



**Decision-making in international marketing: past, present, and future**

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## Decision-making in international marketing: past, present, and future

### Abstract

**Purpose:** This special issue seeks to create an interdisciplinary community of researchers applying decision-making theory to the international marketing context. The articles published in this special issue contain cutting-edge conceptual and empirical studies that enhance existing knowledge on international marketing decision-making.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Thirty-six (36) manuscripts were submitted to the editorial office focusing on a broad range of international marketing decision-making. Following a thorough review process, a collection of five original empirical studies on different facets of international marketing decision-making from multiple theoretical, contextual and methodological perspectives are included in this Special Issue.

**Findings:** Overall, the combined evidence presented in this Special Issue shows that the general field of international marketing decision-making is starting to mature. Evidence from the contributors to this Special Issue shows that researchers have taken inspiration from both the past and the present when designing and crafting their research and, by doing so, they have collectively contributed to new knowledge in terms of international marketing decision-making principles, decision-maker personality traits, the consequences of international marketing decisions, and cross-cultural differences with regards to decision-making influences and behavior.

**Originality/value:** With few exceptions, not much is known about how international marketing decisions are made. Yet, the way international marketing decisions are made is critical for international marketing success. This sphere of international marketing decision-making research, while relatively anemic, is typically underpinned by behavioral economic theories of decision-making, such that a duality in decision-making processes is identified. Nevertheless, international marketing and management studies are dominated by the planning paradigm, while in practice, managers often see the attempt to deviate from planning as irresponsible and dangerous. The articles included in this special issue have addressed major unanswered questions regarding the content and processes of international marketing decision-making.

**Keywords:** Decision-making, International marketing, Literature review

**Paper type:** Special issue introductory commentary

## Decision-making in international marketing: past, present, and future

### 1. Introduction

The saturation of domestic markets and global hyper-competition have pressured many firms to expand into international markets which are often diverse. Decision-making is a key driver of business success in the international environment (Nemkova et al., 2015). Thus, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making is critical to international marketing research theory and practice. The international marketing literature has made notable progress regarding what the key *substantive international marketing decisions* that drive international marketing success are (e.g., degree of standardization/adaptation, foreign market entry modes, international resource investments). A parallel body of research within international marketing decision-making addresses the process of *how* decisions are made to derive enhanced performance outcomes (e.g., emergent versus deliberate international strategies, cognitive micro-foundations, use of heuristics). Therefore, this special issue invites papers that help push the boundaries of international marketing decision-making knowledge both in terms of substantive decisions made and of the process of decision-making.

Knowledge regarding substantive international marketing decisions (e.g., adaptation versus standardization, entry modes), their drivers and impact on performance is far from complete, with ambiguity and inconsistencies characterizing much of the field. In addition, other core decision issues such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate partnerships, and value creation that are pertinent to today's international businesses are often overlooked. For example, current environmental decision-making models explain the adoption of single behaviors only, rather than the coaction suite of behaviors required to halt climate change (Newton et al., 2015); knowledge of the determinants behind standardization and/or adaptation of international marketing strategies is also incomplete (Rao-Nicholson and Khan, 2017); understanding of what effective foreign market entry should actually look like

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3 is also very incomplete given the propensity in the field to only examine individual modes  
4 independently and in silo (Oliveira et al., 2018). In this context, a more holistic view of  
5 international marketing decisions that considers a firm's entire portfolio of activities in  
6 foreign markets is needed.  
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12 With few exceptions, few studies have been carried out specifically on how  
13 international marketing decisions are made (Nemkova et al., 2015; Souchon et al., 2016).  
14 Yet, this particular issue is critical for international marketing success (Hughes et al., 2019).  
15 The sphere of international marketing decision-making research, while relatively anemic, is  
16 typically underpinned by behavioral economic theories of decision-making, such that a  
17 duality in decision-making processes is identified. Supported by developments in the  
18 cognitive psychology field, the decision-making process is as reliant on emotion and intuition  
19 as on rational cognition (Hodgkinson and Sadler-Smith, 2018). Nevertheless, international  
20 marketing and management studies are dominated by the planning paradigm (Hughes et al.,  
21 2018), while in practice, managers often see the attempt to deviate from planning as  
22 irresponsible and dangerous (Nemkova et al., 2012). The reality is, of course, much more  
23 complex and characterized by interactions between alternate decision-making approaches  
24 (Hughes et al., 2019). Despite the 'ideal state' being a high level of duality in decision-  
25 making (Hodgkinson and Sadler-Smith, 2018) the form that this duality should take remains  
26 unanswered.  
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47 This special issue comprises five empirical papers from various theoretical and  
48 country contexts which contribute to mainstream international marketing decision-making  
49 knowledge whilst also providing and overview of the past and present account of the extant  
50 literature on the topic.  
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## 55 56 57 58 **2. An Overview of the Decision-making Literature** 59 60

## 2.1. Past Research on Decision-making

Decision-making is one of the main functions within management that influences a firm's performance and success outcomes (Bailey, Johnson and Daniels, 2000; Dean and Sharfman, 1996; Ireland and Miller, 2004). Decision theory is split into two camps that have traditionally examined decision-making from two distinct angles: *normative* (or prescriptive) and *descriptive* (or behavioral) (e.g., Tamura, 2008). The normative approach is rooted in economics theory and seeks to investigate how people ought to behave, whereas the descriptive focuses on understanding how people actually behave in reality (March, 1978; Simon, 1987).

The normative approach is rationality-based, to the extent that it highlights the importance of market analysis, evaluation of macro and micro factors, and development of optimal solutions (Fredrickson, 1984). The dominant theme of normative decision-making is that companies should examine their environment and then derive lists of possible decision outcomes. To this end, managers are encouraged to use a set of objective criteria to evaluate alternatives and make decisions. Thus, according to the normative approach, decision-making involves a series of sequential and analytical processes (Hitt and Tyler, 1991) and assumes that managers are able to make optimal and rational choices (e.g., Ansoff, 1965). This view on decision-making emphasizes that all decisions have facts (means) and value (ends), where ends are identified before the means to achieve them, that in turn leads to a greater success (Fredrickson, 1986; Hart, 1992; Simon, 1993; Dean and Sharfman, 1996). In the marketing and strategic management literatures, this approach is adopted by the *planning* school of thought, where decision-making is viewed as intended, purposeful, and consciously formulated (Slevin and Covin, 1997).

Despite its wide acceptance, the normative rationality-based view has been widely criticized over the years for not representing the totality of decision-making processes (e.g.,

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3 Bell, Raiffa and Tversky, 1988; Vareman, 2008). Researchers have argued that real-life  
4 decision-making processes rarely follow this rational and sequential approach (March and  
5 Olsen, 1976). Tversky and Kahneman (1986) argued that deviations from the normative  
6 model are “too widespread to be ignored, too systematic to be dismissed as random error, and  
7 too fundamental to be accommodated by relaxing the normative system” (p. 252).

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14 The descriptive (or behavioral) approach to decision-making, on the other hand, challenges  
15 the assumption of rationality by arguing that, beyond the rational decision-making process,  
16 managers make decisions under a variety of conditions and situations (Gavetti, 2012). For  
17 example, as early as 1955, Simon introduced a ‘behavioral model of rational choice’ that was  
18 anchored in the field of psychology. He contended that human rationality has its natural  
19 limitations due to the psychological ability to process information and draw conclusions, and  
20 that individuals rarely consider all available choices but rather stop when ‘satisfying’ (not  
21 optimal) solutions are found (Simon, 1955). Thus, in the organizational context, decision-  
22 making within firms is limited by bounded rationality (Hart, 1992; Krabuanrat and Phelps,  
23 1998).

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38 From then on, an increasing number of scholars (e.g., March and Olsen, 1976; Quinn,  
39 1980; Schwenk, 1984; Miller, 1987; Hart, 1992; Dane and Pratt, 2007) have argued, that in  
40 reality, firms do little analysis and aim to *satisfy* rather than optimize their options. These  
41 scholars form what is referred to as the *learning, adaptive, or incremental* school of thought  
42 (e.g., Mintzberg, 1973; Fredrickson and Mitchell, 1984; Slevin and Covin, 1997). The basic  
43 principle of this school of thought is incrementalism (Martens, Matthyssens and  
44 Vandembempt, 2012; Rahman and de Feis, 2009), which is based on the assumption that clear  
45 goals do not exist initially, but rather adjustments are made to align actions with external  
46 conditions in incremental steps where comprehensive actions are constrained by bounded  
47 rationality (e.g., Slater, Olson and Hult, 2006). Researchers have subsequently emphasized  
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3 that firms could have multiple goals and follow the practice of ‘muddling through’ when  
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5 decisions are taken in small increments (e.g., Bettis-Outland, 2012).  
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8         Prior research has further explored the extent to which decision-making is related to  
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10 strategy formation. Importantly, Mintzberg (1978) draws attention to two fundamental  
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12 approaches to strategy formation: deliberate versus emergent. Deliberate strategy formation is  
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14 intended and formally planned, which is similar to the rational approach to decision-making.  
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16 Emergent strategy, on the other hand, is more intuitive, action-oriented, spontaneous and  
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18 realized in the absence of intentions, which is similar to the ‘satisfying’ approach to decision-  
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20 making. Emergent strategies represent decision-making under conditions of bounded  
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22 rationality when information is incomplete and cognitive limitations are in place (Slevin and  
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24 Covin, 1997). As a result, there are two sides to the strategy formation process; strategy could  
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26 be intended when practitioners formulate a strategy through a conscious process before the  
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28 decisions are made, or strategy could be formed incrementally, perhaps even unintentionally  
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30 (Dibrell, Down and Bull, 2007).  
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## 38 ***2.2. The present: International marketing decision-making 2016-2021***

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40 Having established the foundations of mainstream decision-making research we proceed to  
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42 investigate the present state of the field by reviewing the current published research on  
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44 international marketing decision-making. The review specifically covers both content and  
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46 context aspects of international marketing decision-making research from the past five years.  
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### 51 ***2.2.1 Decision-making content***

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53 Regarding the content of international decision-making, i.e., the substantive decisions made  
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55 by firms, current studies focus on a diverse set of topics. A large share of studies reviewed  
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57 focuses on international marketing strategy decisions. Such factor is in line with previous  
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3 international marketing literature reviews (e.g., Sousa, Martínez-López, & Coelho, 2008;  
4 Zou & Stan, 1998). Among international marketing strategy decisions, the question of  
5 whether firms should standardize/adapt marketing strategies is the most prominent topic  
6 analyzed, despite more than four decades of research on the topic. The high importance  
7 given by scholars to international marketing strategy standardization/adaptation decisions  
8 not only reinforces the notion put forward by several researchers that those decisions are of  
9 extreme theoretical and managerial importance (Assadinia et al., 2019; Samiee &  
10 Chirapanda 2019; Tan & Sousa, 2013), but also indicates that the standardization/adaptation  
11 debate is far from over.

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24 In this context, whereas some of the studies focusing on international marketing  
25 strategy standardization/adaptation decisions examine its components individually (e.g.,  
26 Jiménez-Asenjoa & Filipescu, 2019; Rao-Nicholson & Zaheer Khan, 2017; Westjohn, and  
27 Magnusson, 2017), other investigations conceptualize and analyze international marketing  
28 strategy standardization/adaptation in a holistic way, i.e., they do not examine  
29 standardization/adaptation of the different marketing strategy elements separately (e.g.,  
30 Samiee and Chirapanda 2019).

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40 A non-neglectable share of present literature on international marketing strategy  
41 decisions focuses on issues other than standardization/adaptation. Those include decisions  
42 about firms' level of control over international distribution (e.g., Jiménez-Asenjoa and  
43 Filipescu, 2019) or decisions concerning segmentation, targeting, and positioning (Kotler,  
44 Manrai, Lascu, and Manrai, 2019). A recent development concerns the promotional (i.e.,  
45 communication) element of international marketing strategy. Specifically, researchers have  
46 started to focus on decisions concerning the use of social media platforms in the context of  
47 firms' international marketing activities (e.g., Puthusserry, Khan, and Rodgers, 2018). This  
48 reflects the enhanced importance that social media has gained in the last decade in terms of  
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3 enabling communications between companies and their customers (Li, Larimo, and  
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5 Leonidou, 2021).

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8 Current literature on international marketing also examines other key decisions that,  
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10 while not being components of international marketing strategies pursued by firms, are  
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12 closely interconnected with such strategies. Those concern decisions regarding the level of  
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14 resource commitment to international markets, geographical scope of the firm's international  
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16 marketing activities (Oliveira et al., 2018), and the extent of information exchange between  
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18 the firm and its foreign partners (Makria, Theodosiou, and Katsikea, 2017).

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21 Finally, another stream of research focuses on decisions relating to entering  
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23 international markets. Topics examined include international market selection decisions (He,  
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25 Lin and Wei, 2016; Hultman, Iveson, and Oghazi, 2021), market expansion patterns (Jin et  
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27 al., 2018), decisions concerning entry mode type (Puthusserry, Khan, and Rodgers, 2018),  
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29 and decisions concerning entry mode diversity, i.e., the degree to which firms adopt different  
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31 entry modes in across their international markets (Oliveira et al., 2018). Notably, there is  
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33 also an increasing scholarly interest on international decisions concerning foreign market  
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35 exit (Tan and Sousa, 2020).  
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### 42 *2.2.2 Decision-making process*

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44 To shine further light on the current state of international marketing decision-making research  
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46 and given the volume of recent decision-making process domain, we conduct an additional  
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48 systematic literature on this area. A systematic literature review requires both transparency  
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50 and replicability. For this reason, we outline below the steps we undertook to select the  
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52 articles included in our review, and the outcome of that process. Specifically, we began our  
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54 search taking 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 as the relevant time bracket  
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56 representing "the present". Our journal selection did not make any distinction between  
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3 different levels in journal quality, to ensure review comprehensiveness. We did, however,  
4 select only peer-reviewed journals in the English language. Using the EBSCO Business  
5 Source Complete database, we then entered keywords as follows: “Decision Making” in the  
6 title, and “International Marketing” in all fields. This exercise returned 91 papers. However,  
7 not all were pertinent to organizational and/or international decision-making. Specifically, we  
8 found, articles on consumer, tourist and student (higher education) decision-making, and  
9 papers where the “international marketing” only appeared in the reference list, and therefore  
10 excluded these papers. This final cull yielded 42 remaining articles, which form the basis of  
11 this section.  
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### 26 ***Fields (discipline/subject areas).***

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28 The first immediately noticeable observation from the 42 reviewed papers is that a large  
29 number of diverse fields are represented in work on international marketing decision-making  
30 between 2016 and 2021. Specifically, we uncover articles within behavioral decision-making  
31 (1), Business (1), Economics (3), Exporting (1), Gaming (1), Human resources (1),  
32 Information management (2), Innovation (5), IT (3), Logistics (2), Marketing (14),  
33 Neuroscience (1), Operational research (1), Production research (4), Sales (1), and Strategy  
34 (1). This suggests the far-reaching relevance and importance of international decision-making  
35 beyond the marketing field.  
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### 49 ***Themes***

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51 We identify 10 cross-cutting themes in which the papers sit and overlap. These include a) the  
52 process of making decisions (i.e., how decisions are substantively made; for example, use of  
53 information, choice scoring schemes, scenario planning), b) cognitive decision-making  
54 principles rooted in behavioral economics (i.e., thinking fast/slow, bias and judgement,  
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3 bounded rationality), c) the decision-making context in terms of the industrial sector the  
4 research pertains to (such as services, retailing and fashion), d) the decision-making context  
5 in terms of the substantive type of decision made (such as risk management, inventory  
6 classification, industrial purchasing, mergers and acquisitions, supply chain designs), e)  
7 ethics in decision-making (including moral hazards and ethical sales), f) level of analysis  
8 used (i.e., individual versus group decision-making), g) strategic versus operational decision-  
9 making, h) international issues (e.g., cultural differences, country-of-origin effects), i)  
10 company size (i.e., an SME focus), and finally j) supporting analytics through big data (e.g.,  
11 the effect of artificial intelligence on knowledge creation). Table 1 summarizes the 42 papers,  
12 the field they sit in, the themes they cover, the research methods used, and the theoretical  
13 perspectives underpinning the work.  
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33 The process of making decisions (DmP). The focus of this theme is not typically the  
34 types of decisions made in international marketing (see Decision context below), but the  
35 ways in which decisions are made. We see 12 publications on international marketing  
36 decision-making published between 2016 and 2021 devoted to this theme. Work in this area  
37 is rich, diverse, and multidisciplinary. Specifically, we encounter outcome versus process-  
38 driven decision-making (Hsieh and Yalch, 2020), organizational cognitive neuroscience (the  
39 biological mechanisms mediating choice and decision-making) (Butler, 2016), multi-attribute  
40 decision-making techniques (Yalcin and Kilic, 2019) applied to both export performance  
41 measurement (Dahooie et al., 2020) and the internationalization decision (Rosario et al.,  
42 2021). Research also covers the application of decision-making scoring schemes (Fu et al.,  
43 2016), use of information as a stand-alone concept (Tarka, 2018) as well as linked to adaptive  
44 learning to avoid the bullwhip effect (Haines et al., 2017). The theme is further reusing  
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3 existing knowledge to improve judgement (Zhang et al., 2017), scenario planning (Lew et al.,  
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5 2019), fault tree analysis (Liu and Tsai, 2016), and finally decision-making that is  
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7 incremental, iterative, and/or co-created (Yang and Gabrielsson, 2017).  
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10 The cognitive decision-making principles (FvS) theme is rooted in behavioral  
11 economics. Eight international marketing decision-making publications in the last years  
12 explored this theme. As expected from an economics-based theme, articles touch upon  
13 rational (Bag et al., 2021) and irrational decision-making (Liu, 2018), effectuation/causation  
14 (Hauser et al., 2020), maximization tradeoffs against desirability and feasibility (Hsieh and  
15 Yalch, 2020) together with related bounded rationality and prospect theory research (Wang et  
16 al., 2018), judgements, heuristics, and biases (Kang and Park, 2019; Thourmrunroje, and  
17 Racela, 2020), formal and informal scenario planning (Lew et al., 2019)  
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28 Moving away from how decisions are made and towards the types of decisions made,  
29 the decision context (D-Ctx) theme is represented by 17 international marketing decision-  
30 making publications reviewed in the 2016-2021 period. The types of decisions examined  
31 include those pertaining to sales (Ameer and Halinen, 2019), industrial purchasing  
32 (Dobrucali, 2019), the supply chain (Haines et al., 2017), joint new product and supply chain  
33 designs (Yao and Askin, 2019), green supplier selection (Yalcin and Kilic, 2019), risk  
34 management generically (Liu and Tsai, 2016) as well as within the supply chain (Singh,  
35 2020, engineer-to-order practice (Reid et al., 2019), inventory classification (Fu et al., 2016),  
36 bank loan decisions (Wasiuzzaman and Nurdin, 2019), value co-creation in banking (Wu et  
37 al., 2019), online crowdfunding (Xiao and Yue, 2018), green technology adoption (Yao et al.,  
38 2020), new product development (Zhang et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018), new ventures (Yang  
39 and Gabrielsson, 2017), and finally mergers and acquisitions (Uzelac et al., 2016).  
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55 Strategic versus operational (SvO). Interestingly, despite the fact that the most  
56 common form of internationalization is exporting, and export functions arguably operate at  
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3 the tactical rather than the strategic level, the international marketing decision-making  
4 literature of the 2016-2021 period is strategic in nature (Byford, 2017; Morita et al., 2017;  
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6 Lew et al., 2019; Hauser et al., 2020 ; Thoumrungroje and Racela, 2020).  
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10 More surprising, we only see 3 publications touching upon ethics (Etc) in  
11 international marketing decision-making. Specifically, Oumlil and Balloun (2017) examine  
12 mainstream ethical decision-making, while Byford (2017) studies moral hazards and Ameer  
13 and Halinen (2019) report on unethical sales behaviors.  
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19 Cross-cultural / cross-national / international (CC). Quite apart for the type of  
20 decision being examined, international marketing decision-making research can also be  
21 classified according to the international focus of the studies themselves. Specifically, the  
22 papers published between 2016 and 2021 continue to examine export performance (Dahooie  
23 et al., 2020), a topic in vogue since the 1990s, country-of-origin effects (Dobrucali, 2019),  
24 cultural effects and variations (Morita et al., 2017; Oumlil and Balloun, 2017; Liu, 2018),  
25 foreign subsidiary decision-making autonomy (Beugelsdijk and Jindra, 2018), and  
26 internationalization (Yang and Gabrielsson, 2017; Thoumrungroje and Racela, 2020; Rosario  
27 et al., 2021).  
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40 Level of analysis (LoA). The literature on organizational decision-making more  
41 generally has often taken the perspective of either the individual decision-maker or the team  
42 responsible for making decisions. The international marketing sphere is no different. We find  
43 3 papers devoted to group decision-making (Morita et al., 2017; Yao et al., 2020; Rosario et  
44 al., 2021), and one to individual level decision-making (Xiao and Yue, 2018).  
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51 As is sometimes the case with other topics within the marketing field, we also see  
52 sectoral context-specific (S-Ctx) research that does not attempt generalization but rather  
53 seeks relevance to specific industries. Here, we see 10 publications in international marketing  
54 decision-making, published between 2016 and 2021, examining the fashion industry  
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(Acharya et al., 2018), the banking industry (Kang and Park, 2019; Wu et al., 2019), the more general service systems (Akter et al., 2019), generic B2B (Saura et al., 2019), but also B2B in the South African mining industry (Bag et al., 2021), the high tech sector (Yang and Gabriellsson, 2017), retailers (Poddar et al., 2017), Burmese managers (Thoumrungroje and Racela, 2020), and environmental non-profit organizations in Taiwan (Liu, 2018).

Company size (Cs). Potentially owing to the fact that the majority of organizations operating on the international scene are, in fact, exporting SMEs, we observe a focus on these organizations in recent research with Hauser et al. (2020), Yao et al. (2020) and Rosario et al. (2021) all examine this type of firm. We also note that some authors go one step further in seeking contextual specialization, namely Gati and Bauer (2019) working with Hungarian SMEs and Wasiuzzaman and Nurdin (2019) specifically researching Malaysian SMEs.

Supporting analytics / big data (BD). Finally, and unsurprisingly, we note an emerging interest in analytics within the field of international marketing decision-making, namely big data / knowledge co-creation leading to efficient and effective decision-making and return on investment (Acharya et al., 2018), better decision-making through big data analytics (Akter et al., 2019), and big data powered AI effect on knowledge creation (Bag et al., 2021).

### ***2.3 The future: A synthesis of the special issue***

The current Special Issue articles can be considered a glimpse of what the future holds when it comes to decision-making research in the international marketing context, given the diverse nature and composition of the papers included. The five papers comprised in this Special Issue bring forth topics from a plethora of theoretical, contextual, and methodological perspectives. Such a diversity has allowed the content and processes of decision-making to be studied from a multitude of angles, thus enhancing our collective understanding regarding

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3 international marketing decision-making. The Special Issue also hosts contributions from all  
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5 over the world, reflecting the timeliness and immense global interest in international  
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7 marketing decision-making. The empirical contexts from which the Special Issue findings are  
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9 drawn also reflect the global relevance of the topic as those include data from Italy, China,  
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11 and New Zealand among others, thus offering a truly global perspective to current and future  
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13 international marketing decision issues.  
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17 In response to our initial call for papers, 36 manuscripts were submitted to the  
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19 editorial office focusing on a broad range of topics. The manuscripts were initially screened  
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21 and reviewed by the Special Issue co-editors in search of rigor and relevance to the theme.  
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23 Manuscripts with significant potential were thereafter reviewed and evaluated by  
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25 knowledgeable specialist scholars in their respective fields. After multiple rounds of reviews  
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27 final decisions were made based on reviewer recommendations and careful reading by the  
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29 Special Issue co-editors.  
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33 Overall, the combined evidence presented in this Special Issue shows us that the  
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35 general field of international marketing decision-making is maturing by building heavily on  
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37 extant research (e.g., Table 1) at the same time as it introduces some exciting novel insights  
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39 and promising future research directions. It is indeed clear that the contributors to this Special  
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41 Issue have taken inspiration from both the past and the present when designing and crafting  
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43 their research and, by doing so, collectively contributed to new knowledge in terms of  
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45 international marketing decision-making principles, decision-maker personality traits, the  
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47 consequences of international marketing decisions, and cross-cultural differences with  
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53 First, Guercini and Freeman (this issue) tackles the interesting topic about how  
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55 international managers learn and rely on heuristics in their international marketing decision-  
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57 making processes. They use a longitudinal case study approach to examine their research  
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3 question in the Italian textile context and find that international marketers tend to possess a  
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5 'heuristic portfolio' and rely on different heuristic scopes depending on the type of decision  
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7 being made and the level of uncertainty and risk involved. Specifically, a narrower and case-  
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9 by-case heuristic seems to be applied during conditions characterized by high uncertainty. In  
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11 these cases, the heuristic rule emerges during the international activities whilst learning is  
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13 applied on the specific case in question (i.e., high specificity and low convergence of rules).  
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15 On the contrary, as the perceived risk of the international marketing decision increases, a  
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17 broader scope heuristic appears to be applied where the rules emerge from learning gained  
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19 during previous international activities and other cases (i.e., low specificity and high  
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21 convergence of rules). Guercini and Freeman's (this issue) findings enrich the literature on  
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23 how international marketers make decisions through learning and heuristic rule usage whilst  
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25 also focusing specifically on established international firms as opposed to new ventures  
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27 where most of the extant heuristic research has been applied in the past.  
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33 Li, Wang, Yang, and Tang (this issue) further contribute to the decision-making  
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35 principles stream but takes a rather different angle by investigating how the degree of owner-  
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37 CEO narcissism influences decisions regarding the speed of post-entry internationalization  
38  
39 among Small and Medium-sized (SME) exporters in China. The authors draw from the upper  
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41 echelons literature and collect multi-wave survey data paired with objective indicators to find  
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43 that more narcissistic CEOs tend to internationalize at a faster pace than their less narcissistic  
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45 peers. The mechanism is explained by the fact that narcissism is a strong driver of bold,  
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47 highly visible, and prestigious strategic decisions (e.g., rapid international expansion) among  
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49 upper echelon managers such as CEOs. Using similar arguments, the study findings also  
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51 reveal that the narcissism–post-entry internationalization relationship is mediated by  
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53 international entrepreneurial orientation. As such, Li et al.'s (this issue) study offers valuable  
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3 insights into how key decision-maker personality traits drive important international  
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5 marketing decisions from a psychological microfoundational perspective.  
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8 This Special Issue also adds to the decision context stream by introducing two related  
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10 but complementary papers about international marketing decisions revolving around  
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12 customer strategies. Specifically, Tuominen, Reijonen, Nagy, Buratti, and Laukkanen (this  
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14 issue) surveyed Italian exporters to investigate how decisions regarding customer orientation  
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16 and customer relationship orientation contribute to a customer-centric strategy that, in turn,  
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18 drives innovativeness and subsequent business growth in foreign markets. The authors find,  
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20 in line with the customer orientation literature, that strategic decisions favoring both customer  
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22 orientation and customer relationships are potentially worthwhile for exporters as they appear  
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24 to foster a healthy level of firm innovativeness which, in turn, enhances growth.  
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28 Cadogan, Miocevic, and Gnizy (this issue) continue the work in the realm of customer  
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30 related strategic decisions through their exploration of the relationship between decisions  
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32 regarding export customer responsiveness and export growth. Their study stems from the  
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34 export market orientation literature and investigates New Zealand-based exporters. The  
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36 findings indicate that decisions on customer responsiveness do not necessarily always  
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38 generate export sales growth, but rather that the relationship is nonlinear and dependent on a  
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40 number of boundary conditions in the exporting firm's external and internal environments,  
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42 such as competitor responsiveness, export environment factors, and international  
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44 entrepreneurial orientation. Based on these findings, Cadogan et al. (this issue) provide  
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46 detailed recommendations with regards to when international customer responsiveness  
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48 decisions are beneficial.  
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54 Finally, the study by Lee, Kim, and Yoon (this issue) contrasts the other studies in the  
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56 Special Issue by looking at international marketing decisions from the customer perspective.  
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58 Their study examines how recommendation decisions among customers are driven by  
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3 herding tendencies and how these herding tendencies vary depending on the customer's  
4 cultural background. Specifically, individualistic cultures are more likely to follow more  
5 recent customer recommendations in their decision-making compared to collectivistic  
6 cultures that are more likely to follow overall average recommendations and reviews. The  
7 authors use a multi study-approach consisting of actual customer review data combined with  
8 an online experiment. The experimental study further manipulates cultural thinking styles  
9 (analytic vs. holistic) to untangle the mechanisms behind the prior detected cross-cultural  
10 differences. Although Lee et al.'s (this issue) paper does not directly tackle the issue of  
11 managerial decision making, it does offer some valuable contributions to the international  
12 marketing decision-making literature in that it provides guidelines for managers in charge of  
13 global marketing platforms on how international customer decisions can be guided based on  
14 cultural backgrounds. The study's general findings can also be of use in international  
15 customer relationship management decisions, specifically when it comes to the techniques  
16 used for priming analytic versus holistic thinking prior to collecting international customer  
17 feedback, or when soliciting international customer recommendations.  
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### 40 **3. Conclusion**

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42 While prior decision-making research has articulated the contents and processes that  
43 organizational decision-makers (including marketers) follow in making decisions, we are  
44 confident that the contributions included in this Special Issue advance the field by bringing  
45 together high-quality contemporary research that not only reflect recent developments in the  
46 field of international marketing decision-making but also offer unique insights that serve to  
47 enhance understanding in the area. The papers included in the Special Issue further provide  
48 novel and interesting managerial and methodological perspectives, and offer intriguing  
49 opportunities for future international marketing decision-making researchers  
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International Marketing Review

**Table 1: The present state of International Marketing Decision Making Research (2016-2021)**

Article	Discipline	Theme(s)*	Research Method	Theoretical Perspective
Acharya et al. (2018)	Information management	S-Ctx, BD	Qualitative, narrative inquiry	Knowledge (co)creation and 'Big Data'
Akter et al. (2019)	Information management	S-Ctx, BD	Systematic literature review & Qualitative interviews	Big Data Analytics (BDA)
Ameer & Halinen (2019)	Sales	D-Ctx, EtcS	Systematic literature review	Unethical Sales behaviour
Bag et al. (2021)	Marketing	FvS, S-Ctx, BD	Structured survey questionnaire	Knowledge Management Theory (KMT)
Beugelsdijk & Jindra (2018)	Innovation	CC	Survey questionnaire	Product innovation
Butler (2016)	Neuroscience	DmP	Systematic literature review	Organizational Cognitive Neuroscience (OCN)
Byford (2017)	Strategy	EtcS, SvO	Conceptual	Principle-Agent Theory & Moral Hazard Theory
Cantone et al. (2019)	Innovation		Longitudinal case study	New Product Development (NPD)
Dahooie et al. (2020)	Exporting	DmP, CC	Literature review & Additive ratio assessment method	Export performance & measurement
Dobrucalı (2019)	Marketing	D-Ctx, CC	Systematic literature review	Industrial purchasing
Dwivedi et al. (2018)	IT			
<b>Fu et al. (2016)</b>	Operational research	DmP, D-Ctx	Ng-model for multiple criteria ABC inventory classification	NA
<b>Gáti &amp; Bauer (2019)</b>	Marketing	Cs		
Gichungi et al. (2020)	Innovation		Survey questionnaire	Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technology
Haines et al. (2017)	Economics	DmP, D-Ctx	Laboratory experiment	Learning Theory
Hauser et al. (2020)	Economics	FvS, SvO, Cs	A phenomenological case study approach & semi-structured interviews	Reasoning
Hsieh & Yalch (2020)	Behavioral decision-making	DmP, FvS	Experimental design	Bounded-rational theory
Kang & Park (2019)	Marketing	FvS, S-Ctx	Survey questionnaire	Heuristics
Lew et al. (2019)	Marketing	DmP, FvS, SvO	Multiple case study method	Scenario planning
<b>Liu (2018)</b>	Marketing	FvS, S-Ctx, CC	Online survey questionnaire	Cultural theory
Liu & Tsai (2016)	Innovation	DmP, D-Ctx	Qualitative interviews	Risk efficiency
Morita et al. (2017)	Gaming	LoA, SvO, CC	Experimental business games	Cultural theory
Olsson et al. (2018)	Innovation		In-depth case study	New Product Development (NPD)
Oumlil & Balloun (2017)	Marketing	EtcS, CC	Survey questionnaire	Cultural theory

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Poddar et al. (2017)	Marketing	S-Ctx	Experimental designs	Commitment theory
Reid et al. (2019)	Production research	D-Ctx	Case study, participant observation	Engineer-to-order (ETO)
<b>Rosario</b> et al. (2021)	Economics	DmP, Ctx, LoA, CC, Cs	Cognitive mapping, Decision EXpert (DEX) method	Resource-based theory
Saura et al. (2019)	Marketing	S-Ctx	Historical CRM data	Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
Singh (2020)	Logistics	DmP, D-Ctx	Survey questionnaire & secondary data	Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM)
Tarka (2018)	Marketing	DmP	Online survey questionnaire	Rational decision-making theory & Bounded-rational theory
Thoumrungroje & Racela (2020)	Business	CC, FvS, S-Ctx, SvO	Experimental design	Cognitive Science
Uzelac et al. (2016)	Human resources	D-Ctx	Survey questionnaire	Merger & Acquisition (M&A)
Wang et al. (2018)	Production research	FvS, D-Ctx	Experimental case study	Quality Function Deployment (QFD) and Cumulative Prospect Theory (CPT)
Wasiuzzaman & Nurdin (2019)	Marketing	D-Ctx, Cs	Survey questionnaire	SMEs finance-seeking behaviour
Wu et al. (2019)	Marketing	S-Ctx, D-Ctx	Survey questionnaire	Co-production
Xiao & Yue (2018)		D-Ctx, LoA	Secondary panel data	Behavioural finance
<b>Yalcin &amp; Kilic (2019)</b>	Logistics	DmP, D-Ctx		
<b>Yang &amp; Gabrielsson (2017)</b>	Marketing	CC, S-Ctx, D-Ctx	Multiple case study method	Entrepreneurial marketing
Yao et al. (2020)	Marketing	DmP, Cs, LoA	Fuzzy theory and cloud model	Green Technology Adoption (GTA)
Yao & Askin (2019)	Production research	D-Ctx	Literature review	New Product Development (NPD)
Zhang et al. (2017)	Production research	DmP, D-Ctx	Ontologies	Knowledge theory

Key:

DmP: Decision-making process

FvS: Fast/slow – type I/type II – normative/irrational – utility maximisation/satisficing

Ctx: Context

Etes: Ethics

LoA: Level of analysis (higher echelons, team, individual)

SvO: Strategic versus operational

CC: Cross-cultural / cross-national / international

Cs: Company size

BD: Supporting analytics / big data