Territorial Intelligence and Export Performance of Maghreb SMEs

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the impact of the various devices of territorial intelligence on the export performance of SMEs based on their intensities of exports, in the specific case of the Maghreb SMEs. The originality of this paper lies in the lack of empirical studies in the subject of territorial intelligence in developing countries in general, and the Maghreb countries in particular, which is added the enhancement of the mediating effect of competitive intelligence of SMEs on the success of the territorial intelligence approach in terms of export performance.

Keywords: Competitive Intelligence, Export Intensity, Export Performance, Maghreb SMEs, Territorial Intelligence

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**INTRODUCTION**

After the emergence of the new economy qualified as a knowledge economy and the new set of rules that impose, the sense of barriers has drastically changed according to which growth is achieved through a combination of new factors that come to consolidate the role of traditional factors, including the almost instant access to strategic information, collective knowledge production, massive use of information technology and communication (Drucker, 1998; Jacob, 2001; Ernst and Young, 2007). In fact, at present, the detection of high-value information is treated as a no less important as the human capital, material and natural resources and expenditure on R & D. To this end, if the technology facilitating message transmission (the container) is essential for the completion of a project, strategic information is the message content (Barney, 1991) which based on its value, rarity, imitation and substitutability. Starting from this idea, this information is an essential input for any innovation activity at any level.

Moreover, the requirements in terms of attractiveness and competitiveness, which are imposed by the new challenges of the international environment, push the territory to conglomerate its skills and collective action (Marten, Levet, Clerc 1994). Today, the concept of competitive intelligence (CI) is difficult to define given its complexity and multidimensional features. Indeed, the concept of CI encompasses and goes beyond simple monitoring system and its understanding depends on the entity. In addition, the territorial intelligence (TI) is not just a regional implementation of CI, but as an innovative and pooled organization, and with networks of all useful information and knowledge for development, competitiveness, attractiveness of a territory, collectively and for each of its actors. In other words, learn to use the CI tools is necessary but not sufficient when it concerns TI. In addition, the identification of the concept of TI often incorporates two fundamental concepts: CI and territory.

At the beginning of its appearance, the concept of CI has not concerned enough SMEs, where this it is often perceived, wrongly, as abstract and inaccessible. Indeed, the concept of intelligence was strongly biased by the geographic context in which it occurs. To this end, in France, the majority of thoughts are unanimous about the key features and objectives derived from the CI, which is intended to facilitate decision-making and requires actions related to the collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and secure of information available in the business environment. In the USA, the term is more focused on companies. We speak of “competitive intelligence”, incorporating the factor of competition and business competitiveness. While, this term was seen by the Anglo-Saxon approach as a synonym for “deep knowledge” confused sometimes with economic espionage, which in turn reflects the problem of its appropriation by SMEs.

If from the side of firm, CI often proves single and clearly defined its apprehension becomes more complex
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