

International marketing doctrine: the use of guiding principles

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In a seminal qualitative paper, Challagalla et al. (2014; CMJ), identified marketing doctrine (MD) as having potential importance within the marketing literature. CMJ (2014) defined MD as “a firm’s unique principles, distilled from its experiences, which provide firm-wide guidance on market-facing choices” (p. 7). Several core arguments have been placed forward concerning MD’s benefits: MD provides a shared, firm-wide approach to decision making; MD is likely to affect firm’s performance as it guides managers toward the firm’s tested and desired choices and MD guides international ventures by equipping management with a framework to enhance consistency while still allowing flexibility. Given these circumstances, then, firms would do well to look to increase their use of MD. However, these assumptions were not empirically supported as performance benefits of an MD for firms have yet to be demonstrated.

Recently, Asseraf et al. (2020) investigate empirically, whether and how MD’s core processes are related to the success of international firms. Drawing on the knowledge-based view, they developed a model of how MD is used and provide the first quantitative test of its relationship with international performance. The authors advance the understanding of MD by providing a mixed-methods paper. In Study 1, a survey-based quantitative study was used. The final sample comprised 349 internationally active SBUs of Israeli firms. Data were analysed using AMOS. Study 2 provides insights into the use of MD based on 20 in-depth interviews. Cross-sectional evidence shows that there tends to be more MD Use in higher-performing firms. Specifically, the important roles of MD Clarity and MD Knowledgeability as crucial mobilising processes of MD Use are demonstrated. Marketing managers are advised to supplement MD to their portfolio of management tools.

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