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**Abstract**

A new type of companies has emerged along the change caused by globalisation. These companies do not follow traditional theories of slow incremental internationalisation but instead internationalise rapidly or even since inception. Research has been concentrating on finding an explanation and even on creating a new theory for their existence. Especially the founders of these companies have attracted growing interest.

The objective of this study is to understand the significance of the entrepreneur in rapid internationalisation, and is divided – first – into understanding what rapid internationalisation is, and – second – into understanding which characteristics of the entrepreneur have influenced the rapid internationalisation process.

Globalisation has exposed companies to a turbulent environment and shortened the time span in several aspects. Rapid internationalisers have been the response to this change as they seem to internationalise since or near their founding. More interesting in this study is seen the intention of the entrepreneur to rapidly internationalise the company. Since these companies are restricted by their resources the role of the entrepreneur is seen as essential. In theory, the entrepreneur initiates the process of rapid internationalisation through his/hers global mindset, education and previous experience. It is suggested in this study that the research of the entrepreneur should combine these attributes.

The empirical part consists of interviews of the entrepreneurs in three case companies. The case study is carried out with a qualitative action-oriented approach. The companies are identified as rapid internationalisers and the entrepreneurs to have an influential background and global mindsets. Each entrepreneur's education is seen as ancillary to their companies' success. Previous experience and education also seems to influence the success of the case companies and their speed of internationalisation. Especially the entrepreneurs' global mindsets are seen to have a key role in the initiation of rapid internationalisation, and in enhancing it. Internationalisation is seen as a fundamental strategic decision at the founding of the companies. The global mindset is considered to be a universal attribute among modern entrepreneurs as the findings were similar between the entrepreneurs.

Key words	rapid internationalisation, born global, entrepreneur's background, global mindset
Further information	