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Exploring the role of diversity management during the Early Internationalizing Firms internationalization process

Despite their rapid internationalization, early internationalizing firms (EIFs) struggle to sustain their growth over time. Among the factors influencing their internationalization process, the diversity of human resources, and particularly its management, has yet to be studied. Building on different perspectives of diversity management under the lens of the resource-based view, this study explores the role of diversity management during EIFs internationalization process. Based on a multiple case qualitative study of French EIFs, the results show that the perspective of diversity management prevailing within EIFs, as it changes the nature of diversity as a resource (strategic, ordinary, or negative), can influence differently their progress throughout the phases of their internationalization process. More specifically, this study emphasizes the importance of adopting a learning perspective of managing diversity, including specific management practices, during the transition between the entry and post-entry phases of EIFs' internationalization processes. This study leads to several propositions and theoretical contributions while providing managerial recommendations.

Keywords: early internationalizing firms; diversity management; resource-based view; internationalization process

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