

# IMRPs and Advancing International Marketing Education

**Sudhir Rana**

*Fortune Institute of International Business, New Delhi, India*

**Prashant Salwan**

*Indian Institute of Management, Indore, India*

**Arpan Anand**

*Panjab University Chandigarh, India*

**Abstract.** As academicians and students pursue market research for companies, the need to understand the issues and challenges while undertaking International Marketing Research Projects (IMRPs) is becoming increasingly important. Marketing research is the most important tool through which companies understand their existing and prospective customers. As companies contemplate the global market, they need to consider how the international arena differs from local/regional/national market research. In an endeavour to assist executives in their international business decisions many academic researchers and students design and implement IMRPs. We attempt in this paper to advance International Marketing (IM) education by providing a framework for students undertaking IMRPs, and in particular, to highlight the challenges and issues involved. These need to be considered carefully in order to produce international market research of the appropriate quality to optimally support management decisions.

**Keywords:** IM (International Marketing), IMRPs (International Marketing Research Projects), global marketing strategies, marketing research, competitive advantage, globalization.

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## 1. Introduction

Today's business environment is heavily characterized by rapid internationalization. Changes in the global environment are resulting in both opportunities and challenges to both businesses and business education alike. More firms than before are now embarking on international expansion in order to increase their operations and to take advantage of economies of scale and to

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respond to foreign competition entering domestic markets (Douglas and Craig 1989, Shane *et al.* 2012, Tsao and Lien 2013). The literature highlights that firms looking to compete in the globalized economy are increasingly confronted with the task of creating strategies that effectively predict and respond to the rapid pace of change in global markets (Craig and Douglas 2001). The global economy is forcing organizations to become accustomed to a new international order (Czinkota and Ronkainen 2002, Rugman 2001, Yaprak 2002). In the initial phase of internationalization, firms are concerned with the collection of information to identify and assess internal and external market opportunities in different countries and to analyze which markets to enter and how to position their products in multiple markets for increasing enterprise value but also simultaneously managing a global strategy. To create enterprise value on a global scale companies seek new executives who have value creation and problem solving skills for contemporary global environment challenges. Not only companies, but also Business Schools are as global as never before. All the ecosystem partners of a business schools including faculty, students, and recruiters look for global orientation. Business Schools' innovative International Marketing (IM) practices and advance teaching pedagogies are being used as a tool for building a positive image of an institution of higher education and increasing the competitiveness of its graduates. Globalization and in particular technical advancements, are influencing IM specializations (Quelch and Klein 1997, Hoffman and Novak 1996, Schleglmlch and Sinkovics 1998, Bell, Ibbotson, and Sinkovics 2001). Lundstrom and White (1997) argued that IM academicians need to better tailor their course contents to fit the outcome desired by industry practitioners. In order to make IM specialization more "internationalized", academicians need technology oriented and cost effective pedagogies (Bell, Deans, Ibbotson, and Sinkovics 2001). Therefore, research projects act as a hybrid tool that emphasize student engagement and self-regulated learning (Ackerman, Gross, and Sawhney 2014). Considering the view of scholars on research projects as a significant and scientific way to instil experiential learning into the marketing field (Metcalf 2010, Radford, Hunt, and Andrus 2015), they are also a source of competency based learning (Arroyo-Cañada, Argila-Irurita, and Solé-Moro 2016), and learning through International Marketing Research Projects (IMRPs) will help IM students configure and coordinate IM activities.

IMRPs have been the focus of discussion among IM scholars (Sinkovics *et al.* 2005, Young and Javalgi 2007). But considering the importance of culture in IM studies (Soares, Farhangmehr and Shoham, 2007) and changing relationships between international market research and international marketing research, the role of IMRPs in advancing IM education and its contribution in bridging the gap between IM theory and practice needs to be brought to the surface. The relevance of IM education both in academia and in the business world can be enhanced through effective teaching and learning. Therefore, academicians need to make