



CONNECT TO LEARN – THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN EMERGING MARKETS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The overarching purpose of this research is to study a Multinational corporation's (MNCs) expansion into an Emerging Market (EM). It does this by further investigating how MNCs partner with non-traditional actors when entering EMs, and how the exchange of knowledge is carried out at the micro-level in these relationships.

Design/methodology/approach: An exploratory field study was conducted in Myanmar over a period of one month. The purpose was to study an MNC's expansion into an EM. The study includes interviews with both an MNC and the United Nations, including observations on site, and a documentary analysis.

Findings: The study contributes to research in proving that internationalisation in emerging markets seems to be a two-way experiential knowledge direction, where MNCs also need to take an active part in educating the emerging market in order to enter.

Originality/value: By studying an MNC's cooperation with the UN as part of their expansion in Myanmar, the research will increase the understanding of the complex phenomenon of multi-stakeholder partnerships between MNCs and the UN. This is an area that has received limited research among both political science scholars as well as international business scholars.

Keywords: Internationalisation process; experiential knowledge; emerging economies; Uppsala model; United Nations; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Myanmar; Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP); Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015. One of the main goals is to include the private sector's resources in order to be able to fulfil the SDGs. The UN has thereby reached out to the private sector, and multi-stakeholder partnerships have been endorsed with the aim to "mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, in particular developing countries" (UN, A/RES/70/1, 2015). The SDGs' role in the multinational corporations' context is a new phenomenon, which makes it complex to study. However, there is a need to increase the understanding of how the collaborations between MNCs and the UN are carried out.

The primary corporate benefits of partnering with the UN are considered to be market expansion, obtaining a license to operate, and an opportunity to develop emerging markets (EMs) (Rueede and Kreutzer, 2015; Utting and Zammit, 2009). Having said that, the MNCs find it rather difficult to be successful in entering EMs, despite the additional business opportunities it represents (Meyer, 2004; London and Hart, 2004). This is due to the liability of foreignness, as well as a lack of market-specific knowledge that is considered an essential prerequisite when conducting business abroad (Hadjikhani et al., 2008). In EMs this market-specific knowledge is of even greater importance as prior knowledge from other markets is less or even non-transferable. Hence, there is a need for MNCs to have social embeddedness, which refers to the need of establishing relationships with other actors in society (London and Hart, 2004). However, the lack of institutions within EMs requires MNCs to turn to other actors within society (Peng and Luo, 2000). By collaborating with non-traditional partners, the MNCs will gain access to local knowledge that would otherwise be difficult to achieve (Rondinelli and London, 2003).

On the empirical front, the study is motivated by the observation that there are few studies on how the knowledge is obtained at the micro-level when MNCs internationalise in EMs. Instead, the previous studies have all focused on the importance of knowledge at the macro-level. Therefore, the overarching purpose of this research is to study an MNC's expansion into an EM by further investigating how MNCs partner with non-traditional actors when entering EMs, and how the exchange of knowledge is carried out at the micro-level in these relationships.

How do non-traditional actors assist MNC's internationalisation in emerging markets?

In order to answer the research question, the study will take a closer look at Ericsson's entry into the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The country is considered as one of the last remaining greenfield markets in the world. In 2012, the government

of Myanmar, together with the UN agency International Telecommunications Union (ITU), launched the Wireless Broadband Master Plan of Myanmar with the aim of introducing two new telecoms licenses. Shortly thereafter, Ericsson decided to re-establish themselves in Myanmar and started a corporate social responsibility (CSR) project in collaboration with UNESCO (Ericsson, 2016). By studying Ericsson's cooperation with UNESCO as part of their expansion in Myanmar, the research will contribute to the internationalisation literature about how an MNC internationalises in an EM. This will in turn increase the understanding of the complex phenomenon of multi-stakeholder partnerships between MNCs and the UN, which is an area that has received limited research among both political science scholars (Pappi and Henning, 1998) and international business scholars (e.g. Boddewyn, 1988; Hadjikhani, 2000; Ljung, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the aim of this study is to investigate an MNC's partnership with non-traditional actors when entering EMs, and how the exchange of knowledge looks at the micro-level in these relationships, there is a need to apply a model that conceptualises the knowledge concept. Consequently, the process model of internationalisation was identified as this model, illustrating that MNCs enter new markets in order to expand their knowledge base (e.g. Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). The most prominent research is the Uppsala Model (U-M) of Internationalisation, which builds on the idea that internationalisation is a gradual process where there is a correlation between the development of knowledge and market commitment (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). The main obstacle for firms that want to enter foreign markets is claimed to be the *physic distance*¹, where firms lack the experiential market knowledge that can only be acquired by operating in that market (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). When a firm enters a foreign market, it can gain new knowledge that will reduce the uncertainty of operating in that market (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977).

The concept of experiential knowledge has been recognised as one of the most critical concepts of Johanson and Vahlne's (1977) model (Kogut and Singh, 1988; Barkema et al., 1996; Eriksson et al., 1997). The concept can be divided into *general knowledge* and *market-specific knowledge*; general knowledge is associated with objective knowledge while market-specific knowledge refers to experiential knowledge (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). Experiential market-specific knowledge is bound to the

¹Physic distance refers to the differences between the foreign market and the host market (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977).

market and firms that obtain experiential knowledge; it also increases their ability to “perceiving and formulating opportunities” (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977, p. 28). In their study, Hilmersson and Jansson (2012) have assumed that firms that enter foreign markets exploit previous experiences and gain new experiences, which they refer to as *internationalisation knowledge*.

Two other types of market-specific knowledge seem to appear in the literature. The first concept can be labelled *institutional/societal/market knowledge*, which refers to experiential knowledge of institutions such as frameworks, laws, norms and rules (e.g. Blomstermo et al., 2004; Eriksson et al., 1997). The second concept is called *business knowledge*, which relates to experiential knowledge of the market and clients. It is argued that firms that possess this type of knowledge can increase their business opportunities in the foreign market, and thereby reducing uncertainty (Kogut and Singh, 1988). Finally, in recent years, scholars have applied a further type of experiential knowledge that relates to *network knowledge*, referring to knowledge derived from within the network relationship (Blomstermo et al., 2004).

Obtaining experiential knowledge is critical for firms that enter EMs; this is because there is a lack of existing knowledge of these markets (Meyer and Gelbuda, 2006). Traditionally, EMs have been considered undeveloped and immature (Jansson, 2008). They still lack institutional capacity, legislation and infrastructure (Hoskinson et al., 2000), and it is difficult to employ a well-educated workforce (Khanna et al., 2005). Scholars (Hilmersson, 2011; Meyer and Gelbuda, 2006; Salmi, 2000) have therefore argued that internationalisation knowledge is less valuable when entering EMs. Instead, market-specific knowledge is considered the essential sort of knowledge when firms enter EMs (Forsgren, 2002). Hence, MNCs have realised the importance of having social embeddedness – three strategies (collaborating with non-traditional partners, co-inventing custom solutions and building local capacity) that can facilitate MNCs entry into Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) (London and Hart, 2004).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical tool in this research will be built on the knowledge exchange between MNCs and non-traditional actors, which in turn will contribute to the understanding of how MNCs enter EMs. In order to contextualise this, the main concept of experiential knowledge will further be divided into different types of knowledge. In line with scholars (e.g. Eriksson et al., 1997), experiential knowledge will be divided into institutional, business and internationalisation knowledge. In order to take the theoretical tool further, it has also integrated the network knowledge proposed by, for example, Johanson and Vahlne (2009) (see Table 1 for theoretical framework).

Table 1 Summary of Theoretical Tool

<i>Experiential knowledge type</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Critical in EM</i>
Institutional/ societal/ market knowledge	Experiential knowledge of the macro-environmental institutions such as institutional frameworks, laws, norms and rules (e.g. Blomstermo et al., 2004; Eriksson et al., 1997).	Lack of institutional experiential knowledge is difficult, as it is not easy for a firm to acquire information about laws and norms that apply abroad (Eriksson et al., 1997).
Business knowledge	Firm's knowledge of competitors, customers as well as other actors (Eriksson et al., 1997).	Firms are able to perceive opportunities in markets, thereby reducing uncertainty (Kogut and Singh, 1988).
Internationalisation knowledge	Firms that enter foreign markets exploit previous experiences and gain new experiences (Hilmersson and Jansson, 2012, p.99).	General internationalisation knowledge is less valuable when entering EMs (e.g. Hilmersson, 2011; Meyer and Gelbuda, 2006; Salmi, 2000).
Network experiential knowledge	Knowledge about the business network in the host market (Blomstermo et al., 2004).	Being an insider in a network decreases the uncertainty in the foreign market (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009).

Source: Compiled by author

METHODOLOGY

Given that the study was conducted in Myanmar without much attention from international business scholars (Wright et al., 2005), due to its politically unstable climate (Meyer and Thein, 2014), a case study was considered an appropriate methodological choice. The major reason behind the selection of investigating an MNC's expansion in Myanmar is because the country has one of the least developed telecommunications services in the world. The identification of the focal firm, Ericsson, as a suitable case was based on their extensive experience of internationalisation since the company was established in 180 countries. Ericsson was also selected because the company has taken a leading advocating role in fostering partnerships for the SDGs. Therefore, when screening Ericsson's partnerships with the UN, the Connect to Learn programme was recognised as an interesting public-private partnership between Ericsson and UNESCO. Twenty-one in-depth interviews (see appendix) were carried out; these were semi-structured and consisted of open questions (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 320).

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Ericsson's Entry into Myanmar

The Swedish MNC Ericsson is present in 180 countries (Ericsson, 2015). In 1998, Ericsson made the decision to withdraw all operations in Myanmar, which they claimed was

on commercial grounds or human rights concerns (Weidman, 2012). In June 2012, Ericsson re-established themselves in Myanmar. The major challenges were anticipated to be the legislation that still was not complete, infrastructure, and being able to get bank licenses (The Head of Ericsson Myanmar). Anders Larsson, who acts as the Chief Technological Officer (CTO) at Ericsson Myanmar, was one of the first four employees in Myanmar in 2012. He described that, during the first months, it was impossible to open a bank account. Working with the government was perceived as most challenging since it was conservative and under-developed (Head of Ericsson Myanmar, from research interviews, 2016).

Another challenge was the lack of policy and telecommunication laws. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a specialised agency of the United Nations and has, in the case of Myanmar, been responsible for the ICT development where they have been involved in drafting the Wireless Broadband Master Plan of Myanmar. The Deputy Director of ITU (2016) confirmed that ITU and Ericsson often shared advice, and that they worked closely with each other at the regional level. The CU Head (2016) stated that Ericsson could overcome the challenges of establishing in Myanmar due to their long-time experience in conducting business in other countries. The Connect to Learn (CTL) Programme Manager in Myanmar also described Ericsson had intending to break into new industries with the aim of using their platform in other settings as well:

“We want to break into other industries other than our traditional industry, which is telecom. Not like we intend to do it ourselves, but more forcing Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in different areas. And actually, show that our platform can be the base for other connected services in the future.” (Programme Manager CTL, from research interviews, 2016).

Ericsson Approaching the Education Sector

Ericsson identified the education sector in Myanmar as lagging behind, and therefore saw a chance to contribute with their technology. Enrolment in secondary education in Myanmar is 51%, one of the lowest numbers globally (World Bank, 2016).

Ericsson decided to launch Connect to Learn (CTL) in June 2015. The aim of CTL is to scale up access to quality secondary education by bringing ICT to schools in remote parts of the world, over mobile broadband. The CTL programme has, so far, been implemented in 21 countries and benefits around 50,000 students. It was described by the CTL Programme Manager in Myanmar (2016) that Ericsson realised early on that it would not be possible to establish the CTL project in Myanmar by themselves. Therefore, Ericsson reached out to other partners that could provide expertise. The CTL project was created as a PPP where Ericsson collaborates with UNESCO, the UK Department for International Development (DfID), under their Girls' Education Challenge, the Earth

Institute at Columbia University, Finja Five, Qualcomm© Wireless Reach™, and the external evaluator EduEval (Ericsson, 2016). Ericsson's collaboration with UNESCO in managing the CTL project will be further emphasised in the next section.

Collaboration with UNESCO

Knowledge of the education sector as well as pedagogic skills were identified as vital for Ericsson to break into the new industry of education. Ericsson therefore needed to reach out to other partners that had good knowledge of both the local context and the education sector:

“So, when we were looking into who could we partner with on the education section, we identified UNESCO in Myanmar as being the most suitable partner to help us implement the program locally” (Global CTL Manager, from research interviews, 2016).

UNESCO was seen as a credible and neutral organisation that specifically has knowledge of the education sector; UNESCO helps governments design their education policy (Global CTL Manager, from research interviews, 2016). UNESCO could therefore provide the expertise from both within education and in their close contact with the government in Myanmar (Head of Ericsson Myanmar, from research interviews, 2016). Several respondents declared that the project would not have been possible without the partnership with UNESCO. Magnus Mandersson, who acts as the Executive Vice President of Ericsson, argued that by collaborating with the UN, it can: “contribute to a better product success and have the opportunity to work in developing markets”. The execution of the project was made at a local level by the regional Ericsson and the regional UNESCO in Myanmar; this will be further described in the next section.

THE ROLE OF UNESCO

Antony Tam, ICT Education Specialist at UNESCO in Myanmar, is responsible for the CTL project from UNESCO's side. Their role is to carry out the teacher professional development programme, where UNESCO has organised a series of ICT training courses. Together with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Myanmar, UNESCO has set up an ICT team of 22 trainers that are the local implementation partners for UNESCO. The ICT Education Specialist at UNESCO (2016) stated that the teacher training was carried out in 31 schools; 17 schools in the Mandalay region and 14 schools in the Mon state and Bago region. The ICT Education Specialist at UNESCO (2016) highlighted that the DBE team are the main trainers, and UNESCO go to the training site on a day-to-day basis. In one of the training courses, UNESCO, together with Ericsson, went to the sites and conducted training in technical trouble shooting.

The ICT Education Specialist UNESCO (2016) stated that the partnership with Ericsson enabled UNESCO to make a bigger impact on the ground. Moreover, UNESCO has also learnt many of Ericsson's technical solutions, in addition to managing and coordinating this kind of multi-donor and multi-partner projects (ICT Education Specialist UNESCO, from research interviews, 2016).

Pitch for the Government

Jan Wassenius, the current Country Head of Ericsson Myanmar, described that Ericsson needed to pitch the CTL project to the MoE as well as the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and get their approval. The Global CTL Manager (2016) further stated that the pitch was made together with UNESCO; this was because UNESCO works closely with the MoE, so it added strength to the proposal. This was further confirmed by the Programme Manager of CTL in Myanmar, who described that UNESCO acted as a bridge to the government in Myanmar: "At first we did not go directly to the MoE or different departments of the minister in Myanmar. We need UNESCO as the bridge".

"We also asked them for their advice on, which areas, which schools, and also which operator we should use as our partner. So MICT, they advised us to work with MPT and MoE they pointed out which schools and areas and provinces that we should do the project in" (Head of Ericsson Myanmar, from research interviews, 2016).

Technology Programme and Network Roll-out

Locally, Ericsson employed around 100 engineers for the network roll-out and building up the 3G networks (Global CTL Manager, from research interviews, 2016). In the technical team, Ericsson also employed four newly examined students from West Yangon Technological University. The main reason for this was that Ericsson needed to train local people in the technology solutions and get these experts to talk with Ericsson's customers about the solutions, products and benefits of choosing Ericsson instead of other companies. The Head of Corporate Sustainability (CS) (2016) also claimed that the aim with CTL was in a long-term perspective to educate the workforce:

"Myanmar is a country that had virtually no internet penetration just a few years ago and the access in Myanmar would be based very much on having an educated workforce. So, CTL is about the next generation of leaders." (Head of CS, from research interviews, 2016).

The CTO (2016) further highlights that the CTL project acted as a learning source for newly employed students. Each student got to focus on one specific area of technology

where Ericsson had the intent to make business with in the future. As a result, this would increase the young professional's knowledge of the technical areas. The next section will elaborate on the students' experiences of working at Ericsson.

The Technical Girls

All the four girls (Mya, Akari, Aye and Ei) were met during an afternoon at the Ericsson office in Yangon. They described Ericsson as the first company that came to their University campus and made recruitments. The recruitment had been very competitive: out of 400 people, 12 students were selected and out of these 12, 4 were chosen to join the technical team. Ei described that she had been to work conferences in Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and India, and that she established connections with senior managers in other countries. The girls described that they struggled when starting work at Ericsson since they were intentionally given tough work just to learn. Mya said: "It was Anders' [CTO] intention that we should learn with this project. He knows that we cannot do much, but if we learn much it is a huge profit for everybody".

Ei described that the first task she was assigned to was to select all the schools in the project. Ericsson had an agreement with the MCIT and the operator Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT) to deploy ten sites and 25 schools in Mandalay. Ei declared that the collaboration with UNESCO and MoE simplified her work:

"I'm born in Myanmar but not familiar with the geography of the other regions. UNESCO and MoE gave us the coordinates of all secondary schools in Myanmar so I can plot the location into the Google maps".

Htone Gyi School in Bago region

In order to increase the author's understanding of the CTL project and Ericsson's role, a field trip was conducted to Htone Gyi school in Bago region in central Myanmar. The school hosts 1,328 students: in total, they had received 6 laptops, 99 tablets, 2 projectors and 3 charging stations. On one occasion they had an issue with the machine and the desktop and an Ericsson engineer came out and managed to solve the issue. Five teachers in this school are a part of the teacher training professional development programme. After the second training session, they claimed that they had learnt basic computer skills and how to use Wi-Fi.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Ericsson left the Myanmar market in 1998 and returned in 2012. When the government of Myanmar introduced the new telecoms licenses, Ericsson saw an opportunity to reintroduce their technology in Myanmar. Therefore, Ericsson used the CTL project

in terms of gaining access to knowledge of the local market and thereby increasing their commitment to the market. This was possible with the interaction with non-traditional actors who acted as a bridge to political actors and state departments. Ericsson gained knowledge from ITU in terms of ICT laws and regulations, and from UNESCO in terms of education policies. Both these actors also facilitated Ericsson's interaction with the state departments. Mandersson further highlighted the importance for Ericsson to collaborate with the UN by saying that the UN can "contribute to a better product success and have the opportunity to work in developing markets". This is in line with BoP studies that pointed out the importance of collaboration with non-traditional partners when entering BoP (e.g. London and Hart, 2004).

As the literature review implied, internationalising in EMs poses both challenges as well as opportunities for businesses. The challenges when Ericsson established itself in Myanmar were anticipated as being a lack of clear guidelines for doing business, legislation that was perceived as unclear, and moreover the ability to obtain bank licenses (Wassenius, from research interviews, 2016). Moreover, several respondents also declared that the basic infrastructure in Myanmar was lagging behind, which imposed institutional challenges. Respondents at Ericsson stated that it was a struggle to work with the government bodies since they were not yet professional in their handling of different project requirements. The struggle for businesses to expand in EMs due to institutional challenges corresponds with Hoskinsson et al. (2000), who declared that EMs are still considered immature markets that often have a lack of institutional capacity and infrastructure.

Ericsson – Lessons Learned from the Market

When reviewing the literature, it was described that firms that enter EMs need to gain market-specific experiential knowledge in terms of institutional as well as business knowledge (Forsgren, 2002). As the Myanmar market was immature and there were not that many institutions, Ericsson needed to turn to other actors in order to gain market-specific knowledge. Therefore, Ericsson gained experiential market-specific knowledge mainly through learning through the UN agencies UNESCO and ITU, which will be further exemplified in the following paragraphs.

Advice from the Government

The Myanmar government provided Ericsson with advice on which schools and which operator Ericsson should use as their partner in CTL. It can therefore be reasoned that Ericsson needed to collaborate with the ministries in order to increase their experiential institutional learning. However, it was declared that it was difficult for Ericsson to approach the ministries by themselves, and thereby UNESCO acted as a bridge to access the knowledge that the government held.

Learning from UNESCO

The empirical paper has shown that Ericsson learned how to work with the government in Myanmar from UNESCO, and how to develop technical programmes that would be suitable for the Myanmar context. The collaboration with UNESCO could therefore be seen as essential in Ericsson's entry in Myanmar. It can be argued that UNESCO provided Ericsson with institutional knowledge in terms of education policies.

Lessons Learned from ITU

As the institutional capacity was still immature in Myanmar, Ericsson needed to turn to other actors. Ericsson gained institutional experiential knowledge from ITU in terms of information of political policies and telecommunication laws that would in turn affect the ICT development in Myanmar.

Educating the Myanmar Government

It was described by several respondents that Ericsson had developed a relationship with the MoE as well as MCIT at an early stage of their entry into Myanmar. Hence, it can be argued that MoE benefitted from Ericsson's technical business knowledge, at the same time as Ericsson gained experiential institutional knowledge from MoE.

Educating ITU

Ericsson's collaboration with ITU was not only a one-direction transfer of knowledge since it was highlighted by Sharma (Senior Advisor, ITU) that Ericsson also provided valuable information to ITU. Therefore, ITU gained business knowledge from Ericsson that helped them to improve standards and policy-setting in the region by transferring knowledge to the government of Myanmar in their draft of the Wireless Broadband Master Plan.

Technical Training of UNESCO

The partnership with UNESCO assisted Ericsson in their implementation of the CTL project, and by exchanging the different knowledge bases, the partners could combine their individual knowledge as well as create new knowledge. The field visit to Htone Gyi school proved that the teachers had to learn Ericsson's technology in the CTL project. The teachers had undergone workshops that were predominately carried out by UNESCO and the DBE team, but Ericsson also contributed to the education of the teachers themselves. This finding reveals that Ericsson provided UNESCO and the teachers with business and network knowledge in line with Kogut and Singh (1988) and Blomstermo et al. (2004).

Training of Technical Girls

A challenge of an EM is that it is immature and, according to Khanna et al. (2005), it is difficult to recruit a well-educated workforce. Ericsson needed to employ local people and train them in order to increase the experiential institutional knowledge of the work force. The employment of the four technical girls was also one way for Ericsson to educate the market. The trickling-down of knowledge (Meyer, 2004), is an interesting finding since the girls carried with them the knowledge that they have learned by working with CTL inside Ericsson, and could continue to work with Ericsson's customers to expand the business opportunities within their area of expertise. This example provides clear evidence that when Ericsson entered Myanmar, they needed to educate the work force in order to succeed. Ericsson provided both business and internationalisation knowledge to the technical girls. One of the girls, Ei, described that by working at Ericsson, she gained knowledge from other markets since she was sent to conferences in other locations. Moreover, since the technical girls needed to take responsibility in specific technical subject matters, they also increased their business knowledge within these areas.

DISCUSSION

The case study of Ericsson's entry in Myanmar has showcased the importance of collaborating with non-traditional actors to gain market knowledge that facilitated the market entry. The theoretical tool in this research was built on the knowledge exchange between MNCs and non-traditional actors, which was further divided into different types of knowledge. The results have shown that Ericsson acquired experiential knowledge by successively learning from other actors in terms of institutional, business, internationalisation and network knowledge. It was also showcased that the relationship with the non-traditional actors frequently acted as a bridge for Ericsson to gain access to political and state actors in Myanmar. The process of knowledge exchange could therefore be seen as essential for Ericsson to enter the Myanmar market.

Previous research has highlighted that experiential learning is a one-way direction learning where MNCs need to gather knowledge of the market when internationalising (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977). However, as the case study of Ericsson's market entry in Myanmar has proved, Ericsson also needed to educate the market in order to succeed. Therefore, it has been found that something is different from what mainstream Internationalisation Process (I-P) models and social embeddedness literature have implied. Instead of looking only at the learning process as being one-way, the learning process takes place in both directions. It can therefore be argued that there is a flaw in Johanson and Vahlne's (1977) Uppsala model, since it does not capture the experiential learning from both directions. Therefore, it is argued that I-P models need to take into consideration the firm's resources and knowledge in order to understand the

expansion in an EM. *One can therefore question if MNCs need to educate the market in order to succeed in their internationalisation process in EMs.*

It seems as though it is not only this author that has found patterns that show MNCs do not only learn from the market, but increasingly contribute to educating the market in order to succeed in the internationalisation process. Similar findings can be found in literature in various fields. In their study, management scholars Child and Tsai (2005) have pointed to the increased power of MNCs in EMs. The framework, which is based on institutional and political perspectives, is applied to analyse firms' strategies for environmental protection in EMs. It can therefore be argued that MNCs' knowledge is considered relevant; this goes against the Uppsala Model of Johanson and Vahlne (1977).

Moreover, the cross-sector literature emphasises that NGOs increasingly collaborate with MNCs in order to gain the knowledge held by firms as in, for example, technical expertise as well as obtaining financial resources (Jamali and Keshishian, 2009; Oetzel and Doh, 2009). Similar findings can be found in the UN-Business Partnership literature, where it has been argued that the UN has developed an interdependency of the business community based on political and performance factors, whereas:

“political interdependency implies that the UN needs to integrate corporate actors in order to resolve global issues politically and performance interdependency implies that the UN needs to integrate business in order to learn new methods of work or new technology for improving the UN operational delivery” (Ruchat, 2000, p. 174).

CONCLUSIONS

The major contribution is that the study found that MNCs not only learn from the market, but also need to educate the market in order to succeed in their internationalisation process in EMs. In addition, all the experiential knowledge types played important roles in the knowledge exchange. The research therefore contributes with both theoretical as well as managerial implications. The I-P model needs to integrate how the knowledge exchange facilitates the internationalisation process of MNCs in EMs. Moreover, non-traditional actors seem to facilitate MNCs; market entry in connecting the MNCs to other actors, as well as creating competitive advantages in these markets.

As the case study has shown, a multi-stakeholder CSR-programme seems to be a way for MNCs to connect with non-traditional actors that can act as a knowledge source for MNCs, but also for facilitating future business opportunities in the foreign market. Therefore, the newly adopted SDGs can be seen as providing a strategic opportunity for MNCs to expand in EMs. This study has filled a gap in the literature highlighted, for example, by Ljung (2014), by providing evidence that the collaboration with the United Nations was considered essential for Ericsson's expansion in Myanmar. It was anticipated by several respondents that the UN agencies were considered to

be neutral bodies that also had a local presence in several countries. By partnering with a UN agency, it provided a chance for MNCs to enhance their legitimacy in the local market. The managerial implications suggested of this study are that mutually beneficial partnerships can therefore provide a chance for MNCs to enter EMs.

APPENDIX

Interview Respondents

#	Respondent	Position	Date	Location	Duration
1	Magnus Mandersson	Executive Vice President, Head of Global Services, Ericsson	1/3/16	Telephone interview	30'18"
2	Elaine Weidman	Vice President, Head of Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility, Ericsson	1/5/16	Telephone interview	28'11"
3	Zohra Yermeche	Global Program Manager, Connect To Learn, Ericsson	17/3/16	Ericsson HQ, Stockholm	35'55"
4	Kim Hoai Nga	Program Manager CTL, Ericsson Myanmar	18/3/16	Ericsson HQ, Stockholm	50'23"
5	Jan Wassenius	Vice President, Head of Ericsson Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos	30/3/16	Ericsson Myanmar	40'37"
6	Anders L Larsson	Chief Technical Officer, Ericsson Myanmar	5/4/16	Ericsson Myanmar	1'15'25"
7	Mya	Technical Subject Matter Expert (TSE), Power, Ericsson Myanmar	5/4/16	Ericsson Myanmar	29'03"
8	Akari	TSE Expert, Core Network, Ericsson Myanmar	5/4/16	Ericsson Myanmar	40'19"
9	Aye	TSE Expert, Transmission, Ericsson Myanmar	5/4/16	Ericsson Myanmar	28'10"
10	Ei	TSE Expert, Radio Transmission, Ericsson Myanmar	5/4/16	Ericsson Myanmar	30'02"
11	Antony Tam	ICT in Education Specialist, UNESCO Myanmar	29/3/16	UNESCO office, Yangon	57'13"
12	Patricia Curran	Head of Sustainability, Telenor Myanmar	7/4/16	Telenor office, Yangon	25'22"
13	Johan Hallenborg	Minister Counsellor	4/4/16	Swedish Embassy – Myanmar	25'39"
14	Sameer Sharma	Senior Advisor, ITU	12/4/16	ITU office, Bangkok	53'57"
15	Daw Thandar	Headmistress	1/4/16	Htone Gyi School	2'45'20"
16–20	Teachers 1–5	Teachers	1/4/16	Htone Gyi School	2'45'20"

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