

Competitive Advantage and its Supply Chain Strategy for Performance of Shipping Agents at Penang Port, Malaysia

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Abstract— The management of arrival and departure of ships at Penang Port needs the shipping agent for increasing global competitiveness and a source of income for developed countries. Of these, the primary purpose of this study is to analyse the relationship between competitive advantage, management knowledge, social networking and performance mediated by internationalization. A self-administered questionnaire was adopted to perform a systematic collection of data from shipping agents and shipping organisations in Penang Port. The partial least squares method was used for the conceptual framework of the study. In conclusion, the competitive advantage and performance of international shipping agents in Penang wellbeing at workplace and environment around. The presented research carefully developed and designed to fulfil the proposed objectives, but this study still has certain limitations. These limitations should be considered to accomplish practical research in the future. As mentioned, this study shipping agent a cross-sectional design. The authors believe that competitive advantage and performance of international shipping agents using empirical data from the port at Penang, as well as that this research is an important emerging topic for researchers, academicians and practitioners.

Keywords—*Competitive advantage, supply chain strategy, management knowledge, social networking, internationalization, government initiative and performance*

1. Introduction

The international shipping services at Pulau Pinang needs the shipping agent for increasing global competitiveness and have a source of income for developed countries this decade. Also, many international shipping agency services involved with the regulations issued by government agencies such as immigration, customs, and marine department at the port of Penang and they play an important role in providing efficient services better. International shipping agent should have a good

relationship with many countries that are well known for controlling the power port in the world such as Shanghai, Bahamas, and more. World Trade Organization (WTO) has shown a drastic increase in maritime trade around 2008 and 2009.

The total value of world trade in the decade up to 34 billion tons of goods loaded into shipping cargo through the system as a major transport freight by sea. 9.8% increase in the number of sea transport in 2009 has been handled by various types of merchant ships from all over the world (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2014). Growth and improvements to the vessel's point of its features are very encouraging better for clean shipping companies to demonstrate the performance of each company in the commercial world, especially boost demand for services using an international shipping agency in Penang. This phenomenon is triggered due to an increase in Penang shipbuilding industry in recent years. Sea transport, in general, is encouraged to transport commercial cargo as it can provide convenient service for large capacity cargo delivery to the customer [2]. Transportation costs and the cost of services between the ports to other ports will vary according to the exchange rate at the time of a country.

Shipping agent prefers to trade and economic growth as they are the middlemen who connect to the port before the ship's captain and from the port during the last and next to the port for the movement of the ship in case of unexpected events such as oil leaks or accidents. In [3]-[4], they studied the ways of appealing to handle large volumes of cargo and take the largest share of cargo is 75% of total world trade. International shipping agents around the ports that have been gazette is classified as a strategic resource in generating regional economies booming and profitable company in the context of

internationalization. International shipping agents play an important role in performance, particularly in terms of competitiveness of the regional economic development [5]. The shipping agent in Shanghai has developed by Yangtze River Delta as a centre for trade strategy which is controlled by the shipping agent proficient with connecting river Pearl River Delta (PRD) into a transit cargo as well as being the main reason for the increase in agent service port in Shenzhen and Guangzhou in the future the same in practice by the shipping agent based in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Shipping agent in Penang also has increased by providing management of all aspects of international port and shipping agent in Penang serves as a driving force in the economy in which the port is under the authority of Penang Port Sdn Bhd and Penang Port Commission. World Bank study shows that the ratio of direct revenue from port operations and trade for sea transport of activities related to the shipping agent is 1: 5 and the ratio of the work in the port carried out by workers indirectly is about 1: 9 [6]. The same ship will also carry the merchandise to another port by dividing cargo to other ships. Furthermore, ancillary services such as the repair of the container shipping agent, storage, delivery, repair damaged ships, port equipment, trailers and cargo handling provided by the shipping agent before the arrival of the ship are also calculated. Realizing with opportunities and increased regional shipping agents, emphasizing importance international shipping agent is essential for improving economic performance targets and generating competitive advantages realize highly efficient and achieve rapid development and competitive in terms of innovation, knowledge management, social relations and the internationalization of the government's initiative with the quality.

International shipping agent in Penang showed a good performance in providing services for arrivals and departures as well as controlling various types of ships for the purpose of loading and unloading cargo in ports and distribution logistics. Among the services provided by international shipping agents to the master of the vessel and ship owners have to arrange all the documents that must be recognized in government agencies such as Immigration, Customs, Department of complying with all procedures to be attached to the ship's captain with the government agencies involved [7]-[8]. Penang international

shipping agent has proud of the efficiency of their services. For example, manages the ship docked period in less than 10 hours. Penang Port is the port where it has a strategy in sea level that could allow large ships to dock at the terminal close to the stevedores went smoothly. Peanut high productivity per meter jetty and the number of annual transactions is 8 million [9]. Renowned as a trading port with excellent service and efficient by international shipping agents in Penang, was in recognition of this port as a port to 4 busiest in Malaysia.

Current factors that help and encourage the entry of ships from overseas have established to determine the difference, and these factors are crucial to help and guide the international shipping agent in terms of competitiveness and performance of the best. The internationalization of shipping agents and their impact on the performance of the least understood and least used. Shipping agent in Penang has faced many competitors among several shipping agents developed to provide the best service to increase the number of customers who use their services. Therefore, it is important to understand the competitive advantage of shipping agents other. It also aims to give an overview of the main influence and competitive advantage function and performance of the extent to which they control the shipping services throughout the island and internationally. In the recent decision of this study may help researchers and shipping agents to improve the performance of their services to customers in the shipping firms worldwide to understand the concept of internationalization itself. It is necessary to increase competitive advantage and performance furthermore; this study provides information that can be used to improve the strategy and performance of the shipping firms to manage and perform services more effectively.

2. Literature Review

In this study, the literature on international shipping agents in Malaysia ports, competitive advantage, performances, international management knowledge, social networking and government support are reviewed. The first part describes the management of the international shipping agents in Malaysia and the literature on the variables described above. The second part outlined the gaps in the literature and followed by the theoretical framework of this study. The third part reviews the

literature on the constructs used in the study and the prior research in this field.

2.1 International shipping agents

For decades, large multinational shipping agent international research firm controlled. Nowadays, international shipping agent's internationalization on performance, resulting in calls for research on the competitive advantages and international shipping agent performance. Previous studies have emphasized the important role played by international shipping agent network in stimulating socio-economic development and providing employment opportunities through internationalization.

Therefore, participation in international business activities determines the importance of competitive advantage and performance, not only for the internationalization of knowledge management but also for the successful development of an international shipping agent. Social networking approach has emerged as one of the main theories to explain the internationalization of international shipping agents. Establishing a network connection is important for international shipping agents who do not have the resources and capacity to continue to grow and expand in foreign markets [10]. When entering foreign markets, international shipping agents have difficulty in carrying out international activities and get a supply channel for their artificial [11]. Social networks help international shipping agents to overcome this limitation and facilitate life in the international market.

The relevant shipping agents' competitive advantage, management knowledge, social networking, internationalization and government support are identified as factors that influence shipping agent's performance. They are also factors considered for shipping agents' choice, as what makes competitive advantage will make shipping agents perform well and contribute to the port selection. Since 2000, a few studies on shipping agent's competitiveness and performance have been conducted in [12]. Tongzon and Heng studied in shipping agents' competitive advantage, and performance and choice proposed eight key determinants of port competitiveness [13]: Shipping agent's services efficiency level, Shipping agents handling service and charges, Complying with government policies and procedures, Shipping agent's selection preferences by ownership or

master of the vessel, The actual of the navigation networking tracking on the vessel, Changing environment, Government accessibility and initiative, service on differentiation.

2.2 Competitive advantage

Competitive advantage in the international shipping agents in Penang has witnessed significant growth over the years. It operates in almost every port around Malaysia, especially in Penang port. This section will explain the literature on competitive advantage and performance of International shipping agents in Penang. Shipping agent's competitiveness has been defined by research in several ways. Shipping agent's competitiveness has led to competition between ports, and it has a competitive advantage. In other words, it shows a criterion to ship owners and master of the vessel for selecting port through various shipping agents for competitive advantage. Therefore, it can be utilized as an indicator of preparing a countermeasure because it identifies the opportunities and threats of shipping agents handling services.

Song and Yeo conducted a study. They stated that the main factors affecting the competitive advantage to the shipping agent are time management, the efficiency of services, knowledge management, and social networking [14]. Saeed presented the results of a comprehensive study conducted by distributing questionnaires to the shipping agent who worked as a foreign port shipping agent in Karachi, Pakistan [15].

The independent variable is a competitive advantage, knowledge management, social networking, and the internationalization of shipping agents and all variables are important. To identify and assess the competitive advantage of shipping agents in the region more clearly. Yeo et al. were able to identify the components that affect the competitive advantage, and company performance is the structure for assessing the quality of the services provided [16]. Based on the literature related to the choice of shipping agents and competitiveness, regional research service covers shipping agents have evaluated. Tongzon have identified factors implied in shipping agents through competitive advantage is found to exist in the existing literature, such as the number of transmissions, high-efficiency service agents, service eternal, knowledge, infrastructure, high range of shipping agency services, and road connections to other ports. Among these factors,

the shipping agent requires competence in being a liaison between them, and that is important in the selection of ports [17].

2.3 Management knowledge

Management knowledge refers to the process of 'formulating, implementing, and evaluating for decisions that an organisation decide to improve to achieve its objectives' [18]. Shipping agents are involved in worldwide business through handling vessel across the world. Shipping agents will always to navigate on the global to ensure the vessel arrives on the destinations. As one of the agents that were hired by master of vessel or ship-owner, the shipping agents need to process of documentary works related to international procedure and rules on behalf of the shippers, and to dealing with activities such as Government procedure, rules and regulation, inventory management and inland transportation in both domestic and foreign countries. Therefore, shipping agents should know well in foreign countries rule and regulation and how their businesses operate.

Shipping agents management knowledge is also linking with all international operations. For example, international leading shipping agents management, such as the Dubai Port World, Port of Singapore Authority Corporation and Hutchison Port Holdings, are all establish their business performance all around the world. Consequently, the focus of their business strategy with each other by controlling of headquarters basis [19]. It can be more monitoring and tracking the shipping agents carry out the name of their shipping firm and that international shipping agents are considered as a global business where the operation in more than one country. It is indicated by management knowledge literature that as a primary factor of business to update the latest and any changes rule or regulation of all port around the worlds, the knowledge management of a shipping firm was contributed to organisational innovation, uniqueness and a higher level of service quality [20].

2.4 Social Networking

A social network is defined as 'a set of connection link to other such as persons and organisations involve by a set of social relationships such as friendship, transfer of funds and any communication between person to another person.

Previous literature agrees that knowledge can learn from social networking where they are intrusted to know and get familiar with all type social networking since the network produces a lot of channels to get latest and valuable knowledge and resources [21] such as for ship tracking system that can estimate the route of vessel. With the actual informational benefits of the co-operative network, the next stage of handling can be proceeding.

The first source of knowledge acquisition for shipping agents services is an international procedure such as IMO, Regulation 15(5), and customs declaration. Shipping agents work within their business networks by connecting and the master of the vessel. The business networks of shipping agent have recently become bigger and more complicated, and the structures and practices of the connecting network have an accurate result. For example, shipping agents have to deal with the master of the vessel for the arrival and departure date and time in actual for arrangement. They have to be the faster arrangement agents then become the new competitors of the other shipping agents.

Although the social network could be helpful for knowledge acquisition, the effectiveness of knowledge acquisition may be promoted by the extent of competition among the shipping organisations in the network [22]. The positive effect between operation and competition on knowledge sharing advantages among shipping firms can be developing. Strategic scholars introduce the social networking concept to describe such a positive effect of communication among them. Social networking is referred to as the latest relationship being to communicate in global markets around the world [23]. It is assumed that networking will generate organisational able to learn and knowledge sharing, which may help to ship firms' performance by improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Hence it is expected that the networks among shipping agents could promote excellent knowledge acquisition, rather than that which is achieved when each activity is pursued separately. In this sense, the social network is regarded as the second source of knowledge acquisition of maritime transportation.

2.5 Internationalization

Internationalization is the company in the same business properties around the world. This model

describes the process of internationalization as a gradual acquisition, integration and application of knowledge about the market and operating in foreign countries. In the I-model, conceptualized by [24], the involvement of export all over the world have performed at a ratio of export sales to total sales to reflect the extent of the dependence of foreign shipping companies in the world market. It is also supported by Cavusgil (1980) has suggested five internationally. There is a support internationalization as domestic marketing, pre-export, experiment involvement, active participation and involvement of committed. Eriksson et al. (1997) also stated that the two U-model and I-model is the same. However, internationalization is the natural action, and the internationalization of knowledge and experience is an important factor in understanding the process of internationalization of the term [25].

Eriksson et al. (1997) explained that models the behaviour of the internationalization of growth companies offering similar services around the world are based on firm growth theory and the theory of the behaviour of the firm in business nature and stressed that the process of internationalization of the firm is a good addition for this decade. Models depend on assumptions that the company has access to incomplete information and explain the process of the increasing internationalization of knowledge through experience [25]. Eriksson (1977) critically assume a two-dimensional model of international expansion in the internationalization of a worldwide established. Model theory has been studied to identify postulate that psychic distance between the rising markets, the more difficult it becomes to international shipping companies to collect and interpret all information that is received correctly and clearly. Psychic distance between one country to another country and foreign markets affect the market selection and entry mode choice. Bartlett and Ghoshal (2000) have identified two main motivations for internationalization of firms, namely: motivation of traditional and emerging motivation [26]. Among the earliest motivations that encourage shipping companies to invest abroad is the requirement to get the mains supply, especially labour, regulatory, and ethical unruly.

2.6 Government Initiative

The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) as the Ministry responsible for trade facilitation in Malaysia that is responsible for formulating and recommending shipping firm of import and export processes by the handling of incoming and the outgoing vessel has taken the initiative to discuss with related government agencies such as immigration, custom, Harbormaster office and Penang port office in identifying the issues and the most common practices for shipping agents procedures, particularly pertaining to documentation requirements, time is taken and the cost involved for shipping firm processes. The trade shipping industry in Malaysia, especially at Port Klang and Penang have highlighted significant issues in shipping procedures that need to be addressed by the authority's concern. Issues raised include the excessive documentation requirements and lack of transparency or unclear import and export process requirements.

For this purpose, government agencies have set up in early 2008 with the objectives to identify the best practices for shipping procedure process flows to address gaps or barriers as well as to improve the efficiency initiative of international trade in general. Based on detailed discussions with the industry, the government initiative function has developed, and identified process flows for shipment activities at Penang port. The process flows comprise of four (4) stages, namely: (i) Document preparation for declaration, (ii) Government agencies clearance (Immigration, custom and harbour master office), (iii) Technical control, port and terminal handling, (iv) Inland transportation and handling, Government initiative which was involved in shipping management such as Immigration, Custom, Harbor Master Office and Penang Port they have their different procedure that international shipping agents need to comply and follow. They are time specification term to report arrival and departure vessel and also for the landing pass term to the crew on the vessel.

2.7 Firm Performance

There is considerable debate on the appropriateness of various approaches to the concept utilization and measurement of organizational performance [27]. Objective data on the performance of firms are

usually not available because most firms are privately held and the owners are neither required by law to publish financial results nor usually willing to reveal such information voluntarily to outsiders. Besides that, financial statements may be inaccurate because they are usually unaudited [28].

Furthermore, CEOs or owners of firms are inclined to provide subjective evaluations of their firms' performance. Shipping agents that have internationalized are able to create knowledge, technology skills, and diversified resources and stimulate development, growth and success. Besides that, Bradley and O'Reagan (2001) commented that shipping agents could internationalize to seek rapid growth [29]. Growth can be measured in firm performance through services sales. The study suggested that internationalization have a positive relationship with firm performance.

Burpitt and Rondinelli's (2000) study showed that financial success in initial exporting activities motivates small firms to internationalize in subsequent periods [30]. Firms agreed that sales, profit and growth would be essential factors to their internationalization. It shows that internationalization will help firms to achieve financial success. Partial correlation analyses have shown that both financial success and learning-oriented variables are related to a likelihood of continued exporting by small firms.

The six systematic internationalization approaches are motivation and strategic planning, market research, market selection, selection of the entry mode, planning for post-entry problems and commitment of resources. Chatterjee and Lim (2000) studied the relationship between the external factors and internal factors of shipping agents in Singapore with the degree of internationalization and performance [31]. The results show that a positive relationship exists between internationalization and performance. Regionalization and internationalization have proven a successfully combined pathway to the success of shipping agents in Singapore.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The following sections delineate the gaps in the previous literature, the conceptual framework of the present study, brief descriptions of the dependent variable, independent variables, moderated variable and the development of

hypotheses. Based on these theoretical underpinnings, the conceptual model guiding the study is depicted in Figure 1, the model postulates three independent variables and one moderating variable that affects the firm is internationalization and the dependent variable is performance. The three independent variables are a competitive advantage, management knowledge and social networking. The moderating variable is internationalization. Performance is the dependent variable. This section describes the variables and their constructs that are used in the research framework. These include competitive advantage, management knowledge, social networking, internationalization, government initiative and firm performance and show in Figure 1.

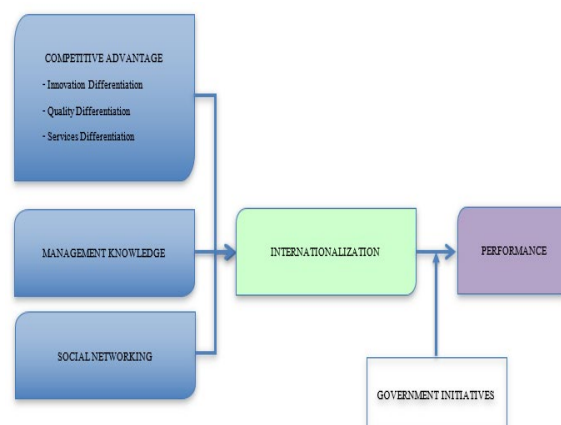


Figure 1. Conceptual Frameworks

Based on the literature, this study will use the following constructs for internationalization: (a) Competitive advantage, (b) Management knowledge (c) Social Networking, (d) Internationalization, (e) Performance (f) Government initiative.

2.9 Development of Hypotheses

Competitive advantage, as mentioned in the literature review, is important to examine of internationalization of shipping agents in Penang. Shipping agents can acquire innovation differentiation, quality differentiation and service differentiation to achieve competitive advantage. Since the competitors among shipping agents are getting growth, the above possessions of strategy become important to examine for shipping agent's internationalization.

The relationship between competitive advantage and performance via internationalization is discussed widely in the literature in previous sections. There are mixed arguments regarding the role of competitive advantage via internationalization. Although the literature shows the relationship between competitive advantage and internationalization, there are findings that a positive relationship between them. The marketing differentiation, complex innovation and conservative cost control help firms to internationalize actively through shipping firm, the establishment of the foreign market and the formation of joint ventures business among shipping firm round the world.

H1: There is a significant relationship between innovation differentiation and performance

The literature on competitive advantage provides a wide range of discussions related to internationalization. Vida findings on internationalization of firms in the United States indicate that competitive advantage is important to facilitate decision making on innovation differentiation positive views with respect to opportunities and potential barriers involved in internationalization [32].

H2: There is a significant relationship between internationalization and performance

Baird (1994) suggested the inclusion of the influence of top managers' decision making and the choice of international strategy on organization performance. The study suggests that management attitudes are important to make decision-making base on company performance, and there is a need to address types of international opportunities and challenges. Xia (2003) identified that the firm resources that are used as competitive advantages [33]. These include technological resources, top managerial knowledge skills and organization capabilities, the Guanxi skills of employees and their professional knowledge, the firm's internal and external relationships.

H3: There is a significant relationship between management knowledge and internationalization of shipping agents

Vida (2000) suggested that in the internationalization of firms in the United States, management knowledge should possess sufficient

know-how and formal training in international operations. They were of the opinion that international knowledge has a significant relationship with shipping firm internationalization. However, Vida also showed that management knowledge has a significant relationship with internationalization [32]. Bloodgood et al. mentioned that the international experience possessed by top management knowledge could enhance a firm's ability to take advantage of international opportunities and chances [34]. The international experience of the entire top management knowledge team is related to greater internationalization at the time of a potential market.

H4: There is a significant relationship between social networking and internationalization

Strengths in international business skills are distinguished between social networking and internationalization. Furthermore, Bradley and O'Reagain pointed to some implications for the social networking of shipping agents seeking to communicate and receive the latest information from time to time and concluded that the shipping agents should deploy their networking resources in familiar markets where the services meet international customer requirements [29]. In addition, shipping firms with service experience are likely to perform better in shipping performance relative to firms without shipping experience through social networking [35].

H5: There is a significant relationship between management knowledge and internationalization

The small amount of variance in firm internationalization explained by firm size calls into question the relevance of firm size as a strong determinant. Vida (2000) found that firm size will be a determining factor for firm internationalization [29]. A firm can be considered in two different but related ways, in terms of sheer organizational or in terms of its international market share. Although the capacity of the firm is conceptually different, they are correlated empirically. Shipping firm has long been considered one of the most significant variables in organizational studies and its relationship with other important such as the international market. Hofer (1975) identified internationalization variable moderating the

relationship between international and performance [36].

H6: There is a significant relationship between service differentiation and internationalization

In their study, Baird et al. (1994) pointed out that internationalization has a positive relationship with service differentiation [37]. They showed that shipping agents could increase their return on sales (ROS) by taking their current services into the international market either on their own. Burpitt and Rondinelli's (2000) showed that service differentiation success allows the aggressive firm performance of internationalization [30] and the internationalization and service differentiation have a positive relationship [38].

H7: There are the performance of shipping agents will affect the shipping firm performance

The three dimensions of entrepreneur ownership (EO) such as to innovate, to be proactive and the propensity to take risk will help the firm of internationalization and increases firm performance [39]. Reed and DeFillipi (1990) focus that there is a positive relationship between competitive advantage and organizational performance, which is measured by ROA and ROS [40]. They have pointed out that there is a substantial agreement within the literature on the service, quality and differentiation of competitive advantage. The studies concluded that competencies are within the firm's control and can be contributed to generate a competitive advantage for performance.

H8: There is a positive relationship between quality differentiation and internationalization

A comparative study between firms and competitors can show the quality services that possess sustainable to the customers, and competitive advantage can produce better performance compared to their competitors. Lubit (2001) elaborated on how quality and excellent services have become both primary bases of core competencies and the key to superior firm performance [41]. He concluded that firms that acquire tacit knowledge and superior management capabilities could achieve quality service of the organizational results. Agus and Sagir (2001) argued that quality differentiation strategies generally attribute to competitive advantage and have a positive relationship with firm performance

via internationalization [42]. Their study shows that personnel quality and sale differentiation have a significant relationship with performance.

H9: Internationalization has an intermediate effect between competitive advantage, Management knowledge, social networking and performance.

The sampled firms have a greater tendency to use excellent strategy to compete with other firms [39]. It contradicted the studies of Beal (2000), which showed that innovation differentiation, marketing differentiation and low-cost leadership have a positive relationship with the performance of shipping firms. Albaum and Tse (2001) also showed that a firm's performance is positively related to its competitive advantage in organization strategy [43]. Based on these reviews, hypothesis nine is developed, as shown below. In addition to that, the conceptual framework also would like to test whether internationalization has an intermediate effect on performance, which is reflected in hypothesis eight.

This research is exploratory regarding the factors that competitive advantage and performance of international shipping agents in Penang. It is also concerned with investigating these factors across firm regions. Methods are utilized in this research to achieve the listed research objectives by quantitative data. The study was carried out using a literature review and surveys in the international shipping agents. A purposive sampling approach was followed for the selection of the research context. Penang was selected because Penang has a significant impact on the activities in shipping firm handling. The shipping industry revolution and developments in maritime transportation, particularly marine shipping development once made the Penang ports famous very prosperous. The Penang is an island state in Malaysia whose sea-shipment is the primary transport mode.

In line with the adopted survey questionnaire and literature review, were conducted in different research phases. Firstly, literature was reviewed to form the research foundation and help to develop a good understanding and insight into the relevant research and emerging trends. The review focused on construction and conceptualization of factors that influence the shipping agent's performance and shipping firm choice. It provided the background to this research and generated an initial list of potentially important of performance. For

answering the research questions, a questionnaire was designed based on the literature, and questionnaire surveys were conducted. Two hundred fifteen valid questionnaire responses were used to assess the reliability and validity of the derived from the literature and to identify the performance. The questionnaire results also validated results. Also, secondary documents and information from a variety of sources were collected and examined to understand the selected shipping agents.

This section discusses the research design of this study, including population and target population, sample, sampling method and sample size, respondents, units of analysis and instrument of research. The present study is a descriptive study, which is a type of research design to describe the characteristics of a population or a phenomenon. This study is aimed to understand the relationship between competitive advantage, Management knowledge, social network, internationalization and performance. It is an enriched study by nature where data will be collected through a self-administrated questionnaire for the hypothesis testing. The questionnaire will be used as a tool to collect data from all level of staff in shipping agents. It is quantitative research. The study will be conducted in Penang and focuses on shipping agents to answer the questionnaire.

3. Material and Method

Primary data was collected from the entire international shipping agency staff where they are holders of the role and critical informants conducted through questionnaires. The unit of analysis in this study is an international shipping agent individually. The level of respondent managers, executives and the staff who handle the shipping agents who excel in the global requirements generate strategic responsibility for the company they were working in a defined based on their title and position in the company [29]. They will be considered knowledgeable in arranging shipping matters and familiar with the operations related to issues under the organization of shipping services that have been provided. The questionnaires were delivered by hand (90%) and e-mails (10%). The questionnaires were delivered

by hand enclosed with respected to encourage responses from the respondents as a measure for the cooperation. Following the e-mail was sent as a reminder to the respondent.

The questionnaires used in this study are shown in Appendix A. The questions were pre-tested with a sample of 200 shipping agents to ensure that they are clear and arrested the information required. This questionnaire is divided into six parts. Part 1 will get information about the company's background. Part A will be used to measure competitive advantage. Part B is primarily on knowledge management, and social network Section C. Section D questionnaire will measure the internationalization of the shipping agent. Section E will focus on performance. Finally, section F will focus on the government's initiative.

3.1 Measurement

The measurement of the questionnaire items in this study was with point Likert scale 1 to 6 rating and show in Table 1—the questionnaire comprised of Part 1 and Part 2 with six sections. Part 1 of the questionnaire consisted of the demographic of the shipping agents, and Part 2 with six sections are Competitive advantage, Management Knowledge, Social Networking, Internationalization, Government Initiative and Performance.

4. Results

This section presents and discusses data analysis results from the survey conducted on to explore the link between competitive advantage, management knowledge, internationalization and performance by adding in government interventions as the moderating effect. Numerous analysis is conducted such as descriptive analysis, reliability analysis and PLS-SEM analysis to test the mediating and moderating effect of those variables concern. The relationship of independent variables to dependent variables and the independent variables to dependent variables through the presence of mediating factor, internationalization as well as moderator factor, government interventions. The findings and results of the hypotheses are presented as well.

Table 1. Likert scale for the questionnaire

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
Section A	Least Applicable	A little Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Applicable	Most Applicable	-
Section B	Strongly disagree	D disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Section C	Least Applicable	A little Applicable	Moderately Applicable	Applicable	Most Applicable	-
Section D	Please tick (✓) for the answer					
Section E	Extremely negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Extremely Positive	-
Section F	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Table 2. Response Rate

Question	Number	Percentage
Distributed	200	100%
Received	180	90%
Usable	176	88%
Unusable	4	2%

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to target respondents. Only 4 out of 180 questionnaires returned were unusable. The final usable questionnaires were 176, which accounted for 88% response rate. In case of response rate acceptability recommended that 20% to 30% is reasonable. Smith et al. (1995) recommended a response rate as low as 30% is considered reasonable for data analysis [44]. Therefore, in this study, the response rate of 88% is considered sufficient for data analysis (See Table 2).

4.2 Respondent's Profile

From the analysis refer to Table 3, the majority of the respondents were male 93.2% while female respondents consisted of 6.8% over the total respondents of 176. The majority falls under the range of 36 years to 50 years old 57.4%, followed

by age group between 26 to 35 years old 28.5% and the age group of 51 to 56 years old (4.0%). In terms of clients' individuals with 11-15 clients were 58%, followed by 6-10 with 28.4%. Majority of the respondents have 5-10 years' experience (68.8%). Most of the respondents were staff members (79.5%).

For addressing this potential problem, Harman Single factor test was used. An un-rotated factor analysis accompanied on all measurement items extracted 8 factors with Eigenvalues greater than one (Appendix). In this study total, 8 factors accounted for 68.74 per cent of the total variance. Factor one accounted for only 23.71 per cent of the variance. Thus common method was not a persistent dilemma in this study. Due to the single factor did not appear, and the first factor did not account for most of the variance. Therefore, this study concludes that the common method bias was not a major issue in this study.

Table 3. Respondents Profile (N=176)

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	164	93.2
Female	12	6.8
Age		
Less than 25	16	9.1
26-35	52	29.5
36-50	101	57.4
51-56	7	4.0
Clients		
1-5	12	6.8
6-10	50	28.4
11-15	102	58.0
more than 15	12	6.8
Experience		
less than 3 year	8	4.5
3-5	24	13.6
5-10	121	68.8
more than 10	23	13.1
Position		
Manager	5	2.8
Executive	31	17.6
Staff	140	79.5

4.3 Goodness of Measurement

The first part of evaluating the model is to justify the measurement model and the substance of the model. The goodness of measurement is assessed through construct validity and discriminant reliability. Construct validity examined the degree of matching between the measurement instrument and the variables, while reliability provides an overview of the consistency of the measuring indicators in assessing the constructs.

4.4 Construct Validity

Construct validity assesses whether the measures test the intended construct appropriately, and it is tested using both convergent validity and discriminant validity [44]. For determining the degree of validity, the recommended loading value is more than 0.50, and value with 0.70 and above is considered good for one indicator. The indicator has loading value with 0.50 and below is considered invalid and should be discarded. In this

respect, this study employed a cut-off value at point 0.5.

4.5 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses the degree of correlation between the measurements in one construct [45]. Sekaran & Bougie, (2010) to establish convergent validity, factor loading of the indicators, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) should be considered [44]. AVE, which is a mean-variance extracted for the items loading on a construct, were all above the suggested value of 0.5 or higher. Therefore, this study found that the AVE of all the constructs fulfils the recommended cut-off value (See appendix). Further, the results of this study (refer Table 4), found the range of 0.886 to 0.973, as composite reliability, which surpass the cut of value 0.7.

Table 4. Convergent validity

Construct	Measurement	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Government Initiative	GI1	0.7476	0.652	0.9177	0.9246
	GI2	0.8342			
	GI3	0.8159			
	GI4	0.68			
	GI5	0.9021			
	GI6	0.8458			
Innovation Differentiation	ID1	0.8036	0.7045	0.8762	0.8361
	ID2	0.9515			
	ID3	0.7499			
Internationalization	IN1	0.8552	0.7462	0.8546	0.6601
	IN2	0.8723			
Performance	JP1	0.7517	0.5097	0.8367	0.7613
	JP2	0.8265			
	JP3	0.631			
	JP4	0.5905			
	JP5	0.7441			
Low cost Performance	LC1	0.8218	0.6555	0.8827	0.8491
	LC2	0.7921			
	LC3	0.6823			
	LC4	0.9239			
Management Knowledge	Mkk1	0.7662	0.6772	0.9361	0.9208
	Mkk2	0.8765			
	Mkk3	0.8498			
	Mkk4	0.81			
	Mkk5	0.846			
	Mkk6	0.8059			
	Mkk7	0.8011			
Quality Differentiation	QD2	0.8723	0.7838	0.9158	0.8624
	QD3	0.8948			
	QD4	0.8889			
Service Differentiation	SD1	0.6442	0.514	0.7594	0.5259
	SD2	0.7595			
	SD3	0.7417			
Social Networking	SN1	0.7044	0.6195	0.8661	0.792
	SN2	0.7341			
	SN3	0.8557			
	SN4	0.8429			

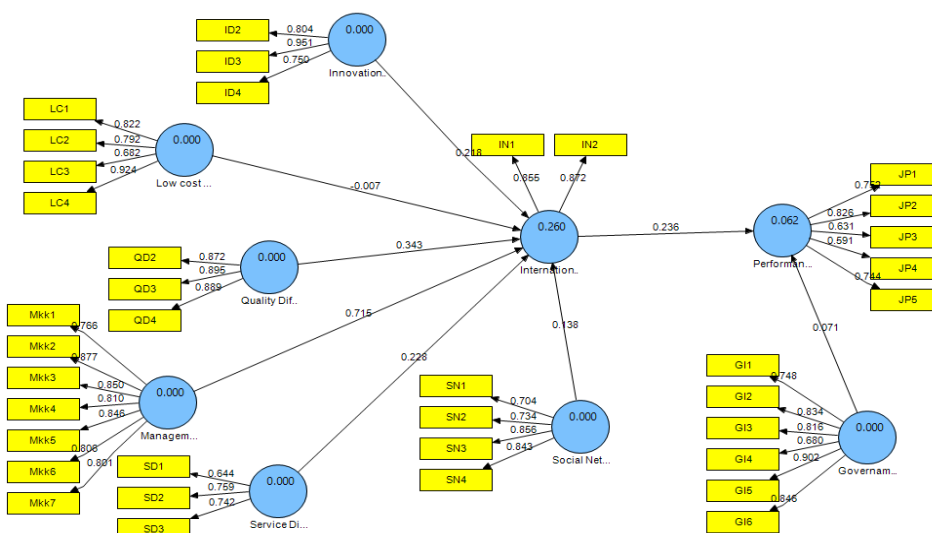


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

	GI	ID	IN	LCP	MK	PP	QD	SD	SN
GI	0.807								
ID	-0.359	0.839							
IN	0.025	0.168	0.864						
LCP	-0.168	0.073	-0.134	0.810					
MK	0.271	-0.095	0.359	-0.078	0.823				
PP	0.077	0.038	0.238	-0.085	-0.230	0.714			
QD	-0.251	0.068	-0.291	0.045	-0.927	0.237	0.885		
SD	0.083	0.126	0.202	-0.122	-0.152	0.472	0.145	0.717	
SN	0.243	-0.243	0.138	-0.543	0.120	0.067	-0.132	0.039	0.787

Note: GI: Government Initiative; ID: Innovation Differentiation; LCP: Low cost performance; MK: Management Knowledge; PP: Performance; QD: Quality Differentiation; SD: Service Differentiation; SN: Social Networking; IN: Internationalization

Table 6. Direct Hypothesis

Hypotheses	Path	Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
H1	Innovation Differentiation -> Internationalization	0.218	0.077	2.819***	Supported
H2	Internationalization -> Performance	0.242	0.068	3.542***	Supported
H3	Low cost Performance -> Internationalization	-0.007	0.120	0.061	Unsupported
H4	Management Knowledge -> Internationalization	0.715	0.134	5.329***	Supported
H5	Quality Differentiation -> Internationalization	0.343	0.125	2.758***	Supported
H6	Service Differentiation -> Internationalization	0.228	0.065	3.516***	Supported
H7	Social Networking -> Internationalization	0.138	0.092	1.497	Unsupported

Note: ***p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, (based on one-tailed test with 500 bootstrapping)

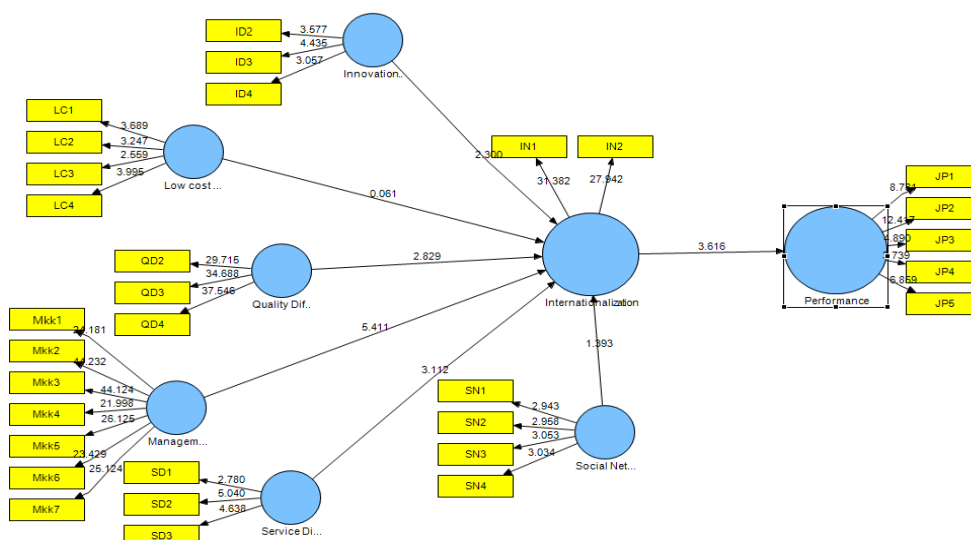


Figure 3. Structural model

4.6 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity measures the degree to which given constructs differ from other constructs in the same model by using the square root of the AVE. For address discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE is compared against the correlations of the other constructs [46]. This study finds the square root of AVE of all the diagonal values of the constructs were higher than the off-diagonal ones. As shown in Table 4, the calculated value of AVE exceeds the intercorrelations of the diagonal constructs with the other off-diagonal constructs ensuring adequate discriminant validity. Therefore, the results of the analysis can reveal that the measurement model of this study fulfils adequate convergent and discriminant validity. See Table 5.

4.7 Assessing the Structural Model

4.7.1 Direct Effect

Since the primary purposes of PLS are prediction, the goodness of the theoretical model is acknowledged by the variance explained (R^2) of the indigenous constructs and the substance of all the path estimates [47]. After estimation of the path estimates in the structural model, a bootstrap analysis was used to measure the statistical significance of the path coefficient. Chin (1998) advocates 500 re-sampling when operating bootstrapping to estimate a parameter. Therefore, in this study, the bootstrapping procedures with 500 re-sampling were used. Table 6 and Figure 3 represent the results of the direct effect

hypothesized relationships of this research. The endogenous construct (Performance) has an R^2 of 0.062, suggesting that 6.2% (week) of the variance in the extent of performance can be explained by internationalization. And endogenous construct (internationalization) has an R^2 of 0.26 suggested that 26% (substantial) of variance in extent innovation differentiation, low-cost performance, management knowledge, quality differentiation, social networking and service differentiation. Further analysis exhibited that the R^2 is significantly based on the guideline of R square, where the author recommended that 0.02 -0.12 is weak, 0.13 -0.25 is moderate, and 0.26 and above is substantial.

Results of the study show that H1, H2, H4, H5, H6 are supported, whereas H3 and H7 are not significant. H3 shows that low-cost performance has a negative relationship with internationalization (See Figure 3).

4.7.2 Testing for Mediating Effect

Testing the mediating effect of internationalization is another objective of this study. This section explains the mediating effect of internationalization in the relationship between dimensions of competitive advantage and performance also between the relationship of management knowledge and performance. Preacher and Hayes (2008) exposed that the mediation effect considers significant while the indirect effect between independent and dependent variables come out significant [48]. In this study, the indirect effect of

internationalization was found to be insignificant only between the relationship of low-cost performance and performance, and between social networking and performance. Therefore, hypothesis 9 and 13 were found to be unsupported. Whereas remaining of the hypothesis were found to be significant. The results of the mediation effect were shown in Table 7.

4.7.3 Testing Moderation Analysis

In examining the interaction effect of moderator using PLS, the product indicator was applied to detect the moderating effect of trust in management on the relationship between employee engagement and employee turnover intention. In order to assess the interaction effect is significant, a bootstrap with 500 re-sampling was employed. Table 8 revealed that an insignificant moderating impact of government intervention between internationalization and performance. The result indicated that higher internationalization leads to lower performance if the government intervention is higher. In this study, government intervention was found to be an insignificant moderator.

Table 7. Mediating Hypothesis

Hypotheses	Path	Beta	Std Error	t-value	LL	UL	Decision
H8	ID ->IN-> PP	0.053	0.024	2.198	0.006	0.100	Supported
H9	LCP->IN-> PP	-0.002	0.031	-0.055	-0.062	0.059	Unsupported
H10	MK ->IN-> PP	0.173	0.055	3.146	0.065	0.281	Supported
H11	QD ->IN-> PP	0.083	0.038	2.184	0.009	0.157	Supported
H12	SD ->IN-> PP	0.055	0.027	2.044	0.002	0.108	Supported
H13	SN ->IN-> PP	0.033	0.026	1.275	-0.018	0.084	Unsupported

Note: GI: Government Initiative; ID: Innovation Differentiation; LCP: Low cost performance; MK: Management Knowledge; PP: Performance; QD: Quality Differentiation; SD: Service Differentiation; SN: Social Networking; IN: Internationalization

Table 8. Moderating Hypothesis

H	Path	Beta	Std. Error	t-value	R ² _i	R ² _m	Change in R ²	Decision
H14	IN*GI->PP	-0.294	0.443	0.665	0.069	0.062	0.007	Unsupported

Note:GI: Government Initiative; PP: Performance; IN: Internationalization

Table 9. Predictive Relevance of the Exogenous Construct

Construct	CV-Redundancy
Internationalization	0.19
Performance	0.029

4.7.4 Predictive Relevance (Q2)

In addition to estimating the magnitude of the R2 values as a measure of predictive accuracy, researchers need to assess the Stone-Geisser's Q2 value [49]. The Q2 signifies an assessment of how the model and its parameter estimates reconstruct well-observed values. Q2 value larger than 0 specifies that the exogenous constructs have predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs [47]. The results of the predictive relevance of this study are presented in Table 9.

4.7.5 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

In this section, the hypothesis can be summarized to see which were supported by the analysis. Table 10 presents a summary of the hypotheses testing. In total, 14 hypothesized relationships were examined and tested in this research. The results support 9 of the total hypotheses. In the direct path analysis, 5 hypotheses were found support, and 2 hypotheses were found not supported. Also, the mediation analysis was found supported whereas, and the moderating hypothesis was found not supported.

5 Discussions

The findings of this study reveal that competitive advantage and performance of international shipping agents in Penang wellbeing at workplace and environment around. Most of the findings from this study are supported, but some findings are not supported. The result of the direct hypothesis between dimension showed that out of 7 hypotheses and 5 are accepted. The research objectives are achieved using a variety of research methods and data sources, presented in a later section. The following section briefly explains the result:

5.1 Competitive advantage and internationalization of international shipping agents

Innovation differentiation, quality differentiation and service differentiation show a positive relationship with the internationalization of international shipping agents. However, the low cost did not contribute to words internationalization of the shipping agents. This result is not consistent with past literature [50]. It could be due to industry under study is Penang Port on the nature of the business was unique compare to other industry. The shipping administration cost is very high, which consist of anchor fees; Penang Port services charges, Pilot charges and additional charges. Nature of the business understudy does not support a low-cost strategy. For instant long side cruise chargers from Penang Port, Sdn Bhd is high, and other costs also related high. Shipping agents continuously improve the time management to report the vessel arrival to the Immigration Department and get immediate approval to load and unload the cargos. Shipping agents use social media, especially "WhatsApp" to send the form of Regulation 15(5) and IMO endorsement to the captain of the vessel for further activities.

The positive relationship between innovation differentiation and internationalization shipping agents is consistent with the past research finding [51]. Shipping agent's continuous focus on innovation differentiation is important if they wanted to grow its client list and more market share in Penang. Shipping agents impose higher fees for special arrangement in the case of North Korean vessel entering in anchor around Penang Port limitation area. Shipping agents innovatively

impose higher fees to provide this special service where the vessel is only allowed to anchor in between NBCT port and Swettenham Port.

Service differentiation provided by the shipping agents enables internationalization through finding new customer service, efficiently meet customers need and improve its sale progress.

Shipping agents eager look forward to finding new customers. For an instant, the agent's Star Cruises become the shipping agents for its new customer such as MV Queen Elizabeth cruises. Beside load and unload cargo, shipping agents also require to fulfil customer need, especially the crews do not have an international passport to declare on the procedure. They have been issued "Notice of Not Permitted to Land" from the Immigration Department. Shipping agents will handle everything necessary to the crews on the board. Since shipping agents force under service sector, they need to provide, excellent service to the customers. This study shows service differentiation is important for internationalization of shipping agents. Shipping agents have to provide a solution to the problem or unexpected problem for the customers. For an instant, passenger for sick the shipping agents has to send the crew to the hospital for treatment. As the vessel unable to wait for the crew recovery, the shipping agents have to send the crew back home throw air.

5.2 Management knowledge and internationalization of international shipping agents

Management knowledge shows a positive relationship with the internationalization of international shipping agents. Shipping agents comply with the flow and procedure dealing with the owner of the vessel, government organization such as immigration, custom, Harbormaster office and Penang Port Sdn Bhd. Shipping agents have to know how to handle and arrange all type of vessel will arrive and depart from Penang Port such as Barter trade ship that most all their crews did not have an international passport or valid travel document. Their only have identity card where cannot be declared to the immigration department. Shipping agents need to get the "Notice Not Permitted to Land" from the immigration department for all the crews on the time vessel anchor at Penang Port. Beside that shipping, agents will be the middle person who was hired by master of the vessel to arrange their needs. In the last ship

anchored barter trade, workers are not allowed to leave the ship or off the boat.

Table 10. Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statement	Decision
Direct Hypothesis		
H1	Innovation differentiation have a significantly positive relationship with internationalization	Supported
H2	Internationalization has a significantly positive relationship with performance	Supported
H3	Low-cost performance has a significantly positive relationship with internationalization	Unsupported
H4	Management knowledge has a significantly positive relationship with internationalization	Supported
H5	Quality differentiation has a significantly positive relationship with internationalization	Supported
H6	Service differentiation has a significantly positive relationship with internationalization	Supported
H7	Social networking has a significantly positive relationship with internationalization	Unsupported
Mediating		
H8	Internationalization mediates the positive relationship between innovation differentiation and performance	Supported
H9	Internationalization mediates the positive relationship between low-cost performance and performance	Unsupported
H10	Internationalization mediates the positive relationship between management knowledge and performance	Supported
H11	Internationalization mediates the positive relationship between quality differentiation and performance	Supported
H12	Internationalization mediates the positive relationship between service differentiation and performance	Supported
H13	Internationalization mediates the positive relationship between social networking and performance	Unsupported
Moderating		
H14	Government intervention moderates the positive relationship between internationalization and performance	Unsupported

Ownership agent is important to ensure that it is under control and no crew is in default with the Immigration direction. Also, the shipping agent must know how to assist ships in supply all your need. In this study, management knowledge is supported by the shipping agents where there needs the knowledge to manage the customers in term to provide better services.

5.3 Social networking and internationalization of international shipping agents

In hypothesis 7 show that social networking does not support international shipping agents. Networking in between master of vessel and shipping agents difficult to accurate cause many factors such as weather, traffic waiting time to

anchor and others unexpected caused. The advice of time and date for the vessel to arrive and depart will give by the master of the vessel in advance to a shipping agent for vessel declaration to the Immigration Department.

The time and date can be delay due to the caused where shipping agents need to rebook long side session to Penang Port for quitting turn to anchors. However, all requirements for the arrival of the ship should be set again based on the latest advice. The delay in the arrival of the ship factors can be caused by weather, congestion turn to close to the port and may also be due to unexpected vessel damage. It is not consistent with the past research result Network location and learning: The influence of network resources and firm capabilities on alliance formation due to connection failure caused by many factors.

5.4 Internationalization and performance of international shipping agents

This study shows that internationalization and performance of shipping agents are supported to the international shipping agents. Internationalization is an important aspect to shipping agents because they need to connect with all the shipping agents around the world to manage their customer next port destination. Last next port of shipping agents will give some related info to next port shipping agents such as vessel MV Aidabella that bring on board 1044 passengers depart from Bahamas will going to next port is Penang with a capacity of crews is 874.

Shipping agents in Penang Port will arrange and tracking the movement of the vessel until there arrives and provides the services as per their request. Shipping agents also need to get some info on from tracking map system to detect how many passengers have disembarked or embarked in between port that the vessel anchors till to the last port in Penang. Instead of that shipping agents will tracking the vessel estimated time from the Bahamas to Penang and if there any passengers will disembark and to fly back to the origin country also need to arrange by shipping agents in the last port.

5.5 Internationalization successfully mediates the shipping agents between performances.

Refer to Table 6 shows the mediating hypotheses shown there are mediate hypotheses 8 to 13. For hypothesis 9, the low-cost performance to

internationalization to performance and hypotheses 13, Social networking to internationalization to performance was unsupported. Hypotheses 8 - innovation differentiation, hypotheses 10 - management knowledge, hypotheses 11 - quality differentiation and hypotheses 12 - service differentiation to internationalization to performance was supported.

5.6 Government initiative moderating is doing not moderate the relationship between internationalization and performance

The moderating a hypothesis of government initiative is not supported between internationalization and shipping agent's performance. This hypothesis does not consist of this study. Issues were aplenty in the months leading up to the lunch of government to plan to transform the productivity and competitiveness of Malaysia's Logistic industry. The logistic and trade Facilitation Master plan in early 2015. Through with all the right intention, were faced with difficulties on two fronts a lack of the required human resource capacity to implement the plan and then highly fragmented and competitive industry, which led some to think that the goal set out in the master plan was the best ambitious and at worst unattainable.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study identified that innovation differentiation, quality differentiation and service differentiation have a positive relationship with the internationalization of international shipping agents. However, low cost does not contribute to the internationalization of the shipping agents. Further, Management knowledge has a positive relationship with the internationalization of international shipping agents. Also, the shipping agents comply with the flow and procedure dealing with the owner of the vessel, government organization such as immigration, custom, Harbormaster office and Penang Port Sdn Bhd. For social networking, this study found it does not support international shipping agents. Networking in between master of vessel and shipping agents difficult to accurate cause many factors such as weather, traffic waiting time to anchor and others unexpected caused. Internationalization and performance of shipping agents are supported to the international shipping agents.

Internationalization is an important aspect to shipping agents because they need to connect with all the shipping agents around the world to manage their customer next port destination. Also, applying the mediating test using PLS-SEM, this study found that the internationalization successfully mediates the shipping agents between performances. Lastly, this study obtained that government initiative moderating is doing not moderate the relationship between internationalization and performance

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