A Study of the Entrepreneur’s Perceptions of the Born
Global Phenomenon

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Executive Summary

This dissertation sets out to explore the phenomenon of Born Globals, a small, international entrepreneurial firm. The study aims at exploring how the entrepreneur perceives the factors that influence the creation of a Born Global. This topic has been chosen since little research has been carried out in order to investigate what the entrepreneurs find important in the creation of a Born Global. This fact has been the basis in developing our study’s aim to investigate the factors’ relative importance.

The first step in the investigation is the literature review which is carried out in order to gain significant knowledge about the phenomenon before collecting empirical data of our own, the deductive approach. The literature review revolves around the conceptual framework created by Andersson & Wictor (2003), which has been used to summarise other findings by other authors into the four subcategories that our found to facilitate the creation of a Born Global. In addition to these factors we have found that nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages, as well as entry modes are feasible facilitators to discuss further.

When considering methodology a qualitative design has been found the most suitable. The approach used is influenced by Phenomenography which aims to describe people’s perceptions and experiences of different phenomena. In order to investigate this phenomenon we have used open interviews with two different entrepreneurs that were found through careful sampling. The companies chosen are located on two different continents and in two different businesses.

The interviews have been transcribed and categorised and the empirical data have been divided into the same categories used in the literature review. This has been done in order to make it easier to read but also easier to analyse. After the summary of the empirical data we have conducted a cross analysis. In analysing the data we have looked for similarities and differences in order to draw conclusions regarding the issues set out to investigate.

The empirical results and the analysis revolve around the six areas outlined in the theory, i.e. Globalisation, Entrepreneur, Networks, Industry, Entry Modes, and A fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages. The two entrepreneurs consider the same factors to have had the biggest influence for the biggest part. However they disagree regarding the importance of Networks and Market Entry. These factors have both had an impact on the companies but their relative importance is disputed.

We would like to stress that the investigated attitudes are subjective. It is the interviewees’ attitudes and opinions the study has been aiming at investigating and therefore it is important to identify the individual as a factor when discussing the investigation’s credibility. It is rather unlikely that we would have reached the same conclusions with different interviewees but since it is attitudes that have been investigated it is only natural and does therefore not clash with the purpose of the study.
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1. Introduction

This section discusses the prerequisites that are essential for further readings, such as background and definitions. The background is derived into a research question which is formulated into the purpose of this study. Objectives have then been constructed to give more specific measures to what this study is aimed at investigating.

1.1. Background

Previously it has been suggested that the internationalisation of firms takes place in incremental steps (Johanson & Vahlne 1977; 1990; Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul 1975). However, it has been proven that not all companies follow these steps. The term Born Global-firm has been formulated in order to facilitate the evidence of firms becoming international soon after their inception (McDougall et al. 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 1996; Kuemmerle 2002; Madsen & Servais 1997; Rennie 1993). Their emergence as a new phenomenon has shed light on the contradictive nature of the previous theories about the processes of internationalisation.

A new focus has been found where, among other factors, the role of the entrepreneur is in focus since it is the entrepreneur that makes the decisions concerning the internationalisation. Upon studying these kinds of firms it has been found that there are several aspects that can affect the possibility for a firm to develop according to the criteria of a Born Global, one example is the conceptual framework by Andersson & Wictor (2003). This framework suggests that four main factors influence the Born Global firms. These are: Globalisation, Entrepreneur, Networks, and Industry. One of the most common denominators in conducting research on Born Global firms is the importance of the entrepreneur (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Bloodgood et al. 1996; Rennie 1993; Knight & Cavusgil 1996; Madsen & Servais 1997). This type of research is a wide area to investigate due to the numerous factors that have been found to influence the individual entrepreneur. While there has been some research conducted in order to investigate these aspects, the common focus has been put on entrepreneurial behaviour of the firm and not on the decision maker per se, i.e. the entrepreneur. This has developed frameworks, such as that of Anderson & Wictor (2003), and giving a better understanding of the environment surrounding Born Globals and the factors that affect the creation of these. However, it has also created a gap in how the entrepreneur perceives the phenomenon known as Born Globals. Although there has been some research conducted in this area lately there is still a need to better understand the impact of the entrepreneurs’ importance in the earlier stages of internationalization (Andersson & Evangelista 2006). Therefore it is of interest to understand how the entrepreneur perceives the factors that affect the creation and success of a Born Global.

1.2. Research Question

How does the entrepreneur perceive the factors that affect the creation and success of a Born Global?
1.3. Purpose

Based on the problem formulation above, this investigation is aiming at exploring the factors affecting the creation of a Born Global. We also wish to investigate how these factors are perceived by the entrepreneurs in two companies and whether they consider one or more factors to have affected the case organisations more than others.

1.4. Research Objectives

- Identify the factors that are considered to facilitate the creation of Born Globals according to existing theory.
- Examine the entrepreneurs’ perception of possible factors that have affected the internationalisation of the case companies.
- Investigate these factors’ relative importance as perceived by the entrepreneurs.

1.5. Delimitation

In this study we have only concentrated on the entrepreneurs in Born Global companies. Due to our own geographical location we have chosen to investigate two companies from two different countries. However, possible cultural differences will not be discussed in this study since this area is not discussed in the Born Global literature and is therefore not of relevance for our study.

Further, this investigation will only focus on the entrepreneurs’ attitudes towards the different factors affecting a Born Global and is not aimed at achieving a reliable result in a statistical sense but instead focus on the individual attitudes of the entrepreneurs.

1.6. Definitions

1.6.1. Born Global

A Born Global is defined as a firm that has achieved foreign sales volumes of at least 25 percent within three years of its foundation (Andersson et al. 2006; Knight et al. 2004). Oviatt & McDougall (1994) claim that this type of organisation “seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries” (Oviatt & McDougall 1994, p.49). The Born Globals tend to be small companies with average annual sales usually not exceeding $100 Million. Despite these firms’ relatively small size and limited resources they aim at achieving international success. According to Knight et al. (2004) the Born Global firm’s internationalisation process has six characteristics that challenge traditional theories. First, the internationalisation of these firms tends to occur very early. Second, the company may target several markets simultaneously. Third, the target markets might be psychically distant from the home country. Fourth, the entry into the foreign markets might be conducted in a number of ways, using exporting, joint ventures etcetera. Fifth, thanks to advances in technology and information systems the Born Global can acquire
relevant market information quickly. Sixth, the Born Globals are highly entrepreneurial and more willing to take on risk in their internationalisation process. Knight & Cavusgil (1996) state that technological advances often contribute to the creation of Born Globals. Technological breakthroughs and unique product ideas facilitate the creation of the Born Global firm.

1.6.2. Entrepreneur

The Oxford Concise Australian Dictionary (1997) defines entrepreneur as “a person who undertakes an enterprise or business, with the chance of profit or loss” (The Oxford Concise Australian Dictionary 1997, p.440). Andersson & Evangelista (2006) have chosen to use a different definition. They state that there are many different definitions of entrepreneurs. The authors have chosen to use the definition of entrepreneurs as all individuals that carry out entrepreneurial actions. Andersson (2000) identifies the following entrepreneurial qualities:
- the ability to see new combinations;
- the will to act and to develop these new combinations;
- the view that acting in accordance with one’s own vision is more important than rational calculations;
- the ability to convince others to invest in entrepreneurial projects; and
- proper timing.

(Andersson 2000, p.67)

In this investigation we will use Andersson’s definition of entrepreneurs. The term will be used throughout this paper with reference to people with the above mentioned qualities. No distinction will be made between innovative managers in already existing organisations and people who set up new businesses.

1.6.3. Globalisation/Internationalisation

Globalisation is discussed by Lynch (2003) as the process of expanding into new markets in other countries. Kotler (2002) further discusses the topic and describes it as a changing focus from competing in just one region. This creates global industries which means that the strategic positions of a company’s competitors are not bound to a given geographical location. Internationalisation is then seen as the process of expanding into other unknown markets for the company.
2. Literature Review

The literature review section of this report will assess the relevant theory, in connection with the purpose, on the subject of Born Globals. This review should give a good overview of the factors that have previously been found to affect the creation of a Born Global. The theory discussed in this section will then be used to analyse the empirical findings.

While there are several names for the phenomenon defined as Born Global in this report, they all discuss firms following the same criteria or characteristics. These characteristics are the factors that affect the creation of a Born Global.

Knight and Cavusgil (1996) give an explanation to why Born Globals dispute the older theories of incremental internationalisation (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 1990), which is that recent trends on the global market of today, where more focus is put on niche markets, advances of process technology, advances in communications technology, and inherent advantages of small companies such as response times, flexibility, and adaptability, has facilitated the creation of Born Global companies. They also claim that the means of internationalisation such as knowledge, technology, tools etcetera together with trends to create larger and more global networks have also made it possible for Born Globals to emerge. Born Globals have emerged in markets where internationalisation is found to be high and they are, in comparison to other exporting firms, often positioned in niche segments of the market, being very specialised in making either custom made products or highly standardised (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; Madsen & Servais, 1997). These factors have made it possible for organisations to globalise in different ways than what has been proposed in previous theories about internationalisation. It has also been found that the presence of a strong entrepreneur with a global mindset and international experience is a facilitator for rapid globalisation (Bloodgard et al, 1996; Madsen & Servais, 1997; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994). Madsen and Servais (1997) also found that Born Globals are know to “piggyback” on larger companies in their distribution channels to expand their ventures with business networks, joint ventures, partnerships etcetera. This phenomenon is more clearly seen in investigations of Born Globals in markets where the domestic market is rather small in comparison to countries with larger domestic markets (Andersson & Wictor, 2003; Madsen & Servais, 1997).

With all of these factors that have been found to influence the creation of a Born Global there has been a need to gather them in the creation of a framework to better summarise what influences firms in their internationalisation processes. Andersson and Wictor (2003) created a framework, which they named “the conceptual framework” which we find highly relevant and suitable for our investigation. Hence we chose to categorise our theoretical findings into this framework. We will also investigate if there are any additional factors that can influence the creation of a Born Global, which is in line with our research objectives.

2.1. Andersson & Wictor’s Conceptual Framework

Andersson & Wictor’s (2003) conceptual framework, figure 1, can be used to summarise the findings of factors that influence the creation of a Born Global. This framework consists of
four primary areas in which different factors can be sorted in order to give a better overview of which the primary forces and influences are on a Born Global firm.

In the following sections the four factors outlined above will be discussed further.

2.1.1. Globalisation

As companies are internationalising they are affected by increasing globalisation. Advances in information technology, communications, transport, and globalisation of marketing demand help facilitate the internationalisation of firms both soon after their foundation and continuously over time (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 1996; Etemad & Wright 2003). The IT revolution has also helped companies in their communication with partners all over the world. Companies can be present all over the world without having to set up subsidiaries in other countries (Etemad & Wright 2003).

Trade barriers are another issue to consider in the internationalisation of firms. A decrease in trade barriers facilitates the implementation of firms’ global strategy (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Etemad & Wright 2003; Karra & Phillips 2004). There are still differences between nations which could be used to segment markets. However, these differences are not of the magnitude as to prevent the companies of entering markets. These differences are often overcome by the organisation using individuals or partner organisations with knowledge of the specific market (Andersson & Wictor 2003).

As globalisation increases so does the competition, both at home and abroad, exposing companies to greater risk. Etermad & Wright (2003) claim that firms need to be globally competitive even if they do not compete directly in foreign markets as the possibility for foreign companies active in the same industry to enter the home market increases. Technological advances have helped harmonise many aspects of firms’ international activities which has lead to reduced risks concerning diversity. However, it does also force firms to move rapidly into international markets (Etemad & Wright 2003).

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Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework (Andersson & Wictor 2003, p.254)
2.1.2. Entrepreneur

The role of the entrepreneur in the creation of a Born Global is very important. The entrepreneur is the one that makes the decisions concerning the company’s activities and therefore it is important to study the entrepreneur on an individual level in order to understand the firm’s development over time (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 1996). As all individuals the entrepreneurs have different traits. Andersson & Wictor’s (2003) study of the entrepreneur has shown that even though there are some common traits there are individual differences that influence the development of the specific company. There is a connection between a positive international development and the international attitude, experience, orientation, and motivation of the entrepreneur (Andersson 2003; Madsen & Servais 1997; Oviatt & McDougall 1994). This fact is in accordance with the view of a firm’s behaviour as a reflection of values and beliefs of strong actors within the company (Andersson 2003; Thompson et al. 2005). A characteristic that most international entrepreneurs have in common is that they see opportunities or challenges where others see problems and that a global strategy is a natural strategy for the Born Global entrepreneur (Andersson & Wictor 2003).

The Born Global entrepreneurs have a global orientation from the formation of the company which is derived from the global mindset of the entrepreneur (Harveston et al. 2000). Knight et al. (2004) state that the Born Global entrepreneur has a “borderless” view of markets and that their strategies are developed in order to achieve international marketing goals at or near the company’s founding. The global view of entrepreneurs at the foundation of companies is widely considered to be a trait of successful Born Globals (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Andersson 2003; Rialp et al. 2005; Karra & Phillips 2004) and Harveston et al. (2000) state that Born Global entrepreneurs do not consider internationalisation to be merely an extension of the home market, but the reason for the firm’s existence.

The international experience of entrepreneurs also affects the internationalisation of firms. Rialp et al. (2005) discuss the difference between the traditional exporter and a Born Global exporter in terms of their prior international experience. While the traditional exporter often has irrelevant or a low degree of experience in international issues the Born Global entrepreneur has a high degree of international experience that facilitates the development of international strategies and the internationalisation of the firm. Andersson & Evangelista (2006) also emphasise the importance of the prior experience and knowledge, both international and industrial, obtained by the entrepreneur. However, Andersson & Evangelista’s (2006) study showed that not all entrepreneurs have international experience. These entrepreneurs had another capability, that of cooperating with others who had knowledge of international trade. The international experience does not have to come specifically from having done business abroad, Andersson & Wictor’s (2003) study showed that entrepreneurs gain experience through work experience but also from study abroad and networks in other countries. Harveston et al. (2000) also discuss international experience and consider managers who have experience from overseas studies or international work experience to be better suited to understand and identify opportunities in these markets.

International entrepreneurs are considered to be more risk tolerant than other entrepreneurs (McDougall & Oviatt 2000; Harveston 2000). The level of risk involved in internationalisation is seen as an important determinant of a company’s internationalisation (Johanson & Vahlne 1977; 1990) and that the entrepreneur’s perception of risk affects the willingness to enter foreign markets. However, the level of risk involved in an
internationalisation decision can be decreased by the entrepreneur’s knowledge of the potential markets. Har weston et al. (2000) state that the Born Global entrepreneur is likely to be more risk tolerant than other managers as they internationalise quickly after the company’s foundation.

2.1.3. Networks

It has been shown that networks are a crucial factor for small- and medium-sized enterprises that wishes to internationalise. Research has shown that small- and medium-sized enterprises, in comparison to larger corporations, rely heavily on their business and personal networks when choosing markets. Instead of choosing markets because of their relative attractiveness and hence reduce risks, small- and medium-size enterprises are known for choosing to enter unknown markets where they have individuals and companies that they know and trust (Doole & Lowe, 2004). In relation to these statements an approach called the network approach has emerged. This network approach has found that business-to-business firms utilise their widespread networks of different actors on the market to rapidly expand their businesses internationally (Andersson, 2002).

While Born Globals is not a term specifically tied to business-to-business ventures, the characteristics of a Born Global shows that most of them are in such markets. One of the factors that have been found to facilitate the creation of a Born Global is the growing trend of global networking. Partnership with foreign organisations such as distributors, trading companies, subcontractors, buyers, and sellers allow small firms to expand easier than before. It has also been shown that it is beneficial in this global market place to create mutually beneficial long-term alliances with foreign businesses to together strive for cross boundary success (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996). This is also a good way for inexperienced managers to reduce uncertainty and to gain the experiential knowledge that is needed, according to other models of internationalisation (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 1990), fairly quickly. McDougall et al (2002) also discuss how the characteristics of the individual entrepreneur are an important aspect of building networks where his/her international experience is directly related to the opportunities of building networks abroad.

These factors of the Born Global relates to the network approach discussed earlier where networks are found to be more beneficial for business-to-business markets than the traditional marketing mix approach due to the specific and complex nature of business-to-business markets (Andersson, 2002). Since you seldom have several customers and focus more on relationship marketing in a business-to-business market, in comparison to transactional focus, it is more nurturing for the business to keep strong relationships and alliances with other actors to more successfully market products abroad (Andersson, 2002; Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; McDougal & Oviatt, 1994). These networks consists of key distribution channels, customers, suppliers, partnerships, etcetera and are maintained through close cooperation in attaining and building international networks (Rialp et al, 2005). These measures of networking facilitate the process that has allowed Born Globals to internationalise in such manner which characterises a Born Global.

2.1.4. Industry
When it comes to the international development of a firm, the industry characteristics are very important. Even though Born Globals are active in many different countries, it has been found that the industry is more important to the company’s development than the nationality of the firm (Andersson & Wictor 2003). Born Globals are often more specialised and involved in niche markets than traditional firms. The products produced by the Born Globals fill a specific need of the customer and are often highly customised (Knight & Cavusgil 1996; Madsen & Servais 1997). Born Globals are international companies which are considered not to be restricted by industrial wisdom but instead try to create niches where they can act without consideration of the industry (Andersson & Wictor 2003). Advances in process technology in the company’s industry (Knight & Cavusgil 1996) and the demand for particular products which creates a “pull”-situation in the market (Karra & Phillips 2004) are also industrial features that facilitate the creation and success of a Born Global.

The international customers and competitors within the industry are also considered to affect the internationalisation process of the Born Global firm. If a large number of a company’s competitors and customers are international, the firm is more likely to enter foreign markets (Oviatt & McDougall 1997). Companies active in growing industries often engage in internationalisation of the firm as a natural part of its activities. Andersson & Wictor (2003) consider this to be natural especially for companies with small home markets. The authors also state that Born Globals are often found in mature industries where they try to find or create niches where they can act independently of the major players in the industry. Born Globals are often involved in new, developing industries without clear industrial structures or in mature industries where they have developed niche markets and therefore do not consider the industry to be mature. This fact makes the behaviour of the Born Globals difficult to explain using traditional industrial structure literature (Andersson & Wictor 2003).

2.2. Additional Factors affecting firms’ internationalisation

In addition to the four factors outlined above, the theory discusses two areas that affect the creation and success of Born Globals. These areas are: Entry Modes and A fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages. These two areas affect the incentives and the ease with which the Born Globals enter new markets.

2.2.1. Entry Modes

In discussions about internationalisation it is imperative to discuss the various entry modes that are utilised by corporations in the process of going abroad. These entry modes facilitate the internationalisation process through allowing organisations to choose the level of foreign investment that the organisation finds feasible in that specific case. What Johanson and Vahlne (1977; 1990) suggest in their Uppsala model is that organisations should, and most often do, internationalise through incremental steps that start with exporting and then successively increasing the level of investment and commitment ending with setting up e.g. manufacturing abroad.

Although a Born Global does not follow this pattern and more often only utilizes a small sample of the entry modes (Doole and Lowe 2004), it is important to be aware of which entry modes are available for the organisation to choose from in taking decisions about internationalising. Since this report is investigating the choices of the entrepreneur in a Born
Global firm it is valid to explore the options facing the entrepreneur and not only the choices that have been taken.

2.2.1.1. Indirect Exporting

The most common first step in going international is to utilise the option of exporting. Indirect exporting is especially feasible for smaller organisations to use because it limits the amount of expenditure that is needed to give an effect (Doole & Lowe, 2004). One way of using indirect exporting is to use export houses that use their expertise to manage the organisations foreign sales for them. This method of export is very close to that of using trading houses to market and sell the organisation’s products abroad. Thirdly, piggybacking is a way of entering a foreign market through using the stronger reputation of another organisation’s operations abroad to market the company’s own products with the help of that reputation (Doole & Lowe, 2004; Lynch 2003; Thompson et. al, 2005).

2.2.1.2. Direct Exporting

A second method of exporting is to export directly. The difference to indirect exporting is that the organisation takes a more active role in marketing its products in the country that has been chosen for the international expansion (Lynch, 2003). Through being more involved in the international activities the organisation can secure a better position abroad and gain more control over the international expansion (Doole & Lowe, 2003). The methods of direct exporting are: Agents, Distributors, Franchising, Direct Marketing, Overseas Manufacturing, Contract Manufacturing, and Licensing. These are all very feasible strategies to utilise in a first step of internationalisation however they do demand more financial support than the indirect measures such as domestic purchasing.

2.2.1.3. Foreign Manufacturing Strategies

If the organisation has significant knowledge about the foreign market or just has a lot of confidence in its products more pricey choices of internationalisation could be utilized. If the organisation is in manufacturing it could be useful to assemble parts of its products abroad in countries where significant economies of scale can be acquired through lower wages (Doole & Lowe, 2004). A subsidiary could also be feasible to start in the foreign market, not only in order to possibly gain economies of scale but also to present a significant presence in that market (Lynch 2003; Thompson et al, 2005). Another option is to acquire or merge with a foreign organisation which will give the organisation very important knowledge that is possessed by the acquired organisation. This can present a significant competitive advantage in the long run in an international environment (Lynch 2003). Although mergers and acquisitions are, in theory, the best way to gain knowledge about foreign markets they present difficulties when it comes to corporate cultures and merge these together. There are historically several cases where mergers and acquisitions have failed and quickly turned into a bad business decision.
2.2.1.4. Cooperative Strategies

With what is said above regarding mergers and acquisitions in mind, an alternative is to use a cooperative strategy. Joint ventures and alliances have in the business climate of today proved themselves to be very useful. Networks and cooperation is the new focus of doing business and has become a vital step for many companies (Doole & Lowe, 2003; Ferrell & Hartline, 2005; Lynch, 2003; Thompson et al., 2005). In lending each other expertise and experiences both parts of an alliance can gain vital competitive advantages compared to their competition. However all ventures in a new business climate and a different culture presents difficulties and the possibility of misunderstanding because of the origin of the different organisations. Also the feeling of that both parts are not contributing with the same amount of risk and effort is hard to avoid (Doole & Lowe, 2003).

2.2.2. A fit between nation specific characteristics & company specific advantages

As a firm decides to internationalise there are characteristics of nations that might facilitate or hinder the organisation’s market entry processes. Market knowledge is one of the factors that facilitate the internationalisation process (Johanson & Vahlne 1990). By having knowledge concerning specific markets the company’s incentives of entering that specific market increases. Johanson & Vahlne (1990) consider the market knowledge to be country specific and difficult to generalise to other markets. Countries with low psychic distance, i.e. countries with similar culture, language, political systems etcetera as the home country, are more likely to be entered in the early stages of a firm’s internationalisation. As the knowledge concerning the markets increase so are the incentives of companies of entering markets with greater psychic distance (Vahlne & Wiedersheim-Paul 1973; Johanson & Vahlne 1990).

“The Eclectic Paradigm” developed by Dunning (1988) is based on the notion that organisations seek to establish themselves in markets where they have a competitive advantage. The advantages can take the form of; ownership-specific advantages, internalisation advantages, and locational advantages. Ownership-specific advantages refer to advantages stemming out of structural and transactional market imperfections. Superior technology or the multinationality of the firm are examples of structural imperfections and advantages such as lower costs due to the firm being multinational is an example of a transactional market imperfection. Internalisation advantages refer to the firm’s ability to transfer ownership-specific advantages to new markets by keeping it within the firm without having to sell it. The third advantage, locational advantages, can also be further divided into structural and transactional. Structural advantages refer to, e.g. differences in factor costs, while transactional advantages refer to improved “arbitrage and leverage opportunities” (Johanson & Vahlne 1990, p.16).

The unique resources of a company can also create opportunities in foreign markets (Oviatt & McDougall 1994). These markets may have a need for the product offered by the firm, thus creating a “pull” situation. Karra & Phillips (2004) state that in addition to the “push” situation created by saturated home markets there is a global “pull” for goods and services. There are global markets where the buyers often search for products with specific characteristics. This might lead to establishment of firms in countries where the demand for the products is high and thereby accelerate the company’s internationalisation process.
### 2.3. Summary of Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.1 Globalisation</strong></td>
<td>• Advances in information technology, communications, transport, and globalisation of marketing demand help facilitate the internationalisation of firms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A decrease in trade barriers facilitates the implementation of firms’ global strategy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Globalisation increases competition at home markets as well as foreign ones.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.2 Entrepreneur</strong></td>
<td>• The entrepreneur is the driving force for decisions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• There are traits and characteristics that are common for a Born Global entrepreneur that help the creation of a Born Global firm, e.g. a global mindset, and international experience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The traits of the entrepreneur, past experiences, and knowledge are a key for the creation of a Born Global together with how the entrepreneur views risk.</td>
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<td><strong>2.1.3 Networks</strong></td>
<td>• Born Globals have a high reliance on personal and professional networks in their expansions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Business-to-business companies have been found to utilise networks heavily, which is why most Born Globals are found in these types of industries.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.4 Industry</strong></td>
<td>• Born Globals are most often found in niche segments of industries because of their ability to be highly reactive and responsive to customised orders.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Born Globals are often found in mature industries where they find niche segments. Also they often come from countries with a small home market, which raises the need to expand abroad.</td>
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<td><strong>2.2.1 Entry Modes</strong></td>
<td>• Entry modes are not chosen through an incremental pattern.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Indirect exporting, Direct exporting, Foreign manufacturing strategies, and cooperative strategies.</td>
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<td>• Due to the high focus on networks Born Globals does not follow a rational approach when choosing entry modes.</td>
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<td><strong>2.2.2 A fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages</strong></td>
<td>• Market knowledge plays a big role in choice of markets.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Organisations seek to enter markets where they have a competitive advantage.</td>
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*Figure 2 - Summary of Literature Review*
### 2.4. Gaps between Theory & Objectives

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Secondary Data</th>
<th>Important Findings</th>
<th>Gap</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Examine the entrepreneur’s perception of possible factors that have affected the internationalisation of the case company.</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>No Findings</td>
<td>No knowledge concerning entrepreneur’s perceptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Investigate these factors relative importance as perceived by the entrepreneur.</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>No Findings</td>
<td>Perceived relative importance unknown.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3 - Objectives, Secondary Data, Important Features, & Gaps*
3. Research Design & Methodology

This section will discuss the choice of research design and methodology as well as the procedures used in the research process. Choices and selections made during the process and the validity and reliability will also be discussed.

3.1. Position of Research Design & Methodology

In conducting a research there are two different research designs to choose from, qualitative and quantitative (Jacobsen, 2002).

A qualitative research design is best suited when conducting exploratory studies. Jacobsen (2002) claims that exploratory research often leads to a increasing need to focus on a few units when conducting research since it is suited to investigate varied data.

A quantitative research design is preferable when the research that is conducted is descriptive or used for testing a hypothesis. Such research has the need to go for width instead of depth since its objectives is to investigate the spread of a phenomenon and hence it uses several units to investigate the phenomenon.

Jacobsen (2002) states that there are two different standpoints on data collection: deductive and inductive data collection. The deductive standpoint claims that the researcher should firstly collect information and create an opinion about the subject of matter and secondly see how well this applies to reality. Critique against this standpoint is that it is thought that there is a risk to the reliability of the collected data because the researcher might only collect data that supports the perceptions he/she already has and by doing so neglecting other relevant data that might not support these perceptions. The inductive standpoint claims that you should conduct research in a reversed matter to that of the deductive standpoint. This means that you should firstly collect evidence and information from reality in which you secondly look for connections and draw conclusions. There are risks to this approach as well which is that the researchers will not know which data is relevant to be collected. It is also very hard to conduct research without any expectations or perceptions all together.

3.2. Purpose of the Study & Type of Design

The position of this research will be that of a qualitative research design since this study’s primary focus is to explore the factors affecting the creation of a Born Global. With this research we wish to create further knowledge about the factors that facilitate the creation of a Born Global firm and how these factors are perceived by the entrepreneur.

Within the qualitative design the term phenomenography is discussed. The phenomenographic approach aims to describe people’s perceptions and experiences of different phenomena. Furthermore it aims to investigate the purpose of the phenomenon rather than to explain or to show connections and frequencies. Phenomenography is used to describe how something emerges for people rather than to describe how something is (Larsson, 1986). This description of phenomenography is in line with the purpose of this research as the attitudes of the entrepreneur will be investigated in order to find out which factors affecting the creation of a
Born Global he/she finds important. Differences in these perceptions are being investigated in this study. Kroksmark (1987) states that a phenomenographic approach focuses on how something is perceived, not how it really is. This fits the goals of this study and therefore we have been affected by phenomenography in this study.

We have also used the deductive approach in this study. This means that we first collected information from which we have identified the relevant areas which we find important to further examine. Of course there is a risk to using this approach which is that the outcome of this study can be different if compared to an inductive approach.

3.3. Alternative Design

The result of this research will be a reflection of the design that has been chosen to conduct the research itself. With a different research approach chosen this study could possibly have been different. With the qualitative design we aim to explain the interviewees’ perceptions of the identified factors that facilitate the creation of a Born Global. Had a quantitative design been used it could have posed some problems to the completion of this study. Some of these problems would have been difficulties in investigating the attitudes and perceptions of the interviewees, which is the purpose to investigate. On the other hand larger numbers of persons could have been questioned with a quantitative approach which means that connections found would be more reliable. However, answers of a quantitative kind would have been more static in the way of being hard to display the nature of the phenomenon, which is the foundation of the purpose of this study.

If an inductive approach would have been used it could also have lead to differences in the results. With larger amounts of data other conclusions could have emerged than those that are found in this research. We have also used an open approach which means that we have in advance limited the research and then proceeded to conducting interviews with an open mind without expecting any certain answers.

3.4. Research Methodology

3.4.1. Secondary Data Collection

In order to be able to understand the problems surrounding the chosen topic we have made the decision to proceed with conducting a thorough literature review. The purpose of the literature review is for us to become more familiar with the subject in order to be able to analyse the results of our data collection in a satisfactory manner. It is also important to be familiar and up to par with pervious research and investigations in order to be able to make the research as scientific as possible. We will then proceed from theories in the literature in the process of assessing our empirical findings to validate it.

In this study the literature review is consisting of secondary sources in the form of books, reports, and articles. The primary literature in the study is articles found with the guidance of essential articles in the initial phases of investigating Born Globals. From there we have used the snowball-method in finding more articles that are feasible from the list of references in these articles. Our preference in choosing articles has been to find articles that are as up to
date as possible, however we have also used articles that we found to be the starting point of researching this topic, which are a bit older. We have also used books that are core text from courses at the University of Lincoln, University of Halmstad, and the University of the Sunshine Coast. To find additional articles and reports we have conducted searches in online databases by using suitable phrases and search words. The databases we have used are: ABI/INFORM Global, LIBRIS, and EBSCO.

3.4.2. Interviews

An interview can be designed in many different ways with varying levels of openness. The extremes are a completely open interview without limitations or guidance, and a completely closed interview where there are clear questions with clear alternatives and structure (Jacobsen 2002). Jacobsen states that open individual interviews are suitable in order to investigate an individual’s interpretations or a phenomenon. The open interview also gives clarity in how the individual experiences and gives meaning to different circumstances (Jacobsen 2002). However, the most common approach is a design in-between the completely open and completely closed, that you have a certain structure but are still open to abandon this structure should the situation demand so. One of the advantages of a qualitative interview, according to Bell (1999) is that it is possible, in an interview, to ask follow-up questions and the answers can be elaborated.

In an interview it is very important that the interviewer stays as neutral as possible. Bell (1999) states that there is a risk in interviews being a subjective technique and that this increases the risk of distortion. Should the interviewer fail in keeping neutral, the risk of the questions being influenced by his/her own opinions is substantial something that might affect the result of the interview.

In an open interview it is important that the interviewer is flexible. Bell (1999) points to the importance of letting the respondent talk about what is important to him/her but that the interviewer has the ability to use the structure of the interview in order to cover all areas of interest. The interviewer should also formulate the questions so that they catch and give the opportunity to develop themes in the answers given.

There is also a risk that the interviewee misinterprets questions and it is then important for the interviewer to be able to lead the interviewee back on track by explaining the question or ask suitable follow-up questions. This also shows the importance of the interviewer having the flexibility and improvisation skills in order to handle these situations.

3.4.3. Interview Guide

There has been a significant amount of research in the area of Born Globals. This research has been discussed and categorised in the literature review. The development of an interview guide has been facilitated by these categories discussed. The interview guide is designed in order for the interviewer to be able to follow up on interesting issues. The interview guide is formulated around different aspects of the Born Global phenomenon and is thought to function as a framework for the interview. Flexibility and follow-up questions are essential in order for the successful completion of the primary data collection. The developed interview guide can be found in appendix 1.
3.5. Sampling

Since this investigation aims at investigating the attitudes and perceptions of entrepreneurs in Born Globals we have, in the sampling process, searched for organisations which meet the demands for Born Global companies. In deciding on which type of organisations to choose we decided upon not concentrating on a certain industry or geographic area since we did not find that these parameters would be applicable in order to find representative organisations. Trost (1997) states that it is usually completely uninteresting to use statistically representative samples. The problem with these is that they provide too many ‘ordinary’ people and not enough of the more ‘unusual’. In most cases the purpose of qualitative studies is to get as much variation as possible and not similar in character. The sample should be heterogeneous within a given frame; where there should be variation but not so that more than an occasional individual is extreme or ‘deviant’. Considering this we chose to investigate two organisations that met the requirements of Born Globals without consideration to other factors.

Regarding the sample size Trost (1997) states that in general one should limit the investigation to a small number of interviews. With a large number of interviews the material becomes difficult to handle and it might make it more difficult to get a good overview and at the same time see all the important details that unify or part. It is important to remember that a small number of interviews carried out proficiently are more valuable than a large number carried out less proficiently. We decided to interview two entrepreneurs from two different organisations in order to be able to properly investigate their individual perceptions and look for similarities.

3.5.1. Choice of Organisations

In this investigation we have decided to study two different organisations. The purpose of this investigation is to investigate the entrepreneurs’ perceptions of factors affecting a Born Global and that is why we, in our sampling, have looked for organisations that fulfil the requirements on the above mentioned type of organisation. In our search for organisations we received help from personnel at Halmstad University, Sweden and the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia in order to locate companies that would be suitable for our investigation.

We have chosen two organisations from different industries and geographical locations. This has been done deliberately in order to eliminate the influence of elements that are specific to a certain region or industry on our investigation.

3.5.2. Choice of Respondents

In the choice of respondents we have concentrated on the entrepreneurs in the chosen organisations. Both entrepreneurs are Chief Executive Officers in their respective companies. Since inception the entrepreneurs have been, and still are, in a position where they have the power to decide on matters concerning the organisations’ internationalisation. In the choice of respondents we focused on the position rather than individual characteristics as we did not want to have preconceived notions concerning how the respondents would answer our
questions. We also decided to interview entrepreneurs in two different organisations in order to have the possibility to compare their answers in order to find similarities and irregularities.

The respondents have not been chosen based on their age or gender. The only factor affecting the choice was their position within the organisation. This is due to the fact that the purpose of this investigation is to investigate the perceptions of the specific individuals and not in order to get a, in a statistical context, representative sample.

3.6. Approach to Primary Data Collection

Previous to the interviews we contacted the interviewees. Through the personnel at Halmstad University and the University of the Sunshine Coast we received a list of suitable companies and from those lists we chose two entrepreneurs which were contacted via e-mail. Through the contact made by e-mail we made sure that the organisations met the requirements of our study. When this had been assured we set up interviews with the entrepreneurs. In the contact we informed the interviewees of how much time the interviews would take, specifically 30-45 minutes. We let the respondents choose the place for the interviews, in one case a café was chosen and in the other at the head office of the company was chosen. The respondents were asked if they opposed us using a tape recorder in order to record the interview, which they did not. During the interview we used a pre-developed interview guide to assist us during the discussions. In the situations where we felt it necessary we used follow-up questions in order to further explore interesting subjects that needed elaboration.

3.7. Data Analysis

A danger with exploratory research is that of faulty interpretation of the findings. There is also a risk that conclusions based on qualitative research are subject to interpreter bias (Zikmund 2000). Bell (1997) states that it is difficult to completely avoid biasness but being aware of the problem in addition to controlling oneself is a way to reduce such effects. It is also very important to analyse the findings by comparing them to the literature review. In doing so it is also very important to keep the research problem and purpose in mind.

Jacobsen (2002) states that an analysis of qualitative data is concerned with three things: Description, Systematisation and Categorisation, and Combination. Description is concerned with presenting the data without interpretation in order to give a good overview of the results. The next phase is systematisation and categorisation of the data collected. In this phase the information collected is screened and simplified in order to get a better overview of the information that is relevant for the study. The final step in the analysis is combination of data. In this phase the researchers look for meaning, causes, try to generalise, or bring order to the data.

In our analysis we have decided to, with help from tape recordings, transcribe the interviews. We have then read these a number of times in order to identify similarities and differences in the answers. During the readings we have also compared the answers to the literature review and marked relevant areas of the text in order to compile these in the presentation of empirical data.
In order to facilitate the reading of the dissertation we have decided to keep the same structure throughout the whole paper. We have used the pattern from the literature review in the presentation of empirical data in order to visualise the findings in the best way.

Using our purpose and research objectives we have then analysed the result of the interviews and compared these to the theory in order to find similarities and differences between them. We have then used these in order to draw conclusions and offer explanations to the perceptions that have appeared in the study.

### 3.8. Problems with Research Design & Methodology

There are risks involved in using a deductive research design. One of these is that we, in the interviews, have been affected by the literature we have used and by doing so, unconsciously, looked for certain results. Jacobsen (2002) discusses the *interviewer effect* which is when the interview is affected by the participating parties. This can lead to answers different to those that would have been given without influence. The influence may consist of the tone in someone’s voice, the clothes worn etcetera. Bell (1999) discusses the fact that interviews are a subjective technique and the risk for distortion increases with this method. Bell further considers it difficult to completely eliminate distortion but that an awareness of the problem in addition to being able to control oneself helps decrease these effects.

### 3.9. Ethical Issues

The interviewees were informed in advance of that the investigation would be a part of a Masters’ dissertation regarding Born Globals. They were asked if they had the time to participate and answer some questions in an interview. That the researchers inform the respondents of the study and that their participation is voluntary is an important part of research ethics. This requirement is formulated by the The Humanistic-social scientific Research Council (Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet) (2006). Before the interviews were carried out we informed the entrepreneurs of that their personal details would not be included in the dissertation. Consequently we will not refer to the respondents or the companies by their name. Instead they will be referred to by their respective area of operation.

In the study we have also decided to convert spoken language to written language. This is justified as people often use a casual language or expressions that have no significance to the investigation (Trost 1997). We also stay clear of any usage of the respondents’ age or gender as there is no reason to include these in the investigation. Consequently, both respondents will be described as male, this in order to further ensure anonymity.

### 3.10. Validity & Reliability

Bell (1999) states that regardless of which method you use in order to collect information, it is important to critically examine it in order to determine how reliable and valid it is. The two concepts come from the quantitative methodology and it is difficult to directly transfer it to the qualitative method (Jacobsen 2002). However, Jacobsen claims that a critical discussion regarding validity and reliability in qualitative studies is important.
Bell (1999) states that reliability is a measurement concerning the likelihood of getting the same results at different times when other circumstances are the same. She further claims that validity is something more complicated. Validity can be described as the conformity of what you set out to investigate and what you actually investigate. Trost (1997) also stresses the importance of being able to show that the collected data is gathered in such a way that they can be regarded relevant for the investigation’s problem definition.

We have consistently used the same approach in the investigation’s different parts, this in order to make sure that we stick to the subject. By doing this we have strived to minimise the incentives of digressing from the topic, thus damaging the validity of the study. We also account for how the collection of data has been conducted, both through a literature review and through interviews. Our strive in the study also includes following the ethical principles existing in the research process. Our wish of keeping the interviewees anonymous is one step in the direction of attaining honest answers without them being affected by worries about getting recognised. The goal with this study is to investigate the perceptions regarding a phenomenon. Therefore we consider it to be justified that we in our choice of respondents have not focused on their knowledge regarding the subject but instead only have concentrated on the position they hold. By considering this and to be aware of our understanding derived from the literature review, we have achieved a high level of reliability in our work.

Trost (1997) stresses the importance of being neutral when collecting and analysing data. Since we have used a deductive method in order to approach the subject it is only natural that we have certain expectations regarding the result of the study. However, we are aware of this and therefore work hard in order to assure that it does not affect the result of the study. Since we are two people conducting the analysis of the gathered material we also have the possibility to check each other in order to avoid that our opinions are reflected in the final result.
4. Empirical Data

The empirical data section will summarise the interviews that have been conducted in the two case companies and divide them into different sections. These sections have the same headings that can be found in the literature review. This was chosen because it will make the empirical data more comprehensible for the reader and to easier see a clear theme from the literature review down to the analysis.

4.1. Company 1 - Medical Writing

4.1.1. Company

Medical Writing is an Australian company created in 2000. The company’s main activities concern providing documents to either medical journals or to health care regulators around the world. Ever since its founding it has been active globally and Medical Writing currently has most of its business overseas. The company currently has ten employees but is undergoing a planned growth and is predicted to grow further over the next period of time. The company only employs PhD’s who have previous experience of international publishing and plentiful research experience. Medical Writing has chosen to concentrate on this kind of employees in order to maintain a high level of quality in the output of the company. The company is currently active all over the world, having participated in projects on all continents except from Africa. However, most of Medical Writing’s business comes from the U.S.A. The organisation is currently undergoing changes. Being a relatively young organisation, Medical Writing has had the characteristics of a start-up company. As the company is becoming established in the industry the mind-set and business plans are changing in order to create a more sustainable, mature business.

4.1.2. Globalisation

The entrepreneur in Medical Writing considers several factors of globalisation to be having an impact on the internationalisation of the company. He discusses an increasing trend of people and companies looking globally for service providers and how that has had a positive impact on Medical Writing’s business internationally. The entrepreneur also considers there to be a rising importance of working with the ‘best minds’ in the world in order to ensure high levels of quality in the output of organisations. Information Technology has had a big impact in connecting Medical Writing with customers all over the world and it has also helped in things such as searching literature data bases around the world, communicating with staff, online professional development programs which have all helped the company reach its current position.

Medical Writing is currently active in a number of markets. The entrepreneur does not consider there to be any real barriers to continued global expansion other than varying economic conditions in different parts of the world. The company has chosen not to conduct business in certain areas due to those countries’ lack of funding. Another issue that the entrepreneur considers to be an issue affecting Medical Writing’s internationalisation is the distance between the company and its customers. Even though IT has helped in bringing them closer the entrepreneur still considers face-to-face meetings to be the best way of attracting
and communicating with customers. The entrepreneur does not consider there to be any legislative barriers that affect the company’s internationalisation. *Medical Writing*’s three biggest markets; the U.S.A., the E.U., and Japan, have all adopted the same regulations which makes it easier for the company to conduct business on par with local competitors. These regulations have also been adopted by Canada and Australia, something that has further benefited *Medical Writing*.

Even though a recent increase in local competitors, *Medical Writing* considers large, generalist, international corporations that have medical writing departments to be the company’s main competitors. Even though these companies are active globally and compete with *Medical Writing* in virtually all markets they are not considered to be a big threat. The entrepreneur describes a situation where currently the company is attracting clients from the bigger competitors which has been achieved by offering high quality service and products.

4.1.3. Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur and cofounder of *Medical Writing* has considerable international experience prior to the creation of the company. He has five years of schooling in the U.S.A. and after that joined a large multinational organisation. The entrepreneur considers this to have been beneficial as it has showed him that he could compete with people overseas. He admits that the education and constantly competing with people abroad was not a planned move but that it has had an impact on his mindset. One impact it has had is that it has erased the normal fear and anxiety normally involved in internationalisation thanks to knowledge of the markets entered and self-confidence from previous experiences.

The entrepreneur is currently the Chief Executive Officer of *Medical Writing*. He considers his main role to be the developer of the company’s strategic direction. The entrepreneur has been involved in the strategy development ever since the founding of the company. The company has a phrase that is frequently used in the company, ‘global since inception’. The entrepreneur explains that when *Medical Writing* was founded there was no local market for medical writing so the company had to look overseas in order to penetrate more attractive markets. The company started out globally and still has most of its business overseas. However, *Medical Writing* is now starting to acknowledge the potential of a growing home market.

*Medical Writing* considers approximately eighty percent of its strategies to be ‘global’, i.e. standardised and implemented in all of the company’s markets. The entrepreneur explains that this is due to the fact that the expectations of *Medical Writing*’s clients are quite similar, consistent, and in order to succeed they need to get their documents for their drugs approved, they have to get their article published in international medical journals. This means that the company uses the same standard operating procedure, the same checklist, regardless of whom they are working with. The remaining twenty percent comes down to cultural client relationship management and just being more culturally sensitive and appreciative of the client’s needs.

The entrepreneur considers *Medical Writing*’s current internationalisation strategy to be a good way to approach risk management. Even though he acknowledges that there is risk involved in most situations the entrepreneur considers diversification, not ‘putting all eggs in one basket’, to be a strategy that minimises the risk the organisation is subject to. Instead of
concentrating all resources on a single client or country. Medical Writing targets a wide range of markets and companies in order not to become dependent on single actors in the industry.

4.1.4. Networks

The entrepreneur in Medical Writing considers networks and network building to be very important for the success of the company in its internationalisation. Medical Writing attracts new customers by attending medical conferences all over the world. By publishing their own research the company gets invited to conferences where they are given the opportunity to present themselves and talk to people from the medical industry. By presenting at conferences the company gets professional recognition and gets approached by people or companies that are interested in hiring Medical Writing. The entrepreneur describes the approach as relationship management, not necessarily looking for immediate business but building relationships that might lead to business in the future.

The entrepreneur believes that the networks created in these conferences have had a big part in the development of Medical Writing. The company now gets invitations to participate in international task forces and working with people in Europe and America in order to solve problems. The entrepreneur also believes that these task forces also, indirectly, help in the company’s internationalisation as they show people that the company is trying to make a contribution and see the company’s expertise. This professional recognition leads to companies wanting to engage in business relationships with Medical Writing. The entrepreneur describes the company’s networking approach as building relationships by impressing people with their knowledge and that these relationships are the key to succeeding abroad.

4.1.5. Industry

Ever since inception Medical Writing has intended to be global. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the company’s customers were, and still are located in the U.S.A. The entrepreneur considers the medical writing industry to be an international one as the medical writing companies active in the market are active globally at the same time as they are hired by customers regardless of nationality. As mentioned earlier Medical Writing also has business in other parts of the world, such as Asia, where increasing numbers of customers are looking to purchase the company’s services. The company’s home market is, in spite of a recent increase, relatively small in proportion to foreign markets. The entrepreneur explains that the company now considers the home market increasingly attractive. However, most of Medical Writing’s customers still come from overseas and the company simply does not have the resources to focus on the home market.

The entrepreneur considers the company to be a “small, smart giant” which prefers to be great rather than big and has therefore concentrated on the medical writing niche. Most of Medical Writing’s competitors are large general purpose companies, companies that have experienced difficulties over the last couple of years. According to the entrepreneur these companies’ success in developing new drugs has declined in recent years and that has lead to them retrenching thousands of employees in order to keep their share price up. However, the work these companies carry out does not go away which means that they now have to outsource, something that has been beneficial to Medical Writing. This has also contributed to a trend of
an industry pendulum shifting back towards specialist niche service providers which is what Medical Writing is and away from large general purpose service providers, those that do everything.

4.1.6. Entry Modes

In entering new markets Medical Writing uses one specific strategy. The company usually attends conferences where they build networks by presenting themselves to international customers. These networks are then used in order to enter markets as the relationships built during the conferences amount to new customers becoming interested in Medical Writing’s products. This interest eventually leads to propositions regarding acquiring the company’s services without Medical Writing having to take an active role in market entry.

The entrepreneur in Medical Writing considers the alternative to the current market entry approach to be that of having government officials speaking on the company’s behalf. However, he considers there to be an element of risk involved in using such intermediaries as even a hint of credibility could lead to potential customers deciding against acquiring Medical Writing’s services. The entrepreneur further dislikes the impersonal approach government officials use to attract new customers and prefers the more personal approach of building relationships currently used by the company.

4.1.7. A fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages

The entrepreneur in Medical Writing states that approximately 80 percent of the company’s international strategies are the same for all markets while about 20 percent is specific to the market in which the firm operates. Currently the company’s biggest market is the American one and Medical Writing is working close to its customers in the industry in order to meet their specific needs. This has worked well in the Unites States and the ability to adapt to the market’s characteristics is an important part of the company’s success. Medical Writing is currently looking into the possibilities of increasing its commitment in the European market. The company has got invitations to conferences in Spain but has not yet been able to go due to commitments in other markets. The entrepreneur sees a lot of potential in the European market and considers market entry to be a part of the company’s future. The market offers good partners for business as well as a relative ease of market entry.

The entrepreneur considers the company’s main competitive advantage to be the intellectual property and expertise of the staff. The company exclusively employs PhD’s who have published internationally and have plentiful research experience. The entrepreneur considers this to be unique and an important part of the company’s international success. By only employing experienced medical writers the company has created a Unique Selling Point which sets Medical Writing apart from its competitors. This Unique Selling Point is important in all of the company’s markets. However, it is vital in the markets, such as the U.S. market, where there is a lot of competition. In addition to the expertise of the employees the entrepreneur considers the processes and tools used by the company to be important factors in the international success of Medical Writing. The factors have contributes in terms of speed and ease in market entry. The previous international experiences of the employees, their
knowledge of specific markets and customers, etcetera, have also strongly contributed to the internationalisation of the firm.

The emerging economies in Asia and other developing parts of the world are also identified by the entrepreneur as presenting good opportunities for international expansion as more customers will be able to afford Medical Writing’s services in the future.

4.2. Company 2 – Industrial Protection

4.2.1. Company

The company is active within the industry of developing, manufacturing and selling machine guarding, warehouse partitioning, anti-collapse and property protection. According to the entrepreneur they are a young, market-leading family company within its sector. Industrial Protection is said to have short decision routes with high employee involvement. They are a global company, which organises their global sales through their own agents and sales company. They have operations in twenty-two different countries of which they have their own manufacturing in six. In total they have sixty employees in their headquarters. The company was established in 1990 and has from its inception targeted other markets than its home market of Sweden. Above 75% of their sales is gained through sales in other countries and their employees are less than a hundred, excluding subsidiaries.

4.2.2. Globalisation

Globalisation is a common theme for the entire company because as the entrepreneur states that “the niche market that we are in demands it from us”. He finds it very important for their company to be responsive in as many locations as possible in order to be able to compete with global competitors but also the local ones. In entering new markets he does not see any obvious and clear barriers, other than the barrier the niche that they are in presents. The entrepreneur says that the product or service that Industrial Protection offers can be seen as an obstacle. “Security and safety is a very hard subject for our customers to evaluate in terms of financial figures”, this is what he sees as the major obstacles for their expansion. However the entrepreneur also states that because of the obstacles their product and services offer they have to choose markets on that basis. The entrepreneur means that they have to choose markets that put a high value on human value and emphasise security. This means that they focus on well-developed markets such as countries within the EU that has a strong focus on the safety of their employees.

In terms of competition Industrial Protection is in a niche, which means that there are not as many global competitors as in larger market segments. However the entrepreneur says that there is another European competitor that has a similar focus that is present in similar markets. Mostly their competitors are local and are not as focused and developed as they are. Other competitors are larger corporations that have a department that does the same thing as Industrial Protection does, but only for their own companies. The major risk when going global that he sees is that of costs. Expanding internationally is very costly and because of the uncertainty involved it is a high risk.

Industrial Protection is not affected by IT to the same extent as other types of industries; nonetheless their products are highly technical. The entrepreneur says that technology has
made their products and safety solutions possible although IT is not used in terms of internationalising.

4.2.3. Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur does not think that one individual can change the direction of an entire company. However, he thinks that it is very important that the values of the entrepreneur are in line with the ambitions of the company. Previous experiences have taken away some of the respect for international ventures but has also enabled him to take more risks and to take chances. This is something that he finds very important in order to be successful abroad, but it is something that experience has given him. The company was intended to be global from its inception mostly because of the niche that it is in. This niche focus has forced the company to seek profits abroad to survive and keep expanding. The entrepreneur has gained his international experience from working in large international companies previously in his career. According to the entrepreneur working with and getting to know different cultures is one essential aspect in eliminating the fear of international ventures. Also the experience from mature and global organisations has made him less cautious to international expansion.

4.2.4. Networks

When discussing networks the entrepreneur claims that "within this niche there is a high knowledge about persons”. This is due to the fact that since so few people work within the niche people know each other well. Due to this close networks are created between the company and its customers but also their agents and other vital parts of the value system. This has created cooperation between the company and its suppliers but also with customers. The entrepreneur’s own personal networks have had some importance but mostly the networks that have been utilized have been created within the niche and industry. The networks are mostly used to find new customers but also reliable distributors and this is a good way to expand the business abroad.

4.2.5. Industry

The industry is seen as a main facilitator for the rapid expansion of the company. As discussed before the special nature of being in a niche segment in an industry such as this one has forced the company to look for other markets than the home market. The industry itself has made this possible because of the possibility to standardise the products and services but also the manufacturing process. Through offering the same product and service to all their customers they can focus on other things in the strategy that is important for success in internationalisation. This is something that is seen as a major facilitator in the success abroad. The positioning in a niche segment, although seen as a barrier, is also a facilitator since it allows the company to focus on what they are good at and enables them to compete better. Their focus is on their “concept” which according to the entrepreneur is their strength in offering a complete service and product to their customers. He sees the industrial factors as the key factor for the expansion of the company, mainly because of the help of EU-regulations that has put more emphasis on what they are offering and supplying to the industry.
4.2.6. Entry Modes

When entering a new market the company prefers to utilise agents and distributors at first. They also have sales teams present in key markets, which, according to the entrepreneur, do a tremendous job at marketing their products. They have six company owned foreign operations at other locations that work similar to the headquarters in Sweden. This has been a strong force in providing better coverage in Europe. This is seen as the optimal way for the company to enter markets. By using their own agents they have better control over the sales process and they get better feedback than if they were to outsource the sales. They can also make better decisions about whether to establish permanent operations in that region or not.

4.2.7. A fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages

In the process of expanding and internationalising the entrepreneur does not focus on entering specific markets but rather focuses on targeting specific customers. This is done because he does not feel that the market itself should be targeted but rather the interest in their product and the prospect of finding good customers. He sees it as very important to have good customer knowledge to be able to provide what they need. They have most of their customers in the EU and more specifically in Germany. He claims that “the values are similar and that there is a high focus on employee safety” which is what creates business for Industrial Protection. Their competitive advantage, as perceived by the entrepreneur, is their ability to provide a comprehensive product and service. This together with a very competent sales force is what makes them better than their competitors.
5. Analysis

In the following section the empirical data gathered will be categorised and analysed with help of the literature review. The analysis uses the same subcategories as the previous sections.

5.1. Globalisation

The importance of IT in a company as well as an industry is somewhat dependant on which product the company is selling. The Medical Writing company and the Industrial Protection company both claim that information technology has played an important role in their process of internationalising. While Medical Writing claims that it has helped them to connect with customers as well as staff, Industrial Protection claims that their use of technology has mostly been used in connection with product development. Information technology is considered one of the primary forces in the creation of a Born Global (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 1996; Etemad & Wright 2003). The authors state that developments in information technology have helped companies to internationalise quicker, which is in line with both case companies. Although technology has helped the companies both similarly they also have utilised technology in different ways. Industrial Protection has used advances in process technology to create a more competitive product, which is something, that Knight & Cavusgil (1996) as well as Madsen & Servais, (1997) mentions as a trait of a Born Global and an important facilitator.

The liberalisation of markets is also a factor that is identified as a facilitator for the creation of a Born Global. This has allowed firms to more easily enter new markets and formalise standardised global strategies which can be applied to several different markets (Andersson & Wictor 2003; Etemad & Wright 2003; Karra & Phillips 2004). The most apparent similarity between the two case companies is that they both agree that there are no major barriers to internationalisation. This clearly shows that the statement above is a strong facilitator since the previous barriers of trade have disappeared. Instead both firms only see problems such as countries inability to provide funding (Medical Writing) or the country’s view of the value of a human life (Industrial Protection). Clearly they do not see any obvious barriers to entering a market other than that the country itself does not present business opportunities.

Further similarities between the case companies are found in their view of competition. Both compete in niche segments and have competitors that are larger corporation that have their own departments that target the specific segment that the case companies are active in. However both also feel that these companies are not their strongest competitors. Instead local competition or companies that target the same niche in the same markets are seen as the main competitors. This has forced the companies to target as many markets as possible in order to reduce risks since both Medical Writing and Industrial Protection claim that risk, such as high costs, is the main barrier to internationalisation. This is something that Etemad & Wright (2003) mention is a way for smaller specialised companies to compete better globally and reduce risks connected to global activities.
5.2. Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur has a major impact on the internationalisation of the firm. The values and previous experiences of the entrepreneur affect the decisions made concerning new market entry. Andersson (2003); Madsen & Servais (1997); and Oviatt & McDougall (1994) consider there to be a connection between the international attitude of the entrepreneur and a positive international development of the firm. The entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* considers the international experience gained from studies and work overseas to have been helpful in the company’s internationalisation. Having worked in multinational corporations as well as studying abroad has benefited the entrepreneur’s attitudes towards internationalisation as he has experienced international competition prior to founding *Medical Writing*. Among other things it has helped erase potential fears and anxieties involved in the internationalisation process. The entrepreneur in *Industry Protection* also considers previous experiences to have been helpful as they have reduced some of the fears of internationalisation as well as enabled him to take more risks. Similar to the entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* he has previously worked in multinational corporations where he has worked with people from different cultures and nationalities on a daily basis, something that he believes has been essential for him in his attitude towards internationalisation.

The entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* has been involved in the development of the company’s strategy since its inception. The company has been intended to be global since its founding as the industry’s overseas markets have been more attractive to the company. Harveston et al. (2000) and Knight et al. (2004) consider this global mindset near the company’s founding to be a feature of successful Born Globals. The international mindset of the entrepreneur in combination with the view of the world as a single market is considered by Andersson & Wictor 2003; Andersson 2003; Rialp et al. 2005; Karra & Phillips 2004; and Harveston et al. (2000) to be traits of successful Born Global entrepreneurs. This single market view fits well with the approach taken by the entrepreneur in *Medical Writing*. The company does not make distinctions between customers from different countries but meet their individual demands based on their specific needs. Similarly to the entrepreneur in *Medical Writing*, the entrepreneur in *Industry Protection* has intended the company to be international from its inception. This international focus comes from a need to look abroad due to the niche market the company is involved in. This niche market has forced the company to internationalise in order to expand and ultimately survive.

Another important feature that characterises Born Global entrepreneurs according to the theory is that they most often consider the risk involved in internationalisation to be little to none existent. Harveston et al. (2000) and McDougall & Oviatt (2000) consider international entrepreneurs more risk tolerant than other entrepreneurs. As mentioned above the entrepreneur in *Industry Protection* believes that his previous international experiences have taken away some of the respect and added to the willingness to take on risk. Johansson & Vahlne (1977; 1990) believe that the entrepreneur’s perception of risk is an important determinant in a decision to internationalise. In the case of *Industry Protection* this can be said to be the case as the entrepreneur does not consider the risk to be an important factor since he has previous international experience. The entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* goes one step further. Not only does he consider the risk to be low but he considers internationalisation to be a good way to reduce risk. Instead of concentrating all of the company’s resources to a single market the entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* believes that diversification is a good way to minimise the risk the company is subject to. By doing so the company does not become
dependent on single actors in the industry and therefore the risk can be considered to be reduced by entering new markets and targeting international customers.

5.3. Networks

The entrepreneurs of the companies both claim that networks are very important to their company, however they do discuss different viewpoints of how these are created and how important they have been for the creation and success of the companies. Medical Writing creates their networks at conferences where they meet clients that do not know anything about the company as well as clients that specifically seek to create a relationship with Medical Writing. Industrial Protection, on the other hand, creates their networks through industry recognition. This means that the people that work with this know each other well from other segments that are connected to this niche but also new contacts are built with the help of their sales team. This way of doing business and utilising networks is a common trait for business-to-business companies but also specifically Born Globals (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996). To create long term relationships which then have to be nurtured is a common factor for Born Globals and obviously the strategy adopted by the case companies.

Industrial Protection also uses the experience and previous networks of employees and the entrepreneur to grow something that McDougall et al (2002) mention as a trait of a Born Global. The case companies both operate in niche segments, which will clearly limit their access to having many customers, which raises the need to create close relationships and cooperation. Both entrepreneurs emphasise that they value their business networks and that they are essential for their success. The fact that there is a high focus on networks is a trait of a Born Global mostly because of the fact that most Born Global firms are in business-to-business markets but also the fact that they are in niche segments which does limit the number of available customers (Andersson, 2002; Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; McDougal & Oviatt, 1994).

5.4. Industry

When it comes to the industry there are a number of characteristics that can affect the creation and success of a Born Global’s internationalisation. One of the most common characteristics when it comes to Born Globals is that they often are involved in niche markets and offer highly customised products (Knight & Cavusgil 1996; Madsen & Servais 1997). The entrepreneur in Medical Writing considers the industry structure important in the internationalisation of the firm. He describes the company’s strategy as one where the company focuses on the medical writing niche instead of being involved in a number of different activities as in the case of the company’s main competitors. Concentrating on a single niche within the medical industry has created expertise and a good reputation within the industry. Focus on a niche market is also something that the entrepreneur in Industry Protection mentions as a reason for the company’s success. By separating itself from its competitors by competing on a niche market has allowed the company to internationalise rapidly. The entrepreneur believes that the market has “demanded” internationalisation from the firm as the home market is relatively small at the same time as customers abroad have expressed a demand for the company’s products.
The demand for a company’s products creates a “pull”-situation in the market. This “pull” is another industrial feature that facilitates the creation and success of a Born Global (Karra & Phillips 2004). This pull for a company’s products is something that both of the entrepreneurs mention in the discussions. The entrepreneur in Industrial Protection states, as mentioned above, that customers overseas demand for the company’s products have made it possible for internationalisation. The entrepreneur in Medical Writing also believes that the pull for the company’s products and services from companies overseas have helped the company in its internationalisation process. The company does not market itself in the traditional sense of the word, they attend conferences and conventions in different parts of the world and then the potential customers contact Medical Writing in order to purchase their products. This pull from customers in different markets allows the company to enter markets without the company itself having to market its products in specific markets.

The existence of international competitors and customers as a facilitator for Born Globals is also discussed in the literature. Oviatt & McDougall (1997) state that a situation where a large number of a company’s competitors and customers are international the firm is more likely to enter foreign markets. This in combination with relatively small home markets is likely to increase the incentives for companies to internationalise (Andersson & Wictor 2003). The entrepreneur in Medical Writing explains that one of the reasons for the company’s internationalisation is just that, a small home market in combination with the fact that most of the company’s potential customers were located overseas. The company has even considered foreign markets more important than the home market in the past but that the home market is getting increasingly attractive. However, most of Medical Writing’s customers still come from overseas and the entrepreneur still considers those markets to be more attractive than the home market. The entrepreneur in Industry Protection also describes a situation where the company found the home market too small, something that lead to a need for internationalisation soon after the company was founded.

Knight & Cavusgil (1996) and Madsen & Servais (1997) state that the products offered by Born Globals are often customised and fill a certain need. Even though this is the case in Medical Writing, the entrepreneur in Industry Protection believes that a contributing part of the firm’s internationalisation is that the company has standardised products. He believes that the industry has allowed the company to standardise its products and services. This standardisation has given the company the opportunity to focus on other important issues in the firm’s strategy which are important for successful internationalisation.

5.5. Entry Modes

One of the things that makes a Born Global firm special, in comparison with earlier theories, such as the Uppsala model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 1990), is that they do not follow an incremental pattern when internationalising (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996). Industrial Protection uses more than one international strategy. Firstly they use external distributors or agents to initially enter a market to establish a presence, which will later on be turned into their own agents or distributors. Their second strategy is to establish their own operations in key markets that are more important and profitable than others. This way of internationalising carries a strong resemblance to the Uppsala model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 1990). However, Industrial Protection did not, and does not; enter one market at the time, but rather goes where it finds opportunities regardless of risk. This is incorporated into the thinking of the entrepreneur who sees the world as one market and is willing to take chances, something
that is a result of previous international experiences (Bloodgard et al, 1996; Madsen & Servais, 1997; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994).

*Medical Writing*, on the other hand, does not follow an incremental pattern but rather applies a suitable entry mode to their strategy and product, that of co-operation. They directly seek co-operation and try to create relationships in order to increase sales and to enter new markets. This is a way, according to the entrepreneur, of not taking an active role in the market entry process and therefore reducing risk. This is a good example of how small companies can reduce risk by attracting the customer first and by doing so reducing the risks connected to international expansion (Doole & Lowe, 2004).

5.6. A fit between nation specific characteristics & company specific advantages

The last of the identified factors affecting the creation and success of a Born Global is the fit between a nation’s characteristics and a company’s specific advantages. Johanson & Vahlne (1990) and Vahlne & Wiedersheim-Paul (1973) consider market knowledge to be an important determinant when entering new markets. Both entrepreneurs talk about previous experiences helping their respective companies as they have knowledge concerning the markets they choose to enter. The entrepreneur in *Industry Protection* considers customer knowledge to be an important factor when choosing markets and in identifying and meeting customer needs. The entrepreneur does however consider similar values among the company’s customers to have been important in the choice of markets and the company has most of its customers in markets close to the home market. In the case of *Medical Writing* the company’s focus is put on the specific customers rather than on markets. The entrepreneur does not consider psychic distance to have been an important issue when choosing which markets to enter. The choice of markets has instead been based on the company’s competitive advantages. This fits well with the “Eclectic paradigm” theory which is based on the notion that a company seeks to establish itself in markets where they enjoy advantages. The entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* considers the fit between the company’s competitive advantage and customers’ needs to be the main determinant in the choice of markets to enter.

The unique resources of a firm is another factor that benefits rapid internationalisation (Oviatt & McDougall 1994). Karra & Phillips (2004) discuss the need for a company’s goods and services which leads to a “pull” situation and increases the speed of the firm’s internationalisation process. This pull for the company’s goods and services is something that the entrepreneur in *Medical Writing* considers to be very important in the firm’s internationalisation. He explains that the company’s customers are interested in acquiring *Medical Writing’s* unique expertise and quality of the services offered. The entrepreneur in *Industry Protection* also considers overseas customers’ demand for products to have accelerated the company’s internationalisation process. This “pull” factor can be seen as decisive for *Medical Writing* when deciding which markets to enter. During the interview the entrepreneur discussed the prospect of increasing the company’s commitment in the European market. The entrepreneur has been invited to attend conferences in Spain and networks built during this kind of meetings could create networks (as mentioned above) that help the company enter the markets.
6. Discussion & Conclusions

This section will outline the study’s conclusion. The answer to our research question and our purpose will be presented. The entrepreneurs’ perception of the Born Global phenomenon will be outlined. In addition to this we will also present suggestions for further research.

6.1. Conclusions

Our purpose with this study has been to investigate the factors affecting the creation of a Born Global and how these are perceived by the entrepreneurs in the two case companies. It has also been our purpose to investigate whether the different factors are perceived to have had the same influence or if one or more have had greater influence on the internationalisation of the two firms. In order to investigate this phenomenon we used two organisations from different industries. It is important to understand that all organisations and entrepreneurs differ and therefore it is difficult to draw general conclusions based on two organisations. However, there are pervading themes in the organisations concerning the perceptions of factors affecting Born Globals.

The entrepreneur in Medical Writing considers a couple of the identified factors to have affected the company’s internationalisation more than others. He believes that previous experiences have been a very important contributing factor when deciding to go international. Competing internationally has taken away some of the respect for international competitors which have added to the entrepreneur’s incentives for internationalisation. Internationalisation as a risk management strategy is also something that the entrepreneur discusses as being important when deciding to go international. Another important factor is the industry structure. The company is involved in a niche market which has created both limitations and possibilities that have lead to internationalisation. The limitations are made up by a small home market. This in combination with the possibilities of a lot of business overseas is also seen as decisive by Medical Writing’s entrepreneur. The third factor that the entrepreneur believes has benefited the company is the fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages. The specialised services offered by the company are attractive to company’s overseas. Most of the company’s customers come from the U.S. which has created a “pull” situation in the market which has benefited the company greatly in its strive for internationalisation. The remaining three factors have also affected the company in its internationalisation. However, they have not been decisive in the entrepreneur’s decision to go global. Globalisation has helped Medical Writing in the sense that, e.g. information technology has helped the company communicate with staff and customers. Other parts of globalisation discussed in the literature such as liberalisation of markets also help the company in its internationalisation. The importance of networks is another thing that has helped the company enter new markets without being decisive. The company builds networks by attending conferences etcetera but the entrepreneur does not believe that previous networks have lead to the internationalisation of the company. The last factor discussed is the one of market entry. Medical Writing uses a direct approach to market entry where they build relationships with the customer and via these relationships enter a new market. The market entry strategy is not a decisive factor when it comes to the internationalisation of the firm, it has however affected the ease with which the company can enter new markets.
The entrepreneur in *Industrial Protection* also considers the different factors to have had varying levels of influence on the company’s internationalisation process. The most important factor for the company has probably been the industry structure. Being involved in a niche market has forced the company to seek new markets according to the entrepreneur. A small home market in combination with international opportunities have contributed heavily to the firm going global. The incremental establishment of the company in the new markets has also contributed to the ease with which *Industrial Protection* has been able to internationalise. The company uses external distributors and later its own distributors and agents in order to establish itself in the new markets. This entry mode in combination with knowledge of markets and customers is described by the entrepreneur as important parts of the company’s internationalisation process. The knowledge of markets and the identification and meeting of customer needs are essential to the company. The entrepreneur believes that the fit between the company’s advantages and a nation’s characteristics has also benefited the firm’s internationalisation. This fit has been assured by the company trying to enter markets where the values and culture are similar to the ones in the home market. There are also other factors that have affected but not been decisive to the company’s internationalisation according to the entrepreneur. As in the case of *Medical Writing* the entrepreneur in *Industrial Protection* believes that the globalisation trend has benefited the development of the company. Information technology has played an important role in product development at the same time as the lack of real barriers to trade has helped the firm’s internationalisation. The entrepreneur also considers previous experiences to have been helpful. These experiences have lead to the entrepreneur becoming willing to take on more risk thus increasing the incentives to internationalise. The entrepreneur’s and other employees’ previous networks have also been helpful in the internationalisation of *Industrial Protection*. These networks have lead to industry recognition in addition to the connections and opportunities it has given the company in foreign markets.

The entrepreneurs in the two companies have similar perceptions regarding most of the factors affecting a Born Global. They both seem to agree that their own previous experiences have been a very important factor in the internationalisation process. Both entrepreneurs have international experience which have reduced the fear of entering new markets and has also added to the willingness to accept risk. The two entrepreneurs also agree that the industry has been one of the most important factors in going global. The two companies are both involved in niche markets. This has created a pull for the companies’ products from overseas markets thus created a big incentive for seeking opportunities in new markets. Both entrepreneurs also mention limited home markets as important reasons for entering foreign markets. These two factors, *Entrepreneur & Industry*, are identified by both entrepreneurs as being decisive for the internationalisation of the firms.

The two entrepreneurs also agree on the relative importance *Globalisation* has had on the two companies. This factor can not be seen as decisive for the creation of the Born Globals. However, it has been helpful as it has contributed to the ease with which the internationalisation process has been carried out. Both entrepreneurs discuss information technology as being a big help in communication and product development. The lack of barriers in entering new markets is also considered to have been helpful for the two companies. *The fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages* is another factor that is considered helpful in the companies’ internationalisation. Market knowledge and finding markets where the companies’ products are wanted is discussed by the entrepreneurs as important parts of the firms’ expansion into new markets. These company
advantages are believed to be a significant part in attracting customers in other markets with different characteristics than the ones in the home market.

The entrepreneurs also have areas where they do not agree. Networks is one of these areas. While the entrepreneur in Industrial Protection believes that the networks he and other members of the staff have since before the company’s founding has helped a lot in attracting business overseas, the entrepreneur in Medical Writing does not consider such networks to have been essential for the internationalisation process. The networks of the staff in Industrial Protection have been a big part of the company’s incentives to internationalise. The networks built by the members of Medical Writing have been created after the internationalisation of the company and can therefore not be considered crucial as in the case of Industrial Protection. However, networks created after the companies’ creation are considered important in their ongoing internationalisation in both organisations. The final factor affecting the internationalisation process of the firms is Market entry. As in the case of Networks the entrepreneurs have conflicting views concerning the importance of this factor. The entrepreneur in Industrial Protection states that the company’s strategy with the use of external distributors and agents followed by their own distributors and agents has been very beneficial for the company in entering new markets. Medical Writing’s entrepreneur does not believe that the direct entry strategy adopted by the company has had a big impact on the firm’s internationalisation process, it has helped but has not been a decisive factor for the company’s success.

Finally we would like to stress that the investigated attitudes are subjective. It is the interviewees’ attitudes and opinions the study has been aiming at investigating and therefore it is important to identify the individual as a factor when discussing the investigation’s credibility. It is rather unlikely that we would have reached the same conclusions with different interviewees but since it is attitudes that have been investigated it is only natural and does therefore not clash with the purpose of the study.

6.2. Implications and Generalisability of Study

While previous research has had a focus on which factors that affect a Born Global, this study focuses on how these factors are perceived by the entrepreneurs. These perceptions can be used in order to explain the choices the entrepreneurs have made in the internationalisation process, which markets they have targeted, how they have entered these markets etcetera. As discussed above the entrepreneurs in the two investigated companies have similar perceptions regarding which factors that have affected the companies’ internationalisation. In spite of their differences in industry, geographical location, entrepreneurial background etcetera, the two entrepreneurs agreed on the importance of previous experiences and industrial characteristics as being the most important factors. Other factors, such as globalisation and the fit between nation specific characteristics and company specific advantages are also considered important but not decisive for the creation and success of the investigated Born Global firms. As mentioned above, this knowledge can be used in order to explain the behaviour of the entrepreneurs in the internationalisation process of the companies. It can also be used as a frame of reference in developing strategies for other companies. While previous research has made little distinction between the different factors in terms of importance, this study offers a ‘ranking’ of the factors as perceived by the entrepreneurs. By acknowledging this relative importance of the factors affecting a Born Global, researchers as well as other companies
have the possibility to develop theories regarding the entrepreneurs’ choices, and strategies concerning internationalisation.

Even though the results of this study are subjective in terms of that they only describe the perceptions of two entrepreneurs they can be used as a starting point for other researchers in investigating the phenomenon on a larger scale. The results can also be used by other companies in order for them to develop strategies for internationalisation. Other entrepreneurs and organisations might differ in terms of structure, industry, previous experiences etcetera but can still recognise some of the features of this study. One should be careful to generalise and lump all Born Global companies together and assume that they have the same features when the reality is closer to the opposite, all companies have different characteristics. However, the findings of this study and the framework used in order to investigate the Born Globals can be used in future studies and in order to describe the actions and success of other entrepreneurs and companies.

6.3. Suggestions for Further Research

This study has been aiming to investigate individual entrepreneurs’ attitudes towards factors affecting the creation and success of Born Globals. Therefore we have not focused on achieving a reliable result in a statistical sense. A suggestion for further research could be to carry out a quantitative investigation of the same phenomenon.

The study carried out has used companies from different countries and industries which could to some part explain the differing views of the Born Global phenomenon. Therefore it could also be interesting to investigate whether the attitudes and the type of company, industry etcetera are interconnected.
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Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Personal

Background
- Education?
- Work before current company (if so, which type?)
- Your role in the company?
- How many years in the company?

Company

Company description
- Activities (which countries?)
- Number of employees?
- History?
- What does the company do?

Internationalisation

How has globalisation, changes in technology, communications etcetera, affected your company? (communication with customers)

Have you experienced any barriers to the internationalisation of the firm? Have these affected the choice of markets to enter?

Are your competitors globally active or are they national in scope?

How have you individually affected the internationalisation of the company? Have previous experience and values had an impact?

Was the company intended to be global from its foundation?

Do you have nation specific strategies or does your company have global strategies? (plans to penetrate a specific market or general plans for all markets?)

How has your previous experiences affected the internationalisation of the firm?

Did you see any risks in the internationalisation process?

If you consider personal networks, how have those affected the firm’s internationalisation? (previous & present) (alliances with business partners) (nurturing relationships)

Do you believe that the specific industry has had an impact on the internationalisation of the company? If so, how? (helped or hindered)

Are there any characteristics of the industry that have helped in internationalisation? (niche market, developing industry etc.)
How do you enter a new market (country)? Do you have intermediaries that help you establish contacts with new customers etc?

Do you consider this way to be the optimal one in entering markets? Why/why not?

Do you market your products to specific customers or markets (countries)? Why these customers/markets?

Where do you have most of your customers?

What do you consider your competitive advantage to be in the industry?

What do you consider to be the most important factor(s) that has influenced the internationalisation of the company?