

4.2.1 The critical realist perspective

This study was conducted in the spirit of critical realism. Critical realism is a philosophical perspective which holds that reality is made up of several strata. What we can see may only be a portion of what is happening. What is happening may be a result of underlying mechanisms. Critical realists begin from an ontological position which holds that there is a reality to be discovered which exists independently of our knowledge of it. Critical realists seek to explore phenomena that can be observed and to explain the factors which may have given rise to those phenomena. Critical realists believe that the underlying factors cause the phenomena to occur. Similarly, critical realists hold that our knowledge is always open to correction in the light of further research. The principal reason for this is that critical realists argue that our knowledge is informed by our own experiences and perspectives which mean that we cannot separate ourselves from these events.

Bhaskar (1975) is credited with the development of many of the core tenets of critical realism. Whilst accepting that there is an objective reality which can be identified, he describes three strata of that reality. At the foundation is the "Real" which are the mechanisms which exist which a researcher seeks to discover. The "Actual" describes the events to which the "Real" mechanisms give rise. Finally, the "Empirical" is the set of events which are actually observed. Critical realist researchers seek to uncover such

underlying mechanisms to provide context-rich theoretical explanations of the phenomenon being studied. For example, Peter and Olson (1983) suggest that different approaches to science can be divided into two categories: positivistic/empiricist and relativistic/constructionist. Guba and Lincoln (1994), for example, have also named competing paradigms, such as positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. In terms of the paradigms of Guba and Lincoln (1994), this study is most closely aligned with post-positivism. Post-positivism represents critical realism as it assumes that reality is apprehended only imperfectly.

4.2.2 Ontology and epistemology of critical realism

Critical realism's ontology reflects the depth implied in Bhaskar's (1975) strata of the Real, Actual and Empirical. Critical realism rejects the conflation of epistemology and ontology (Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004). This is because critical realists have a theory of being which recognises complexity and depth where things may exist independently of our ability to identify them (Fleetwood, 2005). Fleetwood's terminology is useful in that he refers to our ability to identify something as opposed to something existing independently of our knowledge of it. This distinction allows us to differentiate critical realism from the perspective of both social constructionists and positivists. Social constructionists rely heavily on the interpretations of events or objects by respondents which require the respondent to have identified the object or event in some manner. Positivists seek to answer questions about known events or objects, narrowing the field of enquiry and explanation to that which can be identified. In contrast, critical realism allows the researcher to consider what may exist which we have not been able to identify.

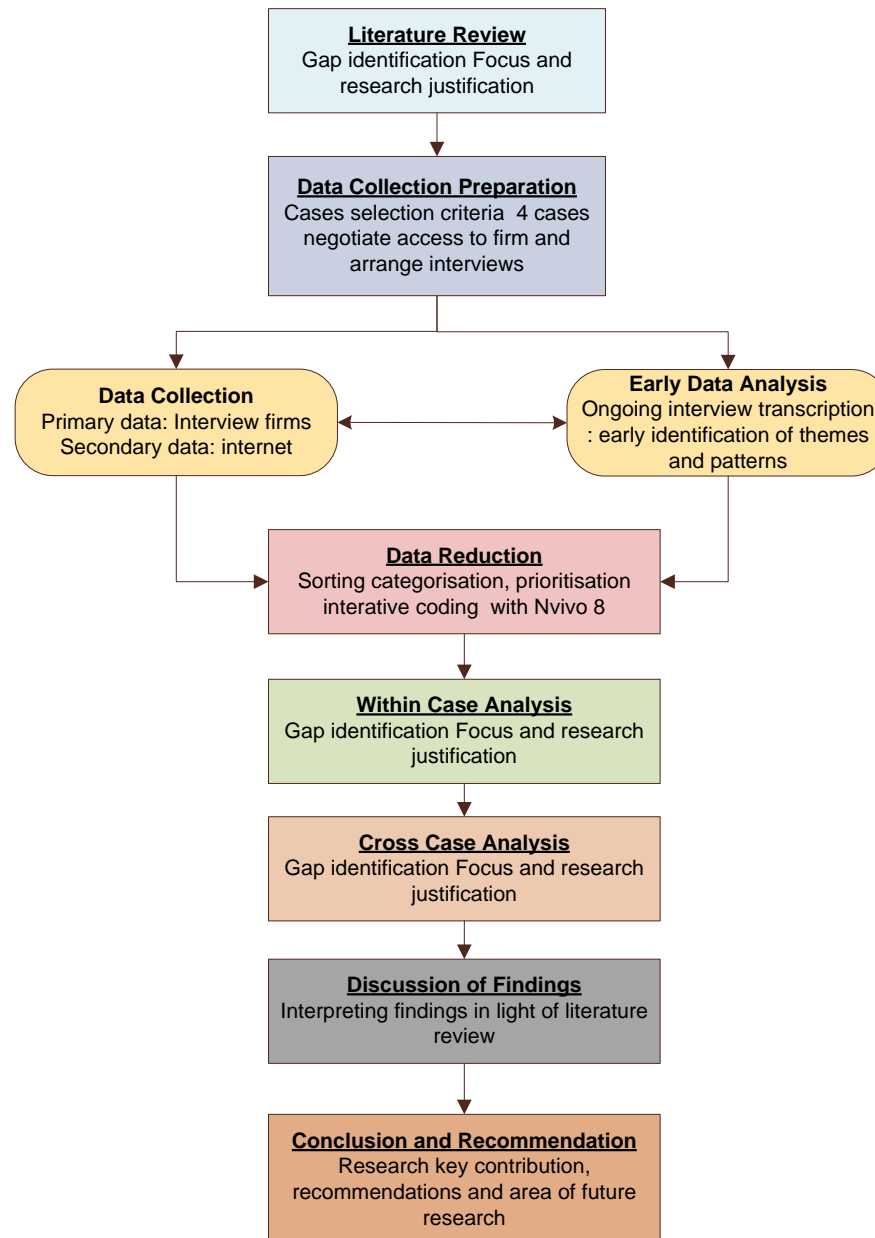
Critical realism makes no universal truth claims in the manner of several other philosophical approaches. Critical realism explicitly recognises that the explanations it makes are fallible (can be disproved or amended by subsequent research) and that causal mechanism can be impacted by other factors which may adjust the tendencies to which the conjunction of the mechanisms would more normally give rise. Critical realism also recognises the fallibility of theories which may be developed, and that knowledge is always open to revision and reformulation (Fleetwood, 2005). This fallibility is grounded in this study approach to research which necessarily brings experiences and worldview to bear. Critical realist researchers recognise that the explanations developed should be defensible and plausible in the context of the process followed, but that the findings should not claim to be infallibly true.

When observed from the epistemological perspective, post-positivism assumes that research is objectivistic and the findings are probably true. The critical realism approach, overlapping with post-positivism, interpretative or phenomenological approaches, understands reality as holistic, and socially constructed rather than objectively determined as in the case of positivism (Amaratunga & Baldry, 2001). According to critical realist thinking, an entity can exist without our identification of it (Fleetwood 2005, 198). This means that things can exist even when they are not being observed. This also applies to, for example, tacit knowledge on how to perform particular tasks. This study equally acknowledged that there is no theory-neutral observation or interpretation (Fleetwood & Ackroyd 2004). These basic assumptions guided this study and influenced the research questions. The latter guided the selection of the research methods.

4.3 Research Design

Every type of empirical research has implicit, if not explicit, research design. In the most elementary sense, the design is a logical sequence that connects empirical data to a study's initial research questions and ultimately, to its conclusions. Furthermore, the research design will follow a cross-sectional design for the practical purpose of the study; because of the time constraint and resource limitation, a longitudinal design is not achievable. In a sense, the research design is a blueprint of research, dealing with at least four problems: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyse the results (Yin, 2009, 2014). It is much more than a work plan since the main purpose is to help to avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions. Hence the research design deals with a logical problem. Furthermore, a research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material. It situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive material, including documents and archives.

A research design flowchart has been compiled to explicitly show the methodological steps undertaken for this research process. The research design, outlined in Figure x.1, is divided into x research stages (modified from Saunders et al., 2007).



Source: Adapted from Saunders et al., (2007)

Figure 3 - Research Design Flowchart

From this position, research strategy concerns how to conduct research through either applying a quantitative method such as a survey or a qualitative method such as case study (Yin, 2009). It is therefore important that the research strategy is determined by the context of the study (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004), and should also match the research

question posed (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2014), there are five major research strategies: experiments, surveys, archival analysis, history and case studies. Each of the five strategies has advantages, disadvantages and different ways of collecting and analysing data based on the following three conditions (Yin, 2009): (1) The type of research questions posed, (2); the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and (3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

4.3.1 Qualitative Research

In general, deductive logic dominates international business research, beginning with theory, thus moving from the general to the specific. A review of the six leading international business journals showed that a majority (60.9 per cent) of the articles were based on surveys (Yang et al., 2006). Another review of published articles in six international business journals found almost 90 per cent of the articles to be quantitative (Andersen & Skaates, 2004). This dominance is also valid for research on SME Internationalisation (Fillis, 2001; Coviello & McAuley, 1999). Common reasons are the ambition to generalise through larger sample sizes, cost and time limitations, as well as limited access to interviewees for conducting qualitative studies. The inductive approach is also widely used, starting with individual empirical cases from which general theoretical patterns are proposed. As they are based on different research philosophies, these approaches are often seen as mutually exclusive. In general, the deductive approach guides quantitative researchers and the inductive approach guides qualitative researchers (Neuman, 2000).

This study is grounded in qualitative research methodology. One of the major aims of qualitative research is to understand reality as socially constructed, produced and interpreted through contextual meanings. This study employs the logic of inductive inquiry suitable for investigating phenomena that are relatively poorly understood (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The goal of inductive inquiry is to allow new theoretical insights to emerge from a rigorous examination of relevant data collected from multiple sources, analysed through constant comparison, and validated both by extant theories and on-going re-examination of the data (Yin, 2009, 2014, 2018; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989).

A qualitative methodology was chosen due to the nature of the research questions being asked, that is to understand the why and how small and medium-sized management consulting firms within the service sector engage in internationalisation. The reasoning is that, in this study, dynamic capabilities are studied in the context of international growth in UK SMEs. The context influences the result of the study. For example, the size of UK domestic markets almost certainly influences firms' willingness to seek growth from international markets. Similarly, from the perspective of dynamic capabilities, it is suggested that what is a dynamic or an operational capability depends on context (Kay, 2010). Also, this study contends that qualitative methodologies are more suitable for examining multidimensional fuzzy, nonlinear phenomena (Sinkovics et al., 2008, p6). Furthermore, according to Emory (1976, p80), the qualitative research approach enables the deeper study of the examined phenomenon, which is very important in this study. Moreover, qualitative methodologies are particularly suitable for studying SMEs, dynamic capabilities and international business. This is because according to Verona and Ravasi

(2003) capabilities result from complex and lengthy processes are extremely difficult to identify through quantitative research. Additionally, the embedded nature of capabilities makes qualitative approaches more suitable (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000). According to Lee (1999, p38), the qualitative research approach is contended to be suitable when, for example, where the details of the phenomenon are poorly known, when new theoretical or managerial propositions are anticipated.

In the case of SMEs and particularly internationalising SMEs, qualitative research is important as it enables context-specific description and explanation (Coviello & McAuley 1999, p249). Moreover, international business research is argued to benefit from research that addresses the meanings that underlie action; that is, the why and how questions (Ghauri 2004; Marschan-Piekkari & Welch 2004, p6). Since, all of the three areas: dynamic capabilities, SMEs and internationalisation combine in this study, the qualitative approach is considered the most suitable alternative. It facilitates the possibility of acquiring a deeper understanding of the organisations under scrutiny and enables change to be taken into account. To further enforce these views, it has been argued that “quantitative research conveys a view of social reality which is static in that it tends to neglect the impact and role of change in social life” (Bryman 1999, 42). This study focus on dynamic capabilities phenomena within SME’s management consulting firm that are engaging within environments that are volatile or dynamic thus quantitative research would have been inappropriate and inadequate to achieve engagement with the study’s questions (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Perry, 1998).

Finally, when the characteristics of the phenomenon itself are not well understood. It would be premature to attempt to investigate causality which uses *quantitative methodologies* which refer to the collection and analysis of numbers. The focus of which is on variables which are often derived from a large and representative sample (Neuman, 1999).

4.3.2 Description versus Explanation

The objective of many scientific inquiries is to develop theories which can be generalised and can explain some form of causality of some phenomenon (Kinloch, 1977; Sutton & Staw, 1995; Weick, 1995b). This type of study, called the *explanatory study*, attempts to identify why a certain phenomenon takes place. This level of theorising is only feasible when a phenomenon has been observed and data has been systematically collected about it. However, in this study, the phenomenon itself is not well understood. It would, therefore, be premature to attempt to investigate causality. It is, therefore, a *descriptive study* which collects, organises and summarise information about the phenomenon. The description included how things are related to each other, a summary of specific factual information into empirical generalisations, summarising details of events (Punch, 2006, 2013). The objective of this study is not to identify causality but rather to demonstrate that a certain phenomenon exists and to describe it in such a way that further investigations can subsequently be carried out. This is analogous to the ethnographic descriptions which served as the foundations for subsequent anthropological theories. A consequence is that the findings will not be generalisable in the same way quantitative studies based on statistically valid samples of populations attempt to provide. However, the findings are transferable to other settings

where they can be replicated. This means that the context and the conditions under which the phenomenon has been identified must be described in detail.

Although this study is grounded in a descriptive approach, it is argued that distinguishing studies between these two (descriptive and explanatory studies) extremes alone would be a rather constrained decision. As Miles and Huberman (1994) put it: *“usually it is hard to explain something satisfactorily until you understand just what the something is.”* This study supports this line of thought and the reader can identify features from explanatory as well as descriptive approaches in the empirical part of the study.

4.3.3 Pre-structured versus Unfolding

According to Punch (2013) the amount of structure and specificity that is planned in the research can vary greatly; ranging from *pre-structured* with pre-specified questions, tightly structured design and pre-structured data to *unfolding* with general open-ended questions, loose design and data not pre-structured. An approach situated somewhere in between these two extremes is proposed. The conceptual framework described in the previous section will initially guide and structure the investigation. However, it is expected that some of the research performed at later stages will unfold and will be influenced by the results identified and analysed in the earlier phases of the study.

4.3.4 Inductive approach

A hypothesis is a *“predicted answer to a research question.”* (Punch, 2006, p. 153). It is most common in deductive models (using explanatory studies) to put forward a hypothesis based on a theory which then needs to be further validated. Because the study area is fairly unstudied, this study will be inductive rather than deductive to help understand the phenomenon with empirical data. The previous chapter presented the conceptual framework which was based on some assumptions however it is NOT the intention of this study to verify the validity of specific hypotheses or assumptions. The conceptual framework is solely proposed to facilitate and structure the collection of data not to develop a hypothesis to be tested. The intention of this study is not to validate a specific theory or a specific model. It is to investigate empirically the practices associated with an under-researched area.

4.3.5 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis will be the processes involved in the internationalisation of small and medium-sized services management consulting firms dealing with dynamic environments. The focus will be on the different aspects involved in sensing events, interpreting them and deciding the changes to be made continually environment. This will involve determining the actors involved, the type of decisions they make, their interactions, the typical relationships between inputs and outcomes.

4.4 Methodology – Case Study

The method used to collect data is the case study method, based on Yin's approach (2009, 2014). With the context of this study, a method is defined as the "techniques and procedures used to obtain and analyse data" (Saunders et al., 2007:3). In determining how many cases were most appropriate for multiple case study research, the literature offers a spread in the best number of cases. According to Eisenhardt (1989), four to ten cases are best to generate theory. Miles and Huberman (1994) are more generous, suggesting that with highly complex issues, fifteen cases maximum are recommended in order not to be overloaded with information. Patton (2002, 2015) is the most flexible suggesting that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative research; however, typically four to five are chosen. This study comprises a multiple case study of four case firms, which are all SMEs management consultant active in both Nigerian and the UK market.

The case study method is one of the best approaches when very little is known about a topic. A case study is a research methodology that focuses on understanding the dynamics present in a management situation (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989). As Yin (2014) suggests, the case study is appropriate when researchers desire is to define topics broadly not narrowly. The focus on the richness and depth of the event exemplified in case study methodology allows for the "opening up" of new ideas and the interpretations of the phenomena being researched (Christie et al., 2000). Yin (2009, 2014) establishes the link between research strategy, the form of research questions and the control over behavioural events. According to Yin (2009, 2014) case studies are a preferred approach

when *'how'* or *'why'* questions are to be answered, when the researcher has little control over events and when the focus is on a current phenomenon in a real-life context. In this study, the *'how'* question is central. The strength of the case study method lies in its ability to examine, in-depth, a *"case"* within its *"real-life"* context. It is also a useful method for illuminating a particular situation, to get a close (i.e., in-depth and first-hand) understanding of it (Yin, 1994, 2003, 2009, 2014; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989).

Case study research reveals a particular event in a real-life context (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989; Merriam, 1988). The investigation of a particular event is significant when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 2003, 2014). The realist research methodology of the qualitative case study is process-oriented and does not deal with cause and effect relations, but with underlying causal tendencies (Tsoukas, 1989; Bhaskar, 1978). Case studies also support the development of an understanding of the process and contextual phenomena, such as organisational behaviour (Bonoma, 1985). Similarly, Ambrosini and Bowman (2009, p. 37) suggest that, when the study aims to understand the subtlety of resource creation and regeneration processes, smaller qualitative sample studies are likely to be more appropriate than quantitative studies involving large, statistically valid sample sizes. Therefore, understanding firm-specific contexts and resources, as well as how resources are renewed, requires qualitative investigation. Consequently, it seemed more reasonable to explore a few international growth-related processes in SMEs in enough depth to enable logical and insightful conclusions to be made rather than to try to capture aggregate frequencies of variables.

4.4.1 Benefits of Case Study Method

An important question which arises when using a case study approach is the number of cases to analyse. Quantitative researchers require a large number of cases to extract some validity based on statistical analysis while qualitative research using case studies might still provide interesting results even based on single cases. However according to Yin (2003, 2009, 2014), there are many benefits of multi-case studies using different contexts over single cases: they are less vulnerable, they provide substantial analytical benefits, they offer the possibility of direct replication, the contexts of cases are likely to differ providing opportunities for contrasting and, it reduces the likelihood of the study of an exceptional single case. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that “multiple-case sampling adds confidence to findings. [...] If a finding holds in one setting and, given its profile, also holds in a comparable setting but does not in a contrasting case, the finding is more robust.” (p. 29). Multiple case study approach seeks to capture the varied empirical evidence supporting the research. The research question meets all three of these conditions.

Furthermore, comparative or multiple case studies examine the same questions in many firms and compares the results to draw conclusions. According to Yin (2014), the purpose of the data collection in a multiple case study is to compare the phenomenon systematically, to explore different dimensions of the issues, or to examine different levels of research variables.

4.4.2 Empirical Case Studies Selection

The selection of case firms is very important to the quality of the study as it has major implications on the outcomes of the study. Therefore, a researcher needs to balance the merits, demerits and the openness of the cases to the research was a major advantage in selecting the cases (Hanell & Ghauri, 2016; Ghauri, 2004). Therefore, instead of random sampling, case research relies on and benefits from theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt, 1989). The selection of case firms is very important to the quality of the study as it has major implications on the outcomes of the study. Case selection is challenging in dynamic capabilities research. Dynamic capabilities are, by definition, difficult to spot, and thus their identification is difficult even if the researcher is familiar with the firm. Hence, case selection is a crucial phase of empirical dynamic capabilities research. It is difficult and laborious to find cases that are relevant and interesting for this study. Thus, there were strict criteria for the case selection. The researcher needs to determine many factors concerning the firms before selecting each firm. Since the aim of case selection should be to maximise what can be learned (Stake 1995, 4). The cases should, therefore, be selected so that they are the most likely to cast light on the issues being examined (Yin 2009, 26; 2014). Relevance to the objective of the study is thus the prime criterion (Mills et al., 2010).

In this study, it was important to select somewhat similar firms to enable cross-case comparisons. Although the case firms played slightly different roles in the study, they are compared along many dimensions. The selected firms offered easy access to the researcher and the informants were interested in sharing information with the researcher (Stake 1995, 2005).

Also, several practical issues similarly played a role in case selection (Hanell & Ghauri, 2016; Ghauri, 2004). For example, convenience, budgetary constraints (Yin, 2014) the location of the firms and access to personal and hence their management for an interview. This is justified as a key issue in case selection is that the cases are accessible to the researcher (Hanell & Ghauri, 2016; Ghauri, 2004). In all the four cases, the examination focused on the business model, the firm international activities and the firm international capabilities. In addition to these emphases, specific attention was given to the management of dynamic capabilities.

Above all, the research question needs to guide case selection. Similarly, the cases must correspond to the theoretical framework. (Hanell & Ghauri, 2016; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010; Ghauri 2004, 112). These considerations were of particular importance when selecting the cases in this study. Furthermore, qualitative research tends to use purposive sampling, which allows for boundaries to be set (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Purposeful selection of participants is a key decision in qualitative research (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). Patton (2015, 2002) sees purposeful sampling as being used for case study selected “because they are ‘information-rich’ and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not an empirical generalisation from a sample to a population” (Patton, 2002:40). Also, Patton (2002, 2015) distinguishes between random *probability sampling* (which is commonly used in quantitative studies); from *purposeful sampling* where the objective is to select information-rich cases strategically depending on the study purpose and resources. In this study position and purposeful sampling were used for case selection. Furthermore, case selection aims to maximise what can be learned from the firms (Stake,

1995). The cases, therefore, should be selected so that they are the most likely to cast light on the issues being examined (Yin, 2009, 2014). Consequently, relevance to the objective of the study is thus the prime criterion (Mills et al., 2010).

As this study focuses on SMEs management consulting firms with international activities, it was important to select somewhat similar firms to enable cross-case comparisons. The firms needed to be such that it offers international capabilities, dynamic capabilities are easily identifiable, and the case firms need to precipitate in international activities. It can safely be argued that all of these firms have international operations, are also all SMEs and have operated internationally for some years. Also, various practical issues played a role in case selection (Ghauri 2004, 113). For the sake of convenience, and due to budgetary constraints (Yin 2009, 26; 2014), the UK firms are headquartered in the Surrey, UK and the Nigeria firms has headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria; hence their management could be interviewed at their headquarters. This is justified as a key issue in case selection, is that the cases are accessible to the researcher (Ghauri 2004). All the four SMEs offered easy access to the researcher and the firms who were interested in sharing information (Stake 1995). In case selection, a researcher balances advantages and disadvantages (Ghauri 2004), and the openness to the research was a major advantage in selecting these specific SMEs.

4.5 Case Operational Criteria

The collection of data is also concerned with issues of validity and generalisability. As a requirement to achieve construct validity, which is

concerned with the correct operational measurement of the data, it is important to measure what is required. This requirement is especially problematic in case study research due to the assumed high degree of subjectivity in the way data are collected. To prevent this problem, a multi-method qualitative data method was used in this study, also called triangulation (Yin, 2003, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989). The qualifiers for the case study were based on firm size, sector, location and involvement in international activities. For a firm to qualify to be interviewed, the following criteria must be met: the firm is a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) as defined by European standards, engages in management consulting firm activities, is located in Surrey, UK; Lagos, Nigeria and is currently involved in international activities.

Number	Qualifier	Definition	Action taken	
			Negative (No)	Positive (Yes)
1	Size: SME	A small to medium enterprise (SME) is defined using the European Union's definition [< 250 employees, $\leq \text{€ } 50$ million turnover or a balance sheet total of $\leq \text{€ } 43$ million] for ease of comparability.	Disqualified for interview.	Continue to number 2.
2	Sector: management consultancy	Management consulting firm is defined in the broad sense to include IT; Oil and	Disqualified for interview.	If yes then continue to number 3

		Gas, management; and strategy and firm.		
3	Location: Surrey, UK and Lagos, Nigeria	The firm should be based in the Surrey or Lagos.	Disqualified for interview.	If yes then continue to number 4
4	Market: Internationalisation	For this research, internationalisation is defined as “the process of increasing involvement in international operations” (Welch and Luostarinen, 1988). This covers inward and outward growth across national borders. All firms interviewed should have sufficient international experience to take a retrospective look at the internationalisation process. Firms should also indicate how the internationalisation process began	Disqualified for interview.	If all of the above parameters are met interview is scheduled
<i>Source: Author's Classification for data collection</i>				

Table 6 – Profile of firms

4.5.1 Size

It will be impossible to analyse the internationalisation patterns of all the service SMEs active in this market, due to the size of the market sector, therefore, a choice must be made which market would be examined. To qualify to be interviewed, the firm needs to be an independently owned, small to medium-sized enterprise. As mentioned in Chapter 3, for this research, an SME is defined using the European Union's definition [< 250 employees, $\leq \text{€ } 50$ million turnover or a balance sheet total of $\leq \text{€ } 43$ million] for ease of comparability.

4.5.2 Sector

The firm needs to be an SME, adhering to the size qualification and must also be in the appropriate sector, a service firm. Within the service sector, the management consulting firm subsector is the focus of this research. Management consultancies are defined in the broad sense to include human resources; innovation; IT, Oil and Gas, management; and strategy and organisation. Specifically, the management consultancy sector has been chosen over other service sectors due to its highly skilled nature and the importance of trust and customer relations; they embody a pure service¹⁵. These elements are strong in all management consultancies irrespective of their sub-sector. The focus is limited to one sector to control for industry effects on internationalisation (Calof, 1994).

4.5.3 Location

To control the country effect of countries particularities towards internationalisation such as cultural attitudes and behaviour towards a risk-taking activity, all the interviewed firms are located in either Surrey in the United Kingdom or Lagos Nigeria. (Hofstede et al., 2010). The UK and Nigeria were specifically chosen as both have significant numbers of management consulting firms. The UK consulting market is the largest outside the USA and according to the UK Management Consultancies Association (MCA, 2016). The UK consulting industry revenues for 2016 were estimated at £5.5bn (MCA, 2016). Nigeria is an emerging economy with a population of more than 180 million people and has the largest market in Africa (World Bank, 2017; PwC, 2016). The Nigerian economy is expected to be in the top 10 in the world in 2050 with a projected GDP of \$6.4 trillion (World Bank, 2017; PwC, 2016). The Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as of 2016 stood at 37.1 million (NBS, 2016). The total number of people employed by the MSME sector as of 2016 is 60 million representing 84.02% of the total labour force in the country (NBS, 2016). Furthermore, Nigeria's services sector output ranks as the 63rd largest worldwide and 5th largest in Africa (World Bank, 2017) and the contribution of the services 54.6% to Nigeria GDP.

Therefore, by using the UK and Nigeria as the home countries there is a comparable SME standards base. Furthermore, Lagos and Surrey were specifically chosen, for their geographically accessible to the researcher and similarly due to the high number of management consulting firms active in both countries.

4.5.4 Internationalisation

All firms interviewed adhered to the criteria of being currently involved in international operations and having sufficient international experience to take a retrospective look at the internationalisation process from its beginning to the current state at the time of interview.

4.5.5 Temporal Sampling

The study focused on four management consulting firms and how these firms handle international growth; this implies the notion of time. This could be handled in two ways: using longitudinal case studies or retrospective case studies. According to Leonard-Barton (1990), longitudinal studies are most appropriate when cause and effect are being investigated. However, these studies typically take more time and tend to gather more unnecessary data than other types of case studies. This study instead uses retrospective case studies. A period of between 1 to 3 years in the recent past was analysed. This should provide sufficient data to analyse how international growth is handled. One potential weakness of retrospective studies is that "participant-informant in a wholly retrospective study may not have recognized an event as important, when it occurred and thus may not recall it afterwards." (Leonard-Barton, 1990:250) However, this weakness can be alleviated by analysing written records corresponding to the events under scrutiny. Another argument to use retrospective study instead of longitudinal studies is that according to (Weick, 2001) it is very difficult if not impossible for people to make sense of their actions at the time they occur. Actions tend to be interpreted and justified afterwards.

4.6 Empirical Data Collection Process

The study is the result of a multifaceted process. This study combines different types of data collection instruments from a multitude of sources. (i.e., documents, archival materials, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts). No single source has a complete advantage over all the others. The various sources are highly complementary, and a good case study will, therefore, want to use as many sources as possible. For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources, in verifying the information collected and to draw inferences about the nature of the firm. There are two categories of data; primary and secondary (Yin, 2003, 2009, 2014; Eisenhardt, 1989). Primary data are the researcher collects for the specific study. They are often collected through direct observations, surveys and interviews. Secondary on the other hand are data that are collected from external sources. Secondary data collected mainly a desk-research which includes an analysis of written materials such as websites of the cases, internal documentation provided by the firms, brochures, and marketing material of the destinations. Secondary data collection comprises reviewing financial statements, websites and different newspapers, magazines and journals were followed regularly to see if the firms are facing radical changes.

The empirical data for this study were collected with interviews, based on a theoretically derived semi-structured interview guide as the main source of data rather than a structured interview approach. There is clear justification for this choice; the challenge in studying dynamic phenomena, such as growth in international markets, is that there is a lack of documentation

and it was decided that the most efficient way to gain comprehensive and reliable empirical data was to interview knowledgeable people (Noordhaven 2004; Kumar et al., 1993). This decision reflects the descriptive nature of the research. As the internationalisation of small and medium-sized management consulting firms is an underexplored area of research, aspects may arise that have not been foreseen. The semi-structured interview was designed to ascertain what the firms themselves identify as most significant to their successful internationalisation: to allow for comparability of questions being asked to all firms yet allowing for the flexibility of other information to be offered by the firm. Also, according to Yin (2009) using a case study protocol with specific questions and propositions is more likely to be within feasible limits. However, secondary sources also played a significant role during the data collection by providing complementary and confirming information concerning events taking place in the studied SMEs.

In this study, the people interviewed represented top management (i.e. entrepreneurs, owner-managers, key decision-makers) of the studied firms. These managers are considered key informants because dynamic capabilities and internationalisation reflect firm-level strategy, which is based on their decisions. So, the owner founders play an important role in the development of dynamic capabilities and we must place owner-manager at the centre of the discussion on dynamic capabilities (Rindova and Kotha 2001, 1274; Ambrosini et al., 2009). In particular, owner founders' perceptions of environmental dynamism (i.e. opportunity search processes) are often considered prerequisites for the other two processes identified as underlying dynamic capabilities (i.e. resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration) (e.g. Teece 2009).

The empirical data for this study began at the end of 2012 with the identification of twenty-nine potential cases. These firms were approached to participate in the studies of which six firms replied with an interest in the studies. In February 2013 several interviews were arranged with the participating firms to start the data collection. Once an interview date was fixed, a follow-up email was sent confirming the date and reconfirming the firm qualifications by email (firm size, sector and internationalisation as the firm address were already known) (see Appendix 1). The empirical data concern three broad themes: I) Internationalisation, II) Success and III) Dynamic capability. The interviews were scheduled with the owners/founders of each firm and all the interviews took place at the firm premises. Each interview was scheduled for three hours with a further an hour for the following session, in total four firms contributed a minimum of six hours in total to the study. The fifth and the six firms contributed a total of two hours each, the depth and breadth were limited. As a consequence, the participation and the contribution of the fifth and the sixth firms were lacking and was not included in the study.

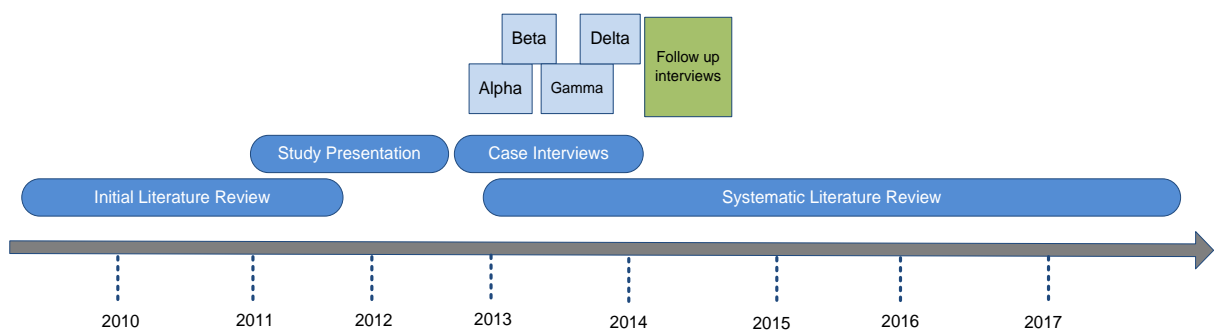


Figure 4 - Data Collection

4.6.1 Interviews

In this study, in-depth interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method. In-depth interview is a flexible method for data collection. It enables the discovery of new relationships and the examination of novel situations (Daniels & Cannice, 2004). Also, the interview situation always recreates the interview and the design can be modified during the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Furthermore, qualitative interviews typically yield much more information than, for instance, surveys. The interview situation enables the quality and quantity of information to be influenced during data collection, as the interviewer can ask additional, specifying questions that were not planned. Additionally, in-depth interviews were considered suitable for this study as the research question called for in-depth data on the firms and the key informants' views were considered important (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The decision to use in-depth interviews as the main data collection tool is to allow for a detailed discussion on the issues. Interviews, according to Patton (2002, 2015) are defined as "open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The use of interviews as a qualitative data collection instrument, according to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), "fosters interactivity with participants; elicits in-depth, context-rich personal accounts, perceptions, and perspectives" yielding rich explanation and description (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008:195). This instrument would allow for the depth of information sought after by this research.

Firstly, in-depth interviews are a suitable data collection method for theory building research (Daniels & Cannice, 2004). Saunders et al., (2007) highlight the advantage of an interview over a questionnaire, suggesting that managers are more likely to agree to an interview than filling out a questionnaire as the interview allows them to reflect on events of relevance to their work and they do not have to write their responses. The interviewee also is more likely to share information and be more trusting when personal contact is established. Furthermore, by agreeing to be interviewed, the interviewee gives consent, knowing that the interview is recorded and the researcher has a set of questions to be answered (Denscombe, 2007). Secondly, the complex nature of the phenomenon under study influenced the choice. Interviews enable the researcher to develop a trusting relationship with the informant, and hence gather data that would not be accessible by any other means (Daniels & Cannice, 2004). Finally, interviews are suitable in situations in which the number of possible informants is relatively limited (Daniels & Cannice 2004). This is an important facet from the standpoint of this study, as the number of SMEs management consultant operating internationally are fairly low, and the number of possible informants is relatively limited. In this study, it was particularly important to ask any specific questions since some of the business terms used are sometimes complex and even ambiguous. In such an instance, the interviewees were asked to explain what they meant by the terms they used.

The interviews were semi-structured (Yin, 2009, 2014). The interviewer had listed themes with some open-ended questions to guide the interview. The interview guides are located in appendix 2. The interview guide served as a checklist for the interviewer to ensure that all intended themes were

addressed and as a tool for time allocation (Yin, 2009, 2014). A semi-structured interview enables interviewees to respond to questions in their own words and emphasise the issues they perceive as important. The open-ended nature of the interviews meant that the interviewees talked both about the facts relating to the issues in focus and their own opinions or interpretations on the issues (Yin 1994, 2009, 2014). The interviewees were key informants i.e. founding partner or owner founder and thus have a deep understanding of the firms (Yin 1994, 2009; Daniels & Cannice, 2004). Interviews were recorded with a digital recorder, with the consent of the interviewees. Recording can make interviewees feel uncomfortable or even restrict what they say (Daniels & Cannice, 2004). This was not the case with this study. Each interview began with a couple of very easy questions relating to the interviewee her/himself. The purpose was to make both the interviewee and the interviewer feel at ease (Daniels & Cannice, 2004), and to gain some background information on the interviewee that might help in interpreting their views.

The researcher undertook in-depth, face-to-face interviews, conducted on a one-to-one basis. Interviews were conducted with the owner/founder or the manager in charge of international activities. Interviews were conducted either on the firm's premises or located selected by the firms. The duration of the interviews varied from 45 minutes to approximately two hours. Interviews were recorded which allowed for the material to be revisited as well as enabling the interviewer to be more attentive during the process with the possibility of picking up on nonverbal cues (Saunders et al., 2007). Recordings were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview was conducted to ensure an iterative process while still undertaking interviews and thus gaining insight from one interview before

moving on to the next. All identifying data (firm name, etc.) were coded and made anonymous in the transcriptions, including data cleaning and the correction of grammatical errors. Finally, a copy of the transcript was sent to all interviewees for final checking. Out of the four cases, two firms made changes and the other two selected not to modify the transcript.

The table below lists the merits and demerits of audio recording at interview (Healy and Rawlinson (1994); Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005); Saunders et al., (2007); and Easterby-Smith et al., (2008).

Merits	Demerits
Allows questions formulated at an interview to be accurately recorded for use in later interviews where appropriate.	Equipment's malfunctions due to technical problems.
The accurate and unbiased record provided.	Interviewee responses may impact and thus reduce reliability.
Allows direct quotes to be used.	Interviewee and interviewer relationship may be adversely affected (supplications possibility of 'focusing' on the audio-recorder).
Allows the interviewer to concentrate on questioning and listening.	The cost and time required to transcribe the audio recording.
The interview can be re-listen over a long period.	

Table 7 - Merits and demerits of audio recording

4.6.1.1 Single Informant Limitation

The use of a single/key informant has observed restrictions regarding the reliability and validity of data obtained with this method; specifically, it “prohibits a determination of the extent to which variation in measurements is due to (1) the concept of interest, (2) systematic sources of error, or (3) random error (Joreskog, 1971, Bagozzi, 1980)” (Phillips, 1981). Another way to measure that same data is recommended. To this end, the second interview was conducted across all the cases as well as the case’s website was used to cross-check or triangulate the data. An additional criticism is that no one single informant is likely to be the most reliable informant on all issues. Such criticism could be appropriately levied at large firms, however, for this study firm size is relevant since it is common for the owner to be involved or at least knowledgeable of all the firm’s transactions. It was decided to interview either the owner/founder about international activities because they were the person with the most knowledge of a firm’s internationalisation process. It is, therefore, reasonable to argue that they are the most knowledgeable of all staff of the firm’s internationalisation process.

On the issues of interviewer bias, according to Maxwell (2005), this is impossible to conduct interview entirely without bias. The interviewee will be influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation (Maxwell, 2005). The best that can aim for is to understand how the interviewer is influencing the interviewee and how this affects the validity of inferences from the interview. Another practice employed to counter interviewer bias was to the summarised explanation provided by the interviewee to ensure comprehension (Saunders et al., 2007). The usage of the firms’ websites

could be a limitation in the sense that it is based on information the firm is willing to share publicly. Consequently, the objectivity of this information on its own can be challenged. Nonetheless, the benefits of collecting information on the firm before the interview were deemed greater than the risk of objectivity; the website was a useful means of ascertaining how the firm portrays itself to the public and rich information on the firms' service offerings was typically available.

4.6.2 Case Study Questions

Interview questions can be grouped into four main sections. Table 6 has grouped the interview questions thematically by relevant research questions.

Q1: How do small to medium-sized management consulting firm internationalise successfully?	
	Explain how your present internationalisation activities works
	Why has your firm internationalised?
	Thinking about your internationalisation experience(s), which factors proved the most relevant?
	What are your key performance measures?
	How do you measure your success?
	How do you evaluate your international activities?
	What adaptations have been made after internationalisation In retrospect, what do you see as key skills for internationalisation?
	Have you sought any formal help, support or advice?
Q2: What factors enable international market success among management consulting firm?	
	Explain your firm operations in general
	What are your financial and non-financial measures?

	How have you achieved them?
	Do you have any special training for internationalisation? Explain your marketing activities.
	How do you obtain information on international opportunities?
	How do you manage and sustain relationships?
	Explain your service delivery
Q3: How do you management continual changing the business environment?	
Q3: What are your future plan?	
	Explain your firm international expansion plan
	How will manage and sustain the expansion plan?

Table 8 – Case Study questions List

The first section covers the firm's general operations and its present international activities including the background of the firm, context and history. Also covered were the interviewee's role and responsibilities, their experience with the firm and previous international experience. The second section covers specifics on how and why the firm has internationalised. This includes the reason for going abroad as well as performance factors involving human resources, marketing activities, networking activities, service delivery and critical success factors. The final section inquiries on the firm's plans and long-term internationalisation strategy. At the interviews, the questions were not necessarily asked and discussed in the order presented in Appendix 2, as the researcher did not want to interrupt the flow of the interview if the interviewer started to discuss another relevant matter. However, the prepared questions were used as an indication of flow and to give direction to the discussion and, when

necessary, as a way of drawing the interviewee back on track. This way, the researcher was able to ensure all questions were asked before the interview is completed.

4.7 Empirical Data Analysis Approach

The guidelines suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2003, 2009, 2014) were followed. Eisenhardt (1989) recommends starting the data analysis with an in-depth study of each case. The aim of this is to screen through all the data, discarding the irrelevant data and bringing together what seems most important. The analysis of the research material comprised of several phases due to the nature of the research process. The data collected were analysed using a combination of techniques described in (Yin, 2009; Langley, 1999 and Eisenhardt, 1989): thematic analysis and comparative case, narrative, visual mapping and temporal decomposition. Documents provide a better record of historical events (dates, decisions points, etc.) but lack the richness of exactly what happened (who was involved, what were the interactions, what was analysed, etc.). The combination of the techniques alleviates the deficiencies of each method. In effect, data collection alternated with data analysis, which is typical in qualitative studies (Yin, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989 and Strauss, 1987). Initially, before the in-depth interviews, information from each selected firm was collected from secondary data sources such as articles, websites, financial statements, and thereafter case records were created.

4.7.1 Data Analysis Phases

Data analysis began with an analytic strategy that determines the priorities for the analyses and why (Yin 2009:126). This was also very important in this study as the body of data was relatively very large, which is typical in qualitative research. Making sense of the mass of data would not have been possible without prioritising and having a structure to the analysis. Data analysis commenced immediately with the first interview and questions raised then informed the categorisation of findings and the choice of further questions (Strauss, 1987). The actual analysis started by transcribing verbatim the in-depth interviews and combined into the case records the transcribed in-depth interviews. This restructuring was done chronologically from the perspective of firm growth. This enables the growth development for each firm to be illustrated. This was done because retrospective data are easier to analyse when arranged in chronological order.

Also, all newspaper and magazine articles, financial statements, websites and other secondary data sources, as well as telephone interviews collected from studied firms, were re-read very carefully. This initial phase allowed for the creation of relatively detailed descriptions of the internationalisation processes of each of the four. Since this study focuses on the international dimension of the studied SMEs, this enabled the creation of chronological descriptions of each firm's international growth by reading the descriptions of growth processes carefully and separated sentences referring to business growth by internationalisation.

Finally, a cross-case analysis was conducted. Cross case analysis allows comparison and/or juxtapose across the cases to identify patterns and themes. The key goal of the research is to better understand both deliberate and emergent critical success factors and the interplay of dynamic capability processes across cases during international market dynamism. Using cross-case analysis the results were first horizontally displayed in tables and analysed to search for a convenient way for similarities and differences between the cases. Following on this, pattern matching is used to analyse the patterns of the case data and to find out more about the extent to which the Internationalisation patterns of the four cases follow the patterns suggested in the Internationalisation literature. According to Saunders et al., (2007) pattern matching involves predicting a pattern of outcomes based on theoretical propositions to explain the expected findings. Yin (2009) states that a non-equivalent independent variables design is desirable; Yin continued and stated that the researcher should formulate different expected patterns of independent variables, each based on a different and mutually exclusive "rival" theory and that the concern of the case study would be to determine which of the rival patterns has the largest overlap with the observed one.

The data were analysed using thematic coding (Strauss, 1987). The codes that were generated were based on both themes identified through the literature review and themes induced by the researchers in examining the transcripts of the interviews. In the beginning, open codes were produced through asking a set of 'theory-generating' questions which enabled moving beyond description and order thus exploring the data holistically and moving towards assigning conceptual labels to the basic elements of the data. The purpose of open coding was, in part, to contrast across cases. The

next stage refined the codes into robust concepts to generate a set of axials - aggregate codes by reducing the open codes further (Strauss, 1987). This approach aided data simplification through reduction to dominant categories and data complication through the expansion and reconceptualisation of the data (Saunders et al., 2007; Strauss, 1987; Yin (2009).

In this way, the approach to coding was undertaken in a heuristic manner. By analysing in stages, the emphasis was on a holistic approach to engaging the data insightfully, thoughtfully and on being critical about how the researchers' view of the world may have shaped their assumptions of the findings (Saunders et al., 2007; Strauss, 1987; Yin (2009). This has aided the visibility of social processes situating the research within a real-world context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

4.7.2 Nvivo Data Exploration

The researcher used Nvivo8 software to further facilitate the coding of the four interviews. According to Bazeley (2007), Nvivo has five principal functions: to manage data, manage ideas, query data, model graphically and report from data. In the first instance, Nvivo helped to manage the data: the researcher had over 10 hours of interviews that yielded over 165 pages of transcript. By using (Bazeley, 2007). By using Nvivo, the researcher was able to save and access all relevant data using a single media file. One of the key function of Nvivo's is to code data applying a systematic format to ensure each line of the transcript is scrutinised. Furthermore, it aids managing ideas since the researcher was able to create and store notes and memos within this same file. By using Nvivo accessing and retrieving

information was efficient, this time study time management optimal has information are all stored one place. Another key benefit of using Nvivo is the ability to generate graphics models, these functions were used during conceptual framework and research design. The aforementioned advantages outweigh the criticism cited about using Nvivo one of which was that the researcher loses closeness to data by using analysis software (Bazeley, 2007). Nvivo generates usable codes whereby serving as a facilitating tool to organise data and ideas generated. To create these codes, the researcher is expected to formal with the data by reading and rereading the transcripts. Such activities will allow the researcher to identify keywords to understand data and be familiar with the phrases known as open coding. Open coding is when “the codes will be fairly descriptive and are likely to involve labelling chunks of data in terms of their content” (Denscombe, 2007:98).

Through the iterative process of rereading the transcriptions and looking for overlaps in coding, the codes were further reduced. The result was a reduction, down to twenty codes as listed in Table 27). The codebook gives a clear definition of how each code is used for the cases and the type of information it represents. The codebook explains the selective coding, “...this selective coding focuses attention on just the core codes, the ones that have emerged from open and axial coding as being vital to any explanation of the complex social phenomenon” (Denscombe, 2007:98).

4.8 Strategy to Overcome Bias

In qualitative research, the researcher plays an active and central role in the data collection (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008). There is a risk that the

researcher's experiences, ideas, prejudices and personal philosophies, values and view of the world may potentially bias the findings (Perry, 1998, Denscombe, 2007). It is therefore important to account in advance of the study, the researcher experience and view to enhancing the transparency of possible research bias. Before undertaking the doctorate programme, the researcher worked for over twenty years across several multinational firms as an employee managing principal. As a management consultant, the researcher-led a consulting practice unit working across multiple areas from corporate strategy to culture change to technology architecture to detailed solution development. The researcher worked operated globally in a variety of market sectors, both public and private, and led teams providing technology strategy and operational services delivery responding to significant change driven by either by regulatory reform, market liberalisation and market disruption. In the last ten years to 2017, the researcher has been working with SME business owner again on strategy, technology, operational services delivery and facilitate action-driven plans to support growth and objectives within the business environment.

It is, therefore, imperative as part of managing bias that the researcher clearly articulating the rationale for choosing an appropriate research design to meet the study aims and thus reduces common consequences concerning bias. Having a well-designed research protocol explicitly outlining data collection and analysis similarly assist in reducing bias. Furthermore, purposeful sampling in qualitative research assist with managing bias when compared to convenience sampling in that bias is reduced for the reason that the sample is constantly refined to meet the study aims. In addition to the aforementioned, the second way to reduce the researcher role as the sole researcher and influencing the research is

by discussing the study with others and receiving feedback from experts in the field. Throughout this doctorate process, there were many opportunities to get feedback on this work not only from the supervisory team but also from additional experts as well. The first source of this has been internally within the University, from faculty research training sessions and the internal monitoring process.

The researcher took the view from the outset to seek clarity from the academic community, thus the researcher attending several academic conferences and presented the research papers. These conference paper presentations provided valuable opportunities for the researcher to share ideas with peers and experts in the field, receive feedback with the ability to make modifications and alterations at various stages of the research process. Furthermore, receiving valuable comments of others, allows the researcher to develop and become more comfortable and at ease presenting study ideas in an academic arena. Also, these presentations have empowered the researcher to become more confident in my academic techniques of exposition. Furthermore, such conference has also enabled the researcher to develop clarity of thought necessary to present in front of an experienced academic audience has been a powerful incentive in assisting and motivating the research during some challenging times as well as providing a forum where the research can explore concerns and develop further questions.

There is the risk of the interviewee altering the truth, either to please the interviewer or to omit uncomfortable realities (Saunders et al., 2007). Therefore, according to the Patton (2015), the way to reduce the researcher's impact on the research is, to display empathic neutrality or

take “the middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgement, and remaining too distant, which can reduce understanding” (Patton, 2002:50). This was further emphasised by Denscombe (2007) that minimising the impact on the research, the researcher should take a passive and neutral stance. Specifically, he explained “that the researcher: presents himself or herself in a light which is designed not to antagonize or upset the interviewee (conventional clothes, courtesy, etc.); remains neutral and non-committal on the statements made during the interview by the interviewee” (Denscombe, 2007:185). During this study interviews, this neutral stance was employed.

Finally, as part of the mitigating bias factors, the researcher obtained direct feedback from the interviewed firms, to confirm both the interview transcription, therefore, the researcher shared specific individual case study write up with the concerned firm. This counter the limitation in the usage of interviews or the roles of the interviewer and interviewee during the interview.

4.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter described the research stages and the elements of the research process, focusing on the primary data collection methodology, used in the process of theory building and proposition development. It also explained and detailed the rationale for choosing the research strategy, justified by the theory of the method that guided the study. The chapter further described how the instrument was designed, the nature of measurement, the soundness of measurement. Finally, the chapter

described the case selection strategy, data collection, analysis, and procedures around ethical considerations and increasing validity.

5 THE CASE STUDY FIRMS

5.1 Within Case Study Analysis

The proposition outlined in section 3.4 was used to engage with each of the cases to draw out the emerging themes. The use of coding and sorting and the identification of themes are important, even indispensable, part of this case study process. Accordingly, the analysis of individual case allows for the understanding of those aspects of experience that occur not as individual “units of meaning” but as part of the pattern formed by the confluence of meanings within individual accounts.

Lastly, an overview of the research participants, six SMEs, is presented detailing both the rationale for selection and a historical overview of the firm in the UK and Nigeria. This overview provides the contextual background to this study, in which each the participant organisations operate.

5.2 Case Study - Alpha

5.2.1 Brief Description

Alpha is an SME founded in 2003 based in Surrey, UK. Alpha is a micro-sized firm and identifies itself as an SME management consulting firm offering advice and know-how to its clients within the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) sector. The firm employs 5 full-

time staff in the UK and 7 full-time staff across the other countries. The firm has satellite offices across 4 countries Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand. Similarly, to the full-time staffs, Alpha maintains an extensive network of independent local partners across operating countries in order to maintain optimal resource configuration. The firm clients are predominantly across the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand. The firm stated that they act independently and have access to an extensive network of independent local partners across Asia.

Alpha's expertise is in ICT risk and change management. The firm's client service offering is to minimise ICT risk exposure at a competitive cost and improve process efficiency in a way that increases profitability and opens doors to new opportunities. According to the owner founder, Alpha's goal is to bring businesses together and in doing so to improve process efficiency in a way that increases profitability and opens doors to new opportunities.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Technology sector	<i>"... We operate within the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) space. ..."</i>
International operation	<i>"... Yes, we operate predominantly within the South-eastern region of Asia market, mainly from the Philippine, Vietnam and Thailand. In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a regional headquarter and very strong presences. ..."</i>
Sectoral knowledge	<i>"... We assist our clients to minimise ICT risk exposure at a competitive cost and improve process efficiency in a way</i>

	<i>that increases profitability and opens doors to new opportunities..."</i>
Niche	<i>"...We are a small size international niche consulting business operating from many countries including the UK. We operate within the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) space. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... Our growth outlook over the next two years at 2014 was to maintain and continue to consolidate our current business opportunities approach. ..."</i>
Staffing structure	<i>"... Yes, sure. We use a freelance staff model. It is the most cost-efficient approach to staffing as far as we are concerned. We cannot afford to hold huge pool off resources on our books. ..."</i>

Alpha works with its clients to deliver a flexible combination of services that are tailored to their needs. The firm uses a team of highly experienced and certified professionals to provide project management services, project training and project office development services. Alpha claimed that their stated goal is to enable competitive advantage through improved programme management, risk mitigation planning and control techniques. Alpha recombine these services with the sector know-how to deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of clients' organisation. To this effect, Alpha continues to develop a long-term partnership with its clients' teams of service propositions. Alpha supports its clients to implement strategic projects to deliver competitive advantage. As part of service offerings, Alpha project management consultants work

with clients existing project office to identify opportunities for greater efficiency and better results.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Sectoral knowledge	<i>" ...Our consulting services are provided across the entire lifecycle of business change from conducting strategic reviews to facilitating the embedding and adoption of new ways of working ..."</i>
Know-how	<i>"...Our change capabilities include supporting and enabling the technical, process, cultural and organisational change for our clients within the telecommunication sectors and government (Founder of Alpha) ..."</i>
business structure	<i>"... By adhering to our mantra being focus and building on our reputation. Our business structure is very flexible not hierarchical. Much so also our delivery processes are flexible and are simple and clear. ..."</i>

5.2.2 Alpha Interviewee's Profile

The Interviewee is the founder of Alpha and has served over 25 years of international in technology and telecommunications. Before Alpha's formation, the founder worked for several British multinational firms where his tasks were to develop package ICT services for the firm within the Southeast Asia market i.e. Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Personal experiences	<i>"...Haven worked within the region extensively, the Philippine that is. I identified a gap in the market for a western-style deep ICT expertise, particularly within risk and change management space..."</i>
International entrepreneur	<i>"...In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a regional head office and very strong presences. As a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region of South-eastern Asia."</i>
Knowhow	<i>"...Our reputation, our ability, capabilities, our sectoral and industry know-how. Are the key, in the southeastern Asia market, expatriate status and western technical knowhow give you a slight edge. But you still, you have to continually be creative and embed your technical expertise in the context of the market..."</i>
Culture	<i>"... Cultural sensitivity is crucial and very important in this part of the world. You have to know how to navigate through business-related sensitivity and you have to be aware of their place in business..."</i>
business model	<i>"...Take, for example, we are very aware and very familiar with the way business is conducted around here. It is slightly different from the way business is conducted here in the UK."</i>

5.2.3 Alpha's Internationalisation

Alpha was born global, meaning that since the company's formation, it has been involved in international activities. The founder has worked as a field officer with a major British multinational telecommunication firm for several years in the South-eastern Asia countries. British multinational telecommunication restructured its operations with the region and going forward decided its preferred mode of operation within the region will to work with partners rather than undertaking the assignment directly. Following on from the restructured the founder of Alpha decided to become an entrepreneur. The founder was interested in translating his "know-how" or tacit knowledge into commercially viable services.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
International journey	<i>"... I used to work for British telecommunications looking after their interest in the South-eastern region of Asia within the telecommunication sector. I have worked within the region extensively, the Philippine that is. I have identified a gap in the market for a western-style information technology expertise, particularly within risk and change management space. In essence, there was a huge demand for our service and there was a shortage in the market for our service. ..."</i>
International entrepreneur	<i>"...In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a regional head office and very strong presences. As a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region of Southeastern Asia."</i>

Knowledge and training	<i>I had acquired very significant knowledge and practical "knowhow" in ICT change and risk management during my career.</i>
Sectoral and industry	<i>"...Our reputation, our ability, capabilities, our sectoral and industry know-how are the key. In the southeastern Asia market, expatriate status and western technical knowhow give you a slight edge. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... We have a very clear vision of how and with whom it prefers to work. We prefer internationalising through subcontracting with large MNEs, who find the clients, establish, the contract and we manage the relationship. ..."</i>

The critical event identified as playing a major role in the formation, international growth and development of the firm was when the founder's started operation by working as a subcontractor for an employer by engaging in a change programme in South Asia. The relationship between the two firms became very strong such that Alpha undertook some additional assignments working on behave of the then British multinational telecommunication firm within the region. Alpha then used the experience and opportunity as a "spring ball" to develop and build business opportunities within the region.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Knowhow	<i>"... We offer expert independent advice and knowhow in information technology, risk and change management to our clients and in so doing deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of our client's organisation. ..."</i>

Sellable services	<i>"...Also, I have developed easily sellable services which are much cheaper than the previous multinational telecommunication firm..."</i>
International entrepreneur	<i>"...The combination of these factors and my extensive knowledge and skills strongly played a vital part in my decision to establish on my own ..."</i> (Founder of Alpha)

Alpha contract with the British multinational telecommunication firm ended in December 2004. Following on from the end of its first contract, in 2005, Alpha decided to consolidate its clients' base and increase their presence within Manila, in the Philippines. To do this, Alpha established a strong local presence in Malian and open an international office in the Philippines in the same year. Following on from establishing an office in Malian, Alpha secured its first contact in April 2005 with a local firm in the Philippines.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Responsiveness to client's requests	<i>"...Once our initial contract with my then employer was completed, I decided to pursue business opportunity Manila and started my own company in the Philippines..."</i> (Founder of Alpha).
Continuous change	<i>"... Ok, you see because change is inherently unsettling for people at all levels of an organisation, we work with the leadership to speak with one voice and model the desired behaviours. ..."</i>
Resource utilisation	<i>"... Another important key is the way we leverage our limited sources of human capital to take full advantage of the</i>

	<i>opportunity. Another key important factor that allows us to remain competitive is how we incorporate lessons learned from one project to the next. ..."</i>
Relationship management	<i>"... We have developed mutually beneficial knowledge sharing relationships with our clients talking to them about their future requirements and discussing how we might be able to develop products or services to ensure that we meet their needs. ..."</i>
competitors	<i>"...We listen to your customers, look at our competitors and look at industry trends and insights. ..."</i>

The contract was to programme manage call centre set up. The work required managing the setup information technology centre, processes and procedure as well as the necessary methods for the call centre operations. The call centre setup programme was very successful, and Alpha was awarded additional training contract with the same firm. It is against this backdrop that Alpha began a proactive opportunity campaign to continue to grow its Philippines business. By the end of 2005 Alpha had secured a total of four contracts predominantly in Manila.

As a consequent of business success in the Philippines, Alpha made a strategic decision to enter neighbouring countries. At first to enter the Vietnam ICT market from which the firm can then progressing to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Alpha eventually succeeded in entering Vietnam and Alpha's first Vietnam client, was in January 2006. The contract was with a telecommunication company that specialised in using the mobile virtual network operator business model to provide Pay As You Go mobile SIM cards. The work required managing the business change process from the

manual customer relationship management (CRM) activities to information technology CRM system. Alpha's own definition of success in international activities is centred on having long-standing clients with mutual benefit.

The following diagram represents the Alpha's international progression. The firms started across the Philippines and progressing to Vietnam, Thailand, Laos.

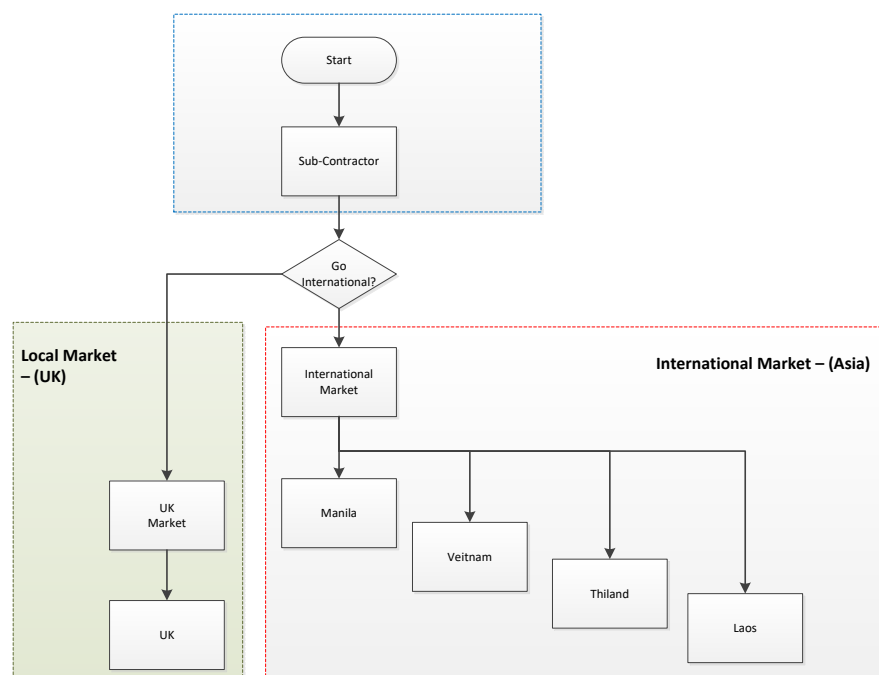


Figure 5 - Alpha International Journey

5.2.4 Dynamic Capability Influence on Successful Internationalisation

5.2.4.1 Proposition 1 – P1

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

This proposition emphasises the key role of dynamic processes in adapting, integrating and reconfiguring internal and external organisational skills, resources and competencies, to match the requirements. The analysis of the case data suggests that three themes or enablers of dynamic capabilities such as sensing – opportunity search, resource acquisition – seizing and resource reconfiguration – transforming are evident in the dataset collected. This then begins to explain the implementation of dynamic capabilities. First, the focus of the firm ability to manage its limited resource based on effective orchestration of enablers of dynamic capabilities in a turbulent international market environment.

Opportunity search - (Sensing): by viewing the data from this lens several examples of the dynamic capabilities can be identified during market opportunity pursuit. For example, Teece et al., (1997) have observed that winners in the global international marketplace have demonstrated timely responsiveness, rapid and flexible product innovation, along with managerial ability to effectively coordinate and redeploy internal and external competencies (Aslan, 2017). Alpha operates in the telecommunication industry which requires agility and rapid response to

clients shifting specifications. So, the application of opportunity search needs to be response and example of this is clear within the dataset.

Similarly, Alpha requires industry-specific technological capabilities (for example knowledge of hardware and software). These could be called the operational capabilities required to keep the business running. However, this operational capability was continually reconfigured and integrated with the capabilities it already possessed. Hence, Alpha was able to expand its service offerings and reduce the risk of being cut off by its largest clients through the application of dynamic capability processes. With this in mind, dynamic capabilities can be identified by how the firm's operational capabilities changed during the research for market opportunity. For example, learning capabilities, together with the prior experience of the firm's management, were enablers of the dynamic capabilities with Alpha.

Enablers of dynamic capabilities	Opportunity search - (Sensing)
Environmental analysis	<i>"...We are frequently involved in environmental analysis as well. We see it as an on-going activity that takes place every time, we obtain feedback. We usually start with working through my networks of social and personal contacts that I have built up over the years. ..."</i>
Sales	<i>"...We offer expert independent advice and knowhow in information technology, risk and change management to our clients and in so doing deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of our client's organisation. ..."</i>
cultural sensitivity	<i>"... as a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region South-eastern Asia. I</i>

	<i>am very familiar with the culture and understand how the business operates and function within this region. ..."</i>
Sensing and scanning	<i>"...Although we relied extensively on our relationship to secure some of our contracts. But in this telecommunication industry, we still have to be inventive in the use of our limited resources, be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay complete. Otherwise, our margin level and ability to grow will be severely compromised..."</i>
Growth	<i>"... Our growth outlook over the next two years at 2014 was to maintain and continue to consolidate our current business opportunities approach. ..."</i>
innovation	<i>"...This allows for equilibrium and encourages growth and innovation within a company. I believe that the leadership team must invite all staff to offer ideas on creating a new vision for the company and thus driving the company forward as a whole. ..."</i>
Responsive to client's requests	<i>"... as a small firm, we continuously reshape, modifies and reassess our business strategy to ensure we are agile and able to respond to the ever-changing business environment and the demand of our clients. ..."</i>

Resource Acquisition (Seizing) is clearly shown is in the way the firm routine, assess and guide its resource acquisition during seizing within its challenging environment. This approach including a tool created to assist in allowing the resource acquisition. These updates were usually based on information gathered from discussions with stakeholders, market analysis,

social media, all networks. This update assisted management to build an extensive picture of the development within the industry. It is clear from the case dataset that Alpha perpetual and systemically analysis of its external environment with its limited resource. Similarly, other interview respondents made references to the impact of environmental factors on the business.

Enablers of dynamic capabilities	Resource acquisition - (Seizing)
Seizing	<i>"... We are a small firm working in the telecommunication sector where agility is the key. So, it is soo important we continue to remain relevant and responsive to our clients need. We have to constantly renew and mix our technical "know-how" with other resources..." (Founder of Alpha).</i>
Technology	<i>"...we are constantly relying on our digital service delivery capabilities to be closer to our clients particularly in the mobile device space. It would surprise you to note that In Asia mobile devices are heavily relied on for day to day communication. ..."</i>
Subcontracting and	<i>"...As a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region of South-eastern Asia. ..."</i>
Partnership	<i>"...We do this by developing a long-term partnership with our clients' ..."</i>
Subcontracting	<i>"...We have a very clear vision of how and with whom it prefers to work. We prefer internationalising through subcontracting with large MNEs, who find the clients, establish, the contract and we manage the relationship.</i>

	<i>As of 2014, subcontracting work accounts for approximately 65% of our workflow. ..."</i>
Marketing	<i>"...for example, we constantly adapt our marketing campaigns and strategies depending on our target audience. Being a tech company, it is easy for us to be focus and targeted. That way, we can get maximum return on marketing investment and achieve economy of scale. ..."</i>

It can be argued that to be successful in a turbulent international market environment Alpha was innovative in the use of its resources and application of enablers of dynamic capabilities. This led to the realisation that the firm needed to continually develop new services if it were to survive. Secondly, the data revealed the Alpha carefully investment in resources that will generate maximum revenue and developed a capability in identifying and acquiring these resources. Finally, the data also revealed a continuous investment in technological capacity both through training initiatives, capital investment and in the development of technology-based solutions for clients.

Resource Reconfiguration - (Transforming) in these examples, changes in the firm's resource base were often related to changes in clients' requirements, for example, new service offerings, price pressures, changes in the business landscape or new geographical markets. This is in addition to changes motivated by the firm's internal and external environment. This can be illustrated through management's assumptions that the integration of existing resources and capabilities result in new service offerings. In

other words, good practices were continually and successfully embedded within the firm.

The interview data provided examples of how the Alpha focused on the continual development of its reconfiguration and transforming its capacity. This positioned the firm's to service client needs and to develop internal solutions to meet evolving client's requirements. This capacity development focused on all its resources. To achieve this, the data revealed that Alpha management team proactively engage with the client base to drive changes concerning new technologies as they became increasingly aware of the scale of change and the potential of new developments. The data equally disclosed that the firm continually assesses its technology competencies and made considerable investments in smart new technology investment. The data further showed a link between investments in technology and firm reconfiguration and adaptive capability.

Enablers of dynamic capabilities	Reconfiguration - (Transforming)
Resource Reconfiguration	<i>"...just like I said early being a small firm in that part of the world we can be compliance even with our reputation we have to constantly transform out limited resource to remain competitive - we just have to..." (Founder of Alpha).</i>
Agility	<i>"... Nope! Our marketing methods evolve. Creativity and agility dominant our marketing campaigns methods and strategies. Technology dominant marketing campaigns. ..."</i>
Change management	<i>"...Managing change effectively requires moving the</i>

	<i>company from its current state to a future desired state at minimal cost to the company. Therefore, the key is change must be managed, implemented, and executed in such a way that there is always communication across the company. ..."</i>
resource utilisation.	<i>"... Another key important factor in our resource utilisation. We must be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive and we are good at it. ..."</i>
New services offerings	<i>"... changes in inevitable so from the point of view of our business we have a great deal of control over the internal environment, structures and processes covering our day-to-day operations and decisions to create services that will satisfy clients. ..."</i>
New organisational processes	<i>"...In this constantly evolving business environment, we also continuously rework our processes to make them optional and keep pace with environment. ..."</i>

It is argued that this required dynamic capabilities since the firm's management had to be able to modify its services offerings, processes and internationalisation strategies to remain competitive. The relationships between opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration were highly intertwined and bidirectional. To summarise, when reflected against the definitions of dynamic capabilities introduced in chapter two of the study, for example, Teece et al., 1997 or Helfat et al., 2007 and the review of the case through the three essential elements of dynamic capabilities studies noted by (Teece, 2017; Winter, 2017; Zahra et

al., 2006). The examples presented above reflect the dynamic capabilities possessed by Alpha very accurately.

5.2.5 Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment

5.2.5.1 Proposition 2 – P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm's strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive

Alpha operating in a rapidly international business landscape which often includes unexpected changes in the environmental business environment such as technology, customers, competitors, government regulations. For technology-based SMEs like Alpha, the operating environment is relatively volatile; opportunities unexpectedly arise and disappear. Thus, there is a need for the changing of traditional rules, business models and ways of thinking. This allows for re-invention of business models which enables the creation of new bundles of products and services and the restructuring of value chains.

Theme	Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment
Multifaceted strategies	<i>"...No, not really, we use a multifaceted marketing approach. You see, we cannot compete with large firms with huge financial resources. ..."</i>
Adaptive capability	<i>"... We not only use social media to communicate with our clients. But instead, we see social media as a strategy tool</i>

	<i>which is needed to maintain an advantage over our competitors, evolve our business model and we continue to its impact on growth". ..."</i>
Flexibility	<i>"... What makes us different and remains competitive is the way we do business and our flexible company processes. ..."</i>
Resourcing model	<i>"... Resource reallocation helps us choose the best available resources for our clients' projects and manage them throughout the assignment, so that way we avoid under or over utilisation of your employees. ..."</i>
Technology	<i>"... We have a very strong and visible technology presence across the web and the social media strategy played and continue to play a very significant part in our international growth approach...."</i>
Social media	<i>"...So, you see, leverage our digital service delivery capabilities, social media knowhow and our technical expertise to the maximum. ..."</i>
Technology savvy	<i>"... We relied heavily on our digital service delivery, social media and technology capabilities to remain competitive. ..."</i>

There is strong evidence of this re-invention within Alpha's operating environment and the extent of such implementation of enablers of dynamic capabilities increase with an increase in the level of market uncertainty. For example, the scale of technological and market changes in telecommunication industry often had a dramatic impact on profitability and growth according to Alpha's management team. Therefore, the need to

implementation of enablers of dynamic capabilities is important in the turbulent and uncertain international marketplace so that new ways of providing solutions to clients can time reinvested was emphasised by the management team as key in the reconfiguration of their resources and the processes.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Responsiveness	<i>"...We are actively in communication with our clients through formal and informal channels to enable us to plan. This allows us to get a better understanding of our clients' demand thus enables us to renew and reassess our capability, capacity and adjust our strategies going forward..." (Founder of Alpha).</i>
communication	<i>"... We actively engage with our clients, this allows us to get a better understanding of our clients' demand thus enables us to renew and reassess our capability, capacity and adjust our strategies going forward. ..."</i>
Innovation	<i>"... We have to be innovative with our limited resources, by being creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive. Since most of our solution and modularise, typically a consultant often works on many projects and or assignment simultaneously. ..."</i>
Responsiveness	<i>"... We listen carefully to our clients' needs and enables their strategy change journey. We do this by leveraging our advisory business expertise to focus on outcome led initiatives and considering strategy change needs. ..."</i>
Change	<i>"...We usually deal with changes from two different</i>

management	<i>perspectives. First from the external business environment perspective and Secondly from our internal business environment perspective. From the viewpoint of the external business environment. ..."</i>
business model	<i>"... Our business model is very simple and very flexible Basically, we use a consulting service business model working on an assignment basis, that is time and material basis. That is that standard consulting services practices. ..."</i>
Resource utilisation	<i>"...We do not maintain a large staff portfolio instead we work with our local partners on projects and contracts delivery. Also, resources are allocated to us by our clients on projects as needed in essence we work closely with our clients to identify their challenges. ..."</i>

Alpha Operations Director revealed that the firm actively and perpetually analysis external environment conditions and triggers based on the collection of data from several sources such as research, the internet, newspapers, government publications, etc. to attain a clear understanding of demands. In this way, the firm is better positioned to respond to shifting clients demands. One of the primary methods of doing this is by obtaining feedback from suppliers and clients. The outcome of such exercise is that Alpha can effectively apply the available resources to take advantage of its external opportunities.

The dataset further suggested that the survival and success of Alpha were associated with the continual combination of resources development, internal adjustments, external analysis of its and the new skills in a

turbulent international marketplace. Furthermore, the reasons for Alpha's survival and international growth strategy can also be found in its innovation, technology and good client relations.

5.2.6 The Importance and the extent of Innovative Capacity

5.2.6.1 Proposition 3 – P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

When the case is studied from the viewpoint of innovative processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, there were multiple motives for continual processes reconfiguration. The firm continually recombined its innovative capacity processes during searches for new technological resources, new geographical markets, and ways to increase the firm's effectiveness. Furthermore, that data collected from the interview clearly showed that Alpha management placed great importance on processes innovation. This the firm stated innovation is crucial to its survival, including processes re-engineering which enables the firm to deliberate search new ways of delivering news solution.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Innovative Capacity	<i>"...due to our size and limited access to the large financial resource we have to make do with what we have by clearly implementing innovative processes reconfiguration and to quickly recombines these processes to achieve competitive</i>

	<i>advantage in this ever-changing market environment..." (Founder of Alpha).</i>
Agility	<i>"... Our mantra is agility and creativity equal success. So, we live and breathe this mantra by reassessing and reassessing our business strategy and approaches. We just must be agile in our ever-changing business environment. ..."</i>
Adaptation	<i>"... So, to compete successfully and sustain the growth we continuously study the environment and adapt our business model accordingly..."</i>
Multifaceted business model	<i>Our approach and business model are multi-layered and localised within a given business environment. ..."</i>
Continuous change management	<i>"...So, we bring a set of structured processes and set of deliverables to the technical side of change. After all, change management is all about introducing changes in a structured way. Without structure and rigour, it is difficult to integrate change management activities into a project delivery approach. ..."</i>
Innovation	<i>"...We must be innovative with our limited resources to be a suitable business. We must be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive and we are good at it. ..."</i>
Social media	<i>"...We use social media extensively. We check the social media activity of our potential clients'. You will be surprised how much information we keep up from social media just be looking at what is discussed by our potential clients' staffs. We use that to gauge and explore opportunities. ..."</i>

The values created by processes innovations re-engineering are often manifested in new ways of doing offering business solutions. This is particularly important within the Alpha since processes innovations re-engineering enhances the competitiveness of their ability in turbulent environments. The data demonstrated that was important since the increased requirements of the business environment had forced the Alpha management team to continuously search for new ways to increase the effectiveness of the firm's processes in sensing - opportunity search, in resource acquisition - seizing and in resource reconfiguration - transforming. This again was essential since the telecommunications industry clients applied considerable pressure to prices. As a consequence of the pressure on prices, Alpha had to continually increase the flexibility of its internal structure and processes innovations re-engineering.

Technological transformations capacity is at the core of delivering services and solution to their clients, therefore, examining the data through the lens of technology, it clear that technology is one of the firm's key competitive advantage; particularly in the way technology is intertwined with services delivery, it was used to significantly contributes to resources reconfiguration. To this effect, Alpha has been able to integrate, adapt and recombines technology offerings in such a way that add values to their client services.

The firms use several technology products and services across all technology which are accessible across all geographical locations. To optimise its business model, Alpha uses a "demand services" computing

service called OnDemand to allow for elastic technology model (i.e. hardware and software) that allows the firm to innovative seamlessly without large capital investment. This enables Alpha to continually adjustment and adaptation to an unexpected surge in demand in a turbulent international business environment. Alpha stated that elastic technology model combined with emerging and disruptive technologies has aided Alpha to be more streamlined, accessible more flexible and more productive.

Not only have advance in technology and the application of technology motivated Alpha's to internationalise, but they are also one of the key motivations for the firm's formation. Alpha was born global firm, meaning it has actively sought international markets since firm inception, making the firm's existence and its motivation to internationalise inseparably. The continual application and recombination of technological developments are argued to have contributed to Alpha's international operations. It is argued that to cope with these changes, a firm must possess dynamic capabilities. Base on the empirical data, it is argued that those innovations are a vital tool for Alpha and the data, therefore, support the position that the importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Alpha's operating in a turbulent environment continue to increase with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation.

When the case is studied from the perspective of social media ability Alpha uses social media to communicate and share information to increase their public visibility, reputation and marketing. The use of social media has allowed Alpha to actively involve and share information with clients. Alpha claimed that the importance of social media and virtual channels to achieve

business goals and are considered a key competitive advantage. Alpha demonstrated significant use of social media to exploit the full potential of interactive business tool, which has contributed to the development of business growth and has enhanced its competitive advantage.

Themes	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Innovative Capacity	<i>"...the use of technology is so embedded in our DNA. It enables us to deliver customer solution globally and it is so fundamental to our success. ..."</i>
Social media	<i>"...We not only use social media to communicate with our clients. We see social media as a strategy tool which is needed to maintain an advantage over our competitors, evolve our business model and we continue to its impact on growth". ..."</i>
Technology	<i>More important than ever we continue to embrace emerging and disruptive technologies and offer the benefits to our clients – ignoring such them will leave us falling behind and questioning what might have been, as a potential competitive advantage..." (founder Alpha).</i>
Technology impact on business	<i>"... So, we to be creative and innovative with our marketing approaches. for example, we constantly adapt our marketing campaigns and strategies depending on our target audience. Being a tech company, it is easy for us to be focus and be targeted. That way, we can get maximum return on marketing investment and achieve economy of scale. ..."</i>
	<i>"...leverage our digital service delivery capabilities, social media knowhow and our technical expertise to the maximum. By way of example, all our consultants and local partners are</i>

	<i>technology savvy, our delivery processes are flexible, our communication approaches are simple are clear all across the business. ..."</i>
Relationship management	<i>"...We help identify challenges and shared our goals and values with them. We develop mutual respect and share our vulnerabilities. We share our plans with them. ..."</i>
Marketing innovation	<i>"... Technology dominant marketing campaigns. We have developed a marketing algorithm that very good which continues to give us an edge and it is easy for us to be focus and targeted. ..."</i>

5.2.7 The Emergent Business Model and Strategic Adaptive Capability

5.2.7.1 Proposition 4 – P4

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

The firm recognised changing turbulent international marketplace requires multiple methodical approaches to the enablers of dynamic capabilities. Consequently, the management pursuit and followed its business environment systemically. Turbulent implies that Alpha cannot rely extensively on a single source of market for growth thus constantly explore the adjacent market. The firm's business environment is challenging, this turbulence demanded continuous modifications in the firm's business

model. To maintain the firm's internal organisation, efficiency and processes at a satisfactory level, Alpha implemented such systems as ISO9001 across the firm and continually reviews systems to accommodate turbulence.

Alpha claimed that their strategic goal is to enable competitive advantage through improved programme management, risk mitigation planning and control techniques. Alpha recombine these services with the sector know-how to deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of clients' organisation. To this effect, Alpha continues to develop a long-term partnership with its clients' teams of service propositions.

On the key point of observation from the data on Alpha is that it is apparent that reconfiguration and adaptive capabilities allowed the firm's capability to modify its strategy to match different business environments and market characteristics. An illustration of this was the decision by Alpha management team to apply a different approach to market penetration i.e. to Philippine. Furthermore, the firm also reacted and reduced its exposure to a single contract when it launched a new business area that focused on selling technology to governmental organisations.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Knowhow	<i>"...In this part of the world being a western firm gives you a slight edge ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... We are constantly adjusting our business model based on the need of the local market and we are very adept at it. ..."</i>
Multifaceted	<i>"...right from the start we have embraced multifaceted</i>

strategies	<i>strategies..."</i>
Agility	<i>"... But you still have to continually be creative, be agile and be adaptive to survival and outperform the competitions, especially being a small business operating in an international..." (founder Alpha)</i>
Adaptive capability	<i>"...What makes Alpha different is the way we do business: by offering real people, real solutions, and real results. We believe that by bringing people together, we produce positive outcomes..."</i>
new capability development	<i>"...For example, identifying market trends before they happen might enable us to offer products and services to clients before your competitors. ..."</i>

This can be seen to reflect the dynamic capabilities possessed by the firm. For a while, the firm's management relied mainly on a single contact to growth, but in 2005, the firm's founder declared that they had also started to view another potential source of multi growth in the firm's growth strategy. Its management also continuously reshaped the firm's strategy, and, in interviews, it was revealed that the firm had significantly modified its business plan during the period 2013 – 2015.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Adaptive capability	<i>"...I have to continuously reshape modifies and reassess our business strategy to ensure we are agile and able to respond to ever changing clients remand. These organisational changes did</i>

	<i>occur relatively smoothly been an SME nonetheless there were internal conflicts, frustration inside the firm..." (Founder Alpha).</i>
multifaceted strategies	<i>"...for example, we constantly adapt our marketing campaigns and strategies depending on our target audience. ..."</i>

5.2.8 Proposition 5 – P5

Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

5.2.8.1 The Influence of International Entrepreneur Manager/Owner

There is clear evidence in the empirical data to support this position, for example, Alpha founder has extensive international experiences and has worked widely across several countries with the South Asian region. This indicates that entrepreneur or managers knowledge and learning are important in international growth. Thus, it is argued that entrepreneur or managers knowledge often exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction. This is supported by the research and highlighted in previous research (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Helfat et al. 2007). This is further reinforced that managerial capabilities encompass the managerial skills, strategic managerial leadership, managerial beliefs, and top management's strategic intentions that provide the impetus for underlying processes to emerge (Teece, 2018).

Another key observation from the data is that success in turbulent international marketplace dependant on the ability and capability of the entrepreneur manager to coordinate all the fundamental facets identified,

integrated and operating in a common direction to enable successful international market growth. The data collected from the case significantly acknowledges the role of managers' earlier experiences and the firm's history as enablers of dynamic capabilities possessed by the firm.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Entrepreneur	<i>"... I have over for 18 years of international experience before I started as a subcontractor for a British multinational and I have developed a very strong network of contacts especially within the region..." (Founder Alpha)</i>
Entrepreneurial orientation	<i>"... My personal relationship and networks provide me with opportunities to see what is going on in the market and often act as a point of reference for opportunities that are pending. ..."</i>
Environmental analysis	<i>"...We are frequently involved in environmental analysis as well. We see it as an on-going activity that takes place every time, we obtain feedback. We usually start with working through my networks of social and personal contacts that I have built up over the years. ..."</i>
Growth	<i>"...This largely in the domain of John. The general approach is John set the strategy on how and with whom we prefer to work with. We usually give preference internationalising through subcontracting with a large company. ..." Director of operations.</i>
Reputation	<i>"...Our reputation, the reputation of our main contractor and the ability of us to be less dependent on a single source of growth is dependent on our industry know-how..." (founder</i>

	<i>Alpha).</i>
International experience	<i>"...Before setting up the company, I have lived abroad for years working for several multinational companies in many various capacities from country lead, programme director to change owner. ..."</i>
Knowhow	<i>"... In any event, at that time, I had acquired very significant knowledge and practical "knowhow" in ICT change and risk management during my career. This is coupled with the fact that I had lived and worked in the Southeastern region of Asia for about 10 years and understood the culture and the business landscape very well. ..."</i>

5.3 Case Study - Beta

5.3.1 Brief Description

Beta is an SME which operates within the pharmaceutical section and was founded in 2001 and the firm is based in South East of the UK and began as a UK based firm predominantly serving the UK home market. The firm identified itself as an independent management consulting firm, within the pharmaceutical sector, dedicated exclusively to providing quality assurance and management services to its clients. In addition to clinical quality assurance service, the firm also offers a broad range of service capability in the area of biopharmaceutical and medical device to its clients in all areas of quality assurance from auditing to quality management services, process optimisation and integration. Beta's client value proposition includes quality assurance (QA), compliance in quality assurance, quality management system (QMS), pharmacovigilance, good clinical practice

(GCP), auditing services, training, standard operating procedure (SOP) writing to clients throughout the UK and internationally.

The firm was initially established to fill the gap within the UK market to provide quality assurance clinical research to the life science and healthcare sector and is not involved in any other clinical research activity. As of 2013, the firm employed 6 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff in the UK and about 95 self-employed contractors' staff internationally.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Pharmaceutical Sector	<i>"... We also specialised in clinical quality assurance service. We also offer a broad range of service capability in the area of biopharmaceutical and medical device to our clients in all areas of quality assurance. From auditing to quality management services, process optimisation and integration. ..."</i>
International operation	<i>"...The India opportunity "kick-started" our international journey. It came just at the right time but with several issues and challenges. ..."</i>
Sectoral knowledge	<i>"...We also specialised in clinical quality assurance service. We also offer a broad range of service capability in the area of biopharmaceutical and medical device to our clients in all areas of quality assurance. From auditing to quality management services, process optimisation and integration. ..." (Founding Partner Beta).</i>
Reputation	<i>"...Our reputation, our ability, capabilities, our sectoral and industry know-how are the key. In the southeastern Asia</i>

	<i>market, expatriate status and western technical knowhow give you a slight edge. ..."</i>
Resource utilisation model	<i>"...Yes, sure. We use a freelance staff model. It is the most cost-efficient approach to staffing as far as we are concerned. We cannot afford too old huge pool off resources on our books. So, we pull resources in when it is necessary. ..."</i>
business model	<i>"...Take, for instance, we have to quickly adaptable our business model to accommodate India business opportunity. ..."</i>
Staffing model Finance	<i>"... we use subcontractors staffing model. Using local resource to supplement our staff is the approach we prefer. ..."</i>

Beta identified itself has experienced professionals with proven auditing experience who believe in the important role that quality assurance has to play in improving the quality of medicines and clinical research. To underscore this approach, Beta self-employed contractor's staff includes physicians, scientists, former regulators, and industry professionals with an average experience of the consultants is 14 years.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Training and learning	<i>"...Achieving real improvement requires research, genuine commitment and the hard work of many individuals with different skills working together for the same purpose. We're to be effective organisers so that our clients can benefit from all our skills, not just those of one particular consultant. This is what makes us different, flexible and able to adapt to the various circumstances that clinical research brings..." (Founding</i>

	<i>Partner Beta).</i>
Environment scanning	<i>"...On a continual and a regular basis. We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity. ..."</i>
market research	<i>"...We conduct market research on market analysis, competitor analysis, trends analysis and customer analysis. ..."</i>

Beta is a small-sized firm, employing four staff and three part-time staff in the UK including about 40 self-employed contractors' staff internationally. Also, Beta has network consultants based on its key operating countries from these bases, they often undertaken quality assurance projects.

5.3.2 Beta Interviewee's Profile

The Interviewee is the founder of Beta and holds a PhD in computational chemistry and structure-activity correlation studies for oncology products. Also, the interviewee holds a Diploma in research quality Assurance and has been the British Association of Research Quality Assurance (BARQA) regional coordinator for the Anglian region and in 2004 was a member of the BARQA membership working for the party. Interviewee started her quality assurance/management career as a clinical QA auditor within the contract research environment. The Interviewee is fluent in Italian, French, English and has a good understanding of Spanish and German. Interviewee joined a specialist QA consulting firm to broaden her experience in international auditing to GCP standards. During that time interviewee conducted the full range of audits specialising, in particular, in technology and statistical auditing.

The interviewee participates in many professional, leadership and entrepreneurship development programs within the sector to further develop her and promote the firm. Over the past 10 years interviewee continued to build Beta including forming strong alliances with quality representatives and practising consultants.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
International experiences	<i>"... So, I carefully following a career path which will offer me the experience to broaden my career horizon and gain the vital experiences, including international assignments, was possible since I already have a very good grasp of two additional foreign languages. ..."</i>
Culture	<i>"...I am multi-language skills to my advantage these languages assisted the firm in building international credibility ..."</i> (Founder of Beta).
Technology	<i>"...We make use of digital marketing as part of our toolset to explore and promote our service and advertizing to reach some segments of your audience online especially it allows users to reach and deliver to our mobile users. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... We sustainable growth success include developing new business models and value propositions across our value chain from clinical trials, post-market surveillance, electronic health records and other sources. ..."</i>
sustainable growth	<i>"... To achieve sustainable growth, we will rely heavily on our knowledge, from data management to understanding clients' expectations. ..."</i>

5.3.3 Beta's Internationalisation

The beta firm began as a UK based firm predominantly serving the UK home market. The firm's strategy was then to increase the UK client base so that the business support service had more clients. The critical event identified as playing a major role in the international growth and development of Beta started in the year 2003 following an invitation to participate in United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) led initiatives. Consequently, Beta began active participation in UKTI proportional campaign attending many campaign events as a result of which Beta secured its first international business in 2004. Before the firm's association with the UKTI and the EU market downturn, the firms have been in business for three years and it was at the preliminary stages of exploring the possibility of expanding into the Spanish or French market.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
International journey	<i>"... During 2003, United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) invited us to participate in an international show trade initiative. We attended many campaign events as a result of which we secured our first international business working for an Indian operation in 2004. The India opportunity "kick-started" our international journey. It came just at the right time but with a number of issues and challenges. ..."</i>
International entrepreneur	<i>"...I carefully following a career path which will offer me the experience to broaden my career horizon and gain the vital experiences, including international assignments, were possible since I already have a very good grasp of two additional foreign languages..."</i>

Knowledge and training	<i>"...I hold a PhD in computational chemistry and structure-activity correlation studies for oncology products. ..."</i>
Sectoral and industry	<i>"... We also specialised in clinical quality assurance service. We also offer a broad range of service capability in the area of biopharmaceutical and medical device to our clients in all areas of quality assurance. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it. This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field. ..."</i>
Strategic approach	<i>"...We initially wanted to start our international exposure by exploiting the Spanish or French market. This particular strategic approach was in part due to my language advantage in Spanish and French. But instead, our first international opportunity was in India..." (Founding Partner).</i>
Adaptation capability	<i>"... the future of health care ecosystem will surely continue to revolve. therefore, our growth approach takes into account such approaches. ..."</i>
Partnership	<i>"... That said, our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it. This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field. ..."</i>
growth strategy	<i>"...We also leverage our big data and AI capabilities to sustain our growth strategy. I also take part in several pharmaceutical related symposia internationally which I leverage for business growth. ..."</i>

Beta was approached in 2004 by a medium side India firm on the quantity-based project. The India client wanted to run a large international trial and

subsequently outsourced the work to a traditional Contract Research Organisation (CRO). The client was unable to conduct rigorous vendor oversight and lost control of the quality of the CRO work. The client approached Beta on quality assurance to help them oversee trial clean-up activities including key documentation such as Trial Master File (TMF), conduct a gap analysis of potential risks with its FDA submission. Beta became the service QA vendor and supported the client through a successful FDA inspection.

Theme	Opportunity search - (Sensing)
Opportunity search	<p><i>"...The India opportunity "kick-started" our international journey. It came just at the right time but with a number of challenges. For instance, we have to quickly adaptable our business model to accommodate India business opportunity. Also, finance almost became an issue because of the initial fund requirement. Take, for instance, I had to travel to India extensively as part of the contract signature. In addition, the contract requires us to have someone off the ground in India..."</i> <i>(Founding Partner Beta).</i></p>
Environmental scanning	<p><i>"... On a continual and a regular basis. We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity. ..."</i></p>
Recourse utilisation	<p><i>"... there is no way we can sustain an international growth based purely on maintaining a large human resource pool! So, we are always creative in both our HR acquisition, HR utilisation. ..."</i></p>
Freelance model	<p><i>"...So, HR model is based on the freelance model to achieve economy of scale as and when needed. The resource is used in a</i></p>

	<i>coordinated approach and usually across projects. A given freelancer usually works on a number of projects at any given time. ..."</i>
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Following on from their successful operation, Beta establish a local presence in India by collaborating in a partnership arrangement to penetrate the India market. Beta's future international plans are to grow, increase their external expertise by expanding their networks of consultants', and expanding the scope of their work. Figure 9 below chart the internationalisation stages of Beta.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Adaptive capability	<i>"...I am very excited about the future and our prospect to grow and expand internationally is very encouraging. Our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possible partnership will be part of our international strategy. This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field..." (Founding Partner, Beta).</i>
business model	<i>"...Basically, it's very simple, we offer our expert advice in the areas of pharmacovigilance standard in, international clinical practice (ICP), auditing services. ..."</i>
Brand loyalty	<i>"...We focus on increasing conversions on our brand loyalty. ..."</i>
Technology	<i>"... We rely extensively on the internet for all more marketing campaign. We platform such as LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube,</i>

	<i>Twitters. ..."</i>
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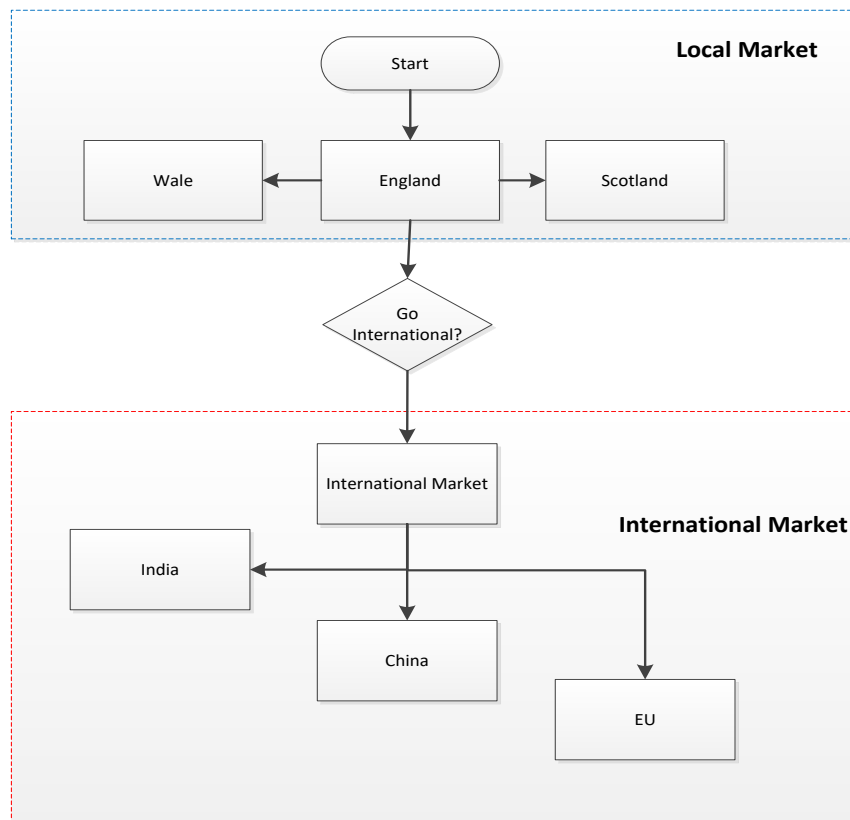


Figure 6 - Beta International Journey

5.3.4 Dynamic Capability Influence on Successful Internationalisation

5.3.4.1 Proposition 1 – P1

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

Opportunity search - (Sensing) it is remarkable that the founder of Beta vividly understands of importance to foresee in the future with a clear vision of how to develop and combine these capacities to sense new opportunities. It very clear from the dataset that the founder plays a significant role in the process opportunity search which consists of extensive communication with current and potential clients as well as with other businesses operating in the industry. The first example of dynamic capabilities applies to Beta founder at a more general level. It seems that they continuously searching for new business opportunities. In practice, opportunity on service innovations, new geographical markets and opportunities for partnership. The search has not been very systematic but has relied more on intuition. It is notable how the founder has developed this capability and turned it into competitive advantages. It is important to highlight that Beta only maintain a limited resources pool for permanent staff. This staff are augmented with a pool of self-employed database consisting of physicians, scientists, former regulators, and industry professionals with an average experience of the 14 years. As part of its talents acquisition Beta stated that entrepreneurship skill is of significant importance during opportunity search. This is crucial since Beta clients highlight people with an innovative approach to problems solving paramount on projects. The need to maintain a skilful pool of consultant is reinforced by the fact that, as previously stated, very often these consultants very valuable to the firm and highly respected within their field. Furthermore, they sometimes make business commitments on behalf of the firm.

Enablers of dynamic capabilities	Opportunity search - (Sensing)
Environmental analysis	<i>"... On a continual and a regular basis. We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity. ..."</i>
Sales	<i>"...To achieve sustainable growth in the fluctuating international marketplace, we will rely heavily on our knowledge, from data management to understanding clients' expectations. In addition, the future of the health care ecosystem will surely continue to revolve within these uncertain times, therefore, our growth approach always takes into account market uncertainty. ..."</i>
cultural sensitivity	<i>"... then folks like myself then provide regional expertise to manage any cultural influence that we need to be mindful off. ..."</i>
Sensing and scanning	<i>"...This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field. ..."</i>
Growth	<i>"... we also leverage our big data and AI capabilities to sustain our growth strategy. I also take part in several pharmaceutical related symposia internationally which I leverage for business growth. ..."</i>
innovation	<i>"...It is the innovation that always us to stay ahead of the competition curve. We are very agile and do not depend on an elaborate structure so innovate ideas are easily worked on. ..."</i>
Responsive to client's requests	<i>"...On a continual and a regular basis. We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are</i>

	<i>constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity. ..."</i>
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Thus, based on the data it possible to deduce that opportunity search takes into account of effective selecting processes since empowering the entrepreneurial consultants is a key process which is used at Beta use as offerings. Beta undoubtedly has entrenched entrepreneurial skillset and managerial abilities within the search process and by extension in their culture and thus continues to keep the firm successful in a turbulent international marketplace. It is, therefore, reasonable to argue that dynamic capabilities have enabled the firms to effectively harness the benefit of entrepreneurial behaviour across the firm. Consequently, it has been identified as a key success factor and without the application of dynamic capabilities in the turbulent international marketplace, success can be compromised.

Theme	Opportunity search - (Sensing)
Opportunity search	<i>"...it is important that those consultants that represent our firm especially those on the frontline have the right entrepreneurial approach. In other words, that they to think on the feet and come up with new ideas since they sometimes work on clients' site. It is very important for us that our consultant to continually update the global office..." (Founding Partner).</i>
Change management	<i>"...Achieving real change requires research, genuine commitment and the hard work of many individuals with different skills working together for the same purpose. We're effective organisers and a good change agent so that our customers can</i>

	<i>benefit from all our skills..."</i>
cultural norm	<i>"...You see, international growth activities in the Asian market and in particular India has a subtle cultural norm and it plays an important role..."</i>
Finance	<i>"...Measuring our financial success and business performance means checking out the money flow of into the business. This is done by checking the number of contracts on our books. ..."</i>
Reviews	<i>"...We are very keen on reviews and making sure that our customers are happy with our services. When we receive reviews, we post them on our social media i.e. blogs, Facebook twitter and the company website. ..."</i>

Resource Acquisition (Seizing) Teece (2009) defines *seizing* as the structures, procedures, designs and incentives for identifying that changes are required once a new technological or market opportunity is sensed. There is a clear illustration of this within Beta dataset. It is interesting to observe that the Beta management appears to use informal sensing methods and experience instead of formal methods in their opportunity search processes management, whereas in the human resource development field, the firm utilises rather formal tools. An illustration of this is a know-how matrix which helps the firm follow the seizing processes selecting consultants addressing the training of the staffs that require skills acquisition. Beta's start the selection process during interviewing potential candidates. The aim is to find the most consultant from the start. The new consultant asked to demonstrate their skills at the interview. This way, the firm is about to identify skills to complement the current consultant resource pool. Although Beta management was prudent enough to foresee

possible radical changes in the market a long time in advance and made the necessary internal adjustment and preparations to maintain a pool of trained consultants globally for changes by building in routines which would support organisational changes, they still had to admit that not all the consultants were able to maintain the level of skills and education capability requires for change when the time arrived.

Enablers of dynamic capabilities	Resource acquisition - (Seizing)
Technology	<i>"...We fully rely and utilise the power of technology to promote our services. So, you see, technology and the web play a huge role in our marketing approaches. ..."</i>
Processes efficiency	<i>"...Another good reason for having a robust process is that we are heavily dependent on technology such as the Internet, OnDemand, social media such as Google and Amazon for efficiency. So basically, proprietary services are very agile across all our services and it's a key selling point particularly for pharmacovigilance. ..."</i>
Subcontracting and	<i>"... our consultants' resource model is a sample, very fluid and is based on a freelance business approach. We maintain minimal direct employees. The other staff members are a freelancer and all most all of them are professionals such as healthcare professionals i.e. chemist, pharmacist, biochemist etc. so as you can imagine it is practically impossible to have them employed by us directly. Hence the need for freelancing. ..."</i>
Partnership	"...where the possible for partnership exist, we exploit it. This just makes good business sense to compete

	effectively internationally in a plain level field. ...”
Subcontracting	“... we use a subcontracting business model for all our resourcing need. ...”
Marketing	“...by building up brand recognition across our key target markets. We also leverage our big data and AI capabilities to sustain our growth strategy. ...We are very keen on reviews and making sure that our customers are happy with our services. When we receive reviews, we post them on our social media i.e. blogs, Facebook twitter and the company website. ...”
Social media	“... The social media offers us the capacity to reach a greater audience with a greater degree of accuracy. We are able to use social media has a precision tool to enhance our marketing strategy across countries precisely. ...”
Processes efficiency	“... what I meant my good processes. Basically, the pharmaceutical industry is heavily regulated and based on our expertise we have found a seamless way of deploying well-integrated processes that we also offer to our customers at a premium. ...”
Marketing	“... we sustain this by been proactive by making sure that our market relevancy is continually promoted and it is featured in all our social media feeds. ...”

Resource Reconfiguration - (Transforming). When the case of Beta’s partnership deal is studied from the viewpoint of the transformation, there is clear evidence within the dataset to support this accession. Beta operates in the pharmaceutical industry where radical innovations take place

occasionally. Thus, smaller adaptations are needed all the time because the legal environment becomes ever more environmentally demanding. For example, the EU's, and the FDA environmental standards continued to exert regulatory demand on the firm to conform to the standard in clinical research protocols and ethics which have to be incorporated into the firm's processes and be reflected into the resource stream. Since the visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the transformation of existing resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment. In practice, the firm has to solve how to deal with different issues related to, among others, the financial aspect. Also, the firm itself has very few resources in R&D again due in part to financial resources. To compensate this firm has to collaborate with some university both in the UK and Philippines concerning in clinical research development.

Beta dataset disclosed that technology capabilities are among the most significant factors that support its international growth. In this process, the firm's resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration processes are seamlessly integrated. Also, technology and in particular the significant use of internet capabilities as made it much easier to collaborate more closely with their geographically distributed clients and well consultant base resources. One key observation from the data is the continual use of artificial intelligence, big data, social media and technology appeared to be embedded with the works of the firm appeared a deliberate strategy though the firm's history, therefore, the process is difficult for competitors to imitate quickly. Another illustration is most of the consultants are required to be social media savvy.

Another good illustration is the transformation of existing resources with new resources, especially the use of social media, constantly evolving into new functional competencies it seems clear is transformation operation in action. Looking at the firm's transforming resource processes in the context of the consultant pool database, for instance, we can see several crucial factors that played a major role in the process. All senior consultants required significant expertise at least three major areas of QA, compliance in quality assurance, QMS, pharmacovigilance, good clinical practice (GCP), auditing services, training, standard operating procedure (SOP) all are continually transformed into new service offerings before subsequently being offered to clients as offerings.

Enablers of dynamic capabilities	Reconfiguration - (Transforming)
Resource Reconfiguration	Resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration.
Agility	<i>"...So basically, services and offerings are very agile across all our services and it's a key selling point particularly for pharmacovigilance. So, this is what I meant generally by saying good processes underpins our ability to be agile. ..."</i>
Change management	<i>"... Achieving real change requires research, genuine commitment and the hard work of many individuals with different skills working together for the same purpose. We're effective organisers and a good change agent so that our customers can benefit from all our skills, not just those of one particular consultant. ..."</i>
resource utilisation.	<i>"... there is no way we can sustain an international growth based purely on maintaining a large human resource pool!"</i>

	<i>So, we are creative in both our HR acquisition, HR utilisation. We are always transforming and recombines our resources to achieve success. ..."</i>
New services offerings	<i>"... it is done by the continuous transformation of our existing resources and into news resources. ..."</i>
New organisational processes	<i>"... by continuously transformation of our existing processes to take advantage of learnt experience across our services into new functional competencies. ..."</i>

5.3.5 Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment

5.3.5.1 Proposition 2 - P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm's strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive.

When Beta the case is studied from the perspective of the turbulent international marketplace the dataset showed that the extent of implementation of enablers of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty. Beta is another good example of success in a turbulent. They are very creative in their consultative, delivery and implementation approaches. For example, instances of dynamic capabilities process are visible illustrations in Beta's *opportunity search* processes. In other to grow the business and expand its business operations, Beta had to continually adapt its internal organisation processes to support its contract and, at the same time, support its

international growth ambition. An illustration of this was demonstrated in the way the Beta adopted a multi-faceted sensing approach for new business prospects and constantly adjusted its organisational opportunity search processes when exploring the in-country opportunity.

Beta's founder declared that Beta's is strongly international growth-oriented firm. The fast growth demanded continuous modifications to Beta's business systems. International operations played a major role in the firm's business in such as that Beta established two offices and developed partnership relationship within the region as a resulting of strategy adaptation. In this context, it is not very surprising that during the interview, the founder declared that Beta is a strong growth-oriented firm.

Theme	Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment
Multifaceted strategies	<i>"...We do not allow inertia to set in if we want to survive in our niche market and maintain our value propositions. In some cases, adapting to change will call for the use of other skills as well. ..."</i>
Adaptive capability	<i>"...Beta's advantage is that, with our limited financial resource, we have very good capabilities for very quickly human capital transforming and deployment."</i>
Flexibility	<i>"...we're effective organisers and a good change agent so that our customers can benefit from all our skills, this is what makes us different, flexible and able to adapt to the various circumstances that clinical research brings. ..."</i>
Resourcing model	<i>"...resource model is a sample, very fluid and is based on a freelance business approach. We maintain minimal direct</i>

	<i>employees. The other staff members are a freelancer and all most all of them are professionals such as healthcare professionals i.e. chemist, pharmacist, biochemist etc. ..."</i>
Technology	<i>"... what makes this viable is our technological capacity. we use technology a great deal. ..."</i>
Social media	<i>"... we use social media greatly. Don't underestimate the power of social media in business especially in a B2B arena. It's great for connecting with our clients and putting our business in front of potential partners and investors. ..."</i>
Technology savvy	<i>"... all our consultant including our freelancer must be technology savvy. It one of the key requirements in addition to their clinical and professional expertise. ..."</i>

The data support that the extent of implementation of enablers of dynamic capabilities will increase with an increase in the level of market uncertainty. The ability to sustain this described as an evolution in firm capability which is some of the characteristics of dynamic capabilities in action.

5.3.6 The Importance and the extent of Innovative Capacity

5.3.6.1 Proposition 3 – P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

Innovation capacity: When the case is studied from the viewpoint of innovation capacity underpinning dynamic capabilities, there were multiple examples of innovative processes being adapted continually to make the turbulent international marketplaces conditions. The data collected from the interview clearly showed that Beta's management placed great importance on innovative capacity when it comes to technology, resources utilisation, new geographical markets to increase the firm's efficiency and effectiveness of coordinating the firm. In a turbulent market, service innovation capabilities are predicated on the ability to use hard to transfer and imitate service innovation capabilities which firms possess to develop, reshape, disintegrate and reconfigure existing and new resources and operational capabilities. Accordingly, Beta's innovation capability is very important in developing new value-creating services and solutions that provide a competitive advantage for the firm. To this effect, another key success factor for Beta is its capacity to continually innovate, this ability to transform existing knowledge and skills into new knowledge and services is its important source of competitive advantage.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Innovative Capacity	<i>"... Innovation plays at large and significant role across our entire business functions and value change. The culture of innovation is continually promoted across the business. From how we engage with resource utilisation to how we bring a new business solution to the market. It is creative thinking that allows us to stay ahead of the competition. ..."</i>

To success and survive Beta came up with an innovative business model of quickly recombined several available products and services as services offerings. This was due to the founder's significant expertise, experience and several seminars participation within the pharmaceutical sector. Clinical research protocols and ethics are very rigorous. For example, quality assurance (QA), compliance in quality assurance, quality management system (QMS), pharmacovigilance, good clinical practice (GCP), auditing services, training, standard operating procedure (SOP) must follow a set of international standards. Base on the empirical data, the conclusions that can be drawn is that innovations are a vital tool for Beta particularly competitive advantage of commercialising the technology. The data thus support the position that importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Beta's operating in a turbulent environment continue to increase with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation.

When the Beta is studied from the perspective of technology capacity processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, technological transformations have triggered novel changes in how Beta engages with its resources across the firm. The empirical data additional suggested that clients' perception of Beta is grounded on the firm's innovative use of technology in the market. This perception of technology is well-founded since it is rooted in the behaviour of innovation at the firm level and as such given Beta a reputation within its clients' base. Beta's competitive advantage in the market is related to its technological capabilities and how it recombines its resources around framework technology. For example, OnDemand Cloud Computing is the preferred technology use and it is very

dominated in its deployment approach; this technological approach has meaningfully aided and contributed to Beta international growth. By way of example, almost all the infrastructures (i.e. hardware and software) assets of the firm are based on the OnDemand Cloud computing business model. Such technology adoption behaviour significantly improves Beta's ability to expand the term of its service of profit, growth and market share in Indian.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Technology	<p><i>"... We have developed capability in big data and AI to transform a large set of a clinical analytical dataset and compare it across a range of dataset to produce comparable result quickly. Possessing this kind of know-how is very rare and it is a great advantage that their technological capabilities have been very highs..." (Founding Partner Beta).</i></p>

Social Media ability: when the case is studied from the perspective of social media ability Beta displayed a greater ability to take advantage of social media. Beta depended significantly on social media technology to be agile, particularly with how the resource is reconfigured and its relationship to opportunity. For example, the use of social media and the ability to leverage social media to quickly and effectively communicate with consultants, share knowledge and explore clients base is striking. for example, Beta informs each of its clients to follow its Social Media platforms, such action has brought about benefits that come with increased critical masses including raising more awareness about the business' existence. This action has improved client relationship and played a major role in their international growth.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Social media	<i>"...We use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn aggressively to promote ourselves, to attract our clients and stay in contact with our clients. We also use social media for instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, webcams, file sharing and blogging and discussion groups to promote ourselves and more importantly to be able to respond quickly to our clients. ..."</i>
Social Media	<i>"... we use social media greatly. Don't underestimate the power of social media in business especially in a B2B arena. It's great for connecting with our clients and putting our business in front of potential partners and investors. ..."</i>

Almost all consultants continually make use of social media to communicate daily. Furthermore, factors such as the development in Beta's software solution, the addition of a wide range of new services and how Beta continues to utilise its network of contacts during opportune explained how Beta depends meaningfully on the use of technology and is seen as a key contributor to successful international growth. For example, Beta's case illustrates the management capability to collaborate where appropriate to increase the firm's technological capabilities as part of its international reach by collocating with a key supplier in auditing and the quality management system services. Such collaboration allows Beta to recombine electronic QMS solution proposition and offers it as add on service to clients.

5.3.7 The Emergent Business Model and Strategic Adaptive Capability

5.3.7.1 Proposition 4 – P4

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

The dataset confirmed that Beta's continually adjust its strategy in the context of the market environment in which they operate. Albeit, Beta admitted that being an SME operating competing in a turbulent international marketplace make it challenging in maintaining and sustaining competitive advantage. This is especially if a competing firm can substitute an alternative resource for the same result, any competitive advantage will be short-lived. Therefore, continual reconfiguration and by extension strategic adaptation requires careful orchestration of skills to be successful in implementation. The founder of Beta had a very good understanding of how complex the demanding clinical research protocols and ethics can be. First of all, they got used to adaptation, and then they started to learn how to be more innovative to be successful in new conditions. Consequently, the management team over the year has embraced "on-demand", "big data", artificial intelligent (AI), cloud computing to positioned Beta technology-enabled firm and have developed a strong competitive advantage. And able to outperform completion.

They have used this strategy deliberately so that it can apply such skills and "know-how" into reconfigurable propositions and by extension strategic

adaptation. Another noticeable demonstration of dynamic capabilities in action is based on the use of the firm's resources. As such, the dataset revealed that Beta resources reconfiguration uses the "just-in-time" concept which is borrowed from the manufacturing industry when building service and products for clients such that Beta's resources continue to fit well with what is required. To be responsive in the turbulent marketplace, Beta instituted a working group as a way of measured continuity in the ongoing reconfiguration and adaptive capabilities in the area of innovates strategy. Although the Beta's management team regularly receive market reports from the industry's they do not follow their market environment very intensely through official reports but tend to gather information mainly from more informal sources. These sources are, for example, discussions with clients, sales representatives, agents or suppliers and participation at exhibitions. The firm also gives its employees a chance to express their developmental ideas. Beta allowed innovations and ideas to come from employees who are duly considered in a working group. If the idea is found to be useful, the inventor is rewarded.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Adaptive capability	<i>"...What makes Alpha different is the way we do business: by offering real people, real solutions, and real results. We believe that by bringing people together, we produce positive outcomes..."</i>
Change management	<i>"... achieving real change requires research, genuine commitment and the hard work of many individuals with different skills working together for the same purpose. This is what makes us different, flexible and able to adapt to the</i>

	<i>various circumstances that clinical research brings. ..."</i>
Multifaceted strategies	<i>"... right from the start, we have embraced multifaceted strategies..."</i>
Growth	<i>"...Through word of mouth, thought the use of social media and some existing contacts. Also, by building up brand recognition across our key target markets. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"...Oh, yes. Basically, it's very simple, our business model must be flexible, readily adaptive and most importantly tailored to the local market. ..."</i>
Agility	<i>"...flexibility is integral to our success. We are able to move and react much fast to the big guys and the competition. ..." (founder of Beta)</i>

5.3.8 The Influence of Entrepreneur Manager/Owner international Growth

5.3.8.1 Proposition 5 – P5

Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

It can be identified that Beta's founder provides visionary direction and exert significant influence on international growth. The entrepreneur founder already had a clear position in the direction of international growth. In other words, the founder has an international growth direction for the firm. For example, during the interview, the founder admitted to a set of the preferred international growth plan. According to the founder, this was due in part to the experiences, for example, Beta founder has

international experiences within a certain international marketplace. This is grounded in research (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Helfat et al. 2007) This is indicated in how this has exerted influence on international growth plan of the firm. The founder's learned many essential things during the first venture into India, so this experience provided knowledge of which dimensions of the business needed to be developed further to achieve a significant international market position. The firm managed to develop services and products to better suit the India market. The firm was able to produce more adaptable services than its competitor and also sell them more cheaply. It is argued therefore that the learning capabilities possessed by the firm were an essential background factor for the successful conquest of the India market.

Sectoral Knowledge: according to Beta, sectoral knowledge was cited as a factor in their continual international market penetration and was rated more highly by their clients. Another example of the importance of sectoral knowledge was cited by Beta, according to Beta, instances of sector knowledge circulated continually in decision making often its absence created difficulties for clients that had to be surmounted before meaningful progress could be made on many assignments in the India region.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Entrepreneur	<i>"... I have always wanted to work for myself and I have been looking for such an opportunity right from the start of my career, but I needed experience. ..."</i> (Founder Beta).
Entrepreneurial orientation	<i>"...I usually take the lead and often set the direction of our growth path. Being a small business, and especially operating in a volatile</i>

	<i>business environment and I often need to understand what's going on about the business and how growth approach. ..."</i>
Environmental analysis	<i>"...We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity. ..."</i> (Founder Beta).
Growth	<i>"...Basically, Jane usually takes the lead and generally set the strategic direction of the firm. Then folks like myself then provide regional expertise to manage any cultural influence that we need to be mindful off. ..."</i> Head of Asia Operations.
Business model	<i>To succeed, firms will need to develop new business models and value propositions; and central to their success will be their ability to work with sectoral data of all sizes from clinical trials, post-market surveillance, electronic health records and other sources.</i>

5.4 Case Study - Gamma

5.4.1 Brief Description

Gamma was established in 1999 and the firm is based in Lagos, Nigeria. Gamma operates in the oil and gas sector and assists its clients to develop holistic strategic solutions that combine environmental services and social engagement processes, alongside an in-depth understanding of oil and gas exploration. Gamma identifies itself as a management consulting firm offering advice and know-how to its clients within the oil and gas sector. Within the West African oil and gas sector environmental and cooperate responsibility has become a key driver for environmental sustainability.

Gamma has offices across 6 countries including Lagos Nigeria employing 10 in Lagos, with additional 13 staff across the Africa continent and maintain an extensive network of partners across Asia and the Middle East. Gamma claimed to a leading independent expert in the upstream oil market including exploration asset know-how and performance strategy.

Gamma value-added proposition includes advising its clients on how to optimise their interface within communities and nations they operate within. Gamma also stated that they assist clients in the use of the best tools to assess their social performance including developing design solutions to manage and thus reduce social risk. Gamma stated that their management skills combined with their pragmatic technical understanding add value and insight to challenges faced by their clients. Gamma's stated that their engineers and consultants have skills in asset management, due diligence, change management and management improvement.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Energy sector	<i>"... That as a context we are a management consulting firm offering advice and know-how to our clients within the Energy sector. ..."</i>
International operation	<i>"... We have our head office here in Lagos, Nigeria, Office Accra, Ghana, office in Yaounde, Cameroon, 2 offices in the UK one in Aberdeen and one in Surrey. ..."</i>
Sectoral Knowledge	<i>"...We use our extensive oil and gas knowledge and experience to help our customers meet the toughest oilfield challenges. So, they can rest assured that their business is in safe and capable hands ..." (Cofounder Gamma).</i>

Niche	<i>"...We advise on both sides of oil and gas, exploration and production (E&P) companies and governments on the continually evolving industry best practice to explore for hydrocarbons. Our services enable our clients to understand the geological conditions and building a business case founded on a sound appreciation of subsurface risk and associated value..." Cofounder Gamma.</i>
Reputation	<i>"... We are well-recognised figures within the industry across sub-Saharan Africa, for our sectoral knowledge and knowhow John and I jointly decided to start Gamma after many years of climbing the corporate ladders. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"...We are an SME management consulting firm.</i>
Staffing model	<i>"... Temporary staff business model. ..."</i>

Gamma's specialist consultants and associates focus on providing strategic support to exploration leadership teams in covering strategy formulation through to new country entry risk mitigation.

5.4.2 Gamma Interviewee's Profile

The interviewee is with the co-founder of Gamma with experience in the oil and gas sector including more than 18 years as an exploration geologist with BP, 5 years working on the Kuparuk Oil Field in Alaska and exploration review of South East Asia. Both founders have a combined experience of over 50 years working internationally and have developed track records and reputation within the sector in Africa, Asia and the Middle East for

providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream industry. The interviewee holds an MBA and many years of experience in the multinational corporate environment on several global assignments both in the UK and abroad, using his experience and contacts to his advantage. The interviewee's key specialism is in exploration strategy and programme management. He has previously helped firms develop and implement exploration led growth strategies as well as coached governments in attracting oil company investment.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Experience and knowledge	<p><i>"...Few years after my MBA myself and the co-founder decided to go it alone and formed Gamma. Between us, we have over forty years of experiences working for a number of multinational companies such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil and the GB group..." (Founding Partner).</i></p>

5.4.3 Gamma's Internationalisation

The critical event identified as playing a major role in the international growth and development of the firm was based on contracts awarded to the firm one by the Ghanaian government followed by a second contract by the Cameroonian government. The contracts were awarded based on the partners' sectoral reputation, experiences and network of relationship. Figure 10 below chart the internationalisation stages of Gamma.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
International journey	<p><i>"... We are well-recognised figures within the industry across sub-Saharan Africa, for our sectoral knowledge and knowhow John and I jointly decided to start Gamma after many years of climbing the corporate ladders. ..."</i></p> <p><i>"... We have our head office here in Lagos, Nigeria, Office Accra, Ghana, office in Yaounde, Cameroon, 2 offices in the UK one in Aberdeen and one in Surrey. ..."</i></p>
International entrepreneur	<p><i>"... Between us, we have over forty years of experiences working for a number of multinational companies such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil and the GB group. ..."</i></p>
Knowledge and training	<p><i>"...I am a chartered geologist by profession still hands-on experience and solid business development track records. John, on the other hand, is a chartered petrochemical engineer and we have both worked together for many years. ..."</i></p>
Sectoral and industry	<p><i>"... for our sectoral knowledge and knowhow.."</i></p>
Business model	<p><i>"... That said, our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it. This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field. ..."</i></p>
Growth strategy	<p><i>"... We are currently concentrating our growth strategy within sub-Saharan Africa – mainly on the West African market. Countries like Cameroon and Ghana has huge market potentials and we do have the right contacts on the ground. ..."</i></p>

Gamma stated that they have developed track record and reputation with clients in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East for providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream industry.

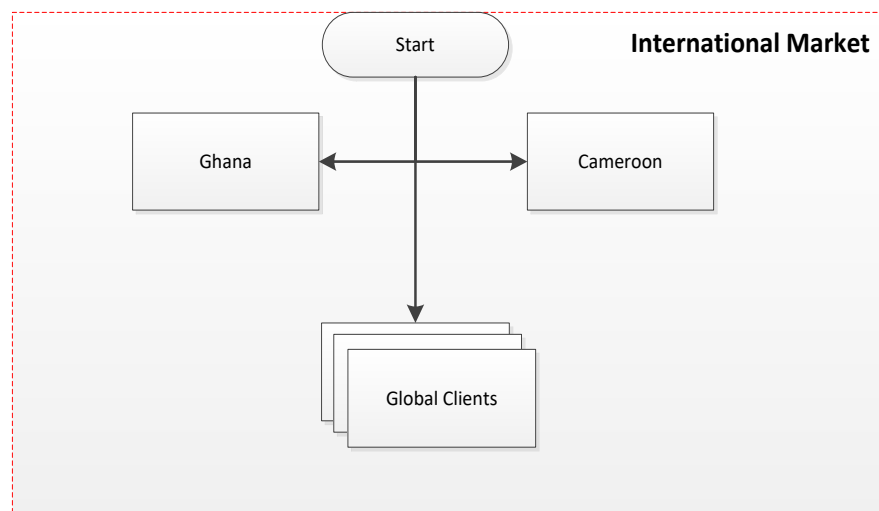


Figure 7 - Gamma International Journey

5.4.4 Dynamic Capability Influence on Successful Internationalisation

5.4.4.1 Proposition 1 – P1

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

Opportunity search - (Sensing) it has been stated that Gamma's management knows its business environment well. Additionally, the firm is exceptionally active in networking, and its founder has very active roles in different associations. Besides informal knowledge, these memberships also provide regular forecasts and reports from the oil and gas industry. In other words, managers gather information mainly from informal sources (e.g. discussions with clients, agents, employees etc.) and then they combine these market signals to make more holistic mental pictures. The management's intuition has guided the firm quite successfully. As a concrete illustration, the firm's opportunity searches combined knowledge gathered from formal and informal sources also using several forecast tools. In practice, however, it is the application of dynamic capabilities process in a turbulent environment that allowed these different forecasts to be combined with knowledge gathered from the firm's networks (clients, sales representatives, subcontractors, agents etc.). of this is found in the firm's business plan.

Themes	Opportunity search - (Sensing)
Environmental analysis	<i>"...We constantly probe our business environment not just for business opportunities to ensure take advantage of innovations, be aware of threats by monitoring what our competitors are doing, be ready for challenges. ..."</i>
Sales	<i>"... sales opportunities always from with existing clients by exploring industry key challenges and for trends, that way we are able to continually improve on our business performance and sales opportunities."</i>
Cultural	<i>"... we have the regional expertise to on finely balanced cultural</i>

sensitivity	<i>influence. Because for example we fully understand what the cultural challenges and the pressure points are. ..."</i>
Sensing and scanning	<i>"... as you yourself will know, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very dynamic and often turbulent. Government contracts can sometimes be personalised, for example, on who you know and sometimes tribalised. ..."</i>
Growth	<i>"... so, consequently we have to be very creative with our business strategy and business models. For a start, we continuously adapt our business strategies and localised our services offerings across the region. We cannot use one size fit all here. ..."</i>
innovation	<i>"... by being creative. The sub-Saharan Africa market is very turbulent with a set of unique circumstances and these circumstances vary from country to country. So, what this means is that we are constantly innovating particularly on our business development and delivery approach. ..."</i>
Responsive to client's requests	<i>"... for a start, we continuously adapt our business strategies and localised our services offerings across the region. We cannot use one size fit all here. ..."</i>

As a result, the opportunity search process has been able to build a successful increase in predictions of market behaviour. For example, the firm's strategic change towards the renewable source of energy investment was based on the continued ability to interpret weak signals provided by different information sources. As a consequence of these interpretations, the firm was able to grow internationally.

Resource Acquisition (Seizing) Gamma was able to use different information and knowledge sources both formal and informal to build a picture its market that needs to be translated into new service solutions follows in the seizing phase. The key factor behind the firm's success in the African market was the capacity to build a robust relationship with key governmental parastatals. The firm management is aware that the firm has to continually develop its services and processes to be able to stay in business. Gamma seizing service opportunities include integration processes integrating components into a functioning system. It can include a business process and technology application integration. Business process integration is seizing customer value by integrating customer's business processes.

Themes	Opportunity search - (seizing)
Opportunity search - (Sensing)	<i>"...Although we relied extensively on our relationship to secure some of our contracts. But in this telecommunication industry, we still have to be inventive in the use of our limited resources, be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive. Otherwise, our margin level and ability to grow will be severely compromised..."</i>
innovation	<i>"...This allows for equilibrium and encourages growth and innovation within a company. I believe that the leadership team must invite all staff to offer ideas on creating a new vision for the company and thus driving the company forward as a whole. ..."</i>
Environmental scanning	<i>"...We are frequently involved in environmental analysis as well. We see it as an on-going activity that takes place every time, we</i>

	<i>obtain feedback. We usually start with working through my networks of social and personal contacts that I have built up over the years. ..."</i>
Sales	<i>"...We offer expert independent advice and knowhow in information technology, risk and change management to our clients and in so doing deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of our client's organisation. ..."</i>
Niche	<i>"...We are a small size international niche consulting business operating from a number of countries including the UK. We operate within the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) space. ..."</i>

Resource Reconfiguration - (Transforming) Gamma is an SME and is not able to maintain a large pool of permanent staff. So, the firm instead maintains an extensive network of partners across all its international operations. The resource model is according to Gamma, allows it to be responsive and compete effectively. For example, a consulting assignment may consist of several specialists i.e. Geologists, surveyors, cosmetologists, modellers, IT personal, helicopter pilots', health and safety inspectors, etc. these resources are employed on a contract based.

Themes	Reconfiguration - (Transforming)
Resource Reconfiguration	Resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration.
Agility	<i>"... This has been very very successful in managing turbulences and constrains. So, the bottom line is agility, agility, agility, coupled with a cultural awareness of the</i>

	<i>sub-Saharan Africa business ethics. ..."</i>
Change management	<i>"...Whatever its shape or form, change is inevitable, and change can come in many forms. You see our market is aggressive and our approach must match especially our ability to quickly win clients over. ..."</i>
Resource utilisation.	<i>"... Here, resource allocation and transformation are determined by clients' demand and programme' or assignment. We take resource allocation, transformation and reallocation so important because it gives us a clear picture of the amount of work that is a necessary assignment. ..."</i>
New services offerings	<i>"... you see, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very turbulent. For instance, governments across this region are unstable. So, we continuously adapt our business strategies and be aggressively innovative both with our business model and how we adapt our model as well as our services offerings across the region. ..."</i>
New organisational processes	<i>"... As you may know, you'll need to improve most processes at some point. Especially since we operate in a challenging and turbulence business environment... So, we continually assess our processes, closely monitor how things are going in the weeks and months, to ensure that the process is performing to expectations. ..."</i>

5.4.5 Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment

5.4.5.1 Proposition 2 – P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm's strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive.

When the case of Gamma's is studied from the viewpoint of the turbulent international marketplace environment there is clear evidence within the dataset show that Gamma continued to grow in the turbulent international marketplace. As part of this continual growth process, to gather market information, Gamma utilises several data sources. The firm's management has been able to modify its internationalisation strategies to meet the demands of different market environments. The data indicated that Gamma's opportunity search processes were based on different market settings require a different method.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Business growth strategy	<i>"...On the international market. We are currently concentrating our on-growth strategy on the West African market right now. Counties like Cameroon and Ghana have huge market opportunities and we do have the right contacts on the ground. We believe there are loads of opportunities and potential for growth within these areas..."</i>

For example, after the firm secures a contract with the Ghanaian government, the growth rate accelerated, but it should be noted that the firm's development had been connected with economic changes. In other words, Gamma grows and when markets have marketplace conditions declines Gamma contracts declines. Although Gamma main markets have been in Africa, the role of the firm's international operations was important, for example, during the Nigerian recession in 2016 when Gamma covered decreasing domestic sales by investing more in international business.

Since Gamma's business is closely intertwined with the development of the oil and gas industry, it is not surprising that economic recession hit the firm hard and Gamma's revenue decreased almost 30 per cent between the years 2012 and 2016. This was the first time during which the firm's revenue did not grow. As with the economic recession, the number of personnel decreased. The most significant factor in Gamma's negative growth development was the general economic downturn which had a direct negative impact on the oil and gas markets internationally. Although the market downturn affected Gamma's business directly, for example, Gamma international market has been very challenging since a significant part of its business contacts were with the central government in the countries it operates within, especially the Africa countries.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
new organisational capacity	<i>"...Renewable energy is now a viable business proportion here in sub-Saharan Africa and it's in the initial growth stage. So, We had developed new organisational capacity, modify our business model and strategies by continually reconfiguring,</i>

development	<i>adapting and reposition our strategies towards accommodating the growth potential in the renewable energy market which is the way forward particular due to everybody talking about global warming..." (Cofounder Gamma)</i>
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At the time of the interview, the price of crude oil has collapsed in one month. Similarly, prices of other raw materials increased thus they can immediately reflect these changes in their pricing as they had already made many contracts based on "old" prices. However, international operations in Gamma's business recently increased based on the data, it is inferred, that the firm continued to implement and adjust both formal and informal sources of opportunity search using dynamic capabilities processes. To support this the firm's international revenue has remained quite stable.

There are enablers of dynamic capabilities supporting Gamma international growth. First, the firm managed to develop a service offering within the African market with a clear competitive advantage over its competitors. At the time of the case study, 75 percent of the orders on Gamma's books are governments' contacts. Although, it is common in the African region since almost all the oil field are owned by the governments. However, the challenge moving forward is maintaining the follow of such contracts is important thus Gamma continues to aggressively pursue and attract private sector opportunity.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Business strategy	<i>You see, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very</i>

adaptation	<i>turbulent. For instance, governments across this region are unstable. So, we continuously adapt our business strategies and be aggressively innovative both with our business model and how we adapt our model as well as our services offerings across the region.</i>
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5.4.6 The Importance and the extent of Innovative Capacity

5.4.6.1 Proposition 3 – P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

When the case is studied from the perspective of innovation capacity processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, it has been stated that the firm demonstrated. For example, Gamma implemented innovative processes and continually reshaping of these changes have played a major role in the international growth of Gamma and hence make it possible to see the role of dynamic capabilities in operations. The firm relies on its logistic capability continually reshape its processes, especially concerning its operation and the availability of assets. Empirical data seems to suggest that inefficient or failures in logistic schedules will significantly impact success in international growth. Gamma relied on its ability to add value in this area and identifies logistic important capability which needed to be continually adjusted to meet the of their clients. To this effect, Gamma sees its innovation capacity processes as strategic asset concerned with value-added propositions offerings to its clients.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
<i>Innovative capacity</i>	<i>"...We are constantly innovating on the strategies side and customer assignments delivery. You see, over the past decade, our sector has grown significantly to become one of the most dynamic service industries across sub-Saharan Africa. I believe this growth is partly attributed to the ongoing accessibility and the reach of technology and increasing globalisation...." (cofounder of Gamma).</i>

Such an innovation capacity, along with managerial ability in decisions has allowed for a successful international growth especially in tabulate international marketplace. Also, to logistic as one of its core values added propositions to clients, Gamma demonstrated innovation capacity processes also in opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration. It is contended that the importance of Gamma's innovative capability is predicated on Gamma's and closely related to dynamic capabilities processes of the firm. The data showed that innovations are is an important tool for Gamma; since supporting the position that importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Gamma's operating in a turbulent environment continue to increase with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation.

When the case is studied from the perspective of technology capacity processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, Gamma demonstrated effective use of its technological capacity to add value to their service offerings. This is particularly important since logic dictates that Multinational are often the firms with financial assets to compete more

effectively. However, the data confirmed the claim that Gamma's placed significant importance on the use of technology and extent of implementation of the innovative capacity of Gamma in a turbulent environment increased with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation. Since Gamma is unable to produce large or maintain expensive technological capital asset (i.e. hardware and software).

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Innovative capacity	<i>"...For us to remain our competitive we rely heavily on creative thinking across all our functional departments. Most importantly we rely on social media blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and the company website..." (co-founder of Gamma).</i>

Similarly, technically infrastructures are not as developed compared to the UK. Therefore, Gamma relied extensively on service such as Cloud Computing services to compete; services such as OnDemand like Amazon Web Service allows Gamma to be more agile and active within the region and thus able to perform extensively data-intensive data activities that may be otherwise beyond its reach.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Technology	<i>"...Technology such as Cloud Computing services, OnDemand like Amazon Web Service allows has made very very mobile and able to aggressively compete with the likes of EY, PWC at least here in sub-Saharan Africa. We are very proud of yourselves. We</i>

	<i>are constantly prompted by events, challenges from competitions nipping at our heal to technology....” (cofounder of Gamma).</i>
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For example, seismic computational assessments require expensive computation capability. However, Gamma can compete on equal terms with the major players in the sector. As a consequent of the internet and in particular, the Cloud Computing Gamma can outperform some of its competitors.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Technology	<i>To give you a flavour of what I'm talking about. We were asked to conduct analysis on a number of Basins with the objective of forecasting natural gas production growth for the next 25 years to determine if adequate natural gas pipeline infrastructure exists within two countries. It would have been impossible for us to carry out such an assignment without technology asserts, yet we are unable to afford to own such larger technological asserts that is required. Thanks to the internet and technology such as Google could Computing services, OnDemand service like Amazon Web Service allowed to compete successfully. We were able to remotely access pulled together historical data via the use of such technology assets. (co-founder of Gamma).</i>

The data showed that continual application and recombination of technology has contributed to Gamma's growth and operations. Consequently, it is argued that to cope with these changes, Gamma must

possess dynamic capabilities to enable innovations which are a vital tool for Gamma. To this effect, the data support the position that the importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Gamma's operating in a turbulent environment continue to increase with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation.

When the case is examined from the perspective of social media ability Gamma demonstrated a greater ability to take advantage of social media to engage with both its clients and partner. Social Media has significantly impact Gamma's reputation, sales, and even survival within the region. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook have enabled Gamma to create virtual clients as well as staffs' environments where online communities of interest form around specific sectoral challenges and solutions. Furthermore, social media has enabled equally allowed Gamma on brands and services offerings.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Social media	<i>"...Most importantly we rely on social media blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and the company website..." (co-founder of Gamma).</i>

Thus, Gamma has used social media to impact on client-to-client communications which have been widely magnified in the regional marketplace. Such communication is made possible due to technology and internet connectivity. Albeit it could be argued all actors within the regions are equally exposed to the same capabilities. The difference with Gamma is that social media is embedded within the culture and working of the

firm. For example, the adoption of social media for personal within the Africa continent continues to grow exponentially. The empirical data suggest that Gamma significantly use of social media; thus, Gamma has been able to continually explore such capability to engage more effectively with its clients based.

5.4.7 The Emergent Business Model and Strategic Adaptive Capability

5.4.7.1 Proposition 4

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

In general, there are several indications that Gamma founders have the adaptive and reconfiguration capabilities necessary to guide the firm turbulent international marketplace since they have built a comprehensive picture of the industry's development. The founders have been in the industry for decades and they acknowledged signals indicating market downturn as well as market boost. An illustration of such capability is found in the firm's decision to make a strategic decision to build capabilities in the renewable energy sector. Gamma founders have been following the development in the renewable energy sector and found that the sector has been growing continuously. This business thus took a strategic decision to invest in renewable markets to will probably make their business more stable in the long term. To achieve this the firm continually adjusts its internal structures which is also reflected in the investment decisions in the

pool of trained consultants used. By building in routines which would support organisational changes.

Therefore, it can be stated that Gamma had modified its strategy by continually reconfiguring, adapting and reposition its strategy towards accommodating the growth potential renewable markets. Besides modifying the firm's international growth strategy by establishing an international sales office, Gamma's management has shown some dynamic capabilities by starting to assess its international sales channels more critically. It has been stated that the firm was able to react to changing market situations by continually adapting its strategy radically this move also allowed the firm to develop new capabilities to enable growth when the renewable sector.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Adaptive capability	<i>"...So, we had to modify our business model and strategies by continually reconfiguring, adapting and reposition our strategies towards accommodating the growth potential in the renewable energy market which is the way forward particular due to everybody talking about global warming. ..."</i>
Change management	<i>"... we make it clear in our team the need for continual change management. We never downplay the effects of any change to our team. We ensure all of us buy-in into our continual change management approaches. We do not allow inertia to set. ..."</i>
Multifaceted strategies	<i>"...We also, continually adapt our business strategies to accommodates such dynamic of ore environment. ..."</i>

Growth	<i>"...We are well-grounded within this region based on reputation and our expertise in the energy sector when it comes to our holistic approach to environmental stainabilities. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... we continuously adapt our business strategies and be aggressively innovative both with our business model and the how we adapt our model as well as our services offerings across the region. ..."</i>
Agility	<i>"... this has been very very successful in managing turbulences and constrains. So, the bottom line is agility, agility, agility, coupled with a cultural awareness of the sub-Saharan Africa business ethics.</i>

5.4.8 The Influence of Entrepreneur Manager/Owner international Growth

5.4.8.1 Proposition 5 – P5

Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

It has been stated that the firm sensed an opportunity to increase its African and international market share, and the opportunity was seized through the establishment of a new sales office in a number of African countries. The influence of the founder in realising such marketplace growth cannot be ignored since the prior experience of entrepreneur or managers guided the growth and in so doing exert significant influence on international market growth and direction. Since the firm's managers have already operated for decades in the international business and have access

to wide international networks, they probably also make faster and more successful decisions, relying more on their intuition than less experienced managers. In other words, the founder exerts significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction. Entrepreneurial orientation was found to be crucial for the dynamic capability of managing successful international growth. Both founders during interview emphasised that their *success is not just accident*", but for them, it stems from a continuous review of current business plans and taking the necessary initiatives. Proactivity was found to be a distinguishing character of the management team.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Business strategy adaptation	<i>Yeah look, being a small business relationship play a very significant role in our survival. You see, it would be very difficult to succeed in this market without being proactive, adaptive and flexible about our relationship. we use social media all the time to like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn facilitate relationship building. We are using it aggressively to promote ourselves too and to attract new clients and stay in contact with old clients. (co-founder of Gamma).</i>

The Gamma stated that it is very important to have good business relationships across all their clients, preferably with much larger and financially solid firms which could partly support in market penetration. However, it is extremely important to remain flexible and fast in making decisions, which is necessary for success in a turbulent environment.

The data collected from Gamma significantly acknowledges the role of managers' earlier experiences and the firm's history as enablers of dynamic capabilities possessed by the firm. Both founders have a combined experience of over 50 years working internationally with extensive experience within the oil and gas sector and across several countries i.e. Canada, South East Asia and the Middle East.

According to Gamma, being a contributor to the sectoral knowledge has amplified the firm reputation within the West African market and continued to play a major factor in the success of the firm. Gamma continued and stated that such sectoral knowledge is an imperative requirement for value-adding offerings.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Sectoral Knowledge	<p><i>"...Sectoral knowledge is a critical driver of success for the oil and gas industry, particularly with regard to the upstream focus. This knowledge intensity is reflected in the increasing attention to and investment in interconnected technologies and in the integration, management and sharing of technical data - the so-called 'digital oil field' or 'smart field...'" (cofounder of Gamma).</i></p>

5.5 Case Study - Delta

5.5.1 Brief Description

Delta was founded in 2007 and the firm is based in Lagos, Nigeria and began its international business operation from inception. The firm operates within the oil and gas aviation sector. Furthermore, Delta stated that they are one of very limited management consulting firm with the strategic and operational insight and the practical experience capable of providing a material impact to the oil and gas aviation sector in their operating countries. The firm employs 10 staff in Nigeria, 1 staff in the UK and about 40 self-employed contract staff internationally. Similarly, Delta has affiliate advisors are across the UK, South Africa, USA and Australia with hundreds of years of aviation experience to offer, international aviation consultants are ready to be at your service.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Aviation Sector	<i>"...I have worked in the aviation sector for many years during these years I have developed an extensive network of relationships. ..."</i>
International operation	<i>"... Our business development has enabled us to win business in West Africa and continues to provide us with the foundation to seek further business ..."</i>
Sectoral knowledge	<i>"...Here, sectoral knowledge is critical in the aviation such so in the oil and gas sector and this has underpinned our reputation for several years...."</i>
Reputation	<i>"...Our business sales are based on reputation. We work in a niche market and we are well known. ..."</i>

Business model	<i>"...We are a small management consulting firm with the strategic and operational insight and the practical experience providing a material impact on the oil and gas aviation sector. ..."</i>
Staffing structure	<i>"... Our staffing model is based on the self-employed model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed. We a small firm and we do everything possible to lower the risks of attrition and increase the chance that our freelance or self-employed model works. ..."</i>

The firm is involved in all areas of the aviation sector within the oil and gas industry and advises its clients on aviation issues including specialist services to fixed-wing and rotary, wing operations, auditing of aviation service suppliers and helideck inspections. Also, the firm undertakes special projects and management programs such as aviation contract management, accident and incident Investigations, offshore and onshore Security. Delta offers its clients an unbiased and fully confidential aviation advisory service. This includes a personal independent aviation advisory service or an alternative such as a team of highly qualified and experienced former oil and gas industry aviation advisors to assess clients operations to help them identify and minimise exposure to aviation-related risks.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Experience and knowledge	<i>"...My passion for flight safety and the safety of all others involved in onshore and offshore rotary and fixed-wing flight operations has been the driving force for our form and this moral code or DNA if you will is shared across our</i>

	<i>firm..." (Founder of Delta).</i>
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5.5.2 Delta Interviewee's Profile

The interviewee is the founder and principal consultant, has served over 38 years in international commercial aviation in a variety of roles such as air transport pilot, flight instructor, chief pilot, flight operations manager, and aviation advisor. The interviewee has worked in 17 countries for operations as diverse as forestry, fishing, mining, oil & gas, dredging, pipeline laying, seismic, exploration, offshore and deep-water helicopters, offshore drilling and marine. His speciality is providing aviation support for companies operating in remote locations under difficult conditions. He has completed the IATA aviation safety management diploma and has published a book through the University of Texas titled Helicopter Safety which is currently used as a textbook for the rotary drilling Series for offshore workers. Moreover, the founder has published one of the first-ever aviation web sites on the internet and has written many aviation and safety-related articles. He has been instrumental in providing critical guidance in purchasing and managing aircraft and other key aviation assets including the implementation of operational business plans, safety and security management systems for flight operations.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Opportunity search (Sensing)	<i>"...I have personally negotiated multiple high nets worth contracts with or on behalf of principles such as Chevron, Shell, P Caverton Helicopters, World Fuel, MCM</i>

	<i>(Maintenance Centre Munich Germany), Universal Weather, Netjets Europe, and many others..." (Founder Delta).</i>
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To complete complex audits, assessments or operational start-ups, he has forged relationships with strategic aviation consulting partners throughout the different regions to ensure that a wide range of assignments can be completed by the right number of personnel who are properly qualified for the job.

5.5.3 Delta's Internationalisation

The critical event identified as playing a major role in the international growth and development of the firm was based on contracts awarded to Delta by the Central African Republic (CAR) a National State-owned company. CAR aviation support for some of their remote locations under difficult conditions. The contract was awarded to Delta based on the owner's network of relationships, experience and sectoral reputation within the region. Figure 11 below chart the internationalisation stages of Delta.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
<i>International journey</i>	<i>"... I received an invitation from a contact of mine from the Central Africa Republic interested in my service to assist with delivering a contract in the Central Africa Republic. That is how our international business operation began..." (Founding Partner).</i>
<i>Knowledge and training</i>	<i>"... Based on experience we have come to understand that business issues are different in different parts of the West</i>

	<i>African counties. ...”</i>
<i>Sectoral and industry</i>	<i>“...I have worked in the aviation sector for many years during these years I have developed an extensive network of relationships. Here, sectoral knowledge is critical in aviation such so in the oil and gas sector and this has underpinned our reputation for several years. ...”</i>
<i>Business model</i>	<i>“... business issues are different in different parts of the West African counties. Some are Francophone countries and the others are from the old British colonies. So, we continuously adapt our business strategies especially now that the Chinese are in town and pushing aggressively to gain market share. ...”</i>
<i>Growth strategy</i>	<i>“... we are strengthening our growth strategy here since there are lots of business opportunities out there in the West African markets. ...”</i>

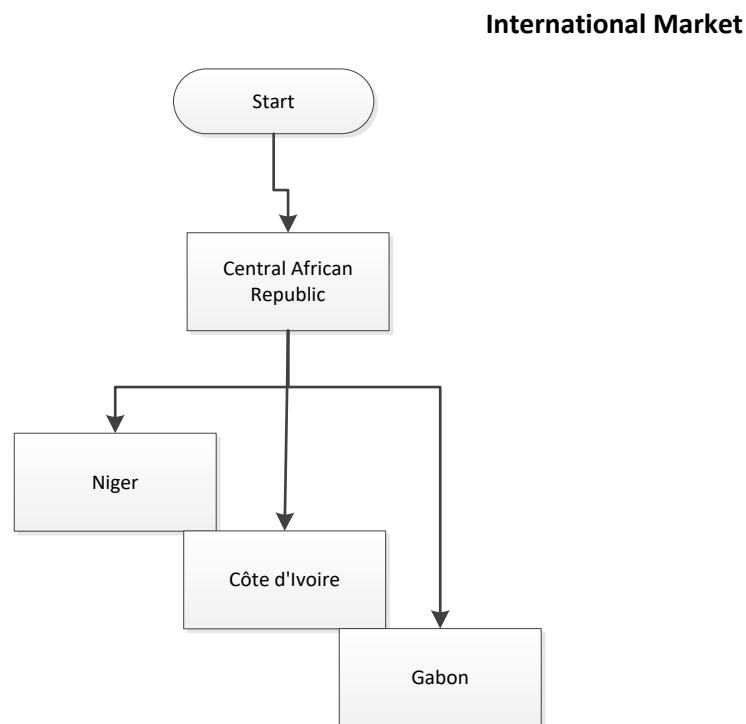


Figure 8 - Delta International Journey

5.5.4 Dynamic Capability Influence on Successful Internationalisation

5.5.4.1 Proposition 1 - P1

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

Delta aviation stated that they are one of very limited management consulting firm with the strategic and operational insight and the practical experience capable of providing a material impact to the oil and gas sector in their operating countries.

It is clear from the dataset that the founders of Delta played a significant role in the process opportunity search which consists of an extensive search of networks relationship and contacts of potential clients as well as with other businesses operating in the industry. The West African business opportunity search is especially done through mainly networks, relationships and sectoral knowledge. The combination of these information sources of information and knowledge including learning about clients opportunities and threats, and used to in opportunity search. The search has not been very systematic, but intuition led. It is notable how the founder has developed this capability and turned it into competitive advantages. It is important to highlight that the founder often the main source of the initial contacts. This seemed to be a cultural norm, or at least significantly influenced by culture.

Themes	Opportunity search - (Sensing)
Environmental analysis	<i>"... environmental scanning plays a key role in managing turbulences and constrains it helps us understanding trends, events and relationships in an organisation's external environment which assists management in planning the future course of action. ..."</i>
cultural sensitivity	<i>"...here we have to be sensitive to culture and the during business negotiations. It very much influenced by culture. Therefore, some of our practices are often tailored and reflective of the culture according to the operating country...." (Founding Partner Delta).</i>
Growth	<i>"... basically, obtaining information on business</i>

	<i>opportunities tends to be mostly through personal and professional contacts that we've built up over the years. The rest is through the traditional approaches providing the environment, conducting market analysis. You know what I mean. ..."</i>
innovation	<i>"...We use innovation as the key driver of productivity and our long-term growth. For example, some digital technologies like cloud computing have enabled us to rent computing infrastructure and software services from the line of Amazon without upfront investment in technology capital. ..."</i>
Responsive to client's requests	<i>"... relationship as the key so important within our industry. ..."</i>

It is, therefore, reasonable to argue that dynamic capabilities have enabled the firms to effectively harness the benefit of culturally sensitive of the West business operations. It is therefore argued that without the application of dynamic capabilities in turbulent international marketplace success can be compromised. When the case of Delta's partnership deal is studied from the viewpoint of the transformation, there is clear evidence within the dataset to support this accession. Delta operates within the oil and gas sector by assists its clients to provide aviation capacity.

Themes	Resource acquisition - (Seizing)
Seizing	<i>"...Understanding what the customer really wants is key for our business to succeed in this part of the world.</i>

	<i>Sometimes the opportunity just screams out at me and sometimes I have to let the story percolate for a few days or weeks. ..."</i>
Technology	<i>"...We innovate to differentiate ourselves by leveraging technology and global platforms. We leverage technology and heavily rely on global platforms like Amazon Web Services and google services. We create webinars, we find them to be a great way to promote our service. ..."</i>
Processes efficiency	<i>"...Having the right systems and processes is very important to sustain and grow our business. ..."</i>
Partnership	<i>"... yes, we do, strategic partnerships with the right companies can truly make a world of difference to our business. We only collaborate with companies that are complementary to your own. ..."</i>
Subcontracting	<i>"...Our staffing model is based on a self-employed model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed. We are a small firm and we do everything possible to lower the risks of attrition and increase the chance that our freelance or self-employed model works. ..."</i>
Marketing	<i>"...It helped us grow relatively fast by providing use with automated selling tool for literally taking our services to market and reaching a wide audience quickly. ..."</i>

When exploring the data from the viewpoint of enablers of dynamic capabilities, the data pointed to corporate culture, human resources management, organisational structure, and service innovation. Delta is a service-oriented firm and as such those elements played a strong role in

the ability of the firm to recombine these elements in such a way to improving dynamic capabilities, for example, Delta strongly embraces the culture of fostering learning and uses this to optimise their ability to sense shifts in the competitive environment and accordingly be prepared for changes. Furthermore, operating in an inch market requires knowledge and open-minded managers use sensing and seizing capabilities to succeed.

To use reconfiguration capabilities most efficiently and in lowest possible time Delta operates a simple organisational structure. This structure would allow for easier knowledge sharing, as a result increasing not only reconfiguration capabilities but also sensing and seizing.

Themes	Reconfiguration - (Transforming)
Resource Reconfiguration	<i>"... It's important to remember our HR policies will heavily impact our business growth as well as our reputation as an employer. We small businesses often build the best brands, but we're faced with limitations (time, resources, plentiful workforce). ..."</i>
Agility	<i>"...So, we regularly revisit and updates your business plan to remain agile in a very changing market condition. By being proactive we have built the capacity to respond to quickly changing market condition. ..."</i>
Change management	<i>"...We are fully committed to continual change strategy even if it takes us out of our comfort zone. It involves hard decisions and we're prepared to do this, otherwise, we risk putting our business at a dangerous competitive disadvantage. ..."</i>

Resource utilisation.	<i>"... We use virtual employees to expand and diversify our talent pool. By using virtual employees and freelance model we delegate working structure saving our business some overhead cost. ..."</i>
New services offerings	<i>"... Here, in West Africa, loyalty can be quick eroded. So, understanding where our services are in their lifecycles helps us work out how to maximise overall profitability. At the same time, we continue to see innovation as a key to build a stream of new profitable services to the market by making use of digital marketing tactics to explore and promote our service. ..."</i>
New organisational processes	<i>"... Whilst servicing the oil and gas field is our core business, we have recently seen a diversification of the economy across West Africa, so we continue to reinvest our business to take advantage of the wider opportunities. ..."</i>

5.5.5 Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment

5.5.5.1 Proposition 2 – P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm's strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive.

When Delta eta the case is studied from the viewpoint of the turbulent international marketplace, the data revealed that the extent of

implementation of enablers of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty. To in a competitive and succeed in the aviation sector which often requires a substantial level of financial investments Delta has to be innovative uses, responsive business model.

In a turbulent market, service innovation capabilities are predicated on the ability to use hard to transfer and imitate service innovation capabilities which firms possess to develop, reshape, disintegrate and reconfigure existing and new resources and operational capabilities. Accordingly, innovation capability is very important in developing new value-creating services and solutions that provide a competitive advantage for the firm. To this effect, another key success factor for Alpha is its capacity to continually innovate, this ability to transform existing knowledge and skills into new knowledge and services is its important source of competitive advantage.

5.5.6 The Importance and the extent of Innovative Capacity

5.5.6.1 Proposition 3 - P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

When the case is studied from the perspective of innovation capacity processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, Delta demonstrated innovative capacity in the turbulent market. Innovation capability is important in developing new value-creating services and solutions within the oil and gas industry. In particular, its service innovation capabilities were predicated on its ability to use hard to transfer and imitate service

innovation capabilities to develop, reshape, disintegrate and reconfigure existing and new resources and operational capabilities. Furthermore, by repeatedly incorporate sectoral knowledge and skills into new knowledge and services Delta was able to recombine its source and thus continues to maintain its competitive advantage. Thus, Delta's was able to maintain client retention and also growth within the region by attracting new clients in the West Africa market. This highlighted that Delta dependent on dynamic capabilities to provide innovative services and solutions more efficiently and effectively compared to competitors in the West African oil and gas aviation services sector. The data showed that innovations are an important tool for Delta supporting the position that importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Delta's operating in a turbulent environment continue to increase with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation.

When the case is studied from the perspective of technology capacity processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, Delta demonstrated effective use of its technological capacity during international growth. Delta uses its technological differentiation to position itself by offering its clients something different than their competitors to avoid the low-margin trap. For example, Delta has implemented a proprietary e-commerce platform to reach and penetrative deeply into the West African market. Delta takes advantages of their technological tools available are extensively utilises this capability effectively and it is also used to manages relationships with the market.

Themes	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Innovative capacity	<p><i>"...Another technology-driven innovation in the sector is asset-based consulting. In asset-based consulting, technology is used to add value and competitive advantage for customers by shortening project lead times and providing more functionality with lower costs..." (founding Partner of Delta).</i></p>

It is argued that to cope with these changes, Delta must possess dynamic capabilities; and based on the empirical data, it was the position of Delta that innovations are a vital tool for in its continual international growth and therefore support the position that the importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Delta's operating in a turbulent environment continue to increase with an increase in the level of importance and extent of implementation.

When the case is studied from the perspective of social media ability Delta displayed a greater ability to take advantage of social media, and used social media not only to contact clients but also to create a broader network, involving other supply chain partners. Delta has extended the concept of the online community, including not only their clients and partner but also resource pool. Delta uses social media as a strategic tool to significantly stimulate, recombines its resources and it is used as part of their international growth strategy.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Social Media	<p><i>"...we use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn it is one of the major ways to share instant information especially the use of chat rooms such as blogging and discussion. To exchange views, ideas and about challenges including webcams, file sharing ..."</i> (Founding partner of Delta).</p>

Similarly, Delta extensively uses YouTube Facebook to promote and market their services. For example, the firm's Facebook pages are constantly updated with the firm's service offering and reference firms. The presence of social media, therefore, seems to add value to Delta. The use of Facebook seems to be the result of a fashion within the firm and it is used to improve the firm's relationship with clients and to implement an effective marketing strategy.

The importance and extent of implementation of innovative capacity in Delta is a reflection of the dynamic capabilities of the firm. It is contended that without dynamic capabilities processes Delta's agility will be compromised and its adaptive capacity will be severely affected, and thus international growth will not be able to sustain.

5.5.7 The Emergent Business Model and Strategic Adaptive Capability

5.5.7.1 Proposition 4 – P4

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

In general, there are several indications that Delta founders have the adaptive and reconfiguration capabilities necessary to guide the firm turbulent international marketplace since they have built a comprehensive picture of the industry's development. The founders have been in the industry for several years and during this period they have developed a rich knowledge of the West African aviation industry and the participating forces within the sector. Delta's strategic and operational insight and the practical experience of providing a material impact on the oil and gas sector in their operating countries. To achieve growth in the turbulent West African business environment, Delta's strategy and business model is frequently adjusted and the level of importance and extent of implementation of these strategic adaptive capacity routines increases with an increase in the turbulent international marketplace. Again, this is a reflection of the dynamic capabilities of the firm, which underpins the ability of Delta to grow internationally within the West African region.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Adaptive capability	<i>"...So, we continuously adapt our business strategies especially now that the Chinese are in town and pushing aggressively to gain market share. So multifaceted business strategy and the capacity to be innovative with our business model is soo crucial an approach to business survival. ..."</i>
Change management	<i>"... we are fully committed to continual change strategy even if it takes us out of our comfort zone. It involves hard decisions and we're prepared to do this, otherwise, we risk putting our business at a dangerous competitive disadvantage. ..."</i>
Multifaceted strategies	<i>"... it's essential to assess our readiness and commitment to grow internationally before you get started. Even though, our brand is now very well known in some West Africa region. Whilst Mr King pursuit works with the strategies. ..."</i>
Business model	<i>"... by knowing change is always on the horizon and finally by continually adjusting our business model and having an adaptable multifaceted business strategy. ..."</i>

5.5.8 The Influence of Entrepreneur Manager/Owner international Growth

5.5.8.1 Proposition 5 – P5

Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

There are evident within Delta empirical data to support the position that prior experience of entrepreneur or owner-managers exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction. These enablers include personal knowledge, skills and experience of the entrepreneur or owner-managers and more importantly the ability to continually combine and reconfigure such “know-how” with sectoral knowledge into to client offerings.

The entrepreneurial manager sectoral knowledge is acknowledged by Delta as significant and exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction. Take, for instance, Delta founder has over 38 years in international commercial aviation in a variety of roles and has worked in 17 countries specializing in providing aviation support for companies operating in remote locations under difficult conditions. Furthermore, the founder often leads to the growth direction of the firm. The data suggested that such an approach has allowed Delta to position itself as a leading firm, that is sensitive to unique challenges of doing business within the West African region.

Sectoral knowledge: according to Delta, being a contributor to the sectoral knowledge has amplified the firm reputation within the West African market and continued to play a major factor in the success of the firm. Sectoral knowledge was cited Delta as a factor in their continual market penetration and was rated more highly by their clients. Delta continued by stating that such sectoral knowledge provided the firm with a context for assisting clients in resolving complex and uncertain decisions. Network and Relationship: delta has shown the capacity to build network and relationship is dominant to in succeeding in the turbulent international

market. Delta used its external business networks and organisations ability to coordinate with them and cooperate to increase innovative capabilities.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Entrepreneur	<i>"... I have always wanted to work for myself and I have been looking for such an opportunity right from the start of my career, but I needed experience. ..."</i> (Founder Beta).
Entrepreneurial orientation	<i>"...I usually take the lead and often set the direction of our growth path. Being a small business, and especially operating in a volatile business environment and I often need to understand what's going on about the business and how growth approach. ..."</i>
Environmental analysis	<i>"...We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity. ..."</i> (Founder Beta).
Growth	<i>"...Basically, Jane usually takes the lead and generally set the strategic direction of the firm. Then folks like myself then provide regional expertise to manage any cultural influence that we need to be mindful off. ..."</i> Head of Asia Operations.
Business model	<i>To succeed, firms will need to develop new business models and value propositions; and central to their success will be their ability to work with sectoral data of all sizes from clinical trials, post-market surveillance, electronic health records and other sources.</i>

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

In summation, the propositional statements outlined in section 3.5 were used to analyse each case, in turn, to explore the undying theme as described by the cases to draw out the emerging themes. These themes will be used before a cross-case examination in the next chapter.

6 CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

6.1 Chapter Summary

This section begins the examination of the topic through empirical data. In the preceding chapter detail of each case as discussed were developed through the propositional statements outlined in section 3.5. The cross case-study analysis is now described below to detect patterns and to draw conclusions.

6.2 The Emergence of Patterns Cross the Cases

The emergent themes resulting from the examination of the firms were categorised into dynamic capabilities enablers and how the evolution of dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth. The purpose of such categorisation, firstly, will allow the cases to be compared across the propositional statements to illustrate how the cases data unfolds from the empirical data. For example, to establish how dynamic capabilities process unfolded across the cases as part of international growth and examine how dynamic capabilities contributed to the success across the cases. Secondly, examined the mechanism through which dynamic capabilities influenced internal structures and internal competencies of the firms and how these firms responded to the external international market forces.

All the entrepreneurs of the firms in this study shared the common opinion that in unstable times, cultivating and using dynamic capabilities help their respective firm not only survive but emerge with competitive advantages.

All four firms' founders had prior skills and experience in their speciality area. In all the cases, the interview was conducted with the owner/founder. All the firms are management consultants operating with the service sector. All the firms engaged in multinational business, working across more than one country simultaneously. The firms are small-sized enterprises as defined by the European Commission that is having 10 to 49 employees and a turnover of under £8.9 million. Delta is the youngest of the firms and has been in business for three years and Gamma is the oldest firm and has been in business for thirteen years. In terms of employees, Gemma has the largest numbers with a total of 23. Table 10 below presents a brief overview of the four cases in terms of industry, sectoral activities, the number of employees, first international operations, industry knowledge.

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Industry	ICT	Pharmaceutical	Energy Oil and Gas	Aviation
Size (no of employees) with the firm	15	11	23	10
First International Operations	2003	2004	2000	2001
Main Business Output	Consulting Services & Implementation	Consulting Services	Consulting Services	Consulting Services
Industry Knowledge Requirement	Very Detailed	Very Detailed	Very Detailed	Very Detailed
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>				

Table 9 - overview of cases

The cases identify dynamic capabilities that impacted on the successful development as their ability to identify the need for change, to formulate a response, and to implement appropriate measures. Across the cases the data showed this involves sensing the need for change, learning about how to respond to opportunities and threats, and accomplishing reconfiguration. Sensing may capture the first facet. The data revealed that, across the cases, sensing played a key factor when scanning for the opportunity. There are clear examples of cases ability to recognise shifts in the environment that could impact on their business model based on the current capability position. Also, having identified the need for change, the data showed that the cases learn all this is to know about this to formulate. Learning in this context relates to knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, and knowledge sharing. This suggests that learning is a core element of dynamic capabilities. The formulation of a response by shaping opportunities is also a learning function, as it involves learning about clients' needs.

The following are the themes extracted across the cases highlighting dynamic capabilities enablers.

Dynamic capabilities	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Linked Growth
Sensing the need for change	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes
learning about how to respond to opportunities and threats	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes
formulate a response	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes
Implement appropriate measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes

Opportunity search - (Sensing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Acquisition (Seizing)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Resource Reconfiguration - (Transforming)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Table 10 – Themes on dynamic capabilities enablers

The main themes to emerge from the empirical data on dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth are outlined below. These themes will allow the cases to be compared across the propositional statements.

The themes of dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth					
Themes	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Capability Link
Business strategy adaptation	✓	✓	✓	✓	External
Processes adaptation	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Service adaptation	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Resource reconfiguration	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Knowledge management processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Responsiveness to client's requests	✓	✓	✓	✓	External
Social Media	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Managing international market dynamism	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal

Managers international experience	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Training and learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
new organisational capacity development	✓	✓	✓		Internal
Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Managing partnership/collaboration	✓	✓		✓	External
Adaptive capability in business model and multi-faceted strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
Innovative Capacity	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal
International entrepreneur	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internal

Table 11 - Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth

6.2.1 Case Firms History of Internationalisation

Firm Name	Year Founded	First International Activity	First International Market	Other Markets	Degree of Internationalisation	Key Influence	Future Plans
Alpha	2003	Philippines	Philippines	Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia	70% of clients are international	Industrial expertise, networks and word of mouth.	Continue to develop business opportunities in the region.
Beta	2001	India	India	China	70 - 90% of clients are international	Industrial expertise, networks and word of mouth.	To grow clients base within India and China
Gamma	1999	Ghana	Ghana	Cameroon, Gabon, West African	85% of clients are international	Trust, Networks, reputation, industrial	Maintain and grow current clients base within the region

						expertise	
Delta	2007	Central African Republic (CAR)	Central African Republic (CAR)	Ghana	85% of clients are international	Respond to clients, deep industry expertise and Networks	Expanding clients based within the West African market

Table 12 – Profile of Study SME

6.3 Dynamic Capabilities as the instrument of coordinating changes

6.3.1 Proposition 1 – P1

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

Surviving in changing turbulent market situations requires the firm to be able to modify its resource base. As Teece et al., (1997) note, a firm must have the ability to evaluate its environment and continuously develop new ideas and, as a consequence, new business opportunities. The data support this view and further highlighted and characterised the case as firms that evolved new skills over time. This evolution in skills could be described as an evolution in firm capability which is some of the characteristics of dynamic capabilities in action. Another example of dynamic capabilities in action was how the cases integrated acquired resources with the resource base already possessed by the firm. This kind of integration seen across the case and is illustrated by in the cases ability to integrate and combine assets (including knowledge) often played a major role.

This is accretion finds support in the works of (Teece 2007, 2009; Grant, 1996). According to Teece's framework, it is called *managing threats and transforming*. In the face of changing environments, the enterprise might

have to reconfigure and re-assign existing capabilities and potentially develop new ones. The micro-foundations included in this capability include decentralisation and near decomposability: adopting loosely coupled structures, embracing open innovation, developing integration and coordination skills; governance: achieving incentive alignment, and minimising agency issues; co-specialisation: managing strategic fit so that asset combinations are value-enhancing and knowledge management: learning, knowledge transfer, achieving know-how and intellectual property protection.

Dynamic capabilities are important for service-oriented firms, as they allow firms to identify market opportunities and client needs, take action on those opportunities by organising available resources, and gain a competitive advantage in the process. The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the transformation of existing resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment (Teece, 1997, 2007, 2017, 2018; Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Zucchella & Magnani, 2016; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Wang & Ahmed, 2007; Zucchella & Cabini, 2007). Furthermore, the proposition gives support to the position that dynamic capability is not a resource but a process that has an impact on the resource. While capabilities are about competing today, dynamic capabilities are more future-oriented (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009).

By examining the relationship between the different processes, the data appeared to suggest that if a firm can identify and assess new business

opportunities it can then make decisions about acquiring new resources and how to reconfigure the resources it already has. It could be said then that dynamic capabilities cannot exist without having an opportunity search process. The main themes that emerge from the empirical data on the interplay of dynamic capabilities are now discussed below in detailed.

It is important to state that it is not sufficient to have the capacity to predict future business trends and to sense new business opportunities, it is similarly important to have enough analytical and entrepreneurial skills to understand what these market trends mean in the context of the industry and the company and how to glean from this knowledge (the capacity to seize new opportunities). According to Teece (2009), a dynamic capability is a combination of the capacities to sense new opportunities, to seize new opportunities and to reconfigure the resources.

There is a common pattern across the cases on resource acquisition. In all the cases, staff members have both deep technical knowledge and client-facing skills, such capacity allows them to provide tailored services to their clients. To this effect, the data shows that all the cases staffing model were to hire very experienced staff. Such employment model allows the cases to manage firm size to keep their overhead low and retain their flexibility. Therefore, the staff are chosen carefully, in almost all the cases these staff already have established and extensive networks, are all highly skilled and experienced professionals.

The data supported the view expressed by the cases, which was the cases often only employ experienced team member with detailed industry-specific experience to maximise on return on investment. This peculiarity was observed across all the cases, especially when recruiting an experienced team member. The cases highlighted a common pattern that internationally grown management consultant firms often appears to attract and recruit their experienced managers from larger competitors or multinational firms. These people already have access to industry-specific networks and have the experience needed to support the firm's international growth. An illustrative example is in how the Alpha innovatively combined different channels and processes in its resources acquisition such as open, free sources, and freelance employment model to supplement resource acquisition during in-country assignments. Such a flexible approach to resource acquisition capabilities demonstrated that the Alpha can expand its services offering to meet the sudden increase in customer demand. Another key imperative in Alpha's sensing process is rather than complete dependence on their main source of contracts, Alpha continually scan the environment independently to see what the opportunities are in the marketplace from which the partners then identify potential opportunities.

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Similar resource acquisition patterns were observed within Beta, which had to significantly adjust its organisational processes, operational capabilities and the underlying resource acquisition processes as part of the international growth strategy. For example, Beta's employment approach is based on the self-employed model, this includes employing physicians,

scientists, former regulators, and industry professionals with an average experience of the consultants are 14 years on a self-employed basis. This business model has enabled Beta to be agile and able to respond to sudden movement in the marketplace with a network of consultants globally. The benefit of such a flexible resource acquisition allowed Beta access to a network of consultants and access to sufficient resources to capitalise on opportunities. Such an approach demonstrates the importance of dynamic capabilities for resource acquisition processes and creating value through internationalisation growth.

From the viewpoint of *resource reconfiguration* being the engine for reconfiguration of repositories or a centre for resources, skills, and knowledge reconstruction. The cases demonstrated continued ability to accumulate, protect, and update resource reconfiguration. Furthermore, by examining the relationship between the different processes, the data appeared to suggest that if a firm can identify and assess new business opportunities it can then make decisions about acquiring new resources and how to reconfigure the resources it already has. It could be said then that dynamic capabilities cannot exist without having an opportunity search process. The *resource reconfiguration* process being the engine for reconfiguration of repositories or a centre for resources, skills, and knowledge reconstruction. The cases demonstrated continued ability to accumulate, protect, and update resource reconfiguration. Across the cases, when the cases resource reconfiguration processes are studied, it

can be seen that the role of resource reconfiguration processes is important.

An illustrative example of the resource reconfiguration processes undertaken by Alpha is revealed by a study of the firm's capability to improve quality in delivery based on the ISO9001 standard. The firm decided to establish a local centre of excellence in the Philippines to embed good practice into local staff working ethos. Although the new local staff knows how to do tasks in theory but lacked practical know-how. Through the resource reconfiguration processes, Alpha decided that new local employee with local professional experience will undertake a thirteen weeks knowledge sharing training initiative. The local Philippines employees were motivated to learn how to perform practical quality control. So, it could be inferred that in the Philippines context, this kind of internal knowledge transfer routine was a success due to the firm's ability to reconfiguration its resources and improves the underlying knowledge sharing process. It is a practice followed to ensure that Alpha's SO9001 quality in delivery standard routines and best practice come into play as soon as a new employee is embedded.

Beta, in contrast, operates in an industry where radical innovations take place only very occasionally. Similarly, innovation to market requires significant financial and resources commitment such commitments require significant capital investments and many years of ongoing research and development commitment. Therefore, Beta has to be novel and agile in

their resource reconfiguration processes approach. An illustration of this is demonstrated in the way Beta adopted its process such that smaller adaptations are continually made in its resource reconfiguration. Within the context of international growth, this is a good example of how management consultant effectively utilises resource reconfiguration to increase manage their international growth. This is necessary since they often have very limited access to unlimited resources pool.

Across all the cases, it was observed that knowledge sharing recombination and management played a very significant role in firms international growth success. The cases internal knowledge creation is evident in staff abilities concerning sharing knowledge, levels of education, experience, training and the skills they acquire in the workplace through their interaction with other agents with different knowledge bases. Across the cases, that data similarly confirmed that knowledge management approaches are dependent on how information is shared across the firm. For example, across the cases, the data further indicated that management constantly communicates with each other and across the firm on decisions about the target market, clients and in the case of Alpha and Beta determining how knowledge management should operate within partnerships. For example, where both firms have built knowledge that forester strong loyalty and commitment to the clients and in some cases others through informal open and communication. These types of

differentiating knowledge require effective knowledge management in partnerships arrangement.

The cases continual knowledge reconfiguration capabilities in responding to a turbulent business environment demonstrate dynamic capabilities. Such capability is demonstrated, for example, in the way Alpha established a centre of excellence in one of its operating regions for knowledge transfers to new personnel. In other words, good practices were continually captured across Alpha's operating regions and such knowledge is eventually successfully transferred between the firm's employees despite different cultural and educational backgrounds. One of the key observations during the analysing Alpha's case, it was noted that knowledge management and reconfiguration were very much intertwined with services offerings.

Furthermore, another key observation across the cases was that international opportunity search and thus growth was linked to the firms' abilities to recombine knowledge. Such knowledge recombination is then offered as a value proposition to customers which in turn is linked to international growth opportunities. These approaches to knowledge acquisition, reconfiguration, assimilation and management within each firm demonstrated that knowledge is a key asset that the firms constantly and continually improved upon to gain an advantage. It is therefore inferred that the continual acquisition, reconfiguration and readjustment of knowledge improve is a key success factor across the firms.

6.4 Increasing Marketplace Share in Turbulent Marketplace Environment

6.4.1 Proposition 2 – P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm's strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive.

From the viewpoint of a firm's international growth, a firm in a turbulent international environment should be able to sense and seize opportunities and to reconfigure its resources and capabilities accordingly (Teece, 2007). Consequently, searching for new growth potential from abroad can be challenging for SMEs management consulting firm because building an extensive picture from the competition in certain markets demands that management gathers knowledge concerning recent and predicted changes in the local market environment. Thus, when related to dynamic capabilities reconfiguration is key essential because growth is often related to R&D, product or service innovation and the ability to gain a competitive advantage in product or service markets (Omriani & Lecerf, 2019). By opening new markets to the firm, new products or services provide firms with momentum for market share growth and improved profitability (Zahra & Nielsen, 2002; Lansiti, 1995).

After a firm has observed new business opportunities, they must figure out how to interpret new events and developments, which technologies to pursue and which market segments to target. The selection of new resources comprises an important dynamic managerial capability (Helfat et al., 2007) because of resources, in general, have a critical role in the success of the firm. It is therefore important that firms need new resources to respond to changing customer demands and changes in the external environment. Therefore, the main themes that emerge from the empirical data from the viewpoint of international growth are now discussed below in detailed.

Responsiveness to client requests is cited across the data, as being imperative in the turbulent international market. There is evidence of the cases responding quickly to customers' request. The data seems to suggest that the firms [can](#) respond promptly to request from clients. The data confirmed that this was possible due to a combination of network, relationship and management ability. For example, there is evidence to support that the cases routinely leverage their relationship to gain advance information on anticipated request.

Managing Partnership/Collaboration another key important observation cited the case where reliance on partnership arrangement. One of Beta's key strength and partnership selling point was the firm's detailed understanding of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) submission processes. FDA is an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services. In addition to clinical quality assurance service, the firm also offers a broad range of service capability to enable its clients in all areas of biopharmaceutical and medical device quality assurance from auditing to quality management services, process optimisation and integration. The firm's customer value proposition includes quality assurance (QA) and compliance in quality assurance, quality management system (QMS), pharmacovigilance, good clinical practice (GCP), auditing services, training, standard operating procedure (SOP) writing to clients throughout the UK and internationally.

In 2004 Beta entered into the Asia markets, at first into the India market. Beta's rapid entry into the Asia market required a strong local presence, however, the firm did not have enough financial resources to maintain a local presence required to fulfil its legal requirements under the term of the contract. To enable Beta to make an inroad into the India market within limited resources and capacity, the firm entered into a partnership venture with a boutique healthcare consulting company based in India. This partnership enabled the firm to set-up new affiliated services in the Asia-Pacific region and brings over a decade of clinical research expertise with Big Pharma both from the EU and US to the region. It is argued that without processes changed enabled by dynamic capabilities and effective alignment with the environment while internal interdependencies are efficiently managed. Beta would not have been effective with its international transition.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
	<i>"...We strongly believe that our association and relationship with the UKTI continue to enable us in our international growth effort..." (Founding Partner, Beta).</i>

As an illustration, in 2008 Betas entered into a collaboration with a software firm in Israel. Through this collaboration, the Beta was able to gain access to the market and was also able to support its auditing and the quality management system (QMS) services. Such collaboration enables Beta's services capacity to resell, design, customise, and project manages the deployment of the firm electronic QMS to clients looking to implement an electronic QMS. According to Delta, networks have been useful not only to begin internationalisation, but Delta uses its networks to find new local partners as it expands its internationalisation process. These links with local partners are an integral part of its internationalisation process since the firm needs to gain information locally at the relevant location of their international market.

Delta uses its local partners to find associates within the West African regions that they can use for subcontracting work. Delta owner/founder maintains these links with local partners by making frequent trips to the region. By building partnerships, the cases **can** gain access to resources and capabilities beyond their firms. Additionally, knowing how to operate in

numerous different markets simultaneously would be impossible for cases firms without partners. Having partners enables cases to benefit from world-class know-how in areas that are beyond their scope.

Reputation was cited as a critical success factor; this also includes managing client expectations. All cases involved in this study see building a strong reputation as an essential marketing tool. The time and effort invested in developing or maintaining such reputation and brand differentiation are considered an alternative to spending money on advertising or public relations. For example, Alpha viewed their firm's reputation as an important point of difference in a highly competitive industry, emphasising the relationship with their customer base. This reinforce reputation by showcasing customer success online, using social media to present an image of the firm as knowledgeable, approachable, and helpful. All the cases cited managing client expectations as being indispensable to a good working relationship. Alpha cited reputation as one of its critical success factor in the sense that they relied extensively on their relationship with large MNEs, who sometimes find the clients and establish the contract. Alpha invests time in maintaining its good reputation and trust with clients, it is aware that this could be lost by a lap in judgement. It was evident across the case that reputation was considered to be particularly acute with new clients to establish the possibility of future referral and client showcase.

Beta experienced pressure to extend their existing brand reputation into new social media channels. Beta is known for building highly successful forum-based communities, in the eyes of potential business partners and investors their social presence is now measured by the size of their social. The importance of building a good reputation is very important to Gamma, especially when approaching new clients. Gamma relied extensively on new client acquisition through word of mouth thus Gamma focuses on having a good reputation client loyalty. Gamma's reputation and trust are built on a client-by-client basis. Gamma explained how the firm strives to always maintain the utmost professionalism and be seen as providing value. Delta also cited reputation and trust is paramount for it to flourish. Delta work within the aviation of the oil and gas sector which requires high technical expertise due, in part, to the challenge and the type of landscape they operate in. Such a specialised service and reputation enables clients to seek them out, Delta's reputation is embedded in trust and quality.

International Growth History and the degree of internationalisation				
	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Year of first International Operations	2003	2003	1999	2010
Frist International Market	Philippines	India	Ghana	Central African Republic

				(CAR)
Other Markets	Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia	China	Cameroon,	Ghana
Future Plans	Continue to develop business opportunities in the region.	To grow clients base within India and China	Maintain and grow current clients base within the region	Expanding clients based within the West African market
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>				

Table 13 - History of Internationalisation

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
	Born Global	UKTI	Global	
Frist International Activity	2003 (Born global)	2003	1999 (Born global)	2010
Frist International Market	Philippines	India	UAE	Nigeria
Founder(s) Years of prior International Experience	20 years	40 years (Combined)	50 years (Combined)	13 years
Degree of Internationalisation	70% of clients are	70 - 90% clients are	85% of clients are	85% of clients are

	international	international	international	international
Other Markets	Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia	China	Oman and Qatar	Ghana
Future Plans	Continue to develop business opportunities in the region.	To grow clients base within India and China	Maintain and grow current clients base within the region	Expanding clients based within the West African market
Anticipated International sale contribution to business operations	High 50% or above	Moderate 35% or lower	Very high 75% or above	Very high 75% or above
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>				

Table 14 - History of Internationalisation

Table 11 below presents an overview of the cases from the viewpoint of the firm's formation, the start of international operations, the type of market, years of owner international experiences and the influence of environmental change, the degree of internationalisation, owner's years of prior international experience and the future international growth by each

case. It can be observed from table 11 that before each firm's first international activity, the Owners/founders have gained significant years of previous international experience. For example, Alpha founder has more than 20 years of international experiences, Delta founder has more than 13 years of international exposure and Gamma founders has a combined 50 years of international exposure.

From the standpoint of international operations, the data confirmed that over 70% of all the cases business activities were as a direct result of international activities. When the cases were examined across multinational frontier the data similarly confirmed that all the cases operate across the multinational frontier at any given time. Finally, the data from the cases similarly confirmed that all the firms are actively seeking business opportunities across several international countries frontier. Furthermore, the data support the position of the firms on the degree of international operations will continue to play a significant part in the sales strategy.

Table 13 below presents an overview of the firms from the viewpoint of the critical events that led to international business operations, the key influence that triggers the international operations and future business plans. It can be observed from table 14 that networks and relationships played a very significant role in all the firms' international activities. Also, reputation and trust played a major role in building the firms international operation. As well as, deep sectoral and industrial knowledge.

6.5 The Importance and the extent of Innovative Capacity

6.5.1 Proposition 3 – P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

Innovation is the implementation of new ideas that create value and strategic innovation is the ability to reinvent the basis of competition within existing industries and to reinvent entirely new industries. Strategic innovativeness is thus a major success factor for firms operating in a turbulent marketplace (Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Elia et al., 2016).

When the case is studied from the perspective of innovation capacity processes underpinning dynamic capabilities, the firm demonstrated such capability. The dataset emphasised that the process of innovations within the firms observed that economic incentives, internal resources, and technical and organisational competencies that the firms have developed or accumulated over time and the firm's linkage to external sources of expertise for learning about new technological development were the major forces that influenced these firms in adopting a process innovation.

In a turbulent market, in particular, service innovation capabilities are predicated on the ability to use hard to transfer and imitate service innovation capabilities which firms possess to develop, reshape, disintegrate and reconfigure existing and new resources and operational capabilities. The data confirmed that the firms are generally more flexible, adapt themselves better, and can develop and implement new ideas. This is partly possible due in part to the firms' flexibility, their simple organisational structure, their low risk and receptivity these all facilitated innovation. Accordingly, innovation capability is very important in developing new value-creating services and solutions that provide a competitive advantage for the firm This position is supported by the work of (Lecerf & Omrani, 2019; Coviello, 2018; OECD, 2017).

The cases data supports prior research by Elia et al., (2016) and Qian & Li (2003) which indicates that an innovation strategy provides important benefits to SMEs firms. Improved performance in small firms may be the result of employee innovativeness and the ability of a small organisation to implement an innovative strategy. This study confirms that innovation is an important contributor to international growth and profitability of studied firms. Other important insights attained from this study is the impact of dynamic capabilities on service innovation and in particular, the firm's capacities to continually recombine and add values to innovation are significantly important in SMEs management consulting firms' international growth (Omrani et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2015).

Technology has long been proposed as a key enabler of organisational capabilities (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019; Dutot & Bergeron, 2016; Mata et al., 1995). Technological innovation is unavoidable for firms which want to develop and maintain a competitive advantage and/or enter new markets. A review of literature that concerns how SMEs firms develop new products and services indicated that the firm's productivity is achieved by the adoption of technological innovation. Including the reduction of transaction cost, advertising and promotion cost, eliminating traditional supply chain, speedy communication with customers. Additional studies further showed that technology not only supports organisational processes but also can be used to reconfigure them in ways that enable dynamic capabilities. Example of these is on how social media technology has meaningfully enabled the firms. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are globally the most widely used social media networks for private and business purposes and therefore they were chosen to be presented as examples of leadership in social media tools (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019; Scuotto et al., 2017; Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011).

In new product development (NPD), the technology-leveraging capability has a direct positive effect on dynamic capabilities because different types of technology systems enhance the ability of NPD work units to sense the environment, enhance learning, integrate resources, and coordinate activities (Ahmad et al., 2019; Omrani et al., 2019; Pavlou & El Sawy, 2006). The data illustrates how SMEs are innovatively using technological

resources to reconfigure existing service offerings or are exercising specific dynamic capabilities with the help of technology. An example concerning the role of the firm's technological capabilities in its international growth and the firm's ability to continually apply dynamic capability in the renewal and application of such capacity as cited across the studied cases.

This is grounded in the scholarly literature (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019) Data confirmed that the cases the successful use of technology were based on the interface of technology and customer needs, a commitment that takes numerous forms. For example, the Alpha is very good at clients training. As the complexity of technology increases, the clients require more instruction in operating and maintaining technology. This combination of being oriented to both a specialised niche service, typically combining both sophisticated technologies with careful devotion to consumer needs, that makes a strategy of foreign direct investment essential to the Alpha. To understand the peculiarities of each host market, the alpha benefits by servicing at the location of the host market.

The study data confirmed that capability to innovate and recombine developments in technologies have had a significant impact on all the cases. For example, the cost associated with telecommunication across the international border has been steadily reducing over the years and this has consequently improved the abilities for the cases to maintained optimal communication with their customers at a manageable cost (Coviello, 2018; Leonidou et al, 2018). However, it should be noted that the development of

new technology or services does not in itself guarantee commercial success for firms (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). Instead, technological expertise and the business possesses needs to be balanced against business skills and capabilities. For example, the cases focus on building new technology capacity constantly so as improve their ability to innovate and thus recombine technology service offerings and risk management in such a way to add value to their client's businesses. This found support in the work of Lecerf & Omrani, (2019) and Song & Jing, (2017).

Furthermore, the same line of reasoning applies to Beta and Gamma since their decision to internationalise were facilitated partly by improvements in technology. According to the data, both firms often rely heavily on technology to provide their services. It is important to note that when the technology dominates a firm and the employee are the driving force in the firms, customer satisfaction tends to be compromised and if the case is not taken customer demand are likely to shifts elsewhere.

The data affirmed that when the management team are the driving force behind innovation the technological sophistication is affected. While clients may be satisfied in a static sense, the firm is not only engaging in dynamic service development, which leaves it vulnerable to competition from more technologically advanced firms. Across that studied cases, the data support the position that clients eventually reward technological leaders that can provide them with unanticipated service innovations and improvements. This is again supported by the work of Ahmad et al., (2019) and Lecerf &

Omrani, (2019) and Scuotto et al., (2017) they the importance of renewal and reconfiguration of technological assets as being imperative in a turbulent marketplace. In this sense, balancing conflicting clients demands is a delicate strategy that only a very flexible firm, which has both technological competencies and sensitivity to consumer needs, can accomplish. It is therefore argued that to cope with continued technology advancement and change, a firm must possess dynamic capabilities. By a way of example, Gamma relied extensively on the use of technology for seismic computational assessment which often requires access to client historical data.

The data similarly confirmed that the cases have a deep understanding of what their clients need. The data also confirmed that this is possible by the cases cultivating close and frequent contact with the customers. Such direct and repeated contact between clients and the cases are particularly important so that the latter do not underestimate the problems of applying technology to commercial needs. Indeed, the data confirmed that the cases engage in direct contact with clients very frequently. The data highlighted this to be typically important for the cases of having customer interaction [to](#) make sure innovative activities truly meet customer needs.

According to literature, social media has become an important aspect in a firm's development through customer relation management, it has similarly guided entrepreneurs while allocating their market resources. Again this is grounded in (Ahmad et al., 2019; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al.,

2017; Wang et al., 2016). Additionally, Swani et al (2014) stated that social media has been used to increase brand loyalty through raising brand awareness and therefore fostering the increase on a firm's profitability and sales.

To this effect, the firms used social networking services (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) to focus on building online communities of people who share interests or activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others (Ahmad et al., 2019; Dutot and Bergeron, 2016; Bennet et al., 2010; Mata et al., 1995). These social networking sites generally provide several ways for firms to interact and communicate with clients including instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, webcams, file sharing and blogging and discussion groups. Ahmad et al., (2019), Scuotto et al., (2017) and Wang et al., (2016) stated that social media has created a platform for research and new opportunities for business, this has contributed to the creation of partnerships and to establish new business relations.

The study confirmed that organisational internal environment and culture are important antecedents and facilitators of the knowledge creation and exploitation process and thus the formation of dynamic capabilities with the firm (Teece et al., 2007; Sinkula, Baker, & Noordewier, 1997). The concept of path-dependency or prior history or prior knowledge represents the recognition that history matters and the recombination previous (Teece et al., 2007). The study supports the position that shared knowledge significantly strengthens the firm's abilities to recognise and consequently

assimilate new knowledge also known as “history dependence” (Grant, 1996). Such prior learning and shared vision imbue the individuals within the firm with a sense of direction and belonging and maintains their organisational focus (Amit & Han, 2017; Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Day, 1994). As a consequence, firms learn from both good and bad experiences, and such information is embedded in their mental models and influences future thinking (Day, 1994).

The process of identification of new knowledge, as well as the process of distribution of this knowledge across the firms, is of particular interest in a dynamic market environment. These processes are known as absorptive capacity, which is widely acknowledged as a crucial component as it enables a better understanding of markets and consequently market opportunities (Zollo et al., 2016; Wang & Ahmed, 2007; Liao et al., 2003). The findings of the study underscored the crucial importance role of adaptive capability and the capability to destroy and reconfigure current knowledge, and then renew and apply it in new ways to support their customers as well as in firms’ international growth (Ibeh et al., 2019; Tavassoli et al., 2017; Todorova & Durisin, 2007; Liao et al., 2003). Across cases, there is evidence of reconfiguring current knowledge, and then renew, Beta integrated its pre-existing knowledge which resulted in a process that enabled significant cost-savings in new resource acquisition and training which again facilitated the firm’s rapid entering into the Asia market (Jones et al., 2014; Wyton & Payne, 2014).

It is argued that there is a causal link between knowledge-accumulation behaviour of the firms their knowledge absorption process and the dynamic capabilities of the studied firms. Based on the empirical data it is further argued that it is the dynamic capabilities of the firms that allow the firms to be better and quicker in unlearning and in altering their business processes due in part to their small size, flourishing internal climate, and facilitative leadership. Hence, the accumulation of absorptive capacity through the use of social media, and the resulting new configurations of tangible and intangible resources could prevent the reactive behaviour, and could enable SMEs to fully exploit their potential through a better understanding of the market, continuous evolution, and by minimizing risk and uncertainty.

It is further argued that it is the dynamic capabilities that enable the firms to continually combine the newly acquired knowledge and resources with their existing assets to new organisational capacities unique capabilities. It is this innate ability within firms that are crucial to ongoing survival, success and dynamic capabilities development. The study appeared to suggest that the competitive advantage and indeed survival of firms the international growth of the firms stems from the ownership and/or replicate knowledge assets and how they are deployed (Tavassoli et al., 2017; Zollo et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2014; Wyton & Payne, 2014; Teece, 2013).

6.6 The Emergent Business Model and Strategic Adaptive Capability

6.6.1 Proposition 4 – P4

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

Evaluation of strategy is an important activity across the cases and what emerges across the cases was, the leadership of a firm has a few simple rules to guide their strategic processes instead of elaborate strategies. A simple standard operating procedure was devised to guide decision making across the case. Such a business model focus on how the firms carry out key strategic adaptability processes; knowing which strategies to pursue and which should not be considered; being able to rank the accepted business model; to synchronize the pace of emerging opportunities and other parts of the firm and when to pull out of the perceived opportunities. From this point of observations, the data confirmed that the decision to introduce a flexible business model was based on the ability to respond quickly to client's requirements. Consequently, through the flexible business model, the cases were able to be very elastic in their application of the flexible business model. This was observed to be very important across the cases due impart to limited financial capabilities but more importantly due to the need of the cases to be imaginative in responding to market

turbulence and the need to complete and grow their business internationally.

Managing Turbulent Market Environment								
	Environment				Competitive Capabilities			Competitive Strategy
	Industry	Perceived Industrial Structure	Market	Inter Market Pressure	1	2	3	
Alpha	ICT	Volatile	Narrow	2	Entrepreneur	Innovations	Marketing	Multifaceted
Beta		Volatile	Narrow	1	Entrepreneur	Service Range	Service Quality	Multifaceted
Gamma		Volatile	Broad	3	Entrepreneur	Innovations	Innovations	Multifaceted
Delta		Volatile	Broad	2	Entrepreneur	Logistic	Service Range	Multifaceted

Table 15 - Themes Managing Turbulent Market Environment

The data clearly showed that the firms demonstrated dynamic capabilities through their ability to modify their internationalisation strategies to match different markets. All the cases adopted a multi-faceted business model. Consequently, employing the flexible business model, the cases were able to be very elastic in their application of the flexible business model. This was observed to be very important across the cases due in part to limited financial capabilities but more importantly due to the need of the cases to be imaginative in responding to market turbulence and the need to compete and grow their business internationally.

An example of a dynamic strategic adaptable approach was evident in how environmental changes impacted on Beta's decision to review its new markets strategy and underlining business strategy against rapidly changing the business landscape. The Beta management team had to reassess its growth strategy and decided to grow internationally. The shift in Beta's emphasis to growth by internationalising was partly as a direct result of strong association with the United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) led initiatives. But more importantly, it was as a function of external EU market conditions and, in particular, the EU life science market downturn.

As a consequence of the downturn, the majority of beta's clients began to source for competitive solutions globally, especially, from within the Asia markets. The Beta's international growth as of 2014 has been successful and the success was largely attributed to the management team able to

identify the need for change, the impact of continual environmental changes, the processes of formulating and implementing a rapid response to changes and the need to be proactive. different approach. Using this as a template, Beta's sensing approach is different depending on the target market Similarly, Beta recognised that different market settings require a.

Gamma operates in globalised Oil and Gas markets and. The Oil and Gas market is undergoing dramatic changes as new technology and efficiency improvements in the exploration and production (E&P) sector continue to drive rapid gas production growth. This is combined with the current turbulent due to the significant fall in oil prices and near collapsing price spreads. These trends are likely to continue due to the likelihood of overcapacity trends in the sector. Understanding these events is important for determining how Gamma adapt its business strategy within the overall energy market environment. Examining Gamma against this backdrop, the data confirmed that Gamma's continually adapted its strategy against market activities. For example, Gamma strategy adaptation accommodated microcosm of the changes and challenges taking place in the entire sector. Again, in the case of Gamma, the relationship between the organisational processes and the interplay of dynamic capabilities as discussed and illustrated above in terms of dynamic capabilities constructs are explicitly illustrated in the relationships between processes and dynamic capabilities.

For example, Alpha stated that their critical success factor is predicated on their specialisation in ITC systems customisation. Service specialisation as a critical success factor was also cited by Gamma and Delta whose specialisation is in oil and gas as well as aviation respectively. For example,

one of the major strategic instruments deployed by the Delta is the combination of service specialisation with geographical know-how. Delta focuses on a particular West Africa market niche that requires technical expertise, and firm devote resources to maintaining market leadership in that niche. Delta service specialisation is leveraged across broad West Africa geographic markets.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
	<p><i>"...If you are small, your front of attack has to be narrow. You'd better focus your business. And if you are focused, you have to find customers for your speciality all over the region..." (Founder of Delta).</i></p>

One of the keys to the success of Delta has been its strong commitment to expansion within its operating region. According to the data Delta investment in plant, equipment, and technology, and the investment in people. Furthermore, Delta stated that high initial investment may not be justified in terms of short-term returns.

Across the cases, there are examples of processes adaptation. The data shows that the firms restructured their internal processes to take advantage of international opportunities. Take, for example, Beta and Gamma operate in a data intensive industry which requires the firms not only to retain large industry-specific knowhow but to have the capability to recombine such knowhow into the client value proposition. To this effect, the data confirmed that both firms had to regularly appraise their processes and approaches on how data is captured, collected and

recombined to maximise their operational capabilities to reconfigure services to be more inventive during new international markets activities. Another key observation was on how the organisational processes had to be adjusted during resource acquisition.

The importance of having mechanisms for the systematic management of processes is evident in the cases. For example, it was noted that the continual adaptation of both managerial and organisational processes has enabled Beta's in the effective development and deployment of the firm's assets. From the perspective of Beta's capabilities, such capabilities are combined and adapted continually to take account of the market environment. For example, Beta had to undergo processes review to reposition its business strategy and adopted international ordained processes. According to data, Beta recognised that its processes had to be multifaceted and dynamically adjustable during different international opportunities search. For example, the firm engaged in both informal and formal processes in its international opportunity search pursuit. This is illustrated in the way the firm systematically processed new prospects (sensing) and used its association with UKTI to interpret signals emerging from the UKTI.

The data from the study confirmed that the cases frequently reassess their organisational capabilities and their internal structures to develop new organisational capacity. The capability is viewed as the ability to put resources into productive use. In other words, to derive services from the resources. The capabilities, therefore, allow firms to utilise their resources to realise different kinds of the result. Data from the cases on

organisational capabilities include training, marketing assistance, information, technology development and business linkage promotion.

Across the cases, the data support continual organisational capabilities development to manage and grow the business on medium to long term thus improving the performance of cases, the cases access to markets, and their ability to compete. The data suggested that across the cases such strategy assisted the cases to identify and service markets, design products, set up facilities, and seek to finance. Developing capacity building programmes that include supply chain and cluster initiatives, which recognize the potential for developing tiers of suppliers to maximise effects are identified across the cases. As an example, Beta long term strategy is to expand its Israel market share significantly. But to attain such long-term strategy, Beta in the interim needed to collaborate via partnership whilst build the local necessary organisational capabilities to support its auditing and the quality management system (QMS) services. With such collaboration, Beta would need to be funded capacity, as the SME Beta would most likely be unable to cover such expenses over the long period needed to build capacity.

Similar, the same strategic behaviour was observed with Delta, find, design and build business opportunities that create value over time with the West African region, special Gabon Gas and oil service market. Delta collaborated with local firms that already has established an extensive relationship with the government. Another key observation across the cases is that some of the operational services such as management of accounts and tax records

and compliance with labour laws and other regulations are contracted out to other organisation.

looking at service provision modification across the cases, the results of these findings support the position that for knowledge-intensive firms, such as management consultant, their service provision adaptation requires the services offerings to be flexible and such flexibility is often manifested through dynamic capability. Dynamic capabilities enable the cases to maintain competitiveness by allowing customers services offerings to be combined with several different service offerings options. This distinctiveness was observed across all the cases. For instance, the main strategic focus of Alpha and Gamma was internationalisation from the beginning and their work is highly customer-focused, therefore it could be argued that in both cases dynamical capability is manifested in the firm's ability to be very flexible in their customer services offerings provision. Alpha, for example, developed multi-technology service offerings which they could modify according to the needs of their customers. Alpha's services were easily adaptable, and it is based on the ISO9001 standard. A significant factor behind the innovation was the founder's background in technology risk and change management.

Such an approach could be view has dynamic dependent and efficient way of bringing multiple services to the customers thus service adaptation demonstrates dynamic capabilities actively in operation. Again, another effective way to illustrate dynamic capability inaction could be observed in Beta's ability to change its business substantially to grow internationally. Beta began with only domestic clients and after three years begin their first

international experience which was a reaction to a client's demand. Beta had to adapt almost all of its services and the underlining processes to support its international business growth. Furthermore, the data confirmed that Beta's service offerings and processes continue to be adapted to accommodate customers' demands. Similarly, the data suggested that this was due in part to dynamical capability in action, thus Beta was able to use such capability and their market knowledge to be agile and respond more promptly to clients' demand. By the processes of continual refining and adjusting their service provision considering these experiences to remain competitive on the international market.

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Alpha, for example, can be seen to have invested significantly in training focused on the development of international managerial, support and as well as in the marketing capability within the firm. Similarly, Alpha decided that every young Philippine with limited prior professional experience should undertake ten weeks of training to ensure that new employees learnt the skills needed to produce excellence services. Beta, for example, can be seen to have invested in a highly flexible training approach. It was observed that the Beta's training model also includes on the job training

with local intake, this was the case in India. Beta had to be innovative in its training approaches to facilitate rapid access to readily available local expertise at a considerable low cost. The cases were also capable of learning from the failures and mistakes that they had made in the past in their international operations. For example, Beta would not have been able to conquer the Israel market without learning from the mistakes made some years earlier. Beta's *lesson learnt* from India issues on services features and technological resources that needed to be addressed before other international growth could be achieved.

Another important crucial factor is with flexible training approach across the studied cases. For example, Gamma continually updates its training programme to include *lesson learnt* based on past projects and almost all the training course could be accessed remotely via the internet. Furthermore, Delta has also made the long-time investment in short training courses in partnership with some vocational Institute for its personnel which could be accessed remotely via the internet. This again validated the firm's dynamic capabilities competence to overcome the financial challenges of embarking on expensive training programme through an innovative training approach.

The locations of the firms were cited as another factor in the successful internationalisation of all the firms. This supports the position of to the FDI Theory, as part of Dunning's (1988) OLI Paradigm, which finds a location to be one of the three forms of advantages when internationalising. A location's significance is expanded on by Ruzzier et al., (2006) as being "institutional and productive factors...when it is better to combine products

manufactured in the home country with irremovable factors and intermediate products of another location” (Ruzzier et al., 2006:481). In the case of knowledge-intensive service firms, location is beneficial to the internationalisation process when the geographic location can increase confidence in the firm’s abilities. In the case of this empirical research, this is due to geographic proximity to other reputable, competent sources specifically in Cambridge to the established academic community.

6.7 The Influence of International Entrepreneur Manager/Owner

6.7.1 Proposition 5 – P5

Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

The empirical data confirmed that owner/founders’ decisions can either hinder or promote organisational change. This finds support in the work of Helfat et al., (2007) and the study carried out by (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Helfat et al. 2007) underline the behaviour of senior executives such as entrepreneur/owner-manager is significant in turbulent business environments. As a consequent, their involvements were considered when analysing the development of dynamic capabilities. To the extent that the empirical part of the study is mainly based on interviews with the owner/founders of the studied cases. Consequently, in addition to interpretations made by the researcher, the interpretations offered by the entrepreneur owner/founders have affected the creation of

case descriptions introduced in the empirical part of the study (Chapter 5). The data revealed that interplay of dynamic capabilities includes the ability of the firms to identify the need for change, to formulate a response, and to implement appropriate measures (Helfat *et al.*, 2007).

Furthermore, the study similarly recognises the important role of management in making strategic decisions that influences and impact on dynamic capabilities. According to Helfat *et al.*, (2007) management decision plays a significant role in the development of a firm's specific dynamic capabilities. Helfat *et al.*, (2007) continued and stated that the management decision in the firm's strategies can often either obstruct or encourage organisational change. Therefore, their approaches should be taken into account when scrutinising the development of dynamic capabilities. Furthermore, Helfat *et al.*, (2007) emphasise that the behaviour of senior executives in turbulent business environments is one factor, in particular, that should be looked at in detail. To this effect, this study considered these factors to the extent that the empirical part of the study is largely based on interviews with the owners/founders of the studied management consultant SMEs.

Another key unifying factor across the four cases is that the owner/founders all had an embedded international orientation. The international orientation was cited as one of the keys success factors. It was noted across the cases that international orientation of the owner/founders served as the driver for the cases internationalisation, with three of the cases engaging in international activities from the formation. Similarly, the cases owner/founders all had international experience

working at large MNE. The common theme across the cases are they all departed from these MNE to start their business, since they believed they could do better themselves, either on their own or with like-minded colleagues.

International orientation also infers an understanding of foreign cultures, working internationally, knowledge of foreign language skills, travel to the country and insight enables the cases. Three out of the four cases stated that the experience of travel and living abroad allows them to be culturally aware and comfortable with international commerce. The data confirmed that the cases benefitted from having a culturally diverse staff, which could also be seen as an enabling factor in international orientation. Alpha's service offerings are within the ITC sector, which requires technology specialisation and development. The founder claimed that the UK has been at the forefront of ITC innovation and this has allowed the founder to gain build upon such expertise. The acquired expertise, the international orientation of the founder and cultural awareness has encouraged Alpha to look for clients abroad and more especially within the South Asian region where he has lived extensively. This is exemplified in the following interview extract where an owner/founder to explain the impact of international orientation.

Beta's founder has lived and worked extensively across the EU and is fluent in Spanish, Italian, French, English and has a good understanding of Spanish and German culture. Beta's owner/founders claim that her international orientation experiences played a significant role when she decided to grow internationally. She similarly claimed that international

orientation has been well-grounded, and her international orientation and outlook has contributed to the success of Beta. Across the cases, the entrepreneur owner/founders claim that understanding culture is significant than having foreign language skills. This is especially important with Alpha, Beta and Gamma, where an understanding of the country's culture was helpful both in business discussions and in intersecting personal intentions. The following interview extract from the owner/founder to explain the impact of international orientation.

One of the founding members of Gamma was from the Middle East – the Gulf state and studies in the UK and the USA. The other founding member has lived and worked extensively in the Middle East and the USA. Also, both founding members have worked together in several MNE and across cultural boundaries. Consequently, their international orientation seemed well-aligned from the beginning and they have used their combined international orientation to drive the success of the firm. Similarly, the owner/founders of Delta have lived and travelled extensively thus, Delta used their international orientation and region experiences to penetrate the aviation market within the region. The following interview extract from the owner/founder to explain the impact of international orientation.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Business model	<i>"...I have lived and travelled extensively West African region, and my parents being expatriates working for the UK government across the West African region gave me added advantage..."</i>

Across the cases, there seems to be a clear correlation between the international orientation of the owner/founder and the cases increased engaging in international commerce. International orientation positively influenced the owner/founder's perception of internationalisation, resulting in all the cases engaging in international activities. This claim is supported by the data and examples cited above.

They are common pattern across the cases on the prior international experience of the firms, in particular, of the owner/founder. Across the cases, the data support the importance and influence of international experiences are key enabling factors in the cases achieving successful internationalisation. This found support in the literature (Song & Jing, 2017; George et al., 2016), for instance, if a firm's managers have already operated for decades in the business and have access to wide international networks as with all the case in the study. They probably also make faster and more successful decisions, relying more on their intuition than less experienced managers (Ibeh et al., 2019). In other words, less experienced managers have to place more trust in formal information gathered from official sources, which can be more time-consuming. So, managers have to be able to build dynamic capabilities, but whether they can do so depends on factors such as experience, motivation and skills (Martina et al., 2017; Oviatt & McDougall-Covin, 2015; Augier & Teece, 2009; Zahra et al., 2006).

All the cases cited prior international experience significantly contributed to their success. For example, before embarking on international commerce, Alpha's founder had 18 years of international experiences within the ITC

sector with cross-sectoral experience. Similarly, before embarking on international commerce, Beta's principal owner has over thirteen years of international experiences gained working within several major MNE environment. Equally, Gamma's both partners have a combined experience of over 50 years working internationally for several MNE, before embarking on international commence.

During this period, Gamma developed a good reputation within the sector in Africa, Asia and the Middle East for providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream industry. Delta founder, in the same way, has over 30 years in international commercial aviation in a variety of roles such as air transport pilot, flight instructor, chief pilot, flight operations manager, and aviation advisor. Again, Delta owner/founder claimed such experiences are a key selling point and significantly contributed to the firm's international success. Across the cases, the data support the owner/founder claims that without such prior international experience it would have been impossible to establish their firms since one of the cases key selling point is their detailed sectoral know-how.

In addition to the owners/founders' prior international experience, each of the cases had very experienced management teams, especially in terms of industry-specific knowledge and international experiences. It was furthermore noted that three of the cases senior management teams correspondingly had the experience of managing businesses at an international level before embarking on an entrepreneurial journey. For example, all the founding partners of all the firms are already very familiar

with their respective industry before internationalisation and very experienced in their respective industry. Also, the majority of senior management teams had earlier worked for the multinational firms within their industry.

The cross cases findings, therefore, show that there does seem to be a clear correlation between senior management international experiences underpinned by deep industry knowledge and successes of the cases their international journey. This claim is supported by the study data as shown by the examples cited above. Thus, support the proposition that the entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

Each of the cases that were studied had managers who had held strategic and confidential posts some in different MNE and/or where a senior member of the other firms. The cases cited leveraging and building a network and personal relationship played significantly in international opportunities search. The data shows that relationships are very important the firms investing time in them and having enduring clients. According to the study data, and across the cases it was evident that management with established international experiences tends to gather information from several sources; official or unofficial. Official information may come from banks or associations, whilst unofficial information may come from general discussions with social network, subcontractors, clients or agents.

Similarly, the data suggested that the entrepreneur draws on their personal networks and strategic competencies to resolve acute operating problems

of limited internal resources. For example, Alpha began as a subcontractor which was as a direct result of the founder business relationship with his previous employer. The relationship between the two firms became very strong such that Alpha undertook many additional assignments on behalf of the then British multinational telecommunication firm within the region. This relationship guaranteed good profits and references for the new firm and hence enabled steady international growth. Similarly, Gamma, founders have a very strong reputation within the oil and gas sector and uses to further penetrate the African market by developing a service offering.

It was elicited from an interview with the Delta's founder that, as part of its international growth prospect in a turbulent market, Delta needed to grow their business capacity. Consequently, Delta developed a multi relationship business model and used this model as a "*spring ball*" to develop and built business opportunities across the West African market. Based on this business model, Alpha consolidated its clients' base and increased its presence, West Africa. As part of the multi relationship business model, Delta decided to establish a strong local presence in the Central African Republic (CAR) and open an international office in Ghana in the same year.

Likewise, Beta's association with UKTI led initiative was noted as an enabling factor during international growth. Such association and network connections significantly assisted Beta in pursuit of successful international growth. Furthermore, the owner/founder of Beta uses their social networks as opportunities to promote the firm and get in contact with new clients. The owner/founder found networking to be a fruitful way to have initial

contact with his target clients. It is clear from the empirical data that all the case exploited their networks of relationships played a strong role in its growing success.

Again, the importance of having mechanisms for the systematic management of *opportunity search* processes are cited across the cases has been a success factor. Another illustration of this was in Gamma's deep networks across the Oil and Gas sector with detailed geographic regions experiences. Gamma is also well known within its sector and is frequently involved in international trade activities. They leverage the benefits of a wide-reaching network effectively on clients. Despite their small presence in the UK, they can bridge Middles East and Europe and interact with their clients' that are located internationally effectively. Also, Gamma's founders claimed to be experts and are frequent contributors to trade journals. Therefore, from such advantage standpoint, Gamma effective leverage its networks, relationship and market know-how when sensing market for opportunities. As of 2013, the Gamma has 4 contracts on their books with each contract running from between 2 to 4 years.

Delta explicitly stated that value relationships much more over the project. For example, Delta guiding principle is predicated on having a lasting relationship and doing what is right for the client over the project, valuing the long-term view. This approach underpins the firm's culture and ethic. An illustration of this was observed in both Gamma and Delta managerial processes, such as the role of an ongoing relationship in its networks. As the relationship strengthens, the ability of the managers to sense and seize opportunities and to reconfigure strengthens. For example, as of 2014 and

despite turbulent in their international market, Delta has 8 contracts renewed on their books with each contract running from between 3 to 5 years. Of course, it is not just collecting important information. Management needs to be able to take meaning from the information they collate and use it to support high-level decision-making. A senior management team needs to have an extensive picture of their business if they are to accurately identify new business opportunities and evaluate whether they are worth seizing. To be able to realise these opportunities a business must be able to question its usual practices.

Based on these lines of reasoning and comparing the cases from the context of networks of relationship, it is argued that there is again a correlation between senior management abilities to establish and maintain effective networks of relationship within their industrial sectors and ability of the firm to grow successfully in the turbulent international market. These networks of relationships often contribute to the international success of the firm in pursuit of growth in the turbulent international market environment as cited across the cases. Accordingly, it is argued that previous international experience and networks improve management's opportunity search processes and offer better opportunities to recognise potential international opportunities. Similarly, the international orientation of the owner/founder was instrumental in establishing many of these networks and client relationships. Again, the importance of having a good reputation and long-standing clients can be seen as mutually reinforcing. It is argued that there are interaction and reinforcing nature among these critical success factors.

Across the data, the importance and influence of sectoral knowledge are considered key enabling factors in the cases achieving successful internationalisation. All the cases cited sectoral knowledge significantly contributed to their success. The data established that sectoral knowledge is continually developed, extracted and formalised as a collective knowledge type. The data further highlighted that firms with details sectoral knowledge can generate new ideas, frameworks and part of this knowledge fabricating activity involve the development of sector know-how. Across the cases, the data further confirmed that in the work context, experience accumulated around particular client groups contributes directly to tradable knowledge. By way of example, for a sector speciality to develop, knowledge comes through repeated assignments and assignments contacts with the main sector players and their technologies and networks.

The data across all the four cases showed that to operative successfully, the cases continually application its sectoral know-how and recombine such knowledge to create clients value-added proposition. The data appeared to indicate that such capacity is perceived by the clients as adding value to their business. The data showed that dynamic capabilities enabled the development of such capacity. The significant factor noted was the contribution of dynamic capabilities and the ability of the cases to offer clients useful insight into their sector knowledge thus continues to maintain a competitive advantage.

Across, the cases sectoral knowledge was cited as a factor in continual international market penetration was rated more highly. The data also

confirmed that across the cases there was a strong emphasis on the client requesting specialist sectoral knowledge. In particular, with Beta, Gamma and Delta the meanings and understandings created in discussions involving detailed sectoral knowledge which are directly instrumental in the skilful handling of assignments. Such discussions appeared to serve as an integrative function in achieving decisions. In these cases, the language of firms is based partly on shared industry/sector knowledge and knowing the sector. For example, according to Gamma, during a specific assignment, the firm used sector contacts and experience to bring the clients' perception of the problem in line with sector activities. Knowledge transfer from other oil and gas sector meant the firm could advise their clients on what happened in a similar assignment where they had had similar problems.

Across the cases, collaboration in decision making based on sectoral knowledge were cited as often very helpful negotiation. New practices within which sectoral knowledge is embedded and invested almost by definition unite interests. Furthermore, the data suggested that sector knowledge was not only possessed by firms and mechanically brought to the client but could be co-produced. In all our cases, there was no doubt that sector knowledge was valuable as a decision-making resource.

As seen across the case a simple model of knowledge flow is not the whole story, and there will be limits to notions of sector knowledge being owned solely by firms, as well as notions of knowledge guiding action in some un-reflective mechanistic way. It is therefore worth noting that, sector knowledge needs to be conceived in some senses as an object under construction across the sector. This is supported by scholarly review

according to Zucchella & Scabini (2007), possessing this kind of knowledge increases firms' abilities to perceive international opportunities. The data collected equally support the position of Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) that path-dependent learning mechanisms shape the creation and development of a firm's dynamic capabilities. Furthermore, Teece et al., (1997) state that learning is a process by which repetition and experimentation enable tasks to be performed better and faster. Based on this assertion, it is reasonable to argue that there is a clear linkage between dynamic capabilities (sensing – opportunity search, resource acquisition - seizing and resource reconfiguration – transforming), strategic adaptability, international growth and the influence of entrepreneur manager or owner on the direction of international growth. Overall the data affirmed that sectoral knowledge drives productivity and profitability, but knowledge is growing in importance beyond this as access to it broadens and deepens. Those able to harness it well will discover that sectoral knowledge is increasingly becoming the biggest differentiator in business.

Specialisation was another enabler of international growth as cited is one of the key selling points in internationalisation. All the cases cited that they are approached by clients based on, their technical expertise or their strategic market knowledge of specific markets in which they are in demand or either their skills specialisation within the market.

Theme	Dynamic capabilities processes underpinned successful international growth
Sectoral knowledge	<i>"...we develop high impact and tailored professional service to our customers, so key to our success is highly</i>

	<i>skilled and experienced professionals with outstanding customer-facing skills that live and breathe quality in the professional standard ..." (Founder of Gamma)..."</i>
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It is through such an aggressive strategy of expansion of local presence in foreign markets that these cases have been able to overcome the inherent size is an advantage. As illustrated above, the data confirmed that the cases had sector-specific characteristics with the added capacity to evaluate and modify their strategies in the constant turbulent market environment. These are very significant especially with a client demanding and paying a premium for such service.

6.8 A Summary Evidence of Research Propositions

6.8.1 Proposition 1 -P1

Dynamic Capability Influence on Successful Internationalisation

The extent of implementation of dynamic capabilities increases with an increase in the level of market uncertainty in SME management consulting firm.

P1	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Conclusion	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
Relational	Alpha operates in the	New business	DC processes	Dynamic

	<p>telecommunication industry which requires agility and rapid response to clients shifting specifications. So, the application of opportunity search needs to be response and example of this is clear within the dataset. According to Alpha</p> <p>"...Although we relied extensively on our relationship to secure some of our contracts. But in this telecommunication industry, we still have to be inventive in the use of our limited resources, be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay completeive. Otherwise, our margin</p>	<p>opportunities depends on the firm's ability to continually sense, seize and transform its resources and this increase. The more the firms seek new opportunities the more</p> <p>Dynamic Capabilities processes increases.</p> <p>The search has not been very systematic but has relied more on intuition. It is notable how the founder has developed this capability and turned it into competitive advantages. It is</p>	<p>are continually relied on during new business opportunity search and these processes increases</p>	<p>capabilities process increased with an increase in international growth success during sense, sizing and transforming.</p> <p>The application of dynamic capabilities processes in a turbulent environment that allowed these different forecasts to be combined with knowledge gathered from the firm's networks (clients, sales representatives, subcontractors, agents etc.).</p>
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	level and ability to grow will be severely compromised ...”	important to highlight that Beta only maintain a limited resources pool for permanent staff. This staff are augmented with a pool of self-employed database consisting of		
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>				

Table 16 – Supporting Evidence of Proposition 1

6.8.2 Proposition 2 – P2

To gain and sustain competitive operations in a turbulent marketplace, the firm’s strategies must be continually innovative, flexible, timely and responsive.

P 2	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Conclusion	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
Relational	Alpha revealed that the firm	According to Beta “...What	As part of this continual growth	With an increase in the

	<p>actively and perpetually analysis external environment conditions and triggers based on the collection of data from several sources such as research, the internet, newspapers, government publications, etc. to attain a clear understanding of demands. In this way, the firm is better positioned to respond to shifting clients demands. One of the primary methods of doing this is by obtaining feedback from</p>	<p>makes Beta different is the way we do business and our detailed knowledge of the industry: by offering real people, real solutions, and real results. We enable our clients by bringing together our know-how to further enhance our clients' value chain, we produce positive outcomes. We want Alpha to be there for them, providing them with</p>	<p>process, to gather market information, Gamma utilises several data sources. The firm's management has been able to modify its internationalisation strategies to meet the demands of different market environments.</p>	<p>level of market uncertainty in the business marketplace. The firm constantly increased the implementation of enablers of Dynamic Capabilities process. Due to "...You see the West African market has very very turbulent, for instance, governments across this region are unstable. So we have to be very innovative both with our business model and the how we adapt our</p>
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	suppliers and clients. The outcome of such exercise is that Alpha can effectively apply the available resources to take advantage of its external opportunities.	advice drawn from our deep industry experiences and our experts..."		model as well as our services offerings across the region...."
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>				

Table 17 – Supporting Evidence of Proposition 2

6.8.3 Proposition 3 – P3

The innovative process capacity increases with an increase in market uncertainty and marketplace turbulent.

P 3	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Conclusion	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
Relational	According to Alpha’s founder “...due to our size and limited	The level of importance and extent of implementation	Gamma implemented innovative processes and	Delta continually innovates, transform existing aviation

	<p>access to a large financial resource we have to make do with what we have by clearly implementing innovative processes reconfiguration and to quickly recombines these processes to achieve competitive advantage in this ever-changing market environment..." this is dynamic capabilities in according since Alpha has to continually recombine is innovative capacity processes to during searches for new</p>	<p>of innovative capacity increased with the turbulent market environment. To success and survive Beta came up with an innovative business model of quickly recombined several available products and services as services offerings. This was due to the founder's significant expertise, experience and several seminars participation within the pharmaceutical sector. Clinical research</p>	<p>continual reshape these processes played a major role in the international growth of Gamma and hence make it possible to see the role of dynamic capabilities in operations. The firm continually reshapes its processes, especially concerning logistics. Failures in logistic schedules would significantly impact success in international growth. Gamma sees its innovation capacity</p>	<p>sector knowledge particular on issues including specialist services to fixed-wing and rotary, wing operations, auditing of aviation service suppliers and helideck inspections. By repeatedly incorporate this knowledge and skills into new knowledge and services into a source of competitive advantage dynamic capabilities in operations were demonstrated. Thus, Delta's client retention and service</p>
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	<p>technological resources, new geographical markets, and ways to increase the firm's effectiveness.</p>	<p>protocols and ethics are very rigorous. Beta's innovation capability is very important in developing new value-creating services and solutions that provide a competitive advantage for the firm.</p>	<p>processes as strategic assets which are concerned with mechanisms for growth especially in tabulate international marketplace.</p>	<p>offering expansion to attract new clients in the West Africa market.</p>
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Source: Author's Classification

Table 18 – Supporting Evidence of Proposition 3

6.8.4 Proposition 4 – P4

The Emergent Business Model and Strategic Adaptive Capability

The visible outcome of dynamic capabilities is the continual adaptation and transformation of resources into new functional competencies that better match the turbulent market environment.

P 4	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Conclusion	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
Relational	<p>The firm recognised changing turbulent international marketplace requires multiple methodical approaches. Consequently, turbulent implies that Alpha cannot rely extensively on a single source of market or strategy for growth thus implemented strategic adaptive capacity and multifaceted business model to maintain its competitive advantage in turbulent and marketplace</p>	<p>Beta admitted that being an SME operating competing in a turbulent international marketplace make it challenging in maintaining and sustaining competitive advantage. Therefore, continually reconfigured its business model, its strategic adaptation was used to careful orchestration its resources to be successful in a turbulent implementation and by extension</p>	<p>The founders used multifaceted adaptive and reconfiguration capabilities to guide the firm's turbulent international marketplace growth. The founders have been in the industry for decades and they admitted to having clear signals of the market dynamism. An illustration of such capability is found in the firm's decision to make a strategic decision to build</p>	<p>Delta strategic and operational insight and the practical experience of providing a material impact on the oil and gas sector in their operating countries. To achieve growth in turbulent West African business environment, Delta strategy and business model is frequently adjusted and the level of importance and extent of implementation of these strategic adaptive capacity routines increases with an increase in</p>

	uncertainty.	maintained its competitive advantage.	capabilities in the renewable energy sector.	the turbulent international marketplace.
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Source: Author's Classification

Table 19 – Supporting Evidence of Proposition 4

6.8.5 Proposition 5 – P5

The Influence of International Entrepreneur Manager/Owner

P5: Entrepreneur/Owner manager exert significant influence on international marketplace growth and direction.

P 5	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta
Conclusion	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
Relational	Alpha founder has extensive international experiences and has worked widely across several countries with the South Asian region. Thus, entrepreneur knowledge often exerts a significant influence on	During the interview, the founder admitted to a set of a preferred international growth plan. This was due in part to the experiences of the founder, for example, the founder has	In some African countries, the influence of the founder in realising marketplace growth cannot be ignored the prior experience of entrepreneur continued to aid the growth and in	Being a contributor to the sectoral knowledge within the West African market. The entrepreneur continually combines “know-how” with sectoral knowledge to exert significant influence on

	international marketplace growth and direction.	international experiences within a certain international marketplace. This is indicated in how this has exerted influence on international growth plan of the firm.	so doing exert significant influence on international market growth and direction.	international marketplace growth and direction of the firm.
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>				

Table 20 – Supporting Evidence of Proposition 5

6.9 Linking the Components of Conceptual Framework

Clear linkage between enablers of dynamic capabilities, opportunity search processes and international growth can be identified. Also, there are several similar links between constructs introduced in the framework. After the firm has identified an international business opportunity, it often has to improve its products to meet the requirements of new geographical markets. These product development processes again require that new resources be integrated with existing resources and capabilities.

6.10 Chapter Conclusion

In summation, to internationalise, SME management consulting firms operating within a turbulent market environment need to possess dynamic capability processes. In order, therefore, to increase understanding of the development of firms' growth, it was necessary to study the processes that played a major influence on a firm's development. Therefore, this cross-case analysis examined how the cases achieved growth in a turbulent business environment, the role of dynamic capabilities processes and organisational ability to continually transform itself in an in the turbulent business environment. In this way, the examination compares across the cases reflecting against the definitions of dynamic capabilities introduced in chapter 2 of the study, for example, Helfat et al., 2007, the examples presented above reflect the dynamic capabilities possessed by the cases very accurately.

In these examples, changes in the firm's resource base were often related to changes in customer requirements - more versatile service offerings, or changes in the market environment - new geographical markets. It is evident that the cases were able to grow and be successful in a turbulent market condition which is dominated by multinational firms and the reasons for the cases survival and growth can be found in its industrial know-how, innovative use of technologies i.e. (social media, OnDemand computing), good client relations, high services quality and continuous transformation of resources to meet the demand of new market environment and services. It is argued that to grow successfully in the turbulent international market, the cases demonstrated that dynamic

capabilities are required. In other words, dynamic capabilities have been implicit in the process of successful internationalisation in a turbulent marketplace. This was demonstrated in the ability to continually modify their services, processes and internationalisation strategies to maintain growth and remain competitive.

Such continual modification is also found in the relationship between the organisational processes and the interplay of dynamic capabilities which has been discussed and illustrated above. For example, the management ability to effectively target investment decision across the cases, the cases constant adjustment of organisational processes. As illustrated by the cases dynamic capabilities are deployed to effectuate change and adaptation in positions. The decision to changes the organisational processes enable the cases to be more adaptable during international prospecting. This kind of fast and continual reaction to the changing environment is arguably important from the perspective of minimising damages when the cases face surprising and constant market turbulent. Drawing from this line of reasoning and based on empirical findings, it is argued that the cases emphasise the patterned and routine aspects of dynamic capabilities as well as the entrepreneurial facets of management in the cases international growth and success factors.

7 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

7.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the findings of the study by discussing certain critical events behind the international growth of the management consultant SMEs in this study. In particular, it discussed the influence of dynamic capabilities on the outcome of the study. The chapter is laid out as follows: the first section introduced the interpretation of the critical realist on the findings. The second section outlined the interpretation and influence of the dynamic capabilities perspectives on international growth. The third section discussed critical success factors as identified from the empirical findings. The final section outlined a revised framework following the empirical findings.

7.2 Interpretation of Dynamic Capability Influence on Successful International Growth

The essence of the dynamic-capabilities approach is that competitive success arises from the continuous development, alignment and reconfiguration of firm-specific assets (Hernández-Linares et al., 2020; Amit & Han, 2017; Teece, 2017; Winter, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Teece et al., 1997). In other words, dynamic capabilities directly affect the firm's resource base, which in turn is the source of the firm's competitive advantage (Harsch & Festing 2020, Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). With this as a base position, the

empirical data revealed the existence of dynamic capabilities processes is evident across the cases.

The data confirmed that the cases; continually sensing – opportunity search, resource acquisition – seizing and resource reconfiguration – transforming; which are key constituents of dynamic capabilities also emerged during the internationalisation period. Again this is consistent with the finding of other studies (Harsch & Festing 2020; Wu & Deng, 2020). The dynamic capability processes which emerged across the cases was the ability to assess competitive position within the marketplace, and the capability of the cases to purposefully adjust their resources base to address the competitive opportunities identified formed an important factor for successful internationalisation.

The results are consistent with previous studies conducted in other contexts (Harsch & Festing 2020; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Martina et al., 2017; Elia et al., 2016). First, past research has shown that dynamic capabilities are a key consideration in the turbulent marketplace. The results confirm that the volatility of the international marketplace requires firms to possess the capacity to manage market dynamism effectively (Harsch & Festing 2020; Ibeh et al., 2019). The results revealed that, in the turbulent international marketplace, dynamic capability processes played a significant role in international growth success. This is consistent with previous studies (Harsch & Festing 2020) The result further revealed that for SMEs to survive and grow, they must continually adapt to changes occurring in the business environment, whether they be economic, social or political.

Furthermore, past research has emphasised the indispensable role of dynamic capabilities (North & Varvakis, 2018; Teece et al., 2016; Gherhes et al., 2016) is a key factor in dealing with volatility in an international marketplace. This research in a like manner augmented this contention by affirming with related empirical results and it is consistent with extant research. It appears reasonable to contend that the rapidly changing business environment influences firms' ability to survive, grow and perform. The results further revealed that timely responsiveness, rapid and flexible service innovation, along with managerial ability to effectively coordinate and redeploy internal and external competencies are key success factors in turbulent international growth.

Successful innovations are thus the results of a deliberate search for and high alertness to new opportunities (Lecerf & Omrani, 2019; Omrani et al., 2019; Davidsson & Wiklund, 2013). The values created by innovations are often manifested in new ways of doing things and processes that contribute to wealth. By implication, then, the failure to innovate is likely to result in reduced competitiveness (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019). This is particularly important within the context of SMEs since innovation enhances the competitiveness of their ability in dynamic environments. (Wu & Deng, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2019; Gherhes et al., 2016; Teece et al., 1997).

One key observation from the study appeared to suggest that successful internationalisation in the turbulent marketplace has four implicit patterns. The first is centred around international entrepreneurship, such as entrepreneur managers perceiving the world as their marketplace and seeing internationalisation to be a strategic choice to the discovery, enactment,

evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities across national borders -to create future goods and services (Doorn et al., 2017; Zucchella & Magnani, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). The second was centred around the service offerings, in other words, the services they offer to their clients in the form of specialisation, niche market, reputation, learning and skills (Ibeh, Crick & Etemad (2019). Third their ability to construct and reconstruct resources by using disruptive technology toolset to meet the challenges of their clients (Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; OECD, 2018). In particular, the use of social media to leapfrog competitions. Past research has emphasised the indispensable role of cost-effectiveness (Hanna et al., 2011) and compatibility (Wang et al., 2010) as other key factors engendering social media usage.

This research augmented this contention by affirming with related empirical results (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Barney, 2017; Song & Jing, 2017; Zollo et al., 2016). In consistence with extant research, it appears social media now offer SMEs a better low-cost option over traditional media (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019). Consequently, the relatively lower cost associated with using social media presents an advantageous avenue for SMEs operating in a turbulent marketplace to carry out its marketing activities within its limited resource constrained (Bagheri et al., 2019). Therefore, the degree to which social media fit firms' needs and practices become a non-negligible consideration of their usage by SMEs.

The final pattern is on how competitive advantage of the firms emerges; where competitive advantage is based on the creative destruction of existing resources and the novel reconfiguration of new, and potentially

rent-generating functional competencies (Helfat & Raubitschek, 2018; Barney, 2017; Schmitt et al., 2016). The results affirmed that the capacity of firms to quickly and continually respond to changing the business environment was a key factor. By being agile in managing a continually changing business landscape (Harsch & Festing 2020; Ince & Hahn, 2020). This underpins the importance of strategic adaptation process (Child et al., 2017), which consists of, the internal structuring (internal actions that addressed firms' adaptiveness to new environment conditions) and external structuring (actions that modify the firms' relationship with its environment). These patterns maybe as a consequent of the growth pattern of services sector SME, in otherwise a peculiarity of the services sector characterise (Mazzei et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the implication of this empirical insight gives support to proposition **P.5**.

Based on the insight, the empirical result asserts that dynamic capability enables the firms to achieve sustained competitive advantage. The significance of this is that the entrepreneur exerts an influence on the firms' international growth in the turbulent marketplace (Tavassoli et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial action such resource orchestration process of bundling resources and leveraging capability of creating market-oriented value interrelated in international growth otherwise any success is likely to be fought with substantial limitations. This view finds support in the work of (Ireland et al., 2017; Mazzei, et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2002).

In the literature, however, these patterns are not described and discussed as identifies in practice. They are often discussed separately, but in practice, they are highly integrated and interconnected to each other with subtle interactions between resources (internal and external factors). This

is particularly insightful, which showed that in turbulent international growth, dynamic capacity processes are often manifested in subtle interactions between many factors. The empirical data revealed that continual process of adjustment to change, strategy adaptation and the dynamism of maintaining an effective alignment in turbulent marketplace significant in successful international growth. It is further claimed that from the viewpoint of the empirical data these patterns elements aided the extent of implementation of enablers of dynamic capabilities which in turn increases with increases in the level of market uncertainty. According to Lan and Wu (2010), the degree of success in international business largely depends on the diversification capabilities, risk-taking attitude and competing aggressively with the firms who are already established in the marketplace. Furthermore, Knight & Liesch, (2016) highlighted the importance of accumulated societal, business network and customer-specific experiential knowledge for SME international growth. The empirical evidence from the study supports this position and further claimed that the aforementioned statements are predicated the overall firm dynamic capabilities which in turn influences and impact meaningfully in the case of international growth. It is important to highlight that even if a firm and its staff are open to a particular change as in this study, this change may still not take place. Hence, it is logical to assume that the easier it is to implement a particular change, the more likely it is to take place and the firm would subsequently cope better with the change.

Exploring international growth success from the viewpoint of how three specific resource management (sensing - resource acquisition, seizing - resource reconfiguration and transforming - resource reconfiguration)

(Zollo et al., 2016; Peteraf & Leih, 2016). From this position, the data revealed that these processes consist of operational capabilities (Winter, 2003, 2017). The process of renewing and reconfiguring these organisational processes so that the firm can respond to the changing market environment is of a particular significance. Since, the firm resources are comprised of assets, capabilities, processes, routines and knowledge (Teece, 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015).

With the aforementioned as a pretext, across the cases data, there was evidence of management teams persistently allocate assets including resources for maximum efficiency. Some scholar has posited that there is not a clear line between operational and dynamic capabilities since change is always occurring to at least some extent. Thus, according to the scholars, it is not always possible to distinguish dynamic capabilities from operational capabilities based on whether they support what is perceived as radical versus non-radical change or new versus existing businesses; and some capabilities can be used for both operational and dynamic purposes (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Helfat and Winter, 2011).

In contrast, the emerging data from the case study clearly showed that dynamic capability evolves continually across all the cases. Both in rapidly changing environments Kuuluvainen, (2013) and Teece et al., (1997) as well as when the cases are getting ready to explore opportunities; what Liesch et al., (2011) Eisenhardt and Graebner, (2007) referred to as stable. The data further gives support to the work of Zollo et al., (2016) and Zahra & Nambisan (2012) which stated that dynamic capabilities enable firms to adapt both its internal and external asset to manage changes (North & Varvakis, 2018). The data demonstrated that the firms' management team

continually adjust strategy to deal with short, medium and long-term asset deployment; thus, in so doing, built indispensable requisite into their operations to ensure survival and sustainability the business (Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017). What this points to is that effective reconfiguration and transformation requires an ability to sense relevant changes both in turbulent and stable with constant surveillance of markets environment. This indicates that the cases frequently continually reconfigure and transforms their capabilities the greater the interplay of dynamic capabilities is evidence. It is therefore argued that such continual resource reconfiguration requires dynamic capabilities which in turn enables operational capabilities dynamism that keeps the business in a state of dynamism and the source of generating profit through international (Wernerfelt, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013).

The result further revealed that having dynamic capabilities is a critical success factor for achieving growth and sustaining competitive advantage in turbulent international markets (Peteraf & Leih, 2016; 2016; Primc & Čater, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). The result indicated that the abilities of firms' management to rapidly and effectively redeploy and coordinate existing core competencies into new forms of business offerings during internationalisation is underpinned by dynamic capabilities (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). Such abilities refer to the firm's capacity to renew and adapt their competencies to changing the environment and to align firm resources (Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Lewin & Volberda, 2011). It emerges from the data that market dynamism, therefore, focuses on the creation and capturing of value, and the underlying resources to do so are the capabilities inherent in the firm. It is dynamic in the sense that a firm

can build upon its existing capabilities through innovation and then add new capabilities (Teece, 2018; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013).

It is important to emphasise albeit, the data revealed that the firms' capacity to, develop and the underlying possesses are imperatives, therefore not a guarantee of firm success. This is where the development of dynamic capabilities come to be important (Chandler & Hwang, 2015; Zollo et al., 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). It is, therefore, reasonable to assert that it is dynamic capabilities that enable the firm to continually evaluate, re-evaluate and develop new and existing capabilities. For example, by actively engaging with their clients, the firms can better understand the changing demand patterns within the marketplace; and thus, reduced the risk of their service or product fails to gain market share. This is important and underscores the importance of establishing an internal climate of commitment, in the turbulent marketplace since competitive advantage can be transient. Accordingly, making constant deployment of dynamic capabilities essential (Wernerfelt, 2016).

The aforementioned are considered core to successful international growth and as a result, they are enablers and drivers of firms' competencies in acquiring, distributing, interpreting and storing that knowledge (Schilke et al., 2018; Teece, 2018; Sapienza et al., 2006; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). The key aspect to growth success similarly includes the enablers of dynamic capabilities which are the firms' ability to frequently sensing the need for change (i.e. business orientation: service and processes adaptation, managing international market dynamism, responsiveness to clients requests), learning about how to respond to opportunities and threats (i.e. restructure organisational capacity to develop and evolve: knowledge

management, training and learning). Learning in this context relates to knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, and knowledge sharing (Teece, 2007, 2018; Barney, 2017; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Enablers of dynamic capabilities increase the growth success by allowing the firms to accomplish continually reconfiguration (i.e. resource management, opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration). These enablers of dynamic capabilities ensure access to new international opportunities search are focused and targeted. It relates not only to the capacity to perceive opportunities in the environment but also to shape it. According to the result, this is significant in a turbulent market condition since environmental market changes exert influence on the internal strategy and in turn on the processes of firms.

Overall, the findings from the study permit the conclusion that international growth success arises in knowing which capabilities are important to the firms in terms of daily survival and which are necessary for a sustainable competitive advantage is critical to the ongoing viability of the firm international growth. The findings revealed that the firms frequently evolve their approaches, repeatedly monitoring sectoral knowledge, training and learning capabilities cope with continual re-generating functional competencies. In an international context there is a need to manage, transfer, regenerate and acquire knowledge within a firm across national and firm boundaries and choose a suitable operation mode to support this.

7.3 Interpretation of Critical Success Factors

In understanding the influence of dynamic capabilities in the turbulent marketplace and the need for SME to have such capabilities to succeed. The study established that the firms used dynamic capabilities perspective to orchestrate and managed clusters of activity that guide decisions about internationalisation such as (sensing), that prepared, planned, engendered the firm's readiness for change (seizing), and changed the firms so that they captured opportunities and created value (transformation). To be effective, there are some core competencies and key critical success factors business must have such core competencies including organisational capabilities. The study acknowledged organisational capabilities which are argued to rest on the organising principles according to which the firm is structured (Schmitt et al., 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013). According to Teece et al., (2014), organisational capabilities include e.g. managerial competencies related to organisational and managerial processes, knowledge and skills of employees, and an efficient organisational structure. Managerial capability, i.e. the role of the management experience and an ability to manage the firm's operations has been emphasised in many studies related to performance (Doorn et al., 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

The data yielded that to be successful it is critical for firms to effectively recombined resources, knowledge and technical capabilities to grow in the turbulent international marketplace. This is underpinned by innovation; it is through innovation that cases can create opportunities. This finding is supported in the work of Ibeh et al., (2019) and Allocca and Kessler (2006),

which stated that it is SMEs that stimulate the international economy through innovation. They further contend that due to the position of SMEs within the competitive market, they are forced to make careful use of their resources and maximize them creatively, to the extent that they become innovative and inspire larger corporations (Lecerf & Omrani, 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Rae, 2007). It is through these daily, informal strategic plans that SMEs are sustained (Omrani et al., 2019; Aloulou & Fayolle, 2005). The innovation of SMEs goes beyond how they manage their resources and lies within their approach to solving everyday problems; however, management of resources is crucial for success (Lecerf & Omrani, 2019; Omrani et al., 2019; Kuuluvainen, 2013).

Also, the study acknowledges the role of entrepreneur managers' earlier experiences and the firm's history as enablers of dynamic capabilities possessed by the firm. The relevance of the prior experience of the entrepreneur or managers supports the idea that experiential knowledge and learning are crucial issues in explaining international growth (Ibeh et al., 2019; Doorn et al., 2017; Zucchella & Magnani, 2016; Zucchella et al., 2007) and, therefore, there is a clear linkage between dynamic capabilities, strategic adaptability and international growth. In other words, learning plays a major role in research into international business as well as research into dynamic capabilities.

Possessing this kind of knowledge increases firms' abilities to perceive international opportunities (Tavassoli e al., 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Zucchella & Scabini 2007, p. 43). Therefore, from the perspective of enablers of dynamic capabilities, the main emphasis in this study is on

studying the role of a firm's history (and learning) and managerial capabilities in enabling the underlying processes of dynamic capabilities to develop (Winter, 2003, 2017; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Kuuluvainen, 2013). The common assumption behind the logic of dynamic capabilities is that a firm's evolution and change are nonrandom and depend on the firm's prior history. In other words, initial resource bases and viable paths for the future are both history and path-dependent. For example, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) explain that path-dependent learning mechanisms shape the creation and development of a firm's dynamic capabilities and Teece et al., (1997, p. 520) state that learning is a process by which repetition and experimentation enable tasks to be performed better and faster.

For instance, if a firm's managers have already operated for decades in the business and have access to wide international networks, they probably also make faster and more successful decisions, relying more on their intuition than less experienced managers (Moon & Lee, 1990; Garnier, 1982). In other words, less experienced managers have to place more trust in formal information gathered from official sources, which can be more time-consuming (Song & Jing, 2017). So, managers have to be able to build dynamic capabilities, but whether they can do so depends on factors such as experience, motivation and skills (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Augier & Teece, 2009; Zahra et al., 2006). Based on the literature review (Teece, 2007, 2009, 2014; Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Alsos et al., 2007), three forms of organisational processes underpinning dynamic capabilities were chosen for closer study.

Another key observation from the data result is supported by Ahmad et al., (2019) and Kuuluvainen, (2013) and Zahra et al., (2000) which is technical

capabilities are among the most recognised determinants of success in small knowledge-intensive firms. It is contended that having technical capabilities without the dynamic capabilities to combine it into client services offerings, implies that technology is just a tool, not a client value-adding proportion. It is dynamic capabilities that allowed the studies cases to recombine technological skills, sectoral knowledge, strategic adaptation, localisation strategy and superior services competences which in-turn enables the firms to offer services and achieve international growth.

It is evident from the data that dynamic capabilities combine meaningfully with aforementioned is a necessity for a firm to gain a superior advantage in the turbulent international marketplace. Furthermore, it emerges that international growth and the related processes are predicated on the important role of the owner founders or senior management on the quality of strategic decisions making. The entrepreneur managers' decisions making capabilities played a significant role in the development of the firms' specific dynamic capabilities. This is supported by Ibeh et al., (2019) and Teece (2007) that dynamic capabilities reside in large measure with the enterprise's top management team.

Similarly, the key to understanding the development of the firm's international growth includes the capability to recognise, assimilate and apply information strategically. On this aspect, the data revealed the ease with which change is implemented across the firms which in turn influenced the degree of organisational adaptability, the ability to embrace changes and the ability to grow successfully in the turbulent international marketplace. This is supported by the works of scholars like (Ibeh et al., 2019; Mazzei et al., 2017; Tavassoli et al., 2017). It is important to state that

even if the firms are open to changes, as is the case with this study, the change may still not be activated easily due to some barriers such as technical, legal or otherwise, that may make the implementation of the changes challenging. Therefore, the entrepreneur manager and the firm that is unchanging will become obsolete (Ibeh et al., 2019; Tavassoli et al., 2017). However, according to Teece (2018), the firm which changes with the times and the market conditions will continue to be rejuvenated. It is argued that the success of a firm in coping with and implementing, change depends on the adaptability of the management which in turn requires the firm to possess dynamic capabilities (Helfat, & Raubitschek, 2018; Barney, 2017). The data confirmed that a firm that demonstrated dynamic capabilities in a turbulent international environment is better able to sense and seize opportunities and to reconfigure its resources and capabilities accordingly. This is also supported by scholarly literature (Winter, 2017)

The study established that the firms used adaptation or strategy of localisation in managing international market dynamism order to be successful. For example, across the firms' resources are frequently aligned both internally and externally to grow successfully in a turbulent international environment. Such strategic adaptation is made possible due in part by the agility of the firms. The data from the study supports the position of Song & Jing, (2017) and Eunni et al., (2003) which group some internal alignment measures: corporate leadership (Collins & Porras, 1994), continual strategic approach to clients, technology and innovation capacity as a key success factor for SME (Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019). The data further emphasised that without such adaptive strategic in a turbulent international marketplace where a particularly strategic

position is rapidly eroded, and a strategy can rapidly become irrelevant (North & Varvakis, 2018; Wernerfelt, 2016). Furthermore, the data shows that the probability of the growing success of firms significantly increased with continual strategy adaptation. Such an ongoing strategy adaptation compensated for the inadequacies in the traditional strategy approaches.

According to the data in a turbulent international environment, market success can be achieved based on the ability of firms to adapt to the ever-shifting international market position. Furthermore, the data affirmed that success in turbulent international marketplace requires the ability to continually formulate strategic plans and policies, align resource choice and operations decisions in the value chain and make appropriate choices for its international operation priorities. Due to the size and resource constraints, the firms are unable to sustain cost leadership or support research and development activities. Therefore, by deploying strategic adaptability, the cases can continually realign and adjust their strategic position in the pursuit of increasing international growth.

The data showed that the firms play greater and continual importance to strategic adaptability and thus can be successful in a turbulent international business environment. The data yielded that strategic adaptive capability interacts with other forces both internal and external to the firm (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Storey, 2016). Strategic adaptive capability significantly enabled the firms in the turbulent international marketplace to reconfigure firm resources and to explore new opportunities by continually refining the strategy to take advantage of new opportunity. Ultimately this approach allows the firms to foster growth, improve the business's competitive position, and allow opportunities to be identified within the

political, economic, and technological environments in which it operates (Hitt & Ireland, 2017; Hitt et al., 2017). It is, therefore, reasonable to argue that there is a causal link between flexible strategic adaptation implementation and the degree of success in changing the turbulent international marketplace. The figure below represents the strategic adaptation and implementation of the strategy for success by the firms.

This approach does have a firm theoretical grounding works of Ansoff (1965) and his team on strategic decisions with entrepreneurial decisions, to the recent studies of Hitt et al., (2002) which identify strategic adaptive capacity as a combination of actions which: *focusing on opportunity*, with actions essentially of a strategic management nature: *creating competitive advantage*. This is similar to the notions put forward by others such as (Martina et al., 2017; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Kuuluvainen, 2013; Eisenhardt et al., 2000), detailing strategic adaptive capacity as a process-based model which incorporates many elements which are central to successful international growth in a turbulent business environment. Strategic adaptation processes allowed the firms to be successful in international growth since services and processes appeared to be tailored to the local context. To this effect, the data revealed that the firms adopted two types of strategic orientation: technology-driven, and clients driven strategy for the development of new offerings (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019). Development of productive relationships with customers underpins strategic adaptation the firms focused on opportunity recognition and exploitation by placing knowledge of their clients at the heart of their business.

Another important consequence of strategic adaptation is the service adaptation, the result disclosed that the firms recombined new and exciting capabilities into modular easily adaptable new services which are packaged to clients on the basis that it offers them more efficient and effective services (Elia et al., (2016; Turner & Pennington, 2015). These new services often complement existing services and generally more flexible. It is therefore argued that the firms which adapt themselves better are better placed to rapidly implement new customer ideas. For example, it was uncovered during interviews that the current knowledge of the targeted market is also an important factor that the firms take into account whenever they are exploring new service offerings. Indeed, it was discovered that the more informed the firms are about their clients market the more they are likely to adapt recombine their service strategy. It was further uncovered that the firms' service flexibility assists them to implement its marketing strategy. Such flexibility enabled the firms to be more adaptable when faced with clients' requirements in a changing business landscape (Teece, 2018; Kuuluvainen, 2013). The most common arguments in the adaptation debate are that the clients are heterogeneous and do not have the same needs and wants over borders.

For example, a change in service provision to better fit the clients was cited as having a strong influence on the abilities of all the firms specifically (Alpha, Gamma and Delta). According to these firms, they underwent a substantial change, involving changing its services offerings as it readjusted its core activities. Gamma modification was more subtle and consisted of a slight broadening of the services it offers. This fits in with the service firm's necessity to be responsive to clients (North & Varvakis, 2018; Schmitt et al.,

2016; Dunning, 1989; Johnston, 1995). From the viewpoint of management ability to manage change in the international marketplace, it can be inferred that without the dynamic capabilities the firm is not able to respond continually to clients services adaptation and compete in the international.

Notwithstanding, the data from this study acknowledges the rationale of services adaptation may not necessarily apply universally since similar market conditions warrant services standardisation which is based on the economic payoff, which includes financial performance and competitive advantage. The international growth of communication channels is likewise seen as an argument for standardisation which is consistency with clients and greater control of national borders and synergies from standardisation are similarly acknowledged. However, this argument applied more towards multinational firms and the findings of this study are based on SMEs management consulting firms do not support this line of argument.

The data thus confirmed past studies that acknowledge, networks and relationship as a critical success factor in internationalisation (Song & Jing, 2017). The case studied networks and relationship approaches consist of both formal and informal processes such approaches provide the cases with important contacts, access, and support. This is a well-established tent in scholarly literature and confirms the findings from Coviello et al., (1998) and Bryson et al., (1993) that SMEs with good networks of contacts and with good relationships tends to be successful during international business growth. Across the studies cases, networks and relationship were found to be utilised at various points in the cases' internationalisation growth for example during Alpha's and Gamma's firm creation and during Alpha and

Delta new clients' searches. This supports the findings from Ibeh and Wheeler (2005) and Bjorkman and Kock (1997). The data highlighted that Networking allows the cases to combine the advantages of smaller scale and greater flexibility with economies of scale and scope international market. The data from the study indicated that networking enables the cases to better respond to changing market conditions, evolving consumer preferences and shorter service life cycles by customising and differentiating their service.

In explaining the internationalisation process of SMEs, Coviello, (2018) pointed out that SMEs show a pattern of externalising their activities during the internationalisation process by depending heavily on establishing network relationships to select the market and the entry mode. Coviello, (2018) further contended that rapid internationalisation is typically likely with building relationships and networks. These were evident in this study, for example, the decision of where to internationalise, i.e. which countries or clients' choices were largely influenced by the entrepreneur or owner/founder's network. The owner/founders' first international experiences were dictated by where they had network contacts or indirectly from leads received from their network. Alpha's owner/founder relationship with its former was a strong enabling factor in the internationalisation process and led to Alpha's first international assignment. Beta's personal and business networks with UKDT facilitated its first international experience. These networks serve not only as a motivational tool to internationalisation but also are acknowledged as significant to sustaining the cases' internationalisation process.

The data also supports the view that the owner/founders require prior international experience and an extensive network of contacts be successful. This confirms Ooi & Richardson, (2019) and Costa, Soares & de Sousa, (2016) findings that informal contacts and professional reputation derived from previous employment in large companies are the main incubators for small business service firms. Furthermore, the data support the findings of Ibeh et al., (2019) which stated that networks are more important for gaining access to clients than formal channels such as advertising or marketing. It is often difficult for firms to have a long lead-time or outlook for future work. Consequently, firms need to have strong relationships in the form of long-standing clients to facilitate the firm's workload planning. Such relationship management contributes to an assured amount of pipeline of potential contact work. The data demonstrated the applicability of both the Network Theory and the Resource-based view, with emphasis on the value of networks in both theories. The data further supports the findings of Westhead et al., (2001) on UK SMEs' motivation factors to export. Similarly, Mort and Weerawardena (2006) highlighted the vital role of the owner/founder in network capacity building which in turn facilitates the quick internationalisation of a born global firm (Mort & Weerawardena, 2006). Furthermore, according to Kuuluvainen, (2013) using a resource-based view, it was found that firms with mature owner/founders, deeper information, contact networks, more resources and experienced management know-how are significantly more likely to export.

Table 21 below outlined literature finds on the role of networks and relations from SMEs perspective.

Firm	Critical Success Factors	Conceptual Links to Literature
	Networks and relationships	Distinguishing micro-businesses from SMEs: a systematic review of growth constraints (Gherhes et al., 2016), Networks find new clients and facilitate links with local partners (Ibeh and Wheeler, 2005) Formal and informal contacts offer market contacts, access, and support (Coviello et al., 1998); The role of informal contacts (Bryson et al., 1993).

Table 21 – Network and Relationship Literature Link List

The data acknowledged a well-established position in the literature, that ownership structure has an important role in defining the pathway to internationalisation. To this effect, the data supports the position that SME firms tend to perform well in the international markets when they have prior international business experience and networks which help to build knowledge competencies (Park & Rhee, 2012). This confirms the findings of Manolova et al., (2002) who found that entrepreneur skills and positive perception of internationalisation are enablers during international growth. Such past international experience was found to facilitate the decision to begin the international growth process across the study. In addition to past international experience, the data from this study found that there appeared to be a correlation between the importance of understanding the

culture, customs, languages, a general business outlook of a chosen international market and the success in gaining a foothold within an international location.

The research highlighted that the owner/founder orientation as a significant antecedent in the internationalisation of the firms, which has a positive effect on international growth, the success factors and a competitive advantage for the case studies. The study outcome strengthens the relationship between the orientation of the owner/founder, the longevity and long-term performance of the firms (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Andersson & Tell, 2009). The study appeared to suggest that a lack of entrepreneur owner orientation could be one of the reasons for aspersing SMEs management consulting firms failure in international growth.

According to Ibeh et al., (2019), the decision-makers of all internationally successful firms have a good understanding of the international orientation and skills often include language and cultural norms. This is further supported that firms gain understanding through experience (Edvardsson et al., 1993) and from experience working internationally (Knight, 1999, Cort et al., 2007). Table 20 below outlined literature finds on the role of entrepreneur/owner/founder with prior international experience from a general standpoint and more specifically from SMEs perspective.

Firm	Critical Success Factors	Conceptual Links to Literature
	International orientation of the	International marketing knowledge and international entrepreneurship in the contemporary multi-speed

	<p>owner/founder</p>	<p>global economy Ibeh et al., (2019).</p> <p>Characteristics of entrepreneur/ founder influential on the decision to internationalise (Ibeh et al., 2019; Hutchinson et al., 2007).</p> <p>Entrepreneur’s (founders/manager’s) characteristics i.e. human capital (international business skills, international orientation, environmental perception and management know-how) and social capital facilitate internationalisation (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Ruzzier et al 2006).</p> <p>Owner/manager driver of internationalisation with vision, experience and know-how (Hutchinson et al., 2005)</p> <p>International orientation, management’s international experience and management’s education/experience necessary for internationalisation (Ibeh et al., 2019; Rezaei & Ortt, 2018; Ibeh and Wheeler, 2005);</p> <p>International orientation comprised of extent of travel, time lived, studies and employment abroad (Manolova et al., 2002).</p>
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Table 22 – International Orientation of Owner/Founder Literature Links

In addition to prior entrepreneur international experiences, the firms cited the influence of the personal reputation of the owner/founders has played a role during internationalisation. It was uncovered during all the interviews that business networks, network relationships and ties between

owner/founders are seen as an important resource facilitating internationalisation. This is supported by the prior research findings on the important role of SMEs entrepreneur in enabling internationalisation (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Ellis, 2011). Also, further research suggests that personal reputation based on past relationships often offer access to a network of relationships internationally, which can then present the basis of new opportunities for the firms (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Ellis, 2011). Across the cases, the data confirmed that personal relationships represent very useful and important attributes that are often fundamental in internationalisation. This is again supported by prior studies of Ellis, (Kuuluvainen, 2013; 2011) and Harris and Wheeler (2005) that personal relationships facilitate the identification of new market opportunities.

Interpersonal relationships, such as individual networks or social networks are recognised to bring benefits within the internationalisation process in the form of reducing transaction and information-acquisition costs (Peng, Lee and Wang, 2005). Such personal reputation and relationship also provide knowledge of new markets and help to develop resources and capabilities needed for internationalisation. (Kuuluvainen, 2013; Ellis, 2011; Edelman, 2011; Manolova et al., 2010). Based on the data from this study it is inferred that personal reputation and locally embedded relationship are sources of the aforementioned benefits. It is argued that personal reputation underscored by a network of relationship is important given that SMEs do not have the economies of scale of multinational enterprises.

The study highlighted the importance of firm reputation during internationalisation and new clients search. The importance of firm reputation was highlighted in the study by (Gaultier-Gaillard, Louisot &

Rayner, 2009). and the key asset of any firm (Rayner, 2009). A firm's corporate reputation can be one of its greatest assets if developed properly (Goldberg et al., 2003). For SMEs corporate reputation may be used to acquire top of the line employees, build alliances with important partners to create credibility on the market, or attract many types of investors and other stakeholders to bind crucial resources that determine the future of the small venture (Goldberg et al., 2003).

To develop a positive corporate reputation, SMEs needs to understand that every interaction that the firm has with its stakeholders is both a source and potential of acquiring, and developing, corporate reputation (Edelman, 2011; Ellis, 2011; Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007). This is due in part to such interactions are likely to either legitimize or change the current perception of the reputation and image that stakeholders currently have, which will affect the associated corporate reputation (Goldberg et al., 2003). Reputation could be argued to be based on a subjective, emotional evaluation, which results in more from the match of personality traits of the firm rather than the financial aspects of the firm. It is further argued that this emotional perception of reputation and its meaning may exert influence on SME management especially in binary evaluation such as bad or good reputation (Dowling, 2004).

This study data supports the claim that reputation is important during internationalisation. There is evidence in this study to this effect, reputation allows the cases to deliver capability to customers and differentiate their firms and thus create competitive advantage enabling the cases to build customers continue to trust and confidence. Similarly, a recent survey on issues of trust, conducted in 23 countries on five continents, found that

trust is a highly appreciated asset by consumers and essential for building a reputation (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Costa et al., 2016; Edelman, 2011). To this effect, this study sees building a strong reputation as an essential marketing tool. There is evidence of the studied cases investing time and effort in developing and maintaining such reputation which they considered an alternative to spending on advertising or public relations. Also, the study's data appeared to suggest that reputation is a strategic intangible asset that seemed to play a very important role in eliminating barriers that may otherwise significantly hindered successful internationalisation. This position is similarly supported by Costa et al., (2016) which highlighted that the most important factor which builds a firm's reputation is the opinion and trust shared by stakeholders.

Firm	Critical Success Factors	Conceptual Links to Literature
	Firm reputation	Relationship between service firm's reputation and performance (Greenwood et al., 2005), Firm's reputation as instrumental in shaping responses from clients and competitors (Teece et al., 2007).

Table 23 – Firm Reputation Literature Link List

The study cited the adoption of digital technologies as a critical success factor for international growth. In particular, the importance of social media which played an important role during internationalisation. Not only social media have proven to play an important role in multinational firms, but it also becomes increasingly relevant for SMEs. The use of social media continues to enhance the ability of SME to rapidly reach clients on a global

scale hence promoting SME businesses that would have otherwise been local thus enhance their business prospects internationally (Scuotto et al., 2017; Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Wang et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2015). Similarly, to increase competitive advantage and effectively reach the competitive environment of businesses, most firms require the use the social media to carefully monitor and analyse both the customer-generated content on their social media sites and the textual information on the competition (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019; Hanna et al., 2011).

The study data acknowledges that social media and digital technology are used to reshape the firm's business strategy, cross-functional competence and business processes such that it empowers business transactions to be carried out across boundaries of time, distance and function (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bagheri et al., 2019; Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Wang et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2015). In the turbulent international marketplace, digitalisation has made it easier to share knowledge and information about trends and needs of customers in different markets and provided easy access to people, data and software (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). This availability and accessibility have served to lower the time taken for completion of the development process of new products (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). This is supported by Gamma and Delta data; it is particularly interesting to note that Gamma and Delta which operates from an emerging economy uses the social media aggressively for business operations. This is possible since several significant new technologies, which include the fast and active Internet devolvement within the region has assisted SMEs to mitigate economies of

scale and the gains traditionally associated with multinational firms (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). The availability of digital technologies at very low costs in the past few years has provided an opportunity to SMEs to compete in international markets with multinational firms. The study supports the position that the digital technology has aided marketing services at much lower costs internationally, finding new market opportunities, make collaborations with partners regardless of geographical locations (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). The cases use the application and adoption of new technologies that effectively serve to reduce costs.

Prior studies suggest that with the aid of digital technology, SMEs can internationalise with speed and within a relatively younger age as digital technology enables firms to work together in a seamless international operation despite being separated by time zones and geography (Bagheri et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017; Tanuri, 2010). More generally at the strategic business level digital technologies enable the formation of different forms of dynamic capabilities suitable for turbulent environments (Jones et al., 2015; Bharadwaj et. al., 2013; Raymond and St-Pierre, 2011; Pavlou & El Sawy, 2006) which are core to the survival and growth of any SMEs. The digital technology-driven strategy enables firms to position themselves as offerings service at the cutting edge of technology. They present their offerings as enabling their clients to seamlessly engage with technologies which are often very complex.

An important strategy deployed across the firms to grow internationally is the use of digital technology to develop core competencies and collaborate

with other SMEs to construct innovative content tailored to each customer. The firms cited digital technology as playing a significant role during their international growth especially when the cases choose to pursue increasingly specialised markets or innovative niches. This is supported by Wang et al., (2016) that technological innovation capability is considered an important determinant of export performance of SMEs. The importance of developing Technological innovation capabilities (TICs) in SMEs is also emphasised in literature such as (Bagheri et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). TICs are a set of characteristics of a firm that facilitates and supports its technological innovation strategies (Wang et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2015; Cakar and Erturk, 2010). There are considered an important determinant of internationalisation performance of firms. Many prior studies have explored this relationship (Wang et al., 2013; Rodriguez and Rodriguez 2005; Cerrato 2009; Raymond & St-Pierre, 2011).

Scuotto et al., (2017) investigated the level of internet and social media adoption in the implementation of growth strategies. According to them, firms used the Internet for information collection, development cycle and the Internet and external communication in product development strategy and benefit from the Internet by identifying target markets internationally and selling services or products online to global customers (Bagheri et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). The study also follows a similar pattern by making use of digitisation and the Internet tools to reach international and foreign markets. Consequently, the studied cases became more involved in international strategic alliances and joint ventures, both alone and in groups. This allows the studied cases to conduct research at a

much lower cost in international turbulent marketplace, take quick expert advice globally, and get a timely response from clients on new services (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Loane et al., 2014). Loane, et al., 2014 and Loane & Bell, (2006) in their study of SMEs using a cross-national sample concluded that the internet and digital technology adoption is not a stepwise process; instead, SMEs adopt internet solutions that best suit the requirement of the firm.

At the strategic business level, the studied cases revealed that digital technologies enable the formation of different forms of capabilities suitable for the international turbulent marketplace which were core to the survival and growth of firms (Omrani et al., 2019; Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Scuotto et al., 2017; Bharadwaj et al., 2013). Furthermore, the study shows that the firms adopted creative technology which effective strategic implementation to be executed. The study is consistent with a previous study (Bagheri et al., 2019; Lecerf & Omrani, 2019; Omrani et al., 2019) and confirmed that the UK and Nigeria firms focused on technology leadership, by offering technology enable services, to their clients which allowed technology orientation services in international growth.

It further emerges from the studied that firms supported the adoption of digital technologies and in particular social media which in turn contributed to the firms' internationalisation. This study complements the study of Ahmad et al., (2019) which states that digital technologies and social media added internationalisation growth performance. Across the studied cases, technology-driven strategy enabled the firms to position themselves as offerings service at the cutting edge of technology. Such a strategy enabled the firms to acquire a substantial use of technology to produced new

solutions in response to their clients' demand. Again, this study complements Bagheri et al., (2019) study. The firms used technology to present their offerings as enabling their clients to engage with technologies which are often very complex. The data further confirmed that technology is often known as the fundamental source of sustainable competitive advantage for firms (Omrani & Lecerf, 2019; Scuotto et al., 2017). The study supports the position that SMEs management consulting firms operating in either in the developed such as the UK or an emerging economy such as Nigeria significantly benefit from the use of social media tools in building their brand and thereby adding internationalise faster.

Firm	Critical Success Factors	Conceptual Links to Literature
	Social Media	The effect of social networking sites and absorptive capacity on SMEs' innovation performance. (Scuotto et al., 2017)
	Social Media	How social media applications affect B2B communication and improve business performance in SMEs. (Wang, et al., 2016).
	Technological Improvement and Social Media	How and why organisations use social media: five use types and their relation to absorptive capacity. (Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017).
	Technological Improvement	ICT increases awareness of international economic opportunities (Wang et al., 2016).

Table 24 - Technology Improvement Literature Link List

The study cited the importance of deep niche market specialisation as an incentive for entering international markets. The market specialisation is known to significantly enable SMEs to compete for the international market and often underpins their successes as well as a competitive advantage (Ooi & Richardson, 2019; Leonidou et al., 2007). One of the major strategic instruments deployed by the firms is a combination of consulting service specialisation with geographic diversification. The studied cases appeared to focus on a particular market niche that requires technical expertise focusing upon the core services. These findings are supported in other studies, according to Ooi & Richardson, (2019) Parish, Cassil and Oxenham (2006), the main factors in the success of niche market are based on relationships.

One of the major services deployed by the Alpha is the combination of digital technology product specialisation with geographic diversification. Typically, Alpha focus on a particular market niche, usually one that requires technical expertise, and firm resources are devoted to maintaining market leadership in that niche. One of the keys to the success of the Alpha has been their strong commitment to the South Asian. Furthermore, Alpha invested in technology, local people and insisted on the same high standards of services across the region and in creating strong and reliable service networks. For example, the Alpha is very good at customer training. As the complexity of services increases, their customer requires more detail training which Alpha provides. It is the combination of being oriented to both specialised services in a niche market and the use of both sophisticated technologies with careful devotion to consumer needs that makes a strategy of foreign direct investment so central to the Alpha. This

is further support for the findings of Bell (1995), that knowledge-intensive SMEs international market selection is driven by their niche market.

Niche market strategy according to Parrish et al., (2006) and (Dalgic & eeuw, 1994) According to them, firms not only market their services or products, but also their businesses and therefore niche strategies depend on word-of-mouth communication. Despite the advantages associated with niche marketing, there are inherent risks in choosing this strategy, of which firms need to be aware of. The first risk is, of course, an attack by a competitor who wants to be a part of a profitable niche. The second risk is cannibalisation (Linneman & Stanton, 1992). According to Linneman & Stanton, (1992). Cannibalisation is when a company introduces a new product that “eats away” at one of its own established markets.

Firm	Critical Success Factors	Conceptual Links to Literature
	Niche market	<p>The incentive for internationalising comes from the possession of marketing competitive advantage like a niche market specialisation (Leonidou et al., 2007)</p> <p>International market selection based on niche markets (Bell 1995).</p>

Table 25 - Niche Market Literature Link List

The study highlights the importance of training and learning. In particular, the study has shown that hands-on training - where a more experienced staff trains a less-experienced staff is one of the preferred training approaches of firms (Harsch & Festing 2020; Jones et al., 2014; Wyton &

Payne, 2014; Gray & Mabey 2005; Barry & Milner 2002). The study indicated that there exists a relationship between training and learning and dynamic capabilities of the study firms. The study confirmed that the firms' culture support and to a large extent fosters constant learning and knowledge acquiring appeared to be well embedded across the firms which enable the firms to respond efficiently especially in changing the environment.

Wyton & Payne, (2014) and Storey (2004) articulated that there are many reasons why SMEs train less than multinational firms. They posit that SMEs have a higher failure rate than larger firms and so it is rational for them to seek shorter paybacks on their investments. Furthermore, they listed the costs of training as being proportionately higher for the SMEs firm and the opportunity costs of released staff are also higher. Similarly, they listed the lack of internal labour markets mean that SMEs staffs are less likely to seek training opportunities as the opportunities for advancement are fewer. The findings of this study contradict this position, this appeared to be partly due to the firms operating in the service sector. The findings of this study support the view that if a firm does not put resources into the training of staff, this impact on the ability of the firms to offer their clients expert advice and to maintain a competitive advantage in a turbulent international marketplace. This position is supported by Jones et al., (2014) which suggest that training enhances the survival rate of SMEs. This study acknowledged that although within the SME sector there are differences in attitude to training which can be attributed to firm size and ownership.

The data appeared to suggest a causal link between investment in training and learning initiatives and abilities of the firms to rapidly respond to client requirements. It is therefore argued that the abilities of the firms to

continually apply lessons from learning and recombine such learning further support the view that dynamic capabilities significantly influenced such abilities. It is inferred from the data that learning and training significantly enhanced the abilities of the firms to rapidly respond to changing customers' requirement in a turbulent international marketplace. This is further enabled by the abilities of the firms to recombine knowledge with new skills by linking training and learning into a sustainable competitive advantage offered to their customers.

Additionally, there is evidence within the cases that demonstrated training and learning culture appeared to influence productivity as well as encouraging creativity which is linked to the successful international growth of the firms. It is the continual recombination of these capabilities i.e. training, learning and knowledge management processes within a turbulent international business setting that support the view that dynamic capabilities were at play. Furthermore, the study affirmed the interplay of dynamic capabilities assisted. This was demonstrated in the firm's abilities to continually absorb sectoral knowledge to learn from such knowledge and constantly recombine such knowledge into customer propositions. Based on the exploration aforementioned, it is reasonable to conclude that dynamic capabilities are a key driver of competitive advantage.

Finally, this study acknowledges culture has an important role in the capability development process and consequentially may be hard to change. Specifically, the role of owner/founders and how they influence the firm's culture in such a way to either promote empowerment, reward and recognition, idea-generating, continue learning and open communication routines. It further affirms the role of organisational culture as being

influential is setting and embedding the interplay of dynamic capabilities. Empirical data confirm that the organisational culture is considered to be a significant enabling element of effective organisational resource management.

7.4 Revised Conceptual Framework

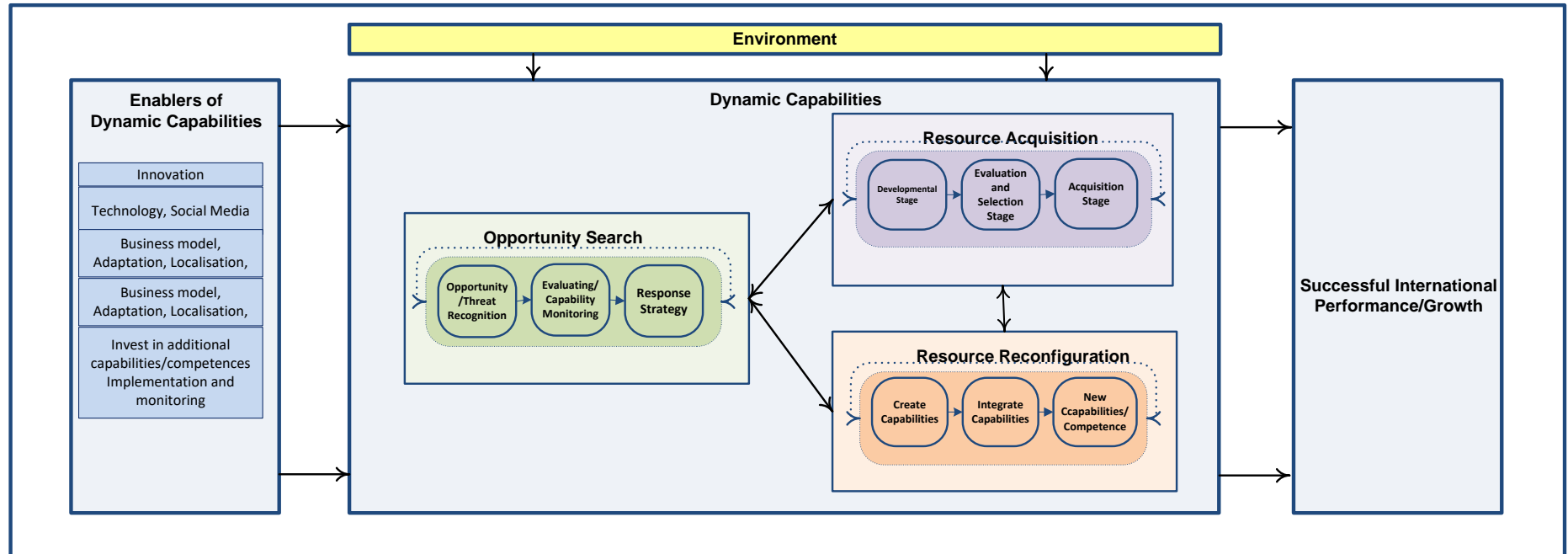


Figure 9 – Revised Conceptual Framework

7.5 Interpretation and critical realist examination

For a critical realist researcher, it is the explanation or the understanding of the underlying mechanisms or reasons for the development of capability which is of central interest. Furthermore, the critical realism perspective recognises that what is empirically observable is only an element of what exists. As described in Chapter 4, section 4.2, the empirical is a sub-set of the actual which is generated by the mechanisms of the Real. Thus, the combination of the researcher owns knowledge and the depth of context provided by the case, coupled with scholarly journal allow the research to explore beyond the Empirical to seek to explain the mechanisms which give rise to that data.

Given this empirical understanding yielded by the study, it is reasonable to claim that international growth process is a continual but subtle orchestration of interrelated internal and external factors. These factors need to be examined not separately but rather be regarded as continual interrelated processes in international growth to enabled for targeted strategy execution, which in turn inform accurate decisions about whereby creating firms' capacity to grow internationality. It is hence important for management consulting SMEs to have an adaptive strategy when considering international growth. From this standpoint, it is reasonable to argue that successful internationalisation in a turbulent business environment can be achieved through a careful orchestration of first and second-order enablers.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a clear linkage between dynamic capabilities, digital technological, social media, strategic adaptation, localisation, growth strategy and the management of change in international growth (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018). This is due to, for example, opportunity search is essential for all the processes and the continually evaluating the importance of exogenous events (child et al., 2017; Chandler & Hwang, 2015; Zollo et al., 2016). Also, the study affirmed that dynamic capabilities have an important influence on the turbulent international marketplace (Schilke et al., 2018; North & Varvakis, 2018; Schmitt et al., 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that previous studies (Amit & Han, 2017; Zucchella & Scabini 2007) have found that dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurship approaches share the common issue of resource mobilisation and combination as fundamental activities that have to be renewed over time to search for new opportunities and create a dynamic resource base that is difficult to imitate for competitors(Teece, 2018; Barney, 2017).

Firstly, according to the literature critique, successful SMEs international growth depends on the firm's ability to be dynamically active in strategy adaptation particular within a turbulent international market. The data from the study confirmed that the cases continually adapted their business strategy.

Secondly, dynamic capabilities are illustrated in the way the business strategies are continually reassessed in light of market conditions fluctuates. The study data linked achieving international growth with constant localisation strategy. This assertion is supported by literature

critique which stated that SME firm must have the capability to change and modify its strategies to meet the fluctuating environment of its target market (Coviello, 2018; Cavusgil & Knight, 2015).

Thirdly, to optimise its potential for international growth, according to literature critique, SME must recognise that different market settings require a different approach (Ibeh et al., 2019). For example, a firm may well have to deal with cultural differences or an upsurge in the competition. This is often typical within 'knowledge-intensive' firms, according to Kakati (2003) who found that 'knowledge-intensive' businesses seem to follow several configurations of strategic behaviour. Kakati (ibid) suggests that a business's performance is enhanced when two or more strategies are engaged in conjunction with each other (Child et al., 2017; North & Varvakis, 2018; Schmitt et al., 2016). Again, the study data confirmed that all the cases used multifaceted configurations of strategic strategy during international growth.

Finally, it is without a doubt that the adoption of social media and digital technologies has many and varied benefits contributing to the small firm's profitability and productivity and growth perspectives (Omran et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2017). In the turbulent international marketplace, digitalisation has made it easier to share knowledge and information about trends and needs of customers in different markets and provided easy access to people, data and software (Srinivasan & Venkatraman, 2018; Schlagwein, & Hu, 2017; Scuotto et al., 2017). Similarly, social media is a helpful tool for reaching potential clients, listening to clients' voices, creating extensive business networks, managing reputations, developing clients trust and loyalty, and gathering marketing intelligence. The study further supports

the position that that SMEs' realisation of the benefits of business value is strongly influenced by their ability to effectively use digital technology to connect with their clients.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Overview of the study

While the importance of dynamic capabilities and strategy is widely acknowledged, little has been established within either theory or practice on its application within SMEs management consulting domain. Thus, the objective of this research was to address the question of “how do small to medium-sized management consulting firm achieve success in an international turbulent business environment? And how are their business strategies adopted and integrated into an international turbulent business environment? Through an examination of both theory and practice in the context of four firms operating across both emerging, Nigeria and developed economy the UK. To address this issue, a review of the literature on the founding construct of dynamic capabilities was undertaken and subsequently examined in the context of literature on strategy, to identify the development and emergence of dynamic capabilities.

Examination of concepts, conclusions, and limitations within existing literature led to the development of a proposed framework of dynamic capabilities, ultimately grounded in theory. To consider the practical application of this framework, an appropriate method of research was then considered and discussed, addressing the rationale, context and associated issues relevant to the research approach. This approach, involving case study analysis of activities recognised as both dynamic capabilities and

entrepreneurial and strategic, was then applied within four separate firms. Specifically, two firms operating within the UK and two firms operating within Nigeria were reviewed and analysed to identify the characteristics and underlying concepts of such activity.

These firms were selected for several reasons. First, on the basis that dynamic capabilities activity is relevant across countries in a developed and emerging economy (Teece, 2007). Second, given that research on dynamic capabilities has traditionally overlooked the management consulting sector, a deliberate focus on SME management consulting as a starting point seemed an important, viable, and less conventional approach to the examination of dynamic capabilities in practice. Lastly, due to the increasing focus on the emerging market such as Nigeria, the question arises as to how policies can be developed and implemented that will foster the development of dynamic capabilities.

This chapter concludes this study highlights significant findings that allows SMEs to sustain businesses growth, strengthening their position. The study contributions to theory, practice, managerial implications, policy implications and to critical realist perspective by providing useful practical implications for the UK and Nigerian SMEs management consulting firms currently seeking international growth in turbulent markets. The study also acknowledges limitations inherent in this study and identify areas for future study to further develop the understanding of dynamic capabilities.

8.2 Significant Findings

As noted at the onset of this study, essentially the understanding of dynamic capabilities SMEs operating in international turbulent environments remains limited. Further, there is no practical support or empirical validation of dynamic capabilities theory presented within the literature on SMEs management consulting firm operating in turbulent in an international turbulent marketplace. During this study, several findings have been made through an examination of individual cases and a comparison of those cases, effectively contributing to the development of understanding. This section now reviews some of the most significant findings which have emerged from this study, ranging from the unveiling of new knowledge to the refinement of existing theory on dynamic capabilities.

8.3 Contributions of the Study

A review of the study reveals several contributions to both theory and practice on the topic of strategic entrepreneurship. At the broadest level, findings reflect the process or operation of dynamic capabilities as a general construct.

8.3.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The study has highlighted certain important interactions between a firm's business models and their dynamic capabilities. A key theme is that strong dynamic capabilities enable the creation and implementation of effective business models.

Second, in the initial stages of this study a theoretical framework of dynamic capabilities was derived based on a review of the founding concepts of dynamic capabilities and to a lesser extent, strategy management, strategic entrepreneurship and an analysis of the perceived limitations within the existing literature on dynamic capabilities. Essentially, this framework defined the concept of dynamic capabilities in a turbulent international marketplace and identified the underlying elements, related issues, and potential outcomes. The examination of this framework in a practical context subsequently revealed extensive support for the framework does exist. This is perhaps one of the most significant findings arising from this study. Thus, the framework facilitates signposts for SME management consulting firms contemplating international grow in a turbulent marketplace.

Third, a summary of the preliminary framework involved five propositions addressing the core elements, scope, operation, and function of dynamic capabilities. Significant practical support was found to exist for each of the five propositions. Such support is an important distinction between this study and previous research on dynamic capabilities, which remains grounded in theory and has not yet been examined in this practical context. As detailed above, the five propositions were derived from theory and addressed elements considered fundamental to dynamic capabilities. Examination of the model in a practical context provided extensive support for these elements. Equally significant, however, based on an examination of the practical data, are the secondary or supporting elements uncovered through an inductive approach.

Fourth, this study extends the study of scholars such as Teece, (2007) Eisenhardt and Graebner, (2007); and Zahra et al., (2006), which suggest that dynamic capabilities are most valuable when the external environment is turbulent or unpredictably, volatile or changing. Also, this study further complements dynamic capabilities perspectives of Helfat and Peteraf, (2015) and Kuuluvainen, (2013), which states that dynamic capabilities are relevant in the turbulent marketplace and provides empirical evidence that dynamic capabilities increase the competitiveness of firms operating in such industries. Thus, contributing to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the importance of the dynamic capabilities perspective in the turbulent international marketplace. Specifically, demonstrating that SMEs management consulting firms operating in a turbulent international marketplace continually evolve their dynamic capabilities to ensure they are less vulnerable and better prepared when faced with rapid and radical changes in the international marketplace.

Fifth, this study contributes to the debate on SMEs management consulting firms operating across both emerging and developed international marketplace represent a different context, in that, typically the routines and processes that might explain the emergence of dynamic capabilities in larger firms, dynamically differently applied with the context of SME. This study not only provides empirical evidence that the dynamic capabilities concept is highly relevant for SME management consulting operating in a turbulent marketplace but also seeks to stimulate a discussion on this premise which was under-theorised before providing a conceptual framework where before there was none. The insights gained from this study provide a strong contribution to service and international business

research, which has limited findings on SMEs management consulting firm's international growth.

Sixth, the finding in this study extends the literature on dynamic capabilities by suggesting that in a turbulent internationally marketplace firms continual adjusting their business models. That strategic adaptive capacity is very important and constant creative innovative capacity are very important during sensing, sizing and transforming in SMEs and that these can substitute for extensive R&D activities in MNEs.

Seventh, this study extends the existing knowledge on the process of the development of dynamic capabilities. As discussed in chapter 2, there are many studies on the dynamic capability model which examine firms that are already adapting and operating in a turbulent marketplace. However, there is a strikingly limited amount of studies on the emergence of these processes for SMEs management consulting firms operating across developed and emerging economies. Thus, one of the primary contributions of this study is to provide an outline of an emerging organisational perspective that combines field insight with theory to describe processes of emergence of dynamic capabilities in such settings. This study similarly examined the micro-organisational processes of the development of dynamic capabilities and in this sense, it is considered that it has contributed to the body of literature. Specifically, by examining how these processes in SMEs management consulting firms operating in the turbulent international marketplace across developed and emerging economies. Thus, contributing to how SMEs facilitate opportunity search - sensing, resource acquisition - seizing, resource reconfiguration - transformation.

Eighth, the study offers new constructs by suggesting that dynamic capabilities are just as relevant for SMEs management consulting firms within this context and the entrepreneurial play a significant role in the creation of dynamic capabilities. This conclusion reinforces the literature findings that entrepreneurial management is important in firms and their capacity to sense and seize new business opportunities is a key element in the reduction of uncertainty, which in turn helps to nourish the development of the firm's core competencies.

Finally, this study contributes to the additional development of the theoretical framework of the dynamic capabilities perspective and complements earlier models; by identifying in what way dynamic capabilities have been an inseparable component in the success of the case study.

8.3.2 Contributions to Practice

Concerning the practical aspects of the findings, several implications can be identified for practice. Some of the most significant findings at each of the three conceptual levels: process (operational), content (constituent elements), and context (specific aspects); are discussed briefly below. Possibly one of the more central implications for business at the broadest conceptual level is acknowledging and understanding the importance of the core elements to establish dynamic capabilities. As such, opportunity identification, opportunity seizing, transforming, innovation, acceptance of risk, flexibility are all essential for the dynamic capabilities continual renewal processes.

First, businesses cannot rely on each element alone, or focus solely on new opportunities, but rather ensure these elements are adopted collectively and continually adjusted to facilitate the process of dynamic capabilities. As core elements, essentially these concepts are both individually and collectively essential to the continual renewal of dynamic capabilities for sustainable business performance thus dynamic capabilities then presents the potential for both competitive advantage and wealth creation. Within this finding, businesses should also acknowledge the importance of ensuring these elements do not exist in isolation but directly intersect with strategic elements in some form. As noted previously, continuous innovation is central to dynamic capabilities, but cannot be relied upon to solely without combining with the strategy in some form. Therefore, firms can either rely on the specific strategic elements identified in this study (continually combining innovation with a specific client focus) or reflect on other strategic elements which may assist in achieving the same objective.

Second, the importance of dynamic capabilities elements identification and the practical means by which this can be achieved is an important implication for firms. Specifically, the issue of sensing, seizing and transforming both internally and externally provides a clear, practical approach for firms to address this concept, and offers an important alternative for businesses which are not proficient in identifying opportunities independently. Consequently, specific developments of this nature represent a valuable implication for business practice at the most detailed level of understanding.

Third, the study highlighted and strongly emphasise the importance of businesses having adaptable routines and agile processes when

contemplating international growth in the turbulent marketplace. This is further reinforced by suggesting that business must have an embedded culture of having a flexible routine and processes capabilities especially in human capital resources management, intelligent hiring intelligent, entrepreneurship and innovative use of technology are significantly in facilitating international growth.

Fourth, the study provides a fine-grained case study of a business that continues to grow in a turbulent marketplace, which can be used as guidance for firms who might be in similar conditions. The study has identified which processes are critical to the development of dynamic capabilities and successful international growth in a turbulent marketplace. This study recommends dynamic capabilities as an integrated framework for any successful business strategy. The study provided clear guidance as to which dynamic capabilities might be more appropriate for firms, particularly SME management consulting firms operating both in the developed and emerging economies, operating in a turbulent international marketplace.

Fifth, the firms need to continually develop their cognitive skills-base and absorptive capacities for sensing and seizing new market opportunities. This requires the development of entrepreneurial skills since it was found that the critical factor in success was expertise not only in sensing seizing business opportunities but in transforming and recombining resources.

Finally, and probably the greatest contribution of the current study is in the conceptual framework, the current study does not presume to create "once-and-for-all" solutions but rather to invite business executives to

reconfigure their capacities and resources continuously to protect their competitive lead by exercising dynamic capabilities. By continually applying innovative capacity practices, changing conditions will likely be more familiar and firms better prepared. In a turbulent international marketplace, it is important that firms continually implement the renewal of a business model, different strategic adaptive capability and innovative capabilities.

8.3.3 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for both UK and Nigerian SMEs management consulting firm entrepreneur. The study provides useful practical implications for entrepreneur currently seeking growth opportunities in turbulent international markets. The study highlighted certain competencies that are essential for successful entrepreneur operating in a turbulent international marketplace. Specifically, successful SMEs management consulting entrepreneur managers depends on a continual process of adjusting to change and environmental uncertainty, of maintaining an effective alignment with the environment while internal interdependencies are efficiently managed.

First, the entrepreneur manager needs to develop adaptable and flexible firms processes which lie at the heart of successful internationalisation. Since there are various ways to achieve international growth as internationalisation varies according to environmental conditions, it is crucial to have a flexible mindset to strategy. As demonstrated by the study, it is rather difficult to develop such entrepreneurial skills. Therefore,

a great amount of attention should be paid by entrepreneur managers in employing and selecting the most entrepreneurially minded employees.

Second, entrepreneur managers should create business routines which would sustain and encourage entrepreneurial behaviour and to be open to new creative initiatives and similarly by the continual implementation of strategic changes. An essential element in the development of entrepreneurial behaviour and the development of dynamic capabilities, in general, is innovative experimentation. The study thus suggested routines and processes which entrepreneur managers could adopt to develop dynamic capabilities in their businesses. This study offers a good example of how to sense, seize and reconfigure resources to meet the demand for new business opportunities and how to create a market change and outperform rivals, competitors.

Thirdly, the findings suggest that dynamic capabilities enable intelligence acquisition and reconfiguration processes. Together, these provide the foundation for reconfiguration processes to enable successful international growth and new strategic initiatives. In short, dynamic capabilities significantly improves the overall successful international growth thus ensures superior firm performance.

Fourthly, the entrepreneur manager should consider network-building as a norm. For example, entrepreneur managers abilities to facilitate effective communication across the value change and imbue such communication outcome into directions for the continual capabilities' recombination processes in the business. The study further demonstrated that such capability is crucial during international growth.

Finally, the important implication of the study for entrepreneur manager is that they need to constantly evaluate different elements related to international growth both internal and external as suggested in this study listed above to be successful in the process of international growth. Also, entrepreneur managers, perception and competencies are crucial for international growth. International growth is largely influenced by conscious decisions made by entrepreneur managers. Therefore, the entrepreneur managers need to be mindful of taking actions that will allow the firm to grow internationally. Moreover, in broad terms, entrepreneur managers motivations seem to be very important and the owner/founders' willingness has a great influence on the actual international growth.

8.3.4 Policy Implications

Several policy implications can be drawn from the findings of this study. These arise out of and are informed by, the conceptual insights afforded by this research, not all SMEs are deemed to have the potential to internationalise.

First, there is a need to differentiate between different types of SMEs rather than perpetuating the current widespread practice of policymaker and planners in assuming the sector to be homogenous with the problems and needs of all SMEs enterprises seen to be broadly similar. Consequently, policymakers should understand the need to actively implement business-friendly policies.

Secondly, a more positive business environment such as better regulation for SMEs in the UK and Nigeria. By building a more positive business

environment, making it easier to start a business and share economic opportunities more evenly between regions and industries. Specifically, the aim is to make new regulations SMEs as friendly as possible to allow successful compliance. To engage with SMEs to understand their challenges on which regulations are working and which are not; what should be scrapped, what should be saved and what should be simplified.

Thirdly, there is the need for augmentation of international growth to include approaches, technologies, the formation of support structures, expansion of international tradeshow opportunities and rationale capability building. To encourage successful international growth over the medium to long term, such support must be active and dynamic to assist with challenges as they arise. Thus, from a policy perspective, uncertainty in international growth can be improved by active participation in the international tradeshow, including consulting frequently with SMEs management consulting firms.

Fourthly, policymakers should take a more active role in business networking, network-building, facilitating and mobilising support for SMEs during internationalisation of the firms. Above all, Policymakers should ensure a stable and supportive national business environment.

Finally, improved access to finance, the aim here is for more UK and Nigerian SME businesses, both start-ups and those wishing to grow, to be able to access the finance needed to enable greater levels of the enterprise and innovative activities.

8.3.5 Contribution to the critical realist perspective

This study applies the framework of the critical realist branches on the cases data. This is a contribution to critical realist methodology as the literature contains no empirical studies which explicitly follow a critical realist ontology, or which apply the ontological strata to SMEs management consulting firms data. The application of the framework highlights how, in practice, the presentation and segregation of the Empirical, the Actual and the Real can at times be arbitrary. It also highlights the difficulty of presenting empirical data in the critical realist framework. The process requires reflection on the data, in the context of continual engagement with literature to uncover underlying mechanisms. This creates practical problems as how best to present the research in terms of the evolving research question, the multiple analysis of the data, and the constant engagement with the literature. While this problem is not unique to the critical realist perspective, the essence of the critical realist perspective requires that the reader of such research understands how the researcher comes to the Real

The practical problems as how best to present the research in terms of the evolving research question, the multiple analysis of the data, and the constant engagement with the literature are also highlighted. The use of critical realism in this study and how the study is presented as a contribution to knowledge as it reveals the process by which the study evolved and provides insight into the iterative and reflexive nature of that process.

Specifically, by presenting the cases data in the context of the initial literature and subsequently re-interpreting the data in the light of the second and continual literature review the reality of the study process followed is revealed. The use of the critical realist perspective is also a contribution to knowledge in that it outlines how a critical realist perspective might offer an alternative way of studying aspects of SMEs firms. The study follows a critical realist methodology which suggests that in addition to the existence of the themes identified SMEs emerge as a result of the interaction of the themes identified. The emphasis is on this interaction as it is argued that is a continual process and cannot exist in isolation.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

Reflecting on the study undertaken, some limitations become evident. In particular, limitations concerning the scope of the study, research approach, and findings, are considered in further detail below. The study's central tenet focused on SMEs management consulting firms; consequentially, there are some research topics or areas that are omitted from this study for example challenges were acknowledged but are not given significant detail. There is no one definition of success used for this study, rather success is defined by each firm and measured by its criterion. This study acknowledges that there are also processes other than just those related to opportunity search, resource acquisition and resource reconfiguration that may underpin dynamic capabilities much as networking. However, in this study networking capabilities are not afforded much attention since the phenomenon has already been studied from

several perspectives and the study data would not have been able to provide anything new to the network-research.

The research design led to a small sample of only four cases, extensive SME data collection was difficult to obtain thus generalisability has been exchanged for greater accuracy of the model's explanatory power. Naturally, case study research is used to reach a theoretical conclusion, not statistical representativeness. Therefore, the findings have a strong intuitive and conceptual appeal and statistical generalisability from such a small sample are not appropriate.

The study used retrospective case studies based between 1 to 3 years period in the recent past of the firms were analysed to trace how internationalisation was handled. Predicting international growth strategy, the development of capabilities and success experience, it would be better to use a longitudinal research design. However, due in part to time constraint and resource limitation a longitudinal design is not achievable. It is important to stress that there is no reason to believe that there are validity or reliability problems, the quality of the study would increase in a longitudinal setting.

Due to the limited time and resources allocation, the topic was kept relatively small and focused. This infers that some items must be left out of scope. It will be impossible to analyse the internationalisation patterns of all the service SMEs active in this market across both counties, due to the size of the market sector, therefore, a choice must be made which market would be examined.

The study focused specifically on micro and small-sized management consulting firms, therefore, the sector and size specificities need to be noted. Accordingly, the findings will have a strong intuitive and conceptual appeal and statistical generalisability from such a small sample will not be appropriate. Consequently, transferring some of the findings as such to the context of large firms would be inappropriate, especially if they are operating in an industry other than service industry which management consulting is aligned. It should be similarly borne in mind that the majority of the data was gathered at the time of economic austerity, which certainly influenced results. Notwithstanding, the limitations of the research they do not undermine the significance of the findings rather these limitations suggest avenues for future research.

8.5 Future Research

Few studies focus on SMEs management consulting firms, the relationships with processes, routines, resources and capabilities renewal of the firm in internationalisation. It would be interesting to follow the studied SMEs in the longer. The retrospective glance at the firms' recent international growth evolution revealed that the austerity and market downturn increased the dynamics in the firms and their operating business environments and this has imposed some challenges to each of the firms. It would be interesting to study the impact of austerity and market downturn. Likewise, more study is needed in the area of KBV in SMEs international setting.

The final suggestion for future research relates to the critical realist perspective and methodology used in this study. The critical realism

approach was central to illuminating the principal mechanisms about the cases. The process of constant movement between the data and the literature to reveal the underlying mechanisms which led to uncovering the successful internationalisation of the cases and the role of dynamic capabilities interplay in the process is a powerful research tool. More widespread and explicit use of critical realism in this manner could be an aid to understanding other complex issues in entrepreneurship, services and SMEs business study. However, researchers seeking to conduct critical realist research will face the challenge of how best to present their research. While presenting the outcomes of such research is straightforward, providing transparency to the process on the development these results and explanations offered may be more challenging. Such transparency of the process is also critical for other researchers who may wish to follow a similar methodology.

8.6 Chapter Conclusion

This study explores the interplay of dynamic capabilities in SMEs. Using a critical realist perspective and through an extensive examination of four firms. It has been established that dynamic capability contributed to successful international growth in a turbulent marketplace. The dynamic capability which emerged across the firms was the ability to assess their competitive position within the marketplace and to purposefully amend their resource base to address the competitive opportunities identified. It was found that successful SMEs management consulting firms operating in a turbulent environment, depends on a continual process of adjusting to change and environmental uncertainty, of maintaining an effective

alignment with the environment while internal interdependencies are efficiently managed. The study highlights that strategic adaptation in a turbulent international marketplace is an active process and is underpinned by dynamic capabilities.

Specifically, this study provided an insight into the interplay of dynamic capabilities, flexible resource management, and the firms' abilities to manipulate and continually changes services enhance internationalisation. The study confirmed the importance of capabilities in international growth both in the developed emerging economies. This is significant and should be noted by SMEs management consulting firms wishing to grow internationally. Furthermore, understanding from the study highlighted the influence of dynamic capabilities and how they enhanced flexible human capital resources management. It is therefore suggested that new SMEs management consulting firms wishing to manage agile resources.

The study emphasised the important role of the entrepreneur and in particular an entrepreneurial orientation and experience as a significant key critical success factor in international growth. The entrepreneurial behaviour of the owner/founder is significant in the study in attaining and sustaining growth in the turbulent international marketplace against well-established firms. It is, therefore, important for new SMEs management consulting firm considering international growth to possess these capabilities. This is in addition to entrepreneurial orientation prior international experience, networks and relationship.

Finally, the findings of this study are in contrast to a study by Leonidou et al., (2004) that found that manufacturing SMEs typically first establish a

domestic presence then gradually expanded abroad. In contrast, this study indicates that SMEs management consulting firms experience strong internationalisation sometime from inception; thereby providing support for accelerated internationalisation and refuting the traditional process stage theory of internationalisation (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). The results of this study dispel the notion that resource constraints of all SMEs firms limit international growth and profitability.

This study thus concludes that by the employment of stepwise, rational, specific and targeted interventions and strategies that are designed to initiate and sustain multi-strategy approach when operating in a turbulent environment, the dynamic capabilities of these small firms can be strengthened and hence their performance in turbulent environments optimised. This will serve as a platform to enable a continual adjustment both internally and externally that will trigger the sustaining of innovative resource and service reconfigurations. Furthermore, since management capability is also a small business resource as stated earlier, management capability will also be further upgraded and enhanced.

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10 APPENDIX

10.1 Appendix 1

10.1.1 Participant Information Sheet

Kingston Hill campus
Kingston University,
Kingston Hill,
Kingston upon Thames,
Surrey
KT2 7LB

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk>

SME internationalisation: a case study of UK management consulting firms

This research is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) thesis. The aim of this research is to move forward understanding on SME internationalisation in a changing economic environment, specifically in addressing the types of adaptations necessary inside the firm and the roles of dynamic capabilities in ensuring service provision for internationalising SMEs in the management consulting sector.

I would like to learn from your experiences. You are invited to participate in a conversation, which will help further my understanding of the issues related to SME internationalisation in management consultancies. This dialogue will be transcribed and the analysis will contribute to the completed thesis.

The research is being undertaken by Enitan Okusaga as part of his doctoral research supervised by the faculty of business and law at Kingston University, UK. The results of the study will be analysed and used as the basis of a DBA thesis.

For further information, please contact:

Enitan Okusaga at brynn.eni2speak@yahoo.com or by telephone: 07956244860.

Your participation in the Research Project

The focus is on SMEs in the service sector, specifically management consultancy services, in the UK. Management consultancy has been chosen due to its highly skilled nature and the importance of trust and customer relations due to the nature of the service. Your firm has been selected as it meets these criteria and has experience in internationalisation.

Please know that you can refuse to take part in this research. Should you agree to participate, you can withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured as all names will be coded in the research. The Data

Protection Act will be observed at all times. All electronic data will be password protected. All paper copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Please know that you can refuse to take part in this research. Should you agree to participate, you can withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured as all names will be coded in the research. The Data Protection Act will be observed at all times. All electronic data will be password protected. All paper copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Should you agree, you will receive interview questions in advance to facilitate discussion during the interview. With your permission, the interview will be recorded and discussion transcribed. You will then receive a copy of the interview for your review and will have the opportunity to comment on the subsequent analysis prior to publication. Should you wish, you will receive a summary report of the findings. This analysis may be of potential interest to your firm. I would be happy to provide any feedback, as deemed appropriate.

**Enitan Okusaga | Doctoral Research Student | University of
Kingston**

10.2 Appendix 2

10.2.1 Interview Checklist

10.2.1.1 Interview Checklist

(For interviewer's use only)

Name of company:

Name and title of respondent:

Address and contact details:

Agreed time and date of interview:

1	SIZE OF THE FIRM	
	Is your firm a small to medium enterprise (SME) as defined by the European Union's definition [< 250 employees, $\leq \text{€ } 50$ million turnover or a balance sheet total of $\leq \text{€ } 43$ million]?	
	YES ___	NO ___
	SECTOR: MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FIRM	
	<p>Does your firm consider itself a management consulting firm?</p> <p>Management consultancies are defined in the broad sense to include: IT; strategy and organisation; marketing; operations management and human resources.</p> <p>Management consultancies have been specifically chosen for their sector-specific characteristics. They embody a pure service, necessitating high customer interaction, communication and cultural awareness. They are highly skilled with trust and customer</p>	

	relations of the utmost importance due to the nature of the service.	
	YES___	NO___
	INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES	
	<p>Is your firm involved in international activities?</p> <p>For this research, internationalisation is defined as “the process of increasing involvement in international operations” (Welch and Luostarinen, 1988). This covers inward and outward growth across national borders.</p> <p>All firms interviewed should have sufficient international experience to take a retrospective look at the internationalisation process.</p>	
	YES___	NO___
	<p>If yes, was this a pro-active decision taken to explore the potential for international growth or a reactive decision stemming from external circumstances, such as following a client overseas?</p>	

N.B. The discussion is not limited to the following points only; they should be seen as a starting point into a rich conversation on the firm's internationalisation process. A firm will have the opportunity to discuss other aspects or elements that the researcher may not have considered.

10.2.1.2 The Firm's Context and History

	THE FIRM'S CONTEXT AND HISTORY	
1	Background of the firm	
	Length of time in business	
2	Your role and responsibilities within the firm	

	Concerning domestic activity	
	Concerning international activity	
3	Your experience with the firm	
	How long with the firm?	
	How long in this position?	
4	Personal Experience	
	Training in a foreign country?	YES___NO___ Where___
	Training with foreigners in own country?	YES___NO___ Where___
	Worked in a foreign country?	YES___NO___ Where___
	Experience (travel) in a foreign country?	YES___NO___ Where___
	Foreign language skills	Language Fluent/ very good Moderate Poor
5	General firm operations	
	What are the strategic objectives for the year?	
	What is the management style of the firm? (Power structure, attitudes/ personalities)	
	Staff (number, roles, hierarchy)	
	Role of technology	
	Financial resources	
	Firm capabilities (emphasis on sector or geo)	

6	Present internationalisation activities	
	Who involved? (No. of employees)	
	What form? (Entry mode)	
	When? (Length of time in each market)	
	How many markets served?	
	How's it going? (Position in market, % of sales)	

10.2.1.3 Motivation

	THE FIRM'S CONTEXT AND HISTORY	
1	Reason(s) for the firm going abroad	
	Internal/ external - Push/ pull- Proactive/ reactive	
	What was hoped to be achieved?	
	About domestic activity	
	About international activity	

2	Performance Factors	
2.1	Human resources factors	
	Special training for internationalisation?	
	The importance is given to cultural sensitivity?	
	What is the top management's experience (education? living abroad? Personal contact networks?)	
	Has internationalisation affected the culture of the organisation?	
2.2	Marketing activities	
	How important of priority? (time, resources)	
	How's it done? Formal vs. informal?	
	do you advertise? Different from the domestic market?	
	The role of the client?	

	What are your long term/ short term strategies?	
2.3	Networking activities	
	How do you obtain information on international opportunities?	
	How do you manage and sustain relationships?	
2.4	Service delivery	
	What form(s) does it take? (customised services)	
	How do you adapt to local needs?	
	How do you manage the quality of services/ respond to complaints?	
	It is their price adaptation?	
3	Thinking about your internationalisation experience(s) are there other success factors or barriers to internationalisation?	

10.2.1.4 Performance Measures

	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	
1	What are your key performance measures? How do you measure your success?	
	Financial measures (growth)	
	Non-financial (perceived success or goal achievement)	
2	Evaluation of international activities?	
	Who is responsible?	
	How does the process work?	
	How long do you give your markets to achieve their objectives?	
3	Adaptations made after internationalisation	
	What needed to be changed?	

	How is it now?	
	In retrospect, what do you see as key skills for internationalisation? (Effects on domestically)	
4	Help, support or advice sought	
	If so, from where?	
	How useful? How to improve?	

10.2.1.5 Future Plans

	FUTURE PLANS	
1	How are decisions made in regards to the future of the company?	
	What factors are most important in these decisions?	
2	Firm's long-term internationalisation strategy	

	Increase or decrease from present activities?	
	What are the key factors to achieve aims?	
	What could be a barrier to achieving this?	
	How do you anticipate dealing with this?	

10.3 Appendix 3

10.3.1 SME internationalisation: a case study of UK and Nigeria management consulting firms

Research questions:

Q1: How do small to medium-sized management consulting firm achieve success in an international turbulent business environment?

Q2: How are their business strategies adopted and integrated into an international turbulent business environment?

Q3: How are resources adapted to gain and sustain competitive advantage in an international turbulent business environment?

Q4: What constitutes dynamic capabilities, how is it identified in theory and recognised in practice in the context of SMEs?

What is being investigated?

Small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) internationalisation research to date has largely focussed on the manufacturing sector. This research aims to address the research gap on small to medium-sized service firms' internationalisation by examining how SMEs in the management consulting sector successfully provide their services internationally. As the service sector is inherently different from the manufacturing sector, the investigation will focus on how service internationalisation differs from the internationalisation of manufacturing firms.

How is it being investigated?

The study analysed the key success factors for small to medium-sized management consulting firms internationalisation; examine their strategies for internationalisation; investigated the internal environment of the firm (including management style, the influence of owner/manager, maintenance of relationships, personal skills); and examine how services are delivered and the degree of interaction between staff and customers (including form, cultural sensitivity from employees, managing customer's expectations, and adapting to local needs).

The study is exploratory, critical realist and framed within an interpretive research paradigm. To get a comprehensive understanding, multiple case studies (8-12) according to Yin's (2008) approach will be undertaken rather than a single case to allow patterns to emerge and to avoid chance

associations. The main form of data gathering will be through semi-structured interviews. The research will take a retrospective look at how firms internationalise, including the initial decision to internationalise, and each subsequent junction, to analyse adaptations to the internal environment that were made for service provision and assess the interaction between employees and customers.

What conclusions can be drawn?

To date, there is little research on SME service sector internationalisation and, to the author's knowledge, none specifically focussing on management consultancies. After data collection is undertaken, it is hoped to move forward understanding by identifying motivations, challenges and success factors to internationalisation and the types of adaptations necessary in the firm's internal environment to ensure service provision for internationalising SMEs.

10.3.2 Refining the Research Question

Reconfiguration

The ability to continually adjust strategy and to have multiple and targeted strategies.

Reconfiguration:

How do businesses adjust their strategy to take advantage of your environment?

10.3.2.1 Dynamic Capabilities

Sensing: processes to sense, filter, and interpret events and uncertainty

Seizing: the business model used, selection rules and decision-making protocols

Transforming: characterisation of changes to project portfolios and other changes with impacts on portfolio

Each component brings some sub-questions of which the following subset was investigated:

Sensing:

- How do professional services SMEs in the context of the management consulting firm approach their internationalisation?
- What is the role of dynamic capabilities in professional service firm internationalisation?
- How actively are they probing the environment?
- Through which channels do they gather the information?
- What is the frequency of scanning and analysis?
- What are the events and uncertain elements which are addressed at the firm level?

Seizing:

- What are the rules used to determine the process to translate?
- How formal and documented are these rules?

- How are they constrained by an existing process, policies rules and structures?
- How are opportunities incorporated into the business model and the service offerings architecture?

Transforming:

- What categories of changes are managed at the firm level?
- Does the management of changes to the process dependent on the characteristics of the entrepreneur?
- How are resources re-allocated across the firm?

10.4 **Appendix 4**

10.4.1 **Generic Follow up Contact Email**

10.5 Appendix 5

10.5.1 Unstructured Open Coding

No	Code Name		No	Code Name
1	Adaptation		27	New services
2	Background operations		28	Niche
3	Clients		29	Paperwork
4	Climate change		20	Past expertise
5	Company structure		31	Payment
6	Competitors		32	Performance Factors
7	Complaints		33	Performance Measures
8	Conference		34	Personal background
9	Contract		35	Present Internationalisation Activities
10	Cost		36	Price
11	Customisation		37	Problems
12	Evaluation		38	Profit
13	Financial crisis		39	Quality
14	Foreign Language		40	Reason for going abroad
15	Funding		41	Reputation
16	Future plans		42	Requirements
17	General Firm		43	Skills

	operations			
18	Government assistance		44	Staff expertise
19	Growth		45	Stereotypes
20	Higher Education		46	Strategy
21	Information		47	Tax VAT
22	Intellectual Property		48	Technology
23	Marketing		49	Time
24	Motivation		50	Training
25	Network		51	Travel
26	New markets		52	Trust

10.6 Appendix 6

10.6.1 Perceived Research Outcomes

The outcome of this study is to broaden the understanding of the influence of dynamic capabilities for the SME in the professional service management consulting sector. Also, the study will contribute to how the target group deals with internationalisation and how these firms can find the best way to enter international markets. From an academic perspective, this study will join researchers that call for a measure of international activity of service SMEs, in particular, SMEs active in the international management consulting market. For the service SMEs perspective, this study will be valuable because it will highlight the interplay dynamic capabilities in SMEs internationalisation activities and the possibility to recognise the importance of these dynamic capabilities in the internationalisation process. Moreover, the target groups will have the possibility to learn about and compare their activities with other firms in their business.

This research will contribute to the field of services internationalisation, SMEs professional service internationalisation activities and provides an interesting contrast to many of the already known internationalisation literature. The study will analyse the usefulness of approaches for describing and explaining the internationalisation patterns of service SMEs active in the management consulting market.

10.6.2 Research Limitation

Due to the limited time and resources allocation, the topic must be kept relatively small and focused. This infers that some items must be left out of scope. This section will attempt to specify briefly what will be intentionally left out of the research.

10.6.3 Size and Scope

It will be impossible to analyse the internationalisation patterns of all the service SMEs active in this market, due to the size of the market sector, therefore, a choice must be made which market would be examined.

10.6.4 Evolution over Time

In the methodology section, it was mentioned that a retrospective approach will be taken. However, organizations are not static and evolve. This means that what was done one year prior or six months prior might no longer be in place at the time of the interviews. An interesting topic of study might have been to analyse how the organizations learn and improve in their internationalisation process. However, this will not be the primary focus of this study.

10.6.5 Knowledge Management

Weick (1979) and Teece (2009, 2014) include *knowledge management* under the *transforming* capability and this was specifically studied as a dynamic capability by Killen *et al.*, (2008). However, this topic is very broad and would require a study in itself.

10.6.6 The Dimension of International Growth

This study focuses only on the outward dimension of international growth (i.e. exports and foreign direct investment) and hence the inward dimension (i.e. imports) is, excluded from the study, despite being an element that could be seen as a part of the international growth process of the firm.

10.6.7 Generalisability

The research design is based on a small sample of only four cases. Therefore, the findings will have a strong intuitive and conceptual appeal and statistical generalisability from such a small sample are not appropriate. This study will research only SMEs and transfer some of the findings as such to the context of large firms would be inappropriate, especially if they are operating in an industry other than the professional service industry.

10.6.8 Future Study

The limitations suggest avenues for future research. It would be interesting to follow the studied SMEs in the longer term.

10.6.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical behaviour is important to all research; this holds for qualitative case study research that collects data principally by interviews. Saunders et al., (2007) define research ethics as relating to all aspects of our research from “how we formulate and clarify our research topic, design our research and

gain access, collect data, process and store our data, analyse data and write up our research findings in a more responsible way" (Saunders et al., 2007:178). The research undertaken was in full alignment with Kingston University's ethical guidelines.

10.6.9.1 Informed Consent

All interviewees received both a participant information sheet as well as a consent form to indicate that the participation is voluntary and that they have been informed of the objectives of the research; informing them of how the data collected would be used, stored and their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

10.6.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

The information gathered during the interviews is confidential and only the members of the research team will have access to the audiotapes and the content of their transcriptions. The research material (tapes and transcriptions) and the consent forms will be stored separately in locked filing cabinets at the researcher's premises for the duration of the project. The tapes and the consent forms will be destroyed two years after the last publication. It is expected that the firms which will participate in the research will request some forms of non-disclosure agreements. This means that some of the data being investigated will not be directly publishable. The circulation of preliminary analysis documents prior to the final publications will be limited to the superiors involved in supervising the doctoral research.

10.6.9.3 Use of Results

The data gathered as part of this project will be used for the sole purpose of this research. Subsequent use of the data will have to be approved by the participants and by the research ethics committee at Kingston University.

10.6.9.4 Harm and Risk

The researcher, together with all the other members of the research team, if applicable, undertakes to protect the personal information obtained in the following manner:

- keep transcription in a locked filing cabinet,
- use nicknames for roles instead of real names,
- ensure that individuals are not identifiable in the publications, and
- keep audio transcriptions on password-protected computers.

Finally, a specific ethical issue might arise from this research. I have been working over 29 years as a management consultant building an extensive network in some organisations. Particular attention will have to be paid on the potential reactivity to the interviewer.

10.6.10 Types of Research Bias

Type of Research Bias	
Design bias	Poor study design and incongruence between aims and methods increase the likelihood of bias.
Selection	/ Selection bias relates to both the process of

	participant bias	recruiting participants and study inclusion criteria. Successful research begins with recruiting participants that meet the study aims.
	Data collection bias and measurement bias	<p>Data collection bias can occur when a researcher's personal beliefs influence the way information or data is collected.</p> <p>In quantitative studies, measurement bias can occur if a tool or instrument: has not to be assessed for its validity or reliability.</p> <p>In qualitative research, interviewing is a commonly used method of data collection; how questions are asked will influence the information elicited.</p>
	Analysis of bias	When analysing data the researcher may naturally look for data that confirms their hypotheses or confirms personal experience, overlooking data inconsistent with personal beliefs.
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>		

10.7 Appendix 7

10.7.1 Alpha Case Transcript

Interview conducted at Alpha's UK office		
	Date	03/02/2013
	Time	10:00
	Interviewee	Founder
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>		

10.7.1.1 Founder's Interview Transcript:

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I am the founder of the company with 30 years of industry experience. Before setting up the company, I have lived abroad for years working for many multinational companies in several various capacities from country lead, programme director to change owner. In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a regional head office and very strong presences. As a result, I have built a

very strong network of contacts especially within the region South-eastern Asia.

Interviewer: Thank you soo much. Now, could you tell me a little bit more about your business? I've seen the background on your website and some of the different things that you offer, such as IT service, some training, assistance to business.

Interviewee: We are a small size international niche consulting business operating from some countries including the UK. We operate within the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) space. We assist our clients to minimise ICT risk exposure at a competitive cost and improve process efficiency in a way that increases profitability and opens doors to new opportunities. We offer expert independent advice and know-how in information technology, risk and change management to our clients and in so doing deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of our client's organisation. We do this by developing a long-term partnership with our clients'.

Interviewer: Thank you. You say you offer a change management function to customer. Is there a structured and rigorous approach to change management?

Interviewee: Ok you see because change is inherently unsettling for people at all levels of an organisation, we work with the leadership to speak with one voice and model the desired

behaviours. Managing change effectively requires moving the company from its current state to a future desired state at minimal cost to the company. Therefore, the key is change must be managed, implemented, and executed in such a way that there is always communication across the company. This allows for equilibrium and encourages growth and innovation within a company. I believe that the leadership team must invite all staff to offer ideas on creating a new vision for the company and thus driving the company forward as a whole. This is where we bring our expertise to the table. I believe that executive teams that work well together are best positioned for success.

So, we bring a set of structured processes and set of deliverables to the technical side of change. After all, change management is all about introducing changes in a structured way. Without structure and rigour, it is difficult to integrate change management activities into a project delivery approach. We assist our clients to connect change management to achieve the intended benefits and value from change. By enabling them to directly tie the impact of changes to the ultimate results and outcomes of the project. Are applicable we introduce a structured and rigorous approach to help increase credibility and accessibility across the organisation. By making a direct connection between how well the change is managed and the ultimate ROI.

Interviewer: How do you manage changes in your business environment?

Interviewee: Changes in inevitable so from our business we have a great deal of control over the internal environment, structures and processes covering our day-to-day operations and decisions to create services that will satisfy clients. However, the external environment is a different ballgame although we apply the same approaches because it is manageable when you have visibility across the whole of the service offerings. So, to compete successfully and sustain the growth we continuously study the environment and adapt our business model accordingly.

Interviewer: Thank you. Following on from that, you say you operate from a number of countries including the UK. Could you expand on this, please?

Interviewee: Yes, we operate predominantly within the South-eastern region of Asia market, mainly from the Philippine, Vietnam and Thailand. In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a regional headquarter and very strong presences. As a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region South-eastern Asia. I am very familiar with the culture and understand the way in which business operates and function within this region.

Interviewer: Thank you. On the human resources and staff front. How many staff does your employ please?

Interviewee: OK, we have 5 full-time staff in the UK and 10 full-time staff across the other countries 4 countries the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.

Interviewer: Ok. Am I right I in saying you have 15 staff across 5 countries?

Interviewee: We maintain a low staff overhead since you have an extensive network of independent local contractors that work for us across operating countries.

Interviewer: Ok. I see. Thanks for the clarification.

Interviewer: Following on from your staff model. Could you let me about your business model, please?

Interviewee: Yes, sure. we use a consulting service business model. Our consulting services work across the entire lifecycle of business change from conducting strategic reviews to facilitating the embedding and adoption of new ways of working. We also work with our clients in implementing strategic projects. We work with clients to identify opportunities for greater efficiency and better results. We also work with clients to manage existing projects. For example, our change capabilities include supporting and enabling the technical, process, cultural and organisational

change for our clients within the telecommunication sectors and government. "...the use of technology is so embedded in our DNA. It enables us to deliver clients solution globally and it is so fundamental to our success. More important than ever we continue to innovate, embrace emerging and disruptive technologies and offer the benefits to our clients – ignoring such them will leave us falling behind and questioning what might have been, as a potential competitive advantage..."

Interviewer: So, could you please tell me why you decided to internationalise?

Interviewee: The event that led to our international growth and development was when I decided to leave British telecommunication to start my firm. I used to work for British telecommunications looking after their interest in the Southeastern region of Asia within the telecommunication sector. In a nutshell sometimes in 2002, I believe it's roundabout Aug 2002. It seems rather a long time ago now, it's now over 10 years since we've started operating. Anyway, BT restructured its operations with the region and going forward decided its preferred mode of operation within the region will to work with partners rather than undertaking the assignment directly. I suppose BT want to minimise their exposure at that point in time.

In any event, at that time, I had acquired very significant knowledge and practical “know-how” in ICT change and risk management during the course of my career. This is coupled with the fact that I had lived and worked in the Southeastern region of Asia for about 10 years and understood the culture and the business landscape very well. You see, I have been contemplating leaving BT with the view of setting up a private company in the Philippine as there are good opportunities to be exploited, you see the restructuring of BT just happened at the right time for me. I suppose the key reason being, I have developed easily sellable services which are much cheaper than previous multinational telecommunication firm. The combination of these factors and my extensive knowledge and skills strongly played a vital part in my decision to establish on my own. I have worked within the region extensively, the Philippine that is. I have identified a gap in the market for a western-style information technology expertise, particularly within risk and change management space. In essence, there was a huge demand for our service and there was a shortage in the market for our service.

You see, I already have a good working relationship with BT and I have already established a robust working network of local partners that I normally used as part of my BT operations within the Philippines. I decided to approach BT with a proposal that I will take up their contracts within the Philippine with the view of still representing them. I already

have a functional and established company to take off from BT. That is the beginning of the journey of the company, from there we grew, and we are now operating within four countries within the region.

Interviewer: Would I be right in saying BT was your first international contract?

Interviewee: Yes, our first contract was with the BT and it ended in December 2004. The relationship between us and BT became very strong such that we undertook a number of additional assignments working on their behalf within the region. As with any good relationship, we used the experience and opportunity as a spring ball to develop and build business opportunities within the region. Following on from the end of that contract, in 2005, I decided to consolidate our clients' base and increase our presence within Manila. In order to do this, I established a strong local presence in Malian and open an international office in the Philippines in the same year. Following on from the office in Malian, I secured my first contact in April 2005 with a local firm in the Philippines. The call centre setup programme was very successful, and we were awarded an additional training contract with the same firm. It is against this backdrop that I began a proactive opportunity campaign to continue to grow our Philippines business. By the end of 2005 Alpha had secured a total of four contracts predominantly in Manila. As a consequent of

business success in the Philippines, I made a strategic decision to enter neighbours' countries. At first to enter the Vietnam ICT market from where we progressed to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. We succeeded in entering Vietnam and our first Vietnam client was in January 2006. Which was with a telecommunication company that specialised in using the mobile virtual network operator business model to provide Pay As You Go mobile SIM cards. The work required managing the business change process from the manual customer relationship management (CRM) activities to information technology CRM system. Alpha's own definition of success in international activities is centred on having long-standing clients with mutual benefit.

Interviewer: Do you speak any foreign languages?

Interviewee: Yes, I speak moderate Tagalog. Also, our operations director has Pilipino heritage.

Interviewer: How do you market your firm?

Interviewee: Again, we exploit our knowhow capabilities and are heavy reliance on the use of social media which is part of our marketing toolset. You see, being a technology firm, we use social media extensively and it plays a major role in our marketing approach. For example, to promote firm services offerings. It is not uncommon for clients to contact us via the Internet and this type of clients continues to increase over

the past two years. We also take part in various ICT events and I publish online editorials in Google as well as taking part in UK SMEs trade promotion initiatives.

Interviewer: Do you use the same marketing approach across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: No, not really, we use a multifaceted marketing approach. You see, we cannot compete with large firms with huge financial resources. So, we to be creative and innovative with our marketing approaches. For example, we constantly adapt our marketing campaigns and strategies depending on our target audience. Being a tech company, it is easy for us to be the focus and targeted. That way, we can get maximum return on marketing investment and achieve economy of scale.

Interviewer: Could please explain how your international growth activities works

Interviewee: We have a very clear vision of how and with whom it prefers to work. We prefer internationalising through subcontracting with large MNEs, who find the clients, establish, the contract and we manage the relationship. As of 2014, subcontracting work accounts for approximately 65% of our workflow. Our growth outlook over the next two years at 2014 was to maintain and continue to consolidate our current business opportunities approach. Our medium-term strategic position

is to grow the business capacity within these countries in and our long-term strategy is aligned to maintaining a strong presence within the region. "... Right now, we strongly believe that there is still growth capacity within the Philippines and Thailand market, in particular, that we must exploit. We, therefore, need to consolidate on these opportunities rather than expanding into other countries..."

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Interviewee: As a small firm, we continuously reshape, modifies and reassess our business strategy to ensure we are agile and able to respond to the ever-changing business environment and the demand of our clients. also being agile and being adaptive in order to survival and outperform the competitions, especially being a small business operating in an international..." We do not see the business world through the traditional binary business approaches such as plan, implement, evaluate, you know the traditional growth approach. We must fast yet be cautious, we just do not expansion for its sake we choice our market careful.

We have a very strong and visible technology presence across the web and the social media strategy played and continue to play a very significant part in our international growth approach. We leverage technology and social media, in particular, to be agile and outperform our competitors. We

not only use social media to communicate with our clients. But instead, we see social media as a strategy tool which is needed to maintain an advantage over our competitors, evolve our business model and we continue to its impact on growth”.

Interviewer: How do you remain competitive whilst growing your company?

Interviewee: What makes us different and remains competitive is the way we do business and our flexible company processes. You see by offering real people, real solutions, and real results. We believe that by bringing people together underpinned by seamless processes, we produce positive outcomes. By way of example, all our consultants and local partners are technology savvy, our delivery processes are flexible, our communication approaches are simple are clear all across the business. We relied heavily on our digital service delivery, social media and technology capabilities to remain competitive. Our clients see us at experts in the field. We working approach is collaborative in nature. We do not maintain a large staff portfolio instead we work with our local partners on projects and contracts delivery. Also, resources are allocated to us by our clients on projects as needed in essence we work closely with our clients to identify their challenges. Just to give you a flavour of some of the exciting projects we advise and works with our clients on - mobile

technology integration. Take for example, in the Asian mobile market device space. It should not surprise you to note that mobile devices are heavily relied upon within by our clients' customers for day to day communication. For example, some of our clients' lucrative sales are targeted towards remote customers. Another important is the way we leverage our limited human resources capital to take full advantage of the opportunity. Another key important factor that allows us to remain competitive is how we incorporate lessons learned from one project to the next. You see, rather than going through the formal process on lesson learnt on an assignment. lessons learnt from previous assignments are quickly incorporated via technology into our services offerings, which are made quickly and easily available again using technology across the firm and is readily available for the next assignment. So, you see, leverage our digital service delivery capabilities, social media knowhow and our technical expertise to the maximum.

Interviewer: How are resources integrated or utilise across the firm?

Interviewee: We have to be innovative with our limited resources, by being creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive. Since most of our solution and modularise, typically a consultant often works on a number of projects and or assignment simultaneously. Otherwise,

our margin level and ability to grow will be severely compromised.

Another key important factor, we position ourselves as an expert extension of our clients' resources. So, we usually work with our clients by embedding ourselves within their organisation.

Interviewer: How are resources re-allocated across the firm?

Interviewee: Due to our size and limited access to the large financial resource we have to make do with what we have by clearly implementing innovative processes reconfiguration and to quickly recombines these processes to achieve competitive advantage in this ever-changing market environment.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: We are frequently involved in environmental analysis as well. We see it as an on-going activity that takes place every time, we obtain feedback. We usually start with working through my networks of social and personal contacts that I have built up over the years. My personal relationship and networks provide me with opportunities to see what is going on in the market and often act as a point of reference for opportunities that are pending. We actively engage with our clients, this allows us to get a better understanding of our clients' demand thus enables us to renew and reassess our

capability, capacity and adjust our strategies going forward. For example, identifying market trends before they happen might enable us to offer products and services to clients before your competitors.

We use social media extensively. We check the social media activity of our potential clients'. You will be surprised how much information we keep up from social media just be looking at what is discussed by our potential clients' staffs. We use that to gauge and explore opportunities. Take, for instance, we use our contacts social media feeds to explore and lookout for opportunities. You see, we are very very active, and we always keep our heads to the ground.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: Our reputation, our ability, capabilities, our sectoral and industry know-how. Are the key, in the southeastern Asia market, expatriate status and western technical knowhow give you a slight edge. But you still, you have to continually be creative and embed your technical expertise in the context of the market. Take, for example, we are very aware and very familiar with the way business is conducted around here. It is slightly different from the way business is conducted here in the UK. We are very aware of the cultural influences within the functions and workings of over clients. Cultural sensitivity is crucial and very important in this part of

the world. You have to know how to navigate through business-related sensitivity and you have to be aware of their place in business. I suppose the added advantage is that I've lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries for a very long period of time. So, this has given me a good understanding of the way in which business is conducted.

10.7.1.2 Director of Operations:

Interview conducted at Alpha's UK office		
Date	03/02/2013	
Time	14:00	
Interviewee	Operations Director	
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>		

Questions and Answers Section with the founder

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I am the Operations Director; I head the Southeastern operations from manila in the Phillipine. I have been with the firm for 10 years. Before I joined the company, I too worked for BT for about 3 years. John (the founder) recruited me and brought me into the BT fold in the Phillipine. Before joining the operations, I used to work for one of the largest telecom company in the Phillipine for about 3 years.

Interviewer: Thank you soo much. Please could you tell me a little bit more about your firm business? I've already spoken to John. Also, I've seen the background on your website and some of the different things that you offer, such as IT service, some training, assistance to business.

Interviewee: As you may have probably gathered, we are a predominantly Technology consulting and change management organisation. We work with our clients from two perspectives: 1) from the tech consulting advisory perspective and 2) from a change implementation perspective. From the from tech consulting advisory standpoint we work with our clients on strategic issues such as risk exposure, internet security transition, management, etc and from project implementation perspective we assist with clients on challenging project implementations.

Interviewer: Thank you. You say you offer a change management function to customers. Could you expand on how you approach change management, please?

Interviewee: We have developed a slick and structured process for effective management changes. Our approaches are structured and ensure that planning and strategy development takes place in collaboration with our clients the project team. We listen carefully to our clients' needs and enables their strategy change journey. We do this by We leverage our advisory business expertise to focus on outcome led initiatives and considering strategy change needs.

Interviewer: How do you manage changes in your business environment?

We usually deal with changes from 2 different perspectives. 1st the external business environment and 2nd our internal business environment. From the viewpoint of the external business environment. We have to understand how the environment is changing and the impact of those changes on our business. So basically, we conduct environmental analysis which consists of understanding the economic leverage, understanding the political terrain understanding the legal position and so forth. We then use the result to effectively position our business.

And from the viewpoint of internal business, the environmental analysis is also used to restructuring our internal activities as deemed necessary. We use the results to drive better and seamless internal changes that the business needs in so doing our business we have a great deal of control over the internal environment, structures and processes covering our day-to-day operations and decisions to create services that will satisfy clients.

So, in a nutshell, that is how we deal with or manage the business environment.

Interviewer: Thank you. You say you run the Southeastern operations from manila in the Philippine. Could expand on that, please.

Interviewee: OK, from an operational standpoint, I cover 4 countries which I manage from Manila.

- Interviewer: Thank you. How many staff do you employ, please?
- Interviewee: We currently have 5 full-time staff operating from Surrey. We also have 10 full-time employees and 5 part-time employees across other countries.
- Interviewer: Ok. Am I right I in saying you have 20 staff across 5 countries?
- Interviewee: yes, I think that's about right. Although we work with about 40 independent contractors which are not our employees.
- Interviewer: Ok. Cheers.
- Interviewer: Please let me about your business model?
- Interviewee: Basically, we use a consulting service business model working on an assignment basis, that is time and material basis. That is that standard consulting services practices.
- Interviewer: Do you speak any foreign languages?
- Interviewee: Yes, I'm British but my mum is Pilipino, so I speak good Tagalog.
- Interviewer: Are you involved in the firm's marketing and if so, how do you market your firm?
- Interviewee: Basically, yes, I do. Although, we have marketing personally. But John and I, more so John. John is well known with the

within the tech circuit and he and the company has a very good and established reputation in the Philippine. So, we usually start working on our social networks contacts. We also aggressively use our social media capabilities which plays a major role in our marketing approach.

Interviewer: Do you use the same marketing approach across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: Nope! Our marketing methods evolve. Creativity and agility dominant our marketing campaigns methods and strategies. Technology dominant marketing campaigns. We have developed a marketing algorithm that very good which continues to give us an edge and it is easy for us to focus and targeted.

Interviewer: Could please explain how your international growth activities works

Interviewee: This largely in the domain of John. The general approach is John set the strategy on how and with whom we prefer to work with. We usually give preference internationalising through subcontracting with a large company.

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Interviewee: Our mantra is agility and creativity equal success. So, we live and breathe this mantra by reassessing and reassessing our

business strategy and approaches. We just must agile in our ever-changing business environment. As a small business its handwork but very rewarding with our growing success.

Interviewer: With all these handworks, how do you remain competitive whilst growing your company?

Interviewee: By adhering to our mantra being focus and building on our reputation. Our business structure is very flexible not hierarchical. Much so also our delivery processes are flexible and are simple and clear. Another key important factor in our resource utilisation.

Interviewer: On resources, how are resources integrated or utilise across the firm?

Interviewee: Knowledgeable consultants are at the forefront of consulting practice success or failure. So, their expertise plays a central role in driving our integration and utilisation functions. Aside, from expert knowledge we have to remain creative and agile on work practices, decision making styles, reporting relationships, our firm structure. Hence, our operating models all impact how employees will perform in the combined company. We must be innovative with our limited resources to be a suitable business. We must be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive and we are good at it.

Interviewer: How are resources re-allocated across the firm?

Interviewee: Resource reallocation, helps us choose the best available resources for our clients' projects and manage them throughout the assignment, so that way we avoid under or overutilisation of your employees. We do not just use any resources as needed or available we take into account project dependencies. So, projects there are tasks that can only be done after some other ones are completed, so there's no point to hog resources.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: We are frequently involved in environmental analysis. We listen to your potential clients and past leads. By targeting potential customers listen to their needs, wants, challenges and frustrations in their industry. We listen to your customers, look at our competitors and look at industry trends and insights. We know our customers' very well to know their needs and what they are thinking. We have developed mutually beneficial knowledge sharing relationships with them by talking to them about their future requirements and discussing how we might be able to develop products or services to ensure that we meet their needs.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: We are authentic and let them know we have their back. we help them identify challenges and shared our goals and values with them. We develop mutual respect and share our vulnerabilities. We share our plans with them.

Interviewer: How do you manage changes in your business environment. Is there a structured and rigorous approach to change management?

Interviewee: Ok. Let me answer this in two folds. From a client perspective, we bring a structured process and set of deliverables to the technical side of change.

10.7.2 Beta's Case Transcript

Interview conducted at Beta's UK office		
	Date	17/02/2013
	Time	10:00
	Interviewee	Founder

10.7.2.1 Beta's Founder interview Transcript

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I am the founder of the firm.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. Now, could you tell me a little bit more about your business? I've seen the background on your website and some of the different things that you offer.

Interviewee: I hold a PhD in computational chemistry and structure-activity correlation studies for oncology products. We began as a UK based firm predominantly serving the UK home market. We were initially established to fill a gap within the UK market. Mainly by providing quality assurance on clinical research to the life science and healthcare sector.

We also specialised in clinical quality assurance service. We also offer a broad range of service capability in the area of biopharmaceutical and medical device to our clients in all areas of quality assurance. From auditing to quality management services, process optimisation and integration.

Interviewer: Thank you. On the international front, how many countries do you operate from?

Interviewee: We have a presence in India, Israeli and we

Interviewer: Thank you. How many staff do you employ, please?

Interviewee: As of today, we have 6 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff in the UK and about 95 self-employed freelance staff internationally.

Interviewer: Ok. I see. Thanks for the clarification.

Interviewer: Following on from your staff model. Could you please tell me about your staffing?

Interviewee: Yes, sure. We use a freelance staff model. It is the most cost-efficient approach to staffing as far as we are concerned. We cannot afford too old huge pool off resources on our books. So, we pull resources in when it is necessary. We tend to work on a project by project basis. You see Most if not all the freelancers we use we've known over the years. as a result,

over the years we have built up a database or portfolio of good freelancers.

Interviewer: So, could you please tell me why you decided to internationalise?

Interviewee: I have always wanted to work for myself and I have been looking for such an opportunity right from the start of my career. But I needed experience. So, I carefully following a career path which will offer me the experience to broaden my career horizon and gain the vital experiences, including international assignments, was possible since I already have a very good grasp of two additional foreign languages...

During 2003, United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) invited us to participate in an international show trade initiative. We attended a number of campaign events as a result of which we secured our first international business working for an Indian operation in 2004. The India opportunity "kick-started" our international journey. It came just at the right time but with a number of issues and challenges.

Interviewer: So, what are these challenges?

Numerous to list. Take, for instance, we have to quickly adaptable our business model to accommodate India business opportunity. Also, the big elephant in the room was

finance. Finance almost scuffled the expansion plan. We initially wanted to start our international exposure by exploiting the Spanish or French market. This particular strategic approach was in part due to my language advantage in Spanish and French. But instead, our first international opportunity was in India.

Interviewer: So, you speak Spanish and French?

Interviewee: Yes, I'm also fluent in Italian. I lived in France when I was young, French is my mother tongue and has a good understanding of Spanish and German.

Interviewer: WOW really? That's great! I've also wanted to speak Italian.

Interviewee: Multi-language skills is certainly an advantage. It helps in building international credibility.

Interviewer: Oh yes, I can imagine.

Interviewer: How actively are they probing the environment?

Interviewee: On a continual and a regular basis. We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for a business opportunity.

Interviewer: I would like to know more about your marketing approaches. it terms of approaches, i.e. do you use the same marketing approach across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: We focus on increasing conversions on our brand loyalty. We conduct market research on market analysis, competitor analysis, trends analysis and customer analysis. We make use of digital marketing as part of our toolset to explore and promote our service and advertizing to reach some segments of your audience online especially it allows users to reach and deliver to our mobile users. We rely extensively on the internet for all more marketing campaign. We platform such as LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Twitters.

Interviewer: Could you please explain how your international growth activities works

Interviewee: We sustainable growth success include developing new business models and value propositions across our value chain from clinical trials, post-market surveillance, electronic health records and other sources. To achieve sustainable growth, we will rely heavily on our knowledge, from data management to understanding clients' expectations. Since the future of the health care ecosystem will surely continue to revolve. therefore, our growth approach takes into account such approaches.

That said, our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it. This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field.

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Interviewee: Through word of mouth and some existing contacts, and by building up brand recognition in India. We also leverage our big data and AI capabilities to sustain our growth strategy. I also take part in several pharmaceutical related symposia internationally which I leverage for business growth.

Interviewer: How do you remain competitive whilst growing your company?

Interviewee: We understand that our QA expertise is only of value to clients when it's related to their commercial objectives. Rather than apply ready-made solutions, we prefer to learn as much as possible about the wider issues and business context, becoming - as far as possible - part of a client's quality management team.

Aside, from this, "...it is important that those consultants that represent our firm especially those on the frontline have the right entrepreneurial approach. In other words, they have to think on the feet and come up with new ideas since they

sometimes work on the clients' site. It is very important for us that our consultant to continually update the global office.

Interviewer: How are resources integrated or utilise across the firm?

Interviewee: As I said earlier there is no way we can sustain an international growth based purely on maintaining a large human resource pool! So, we are always creative in both our HR acquisition, HR utilisation. So, HR model is based on a freelance model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed.

Interviewer: How are resources re-allocated across the firm?

Interviewee: We use technology a great deal. The resource is used in a coordinated approach and usually across projects. A given freelancer usually works on a number of the project a any given time. With the aim of maximising HR usage in a manner that gives us the maximum possible output from a given combination of resources based on a freelance model.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: We conduct market research since there are no doubts that our business cannot be successful without knowing our clients or market segmentation. Since we create services that satisfy the needs of clients within your target market. That is why we conduct

market research and identify the opportunities for further business development.

we use social media greatly. Don't underestimate the power of social media in business especially in a B2B arena. It's great for connecting with our clients and putting our business in front of potential partners and investors.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: We use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn aggressively to promote ourselves, to attract our clients and stay in contact with our clients. We also use social media for instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, webcams, file sharing and blogging and discussion groups to promote ourselves and more importantly to be able to respond quickly to our clients. We continue updating our social following on our progress, spreading the word. Using social media, to gather facts, information and contacts about new markets leverage your social media channels. For instance, we seek business leads and a network through LinkedIn, build buzz through Twitter to help amplify the reach of your messages and look at which social media channels have the most penetration in the new markets you are interested in.

Interviewer: How do you manage change and adapt?

Interviewer: Achieving real change requires research, genuine commitment and the hard work of many individuals with different skills working together for the same purpose. We're effective organisers and a good change agent so that our customers can benefit from all our skills, not just those of one particular consultant. This is what makes us different, flexible and able to adapt to the various circumstances that clinical research brings.

Interviewer: How do you measure your success in term of international growth?

Interviewee: Measuring our success and business performance means checking out the money flow of into the business. This is done by checking the number of contracts on our books. We then use the capital generated to grow the business and continue pursuing our entrepreneurial ambition. At Beta, we pride ourselves on excellent customer satisfaction. We are very keen on reviews and making sure that our customers are happy with our services. When we receive reviews, we post them on our social media i.e. blogs, Facebook twitter and the company website. That way, this gives confidence to our customers and shows what other customers have to say about our Services.

We conduct perform a review on all our employer including the freelancers. We do this by conducting performance reviews to see how staffs are doing.

10.7.2.2 Head of Asia Operations

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I joined the firm as part of the jasvinder pharmaceutical business opportunity to assist with establishing Beta's interest and further facilitating Beta's interests in Indian.

Interviewer: Could please expand on how you facilitated Beta's interests in Indian, please?

Interviewee: Initially I was the key contact and the business representative in Indian. I was responsible for all the administrative functions necessary as part of the business update, for example, working through the government bureaucratic processes ensuring that all the requirement documentations are processed. In other words, I worked with Jane to set up Indian operations.

Right now, I head the Asia operation.

Interviewer: Do you have responsibility outside of Indian?

Interviewee: Yes, in Sri Lanka. And we're currently exploring the possibility of establishing an office in The Chinese market.

Interviewer: Thank you. Please could you tell me a little bit more about your firm business? I've already spoken to Jane. Also, I've seen the background on your website and some of the different things that you offer.

Interviewee: We assist our customers in quality assurance (QA), compliance in quality assurance, quality management system (QMS), pharmacovigilance, good clinical practice (GCP), auditing services, training, standard operating procedure (SOP) writing to clients throughout the UK and internationally.

Interviewer: Thank you. How many people worked for your firm?

Interviewee: Do you mean within the Asia operations?

Interviewer: No, I mean within your firm as a whole.

Interviewee: Oh, I see. I'm not exactly sure. May I suggest you ask Jane. I'm able to tell how many we employed directly in the Asian office.

Interviewer: Ok. I will ask Jane. Thanks.

Interviewer: Are you able to tell me about your business model?

Interviewee: Oh, yes. Basically, it's very simple, we offer our expert advice in the areas of pharmacovigilance standard in, international clinical practice (ICP), auditing services. To put it simply, we assist our customer to resolve QA issues, compliance in quality assurance, QMS functions, training.

Interviewer: Ok. I will ask Jane. Thanks

Interviewer: Do you speak any foreign languages?

Interviewee: Yes. I speak basic French.

Interviewer: Could please explain how your international growth activities work.

Interviewee: Basically, Jane usually takes the lead and generally set the strategic direction of the firm. Then folks like myself then provide regional expertise to manage any cultural influence that we need to be mindful of. Such is the dominant services that provide. You see, international growth activities in the Asian market and in particular India has a subtle cultural norm and it plays an important role.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: We usually start by walkthrough our social networks and contacts to explore prospects and business opportunities. We also serve as a conduit for other firms, especially some of

the big international firms. In some of these types of assignments, we will be brought in as an expert in the field to guide programme during the initial project set up. This kind of arrangements is usually common in India.

Interviewer: So, how do you manage to sustain your growth?

Interviewee: Basically, by word of mouth and our existing contacts. Also, Jane is now well known for her expertise and detailed knowledge within the Indian pharmaceutical sector. She gives lectures and attends symposium in pharmacovigilance standard, in International clinical practice and auditing services. She has also written books on pharmacovigilance standards. So, we use clout as part of our growth strategy. But generally speaking, our reputation speaks for itself. We are well known for the quality of work we provide and the quality of consultants we employ. We are very good at what we do. So, we do not compete on the cost we are relatively expensive. Another, important growth approach is our capability in big data and AI to transform a large set of the clinical analytical dataset and compare it across a range of dataset to produce comparable result quickly. Possessing this kind of know-how is very rare and it is a great advantage that their technological capabilities continue to be a key advantage

Interviewer: would I be right in saying that most of the marketing is done through Jane market presence or are you involved in the firm's marketing and if so, how do you market your firm?

Interviewee: Basically, here marketing is everyone's business. Although, Jane is well known within the industry. We do not completely rely on Jane's presence as you say. We also follow the normal traditional approach to marketing. You see, the Internet and social media, in particular, plays a significant role in our approach to marketing. Use all our social media feeds extensively, for example, we have a huge presence on YouTube. We have a huge presence on LinkedIn, we use Twitter a great deal especially for service promotions and we use Facebook significantly as well. These are some of the tools that we use for market penetration. We fully replay and utilise the power of technology to promote our services. So, you see, technology and the web play a huge role in our marketing approaches.

Interviewer: Do you use the same marketing approach across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: Yes, pretty much the same. The difference is in the way we use technology, social media in particular. The social media offers us the capacity to reach a greater audience with a greater degree of accuracy. We are able to use social media has a precision tool to enhance our marketing strategy

across countries precisely. Especially when it comes to promoting our service offerings. We take full advantage of social media. Social media has allowed us to frog leap some of our competitors.

Interviewer: I would like to know a little more about your employment model in particularly how do you maintain your staffing level i.e. the number of consultants you employ?

Interviewee: Our consultants' resource model is a sample, very fluid and is based on a freelance business approach. We maintain minimal direct employees. The other staff members are a freelancer and all most all of them are professionals such as healthcare professionals i.e. chemist, pharmacist, biochemist etc. so as you can imagine it is practically impossible to have them employed by us directly. Hence the need for freelancing.

Interviewer: Specifically, could you explain how your consultants are integrated or utilised across the firm?

Interviewee: What makes this viable is our technological capacity. Basically, at the core of our HR model is the amalgamation of a number of technological platforms such as web, the social media and OnDemand. We have integrated these platforms and, in some cases, modularized our services to be a one global seamless repository documents and tools that can be accessed globally and it is access bae 24/7. This allows our

consultants the ability to collaborate very early and to continually do so across geographically spread locations. So, in addition to our expertise which we are known for, we use our globally available integrated platforms to sustain your competitiveness and efficiency. As well as good processes.

Interviewer: Thanks, you. Could you please explain what you meant about good processes?

Interviewee: What I meant my good processes. Basically, the pharmaceutical industry is heavily regulated and based on our expertise we have found a seamless way of deploying well-integrated processes that we also offer to our customers at a premium. Without such an edge our ability to integrate our HR model which are after all are based on the freelance model will be somewhat challenging to monitor from QA standpoint. Secondly, without effective and efficient processes, our capacity to scale up globally is compromised. So, basically, these capabilities of ours have allowed us to support our freelance model. Another good reason for having a robust process is that we are heavily dependent on technology such as the Internet, OnDemand, social media such as Google and Amazon for efficiency. So basically, proprietary services to be very agile across all our services and it's a key selling point particularly for pharmacovigilance. So, this is what I meant

generally by saying good processes underpins our ability to be agile.

Interviewer: Thanks. Just to clarify. Would I be right in saying your processes have been developed and perfected?

Interviewee: of course not. In the business environment, we are constantly adapting and changing these processes as we mature, develop and in light of new development in technology. The international market we operate is dynamic and as fast-moving. There are interesting discovery and development in our field which has to be incorporated into our functions. So, we can't afford to be complacent otherwise our competitive advantage will be eroded!

Interviewer: Thanks. But just before I move away from your employment model, processes and how you deploy your consultants. Could you please plain how your consultants are re-allocated across the firm?

Interviewee: we are constantly reallocating our consultants and technology is the key. In particular, our ability to manipulate and integrate resources and our processes seamlessly and efficiently on assignments are very important. Secondly, our resource pool and approach are very dynamic and very realistic. At any time we only use what we need. Thirdly, we use cost and materials on all our assignments which are billable to our customers. Such a model allows us to be lean

and efficient. Finally, as you would expect our consultants to work on multiple assignments at any given time. That way we can better leverage cost and realise reasonable margin. By the way, we discourage long-distance travelling. You know the normal housekeeping functions that way, costs are kept to a minimum.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: Relationship as a key so important here. With a good relationship in a number of our business opportunity fully realised. So, we are very very good at nurturing all our old and potential new relationships. We sustain this by been proactive by making sure that our market relevancy is continually promoted and it is featured in all our social media feeds. for example, in India, we invite our customers to take part in some of the activities such as our forums and online activities.

Interviewer: How do you manage change and adapt?

Interviewer: Change is constant in our firm. Adapting to change frequently requires the effective use of all your acquired skills. It is always helpful to look at changed circumstances and the challenges they present. We do not allow inertia to set in if we want to survive in our niche market and maintain our value propositions. In some cases, adapting to change will call for the use of other skills as well.

Interviewer: How do you measure your success in term of international growth?

Interviewee: for a start, we keep a close eye on our cash flow. Followed by conducting a customer survey by collecting stats on a whole range of metrics: from customer acquisition costs and retention rates to lifetime value and return on investment. We then use our data mining to improve our offerings.

10.7.3 Gamma's Case Transcript

Interview conducted at Gamma's Lagos Office		
	Date	17/04/2013
	Time	10:00
	Interviewee	Cofounder 1

10.7.3.1 Cofounder 1 interview Transcript:

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself.

Interviewee: I'm one of the Cofounder of the firm with a background in Energy. I am an exploration geologist and I hold an MBA with

specialisation in exploration strategy and programme management. My experiences cover both local and international operations. I've worked across Africa, Asia and the Middle East for providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream customers. That's about it. What else would like to know?

Interviewer: Thank you Segun. That's just about it. Now, could you please tell me a little bit more about your business. Although, I've seen your business background on your website and some of the different things that you offer.

Interviewee: Energy is an exciting place to be at the moment. It's changing very rapidly from a technology point of view and the market in Africa is very opportunistic. That as a context we are a management consulting firm offering advice and know-how to our clients within the Energy sector. We have our head office here in Lagos, Nigeria, Office Accra, Ghana, office in Yaounde, Cameroon, 2 offices in the UK one in Aberdeen and one in Surrey. We work with our clients providing them with holistic strategic solutions that combine environmental services and social engagement processes, alongside an in-depth understanding of Energy exploration.

Interviewer: Great thanks. Could I now ask you to explain why you decided to internationalise?

Interviewee: Yeah look, few years after my MBA myself and the co-founder decided to go it alone and form Gamma. We are well-recognised figures within the industry across sub-Saharan Africa, for our sectoral knowledge and knowhow John and I jointly decided to start Gamma after many years of climbing the corporate ladders. So, John and I jointly decided to start Gamma after many years of climbing the corporate ladders. I am a chartered geologist by profession still hands-on experience and solid business development track records. John, on the other hand, is a chartered petrochemical engineer and we have both worked together for many years. Between us, we have over forty years of experiences working for a number of multinational companies such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil and the GB group.

We are established several contacts including with the Ghanaian government which led to a contract been awarded to us, to assist the government on establishing sustainable environmental and cooperate strategy. This is how we started our internationalisation. Following a successful assignment, in the same year, the Ghanaian government awarded a second much larger contact to us. We then used our success in Ghana to penetrate the Cameroonian government which led to three contracts awarded to us again based on our sectoral reputation, experiences and network of relationship.

Interviewer: Could I explore your business operating environment with you by asking you how active do you sensing for opportunities?

Interviewee: We constantly probe our business environment not just for business opportunities to ensure take advantage of innovations, be aware of threats by monitoring what our competitors are doing, be ready for challenges. You see two strong themes in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa social content: family and changing social attitudes. So sensing for opportunities always that account of these trends the way that way we are able to continually improve on our business performance.

Interviewer: Do you adapt your business strategy as part of your internationalisation?

Interviewee: You see, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very turbulent. For instance, governments across this region are unstable. So, we continuously adapt our business strategies and be aggressively innovative both with our business model and how we adapt our model as well as our services offerings across the region.

Interviewer: How do you manage these turbulences and constrains?

Interviewee: Look, just like any other risks, we factor this into business strategy - we just have too. Take, for instance, the challenge

of an impact of oil spillage on the environment is quite significant here and attracts huge media publicity. For example, any sudden oil spillage becomes huge negative news in the media. Even if it is contained. So, you see, continually pay particular attention to our operating environment. So that our clients' exposure is kept to a bare minimum otherwise the impact of bad publicity is not good for us or our clients.

Interviewer: Ok thanks. Now could I explore the business growth sustainability with you? Could you please explain how your international growth activities works?

Interviewee: right now, on the international market. We are currently concentrating our growth strategy within sub-Saharan Africa – mainly on the West African market. Countries like Cameroon and Ghana has huge market potentials and we do have the right contacts on the ground. We believe there are loads of opportunities for growth within these markets. Equally, we have not forgotten our local market here in Nigeria as well.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: Our personal contacts. Everyone is into social here and underestimate the power of social media in business. The social media is a huge business here it's now a standard practice it is very transformation here. We use it to analysis them greatly.

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Interviewee: Mainly through our extensive social contacts that we have across the region. But by far through the word of mouth and some existing contacts. As a whole Africa presents a clean and open slate for renewable energy, especially solar. The race to spread solar power across Africa is now a multi-billion-dollar industry that continues to attract entrepreneurs and investors from within and outside the continent. Specifically, Renewable energy is now a viable business proposition here in sub-Saharan Africa and it's in the initial growth stage. So, we had to modify our business model and strategies by continually reconfiguring, adapting and reposition our strategies towards accommodating the growth potential in the renewable energy market which is the way forward particular due to everybody talking about global warming.

Sectoral knowledge is a critical driver of success for the Energy industry, particularly with regard to the upstream focus. This knowledge intensity is reflected in the increasing attention to and investment in interconnected technologies and in the integration, management and sharing of technical data - the so-called 'digital oil field' or 'smart field'.

Interviewer: How do you remain competitive whilst growing your company?

Interviewee: Take for example the use of smartphone is ubiquitous and this phenomenon continues to increase here. By here I mean in sub-Saharan Africa. So, our technology asserts have kept phase with this trend and in some cases, we are ahead of the curve. This is what continues to give our advantage over competitors. So, you see, I cannot overemphasise important of technology to remain competitive and to grow our business across sub-Saharan Africa. The use of technology, social media and creative thinking plays a great deal in our growth and the ability to remain competitive.

Interviewer: Thanks. I understand from your website that part of your growth strategy is collaborating with big multinational. Could you please expand on this?

Interviewee: Yes, that is true within the Nigerian markets. This has been a bread and butter assignment right from the onset at least from within their Nigerian markets. We work with multinationals like BP, Chevron, Shell and some of the Indigenous players within the Nigerian market on the issue of corporate strategy, the environment and navigating the geopolitical to the terrain. We offer such services to ensure these multinationals farms that do not necessarily understand Political ramification off not carrying the indigenous community along with them. Because for example we fully understand what the cultural challenges and the pressure points are. When it comes to it

environmental issues around Energy has now become peculiar. That said, our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it. This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field.

Interviewer: How do you manage change and adaptation?

Interviewer: Commitment and the very very hard work. You see, the volatility of the Sub Sahara Africa market is very challenging at best of times. So, we are continually watching out for subtle signals from our contacts about any potential and sudden on the horizon and then adapt our business strategies to accommodate such changes.

Interviewer: How do you measure your success in terms of international growth?

Interviewee: This is purely based on sales and how best to maintain our business contacts. That is just it. Business performance contacts we are able to generate. It is maybe surprising to you that customer reviews have a limited impact here. It is more about who you know and how you work with your personal contacts.

Interviewer: You mentioned innovation a minute ago. So, let me know how do you manage innovation.

Interviewee: We are constantly innovating on the strategies side and on customer assignments delivery. You see, over the past decade, our sector has grown significantly to become one of the most dynamic service industries across sub-Saharan Africa. I believe this growth is partly attributed to the ongoing accessibility and the reach of technology and increasing globalisation. For us to remain our competitive we rely heavily on creative thinking across all our functional departments. Most importantly we rely on social media blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and the company website. Technology such as Cloud Computing services, OnDemand like Amazon Web Service allows has made very very mobile and able to aggressively compete with the likes of EY, PWC at least here in sub-Saharan Africa. We are very proud of yourselves. We are constantly prompted by events, challenges from competitions nipping at our heal to technology.

Interviewer: You mentioned using technology has given you a competitive edge. Could you expand on that, please?

Interviewee: To give you a flavour of what I'm talking about. We were asked to conduct analysis on a number of Basins with the objective of forecasting natural gas production growth for the next 25 years to determine if adequate natural gas pipeline infrastructure exists within two countries. It would have been impossible for us to carry out such an assignment

without technology asserts, yet we are unable to afford to own such larger technological asserts that is required. Thanks to the internet and technology such as Google could Computing services, OnDemand service like Amazon Web Service allowed to compete successfully. We were able to remotely access pulled together historical data via the use of such technology assets.

Interviewer: Thank you. I was just about to ask you how many countries do you operate from? But we've already covered it. Let me ask you about your employees. How many staff do you employ, please?

Interviewee: Ok, we rely heavily on casual or temporary workers for project-based work. That's our employment model. On the permanent staff side, we have 9 full-time staff here in Lagos, 2 full-time staff here in the Accra's office, 2 full-time staff in the Yaounde. With the UK offices, we have 5 part-time staff in total 2 in the surrey office and 3 in the Aberdeen office. We also maintain a database of about 95 self-employed temporary workers.

Interviewer: If you don't mind, I would like to explore your employee/staffing model with you. So, could you please tell me how you deploy your staff on assignment?

Interviewee: Yes, sure of course. Here in Nigeria, we use a self-employed temporary worker staffing model. There is a surplus and

relatively cheap manpower here so it's a standard practice here to use such a model. We hire on a need by need basis to supplement our full-time staff.

Interviewer: How are resources integrated or utilise across the firm?

Interviewee: our staffing model is based on a freelance model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed.

Interviewer: How are resources re-allocated across the firm?

Interviewee: Yeah look, we use technology a great deal. A resource is used in a coordinated approach and usually across projects. A given freelancer usually works on a number of projects at any given time. With the aim of maximising our staffing model, we use the minimal people resource that is necessary.

Interviewer: Could I now explore your marketing approaches with you. In terms of approaches, how do you go about marketing your services across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: Brading is an area we pay specific attention to. Here in Nigeria, and West Africa at large, we have started to compete equally with the Western companies thanks to the internet and in many cases, we beginning to outsmart them. We have learnt the act of marking well from them and we have perfected the act with what I'll call local flavour and we

understand the culture best. Here we make use of digital marketing tactics to explore and promote our service. We rely greatly on using social media for all our marketing campaign.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: Yeah look, being a small business relationship play a very significant role in our survival. You see, it would be very difficult to succeed in this market without being proactive, adaptive and flexible about our relationship. we use social media all the time to like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn facilitate relationship building. We use it aggressively to promote ourselves too and to attract new clients and stay in contact with old clients. especially, blogging and discussion groups are used for promotions. In so doing, we continually update our social about our progress to spread the word.
(Founder partner Gamma)

Interviewer: Do you speak any foreign language?

Interviewee: Yes, I'm also fluent in French.

10.7.3.2 Cofounder 2 interview Transcript:

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I'm the second Cofounder of the firm along with Segun. My background is petrochemical in the oil and gas industry. Before I completed my MBA programme, I was a chartered petrochemical engineer. Segun and I have a combined experience of over 50 years working internationally and have developed track records and reputation within the sector in Africa, Asia and the Middle East for providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream industry.

Interviewer: Thank you, John. Could you please tell me a little bit more about your business? Although, I've seen your business background on your website and some of the different things that you offer.

Interviewee: We are a management consulting firm. Our business structure is of two halves. One is government-led contracts and the other half is the nongovernment led contracts. To put it in perspective government-led assignments constitute about 70% of our contracts and the other 30% are non-government led contracts. The other key strategic interest of

ours is the renewable energy sector which is very much now a viable business proportion here in sub-Saharan Africa. Compared to Europe or North America for instance, there is huge hidden demand from disparate people and there are lots of very clever approaches that we continue to drive to deliver sustainable power projects across sub-Saharan Africa and that is exciting. So, our strategies towards accommodating the growth potential in the renewable energy market which is at its infancy are important. People are now being conscious of the impact of Energy on the environment. So, Energy firms are now factoring environmental challenges this into their business model which is traditionally not necessarily the case. So, we are currently rebalancing our business strategy by continually growing nongovernmental contracts. To this effect, we anticipate that by the year 2019 we will have rebalanced our business model to 40 60 splits between government and nongovernmental contracts.

But generally speaking, we offer expert advice to our clients on cooperate responsibilities, social responsibilities, governance, and impact of policies on the environment around the Energy services. This includes advising our clients on engaging with the local community, local policies. We equally help them to navigate government policies, environmental management. In a nutshell, we provide our clients with a holistic approach to the impact of Energy

services to the environment and their social responsibilities and cooperate responsibilities.

Interviewer: Great thanks. Could I now ask you to explain why you decided to internationalise?

Interviewee: Segun and I wanted to do new things and follow a different path. We have worked together for many years with several multinational companies Sometimes within the same company. But basically, working for international firms. Basically, assisting their clients on social and cooperate responsibilities on the environmental impact of Energy services - exactly what we presently do. We left we can do a better on our own. Since we are very familiar with sub-Saharan Africa countries and in particular the Energy and their social impact. We've been there done it and got the T-shirt. and you see struggling to climb the corporate ladder, multinational companies' bureaucracy, you know what I'm talking about. So, we decided to start on our own. After all, we are well-recognised experts within the industry and across sub-Saharan Africa, for our sectoral knowledge.

Interviewer: Could I explore your business operating environment with you by asking you how active do you sensing for opportunities?

Interviewee: We are well known within the industry in the sub-Saharan Africa region for our expertise and technical knowhow on the

impact of Energy on social. So sensing is more or less self-fulfilling. That said, and not to be complacent because the sub-Saharan Africa market is very dynamic indeed, particularly the government contacts. That is why we have decided as a strategy to reposition our business as discussed earlier. So, we constantly probe our business environment for business opportunities. For instance, a large percentage of the Energy multinational firms works with us around the sub-Saharan Africa region.

Interviewer: Could you please explain how your international growth activities work.

Interviewee: Basically, Segun and I set and lead the company's strategic direction. Since we have the regional expertise to on finely balanced cultural influence. You see, our international growth activities here in sub-Saharan Africa comes with certain cultural norms without it you are likely to fail! and it plays an important role. Especially when engaging with countries government. Just before you ask me to explain further, it's what we call trade secrets.

Interviewer: Ok then I will not pursue it further. But instead, can I ask you how you adapt your business strategy as part of your internationalisation?

Interviewee: Like you, yourself will know, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very dynamic and often turbulent. Government

contracts can sometimes be personalised, for example, on who you know and sometimes tribalized. So, consequently, we have to be very creative with our business strategy and business models. For a start, we continuously adapt our business strategies and localised our services offerings across the region. We can not use one size fit all here.

Interviewer: How do you manage these turbulences and constrains?

Interviewee: By being creative. The sub-Saharan Africa market is very turbulent with a set of unique circumstances and these circumstances vary from country to country. So, what this means is that we are constantly innovating particularly on our business development and delivery approach. Technology has a game-changer for us. This is combined with our abilities to be fully aware of the cultural influence which plays a very important role and cannot be neglected. We are constantly using technology to manage and mitigate some of this turbulence. Equally, creativity in our approaches, processes is very important as well. You see, we continually adjust our business models and continually align our strategies. This has been very very successful in managing turbulences and constrains. So, the bottom line is agility, agility, agility, coupled with a cultural awareness of the sub-Saharan Africa business ethics.

Interviewer: Thanks. Now could I explore the business growth sustainability with you? Could you please explain how your international growth activities works?

Interviewee: With the same simple principles that I have outlined early in your previous question. Agility coupled with cultural sensitivity to local issues. You see social and cooperate responsibilities perception and the issues environmental impact of Energy services varies.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: Basically, obtaining information on business opportunities tends to be mostly through personal and professional contacts that we've built up over the years. The rest is through the traditional approaches providing the environment, conducting market analysis. You know what I mean.

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Again basically, by word of mouth by existing clients' channels and personal contacts. We are well-grounded within this region based on reputation and our expertise in the Energy industry when it comes to our holistic approach to environmental stainabilities. Also, technology and the web especially has been a game-changer. Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter have completely

dominated how we explore market opportunities. We have embraced technology so much thanks to your company and it has shown dividend and continues to be the case.

Interviewer: How do you manage change and adaptation?

Interviewee: Whatever its shape or form, change is inevitable, and change can come in many forms. You see our market is aggressive and our approach must match especially our ability to quickly win clients over. Although change can be hard to handle and can sometimes even have a negative impact on the business. But we see it as a unique opportunity to step up and create a massive transformation that excites and inspires our clients.

Interviewer: So how do you do it.

Interviewee: We continuously watch for subtle signals from our contacts about any potential. We also, continually adapt our business strategies to accommodate such changes. We achieve this by opening up effective channels of communication between us and our clients'. We lead by example inspiring and educating. We make it clear in our team the need for continual change management. We never downplay the effects of any change to our team. We ensure all of us buy-in into our continual change management approaches. We do not allow inertia to set.

Interviewer: You mentioned that using technology has been a game-changer. Could you expand on that, please?

Interviewee: Today's clients expect to be able to interact with our businesses through online channels. It's no secret that using digital tools such as web and e-commerce marketing methods benefit small business like ours. As you well know digital technology is driving many changes in the business environment. The use of a smartphone is very where here. Social commerce is also booming, especially here in sub-Saharan Africa. So, with online tools, we get greater insight into the business environment and allows us to build lasting relationships with our clients. The digitally-driven economy now has deep penetration here in sub-Saharan Africa market many of our clients now expect to be able to engage with us through online channels. Technology as improved communications, flexibility and lower business costs. Both Segun and I would like to refer to ourselves as technological savvy and with the assistance of your firm that has increased our awareness of digital opportunities and have to assist us in identifying when, where and how we could use digital tools for maximum impact. We cannot just imagine life without it now.

Interviewer: How do you management innovation.

Interviewee: We use innovation as the key driver of productivity and our long-term growth, and it has continued to help solve challenges at the lowest possible cost. So, we constantly innovate, you see, these days enterprise innovation is no longer limited to multinational or corporate R&D labs. It is often the outcome of collaborative efforts in which businesses interact and exchange knowledge and information with other partners as part of broader innovation systems. This open and collaborative approach has reduced the need for firms like us to have innovation-related capital investments. Such an approach makes a business like ours more innovate agile. For example, some digital technologies like cloud computing have enabled us to rent computing infrastructure and software services from the line of Amazon without upfront investment in technology capital. The business model has eliminated the need for on-site IT staff and has enabled us to make use of other relevant digital technologies such as data analytics, i.e. the use of raw big data for business purposes. That is what I meant by technology have been a game-changer innovation is a key part of it.

Interviewer: Thanks. I understand from your website that part of your growth strategy is collaborating with big multinational. Could you please expand on this?

Interviewee: Yes, we do so where are common and mutual interests. For example, we assist companies such as Shell, BP, Chevron, and the local players to where it makes sense to do.

Interviewer: Thank you. Could I now explore with you your staffing structure? How many staff do you employ, please?

Interviewee: Our employment model is based on a freelance business model. We have a resource pool of about 95 self-employed freelancers that we maintain and use as and when needed.

Interviewer: The freelancing staffing model, it is widely used across your industry?

Interviewee: No not really, it is more of a peculiarity here in sub-Saharan Africa. You see you have to view it from two perspectives. One we are an SME firm and we are unable to or maintain for that matter a large pool of human capital on our payroll. Secondly, this type of staffing model is common here in sub-Saharan Africa even most of the multinational firms the same model.

Interviewer: Great, thanks for the clarity. So how does these staff model works across the firm?

Interviewee: Here, resource allocation is determined by clients' demand and programme' or assignment. We take resource allocation and reallocation so important because it gives us a

clear picture of the amount of work that is a necessary assignment. It also helps to schedule ahead and have an insight into the team's progress, including allocating the right amount of time to everyone on the team. Resources allocation and re-allocation across the firm is underpinned by a freelance model.

Interviewer: Could I now explore your marketing approaches with you. In terms of approaches, how do you go about marketing your services across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: we use a multifaceted marketing strategy including online advertising, data analytics and collaboration tools has enabled us to grow the business in the Nigeria local market and internationally right from here in Lagos. For example, the use of smartphone and social media has offered us the capacity to reach a greater audience with a greater degree of accuracy. We use mobile phone technology coupled with social media for precision to further enhance our marketing strategy internationally. Especially when it comes to promoting our service offerings. Social media and mobile technology have allowed us to frog leap some of our competitors.

Interviewer: How do you measure your success in term of international growth?

Interviewee: Since every market is unique and different factors can affect the results, we across countries. So, we set clear goals and use it to measure their impact on the business. We are very careful not to follow the tendency of being overconfidence.

Interviewer: Thanks, you. I would like to know about your processes. Could you please explain how your processes work?

Interviewee: As you may know, you'll need to improve most processes at some point. Especially since we operate in a challenging and turbulence business environment. where for example, new clients' goals, a new development in technology influence our services, and changes in the business environment often calls for established processes to become inefficient or outdated. So, as you know few things work perfectly, right from the start. So, we continually access our processes, closely monitor how things are going in the weeks and months, to ensure that the process is performing to expectations. This monitoring allows us to constantly adjust and readjust processes to fix problems as they occur. We make it a priority to ask all employers including freelancers

how processes work, and what – if any – frustrations they're experiencing.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: Relationship as a key so important here. With a good relationship, business opportunity fully realised. So, we are very very good at nurturing all our old and potential new relationships. We sustain this by been proactive by making sure that our market relevancy is continually promoted and it is featured in all our social media feeds. for example, in India, we invite our customers to take part in some of the activities such as our forums and online activities.

10.7.4 Delta's Case Transcript

Interview conducted at Delta's Lagos Office		
	Date	17/04/2013
	Time	10:00
	Interviewee	Founder

10.7.4.1 Founder Interview Transcript

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I'm very passionate about the environment and most of the work I undertake reflect this. Where possible I try and make a contribution with my knowhow that will eventually lead to sustainable business and sustainable environment. My goal is to demystify elaborate solutions in the aviation sector and work with clients on a tailored solution..." (Founder of Delta).

Interviewer: And you are the founder of the firm?

Interviewee: Yes, I am.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mark. Now, could you please tell me a little bit more about your business. Although, I've seen your business background on your website and some of the different things that you offer.

Interviewee: We are a small management consulting firm with the strategic and operational insight and the practical experience providing a material impact on the oil and gas aviation sector.

Interviewer: Great thanks. Could I now ask you to explain why you decided to internationalise?

Interviewee: "...I have always worked for myself as a freelancer within the Nigerian local market in the aviation industry. "...I have worked in the aviation sector for many years during these years I have developed an extensive network of relationships. Here, sectoral knowledge is critical in aviation such so in the oil and gas sector and this has underpinned our reputation for several years. Then I received an invitation from a contact of mine from the Central Africa Republic interested my service to assist with delivering a contact in the Central Africa Republic. That is how our international business operation began..." (Founding Partner).

My passion for flight safety and the safety of all others involved in onshore and offshore rotary and fixed-wing flight operations has been the driving force for our firm and this moral code or DNA if you will, is shared across our firm. These have assisted and contributed toward our success within the Central African region..." (Founder of Delta).

Interviewer: How active do you sensing for opportunities?

Interviewee: One of the joys of self-employment is searching for new business. I dedicate part of each week to working my contacts and searching out opportunities. Understanding what the customer really wants is key for our business to succeed in this part of the world. Sometimes the opportunity just screams out at me and sometimes I have to let the story

percolate for a few days or weeks. I have been doing it this way for years and I believe part of the business success is working in the niche market we operate in. Sort of a backdoor entrance if you will. This is a good thing because the misses of others create business opportunities for me. We use different approaches to attract the attention of our clients. we have differentiated themselves from our competitor with similar background from us. You see, most if not all of my competitors are from European or American and are not readily sensitive to dealing with how business opportunities present itself here. Some often than not my services have been engaged to assist or deal with an issue that some of the multinational firm's faces. "...Take, for instance, I have personally negotiated multiple high nets worth contracts with or on behalf of principles such as Chevron, Shell, P Caverton Helicopters, World Fuel, MCM (Maintenance Centre Munich Germany), Universal Weather, Netjets Europe, and many others..." that is why I said, sensing for opportunities is sometimes the other way around. (Founder Delta).

Interviewer: Do you adapt your business strategy as part of your internationalisation?

Interviewee: We always seeks opportunities in the international marketplace. Our business development has enabled us to win business in West Africa and continues to provide us with

the foundation to seek further business opportunities as we are now a recognised as a contractor of choice within the region. Based on experience we have come to understand that business issues are different in different parts of the West African counties. Some are Francophone countries and the others are from the old British colonies. So, we continuously adapt our business strategies especially now that the Chinese are in town and pushing aggressively to gain market share. So multifaceted business strategy and the capacity to be innovative with our business model is so crucial an approach to business survival.

Interviewer: would I be right in saying your business operating in a turbulent environment?

Interviewee: Oh, for sure we do. We operate in a very very dynamic business environment. Especially now with the Chinese policy of expanding to African. We are now seeing that the Chinese business subtlety at paly across the business landscape. But Luckily for us we still operate within the niche market capacity to grow within our business tend to rely heavily on personal Contacts. So, I guess in a way we are not that threatened by the Chinese presence.

The other important influence within the market is that as the market continues to develop so is the social consciousness of the people. You see, the West African

people are now demanding that the firm takes the issues of governances seriously. So much so with the big firms especially the multinational firms. So, businesses are now conscious of such social responsibility and it continues to disrupt the moral ways of doing business here.

Interviewer: How do you manage these turbulences and constrains?

Interviewee: By have a transformational mindset. Being aware of the demand of the business environment, so that we can localise demand where necessary. By knowing change is always on the horizon and finally by continually adjusting our business model and having an adaptable multifaceted business strategy.

Interviewer: Ok thanks. Could you please explain how your international growth activities works?

Interviewee: We have an international mindset and participation in Overseas projects is paramount to the overall future sustainable success of our business and the Delta brand is now very well known in some regions of West Africa. We will continue to focus on the West Africa market. To that effect, we are strengthening our growth strategy here since there are lots of business opportunities out there in the West African markets. Being a small firm with a local root in Nigeria we will continue to explore business capacity here and evaluate contacts on its merits before we commit

ourselves. Nonetheless, we start our campaign to grow international by preparing an international business plan to evaluate your needs and set our goals. It's essential to assess our readiness and commitment to grow internationally before you get started. One big difference between doing business domestically and internationally is culture, relationship manager and Understanding body language, people think body language is universal it's not! Africans are notoriously known for coming to a meeting late, so we don't impose time limits on meetings because it adds strength to our negotiating position. Another important factor is finance, financing can sometimes be an issue, but these days government interest in boosting exporting and financial innovation have made getting funding easier.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: Our personal contacts.

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Interviewee: Mainly through our extensive social contacts. But our reputation goes ahead of us. Our international operation is very promising indeed. For many small growing businesses, a key decision is a cashflow. So, we keep an eye on cashflow, Good cash flow control is important for any business. For a growing business, it's crucial since cash constraints can be

the biggest factor limiting growth. Planning ahead helps us anticipate our financing needs.

Having the right systems and processes is very important to sustain and grow our business. Systems such as financial records, interactions with customers, business contacts, employee details, regulatory requirements and so on. Is too much to keep track of let alone use effectively. So, we run on a streamlined and OnDemand model for systems.

Interviewer: How do you remain competitive while growing your company?

Interviewee: Scaling our business is hard. It takes considerable effort. It involves having to interact with clients on a regular in fact on a daily basis. Like with anything else in life or in business, we put in the time to reap the benefits. We don't focus on the short-term outcome of our work. We tend to look to the long term. We continually work with our contacts to build a sales funnel. Continually reinvent ourselves, that is the founds of our business and that how we remain competitive while growing the business. (*Founding partner of Delta*).

Interviewer: Thanks. I understand from your website that part of your growth strategy is collaborating with big multinational. Could you please expand on this?

Interviewee: Yes, we do, strategic partnerships with the right companies can truly make a world of difference to our business. Identifying those partnerships might be easier said than done. But generally, strategic partnerships allow us to reach a wider client easily. We only collaborate with companies that are complementary to your own.

Interviewer: The use of technology how do you use technology?

Interviewee: We innovate to differentiate ourselves by leveraging technology and global platforms. We leverage technology and heavily rely on global platforms like Amazon Web Services and Google services. We create webinars, we find them to be a great way to promote our service. It helped us grow relatively fast. Webinars provide an automated selling tool for literally taking our service to market and reaching a wide audience quickly. We use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn it is one of the major ways to share instant information especially the use of chat rooms such as blogging and discussion. "...Another technology-driven innovation in the sector is asset-based consulting. In asset-based consulting, technology is used to add value and competitive advantage for customers by shortening project lead times and providing more functionality with lower costs..." (founding Partner of Delta).

Interviewer: How do you manage change and adaptation?

Interviewer: Complacency can be a major threat to a growing any business let alone ours. By assuming that we will continue to be successful simply because of our contacts, reputation or on our past success is very unwise. So, we regularly revisit and updates your business plan to remain agile in a very changing market condition. By being proactive we have built the capacity to respond to quickly changing market condition. By not being Complacency and having an up-to-date business plan helps us identify what action we need to take to change your business and the way it operates.

We are fully committed to continual change strategy even if it takes us out of our comfort zone. It involves hard decisions and we're prepared to do this, otherwise, we risk putting our business at a dangerous competitive disadvantage.

Interviewer: How do you measure your success in term of international growth?

Interviewer: You mentioned innovation a minute ago. So, let me how do you management innovation.

Interviewee: For us to remain competitive we rely on constant innovation. We are constantly innovating around our approaches, the use of technologies.

Interviewer: You mentioned using technology has given you a competitive edge. Could you expand on that, please?

Interviewee: Thanks to the internet and technology such as Google could Computing services, OnDemand service like Amazon Web Service allowed to compete successfully. We were able to remotely access pulled together historical data via the use of such technology assets.

Interviewer: Let me how you ask about your employees. How many staff do you employ, please?

Interviewee: Ok, we rely heavily on casual or temporary workers for project-based work. That's our employment model. The firm employs 10 staff in Nigeria, 1 staff in the UK and about 40 self-employed contract staff internationally. In addition, Delta has affiliate advisors are across the UK, South Africa, USA and Australia with hundreds of years of aviation experience to offer, international aviation consultants are ready to be at your service.

Interviewer: If you don't mind, I would like to explore your employee/staffing model with you. So, could you please tell me how you deploy your staff on assignment?

Interviewee: As an owner of a small business, I spend the better part of my life at work and I can't avoid interaction with every single employee. That's why it's important that I employ the right candidates according to their personal qualities. We do not use one size fits all structure and workflow. Our staffing model is based on a self-employed model to achieve an

economy of scale as and when needed. We a small firm and we do everything possible to lower the risks of attrition and increase the chance that our freelance or self-employed model works. The challenge we have is can't justify the cost of hiring a full-time HR generalist, yet we can't afford not incorporating legally compliant HR policies and procedures into our business is a liability. So, we work with third party suppliers. However, we make sure that we don't co-employ staff, otherwise, we lose control over our company's culture and freelance model.

Interviewer: How are your human resources integrated or utilise across the firm?

Interviewee: We use virtual employees to expand and diversify our talent pool. By using virtual employees and freelance model we delegate working structure saving our business some overhead cost.

An important component of creating virtual employees and freelance model experience that help our team feel more connected to the firms is leveraging right digital technology.

Interviewer: How are your human resources re-allocated across the firm?

Interviewee: We do not use one size fits all structure and workflow.

Interviewer: Could I now explore your marketing approaches with you. In terms of approaches, how do you go about marketing your services across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: What I have come to realise is that the more you succeed; the more competitors notice and the more they are likely to react to what you are doing and makes us successful. Here, West Africa, loyalty can be quick eroded. So, understanding where our services are in their lifecycles helps us work out how to maximise overall profitability. At the same time, we continue to see innovation as a key to build a stream of new profitable services to the market by making use of digital marketing tactics to explore and promote our service. Another important fact in our marketing strategy is through our website, email messaging, and social media posts, we make sure we engage with the clients. For example, we try to personalise our interactions with clients. experience showed that nothing can replace the experience of interacting with a company in person. When clients can meet you and your team, they'll feel a stronger connection. As I have stated early, we leverage technology like webinars to promote our services. It helped us grow relatively fast by providing use with automated selling tool for literally taking our services to market and reaching a wide audience quickly.

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain business relationships?

Interviewee: In order to build a strong and lasting relationship with clients again, experience has shown us that no customer wants to feel as though there is just a number. This is one benefit that we SME have over big companies. We try to maintain this approach to our business relationships. Clients must be able to trust and rely on us as an expert. That's why it's crucial we maintain a policy of openness when it comes to our professional opinions and point of view regarding the best interests of our clients. That is why a personal connection is very important in our industry. One of the best ways to help build a strong relationship with a client is to develop a reputation as an independent professional who delivers exceptional results. The key as we see it is to always find the opportunity to go above and beyond in a manner that our clients will appreciate. Another important point on managing and sustaining business relationships is it is essential we maintain our presence on both online and offline channels. Therefore, we see it as being crucial that we have a content and marketing strategy that relates exclusively to our stakeholder's interests. It is important, for example, when clients call for help, it's important we offer the same friendly, attentive service no matter how many times the call. We make sure that we constantly monitor our online presence to capture client complaints that are posted on social media or review sites. This type of criticism can not only cause you to lose the clients. it bad for business.

Interviewer: Do you speak any foreign language?

Interviewee: No.

10.7.4.2 Operations Manager:

Questions and Answers Section

Interviewer: If we could just start with you telling me a little bit about yourself

Interviewee: I'm the operation manager of our business. Prior to joining the Delta, I worked for several multinational firms here in Nigeria and in the UK.

Interviewer: Thank you. Could you please tell me a little bit more about your business? Although, I've seen your business background on your website and some of the different things that you offer.

Interviewee: We are a small management consulting firm. We work in the aviation sector, but we focus on the oil and gas industry. We work with our customer on their aviation needs.

Interviewer: How active do you sensing for opportunities?

Interviewee: New ad old customer alike buys when they trust that your business value is applicable to them and believe your company is able to service their needs. Sometimes, we do not do much of sense for business opportunities. Our business sales are based on reputation. We work in a niche market and we are well known. But usually start marketing with our customer base since we are very active in the market. We continue to rely on the internet which continues to have a large impact on the way international business is conducted these days. We depend on the social media it is our belief that if you don't have a presence on the main networks, we miss out on an audience that's ready and willing to connect with your brand. This impact is especially significant when it comes to finding leads for international partners. We see social media as one of the best ways to connect with oil and potential customers alike. Using social media let us micro target our audience. We use social media to compile data on our current customers and then digging deeper with social media analytics to see the bigger picture of who is interacting with us online. Then we continually revisit our social media to include ways to reach more customers. For example, we company first started, it had limited access to this huge group. The company had an email subscription list only but that was not enough audience to sustain and grow the company.

Interviewer: Could you please explain how your international growth activities works?

Interviewee: The participation in the international market is key to our business and for the overall future sustainable success of our company here in west Africa. Mr King is always seeking out new opportunities in this area. We always start the international grow campaign with a good business plan to evaluate our needs and set our goals. This forms the basis of a growth strategy. It's essential to assess our readiness and commitment to grow internationally before you get started. Even though, our brand is now very well known in some West Africa region. Whilst Mr King pursuit works with the strategies. I, on the other hand, is more pragmatic and thus grounded to avoid the pitfalls since the international expansion has many threats that domestic-based businesspeople never see. Like getting whacked by currency fluctuations, planning for our strategies since it takes far more time to extract ourselves from problems created by lack of planning than it would do it right the first time. So planning is so important. It is the height of ignorance to expect other people to learn our language to buy from us. So, we don't assume that business will be done in English so Familiarize yourself with the local language

Interviewer: How do you adapt your business strategy as part of your internationalisation?

Interviewee: Whilst servicing the oil and gas field is our core business, we have recently seen a diversification of the economy across West Africa, so we continue to reinvest our business to take advantage of the wider opportunities.

Interviewer: How do you manage these turbulences and constrains?

Interviewee: Environmental scanning plays a key role in managing turbulences and constrains it helps us with understanding trends, events and relationships in an organisation's external environment which assists management in planning the future course of action.

Interviewer: Thanks. Now could I explore the business growth sustainability with you? Could you please explain how your international growth activities works?

Interviewee: With the same simple principles that I have outlined early in your previous question. Agility coupled with cultural sensitivity to local issues. You see cooperate responsibilities perception and the issues environmental impact of oil and gas services varies.

Interviewer: How do you obtain information on business opportunities?

Interviewee: Basically, obtaining information on business opportunities tends to be mostly through personal and professional contacts that we've built up over the years. The rest is

through the traditional approaches providing the environment, conducting market analysis. You know what I mean.

Interviewer: How do you manage to sustain your growth?

Again basically, by word of mouth by existing clients' channels and personal contacts. technology and the web especially have been a game-changer. Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter have completely dominated how we explore market opportunities. We have embraced technology so much thanks to your company and it has shown dividend and continues to be the case.

Interviewer: How do you manage change and adaptation?

Interviewer: I can see you use technology extensively. Why is this the case?

Interviewee: The technology drives almost everything we do, and it continues to give us the edge. In the recent 2 years, the tech behind our operations has undergone a metamorphosis based on feedback from customers and staff alike. The key, however, for our customers is not the disruptive technology we have employed, but simply that our service is now more convenient than ever before and offers superior benefits. Technology as improved communications with our customers has increased flexibility and significantly lower

business costs. Internet enable marketplace continues to grow and expand and has deep penetration in the West Africa market. Many clients of ours now expect to be able to do business with us through online channels. Take for example the use of smartphone has led to huge social media presence.

Interviewer: How do you management innovation.

Interviewee: We use innovation as the key driver of productivity and our long-term growth. For example, some digital technologies like cloud computing have enabled us to rent computing infrastructure and software services from the line of Amazon without upfront investment in technology capital.

Interviewer: I understand from your website that part of your growth strategy is collaborating with big multinational. Could you please expand on this?

Interviewee: Yes, we do so where are common and mutual interests. For example, we assist companies such as Shell, BP, Chevron, and the local players to where it makes sense to do.

Interviewer: Thank you. Could I now explore with you your staffing structure? How many staff do you employ, please?

Interviewee: Small businesses often build the best brands, but we're faced with limitations that corporations don't have to struggle with

(time, resources, plentiful workforce). To ensure you're effectively implementing best HR practices, begin crafting your employee handbook and company policies on day one and continue to keep it relevant and up to date as your small business grows; communicate these policies to every new hire during training/onboarding. By investing in employee training and company policies, you're investing in your team members and creating a policy-compliant workspace for everyone.

We are a small business thus, the role of human resource in our business is very important is about the relationship between the firm and our employees. It's important to remember our HR policies will heavily impact our business growth as well as our reputation as an employer.

Interviewer: The freelancing staffing model, it is widely used across your industry?

Interviewer: Great, thanks for the clarity. So how does these staff model works across the firm?

Interviewee: One of the biggest struggles in customer-facing industries is presence. We need to balance being available to customers, while also offering employees morale-boosting work-life balance. Here, resource allocation is determined by clients' demand and programme' or assignment. But generally, we use contractors all the time.

Interviewer: Could I now explore your marketing approaches with you. In terms of approaches, how do you go about marketing your services across all your operating countries?

Interviewee: The unique benefit of social media compared to other marketing channels is that it allows you to talk directly to customers. Most people and our customer included uses a smartphone, it's everywhere so, social media has given us the capabilities to reach a greater customer with a greater degree of accuracy. Especially when it comes to promoting our service offerings. Social media and mobile technology have allowed us to frog leap some of our competitors.

Interviewer: How do you measure your success in term of international growth?

Interviewee: We use a different strategy for the different market since every market is unique and different factors can affect the results.

Interviewer: Could you please explain how your processes work?

Interviewer: How do you manage and sustain relationships?

Interviewee: Relationship as the key so important within our industry. The unique benefit of social media compared to other approaches is that it allows you to manage and build sustainable relationships more effectively and directly with

customers. Good and suitable relationships are very good for a business opportunity.

10.8 Thematic Analysis of User Interviews

10.8.1 Index and Codebook

10.8.1.1 Codebook

Codes and their meaning	
Code Name	Code Definition
Agility	Is how the firm the move fast, speed, nimbleness, and responsiveness in renewing itself, adapt, change quickly, and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment.
Background operations	How the firm began, first clients, formation, background and firm structure.
Culture	How the firm manages or deals with cultural influences, cultural sensitivity.
Contractors	An independent person, business, or corporation including local partners that provide goods or services under a written contract or a verbal agreement.
Clients	Types of clients, sector, how they were found, how long they are clients.
Competitors	Identity, and any interaction of challengers.
Environmental	It is how the firms identify all the external and internal

analysis,	elements, which can affect the firm's performance including business opportunity,
Financial crisis	The impact of the financial crisis on firms.
Financial Measures	How firm assesses performance (turnover, profit).
Foreign Language	Interviewee's foreign language knowledge as well as the company's experience with foreign languages (staff and working languages).
Gap	A gap in the market is a place or area that current businesses aren't serving.
knowhow	How the firm acquires and accomplishes tasks using its knowledge (tacit or explicit knowledge).
ICT	How this firm uses information and communication technology to be competitive in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment.
Intellectual Property	How the firm acquires proprietary knowhow both in how the firm keeps ownership and shares knowledge with clients.
Internationalisation Strategy	Internationalisation process: past, present, future; how the process started, clients, revenue, geographic scope.
Marketing	How the firm promotes services and products offering etc frequency.

Market selection	Past, present and future markets.
Networks	How the firm gains clients and work through contacts to find work, contracts and opportunities both at inception and for internationalisation.
New services	How the firm acquired new services in past, adaptation and customisation undertook and future prospects.
Niche	Identifying firm speciality.
Non-financial Measures	Success factors and goal achievement.
Personal background	Past expertise of the interviewee, work experience, time abroad.
Price	How prices are established, competitiveness.
Reputation	How established, valued by the firm and subsequently perceived by clients.
Social media	How the firm uses internet services within its and online communities to create content and interact through online communities.
Skills	Staff skills, expertise.
Sectoral Knowledge	How the firm uses sectoral Knowledge, acquiring and transforming it into services.

Innovation	How the firm implements new ideas, creating dynamic services, products or improving existing services.
Processes	How the firm changes processes or creating more effective processes.
<i>Source: Author's Classification</i>	

10.8.1.2 Index

Index ID	Code Name	Index ID	Code Name
1	Entrepreneur	35	Limited resources.
2	International experience	36	Sales
3	Contacts	37	Learning organisation.
4	Niche	38	Modularised solutions and services.
5	ICT	39	limited financial resource.
6	Risk management	40	Innovation.
7	Processes efficiency	41	Processes reconfiguration.
8	Partnership	42	Continually reshape Business strategy.
9	International experience	42	Creative business approaches.
10	Culture	44	Social media as a strategy.
11	Staff	45	Technology savvy.
12	Contractors	46	Flexible processes.

13	Process	47	Sample communication approach.
14	Organisational change	48	Working collaboratively
15	Innovations	49	Multifaceted marketing approach.
16	Restructured	50	Huge financial resources.
17	Significant knowledge	51	Target audience
18	Practical knowhow	52	Internationalising through subcontracting
19	Opportunities exploitation	53	Continual growth capacity.
20	Sellable services.	54	Background operations
21	A gap in the market,	55	Competitors
22	A network of local partners	56	Cultural influences.
23	international Sales	57	Cultural sensitivity.
24	Business growth	58	Ability
25	International growth	59	Market analysis
26	Languages	60	Market analysis
27	Knowhow	61	Change management
28	Social media	62	Multifaceted strategy approach
29	Marketing toolset,	63	Entrepreneur
30	Environmental analysis,	64	Entrepreneurial orientation
31	Business opportunity	65	Contacts
32	Reputation	66	Freelance model

33	Capabilities	67	Web
34	sectoral knowhow	69	Internet

Table 26 - Index Table

10.8.2 Emerging Code Exercise

10.8.2.1 Alpha Founder's Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	Code Identified
1.	"...I am the founder of the company with 30 years of industry experience..."	Entrepreneur	
2.	"...Prior to setting up the company, I have lived abroad for years working for a number of multinational companies in a number of various capacities from country lead, programme director to change owner..."	International experience	
3.	"...In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a	International experience	

	regional head office and very strong presences..."		
4.	"...As a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region South-eastern Asia..."	Contacts	
5.	"...We are a small size international niche consulting business operating from a number of countries including the UK..."	SME	Niche
6.	"...We operate within the information technology and telecommunication (ICT) space..."	ICT,	Process efficiency,
7.	"...We assist our clients to minimise ICT risk exposure at a competitive cost and improve process efficiency in a way that increases profitability and opens doors to new opportunities..."	Risk management	ICT
8.	"...We offer expert independent advice and knowhow in information technology, risk and change management to our	Risk, partnership	change

	clients and in so doing deliver a tailored service to meet the individual needs of our client's organisation..."		management
9.	"...We do this by developing a long-term partnership with our clients'..."	partnership	
10.	"...Ok, you see because change is inherently unsettling for people at all levels of an organisation, we work with the leadership to speak with one voice and model the desired behaviours..."	People management	Marketing
11.	"...Managing change effectively requires moving the company from its current state to a future desired state at minimal cost to the company..."	Leadership	Cost
12.	"...Therefore, the key is change must be managed, implemented, and executed in such a way that there is always communication	Change Management	communication

	across the company..."		
13.	"...This allows for equilibrium and encourages growth and innovation within a company..."	structured processes	
14.	"...I believe that the leadership team must invite all staff to offer ideas on creating a new vision for the company and thus driving the company forward as a whole..."	Change management	leadership
15.	"...This is where we bring our expertise to the table..."	Leadership	
16.	"...I believe that executive teams that work well together are best positioned for success..."	plan	
17.	"...So, we bring a set of structured processes and set of deliverables to the technical side of change..."	Processes	
18.	"...After all, change management is all about introducing changes	change	

	in a structured way..."	management	
19.	"...Without structure and rigour, it is difficult to integrate change management activities into a project delivery approach..."	change management	
20.	"...We assist our clients to connect change management to achieve the intended benefits and value from change..."	change management	
21.	"...By enabling them to directly tie the impact of changes to the ultimate results and outcomes of the project..."	change	
22.	"...We applicable we introduce a structured and rigorous approach to help increase credibility and accessibility across the organisation..."	Structure and approach	
23.	"...By making a direct connection between how well the change is managed and the ultimate ROI..."	ROI	

24.	"...Changes in inevitable so from the point of view of our business we have a great deal of control over the internal environment, structures and processes covering our day-to-day operations and decisions to create services that will satisfy clients..."	Change management	
25.	"...However, the external environment is a different ballgame although we apply the same approaches because it is manageable when you have visibility across the whole of the service offerings..."	Environmental	Adaptation
26.	"...So, to compete successfully and sustain the growth we continuously study the environment and adapt our business model accordingly..."	Business model	Growth

27.	"...Yes, we operate predominantly within the Southeastern region of Asia market, mainly from the Philippine, Vietnam and Thailand..."	Network Contacts	Business operations
28.	"...In the last 15 years, I have lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries, specifically the Philippines where we have a regional headquarter and very strong presences..."	International experience	
29.	"...As a result, I have built a very strong network of contacts especially within the region South-eastern Asia..."	strong network	
30.	"...I am very familiar with the culture and understand the way in which business operates and function within this region..."	Culture	
31.	"...OK, we have 5 full-time staff in the UK and 10 full-time staff across the other countries 4 countries Philippines, Vietnam and	Staff	

	Thailand..."		
32.	"...We maintain a low staff overhead since you have an extensive network of independent local contractors that work for us across operating countries..."	Contractors	
33.	"...Yes, sure. We use a consulting service business model. Our consulting services work across the entire lifecycle of business change from conducting strategic reviews to facilitating the embedding and adoption of new ways of working..."	Adaptation	
34.	"...We also work with our clients in implementing strategic projects. We work with clients to identify opportunities for greater efficiency and better results..."	efficiency	
35.	"...We also work with clients to manage existing projects. For	process,	

	example, our change capabilities include supporting and enabling the technical, process, cultural and organisational change for our clients within the telecommunication sectors and government..."	Cultural, organisational change	
36.	"...the use of technology is so embedded in our DNA. It enables us to deliver clients solution globally and it is so fundamental to our success..."	DNA, cultural and	
37.	"...More important than ever we continue to innovate, embrace emerging and disruptive technologies and offer the benefits to our clients - ignoring such them will leave us falling behind and questioning what might have been, as a potential competitive advantage..."	organisational change	Innovations
38.	"...The event that led to our international growth and development	Entrepreneur	

	was when I decided to leave British telecommunication to start my own firm..."		
39.	"...I used to work for British telecommunications looking after their interest in the Southeastern region of Asia within the telecommunication sector..."	Entrepreneur	
40.	In a nutshell sometimes in 2002, I believe it's roundabout Aug 2002. It seems rather a long time ago now, it's now over 10 years since we've started operating..."	Strat of the international operation	
41.	"...Anyway, BT restructured its operations with the region and going forward decided its preferred mode of operation within the region will to work with partners rather than undertaking the assignment directly. I suppose BT want to minimise their exposure at that point in time..."	Restructured	

42.	“...In any event, at that time, I had acquired very significant knowledge and practical “know-how” in ICT change and risk management during the course of my career...”	Knowhow	
43.	“...This is coupled with the fact that I had lived and worked in the Southeastern region of Asia for about 10 years and understood the culture and the business landscape very well...”	culture	
44.	“...You see, I have been contemplating leaving BT with the view of setting up a private company in the Philippine as there are good opportunities to be exploited, you see the restructuring of BT just happened at the right time for me...”	sellable services	
45.	“...I suppose the key reason being, I have developed easily sellable services which are much cheaper than previous multinational telecommunication firm...”	sellable services	

46.	"...The combination of these factors and my extensive knowledge and skills strongly played a vital part in my decision to establish on my own..."	Knowledge	skill
47.	"...I have worked within the region extensively, the Philippine that is. I have identified a gap in the market for a western-style information technology expertise, particularly within risk and change management space..."	International experience	
48.	"...In essence, there was a huge demand for our service and there was a shortage in the market for our service..."	gap	
49.	"...You see, I already have a good working relationship with BT and I have already established a robust working network of local partners that I normally used as part of my BT operations within the Philippines..."	Relationship management	local partners

50.	"...I decided to approach BT with a proposal that I will take up their contracts within the Philippine with the view of still representing them..."	contract	
51.	"... I already have a functional and established company to take off from BT..."	plan	
52.	"... That is the beginning of the journey of the company, from there we grew, and we are now operating within four countries within the region..."	growth	
53.	"...Yes, our first contract was with the BT and it ended in December 2004. ..."	First contracts	
54.	"...The relationship between us and BT became very strong such that we undertook a number of additional assignments working	Relationship management	

	on their behalf within the region ..."		
55.	"...As with any good relationship, we used the experience and opportunity as a spring ball to develop and build business opportunities within the region..."	growth	
56.	"...Following on from the end of that contract, in 2005, I decided to consolidate our clients' base and increase our presence within Manila..."	growth	
57.	"...In order to do this, I established a strong local presence in Malian and open an international office in the Philippines in the same year..."	local presence	
58.	"...Following on from the office in Malian, I secured my first contact in April 2005 with a local firm in the Philippines..."	growth	
59.	"...The call centre setup programme was very successful, and we	success	

	were awarded an additional training contract with the same firm..."		
60.	"...It is against this backdrop that I began a proactive opportunity campaign to continue to grow our Philippines business..."	opportunity	
61.	"...By the end of 2005 Alpha had secured a total of four contracts predominantly in Manila ..."	sale	
62.	"...As a consequent of business success in the Philippines, I made a strategic decision to enter neighbours' countries. At first to enter the Vietnam ICT market from where we progressed to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia..."	Business growth.	
63.	"... We succeeded in entering Vietnam and our first Vietnam client was in January 2006..."	Market entry	
64.	"... which was with a telecommunication company that specialised	business model	

	in using the mobile virtual network operator business model to provide Pay As You Go mobile SIM cards..."		
65.	"...The work required managing the business change process from the manual customer relationship management (CRM) activities to information technology CRM system..."	customer relationship management	
66.	"... Alpha's own definition of success in international activities is centred on having long-standing clients with mutual benefit..."	success	
67.	"...Yes, I speak moderate Tagalog. Also, our operations director has Pilipino heritage..."	Foreign languages	
68.	"...Again, we exploit our knowhow capabilities and are heavily reliant on the use of social media which is part of our marketing	Social media,	

	toolset..."		
69.	"...You see, being a technology firm, we use social media extensively and it plays a major role in our marketing approach..."	marketing toolset	
70.	"..For example, to promote the firm services offerings..."		
71.	"...It is not uncommon for clients to contact us via the Internet and this type of clients continues to increase over the past two years..."	internet	
72.	"...We also take part in various ICT events and I publish online editorials in Google as well as taking part in UK SMEs trade promotion initiatives..."		
73.	"...No, not really, we use a multifaceted marketing approach. You see, we cannot compete with the large firms with huge financial	marketing approach,	

	resources..."		
74.	"... So, we to be creative and innovative with our marketing approaches..."	creative and innovative	
75.	"...for example, we constantly adapt our marketing campaigns and strategies depending on our target audience. Being a tech company, it is easy for us to be the focus and targeted. That way, we can get maximum return on marketing investment and achieve economy of scale..."	marketing campaigns	
76.	"... We have a very clear vision of how and with whom it prefers to work..."	vision	
77.	"...We prefer internationalising through subcontracting with large MNEs, who find the clients, establish, the contract and we manage	subcontracting	

	the relationship..."		
78.	"...As of 2014, subcontracting work accounts for approximately 65% of our workflow..."	subcontracting	
79.	"...Our growth outlook over the next two years at 2014 was to maintain and continue to consolidate our current business opportunities approach..."	Forecast, growth plan	
80.	"... Our medium-term strategic position is to grow the business capacity within these countries in and our long-term strategy is aligned to maintaining a strong presence within the region..."	strategy	
81.	".... Right now, we strongly believe that there is still growth capacity within the Philippines and Thailand market, in particular, that we must exploit..."	growth capacity	
82.	"... We, therefore, need to consolidate on these opportunities	Consolidated	

	rather than expanding into other countries..."	opportunities	
83.	"... What makes us different and remains competitive is the way we do business and our flexible company processes ..."	Flexible processes	
84.	"...You see by offering real people, real solutions, and real results ..."	Services	
85.	"...We believe that by bringing people together underpinned by seamless processes, we produce positive outcomes ..."	seamless processes	
86.	"...By way of example, all our consultants and local partners are technology savvy, our delivery processes are flexible, our communication approaches are simple are clear all across the business ..."	technology savvy	

87.	"... We relied heavily on our digital service delivery, social media and technology capabilities to remain competitive ..."	technology	
88.	"...Our clients see us as experts in the field. We working approach is collaborative in nature ..."	Expertise	
89.	"...We do not maintain a large staff portfolio instead we work with our local partners on projects and contracts delivery ..."	Resource management	
90.	"...Also, resources are allocated to us by our clients on projects as needed in essence we work closely with our clients to identify their challenges. Just to give you a flavour of some of the exciting projects we advise and works with our clients on - mobile technology integration ..."	Resources allocation	
91.	"...Take for example, in the Asian mobile market device space ..."	mobile market	

92.	"...It should not surprise you to note that mobile devices are heavily relied upon within by our clients' customers for day to day communication ..."	mobile devices	
93.	"...For example, some of our clients' lucrative sales are targeted towards remote customers ..."	sales	
94.	"...Another important is the way we leverage our limited sources of human capital to take full advantage of opportunity ..."	limited sources	
95.	"...Another key important factor that allows us to remain competitive is how we incorporate lessons learned from one project to the next ..."	lesson learnt	
96.	"...You see, rather than going through the formal process on lesson learnt on an assignment ..."	lesson learnt	

97.	"...lessons learnt from preview assignments are quickly incorporated via technology into our services offerings, which are made quickly and easily available again using technology across the firm and is readily available for the next assignment ..."	Resource availability	
98.	"...So, you see, leverage our digital service delivery capabilities, social media knowhow and our technical expertise to the maximum ..."	expertise	
99.	"... We have to be innovative with our limited resources, by being creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive ..."	innovative	
100.	"... Since most of our solution and modularise, typically a consultant often works on a number of projects and or	Resource utilisation	

	assignment simultaneously ...”		
101.	“...Otherwise, our margin level and ability to grow will be severely compromised ...”		
102.	“...Another key important factor, we position ourselves as an expert extension of our clients’ resources ...”		
103.	“...So, we usually work with our clients by embedding ourselves within their organisation ...”		
104.	“... Due to our size and limited access to the large financial resource we have to make do with what we have by clearly implementing innovative processes reconfiguration and to quickly recombines these processes to achieve competitive advantage in	Lack of financial	

	this ever-changing market environment ..."		
105.	"... We are frequently involved in environmental analysis as well. We see it as an on-going activity that takes place every time, we obtain feedback ..."	environmental analysis	
106.	"... We usually start with working through my networks of social and personal contacts that I have built up over the years ..."	personal contacts	
107.	"... My personal relationship and networks provide me with opportunities to see what is going on in the market and often act as a point of reference for opportunities that are pending ..."	relationship and networks	
108.	"... We actively engage with our clients, this allows us to get a better understanding of our clients' demand thus enables us to	environmental analysis	

	renew and reassess our capability, capacity and adjust our strategies going forward ...”		
109.	“... For example, identifying market trends before they happen might enable us to offer products and services to clients before your competitors ...”	market trends	
110.	“... We use social media extensively. We check the social media activity of our potential clients’ ...”	social media	
111.	“... You will be surprised how much information we keep up from social media just be looking at what is discussed by our potential clients’ staffs ...”	social media	
112.	“... We use that to gauge and explore opportunities. Take, for instance, we use our contacts social media feeds to explore and lookout for opportunities ...”	Innovation	
113.	“... You see, we are very very active, and we always keep our heads	Modularised	

	to the ground ..."	solutions	
114.	"... Our reputation, our ability, capabilities, our sectoral and industry know-how ..."	Reputation	
115.	"... Are the key, in the southeastern Asia market, expatriate status and western technical knowhow give you a slight edge ..."	expatriate status	
116.	"... But you still, you have to continually be creative and embed your technical expertise in the context of the market ..."	creative	
117.	"... Take, for example, we are very aware and very familiar with the way business is conducted around here. It is slightly different from the way business is conducted here in the UK ..."	approach	
118.	"... We are very aware of the cultural influences within the	cultural	

	functions and workings of over clients. Cultural sensitivity is crucial and very important in this part of the world ..."	influences	
119.	"... You have to know how to navigate through business-related sensitivity and you have to be aware of their place in business..."	business-related sensitivity	
120.	"... I suppose the added advantage is that I've lived and worked around the South-eastern Asia countries for a very long period of time ..."	Experience	
121.	"... So, this has given I me a good understanding of the way in which business is conducted ..."	Business sensitivity	

10.8.2.2 Alpha's Operational Director Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
122.	"...I am the Operations Director; I head the Southeastern operations from manila in the Philippine. I have been with the firm for 10 years..."	Experience	
123.	"...Before I joined the company, I too worked for BT for about 3 years. John (the founder) recruited me and brought me into the BT fold in the Philippine..."	Experience	
124.	"...Before joining the operations, I used to work for one of the largest telecom company in Philippine for about 3 years..."	Skills	

125.	"...As you may have probably gathered, we are a predominantly Technology consulting and change management organisation..."	Skills	
126.	"...We work with our clients from two perspectives: 1) from the tech consulting advisory perspective and 2) from change implementation perspective..."	Business model	
127.	"...From the from tech consulting advisory standpoint we work with our clients on strategic issues such as risk exposure, internet security transition, management, etc and from project implementation perspective we assist with clients on challenging project implementations..."	Business model	Challenging project implementations
128.	"...We have developed slick and structured processes for effective management changes..."	Processes	Effective management

129.	"...Our approaches are structured and ensure that planning and strategy development takes place in collaboration with our clients the project team..."	Approaches	Collaboration
130.	"...We listen carefully to our clients' needs and enables their strategy change journey..."	Client communication	Strategy change
131.	"...We do this by leveraging our advisory business expertise to focus on outcome led initiatives and considering strategy change needs..."	Expertise	
132.	"...We usually deal with changes from two different perspectives..."	Changes	
133.	"...We usually deal with changes from two different perspectives. First from the external business environment perspective and Secondly from our internal business environment perspective..."	Changes	Business environment perspective

134.	"...From the viewpoint of the external business environment..."		
135.	"...We have to understand how the environment is changing and the impact of those changes on our business..."	Changes management	
136.	"...So basically, we conduct environmental analysis which consists of understanding the economic leverage, understanding the political terrain understanding the legal position and so forth. We then use the result to effectively position our business..."	Environmental analysis	
137.	"...And from the viewpoint of internal business, the environmental analysis is also used to restructuring our internal activities as deemed necessary..."	Environmental analysis	Strategy change
138.	"...We use the results to drive better and seamless internal changes that the business needs in so doing our business	Internal changes	day-to-day operations

	we have a great deal of control over the internal environment, structures and processes covering our day-to-day operations and decisions to create services that will satisfy clients..."		
139.	"...So, in a nutshell, that is how we deal with or manage business environment..."	Business environment	
140.	"...OK, from an operational standpoint, I cover 4 countries which I manage from Manila..."	International presence	
141.	"...We currently have 5 full-time staff operating from Surrey. We also have 10 full-time employees and 5 part-time employees across the other countries..."	Limited resources	
142.	"...yes, I think that's about right. Although we work with about 40 independent contractors which are not our employees..."	Independent contractor	Resource model
143.	"...Basically, we use a consulting service business model working	Business model	Consulting

	on an assignment basis, that is time and material basis. That is that standard consulting services practices..."		services
144.	"...Yes, I'm British but my mum is Pilipino, so I speak good Tagalog..."	Languages	
145.	"...Basically, yes, I do. Although, we have marketing personally. But John and I, more so John. John is well known with the within the tech circuit and he and the company has a very good and established reputation in the Philippine..."	Entrepreneurial orientation	Established reputation
146.	"...So, we usually start working on our social networks contacts. We also aggressively use our social media capabilities which plays a major role in our marketing approach..."	Marketing approach	Social media capabilities
147.	"...Nope! Our marketing methods evolve. Creativity and agility	Marketing	Marketing

	dominant our marketing campaigns methods and strategies..."	campaigns	methods
148.	"...Technology dominant marketing campaigns. We have developed a marketing algorithm that very good which continues to give us an edge and it is easy for us to be a focus and targeted..."	Technology, marketing	
149.	"...This largely in the domain of John. The general approach is John set the strategy on how and with whom we prefer to work with..."	Entrepreneurial orientation	
150.	"...We usually give preference internationalising through subcontracting with large company..."	Subcontracting	Resource model
151.	"...Our mantra is agility and creativity equal success..."	Creativity	
152.	"...So, we live and breathe this mantra by reassessing and reassessing our business strategy and approaches..."	Business strategy	Approaches

153.	"...We just must agile in our ever-changing business environment..."	Changing business	
154.	"...We just must agile in our ever-changing business environment. growth success..."	Agile	
155.	"...By adhering to our mantra being focus and building on our reputation..."	Reputation	
156.	"...Our business structure is very flexible not hierarchical..."	Flexible	
157.	"...Much so also our delivery processes are flexible and are simple and clear..."	Processes flexible	
158.	"...Another key important factor our resource utilisation..."		
159.	"...Knowledgeable consultants are at the forefront of consulting practice success or failure..."	Knowledgeable	

160.	"...So, their expertise plays a central role in driving our integration and utilisation functions..."	Integration	
161.	"...Aside, from expert knowledge we have to remain creative and agile on work practices, decision making styles, reporting relationships, our firm structure..."	Creative and agile	
162.	"...Hence, our operating models all impact how employees will perform in the combined company..."	Operating models	
163.	"...We must be innovative with our limited resources to be a suitable business..."	Creative	
164.	"...We must be creative in the way we combine resource and processes to stay competitive and we are good at it..."	Resource and processes	Competitive
165.	"...Resource reallocation, helps us choose the best available resources for our clients' projects and manage them	Resource	Utilisation

	throughout the assignment, so that way we avoid under or overutilisation of your employees..."	reallocation	
166.	"...We do not just use any resources as needed or available we take into account project dependencies..."	Resources management	
167.	"...So, projects there are tasks that can only be done after some other ones are completed, so there's no point to hog resources..."	Transformation	Resource model
168.	"...We are frequently involved in environmental analysis. We listen to your potential clients and past leads..."	Environmental analysis	
169.	"...By targeting potential customers listen to their needs, wants, challenges and frustrations in their industry..."	Targeting	
170.	"...We listen to your customers, look at our competitors and look at industry trends and insights..."	Trends and insights	

171.	"...We know our customers' very well to know their needs and what they are thinking..."	Customer management	
172.	"...We have developed mutually beneficial knowledge sharing relationships with them by talking to them about their future requirements and discussing how we might be able to develop products or services to ensure that we meet their needs..."	Knowledge sharing	Products or services development
173.	"...We are authentic and let them know we have their back..."	Clients management	
174.	"...We help identify challenges and shared our goals and values with them..."	Solution management	
175.	"...We develop mutual respect and share our vulnerabilities. We share our plans with them..."	Clients management	

176.	"...Ok. Let me answer this in two folds. From the client perspective, we bring a structured process and set of deliverables to the technical side of change..."	Process, change management	

10.8.2.3 Beta's Founder Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
177.	"...I am the founder of the firm..."	Entrepreneurial	
178.	"...I hold a PhD in computational chemistry and structure-activity correlation studies for oncology products. We began as a UK based firm predominantly serving the UK home market..."	Education	Sectoral knowhow
179.	"...We were initially established to fill a gap within the UK market. Mainly by providing quality assurance on clinical research to the life science and healthcare sector..."	Market gap	Healthcare sector

180.	"...We also specialised in clinical quality assurance service..."		
181.	"...We also offer a broad range of service capability in the area of biopharmaceutical and medical device to our clients in all areas of quality assurance. From auditing to quality management services, process optimisation and integration..."	Specialisation	Niche
182.	"...we have a presence in India, Israeli and we..."	International presence	Growth
183.	"...As of today, we have 6 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff in the UK and about 95 self-employed freelance staff internationally ..."	Staff	

184.	"...Yes, sure. We use a freelance staff model..."	Freelance staff model	Resource model
185.	"...It is the most cost-efficient approach to staffing as far as we are concerned..."	cost-efficient	Finance
186.	"...We cannot afford to hold huge pool off resources on our books. So, we pull resources in when it is necessary..."	Limited resources	
187.	"...We tend to work on a project by project basis. You see Most if not all the freelancers we use we've known over the years as a result, over the years we have built up a database or portfolio of good freelancers. ..."	Assignment	Resource utilisation
188.	"...I have always wanted to work for myself and I have been looking for such an opportunity right from the start of my career..."	Entrepreneur	

189.	"...But I needed experience..."	Experience	
190.	"...So, I carefully following a career path which will offer me the experience to broaden my career horizon and gain the vital experiences, including international assignments where possible since I already have a very good grasp of two additional foreign languages..."	International Experience	International assignments
191.	"...During 2003, United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) invited us to participate in an international show trade initiative..."	UKTI	Trade show
192.	"...We attended a number of campaign events as a result of which we secured our first international business working for an Indian operation in 2004..."	Campaign events	
193.	"...The India opportunity "kick-started" our international journey. It came just at the right time but with a number of issues and	International journey	Growth challenges

	challenges ..."		
194.	"...Numerous to list. Take, for instance, we have to quickly adaptable our business model to accommodate India business opportunity. ..."	Adaptable	Business model
195.	"...Also, the big elephant in the room was finance. Finance almost scuffled the expansion plan ..."	Finance	
196.	"...We initially wanted to start our international exposure by exploiting the Spanish or French market..."	International exposure	Language advantage
197.	"...This particular strategic approach was in part due to my language advantage in Spanish and French. But instead, our first international opportunity was in India..."	Strategic approach	Language advantage

198.	"...Yes, I'm also fluent in Italian. I lived in France when I was young, French is my mother tongue and has a good understanding of Spanish and German..."	Languages	
199.	"...Multi-language skills are certainly an advantage. It helps in building international credibility..."	Multi-language	International credibility
200.	"...On a continual and a regular basis..."	Continual	
201.	"...We operate in a dynamic international business environment, so we are constantly and actively prevented the environment to ensure service relevancy and scan for business opportunity ..."	dynamic international	Business opportunity

202.	"... We focus on increasing conversions on our brand loyalty..."	Brand loyalty	
203.	"... We conduct market research on market analysis, competitor analysis, trends analysis and customer analysis..."	Market analysis	Customer analysis
204.	"... We make use of digital marketing as part of our toolset to explore and promote our service and advertizing to reach some segments of your audience online especially it allows users to reach and deliver to our mobile users..."	Digital marketing	Online
205.	"...We rely extensively on the internet for all more marketing campaign..."	Marketing campaign	Internet
206.	"...We platform such as LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Twitters..."	Social media platform	

207.	"... our sustainable growth success includes developing new business models and value propositions across our value chain from clinical trials, post-market surveillance, electronic health records and other sources..."	Business models	Sustainable growth success
208.	"...To achieve sustainable growth, we will rely heavily on our knowledge, from data management to understanding clients' expectations..."	Knowhow	
209.	"... Since the future of the healthcare ecosystem will surely continue to revolve. therefore, our growth approach takes into account such approaches..."	Healthcare ecosystem	Approaches
210.	"... <i>That said</i> , our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it..."	Collaborative, partnership	

211.	"...This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field ..."	competition	Growth
212.	"... Through word of mouth and some existing contacts, and by building up brand recognition in India..."	Word of mouth	Brand recognition
213.	"... We also leverage our big data and AI capabilities to sustain our growth strategy..."	AI	Technology
214.	"... I also take part in several pharmaceutical related symposia internationally which I leverage for business growth..."	Business growth	
215.	"... We understand that our QA expertise is only of value to clients when it's related to their commercial objectives..."	QA	

216.	"... Rather than apply ready-made solutions, we prefer to learn as much as possible about the wider issues and business context, becoming - as far as possible - part of a client's quality management team..."	Solution approach	led Team management
217.	"...Aside, from this, "...it is important that those consultants that represent our firm especially those on the frontline have the right entrepreneurial approach..."	Entrepreneurial approach	
218.	"...In other words, they have to think on the feet and come up with new ideas since they sometimes work on clients' site..."	Update	New ideas
219.	"... It is very important for our consultant to continually update the global office ..."	Continually update	Global office
220.	"...Like I said earlier there is no way we can sustain an international	Limited resource	Resource model

	growth based purely on maintaining a large human resource pool..."	pool	
221.	"...So, we are always creative in both our HR acquisition, HR utilisation. So, HR model is based on a freelance model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed..."	Creativity	Resource model
222.	"...We use technology a great deal. The resource is used in a coordinated approach and usually across projects..."	Technology	Approach
223.	"... A given freelancer usually works on a number of projects at any given time..."	Freelance model	Resource model
224.	"... With the aim of maximising HR usage in a manner that gives us the maximum possible output from a given combination of resources based on freelance model..."	Resource management	

225.	"...We conduct market research since there are no doubts that our business cannot be successful without knowing our clients or market segmentation..."	Market research	Market strategy
226.	"... Since we create services that satisfy the needs of clients within your target market. That is why we conduct market research and identify the opportunities for further business development we use the social media greatly..."	Opportunities identification	Market strategy
227.	"... Don't underestimate the power of social media in business especially in a B2B arena. It's great for connecting with our clients and putting our business in front of potential partners and investors..."	Social media	Technology

228.	"...We use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn aggressively to promote ourselves, to attract our clients and stay in contact with our clients. ..."	Social media	Online
229.	"...We also use social media for instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, webcams, file sharing and blogging and discussion groups to promote ourselves and more importantly to be able to respond quickly to our clients..."	Social media platform	Online
230.	"...We continue updating our social following on our progress, spreading the word. Using the social media, to gather facts, information and contacts about new markets leverage your social media channels..."	New markets	Business model
231.	"...For instance, we seek business leads and a network through LinkedIn, build buzz through Twitter to help amplify the reach of your messages and look at which social media channels have the	Business opportunity	Sensing

	most penetration in the new markets you are interested in..."		
232.	"... Achieving real change requires research, genuine commitment and the hard work of many individuals with different skills working together for the same purpose..."	Change management	
233.	"... We're effective organisers and a good change agent so that our customers can benefit from all our skills, not just those of one particular consultant..."	Skills	
234.	"...This is what makes us different, flexible and able to adapt to the various circumstances that clinical research brings..."	Flexible	Adaptation
235.	"...Measuring our success and business performance means	Business	Business model

	checking out the money flow of into the business..."	performance	
236.	"...This is done by checking the number of contracts on our books. We then use the capital generated to grow the business and continue pursuing our entrepreneurial ambition..."	Finance	
237.	"...At Beta, we pride ourselves on excellent customer satisfaction. We are very keen on reviews and making sure that our customers are happy with our services. When we receive reviews, we post them on our social media i.e. blogs, Facebook twitter and the company website..."	Customer satisfaction	Relationship management
238.	"...That way, this gives confidence to our customers and shows what other customers have to say about our Services ..."	Customer satisfaction	Relationship management
239.	"...We conduct perform a review on all our employer including the freelancers. We do this through conducting performance	Business performance	

	reviews to see how staffs are doing..."		

10.8.2.4 Beta's Head of Asia Operations Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
240.	"...I joined the firm as part of the jasvinder pharmaceutical business opportunity to assist with establishing Beta's interest and further facilitating Beta's interests in Indian ..."	Employment	
241.	"...Initially, I was the key contact and the business representative in Indian...."	Business representative	

242.	"...I was responsible for all the administrative functions necessary as part of the business update, for example, working through the government bureaucratic processes ensuring that all the requirement documentations are processed..."	Responsibility, function	
243.	"...In other words, I worked with Jane to set up Indian operations. Right now, I head the Asia operation..."	Responsibility	
244.	"...Yes, in Sri Lanka. And we're currently exploring the possibility of establishing an office in The Chinese market. ..."	Expansion	
245.	"...We assist our customers in quality assurance (QA), compliance in quality assurance, quality management system (QMS), pharmacovigilance, good clinical practice (GCP), auditing services, training, standard operating procedure (SOP) writing to clients	Expertise	

	throughout the UK and internationally..."		
246.	"...Do you mean within the Asia operations? ..."		
247.	"...Oh, I see. I'm not exactly sure. May I suggest you ask Jane. I'm able to tell how many we employed directly in the Asian office..."	International presence	
248.	"...Oh, yes. Basically, it's very simple, we offer our expert advice in the areas of pharmacovigilance standard in, international clinical practice (ICP), auditing services. To put it simply, we assist our customer to resolve QA issues, compliance in quality assurance, QMS functions, training..."	Expert advice	Knowhow
249.	"...Yes. I speak basic French..."	languages	

250.	"...Basically, Jane usually takes the lead and generally set the strategic direction of the firm..."	Entrepreneurial orientation	
251.	"...Then folks like myself then provide regional expertise to manage any cultural influence that we need to be mindful off..."	Expert advice	Knowhow
252.	"... aside to expertise such is the dominant services that we provide. You see, international growth activities in the Asian market and in particular India has a subtle cultural norm and it plays an important role..."	Cultural norm	
253.	"...We usually start by walkthrough our social networks and contacts to explore prospects and business opportunities..."	Sale approach	Growth

254.	"...We also serve as a conduit for other firms, especially some of the big international firms..."	Partnership	
255.	"...In some of these types of assignments, we will be brought in as an expert in the field to guide programme during the initial project set up. This kind of arrangements is usually common in India..."	Expert advice	
256.	"...Basically, by word of mouth and our existing contacts. Also, Jane is now well known for her expertise and detailed knowledge within the Indian pharmaceutical sector. She gives lectures and attends symposium in pharmacovigilance standard, in International clinical practice and auditing services..."	Expertise	Knowhow
257.	"...She has also written books on pharmacovigilance standards. So, we use clout as part of our growth strategy. But generally speaking,	Expertise	Knowhow

	our reputation speaks for itself..."		
258.	"...We are well known for the quality of work we provide and the quality of consultants we employ..."	Brand recognition	
259.	"...We are very good at what we do. So, we do not compete on the cost we are relatively expensive..."	Expertise	Knowhow
260.	"...Another, important growth approach is our capability in big data and AI to transform a large set of the clinical analytical dataset and compare it across a range of dataset to produce comparable result quickly..."	Capability	Transformation
261.	"...Possessing this kind of know-how is very rare and it is a great advantage that their technological capabilities continue to be a key advantage..."	knowhow	Technology

262.	"...Basically, here marketing is everyone's business..."	Marketing approach	
263.	"...Although, Jane is well known within the industry. We do not completely rely on Jane's presence as you say. We also follow the normal traditional approach to marketing..."	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneurial Orientation
264.	"...You see, the Internet and social media, in particular, plays a significant role in our approach to marketing. Use all our social media feeds extensively, for example, we have a huge presence in the YouTube..."	technology	Internet
265.	"...We have a huge presence in LinkedIn, we use Twitter a great deal especially for service promotions and we use Facebook significantly as well. These are some of the tools that we use for market penetration..."	Social media platform	Online

266.	"...We fully rely on and utilise the power of technology to promote our services. So, you see, technology and the web play a huge role in our marketing approaches..."	Technology	Online
267.	"...Yes, pretty much the same. The difference is in the way we use technology, the social media in particular..."	Transformational	
268.	"...The social media offers us the capacity to reach a greater audience with a greater degree of accuracy..."	Capability	
269.	"...We are able to use social media has a precision tool to enhance our marketing strategy across countries precisely..."	Marketing strategy	
270.	"...Especially when it comes to promoting our service offerings. We take full advantage of social media. Social media has allowed us to	Marketing strategy	

	frog leap some of our competitors..."		
271.	"...Our consultants' resource model is a sample, very fluid and is based on a freelance business approach. We maintain minimal direct employees..."	Resource model	
272.	"...The other staff members are a freelancer and all most all of them are professionals such as healthcare professionals i.e. chemist, pharmacist, biochemist etc. so as you can imagine it is practically impossible to have them employed by us directly. Hence the need for freelancing..."	Freelance model	
273.	"...What makes this viable is our technological capacity..."	Technological capacity	

274.	"...Basically, at the core of our HR model is the amalgamation of a number of technological platforms such as web, the social media and OnDemand..."	technological platforms	Online
275.	"...We have integrated these platforms and, in some cases, modularized our services to be a one global seamless repository documents and tools that can be accessed globally and it is access bae 24/7..."	Integrated platforms	Technology
276.	"...This allows our consultants the ability to collaborate very early and to continually do so across geographical spread locations..."	Continuous collaborate	Partnership
277.	"...So, in addition to our expertise which we are known for, we use our globally available integrated platforms to sustain our competitiveness and efficiency. As well as good processes..."	Competitiveness and efficiency	Adaptability
278.	"...What I meant my good processes. Basically, the	Processes	Business

	pharmaceutical industry is heavily regulated and based on our expertise we have found a seamless way of deploying well-integrated processes that we also offer to our customers at a premium..."		improvement
279.	"... our ability to integrate our HR model which are after all are based on the freelance model will be somewhat challenging to monitor from QA standpoint..."	Freelance model	Resource model
280.	"...Secondly, without effective and efficient processes, our capacity to scale up globally is compromised. So, basically, this capabilities of ours have allowed us to support our freelance model..."	Efficient processes	
281.	"...Another good reason for having a robust process is that we	robust process	

	are heavily dependent on technology such as the Internet, OnDemand, social media such as Google and Amazon for efficiency...”		
282.	“...So basically, proprietary services to be very agile across all our services and it’s a key selling point particularly for pharmacovigilance...”	Agile, flexible	
283.	“...So, this is what I meant generally by saying good processes underpins our ability to be agile...”	agile	
284.	“... Of course not. In the business environment, we are constantly adapting and changing these processes as we mature, develop and in light of new development in technology...”	adapting and changing	
285.	“... The international market we operate in is dynamic and as fast-	Dynamic	

	moving..."	business environment	
286.	"... There are interesting new discovery and development in our field which has to be incorporated into our functions. So, we can't afford to be complacent otherwise our competitive advantage will be eroded!	Transformation	
287.	"... We are constantly reallocating our consultants and technology is the key. In particular, our ability to manipulate and integrate resources and our processes seamlessly and efficiently on assignments are very important..."	Resource utilisation	
288.	"... Secondly, our resource pool and approach are very dynamic and very realistic. At any time, we only use what we need..."	Resource pool	

289.	"... Thirdly, we use cost and materials on all our assignments which are billable to our customers. Such a model allows us to be lean and efficient..."	Lean and efficient	
290.	"... Finally, as you would expect our consultants to work on multiple assignments at any given time. That way we can better leverage cost and realise reasonable margin..."	Resource utilisation	
291.	"...By the way, we discourage long-distance travelling. You know the normal housekeeping functions that way, costs are kept to minimum..."	Cost management	
292.	"... Relationship as the key so important here. With a good relationship, a business opportunity is fully realised..."	Relationship management	

293.	"... So, we are very very good at nurturing all our old and potential new relationships..."	w relationships	
294.	"... We sustain this by been proactive by making sure that our market relevancy is continually promoted and it is featured in all our social media feeds. For example, in India, we invite our customers to take part in some of the activities such as our forums and online activities..."	Proactive	
295.	"... Change is constant in our firm. Adapting to change frequently requires the effective use of all your acquired skills. It is always helpful to look at changed circumstances and the challenges they present..."	Adaptation, change management	
296.	"... We do not allow inertia to set in if we want to survive in our	niche market	

	niche market and maintain our value propositions. In some cases, adapting to change will call for the use of other skills as well..."		
297.	"... For a start, we keep a close eye on our cash flow..."	cashflow	
298.	"... Followed by conducting customer survey by collecting stats on a whole range of metrics: from customer acquisition costs and retention rates to lifetime value and return on investment..."	customer survey, cost management	
299.	"... We then use our data mining to improve on our offerings..."	technology	

10.8.2.5 Gamma's Cofounder 1 Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
300.	"...I'm one of the Cofounder of the firm with a background in Energy..."	Entrepreneurial	
301.	"...I am an exploration geologist and I hold an MBA with specialisation in exploration strategy and programme management..."	expertise	
302.	"...My experiences cover both local and international operations.	International	

	I've worked across Africa, Asia and the Middle East for providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream customers. That's about it. What else would like to know..."	experience	
303.	"...The energy sector is an exciting place to be at the moment..."	Energy sector	
304.	"...It's changing very rapidly from a technology point of view and the market in Africa is very opportunistic..."	Rapid business environment	
305.	"...That as a context we are a management consulting firm offering advice and know-how to our clients within the Energy sector..."	management consulting	
306.	"...We have our head office here in Lagos, Nigeria, Office Accra, Ghana, office in Yaounde, Cameroon, 2 offices in the UK one in Aberdeen and one in Surrey..."	International presence	offices

307.	"...We work with our clients providing them with holistic strategic solutions that combine environmental services and social engagement processes, alongside an in-depth understanding of Energy exploration..."	expertise	knowhow
308.	"...Yeah look, few years after my MBA myself and the co-founder decided to go it alone and form Gamma..."	Education	
309.	"...We are well-recognised figures within the industry across Saharan Africa, for our sectoral knowledge and knowhow John and I jointly decided to start Gamma after many years of climbing the corporate ladders..."	Brand recognition	sectoral knowledge
310.	"...So, John and I jointly decided to start Gamma after many years of climbing the corporate ladders..."	International journey	

311.	“...I am a chartered geologist by profession still hands-on experience and solid business development track records. John, on the other hand, is a chartered petrochemical engineer and we have both worked together for many years...”	Profession	
312.	“...Between us, we have over forty years of experiences working for a number of multinational companies such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil and the GB group...”	Years of experience	
313.	“...We are established several contacts including with the Ghanaian government which led to a contract been awarded to us, to assist the government on establishing sustainable environmental and cooperate strategy. This is how we started our internationalisation...”	Professional contacts	Business strategy
314.	“...Following a successful assignment, in the same year, the Ghanaian government awarded a second much larger contact to	International	Business

	us..."	growth	strategy
315.	"...We then used our success in Ghana to penetrate the Cameroonian government which led to three contracts awarded to us again based on our sectoral reputation, experiences and network of relationship..."	Success	sectoral reputation
316.	"...We constantly probe our business environment not just for business opportunities to ensure take advantage of innovations, be aware of threats by monitoring what our competitors are doing, be ready for challenges..."	Environment analysis	challenges
317.	"...You see two strong teams in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa social content: family and changing social attitudes..."	Local presence	
318.	"...So, sensing for opportunities always that account of these	Opportunities	business

	trends the way that way we are able to continually improve on our business performance..."	sensing	performance
319.	"...You see, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very turbulent. For instance, governments across this region are unstable..."	Saharan Africa	governments
320.	"...So, we continuously adapt our business strategies and be aggressively innovative both with our business model and the how we adapt our model as well as our services offerings across the region..."	continuously adapt	business strategies
321.	"...Look, just like any other risks, we factor this into business strategy - we just have too. Take, for instance, the challenge of an impact of oil spillage on the environment is quite significant here	media publicity	negative news in the media

	and attracts huge media publicity. For example, any sudden oil spillage becomes huge negative news in the media. Even if it is contained..."		
322.	"...So, you see, continually pay particular attention to our operating environment. So that our clients' exposure is kept to a bare minimum otherwise the impact of bad publicity is not good for us or our clients..."	operating environment	bad publicity
323.	Right now, on the international market. We are currently concentrating our growth strategy within sub-Saharan Africa - mainly on the West African market...."	international market	West African market
324.	"...Counties like Cameroon and Ghana has huge market potentials and we do have the right contacts on the ground..."	market potentials	right contacts
325.	"...We believe there are loads of opportunities for growth within	growth	local market

	these markets. Equally, we have not forgotten our local market here in Nigeria as well..."		
326.	Our personal contacts. Everyone is into social here and underestimate the power of social media in business..."	personal contacts	social media
327.	"...The social media is a huge business here it's now a standard practice it is very transformation here. We use it to analysis them greatly..."	social media	transformation
328.	Mainly through the extensive social contacts that we have across the region. But by far through the word of mouth and some existing contacts..."	word of mouth	existing contacts

329.	"...As a whole Africa presents a clean and open slate for renewable energy, especially solar..."	Opportunities for	renewable energy
330.	"...The race to spread solar power across Africa is now a multi-billion-dollar industry that continues to attract entrepreneurs and investors from within and outside the continent...."	Growth potential	Investment potential
331.	"...Specifically, Renewable energy is now a viable business proportion here in sub-Saharan Africa and it's in the initial growth stage...."	Renewable energy	sub-Saharan Africa
332.	"...So, we had to modify our business model and strategies by continually reconfiguring, adapting and reposition our strategies towards accommodating the growth potential in the renewable energy market which is the way forward particular due to	business model and strategies	Reconfiguration, adaptation

	everybody talking about global warming..."		
333.	"...Sectoral knowledge is a critical driver of success for the Energy industry, particularly with regard to the upstream focus..."	Sectoral knowledge	Energy industry
334.	"...This knowledge intensity is reflected in the increasing attention to and investment in interconnected technologies and in the integration, management and sharing of technical data - the so-called 'digital oil field' or 'smart field..."	interconnected technologies	integration
335.	"...Take for example the use of smartphone is ubiquitous and this phenomenon continues to increase here..."	technology	smartphone
336.	"...By here I mean in sub-Saharan Africa. So, our technology assets have kept phase with this trend and in some cases, we are ahead of the curve..."	technology assets	sub-Saharan Africa

337.	"...This is what continues to give our advantage over competitors. So, you see, I cannot overemphasise important of technology to remain competitive and to grow our business across sub-Saharan Africa..."	an advantage over competitors.	emphasise important of technology
338.	"...The use of technology, social media and creative thinking plays a great deal in our growth and the ability to remain competitive..."	create thinking	our growth
339.	"...Yes, that is true within the Nigerian markets. This has been a bread and butter assignment right from the onset at least from within their Nigerian markets..."	create thinking	
340.	"...We work with multinationals like BP, Chevron, Shell and some of the Indigenous players within the Nigerian market on the issue of corporate strategy, the environment and navigating the	multinationals	navigating the geopolitical terrain

	geopolitical to terrain..."		
341.	"...We offer such services to ensure these multinationals farms that do not necessarily understand Political ramification off not carrying the indigenous community along with them..."	Service offerings	Political ramification
342.	"...Because for example we fully understand what the cultural challenges and the pressure points are. When it comes to it environmental issues around Energy has new become peculiar..."	cultural challenges	environmental issues
343.	"...That said, our business model is very much collaborative in nature and where the possibilities for partnership exist, we exploit it..."	business model	partnership

344.	"...This just makes good business sense to compete effectively internationally in a plain level field..."	competition	
345.	"...Commitment and the very very hard work. You see, the volatility of the Sub Sahara Africa market is very challenging at best of times..."	volatility	challenging at best of times
346.	"...So, we are continually watching out for subtle signals from our contacts about any potential and sudden on the horizon and then adapt our business strategies to accommodates such changes..."	Continually adjusting	accommodates such changes
347.	"...This is purely base on sales and how best to maintain our business contacts. That is just it. Business performance contacts we are able to generate..."	sales	Business performance

348.	"...It is maybe surprising to you that customer reviews have a limited impact here. It is more about who you know and how you work your personal contacts..."	customer reviews	personal contacts
349.			
350.	"...We are constantly innovating on the strategies side and on customer assignments delivery. You see, over the past decade, our sector has grown significantly to become one of the most dynamic service industries across sub-Saharan Africa..."	constantly innovating	grown significantly
351.	"...I believe this growth is partly attributed to the ongoing accessibility and the reach of technology and increasing globalisation. For us to remain our competitive we rely heavily on creative thinking across all our functional departments..."	reach of technology	globalisation
352.	"...Most importantly we rely on social media blogs, Facebook,	social media	

	YouTube, Twitter and the company website..."		
353.	"...Technology such as Cloud Computing services, OnDemand like Amazon Web Service has made it very very mobile and able to aggressively compete with the likes of EY, PWC at least here in sub-Saharan Africa. We are very proud of yourselves..."	Technology	sub-Saharan Africa
354.	"...We are constantly prompted by events, challenges from competitions nipping at our heal to technology..."	marketing	technology
355.	"...To give you a flavour of what I'm talking about. We were asked to conduct analysis on a number of Basins with the objective of forecasting natural gas production growth for the next 25 years to determine if adequate natural gas pipeline infrastructure exists within two countries..."	conduct analysis	infrastructure exists

356.	"...It would have been impossible for us to carry out such an assignment without technology assets, yet we are unable to afford to own such larger technological assets that are required..."	technology assets	
357.	"..Thanks to the internet and technology such as Google cloud Computing services, OnDemand service like Amazon Web Service allowed to compete successfully. We were able to remotely access pulled together historical data via the use of such technology assets..."	technology	Google Cloud, OnDemand s
358.	"...Ok, we rely heavily on casual or temporary workers for project-based work..."	casual or temporary workers	Freelance model
359.	"...That's our employment model. On the permanent staff side, we	self-employed	Freelance model

	have 9 full-time staff here in Lagos, 2 full-time staff here in the Accra's office, 2 full-time staff in the Yaounde. With the UK offices, we have 5 part-time staff in total 2 in the surrey office and 3 in the Aberdeen office. We also maintain a database of about 95 self-employed temporary workers..."	temporary	
360.	"...Yes, sure of course. Here in Nigeria, we use a self-employed temporary worker staffing model. There is a surplus and relatively cheap manpower here so it's a standard practice here to use such a model..."	self-employed	standard practice
361.	"...We hire on a need by need basis to supplement our full-time staff..."	supplement	full-time staff

362.	"...our staffing model is based on a freelance model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed..."	staffing model	economy of scale
363.	Yeah look, we use technology a great deal..."	Technology	
364.	"...The resource is used in a coordinated approach and usually across projects. A given freelancer usually works on a number of projects at any given time. With the aim of maximising our staffing model we use the minimal people resource that is necessary..."	Resource utilisation	Freelancer model
365.	Brading is an area we pay specific attention too..."	brand	
366.	"...Here in Nigeria, and West Africa at large, we have started to compete equally with the Western companies thanks to the	Competition	Multinational

	internet and in many cases, we beginning to outsmart them.		
367.	We have learnt the act of marketing well from them and we have perfected the act with what I'll call local flavour and we understand the culture best..."	Culture	Lesson learnt
368.	"...Here we make use of digital marketing tactics to explore and promote our service. We rely greatly on using social media for all our marketing campaign..."	digital marketing	marketing campaign
369.	Yeah look, being a small business relationship play a very significant role in our survival.	business relationship	survival
370.	"...You see, it would be very difficult to succeed in this market	proactive	adaptive and

	without being proactive, adaptive and flexible about our relationship..."		flexible
371.	"...we use social media all the time to like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn facilitate relationship building..."	relationship building	social media
372.	"...We are using it aggressively to promote ourselves too and to attract new clients and stay in contact with old clients. especially, blogging and discussion groups are used for promotions. In so doing, we continually update our social about our progress to spread the word..."	continually update	social media
373.	"...Yes, I'm also fluent in French..."	languages	

10.8.2.6 Gamma's Cofounder 2 Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
374.	I'm the second Cofounder of the firm along with Segun. My background is petrochemical in the oil and gas industry..."	Entrepreneurial	Cofounder
375.	"...Before I completed my MBA programme, I was a chartered petrochemical engineer..."	education	
376.	"...Segun and I have a combined experience of over 50 years working internationally and have developed track records and reputation within the sector in Africa, Asia and the Middle East for providing commercial, strategic and technical advice to the upstream, midstream and downstream industry..."	International Experience	Africa, Asia and the Middle East

377.	"...We are a management consulting firm. Our business structure is of two halves..."	Management consulting	SME
378.	"...One is government-led contracts and the other half is the nongovernment led contracts..."	Government-led	nongovernment led
379.	"...To put it in perspective government-led assignments to constitute about 70% of our contracts and the other 30% are non-government led contracts. The other key strategic interest of ours is the renewable energy sector which is very much now a viable business proportion here in sub-Saharan Africa..."	70%	30%
380.	"...Compared to Europe or North America for instance, there is huge hidden demand from disparate people and there are lots of very clever approaches that we continue to drive to deliver sustainable power projects across sub-Saharan Africa and that is	Sustainable power	Sub-Saharan Africa

	exciting..."		
381.	"...So, our strategies towards accommodating the growth potential in the renewable energy market which is at its infancy are important. People are now being conscious of the impact of Energy on the environment..."	our strategies	renewable energy
382.	"...So, Energy firms are now factoring environmental challenges this into their business model which is traditionally not necessarily the case..."	environmental challenges	
383.	"...So, we are currently rebalancing our business strategy by continually growing the nongovernmental contracts..."	rebalancing business strategy	growing nongovernmental
384.	"...To this effect, we anticipate that by the year 2019 we will have rebalanced our business model to 40 60 splits between	40%	60%

	government and nongovernmental contracts...”		
385.	“...But generally speaking, we offer expert advice to our clients on cooperate responsibilities, social responsibilities, governance, and impact of policies on the environment around the Energy services. This includes advising our clients on engaging with the local community, local policies...”	expert advice	environment challenges, Energy service
386.	“...We equally help them to navigate government policies, environmental management...”	expert advice	environmental management
387.	“...In a nutshell, we provide our clients with a holistic approach to the impact of Energy services to the environment and their social responsibilities and cooperate with responsibilities...”	holistic approach	social responsibilities
388.	“...Segun and I wanted to do new things and follow a different	International	

	path..."	journey	
389.	"...We have worked together for many years with several multinational companies Sometimes within the same company. But basically, working for international firms..."	experiences	international firms
390.	"...Basically, assisting their clients on social and cooperate responsibilities on the environmental impact of Energy services - exactly what we presently do..."	Expert advice	Energy sector
391.	"...We felt we can do a better on our owned. Since we are very familiar with sub-Saharan Africa countries and in particular the Energy and their social impact..."	Entrepreneurial orientation	
392.	"..We've been there done it and got the T-shirt and you see struggling to climb the corporate ladder, multinational companies' bureaucracy, you know what I'm talking about. So, we decided to	Expertise	multinational companies'

	start on our own..."		
393.	"...After all, we are well-recognised experts within the industry and across sub-Saharan Africa, for our sectoral knowledge..."	well-recognised experts	sub-Saharan Africa
394.	We are well known within the industry in the sub-Saharan Africa region for our expertise and technical knowhow on the impact of Energy on social. So sensing is more or less self-fulfilling..."	Reputation	sub-Saharan Africa region
395.	"...That said, and not to be complacent because the sub-Saharan Africa market is very dynamic indeed, particularly the government contacts. That is why we have decided as a strategy to reposition our business as discussed earlier..."	dynamic business environment	reposition our business
396.	So, we constantly probe our business environment for business opportunities. For instance, a large percentage of the Energy	Environmental analysis	

	multinational firms works with us around the sub-Saharan Africa region.		
397.	Basically, Segun and I set and lead the company's strategic direction..."	Entrepreneurial orientation	set and lead
398.	"...Since we have the regional expertise to on finely balanced cultural influence..."	cultural influence	regional expertise
399.	"...You see, our international growth activities here in sub-Saharan Africa comes with certain cultural norms without it you are likely to fail! and it plays an important role. Especially when engaging with countries government. Just before you ask me to explain further, it's what we call trade secrets..."	international growth	sub-Saharan Africa

400.	As you, yourself will know, the sub-Saharan Africa market is very very dynamic and often turbulent. Government contracts can sometimes be personalised, for example, on who you know and sometimes tribalized..."	A dynamic international market	sometimes tribalized
401.	"...So, consequently, we have to be very creative with our business strategy and business models..."	Very creative	
402.	"...For a start, we continuously adapt our business strategies and localised our services offerings across the region. We cannot use one size fit all here..."	continuously adapt	one size fits all here
403.	By being creative. The sub-Saharan Africa market is very turbulent with a set of unique circumstances and these circumstances vary from country to country..."	very turbulent	unique circumstances

404.	“...So, what this means is that we are constantly innovating particularly on our business development and delivery approach. Technology has a game-changer for us. This is combined with our abilities to be fully aware of the cultural influence which plays a very important role and cannot be neglected...”	constantly innovating	Technology
405.	“...We are constantly using technology to manage and mitigate some of this turbulence. Equally, creativity in our approaches, processes is very important as well...”	technology	creativity in our approaches,
406.	“...You see, we continually adjust our business models and continually align our strategies. This has been very very successful in managing turbulences and constrains. So, the bottom line is agility, agility, agility, coupled with a cultural awareness of the sub-Saharan Africa business ethics...”	agility, continually adjust	managing turbulences

407.	With the same simple principles that I have outlined early in your previous question..."	Simple business	
408.	"...Agility coupled with cultural sensitivity to local issues. You see social and cooperate responsibilities perception and the issues environmental impact of Energy services varies..."	culturally sensitivity	
409.	"...Basically, obtaining information on business opportunities tends to be mostly through personal and professional contacts that we've built up over the years. The rest is through the traditional approaches providing the environment, conducting market analysis. You know what I mean..."	business opportunities	personal and professional contacts
410.	Again basically, by word of mouth by existing clients' channels and	word of mouth	

	personal contacts..."		
411.	"...We are well-grounded within this region based on reputation and our expertise in the Energy industry when it comes to our holistic approach to environmental stainabilities..."	reputation and our expertise	environmental stainabilities
412.	"...Also, technology and the web especially has been a game-changer..."	technology	web especially
413.	"...Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter have completely dominated how we explore market opportunities. We have embraced technology so much thanks to your company and it has shown dividend and continues to be the case..."	social media	technology
414.	Whatever its shape or form, change is inevitable, and change can come in many forms. You see our market is aggressive and our	Change management	Approach, our ability

	approach must match especially our ability to quickly win clients over..."		
415.	"...Although change can be hard to handle and can sometimes even have a negative impact on the business. But we see it as a unique opportunity to step up and create a massive transformation that excites and inspires our clients..."	Change management	massive transformation
416.	"...So how do you do it? We continuously watch for subtle signals from our contacts about any potential. We also, continually adapt our business strategies to accommodates such changes..."	continuously watch	continually adapt
417.	"...We achieve this by opening up effective channels of communication between us and our clients'. We lead by example inspiring and educating. We make it clear in our team the need for continual change management. We never downplay the effects of any change to our team. We ensure all of us buy-in into our	channels of communication	continual change management

	continual change management approaches. We do not allow inertia to set..."		
418.	Today's clients expect to be able to interact with our businesses through online channels. It's no secret that using digital tools such as web and e-commerce marketing methods benefit small business like ours..."	Clients management	online channels
419.	"...As you well know digital technology is driving many changes in the business environment..."	digital technology	business environment
420.	The use of a smartphone is very where here. Social commerce is also booming, especially here in sub-Saharan Africa. So, with online tools, we get greater insight into the business environment,	technology	smartphone

	and allows us to build lasting relationships with our clients...”		
421.	“...The digitally-driven economy now has deep penetration here in sub-Saharan Africa market many of our clients now expect to be able to engage with us through online channels. Technology as improved communications, flexibility and lower business costs...”	technology	Digitally driven economy
422.	“...Both Segun and I would like to refer to ourselves as technological savvy and with the assistance of your firm that has increased our awareness of digital opportunities and have to assisted us in identifying when, where and how we could use digital tools for maximum impact. We cannot just imagine life without it now...”	technological savvy	awareness of digital opportunities
423.	We use innovation as the key driver of productivity and our long-	innovation	challenges at the

	term growth, and it has continued to help solve challenges at the lowest possible cost..."		lowest possible
424.	"...So, we constantly innovate, you see, these days enterprise innovation is no longer limited to multinational or corporate R&D labs..."	enterprise innovation	
425.	"...It is often the outcome of collaborative efforts in which businesses interact and exchange knowledge and information with other partners as part of broader innovation systems..."	collaborative efforts	broader innovation systems
426.	"...This open and collaborative approach has reduced the need for firms like us to have innovation-related capital investments. Such an approach makes a business like ours more innovate agile. For example, some digital technologies like cloud computing have	collaborative approach	digital technologies

	enabled us to rent computing infrastructure and software services from the line of Amazon without upfront investment in technology capital..."		
427.	"...The business model has eliminated the need for on-site IT staff and has enabled us to make use of other relevant digital technologies such as data analytics, i.e. the use of raw big data for business purposes..."	business model	relevant digital technologies
428.	"...That is what I meant by technology have been a game-changer innovation is a key part of it..."	technology	changer innovation
429.	Yes, we do so where are common and mutual interests. For example, we assist companies such as Shell, BP, Chevron, and the local players to where it makes sense to do..."	Business model	

430.	Our employment model is based on a freelance business model. We have a resource pool of about 95 self-employed freelancers that we maintain and use as and when needed..."	changer innovation	freelance business model
431.	No, not really, it is more of a peculiarity here in sub-Saharan Africa. You see you have to view it from two perspectives.	Business model	A peculiarity in sub-Saharan Africa
432.	One we are an SME firm and we are unable to or maintain for that matter a large pool of human capital on our payroll..."	Resource pool	multinational firms the same model
433.	"...Secondly, this type of staffing model is common here in sub-Saharan Africa even most of the multinational firms the same	staffing model	multinational

	model..."		firms
434.	Here, resource allocation is determined by clients' demand and programme' or assignment..."	resource allocation	
435.	"...We take resource allocation and reallocation so important because it gives us a clear picture of the amount of work that is necessary assignment..."	resource allocation	reallocation
436.	"...It also helps to schedule ahead and have an insight into the team's progress, including allocating the right amount of time to everyone on the team. Resources allocation and re-allocation across the firm is underpinned by freelance model..."	Resources allocation	freelance model

437.	We use a multifaceted marketing strategy including online advertising, data analytics and collaboration tools has enabled us to grow the business in the Nigeria local market and internationally right from here in Lagos..."	multifaceted marketing strategy	enabled us to grow
438.	"...For example, the use of smartphone and social media has offered us the capacity to reach a greater audience with a greater degree of accuracy..."	social media	greater audience
439.	"...We use mobile phone technology coupled with social media for precision to further enhance our marketing strategy internationally. Especially when it comes to promoting our service offerings..."	Technology	mobile phone technology
440.	"...Social media and mobile technology have allowed us to frog leap some of our competitors..."	social media	mobile technology

441.	Since every market is unique and different factors can affect the results, we across countries..."	market is unique	across countries
442.	"...So, we set clear goals and use it to measure their impact on the business. We are very careful not to follow the tendency of being overconfidence..."	vision	
443.	As you may know, you'll need to improve most processes at some point. Especially since we operate in a challenging and turbulence business environment..."	Processes management	
444.	"...Where for example, new clients' goals is a new development in technology influence our services, and changes in the business environment often call for established processes to become	technology	new development

	inefficient or outdated..."		
445.	"...So, as you know few things work perfectly, right from the start..."	Process improvement	
446.	"...So, we continually access our processes, closely monitor how things are going in the weeks and months, to ensure that the process is performing to expectations..."	Continually processes	process is performing
447.	"...This monitoring allows us to constantly adjust and readjust processes to fix problems as they occur..."	monitoring	constantly adjust and readjust
448.	We make it a priority to ask all employers including freelancers how processes work, and what, if any, frustrations they're experiencing.	Business approach	Across all employers

449.	Relationship as the key so important here. With a good relationship business opportunity fully realised..."	Relationship management	business opportunity
450.	"...So, we are very very good at nurturing all our old and potential new relationships..."	Relationship management	old and potential
451.	"...We sustain this by been proactive by making sure that our market relevancy is continually promoted and it is featured in all our social media feeds. For example, in India, we invite our customers to take part in some of the activities such as our forums and online activities..."	market relevancy	continually promoted

10.8.2.7 Delta's Founder Interview - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
452.	I'm very passionate about the environment and most of the work I undertake reflect this..."	Business approach	passionately environment
453.	"...Where possible I try and make a contribution with my knowhow that will eventually lead to sustainable business and sustainable environment..."	knowhow	sustainable environment
454.	"...My goal is to demystify elaborate solutions in the aviation sector and work with clients on a tailored solution..."	vision	tailored solution
455.	Yes, I am	Founder	entrepreneurial

456.	We are a small management consulting firm with the strategic and operational insight and the practical experience providing a material impact to the oil and gas aviation sector..."	small management consulting	Aviation SME
457.	"... I have always worked for myself as a freelancer within the Nigerian local market in the aviation industry..."	freelancer	entrepreneurial
458.	"...I have worked in the aviation sector for many years during these years I have developed an extensive network of relationships..."	Experience	network of relationships
459.	Here, sectoral knowledge is critical in the aviation such so in the oil and gas sector and this has underpinned our reputation for	sectoral knowledge	invitation

	several years..."		
460.	"...Then I received an invitation from a contact of mine from the Central Africa Republic interested my service to assist with delivering a contact in the Central Africa Republic..."		
461.	"...That is how our international business operation began...."	international business	operation
462.	"...My passion for flight safety and the safety of all others involved in onshore and offshore rotary and fixed-wing flight operations has been the driving force for our firm and this moral code or DNA if you will, is shared across our firm. These have assisted and contributed toward our success within the Central African region..."	vision	Central African region

463.	One of the joys of self-employment is searching for new business. I dedicate part of each week to working my contacts and searching out opportunities..."	entrepreneur	Opportunities sensing
464.	"...Understanding what the customer really wants is key for our business to succeed in this part of the world..."	Customer relation	
465.	"...Sometimes the opportunity just screams out at me and sometimes I have to let the story percolate for a few days or weeks..."	Opportunity sensing	
466.	"...I have been doing it this way for years and I believe part of the business success is working in the niche market we operate in. Sort of a backdoor entrance if you will..."	Experience	Niche market
467.	"...This is a good thing because the misses of others create business opportunities for me. We use different approaches to	Business opportunities	business model

	attract the attention of our clients..."		
468.	"...We have differentiated themselves from our competitor with similar background from us..."	differentiation	competitors
469.	"...You see, most if not all of my competitors are from European or American and are not readily sensitive to dealing with how business opportunities present itself here..."	competition	business opportunities
470.	Some often than not my services have been engaged to assist or deal with an issue that some of the multinational firm's faces. Take, for instance, I have personally negotiated multiple high nets worth contracts with or on behalf of principles such as Chevron, Shell, P Caverton Helicopters, World Fuel and many others That is why I said sensing for opportunities is sometime the other way around..."	contracts	Opportunities sensing

471.	We always seeking opportunities in the international marketplace..."	seeking opportunities	international marketplace
472.	"...Our business development has enabled us to win business in West Africa and continues to provide us with the foundation to seek further business opportunities as we are now a recognised as a contractor of choice within the region..."	business development	reputation
473.	"...Based on experience we have come to understand that business issues are different in different parts of the West African counties. Some are Francophone countries and the others are from the old British colonies..."	experience	International growth
474.	"...So, we continuously adapt our business strategies especially now that the Chinese are in town and pushing aggressively to gain	continuously adapt	market share

	market share..."		
475.	"...So multifaceted business strategy and the capacity to be innovative with our business model is soo crucial an approach to business survival..."	multifaceted business strategy	business model
476.	Oh, for sure we do. We operate in a very very dynamic business environment. Especially now with the Chinese policy of expanding to African..."	dynamic business environment	competition
477.	"...We are now seeing that the Chinese business subtlety at paly across the business landscape..."	competition	
478.	"...But Luckily for us we still operate within the niche market capacity to grow within our business tend to rely heavily on personal Contacts. So, I guess in a way we are not that threatened	niche market	competition

	by the Chinese presence..."		
479.	"...The other important influence within the market is that as the market continues to develop so is the social consciousness of the people..."	Market influence	Social consciousness
480.	"...You see, the West African people are now demanding that the firm takes the issues of governances seriously. So much so with the big firms especially the multinational firms..."	Demanding governances	multinational firms
481.	"...So, businesses are now conscious of such social responsibility and it continues to disrupt the moral ways of doing business here..."	social responsibility	Business model
482.	We have a transformational mindset..."	Transformational mindset	

483.	"...Being aware of the demand of the business environment, so that we can localise demand where necessary..."	Business environment	
484.	"...By knowing change is always on the horizon and finally by continually adjusting our business model and having an adaptable multifaceted business strategy..."	Change management	business strategy
485.	We have an international mindset and participation in Overseas projects is paramount to the overall future sustainable success of our business and the Delta brand is now very well known in some regions of West Africa..."	International mindset	Brand loyalty
486.	"...We will continue to focus on the West Africa market. To that effect, we are strengthening our growth strategy here since there are lots of business opportunities out there in the West African	Market focus	business opportunities

	markets..."		
487.	"...Being a small firm with a local root in Nigeria we will continue to explore business capacity here and evaluate contacts on its merits before we commit ourselves..."	business capacity	SME
488.	"...Nonetheless, we start our campaign to grow international by preparing an international business plan to evaluate your needs and set our goals..."	grow international	business plan
489.	"...It's essential to assess our readiness and commitment to grow internationally before you get started..."	Commitment	grows internationally
490.	"...One big difference between doing business domestically and internationally is culture, relationship manager and Understanding body language, <i>people think body language is universal it's not...</i> "	Culture	relationship manager
491.	"...Africans are notoriously known for coming to a meeting late, so	Business	negotiating

	we don't impose time limits on meetings because it adds strength to our negotiating position..."	approach	position
492.	"...Another important factor is finance, financing can sometimes be an issue, but these days government interest in boosting exporting and financial innovation have made getting funding easier..."	finance	financial innovation
493.	Our personal contacts..."	Personal contacts	
494.	Mainly through our extensive social contacts..."	Social contacts	
495.	"...But our reputation goes ahead of us..."	Reputation	

496.	"...For many small growing businesses, a key decision is a cashflow. So, we keep an eye on cashflow, Good cash flow control is important for any business..."	SME cashflow	
497.	"...For a growing business, it's crucial since cash constraints can be the biggest factor limiting growth. Planning ahead helps us anticipate our financing needs..."	Cash constraints	limiting growth
498.	"...Having the right systems and processes is very important to sustain and grow our business..."	Systems and processes	Business growth
499.	"...Systems such as financial records, interactions with customers, business contacts, employee details, regulatory requirements and so on. Is too much to keep track of let alone use effectively..."	financial records	

500.	"...So, we run on a streamlined and OnDemand model for systems..."		Technology
501.	"...Scaling our business is hard. It takes considerable effort. It involves having to interact with clients on a regular in fact on a daily basis..."	Business growth	Business operations
502.	"...Like with anything else in life or in business, we put in the time to reap the benefits..."	management	
503.	"...We don't focus on the short-term outcome of our work. We tend to look to the long term. We continually work with our contacts to build a sales funnel..."	short-term outcome	build a sale
504.	"...Continually reinvent ourselves, that is the founds of our business and that how we remain competitive while growing the business..."	Continually reinvent	Business growth

505.	Yes, we do, strategic partnerships with the right companies can truly make a world of difference to our business..."	partnerships	
506.	"...Identifying those partnerships might be easier said than done..."	partnerships	
507.	But generally, strategic partnerships allow us to reach a wider client easily..."	strategic Partnerships	
508.	"...We only collaborate with companies that are complementary to your own..."	Collaboration	
509.	We innovate to differentiate ourselves by leveraging technology and global platforms..."	Innovate	Technology

510.	"...We leverage technology and heavily rely on global platforms like Amazon Web Services and google services..."	Technology	
511.	"...We create webinars, we find them to be a great way to promote our service. It helped us grow relatively fast..."	Technology	
512.	"...Webinars provide an automated selling tool for literally taking our service to market and reaching a wide audience quickly. We use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn it is one of the major ways to share instant information especially the use of chat rooms such as blogging and discussion..."	marketing	social media
513.	"...Another technology-driven innovation in the sector is asset-based consulting. In asset-based consulting, technology is used to add value and competitive advantage for customers by shortening project lead times and providing more functionality with lower	Innovation	Technology

	costs...."		
514.	Complacency can be a major threat to a growing any business let alone ours..."	Complacency	Major threat
515.	"...By assuming that we will continue to be successful simply because of our contacts, reputation or on our past success is very unwise. So, we regularly revisit and updates your business plan to remain agile in a very changing market condition..."	Continuous adaptation	Agile
516.	"...By being proactive we have built the capacity to respond to quickly changing market condition. By not being complacence and having an up-to-date business plan helps us identify what action we need to take to change your business and the way it operates..."	proactive	up-to-date business plan

517.	"...We are fully committed to continual change strategy even if it takes us out of our comfort zone..."	continual change management	
518.	"...It involves hard decisions and we're prepared to do this, otherwise, we risk putting our business at a dangerous competitive disadvantage..."	competitive disadvantage	
519.	We use a number of matrices systems such as cash flow, sales productivity metrics to measure the factors underlying recent sales growth. Operating cost productivity metrics to measure explore the factors underlying unit costs. Capital productivity metrics to measure how well we are using our working capital..."	Sales growth approach	Finance

520.	For us to remain competitive we rely on constant innovation. We are constantly innovating around our approaches, the use of technologies staffing, delivering and we continue to reap the rewards if it. And it continues to be a key competitive advantage.”	Constant innovation	Competitive advantage
521.	For us to remain competitive we rely on constant innovation. We are constantly innovating around our approaches, the use of technologies staffing, delivering and we continue to reap the rewards if it. And it continues to be a key competitive advantage.	Continues innovation	competitive advantage
522.	Thanks to the internet and technology such as Google could Computing services, OnDemand service like Amazon Web Service allowed to compete successfully. We were able to remotely access pulled together historical data via the use of such technology	Technology	

	assets..."		
523.	"...Ok, we rely heavily on casual or temporary workers for project-based work. That's our employment model..."	Temporary workers	Employment model
524.	"...The firm employs 10 staff in Nigeria, 1 staff in the UK and about 40 self-employed contract staff internationally. In addition, Delta has affiliate advisors are across the UK, South Africa, USA and Australia with hundreds of years of aviation experience to offer, international aviation consultants are ready to be at your service..."	Staff	
525.	As an owner of a small business, I spend the better part of my life at work and I can't avoid interaction with every single employee..."	SME	Staff communication

526.	That's why it's important that I employ the right candidates according to their personal qualities. We do not use one size fits all structure and workflow..."	Flexible employee model	
527.	"...Our staffing model is based on a self-employed model to achieve an economy of scale as and when needed..."	Staffing model	Self-employed model
528.	"...We a small firm and we do everything possible to lower the risks of attrition and increase the chance that our freelance or self-employed model works..."	SME	Freelance model
529.	"...The challenge we have is can't justify the cost of hiring a full-time HR generalist, yet we can't afford not incorporating legally compliant HR policies and procedures into our business is a liability..."	Cost of hiring	

530.	"...So, we work with third party suppliers. However, we make sure that we don't co-employ staff, otherwise, we lose control over our company's culture and freelance model..."	Third-party suppliers	Partnership
531.	"...We use virtual employees to expand and diversify our talent pool. By using virtual employees and freelance model we delegate working structure saving our business some overhead cost..."	Virtual employees	Freelance model
532.	"...An important component of creating virtual employees and freelance model experience that help our team feel more connected to the firms is leveraging right digital technology..."	Experience	Technology
533.	"...We do not use one size fits all structure and workflow..."	Flexible workflow	

534.	What I have come to realise is that the more you succeed; the more competitors notice and the more they are likely to react to what you are doing and makes us successful..."	Competition	
535.	"...Here, West Africa, loyalty can be quick eroded. So, understanding where our services are in their lifecycles helps us work out how to maximise overall profitability..."	Business model	
536.	"...At the same time, we continue to see innovation as a key to build a stream of new profitable services to market by making use of digital marketing tactics to explore and promote our service..."	Continuous innovation	Digital marketing tactics
537.	"... Another important fact in our marketing strategy is through our website, email messaging, and social media posts, we make sure we engage with the clients. For example, we try to personalise our interactions with clients..."	Marketing strategy	Social media

538.	"...Experience as showed that nothing can replace the experience of interacting with a company in person..."	Experience	
539.	"...When clients can meet you and your team, they'll feel a stronger connection. As I have stated early, we leverage technology like webinars to promote our services..."	Client management	
540.	"...It helped us grow relatively fast by providing use with automated selling tool for literally taking our services to market and reaching a wide audience quickly..."	Growth approach	marketing
541.	In order to build a strong and lasting relationship with clients again, experience has shown us that no customer wants to feel as though there is just a number. This is one benefit that we SME have over big companies..."	Relationship management	

542.	"...We try to maintain this approach to our business relationships. Clients must be able to trust and rely on us as an expert..."	Business relationships	Trust
543.	"...That's why it's crucial we maintain a policy of openness when it comes to our professional opinions and point of view regarding the best interests of our clients..."	Expertise	Professional
544.	"...That is why a personal connection is very important in our industry..."	Relationship management	personal connection
545.	"...One of the best ways to help build a strong relationship with a client is to develop a reputation as an independent professional who delivers exceptional results..."	Reputation	independent professional
546.	"...The key as we see it is to always find the opportunity to go above and beyond in a manner that our clients will appreciate..."	Opportunity sensing	

547.	"...Another important point on managing and sustaining business relationships is it is essential we maintain our presence on both online and offline channels..."	Business relationship	Technology
548.	"...Therefore, we see it as being crucial that we have a content and marketing strategy that relates exclusively to our stakeholder's interests..."	Marketing strategy	Stakeholder's interests
549.	"...It is important, for example, when clients call for help, it's important we offer the same friendly, attentive service no matter how many times they call..."	Clients management	
550.	"...We make sure that we constantly monitor our online presence to capture client complaints that are posted on social media or review sites. This type of criticism can not only cause you to lose the clients. it bad for business..."	Continuous monitoring	Social media

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10.8.2.8 Delta's Operations Manager - Emerging Code

	Transcripts Extract	Code Identified	
551.	"...I'm the operation manager of our business..."	Staff	
552.	"...Prior to joining the Delta, I worked for several multinational firms here in Nigeria and in the UK..."	Experience	Multinational

553.	"...We are a small management consulting firm. We work in the aviation sector, but we focus on the oil and gas industry. We work with our customer on their aviation needs..."	SME management consulting	Oil and gas industry
554.	New and old customer alike buys when they trust that your business value is applicable to them and believe your company is able to service their needs..."	Trust	
555.	"...Sometimes, we do not do much of sense for business opportunities. Our business sales itself based on reputation..."	Sensing	Reputation
556.	"...We work in a niche market and we are well known. But usually start marketing with our customer base since we are very active in	Niche market	

	the market..."		
557.	"...We continue to rely on the internet which continues to have a large impact on the way international business is conducted these days..."	Internet	Technology
558.	"...We depend on the social media it is our belief that If you don't have a presence on the main networks, we miss out on an audience that's ready and willing to connect with your brand. This impact is especially significant when it comes to finding leads for international partners..."	Social media	Brand
559.	"...We see social media as one of the best ways to connect with oil and potential customers alike. Using social media let us micro target our audience..."	Social media	Market audience

560.	“...We use social media to compile data on our current customers and then digging deeper with social media analytics to see the bigger picture of who is interacting with us online. Then we continually revisit our social media to include ways to reach more customers...”	Social media analytics	Technology
561.	“...For example, our company first started, it had limited access to a huge group. The company had an email subscription list only but that was not enough audience to sustain and grow the company...”	Technology	
562.	The participation in the international market is key to our business and for the overall future sustainable success of our company here in west Africa...”	International market	Sustainable success

563.	Mr King is always seeking out new opportunities in this area. We always start international grow campaign with a good business plan to evaluate our needs and set our goals..."	Sales lead	Entrepreneurial orientation
564.	"...This form the basis of growth strategy. It's essential to assess our readiness and commitment to grow internationally before you get started..."	Growth strategy	Grow internationally
565.	Even though, our brand is now very well known in some West Africa region. Whilst Mr King pursuit works with the strategies.	Brand	Entrepreneurial orientation
566.	"...I, on the other hand, is more pragmatic and thus grounded to avoid the pitfalls since the international expansion has many	International expansion	

	threats that domestic based businesspeople never see..."		
567.	"...Like getting whacked by currency fluctuations, planning for our strategies since it takes far more time to extract ourselves from problems created by lack of planning than it would do it right the first time. So planning is so important..."	Currency fluctuations	Finance
568.	"...It is the height of ignorance to expect other people to learn our language to buy from us. So, we don't assume that business will be done in English so Familiarise yourself with the local language..."	Language	
569.	Whilst servicing the oil and gas field is our core business, we have recently seen a diversification of the economy across West Africa, so we continue to reinvest our business to take advantage of the	Core business	Oil and gas field

	wider opportunities...”		
570.	Environmental scanning plays a key role in managing turbulences and constrains it helps us with understanding trends, events and relationships in an organisation’s external environment which assists management in planning the future course of action...”	Environmental scanning	External environment
571.	With the same simple principles that I have outlined early in your previous question. Agility coupled with cultural sensitivity to local issues...”	Agility	Culturally sensitivity

572.	"...You see cooperate responsibilities perception and the issues environmental impact of oil and gas services varies..."	Environmental impact	Business model
573.	Basically, obtaining information on business opportunities tends to be mostly through personal and professional contacts that we've built up over the years..."	Business opportunities	Contacts
574.	"...The rest is through the traditional approaches providing the environment, conducting market analysis. You know what I mean..."	Environment	Conducting market analysis

575.	Again basically, by word of mouth by existing clients' channels and personal contacts. Technology and the web especially have been a game-changer..."	Sales channels	Technology
576.	"...Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter have completely dominated how we explore market opportunities..."	Social media	Market opportunities
577.	"...We have embraced technology so much thanks to your company and it has shown dividend and continues to be the case..."	Technology	
578.	The technology drives almost everything we do, and it continues to	Technology	

	give us the edge..."		
579.	"...In the recent 2 years, the tech behind our operations has undergone a metamorphosis based on feedback from customers and staff alike..."	Customers	
580.	The key, however, for our customers is not the disruptive technology we have employed, but simply that our service is now more convenient than ever before and offers superior benefits..."	Expertise	Services
581.	"...Technology as improved communications with our customers has increased flexibility and significantly lower business costs. Internet enable marketplace continues to grow and expand and has deep penetration in the West Africa market..."	Technology	Market growth

582.	Many clients of ours now expect to be able to do business with us through online channels. Take for example the use of smartphone has led to huge social media presence..."	Online channels	Technology
583.	We use innovation as the key driver of productivity and our long-term growth..."	innovation	
584.	"...For example, some digital technologies like cloud computing have enabled us to rent computing infrastructure and software services from the line of Amazon without upfront investment in technology capital..."	Digital technologies	Technology

585.	Yes, we do so where are common and mutual interests. For example, we assist companies such as Shell, BP, Chevron, and the local players to where it makes sense to do..."		Partnership
586.	We are a small business thus, the role of human resource in our business is very important is about the relationship between the firm and our employees..."	Human resource	Resource model
587.	"...It's important to remember our HR policies will heavily impact our business growth as well as our reputation as an employer..."	Business growth	Reputation

588.	"...We small businesses often build the best brands, but we're faced with limitations that corporations don't have to struggle with (time, resources, plentiful workforce) ..."	Brand	
589.	"...So, we have to be innovative about HR practices to keep relevant and up to date as we grow the business..."	Innovative HR	Business growth
590.	"...For example, we communicate policies to every new hire during training/onboarding. Another example is investing team members and create a good workspace for everyone..."	Training	Good workspace
591.	One of the biggest struggles in customer-facing industries is presence..."	Presence	

592.	"...We need to balance being available to customers, while also offering employees morale-boosting work-life balance..."	Work-life balance	
593.	"...Here, resource allocation is determined by clients' demand and programme' or assignment. But generally, we use contractors all the time..."	Resource allocation	Contractors
594.	The unique benefit of social media compared to other marketing channels is that it allows you to talk directly to customers..."	Social media	Marketing channels
595.	"...Most people and our customer included uses a smartphone, it's everywhere so, social media has given us the capabilities to reach a greater customer with a greater degree of accuracy..."	Technology	Capabilities

596.	"...Especially when it comes to promoting our service offerings. Social media and mobile technology have allowed us to frog leap some of our competitors..."	Service offerings	Technology
597.	We use a different strategy for the different market since every market is unique and different factors can affect the results..."	Multifaceted strategy	
598.	Relationship as a key so important within our industry..."	Relationship management	
599.	"...The unique benefit of social media compared to other approaches is that it allows you to manage and build sustainable	Social media	Relationship

	relationships more effectively and directly with customers..."		management
600.	"...Good and suitable relationships are very good for business opportunity..."	Relationship management	business opportunity