



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This is a repository copy of *The power roots and drivers of infidelity in international business relationships*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/116072/>

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Leonidou, LC, Aykol, B, Spyropoulou, S orcid.org/0000-0001-9509-254X et al. (1 more author) (2019) The power roots and drivers of infidelity in international business relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 78. pp. 198-212. ISSN 0019-8501

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.03.003>

© 2017 Elsevier Inc. This manuscript version is made available under the CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 license <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

The power roots and drivers of infidelity in international business relationships

Leonidas C. Leonidou
University of Cyprus

Bilge Aykol
Dokuz Eylul University

Stavroula Spyropoulou
University of Leeds

Paul Christodoulides
Cyprus University of Technology

Abstract

We propose a conceptual model of the power roots and drivers of infidelity in exporter-importer (E-I) working relationships. Based on data collected from 262 Greek export manufacturers, we confirm that the exercise of coercive power in the E-I working relationship by the exporter has positive effects on distance, opportunism, and uncertainty, as opposed to the exercise of non-coercive power that exhibit negative effects. In turn, distance, opportunism, and uncertainty each contribute toward driving infidelity in the relationship by the importer. The relationship length and relationship status were also found to have a control effect on infidelity.

Keywords

Exporting; exporter-importer relationships; infidelity; power; distance; opportunism; uncertainty.

1. Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that the very essence of modern business centers on forming, developing, and maintaining sound inter-organizational relationships (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). However, close, and even trusting, relationships do not always lead to positive results, since there is evidence indicating that a significant number of these relationships is doomed to fail (Anderson & Jap, 2005). One of the major causes of this failure is attributed to infidelity incidences in the relationship, defined as a partner's violation of rules, norms, and expectations regulating the relationship due to a parallel creation of illegitimate partnerships outside the relationship (Drigotas & Barta, 2001). Infidelity involves channeling of resources exclusive to the current partner to someone else (Schützwohl, 2008) and it denotes the breach of the assumption of exclusivity in the relationship (Atkins, Baucom, Eldridge, & Christensen, 2005; Weiser & Weigel, 2014).

Infidelity is a unique, costly, active, and extreme form of opportunism, where the interacting parties have an explicit or implicit contract of exclusivity, and then one of the parties violates this contract in order to reap the benefits of having a parallel relationship with another partner (Weiser & Weigel, 2014). Such benefits may include, for example, accessibility to greater financial, technological, and allied resources, the enjoyment of a more productive and rewarding relationship, and the achievement of better performance outcomes (Buss et al., 2017). Compared to other forms of opportunism (e.g., breach of distribution contracts, failure to follow established quality procedures, and refusal to adapt to relationship requirements) (Wathne & Heide, 2000), infidelity: (a) is characterized by a higher degree of unethicity, since it violates the very ethical norms of the working relationship; (b) leads to a greater loss of physical, financial, emotional and other investments made in the relationship; and (c) has more negative repercussions on the future prosperity and continuation of the

relationship, as well as involving higher opportunity costs (e.g., finding and adapting to a new partner).

Infidelity is one of the most common, severe, and darkest sides of business relationships (see **Appendix A** for a summary of the pertinent literature), which disrupts their smooth flow and creates devastating feelings, harmful effects, and possible termination of the relationship (Fitness, 2001).¹ Although infidelity is a construct which has been developed in interpersonal relationships (and in particular the marital studies literature), it is also relevant for interorganizational relationships. This is because: (a) buyer-seller relationships involve close relationships between highly interdependent partners and are characterized by learning, adaptation, and socialization among interacting parties (Dwyer et al., 1987; Håkansson & Snehota, 1995; Levitt, 1983); (b) interorganizational relations have a dynamic nature and can experience dark periods of transition such as appearance of extradyadic actors trying to tempt the dyadic partners with better offers (Johnston & Hausman, 2006; Stoltman & Morgan, 2002); and (c) infidelity is associated with disloyalty, unsatisfied needs, irresponsibility, and intentional deception (Egan & Angus, 2004), which can also arise in interfirm relationships.²

There are three possible theoretical explanations of infidelity in relationships: (a) the normative perspective, where the likelihood of engaging in infidelity can be attributed to injunctive norms (i.e., formal laws that a society upholds) and descriptive norms (i.e., perceptions of other people's/firms' behavior), where firms are likely to engage in a prohibited activity, if they see someone else violating the same prohibition (Buunk & Bakker, 1995); (b) the investment model, where highly committed individuals/firms are less likely to be unfaithful because they are motivated to derogate potential alternatives in order to protect their relationships, thus keeping alternatives unattractive, and consider, when tempted to be unfaithful, the long-term ramifications of such behavior (Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999); and (c) the evolutionary approach, where the emphasis is on the exchange of benefits

within the dyad and the prediction that satisfaction is largely dependent on the level of equity in this exchange (with the satisfaction received being inversely related to the quality of the alternatives) (Shackelford & Buss, 1997).

Power in inter-organizational relationships has been considered as one of the root causes of infidelity (Lammers, Stoker, Jordan, Pollman, & Stapel, 2011). This is because power, if not judiciously used, can undermine the stability and distort the smoothness of the relationship, which are serious preconditions for having infidelity episodes. In fact, in the literature of interpersonal relationships, power is the cause of infidelity because it violates norms concerning extradyadic involvements (Lammers & Maner, 2016). Specifically, partner abuse due to excessive use of power increases the intention to leave the relationship (Matlow & DePrince, 2015). Power refers to the ability of one party in a working relationship to control the decisions relating to the operation of the venture (El-Ansary & Stern, 1972). The actual alteration of behavior can only be achieved with the exercise of power (Gaski, 1984). The latter will depend on the sources of power (i.e., coercive, reward, legitimate, referent, expert and information), which define the resources available to control the decisions in the relationship (French & Raven, 1959). These sources can be divided into coercive (i.e., denoting aggressive behavior) and non-coercive (i.e., indicating mild behavior) (Hunt & Nevin, 1974).

Infidelity is more likely to take place in an international business context because: (a) it is very difficult to monitor the partner's actions, due to the high geographical and psychological distance separating the interacting parties; (b) the existence of an information asymmetry between buyers and sellers makes infidelity incidences more difficult to detect (c) opportunities in foreign markets can be highly profitable, which will provoke the temptation for one party to serve its own self-interest at the expense of the other; (d) the foreign environment is characterized by high uncertainty, complexity, and volatility, which provides

fertile ground for breaking relational norms and violating expectations; and (e) the existence of numerous barriers when operating in different and unknown foreign market settings increase the likelihood of loosening the relationship between exporters and importers (Lages, Lages, & Lages, 2005; Leonidou, 2004).

Despite the importance of inter-organizational infidelity on both domestic and international market settings, its drivers have received scant empirical attention within the business domain. This is surprising because: (a) infidelity as a dark side of a business relationship is as important as the bright side of it, and therefore to understand it will help to overcome the problems inhibiting the development of sound working relationships (Ping, 1993); (b) infidelity is a unique behavior relating to customer loyalty, involving unmet needs, irresponsibility, and deliberate deception, which can seriously jeopardize the continuation of a relationship (Egan & Angus, 2004); and (c) infidelity has a degenerative element in the sense that it can change the activity links, resource ties, and actor bonds between parties in a relationship (Schurr, Hedaa, & Geersbro, 2008).

In light of the above, our research question is to understand the power roots of infidelity in exporter-importer (E-I) relationships and how these affect the drivers of infidelity at the inter-organizational level. We are referring to relationships where the exporter has an exclusive right to sell its goods to the importer and therefore the importer's infidelity implies a breach of the contract of this exclusivity. The research question is theoretically driven by Social Exchange theory, which views that an ineffective and inefficient exchange relationship promotes infidelity by discouraging interacting parties from devoting the right effort into it. Specifically, we aim: (a) to find out the effect of coercive and non-coercive power exercised by the exporter on distance, opportunism, and uncertainty (see Appendix B for definitions of constructs); (b) to examine the effect of each of these three dimensions (i.e., distance,

opportunism, and uncertainty) on driving infidelity by the importer; (c) to investigate the control effect of both relationship length and relationship status on importer's infidelity.

The results of this investigation are expected to make several theoretical and managerial contributions. Theoretically, we show that infidelity is a key dark-side issue, which although it may have a pivotal effect on shaping the future of the relationship between exporters and importers, has been totally neglected by marketing scholars. We also identify from the field of social psychology (and particularly marital studies) the antecedents of infidelity in inter-firm relationships, with particular emphasis on the power roots of infidelity. Further, we point to the fact that certain relationship demographic characteristics can be responsible for increasing the likelihood of infidelity incidents. Managerially, we stress the deleterious role of the importer's infidelity in the working relationship with the exporter. We also indicate that the exercise of coercive power can increase the propensity of infidelity in the working relationship through the creation of more distance, opportunism, and uncertainty. Finally, we show that exporters and importers who have recently formed their relationship and/or experienced a declining stage are more vulnerable to infidelity incidents.

The article has the following organization. First, we provide an explanation of infidelity in inter-organizational relationships, borrowing ideas mainly from social psychology. Next, we present the conceptual model of the study and develop the research hypotheses. Subsequently, we explain the methodology adopted for the purposes of this study. We then proceed with an analysis of the results and the testing of the hypotheses. The next sections draw conclusions and implications from the study, and provide directions for future research.

2. What is inter-organizational infidelity?

Infidelity is generally considered to be a serious form of betrayal in a relationship. It is a violation of the norms of a relationship that results from the discovery that one's partner has been involved in an illegitimate extra-dyadic activity (Mattingly, Wilson, Clark, Bequette, & Weidler, 2010). Relational norms are shared expectations about acceptable behavior among exchange partners and can take various forms, such as solidarity, role integrity, mutuality, flexibility, and information exchange (Heide & John, 1992; Kaufmann & Stern, 1988). Such norms guarantee predictability, strengthen the cohesion of the relationship, reduce uncertainty, eliminate unsatisfactory behavior, and often increase the outcomes achieved by both partners (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006; Brown, Dev, & Lee, 2000; Zhou, Zhang, Zhuang, & Zhou, 2015). Infidelity violates psychological foundations of the relationship as it involves violations of role expectations and a failure to remain faithful and committed (Jones, Moore, Schratter, & Negel, 2001). Infidelity means that one party in a relationship acts in a way that favors only his/her own interests at the expense of the other party's interests, and signals how little s/he cares about or values the relationship with the other party (Fitness, 2001).

Infidelity can be expressed in various ways, such as contacting another firm outside the relationship (which can sometimes be a direct competitor of the current business partner), in order to develop possible business and negotiate for better trade terms, or by actively doing business with other companies outside the relationship, without the consent of the partner in the existing relationship (Atkins & Kessel, 2008; Mattingly et al., 2010). Infidelity breaks the rules of a relationship and creates a feeling of humiliation or the perception that one has been shamed or treated with disrespect (Gaylin, 1984; Metts, 1994). The causes of infidelity can be grouped into three categories: (a) structural, such as partner incompatibility, low partner dependency, and lack of commitment; (b) behavioral, such as unmet expectations, ill-defined norms, and the existence of dissatisfaction/disappointment; and (c) contextual, such as high relational uncertainty, availability of better (and more rewarding) alternatives, and

problematic managerial personality (Allen, Atkins, Baucom, Snyder, Gordon, & Glass, 2005; Buss & Shackelford, 1997).

From a social exchange perspective, infidelity contributes to the costs of a relationship that outweigh the rewards gained by the other party (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006). It represents a transformation, from considering joint outcomes to actions that are characterized by individualistic results. Infidelity may function as a negative relational signal, and may lead to a complete reframing of the relationship, from one described by solidarity and satisfaction, to one characterized by opportunism and deception. The rewards offered to the relationship may also lose much of their meaning, because one party is providing rewards to a third party (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006). It also denotes a failure to produce joint outcomes, since one party is diverting his/her interest and attention to a third party (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995a).

Infidelity can be confessed or non-confessed. However, although confessed infidelity can provide some relief to the offender, it shifts a considerable burden of pain to the one who has been betrayed and frequently does not result in forgiveness (Lawson, 1988). It can also be of an accidental (i.e., no intention of violating the norms and expectations of the other party) nature, or one that is opportunistic (i.e., an intentional violation of the key expectations of the other party). Infidelity can also be temporal (i.e., a partner breaks from relational norms and rules only once), or repeated (i.e., the partner deviates from relational norms and rules repeatedly). Finally, infidelity can be of an overt (i.e., obvious/explicit violation of relational norms and rules) or covert nature (i.e., violation of norms and rules is not easily identifiable and is of an ambiguous nature) (Hachatorn, Mattingly, Clark, & Mattingly, 2010).

A large number of diagnostic behaviors relate to infidelity. Some of these are when the offending party feels apathy/indifference about the relationship, is caught telling lies to cover his/her misbehavior, shows reluctance, lacks interest or shows indifference about the

relationship, is angry or critical about the relationship, and feels anxious or displays guilt (Shackelford & Buss, 1997). When infidelity is unmasked, the offending party may react by confessing to have committed the offence, apologize for what happened, and even seek to repair the mistake. S/he may also find excuses for the offence, by attributing this to internal or external factors. Justification may also be resorted to, in order to play down the seriousness or wrongness of the offence. Finally, s/he may deny that the offence was made and/or refuse to take any responsibility for it (Fitness, 2001).

With the revelation of infidelity, the victim will feel angry and disappointed, will lose trust, and may seek to impose punitive measures (and even proceed with the termination of the relationship) or seek revenge (Baker, Faulkner, & Fisher 1998; Vangelisti & Sprague, 1998). However, there is also the chance to offer forgiveness and show understanding. The latter will depend on a number of factors, including the extent to which the victim feels s/he has invested in and is committed to the relationship, and whether any promising alternatives are on the horizon (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991).

3. Background research

This section provides a review of the literature of the main constructs used in the study, namely power, distance, opportunism, uncertainty, and infidelity. With regard to power, extant research on E-I relationships indicates that importers based in developed countries exercise higher levels of power over the exporters located in developing countries by having a higher control over marketing decisions (Katsikeas & Piercy, 1992; Leonidou, 1989). Institutional factors in international markets (such as regulatory volatility, environmental uncertainty, perceived market foreignness) are reported to give rise to the exercise of power (Chelariu, Bello, & Gilliland, 2006; Matanda & Freeman, 2009). Overall, the literature reveals that the exercise of non-coercive power in the form of expertise, service quality, or

assistance helps to establish a positive relationship atmosphere as it increases satisfaction (Leonidou, 1989), boosts relationship strength (de Ruyter, Wetzels, & Lemmink, 1996), fosters a sense of justice (Hoppner, Griffith, & Yeo, 2014), and lowers disagreements between parties (Leonidou, Talias, & Leonidou, 2008). The exercise of coercive power, on the other hand, not only has a detrimental effect on the relationship (such as weaker ties, escalating conflict, decreasing satisfaction, reluctance to be flexible, lower relationship performance) (de Ruyter et al., 1996; Hoppner et al., 2014; Leonidou et al., 2008; Matanda, Ndubisi, & Jie, 2016), but also decreases the financial performance of the exposed party (Matanda & Freeman, 2009). The degree of the power exercised may change according to the international involvement of the business partner, with highly involved parties exerting higher power on promotion and distribution strategies (Kaleka, Piercy, & Katsikeas, 1997). The literature also shows that the reactions of exposed parties to the exercise of power changes by culture (Johnson, Sakano, Cote, & Onzo, 1993).

Distance in E-I relationships literature has been predominantly conceptualized as psychic or cultural distance. In both cases, it has been thought as a fundamental, but problematic, element of the E-I relational settings. Specifically, distance interrupts the flow of information between exporters and importers (Leonidou, Barnes, & Talias, 2006; Nes, Solberg, & Silkoset, 2007), thereby blocking the transfer of valuable knowledge. Such distance makes it hard to control the overseas business partner (Bello & Gilliland, 1997). It also spoils the E-I relationship atmosphere by giving rise to opportunism, eroding trust, denying commitment and cooperation, and intensifying conflict (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2015; Katsikeas, Skarmeas, & Bello, 2009; Leonidou et al., 2006; Nes et al., 2007; Shoham, Rose, & Kropp, 1997). As a result, the relationship loses its value and leaves the partners with unpleasant feelings (Griffith & Dimitrova, 2015; Leonidou et al., 2006; Skarmeas, Zeriti, & Baltas, 2016).

In an E-I relationship, opportunism is likely to arise due to environmental factors (e.g., external uncertainty), relationship context (e.g., psychic distance), and attitudinal elements (e.g., economic ethnocentrism) (Katsikeas et al., 2009; Lee, 1998; Saleh, Ali, & Mavondo, 2014; Wu, Sinkovics, Cavusgil, & Roath, 2007). Knowledge sharing with the foreign partner also increases the vulnerability to opportunistic actions (Wu et al., 2007). On the other hand, opportunism in E-I relationships can be avoided by increasing transaction-specific assets, intensifying communication, displaying cultural sensitivity, working with culturally-similar and reliable partners, and controlling the partner with formal contracts (Katsikeas et al., 2009; Saleh, Ali, & Julian, 2014; Saleh, Ali, & Mavondo, 2014; Skarmeas, Katsikeas, & Schlegelmilch, 2002; Wu et al., 2007). Opportunism mainly creates suspicions about the benevolence and honesty of the international business partner (Barnes, Leonidou, Siu, & Leonidou, 2010; Katsikeas et al., 2009; Saleh, Ali, & Julian, 2014; Saleh, Ali, & Mavondo, 2014), while it also jeopardizes relational exchange, decreases partner commitment, provokes inter-partner conflict, and blocks knowledge transfer from foreign market (Lee, 1998; Saleh, Ali, & Mavondo, 2014; Skarmeas et al., 2002). As expected, working with an opportunistic overseas partner impairs relational performance (Wu et al., 2007).

Uncertainty within the context of E-I relationships has been conceived as one of the latent atmospheric elements representing the feelings of the parties regarding the relationship (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Hadjimarcou, 2002). This is attributed to the physical and psychological distance between exporters and importers, which leads to information asymmetries and difficulties in monitoring (Leonidou et al., 2002). Relational uncertainty excludes parties from joint decision-making in the dyad (Rosson & Ford, 1982). Undoubtedly, it is detrimental to the E-I relationship quality in that it creates question marks about the good intentions and honesty of the partner, provokes disagreements, decreases the willingness to make sacrifices for and cooperate with the business partner, blocks information

flow, and leaves the parties with negative feelings about the relationship (Katsikeas et al., 2009; Leonidou et al., 2006; Rosson & Ford, 1982).

Although infidelity has not been investigated in the context of international (or even domestic) business relationships, some researchers peripherally touched this unique relational problem by examining similar concepts. For example, Pressey and Selassie (2007) focus on E-I relationship dissolution, and show how various competitor factors (e.g., better prices offered by a competitor) and relationship factors (e.g., lack of importer commitment) are by and large responsible for E-I relationships to terminate. Moreover, Deligonul, Kim, Roath, and Cavusgil (2006) concentrate on the switching likelihood of the manufacturer due to dissatisfaction with the foreign distributor. Furthermore, Griffith and Zhao (2015) examine contract violation in international buyer-seller relationships, concluding that the interaction of contract-related and country-related factors is influential on contract violation, and that this has a detrimental effect on the relationship performance. Finally, Skarmeas et al. (2016) report that higher E-I relationship value makes partners insensitive to competitor offerings.

4. Model and research hypotheses

Figure 1 shows our conceptual model, which comprises nine hypothesized paths. Coercive power and non-coercive power exercised by the exporter are antecedents of distance, opportunism, and relational uncertainty. In turn, distance, opportunism, and relational uncertainty drive infidelity by the importer in the relationship.

...insert Figure 1 about here...

The conceptual model is theoretically anchored on the Social Exchange theory, which states that economic exchange alone is not able to explain the behavior of parties in an exchange relationship (Cook & Emerson, 1978), mainly because of its simplifying assumptions of market behavior resulting in a neglect of market imperfections and inability to

explain the interactive exchange process between interdependent actors (Emerson, 1976). Social exchange theory centers on the exchange of resources (material and non-material) through social interactions (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958). The flow of these resources depends on their valued return (Emerson, 1976). Social exchange theory also emphasizes the dynamic nature of the working relationship by focusing on the exchange process and its development over time (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998).

Reciprocity is the underlying concept of the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964, Emerson, 1976, Homans, 1958), which is considered as the best known rule of exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Reciprocal obligations between (at least) two parties arise from a series of two-way exchanges in which one side of the relationship provides a benefit to the other (Vadera, Pratt, & Mishra, 2013). While this action generates expectations for the former to receive a return in the future, it also incurs an obligation for the latter to reciprocate the benefit (Vadera et al., 2013). Producing a benefit is a voluntary action initiated by the first party, who does not know whether and when this will result in reciprocation (Molm, Schaefer, & Collett, 2009; Whitener et al., 1998). This uncertainty is higher during the early stages of a relationship (Whitener et al., 1998). In buyer-seller working relationships, the likelihood and nature of reciprocation set relational expectations, with the lack of reciprocation jeopardizing future interactions (Lusch, Brown, & O'Brien, 2011).

Social exchange theory implies that favorable treatment is reciprocated with positive behavior while unjust treatment is reciprocated with undesirable behavior (Hekman, Bigley, Steensma, & Hereford, 2009). In this sense, firms can forestall infidelity actions with high quality social relations (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002). Based on the social exchange paradigm, an act of infidelity by one relational party increases the costs of the relationship, which overbalance the benefits obtained by the party exposed to infidelity (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006). Unsatisfactory, inefficient, and counterproductive relationships promote infidelity by

discouraging parties from devoting energy, time and effort into it and even provoking thought of its termination (Barta & Kiene, 2005).

Research hypotheses

Coercive power refers to the perception of one party in a working relationship that the other has the ability to impose punishments (e.g., withholding support, imposing financial penalties, withdrawing from initial promises) if his/her requests have not been complied with (El-Ansary & Stern, 1972; Etgar, 1979; Frazier & Summers, 1984; Hunt & Nevin, 1974; John, 1984). The exercise of coercive power denotes suppressive and aggressive behavior, where the subject is forced to do things that he or she would otherwise not have done. The exercise of coercive power will increase distance from the other party, because it will generate tension, misunderstanding, and frustration (Leonidou et al., 2008). This is due to the incompatibility of the interacting parties (Lusch & Brown, 1982) and/or the feeling by one party that the other is trying to take advantage of him/her (Schurr & Ozanne, 1985). Distance is also generated because of possible clashes, communication failures, and distortion of the flow of information between the interacting parties (Hallén & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1979; Lusch, 1976; Lusch & Brown, 1982). These problems are more likely to be aggravated in an international setting, due to the large physical and cultural separation between sellers and buyers, and the existence of differences in language, political-legal systems, and business mentalities that set a barrier to the deepening of relationships (Katsikeas & Piercy, 1992; Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998). Based on the above, we may hypothesize that:

H_{1a}: Higher levels of coercive power exercised by the exporter in the E-I relationship will lead to higher levels of distance.

The exercise of coercive power by the exporter will also give rise to opportunistic behavior by the importer due to: (a) retaliating actions in response to the punishments

imposed by the party exercising power (Frazier & Rody, 1991); (b) violation of the subject's decision autonomy, which may provoke psychological reactance (Provan & Skinner, 1989); (c) erosion of favorable norms that prevail in the relationship (John, 1984); and (d) the increase in economic and social costs as a result of the negative psychological pressures felt (Brown, Lusch, & Muehling, 1983). Wathne and Heide (2000) identify four possible forms of opportunism: shirking or evasion of obligations, inflexibility or refusal to adapt, violation of explicit or implicit rules, and forced renegotiation aiming to gain concessions. The large geographic and psychological distance between exporters and importers will also give rise to opportunistic actions because of the culturally-specific nature of opportunistic behavior (Luo, 2007), high costs associated with communication and coordination with the international business partner (Hutzschenretuer, Kleindienst, & Lange, 2015), difficulties in controlling the overseas partner's conduct of business (Klein & Roth, 1993), and lack of complete and precise information to diagnose opportunism of the business partner (Lee, 1998). Hence, the following hypothesis can be put forward:

H_{1b}: Higher levels of coercive power exercised by the exporter in the E-I relationship will lead to higher levels of opportunism.

The exercise of coercive power is a major cause of turbulence in the E-I relationship, which is derived from the fact that punitive actions may cause considerable harm to the partner (Kumar, 2005) and arouse negative emotions about the relationship (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Hoppner et al., 2014; Leonidou et al. 2008). This will create an imbalance between the perceived costs and the respective benefits gained from the relationship (Ramaseshan, Yip, & Pae, 2006). Inevitably, this turbulence will give rise to uncertainty in the relationship, which is characterized by: (a) high information asymmetry between the interacting parties; (b) ambiguities concerning the rules of behavior within the dyad; (c) lack of information required to evaluate the relationship in terms of its rewards and costs; (d)

doubts associated with the partner's intentions in the relationship; and (e) questions about the status and definition of the relationship (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999). This uncertainty is accentuated in an international market setting because of the volatile, complex, and diverse nature of the international business environment (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013). Thus, we can hypothesize that:

H_{1c}: Higher levels of coercive power exercised by the exporter in the E-I relationship will lead to higher levels of uncertainty.

Non-coercive power does not include the aggressive elements found in coercive power, but rather is applied in a mild way. There are five major sources from which it can be derived: (a) referent, which is based on one party's identification with the other; (b) legitimate, which is based on the perception that one party has the legal right to prescribe behavior; (c) reward, which is based on the perception that one party has the ability to mediate rewards to the other; (d) information, which is based on the perception of one party that the other possesses unique information; and (e) expert, which is based on the perception of one party that the other has special knowledge or expertise (El-Ansary & Stern, 1972; Etgar, 1979; Frazier & Summers, 1984; Hunt & Nevin, 1974; John, 1984).³ The exercise of non-coercive sources of power will provide a favorable climate in the relationship, thus decreasing the distance between the interacting parties (Sanzo, Santos, Vazques, & Alvarez, 2003). This climate is derived from greater trust (Jain, Khalil, Johnston, & Cheng, 2014; Simpson & Mayo, 1997), higher commitment (Simpson & Mayo, 1997), deeper satisfaction (Lee, 2001; Simpson & Mayo, 1997), lower conflict (Leonidou et al., 2008), closer cooperation (Zhuang, Xi, & Tsang, 2010), better understanding (Leonidou & Katsikeas, 2003), and higher solidarity (Kim, 2000) characterizing the relationship. In fact, non-coercive influence indicates that the power wielder is not willing to risk the future of the relationship (Leonidou, 2005) and therefore avoids making the exposed party feel remote. All the above

are very important in bringing exporters and importers closer, in view of the many socio-cultural, economic, political-legal and allied differences separating the two parties. We may posit the following:

H_{2a}: Higher levels of non-coercive power exercised by the exporter in the E-I relationship will lead to lower levels of distance.

Non-coercive power exercised by the exporter will also generate more openness in communication, trustworthy relationships, and enhanced problem-solving, thus decreasing the possibility of opportunistic behavior (Frazier & Sheth, 1985). Opportunism will also be reduced because of higher financial, social, and allied benefits resulting, for example, from the provision of assistance, offering of financial rewards, and access to specialized information (Wilkinson, 1979). In order to reciprocate and secure access to these resources, the parties will be inspired to work together to achieve common goals, as opposed to pursuing their own self-interest (Nyaga, Lynch, Marshall, & Ambrose, 2013; Skinner, Gassenheimer, & Kelley, 1992; Zhuang et al., 2010). The fact that non-coercive power seeks to improve the performance of the business partner and the relationship (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000), also signals benevolence to the exposed party and increases the latter's trust (Duarte & Davis, 2004; Payan & McFarland, 2005). Information, skills, and training received also increases willingness to invest in the relationship, work hard and make some sacrifices for the partner exercising non-coercive power (Simpson & Mayo, 1997; Zhao, Huo, Flynn, & Yeung, 2008), not only for reciprocity reasons (Nyaga et al., 2013), but also because of the adoption of norms and values of the power wielder (Lusch & Brown, 1982), admiration for the partner's business (Brown, Lusch, & Nicholson, 1995), and changed attitudes so as to adopt the desirability of the power-wielder's plans (Frazier & Antia, 1995). Therefore, we can hypothesize the following:

H_{2b}: Higher levels of exercised non-coercive power in the E-I relationship will lead to lower levels of opportunism.

The exercise of non-coercive power by the exporter will also create a state of calmness in the relationship and reduce uncertainty. This is because the interacting parties are more likely to: (a) engage in collaborative discussion that will resolve any disagreements; (b) collectively analyze and offer commonly agreeable solutions to potential problems; (c) understand better each other's perspective and formulate joint courses of action; and (d) promote common interests and collective goals within the relationship (Ruekert & Walker, 1987). In fact, business partners exposed to expert, legitimate, and referent power will be motivated to make the adaptations the relationship requires as a mechanism to transfer higher value from their partner in the form of knowledge and assistance (Nyaga et al., 2013). Moreover, if a firm receives rewards for compliance, it will feel obligated to reciprocate by fulfilling the expectations of the partner and make relationship-specific investments (Nyaga et al., 2013). Non-coercive power also reduces uncertainty, in that it facilitates coordination of activities among the interacting parties to attain channel's objectives (Sahadev, 2005). Based on the previous argumentation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{2c}: Higher levels of non-coercive power exercised by the exporter in the E-I relationship will lead to lower levels of uncertainty.

Distance is the prevention, delay, or distortion of the flow of information between the interacting parties, which is responsible for keeping them apart (Hallén & WiedersheimPaul, 1979). This creates a level of unfamiliarity by one party in the working relationship with the characteristics of the other (Hallén & Sandström, 1991). Distance can be caused by several factors, such as differences between the interacting parties on social issues (e.g., personality, behavior, and attitudes), cultural aspects (e.g., norms, values, and beliefs), structural characteristics (e.g., organizational set-up and technologies), and procedural dimensions (e.g.,

working methods and processes) (Cunningham, 1980; Ford, 1984; Rosenbloom, 1990). Distance between sellers and buyers is higher when crossing national boundaries, due to variations in economic, political-legal, socio-cultural and other environments (Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998). Distance is the source of miscommunication and misunderstanding between the interacting parties, which creates difficulties in building close social relationships and reduces the possibilities of properly monitoring the partner's activities (Bello, Chelariu, & Zhang, 2003). This leads toward a more disintegrative and less cooperative approach in the way their business is conducted. It also makes it less clear which goals are needed to be achieved from the relationship, as well as making the resources possessed less visible, which weakens the dependence between the interacting parties (Hallén & Sandström, 1991). The existence of distance distorts the equity between the two parties in the relationship and reduces its efficiency, due to the existence of inconsistent frames of reference, different interpretation of strategic issues, and incongruent expectations regarding future outcomes. All these provide fertile ground for infidelity actions by the importer in the relationship. Thus, we may posit that:

H₃: Higher levels of distance will lead to higher levels of infidelity by the importer.

Opportunism is defined as self-interest with guile (Williamson, 1979). It is the “incomplete or distorted disclosure of information, especially to calculated efforts to mislead, distort, disguise, obfuscate, or otherwise confuse” (Williamson, 1985). It is expressed in terms of various types of behavior, which can be either subtle (e.g., taking advantage of others) or blatant (e.g., shirking obligations) (John, 1984). Behaving in an opportunistic manner creates a feeling of betrayal and dishonesty that reduces trust among the interacting parties (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). In general, opportunism reflects a form of behavior characterized by deceit, where the emphasis is on short-term unilateral gains at the expense of the relationship's long-term potential (Brown et al., 2000; Macneil, 1982). This

creates a situation of insecurity and instability that favors the development of adverse behavior like infidelity (Armstrong & Yee, 2001). It will also increase the possibility of exploiting short-term opportunities outside the relationship, instead of realizing long-term benefits. Opportunism means acting in a self-interested way, which is at the core of infidelity actions (Grover, 1997). The long geographic and psychological distance separating exporters from importers makes the controlling and monitoring of opportunistic actions a rather difficult task (Wathne & Heide, 2000). The following hypothesis can be made:

H4: Higher levels of opportunism will lead to higher levels of infidelity by the importer.

Relational uncertainty refers to the degree to which one party in a working relationship cannot anticipate or accurately predict the future status, direction, and outcomes of the relationship with another (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Anderson, Håkansson, & Johanson, 1994). This uncertainty can be attributed to various factors, such as poor understanding of the roles performed, difficulties in measuring the costs and benefits of the relationship, and substandard control/monitoring mechanisms. It will also be the result of misalignment of relational goals, lack of coordination, and limited relationship-specific investments and resource commitments (Eriksson & Sharma, 2003; Yan & Dooley, 2013). It also stems from problems in having adequate, relevant, and timely information available, which is even more critical when crossing national boundaries, due to the difficulties associated with conducting business in foreign markets (Leonidou, 2004). In fact, foreign environments are characterized by high diversity, complexity and volatility, which increase further the amount of uncertainty in a relationship (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013; Eriksson & Sharma, 2003). High levels of uncertainty may: (a) lead to problems in coordinating the activities performed by the interacting parties; (b) lessen the ability to plan effectively and create a reluctance to invest additional resources in the relationship; (c) make monitoring of relationship activities more difficult, especially as regards detecting inequitable acts,

inefficiencies in the relationship, and performance outcomes; (d) restrict full awareness of the goals of each other and reduce adaptations; and (e) reduce loyalty and cause deception, due to the poor fulfillment of expectations arising from the relationship (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995b). All these will increase the potential for a party in the relationship to work in its own self-interest and engage in infidelity actions. Therefore, we can hypothesize that:

H₅: Higher levels of uncertainty will lead to higher levels of infidelity by the importer.

5. Methodology

The study was conducted in Greece among a sample of export manufacturers, which were identified from the Exporters' Directory of ICAP (2014). Out of a total population of 10,000 firms, 1,000 were randomly selected, having as screening criteria that firms should be indigenous in nature, come from the private sector, and currently engage in export operations. To obtain variability in our findings, we selected firms from different industrial sectors. In each firm, the person in charge with the export operations was contacted by phone to explain the purpose of the study and confirm his/her interest in taking part in the survey. A total of 595 firms accepted to receive the survey instrument and were given the option to receive it either by mail or electronically. Those that declined to participate gave as reasons the lack of available time, a company policy not to disclose information, or the ceasing of export activities.

The **Appendix C** provides the scales for our constructs, which were derived from the pertinent literature and verified by a panel of academics with extensive expertise and experience in the field. Coercive exercised power was a five-item scale extracted from Leonidou et al. (2008), and the same source provided the scale for non-coercive exercised power, which also comprised five items. Five-item scales were also used for distance and uncertainty, and were taken from Hallén and Sandström (1991) and Leonidou and Kaleka

(1998) respectively. Yilmaz and Hunt (2001) provided the scale for opportunism, which comprised four items. Infidelity was operationalized with six items, which were derived from the social psychology literature and adjusted to a business context. The development of the infidelity scale was based on the specification of the domain of the construct, an extensive review of the interpersonal relationships research, in-depth interviews with export managers, and revisions by expert academics (Churchill, 1979). Specifically, the infidelity scale items were taken from the work of Atkins and Kessel (2008), Kumar, Stern, and Achrol (1992), and Mattingley et al. (2010) and discussed with export managers who proposed valuable input about the infidelity of their import customers. Then, a panel of academics with extensive expertise and experience in the field refined this scale for the purposes of this study, ensuring its face validity.

We also controlled the effects of relationship age and relationship status on infidelity, taking into account their effect on related variables. Specifically, relationship age has been reported to have an impact on satisfaction (Jap, 2001), dependence (Bonner & Calantone, 2005), and commitment (Jap & Ganesan, 2000), while relationship status has been found to have an effect on relationship harmony and consideration of other alternatives (Jap & Anderson, 2007). Relationship age was measured as the number of years the exporter has been making business with the importer, while the measurement of relationship status was based on the stages developed by Jap and Ganesan (2000), namely the exploration, build-up, maturity, decline, or deterioration. However, as the number of cases in some stages was too low, we had to reclassify relationship status into two broad categories, namely growing (139 firms) and declining (123 firms).

A pre-coded, self-administered questionnaire provided the research instrument. Individual items in each construct contained in the questionnaire were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). To obtain

randomness in the selection process and achieve variability in our results, respondents were asked to have in mind the third most important business relationship with a foreign business customer. However, a basic prerequisite for inclusion of the latter was for the exporter to have an exclusive right to sell its goods to the specific importer. The questionnaire was first designed in English and then translated into Greek, while a back translation procedure ensured that any linguistic problems were resolved (Craig & Douglas, 2005). The workability of the questionnaire was pre-tested with five export managers, revealing only minor problems, which were corrected. To control for key informant bias, a series of questions was added at the end of the questionnaire, measuring on a seven-point scale the respondent's familiarity, knowledgeability, and confidence in supplying the information required (Cannon & Perreault, 1999). With the exception of two firms, all other respondents scored more than the average point (4) on all three dimensions examined.

Each of the 595 companies that accepted to participate in the study were sent the questionnaire by mail (and in some cases electronically). A cover letter explained the purpose, usefulness, and confidentiality of the study. To encourage participation in the study, we sent reminder letters and/or contacted firms by telephone. A total of 268 firms responded (i.e., 45% effective response rate), of which six were dropped because of missing data, inconsistencies in the answers given, or unsuitability of the key informant.⁴ To control for non-response bias, we have used Mentzer and Flint's (1997) method. For this purpose, we first selected seven items belonging to each of the key constructs contained in the conceptual model. We then contacted by telephone 25 of the firms from those that did not reply and asked them to give us answers to each of these items. The answers of these firms were subsequently compared to those of the 268 respondents in the main survey. A t-test analysis between the answers given by non-respondents and those obtained by respondents revealed no statistical significant differences, indicating the absence of non-response bias.

6. Analysis and research findings

We analyzed the data with structural equation modeling (SEM), using EQS. First, we ran a confirmatory factor analysis on the main study constructs, in which each item was restricted to load on its a priori set factor, but the underlying factors were allowed to correlate (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To estimate the measurement model, we used the elliptical re-weighted least-square (ERLS) procedure, revealing a very good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 662.45$, $p = .000$, $df = 309$; NFI = .91; NNFI = .93; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .07 (see **Table 1**).

6.1 Measurement model

The data collected underwent a purification process comprising four steps: first, we checked the convergent validity, which was met, as the t-value for each item was always high and significant, all standard errors of the estimated coefficients were very low, and the average variance extracted for each construct was equal to or above the threshold of .50 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010); second, we checked for discriminant validity, which was evident because the confidence interval around the correlation estimate for each pair of constructs examined never included 1.00 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), while the squared correlation for each pair of constructs never exceeded their average variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (see **Table 2**); third, we checked for construct reliability, which was satisfactory because all constructs in our conceptual model exhibited Cronbach's alphas greater than .70, while composite reliability was also satisfactory, with all coefficients being greater than .70; and fourth, we assessed the possibility of common method bias. We first employed the Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), where all questionnaire items were included in a principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Six separate factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 emerged from the unrotated factor solution, while

these factors explained 65.3% of the total variance (with 29.4% thereof being explained by the first factor). We also used a confirmatory factor approach, in which all items included in the measurement model were restricted to load on a single factor (Venkatraman & Prescott, 1990). The model fit indices revealed very poor values, well below the commonly acceptable cut-off points (i.e., $\chi^2 = 1765.22$, $p = .000$; $df = 209$; $NFI = .58$; $NNFI = .56$; $CFI = .60$; $RMSEA = .18$). Third, we followed Lindell and Whitney's (2001) partial correlation technique, whereby a marker variable (i.e., a construct theoretically unrelated to the other constructs in the model) is highlighted in advance, so that there is an a priori justification for predicting a zero correlation. For our study, we chose the competitive advantage to serve as a marker variable (r_M). To conduct this test, we computed the CMV-adjusted correlation between the variables under investigation, using the formulas provided by Malhotra, Kim, and Patil (2006). No significant correlations were identified between the marker variable and any of the study's constructs, while the differences between the original and the CMV-adjusted correlations were small and not significantly different at $p < .05$. Based on the results of all three tests, we can safely conclude that common method bias does not appear to be a problem in this study.⁵

...insert Table 2 about here...

6.2 Structural model

We tested the research hypotheses by estimating the structural model, using the elliptical re-weighted least squares (ERLS) technique, which is proven to provide unbiased parameter estimates for both multivariate normal and non-normal data (Sharma, Durvasula, & Dillon, 1989). The analysis produced an acceptable model fit, manifested by the ratio of Chi-square to the degrees of freedom ($\chi^2/df = 2.68$) and the results of the alternative fit indices ($NFI =$

.90; NNFI = .93; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .08). **Table 3** presents the standardized path coefficients, together with the corresponding t-values of the structural model.

...insert Table 3 about here...

With regard to the main hypotheses, the exercise of coercive power by the exporter was confirmed to have a positive effect on distance ($\beta = .26$, $t = 2.88$, $p = .00$), thus supporting H_{1a}. This result stresses the harmful effects of coercive power in the relationship because its application generates tension, causes communication problems, distorts the information exchanged, and decreases the motivation to share knowledge (Hallén & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1979; Chen, Zhao, Lewis, & Squire, 2016). It also creates a feeling of frustration, misunderstanding, and exploitation by the power holder. All these factors are responsible for widening the distance between the interacting parties, which becomes even stronger as a result of the physical and cultural separation between exporters and importers.

H_{1b} was also confirmed, since a positive association was also found between the exercise of coercive power by the exporter and opportunism ($\beta = .38$, $t = 3.96$, $p = .00$). This finding reveals that coercive power, because of its potential to trigger retaliation and ruin a friendly relationship atmosphere, reinforces guileful self-interest-seeking (John, 1984; Handley & Benton, 2012; Wang, Huo, Yian, & Hua, 2015). Such behavior is aggravated in an international setting, where it is more difficult to have in place control mechanisms, coordinating actions, and information exchange in order to diagnose and curb opportunism.

Study findings also demonstrate a positive association between the exercise of coercive power by the exporter and uncertainty ($\beta = .34$, $t = 3.30$, $p = .00$), as expected in H_{1c}. This is in accordance with the fact that the party using punishments to induce behavioral change will lose his or her preferability as a relationship partner and may face denied access to once available resources (Teas & Sibley, 1985), which will lead both parties to question the future of the relationship.

H_{2a} is also confirmed, as the results indicate a negative link between the exercise of non-coercive power by the exporter and distance ($\beta = -.55$, $t = 4.59$, $p = .00$). This finding demonstrates that the assistance, reward, and expertise provided to a business partner creates ambient conditions for exchanging information (Chen et al., 2016; Sanzo et al., 2003), as well as improving relationship strength and closeness (de Ruyter et al., 1996). Indeed, if the exporter uses non-coercive bases of power to control the decisions of the importer, the flow of communication between the two parties will increase because of the latter's willingness to receive more expertise and assistance (Sahadev, 2005).

With regard to H_{2b}, it was also verified that the exercise of non-coercive power by the exporter negatively affects opportunism ($\beta = -.71$, $t = 5.51$, $p = .00$). This confirms the positive role of non-coercive power in forming open and trusting relationships, as a result of offering high financial, social, informational, and other benefits to the other party (Wang et al., 2015). These benefits will inspire joint collaboration between the interacting parties to achieve common goals, rather than seeking behavior characterized by self-interest.

Non-coercive power was found to have a significant negative effect on uncertainty ($\beta = -.76$, $t = 5.69$, $p = .00$), thus confirming H_{2c}. This finding highlights the important role of non-coercive power in promoting solidarity, as well as a desire to continue the relationship among business partners, as opposed to having ambiguities about the involvement of parties in the dyad (Hu & Sheu, 2005). The relationship value derived from knowledge transfer and assistance probably motivates the partners to intensify their relationship and reduce uncertainty by increasing each other's involvement (Geiger, Durand, Saab, Kleinaltenkamp, Baxter, & Lee, 2012).

The results also confirm the positive link between distance and infidelity by the importer ($\beta = .18$, $t = 2.22$, $p = .02$), giving support to H₃. This demonstrates that, as the importer becomes more distant by refusing information flow from and to the exporter, the

value s/he places on the relationship decreases (Skarmeas et al., 2016) and his/her intention to continue the relationship diminishes (Bianchi & Saleh, 2011; Leonidou et al., 2006). The geographical and psychic distance between the exporter and importer probably facilitates efforts to search for other alternatives.

Supportive results were also found with regard to H₄, which link opportunism with infidelity ($\beta = .20$, $t = 2.54$, $p = .01$). This corroborates the influential role of actions directed at guileful self-interest-seeking on the deviation from relational norms and expectations, which once set the very foundation of the relationship. Hence, an opportunistic importer is prone to develop a parallel relationship with the exporter's competitors, because the importer cannot be expected to devote time, energy, and effort to the exporter, nor can s/he have a genuine intention to remain in the relationship (Skarmeas et al., 2002; Bianchi & Saleh, 2011).

Finally, a positive link was also found between uncertainty and infidelity by the importer ($\beta = .27$, $t = 2.98$, $p = .00$), thus verifying H₅. This finding stresses the role of having doubts about the present and prospective nature of the relationship in the tendency to look for other alternatives to achieve a better business relationship (Kang & Jindal, 2015). In fact, if the importer makes and receives no contribution from the existing relationship with the exporter, s/he will develop switching intentions and withhold his/her support as s/he will feel that nothing is owed anymore to the exporter (Eriksson & Sharma, 2003; Geiger et al., 2012).

6.3 Control effects

Relationship length was found to have a negative influence on infidelity ($\beta = -.45$, $t = -1.69$, $p = .09$). This finding shows that the longer the relationship between the exporter and the importer, the lower the risk for the importer to have an extradyadic involvement. This can be attributed to the fact that that over time, international business partners become more dependent on each other, by making mutual investments and developing friendships which

would exclude other alternatives from the relationship and increase the likelihood of continuing the relationship (Bonner & Calantone, 2005; Karande, Ha, & Singhapakdi, 2008; Kim, Oh, & Swaminathan, 2006).

Relationship status was also found to have a negative impact on infidelity ($\beta = -.22$, $t = -2.39$, $p = .02$). This implies that in growing, as opposed to declining, relationships, there is a lower likelihood of infidelity episodes to arise. Hence, relationship status serves as a safeguard against extradyadic importer activities. This is because, in growing relationships, the promising prospects deter the business partners from performing actions that would put the relationship at risk (Parkhe, 1993). This was also highlighted by Jap and Anderson (2007) who found that growing relationships were characterized by relationship harmony and the lower number of alternatives considered.

7. Conclusions

This study sought to garner insight into how power could be a source of infidelity in international buyer-seller relationships. The preceding analysis has amply demonstrated that the exercise of coercive and non-coercive power by the exporter clearly generates different effects on the E-I relationship. Specifically, exercise of coercive power by the exporter in the E-I working relationship has positive effects on distance, opportunism, and uncertainty, as opposed to the exercise of non-coercive power that exhibited negative effects. In turn, distance, opportunism, and uncertainty each contribute toward the creation of infidelity episodes by the importer. Relationship length and relationship status were also found to have a positive control effect on infidelity.

Our study contributes to the literature in four major ways. First, it is the first study to investigate infidelity, a unique relational problem, within the context of buyer-seller relationships. Second, it examined the infidelity problem within an international business

setting, which provides a fertile ground for inter-organizational infidelity, not only because of geographical and psychic distance among the interacting organizations, but also because of the larger number of alternative business partners. Third, it focuses on exercised power, which is an important, but neglected, source of the causes of infidelity, which can have serious effects on individual business partners and their relationship. Fourth, it demonstrated that concepts and theories developed within the discipline of social psychology could be equally useful to explain the phenomena associated with inter-organizational relational transgressions.

Inevitably, the interdependence between exporters and importers gives rise to the exercise of power, in order to attain their individual and relational goals. Our study shows that if the exporter tries to alter the behavior of the importer by using threats and penalties, the importer: (a) becomes reluctant to exchange information and develop a closer relationship; (b) stops valuing the exporter and the relationship and pursues his/her own self-interest; (c) starts questioning his/her role in the dyad and the future of the working relationship. These, in turn, motivate the importer to have extra-dyadic involvements with other foreign suppliers. On the other hand, the use of rewards, knowledge, expertise, skill, and performance to influence the importer produces diametrically opposite effects, with the importer being more willing to receive and transfer information, reciprocate the benefits s/he enjoys, and willing to invest more in the relationship.

We should highlight the fact that, as a result of using coercive power, the exporter loses access to market knowledge and risks a principal source of information required to coordinate activities and make plans with an important effect on its performance (Lages, Lages, & Lages, 2005). The exporter also becomes the target of retaliatory actions and vulnerability to opportunism, which means that s/he will be left with the financial (e.g., control) and psychological (e.g., stress) costs of working with the importer (Barnes et al., 2010). The exporter will also have to deal with insecurities about the future of the

relationship, because the future involvement of the importer (and the mere existence of the dyad) is under risk. This will also create many difficulties with regard to planning and controlling of export activities, which require quick decision-making and serious adaptations in today's turbulent international business environment.

The relationship characterized by distance, opportunism, and uncertainty holds the potential for infidelity actions to arise. Infidelity, regardless of being discovered or hidden, is a serious problem for the E-I relationship. This is because the importer has at least one parallel relationship with the exporter's competitors to whom s/he channels some of the relational resources. The solution of the problem may not be easy, because, on the one hand, although the exporter may become reluctant to work with the importer after learning about his/her extradyadic activity, on the other hand, there may be contracts and investments, which may set a barrier toward dissolution and the exporter may have to continue a stressful relationship for a long time.

7.1. Managerial implications

Export and import executives should understand that their business relationship is based on their interdependence to create value. This interdependence leads them to change the behavior of, control the business decisions of, or seek compliance from their business partners, in order to achieve their own goals. Although exporters can use different sources of power to realize these, they are advised to prefer non-coercive power and avoid using coercive power to make sure that their foreign business partner is willing to exchange information, eschews opportunistic actions, and is free from a sense of insecurity about the future of the relationship. The value created by the exporter, through information and assistance, is expected to be paid back by the importer with hard work, sacrifices, and investments in the relationship.

On the other hand, as a reaction to exposure to coercive power, an oppressive atmosphere characterized by relational distance, opportunism, and uncertainty may surround the relationship. This, in turn, makes the importer search for alternative suppliers, to negotiate with them, or make active business with them. In any form, business partner infidelity means that the importer is sharing resources (such as time, financial resources, commitment) – once exclusive to the exporter - with other firms. This implies that the norms and expectations on which the relationship was built are violated by someone on whom the exporter used to depend. Obviously, this poses threats to the continuity of the relationship and casts doubt over the future actions of the importer.

With regard to distance, exporters should be alert and responsive to disruptions in information exchange with their overseas customers. They should diagnose any problems and/or misunderstandings and try to find an effective solution. It is also essential to set a relationship atmosphere in which both partners are encouraged to freely communicate their problems, which is both crucial and challenging in international markets. This is because cultural differences can easily give rise to misunderstandings, as well as make it difficult to openly communicate the problems (particularly for firms from high context cultures). Hence, in order to control and bridge the distance, exporters should not only have the necessary communication skills, but should also develop cultural sensitivity.

Exporters should also be cautious about the opportunistic behavior of their importers, as this can easily lead to extradyadic involvement. This can be done by creating and fostering a relationship climate based on clear expectations, relational norms, and an ethical code of conduct, not only in good, but also in bad times (such as during periods of disagreement). Although this clearly means that the exporter should be very careful in selecting the right importer, it also implies that s/he should develop controlling mechanisms (e.g., formal contracts) to minimize opportunistic behavior. It is clear that these monitoring mechanisms

should also be suitable in relation to the importer's culture. Notably, the process of developing a formalized new business relationship through a contract requires, apart from knowledge and expertise, excellent intra (i.e., between departments of the exporting company, such as for presales engineers working closely with sales/exporting reps) and inter (i.e., between the importer's purchasing unit and the exporter's selling unit) departmental collaboration.

Exporters should also be aware of the uncertainties in the relationship, which can pertain to their own or their partner's involvement in the relationship, as well as to the current and future status of the relationship. It is advisable for the exporter to interpret the cues of the importer's behavior, particularly after a relational turbulence (e.g., denial of access to resources). For example, these cues for an importer could be a reduction of time devoted to the promotion of exporter's products or refusing to pass market information to the exporter. The exporter should be sensitive to such cues and respond immediately. In fact, partners can use relational uncertainty as an opportunity to solve their problems and redefine their roles and expectations. This can also help them to understand their interdependencies and how their questionable involvement poses a threat to the relationship.

7.2 Limitations and future research directions

There are several limitations in our study, which could provide the basis for future research on the subject. First, the study has been conducted among Greek exporters and their relationships with foreign customers. It would be interesting to replicate the study in other country settings, both in terms of exporters' and importers' locations. This would help to obtain external validity for our findings. In doing so, it would be useful to select countries at a different stage of economic development and from different socio-cultural contexts. It would also be advisable to apply our model in different international business contexts, such

as joint ventures, franchising, and strategic alliances. Our study also focused on single relationships, although it would be interesting to examine infidelity incidents across the whole relationship portfolio of the company. Such an approach would be helpful in discovering how various relational characteristics (e.g., dependence asymmetry, contracts, institutional distance) affect infidelity.

Although business relationships are very dynamic phenomena, our study adopted a cross-sectional approach. It is important therefore to adopt a longitudinal perspective in our analysis, which will help to detect changes over the firm's relationship development process. There are indications, for example, that distance, opportunism, and uncertainty change at different stages in the relationship (Ford, 1980). The balance of power between the interacting parties also changes over time (Kaleka et al., 1997), thus influencing differently distance, opportunism, and uncertainty. Similarly, the exercise of coercive or non-coercive power may not produce the same effect on distance, opportunism, and uncertainty, due to relationship learning issues. A longitudinal approach will also indicate whether there is a repetition of infidelity problems with the same partner over time. Another venue for research could focus on the norm of exchanging critical and valuable information between the exchange parties, because any interruption in the flow of this information may lead to a feeling that interests are jeopardized, expectations are violated, and norms are challenged (Luo et al., 2015).

Our study has also looked at infidelity and its antecedents from the perspective of exporters only. However, to make the analysis more complete, it would be important to adopt a dyadic approach, in which the views of importers would also be taken into consideration. This will help to arrive at a better understanding of the E-I working relationship on a number of counts. For example, it would help to more accurately determine the power of each of the interacting parties and check whether there is a balance/imbalance of power in the

relationship. It would also help to identify the degree of dependence between the two parties, which affects the level of exercised power. The existence of retaliation measures to infidelity, such as revenge actions, will also be revealed. In addition, the motivation to infidelity may be different between exporters and importers.

Finally, our conceptual model could be augmented with the incorporation of additional variables. For instance, some more antecedents to infidelity (such as conflict and mistrust) could be added. It would also be useful to examine the moderating role of inter-dependence on the link between exercised power and distance, opportunism, and uncertainty, on the one hand, and on the link between distance, opportunism, and uncertainty and infidelity, on the other. The moderating effect of situational factors (e.g., an attractive offer from a competitor of the current partner) between distance, opportunism, and uncertainty and infidelity would also be worthy of investigation. It would also be interesting to examine the performance outcomes of infidelity, whether behavioral or financial, as well as its impact on inter-organizational loyalty or relationship termination. The control effect of internal factors (e.g., firm size, industrial sector, type of relationship, and relationship specific investment) and external characteristics (e.g., market dynamism) on infidelity also warrants further investigation. Future research could also examine the role of relationship quality (i.e., trust, commitment, satisfaction, cooperation), as well as changes in attitude toward the power-wielder, in mediating the link between exercised power and distance, opportunism, and uncertainty.

Notes

1. Unpublished data from a survey conducted among US manufacturers indicate that, over a five-year period, one in four firms encountered infidelity problems with their customers, and one in three firms faced infidelity problems with their suppliers.
2. There are also certain differences between inter-personal and inter-organizational infidelity. Specifically, as opposed to the former, the latter: (a) places more emphasis on rational (e.g., better prices) rather than emotional (e.g., personal affection) factors as stimulators of the infidelity act; (b) is more calculative rather than accidental in finding alternative, illegitimate partners; and (c) involves the collective views and actions of multiple participants within the organization, rather than that of a single individual.

3. The inclusion of these five types of power under the non-coercive power has been extensively used by many studies, such as Leonidou et al. (2008), Geyskens and Steenkamp (2000), Zhuang et al. (2010), Zemanek and Pride (1996), and Zhang and Zhang (2013).

4. On average, participant firms had been in business for 25.3 years, had been engaged in exporting for 15.2 years, employed 64.7 full-time persons, and had 14.5 employees mainly involved in export activities. Their last year's total sales averaged €21.7 million, while export sales on average were €8.7 million. They exported to an average 8.6 countries, with the primary markets being mainly Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. The majority of responding firms (47.7%) exported consumer products, 38.8% sold industrial goods, while the remainder (13.5%) exported both consumer and industrial products.

5. Apart from post-hoc bias tests, we have also taken the following measures prior to gathering the data to reduce the key informant bias: (a) we ensured respondent anonymity and clearly stated that there were no right or wrong answers and asked them to complete the questionnaire as honestly and accurately as possible; (b) we counterbalanced the order of questions as such that the dependent variables preceded the independent variables; and (c) we had reverse items in some of the measurement scales (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

References

- Allen, E. S., Atkins, D. C., Baucom, D. H., Snyder, D. K., Gordon, K. C., & Glass, S. P. (2005). Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors in engaging in and responding to extramarital involvement. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 12, 101-130.
- Anderson, E. & Jap, S. D. (2005). The dark side of close relationships. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46, 75-82.
- Anderson, E., & Weitz, B. (1989). Determinants of continuity in conventional industrial channel dyads. *Marketing Science*, 8, 310-323.
- Anderson, J. C. & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 411-423.
- Anderson, J. C., Håkansson, H., & Johanson, J. (1994). Dyadic business relationships within a business network context. *Journal of Marketing*, 58, 1-15.
- Armstrong, R. W. & Yee, S. M. (2001). Do Chinese trust Chinese? A study of Chinese buyers and sellers in Malaysia. *Journal of International Marketing*, 9, 63-86.
- Atkins, D. C., Baucom, D. H., Eldridge, K. A., & Christensen, A. (2005). Infidelity and behavioral couple therapy: Optimism in the face of betrayal. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73, 144-150.
- Atkins, D. C. & Kessel, D. E. (2008). Religiousness and infidelity: Attendance, but not faith and prayer, predict marital fidelity. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70, 407-418.
- Atuahene-Gima, K., & Li, H. (2002). When does trust matter? Antecedents and contingent effects of supervisee trust on performance in selling new products in China and the United States. *Journal of Marketing*, 66, 61-81.
- Baker, W. E., Faulkner, R. R., & Fisher, G. A. (1998). Hazards of the market: the continuity and dissolution of interorganizational market relationships. *American Sociological Review*, 63, 147-177.
- Barnes, B. R., Leonidou, L. C., Siu, N. Y. M., & Leonidou, C. N. (2010). Opportunism as the inhibiting trigger for developing long-term-oriented Western exporter-Hong Kong importer relationships. *Journal of International Marketing*, 18, 35-63.
- Barta, W. D., & Kiene, S. M. (2005). Motivations for infidelity in heterosexual dating couples: The roles of gender, personality differences, and sociosexual orientation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22, 339-360.

- Bello, D. C., Chelariu, C., & Zhang, L. (2003). The antecedents and performance consequences of relationalism in export distribution channels. *Journal of Business Research*, 56, 1–16.
- Bello, D. C. & Gilliland, D. I. (1997). The effect of output controls, process controls, and flexibility on export channel performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 61, 22-38.
- Bianchi, C. C. & Saleh, A. (2011). Antecedents of importer relationship performance in Latin America. *Journal of Business Research*, 64, 258-265.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bonner, J. M. & Calantone, R. J. (2005). Buyer attentiveness in buyer–supplier relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34, 53– 61.
- Brown, J. R., Dev, C. S., & Lee, D. (2000). Managing marketing channel opportunism: The efficacy of alternative governance mechanisms. *Journal of Marketing*, 64, 51-65.
- Brown, J. R., Lusch, R. F. and Muehling, D. D. (1983). Conflict and power-dependence relationships in retailer-supplier channels. *Journal of Retailing*, 59, 53-80.
- Brown, J. R., Lusch, R. F., & Nicholson, C. Y. (1995). Power and relationship commitment: Their impact on marketing channel member performance. *Journal of Retailing*, 71, 363-392.
- Buss, D. M., Goetz, C., Duntley, J. D., Asao, K., & Conroy-Beam, D. (2017). The mate switching hypothesis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 104, 143–149.
- Buss, D. M. & Shackelford, T. K. (1997). Susceptibility to infidelity in the first year of marriage. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 31, 193–221.
- Buunk, B. P., & Bakker, A. B. (1995). Extradyadic sex: The role of descriptive and injunctive norms. *Journal of Sex Research*, 32, 313-318.
- Buunk, B. P., & Dijkstra, P. (2006). The ultimate betrayal? Infidelity and solidarity in close relationships. In D. Fetchenhauer, A. Flache, B. Buunk, & S. Lindenberg (Eds.), *Solidarity and prosocial behavior: An integration of sociological and psychological perspectives* (pp. 111-124). New York: Springer.
- Cannon, J. P., & Perreault, W. D. (1999). Buyer–supplier relationships in business markets. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31, 439–460.
- Cavusgil, S. T., Deligonul, S., & Zhang, C. (2004). Curbing foreign distributor opportunism: an examination of trust, contracts, and the legal environment in international channel relationships. *Journal of International Marketing*, 12(2), 7-27.
- Chelariu, C., Bello, D. C., & Gilliland, D. I. (2006). Institutional antecedents and performance consequences of influence strategies in export channels to Eastern European transitional economies. *Journal of Business Research*, 59, 525–534.
- Chen, J., Zhao, X., Lewis, M., & Squire, B. (2016). A multi-method investigation of buyer power and supplier motivation to share knowledge. *Production and Operations Management*, 25, 417-431.
- Churchill, G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16, 64-73.
- Cook, K. S., & Emerson, R. M. (1978). Power, equity and commitment in exchange networks. *American Sociological Review*, 43, 721-739.
- Craig, C. S., & Douglas, S. P. (2005). *International marketing research*. Glasgow: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31, 874- 900.
- Cunningham, M. T. (1980). International marketing and purchasing of industrial goods — Features of European research project. *European Journal of Marketing*, 14, 322–339.
- Czinkota, M., & Ronkainen, I. A. (2013). *International marketing*. Mason: South-Western.

- De Ruyter, K., Wetzels, M., & Lemmink, J. (1996). The power of perceived service quality in international marketing channels. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30, 22-38.
- Deligonul, S., Kim, D., Roath, A. S., & Cavusgil, E. (2006). The Achilles' heel of an enduring relationship: Appropriation of rents between a manufacturer and its foreign distributor. *Journal of Business Research*, 59, 802–810.
- Drigotas, S. M., & Barta, W. (2001). The cheating heart: Scientific explorations of infidelity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 177-180.
- Drigotas, S. M., Safstrom, C. A., & Gentilia, T. (1999). An investment model prediction of dating infidelity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 509-524.
- Duarte, M., & Davies, G. (2004). Trust as a mediator of channel power. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 11, 77-102.
- Dwyer, F. R., Schurr, P. H., & Oh, S. (1987). Developing buyer–seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 51, 11–27.
- Egan, V., & Angus, S. (2004). Is social dominance a sex-specific strategy for infidelity? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36, 575–586.
- El-Ansary, A., & Stern, L. W. (1972). Power measurement in the distribution channel. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 9, 47-52.
- Emerson, R. M. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2, 335-362.
- Eriksson, K., & Sharma, D. D. (2003). Modeling uncertainty in buyer–seller cooperation. *Journal of Business Research*, 56, 961– 970.
- Etgar, M. (1979). Sources and types of intrachannel conflict. *Journal of Retailing*, 55, 61-78.
- Fitness, J. (2001). Betrayal, rejection, revenge, and forgiveness: An interpersonal script approach. In M. R. Leary (Ed.). *Interpersonal rejection* (pp. 73-104). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ford, D. (1980). The development of buyer-seller relationships in industrial markets. *European Journal of Marketing*, 14, 339–354.
- Ford, D. (1984). Buyer–seller relationships in international marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 13, 101–112.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18, 39–50.
- Frazier, G. L., & Antia, K. D. (1995). Exchange relationships and interfirm power in channels of distribution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23, 321-326.
- Frazier, G. L., & Rody R. C. (1991). The use of influence strategies in interfirm relationships in industrial product channels. *Journal of Marketing*, 55, 52-69.
- Frazier, G. L., & Sheth, J. N. (1985). An attitude-behavior framework for distribution channel management. *Journal of Marketing*, 49, 38-48.
- Frazier, G. L., & Summers, J. O. (1984). Interfirm influence strategies and their application within distribution channels. *Journal of Marketing*, 48, 43-55.
- French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. H. (1959). The bases of social power. In Cartwright, D. (Ed.), *Studies in Social Power* (pp. 150–167), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gaski, J. F. (1984). The theory of power and conflict in channels of distribution. *Journal of Marketing*, 48, 9-29.
- Gaylin, W. (1984). *The rage within: Anger in modern life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Geiger, I., Durand, A., Saab, S., Kleinaltenkamp, M., Baxter, R., & Lee, Y. (2012). The bonding effects of relationship value and switching costs in industrial buyer–seller relationships: An investigation into role differences. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41, 82–93.
- Geyskens, I., & Steenkamp, J. E. M. (2000). Economic and social satisfaction: measurement and relevance to marketing channel relationships. *Journal of Retailing*, 76, 11–32.

- Griffith, D. A., & Dmitrova, B. V. (2015). Business and cultural aspects of psychic distance and complementarity of capabilities in export relationships. *Journal of International Marketing*, 22, 50–67.
- Griffith, D. A., & Zhao, Y. (2015). Contract specificity, contract violation, and relationship performance in international buyer– supplier relationships. *Journal of International Marketing*, 23, 22–40.
- Grover, S. L. (1997). Lying in organizations: Theory, research, and future directions. In R. Giacalone & J. Greenberg (Eds.). *Antisocial behavior in organizations* (pp. 68-84). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hackathorn, J., Mattingly, B. A., Clark, E. M., & Mattingly, M. J. B. (2010). Practicing what you preach: Infidelity attitudes as a predictor of fidelity. *Current Psychology*, 30, 299–311.
- Hair, J. F. Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (Sixth ed.) Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson, Prentice-Hall.
- Håkansson, H., & Snehota, I. (1995a). The burden of relationships or who's next. Paper presented at IMP 11th International Conference in Manchester, September 7th-9th, 1995, 522-536.
- Håkansson, H., & Snehota, I. (1995b). *Developing relationships in business networks*. London: Thompson.
- Hallén, L., & Sandström, M. (1991). Relationship atmosphere in international business. In S. J. Paliwoda (Ed.), *New perspectives on international marketing* (pp. 108-125), London: Routledge.
- Hallén, L., & Wiedersheim-Paul, F. (1979). Psychic distance and buyer-seller interaction. *Organization Markad och Samhalle*, 16, 308-324.
- Handley, S. M., & Benton, W.C. (2012). The influence of exchange hazards and power on opportunism in outsourcing relationships. *Journal of Operations Management*, 30, 55–68.
- Heide, J. B., & John, G. (1992). Do norms matter in marketing relationships? *Journal of Marketing*, 56, 32-44.
- Hekman, D. R., Bigley, G. A., Steensma, H. K., & Hereford, J. F. (2009). Combined effects of organizational and professional identification on the reciprocity dynamic for professional employees. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 52, 506-526.
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63, 597-606.
- Hoppner, J. J., Griffith, D. A., & Yeo, C. (2014). The intertwined relationships of power, justice and dependence. *European Journal of Marketing*, 48, 9/10, 1690 – 1708.
- Hu, T., & Sheu, J. (2005). Relationships of channel power, noncoercive influence strategies, climate, and solidarity: A real case study of the Taiwanese PDA industry. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34, 447– 461.
- Hunt, S.B., & Nevin, J.R. (1974). Power in a channel of distribution: Sources and consequences. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 11, 186-193.
- Hutzschenreuter, T., Kleindienst, I., & Lange, S. (2015). The concept of distance in international business research: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, DOI: 10.1111/ijmr.12065.
- ICAP (2014), *Greek Financial Directory – Manufacturing*, ICAP Hellas AE, Athens.
- Jain, M., Khalil, S., Johnston, W. J., & Cheng, J. M. (2014). The performance implications of power–trust relationship: The moderating role of commitment in the supplier–retailer relationship. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43, 312-321.
- Jap, S. D. (2001). The strategic role of the salesforce in developing customer satisfaction across the relationship lifecycle. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 21, 95-108.

- Jap, S. D., & Anderson, E. (2007). Testing a life-cycle theory of cooperative interorganizational relationships: Movement across stages and performance. *Management Science*, 53, 260-275.
- Jap, S. D., & Ganesan, S. (2000). Control mechanisms and the relationship life cycle: Implications for safeguarding specific investments and developing commitment. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 37, 227-245.
- John, G. (1984). An empirical investigation of some antecedents of opportunism in a marketing channel. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 21, 229-278.
- Johnson, J. L., Sakano, T., Cote, J. A., & Onzo, N. (1993). The exercise of interfirm power and its repercussions in U. S.-Japanese channel relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-10.
- Johnston, W. J., & Hausman, A. (2006). Expanding the marriage metaphor in understanding long-term business relationships. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 21, 446-452.
- Jones, W. H., Moore, D. S., Schratte, A., & Negel, L. A. (2001). Interpersonal transgressions and betrayals. In R. M. Kowalski (Ed.), *Behaving badly: Aversive behaviors in interpersonal relationships* (pp. 233-256), Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Kaleka, A., Piercy, N. F., & Katsikeas, C. S. (1997). The impact of level of company export development on exercised power in relationships between manufacturers and overseas distributors. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 13, 119-134.
- Kang, B., & Jindal, R. P. (2015). Opportunism in buyer-seller relationships: Some unexplored antecedents. *Journal of Business Research*, 68, 735-742.
- Karande, K., Ha, J., & Singhapakdi, A. (2008). The role of contextual factors in relationship commitment of buyers to foreign suppliers: A survey of Korean importers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 37, 856-862.
- Katsikeas, C. S., & Piercy, N. F. (1992). Exporter-importer and exporter-domestic customer relationships: Power considerations. *Management Decision*, 30, 12-19.
- Katsikeas, C. S., Skarmeas, D. A., & Bello, D. C. (2009). Developing successful trust-based international exchange relationships. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40, 132-155.
- Kaufmann, P. J., & Stern, L. W. (1988). Relational exchange norms, perceptions of unfairness, and retained hostility in commercial litigation. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 32, 534-552.
- Kim, K. (2000). On interfirm power, channel climate, and solidarity in industrial distributor-supplier dyads. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28, 388-405.
- Kim, T., Oh, H., & Swaminathan, A. (2006). Framing interorganizational network change: A network inertia perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 31, 704-720.
- Klein, S., & Roth, V. J. (1993). Satisfaction with international marketing channels. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21, 39-44.
- Knobloch, L. K., & Solomon, D. H. (1999). Measuring the sources and content of relational uncertainty. *Communication Studies*, 50, 261-278.
- Kumar, N. (2005). The power of power in supplier-retailer relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34, 863 - 866.
- Kumar, N., Stern, L. W., & Achrol, R. S. (1992). Assessing reseller performance from the perspective of the supplier. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29, 238-253.
- Lages, C., Lages, C. R., & Lages, L. F. (2005). The RELQUAL scale: A measure of relationship quality in export market ventures. *Journal of Business Research*, 58, 1040-1048.

- Lammers, J., & Maner, J. (2016). Power and attraction to the counternormative aspects of infidelity. *Journal of Sex Research*, 53, 54-63.
- Lammers, J., Stoker, J. I., Jordan, J., Pollmann, M., & Stapel, D. A. (2011). Power increases infidelity among men and women. *Psychological Science*, 22, 1191– 1197.
- Lawson, A. (1988). *Adultery*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lee, D. (1998). Developing international strategic alliances between exporters and importers: The case of Australian exporters. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 15, 335-348.
- Lee, D. Y. (2001). Power, conflict, and satisfaction in IJV supplier-Chinese distributor channels. *Journal of Business Research*, 52, 149-160.
- Leonidou, L. C. (1989). The exporter – importer dyad: An investigation. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 4, 17-23.
- Leonidou, L. C. (2004). An analysis of the barriers hindering small business export development. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 24, 279–302.
- Leonidou, L. C. (2005). Industrial buyers' influence strategies: Buying situation differences. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 20, 33–42.
- Leonidou, L. C., Barnes, B. R., & Talias, M. A. (2006). Exporter–importer relationship quality: The inhibiting role of uncertainty, distance, and conflict. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 35, 576–588.
- Leonidou, L. C., & Kaleka, A. A. (1998). Behavioral aspects of international buyer-seller relationships: Their association with export involvement. *International Marketing Review*, 15, 373–397.
- Leonidou, L. C., & Katsikeas, C. S. (2003). The role of foreign customer influences in building relationships with US exporting SMEs. *Long Range Planning*, 36, 227–252.
- Leonidou, L. C., Katsikeas, C. S., & Hadjimarcou, J. (2002). Building successful export business relationships: A behavioral perspective. *Journal of International Marketing*, 10, 96–115.
- Leonidou, L. C., Talias, M. A., & Leonidou, C. N. (2008). Exercised power as a driver of trust and commitment in cross-border industrial buyer–seller relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 37, 92–103.
- Levitt, T. (1983). After the sale is over..., *Harvard Business Review*, 61, 87-93.
- Lewicki, R. J., McAllister, D., & Bies, R. J. (1998). Trust and distrust: New relationships and realities. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 438–458.
- Lindell, M. K., & Whitney, D. J. (2001). Accounting for common method variance in cross-sectional research designs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 114-121.
- Luo, Y. (2007). An integrated anti-opportunism system in international exchange. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38, 855-877.
- Luo, Y., Liu, Y., Yang, Q., Maksimov, V., & Hou, J. (2015). Improving performance and reducing cost in buyer–supplier relationships: The role of justice in curtailing opportunism. *Journal of Business Research*, 68, 607–615.
- Lusch, R. F. (1976). Sources of power: Their impact on intrachannel conflict. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13, 382-390.
- Lusch, R. F., & Brown, J. R. (1982). A modified model of power in the marketing channel. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19, 312-323.
- Lusch, R. F., Brown, J. R., & O'Brien, M. (2011). Protecting relational assets: A pre and post field study of a horizontal business combination. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39, 175–197.
- Macneil, I. R. (1982). Comments to the workshop on transaction cost analysis in marketing. Evanston, IL (August).

- Malhotra, N. K., Kim, S. S., & Patil, A. (2006). Common method variance in IS research: A comparison of alternative approaches and a reanalysis of past research. *Management Science*, 52, 1865–1883.
- Matanda, M. J., & Freeman, S. (2009). Effect of perceived environmental uncertainty on exporter–importer inter-organisational relationships and export performance improvement. *International Business Review*, 18, 89–107.
- Matanda, M. J., Ndubisi, N. O., & Jie, F. (2016). Effects of relational capabilities and power asymmetry on innovativeness and flexibility of Sub-Sahara Africa small exporting firms. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 54, 118–138.
- Matlow, R. B., & DePrince, A. P. (2015). The impact of appraisals and context on readiness to leave a relationship following intimate partner abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 21, 1043–1064.
- Mattingly, B. A., Wilson, K., Clark, E. M., Bequette, A. W., & Weidler, D. J. (2010). Foggy faithfulness: Relationship quality, religiosity, and the perceptions of dating infidelity scale in an adult sample. *Journal of Family Issues*, 31, 1465–1480.
- Mentzer, J. T., & Flint, D. J. (1997). Validity in logistics research. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 18, 199–216.
- Metts, S. (1994). Relational transgressions. In W. Cupach, & B. Spitzberg (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (pp. 217-239). Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Molm, L. D., Schaefer, D. R., & Collett, J. L. (2009). Fragile and resilient trust: Risk and uncertainty in negotiated and reciprocal exchange. *Sociological Theory*, 27, 1-32.
- Nes, E. B., Solberg, C. A., & Silkoset, R. (2007). The impact of national culture and communication on exporter–distributor relations and on export performance. *International Business Review*, 16, 405–424.
- Nyaga, G. N., Lynch, D. F., Marshall, D., & Ambrose, E. (2013). power asymmetry, adaptation and collaboration in dyadic relationships involving a powerful partner. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 49, 42-65.
- Palmatier, R. W. (2008). Interfirm relational drivers of customer value. *Journal of Marketing*, 72, 76-89.
- Parkhe, A. (1993), “Strategic alliance structuring: A game theoretic and transaction cost examination of interfirm cooperation. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 794-829.
- Payan, J. M., & McFarland, R. G. (2005). The effects of influence strategies and dependence on satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 13, 3-20.
- Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc.
- Ping, R. A. (1993). The effects of satisfaction and structural constraints on retailer exiting, voice, loyalty, opportunism, and neglect. *Journal of Retailing*, 69, 320-354.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 879-903.
- Podsakoff, P. M., & Organ, D. W. (1986). Self-reports in organizational research: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Management*, 12, 531-544.
- Pressey, A. D., & Selassie, H. (2007). Motives for dissolution in export relationships: Evidence from the UK. *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 6, 132-145.
- Pressey, A. D., & Tzokas, N. (2004). Lighting up the ‘dark side’ of international export/import relationships. *Management Decision*, 42, 694 – 708.
- Provan, K. G., & Skinner, S. J. (1989). Interorganizational dependence and control as predictors of opportunism in dealer-supplier relations. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 32, 202-212.

- Ramaseshan, B., Yip, L. S. C., & Pae, J. H. (2006). Power, satisfaction, and relationship commitment in Chinese store-tenant relationship and their impact on performance. *Journal of Retailing*, 82, 63–70.
- Rosenbloom B. (1990). Motivating your international channel partners. *Business Horizons*, 33, 53–57.
- Rosson, P. J., & Ford, I. D. (1982). Manufacturer-overseas distributor relations and export performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 13, 57–72.
- Ruekert, R. W., & Walker, O. C. (1987). Marketing's interaction with other functional units: A conceptual framework and empirical evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 51, 1-19.
- Rusbult, C. E., Verette, J., Whitney, G., Slovik, L., & Lipkus, I. (1991). Accommodation processes in close relationships: Theory and preliminary empirical evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60, 53-78.
- Sahadev, S. (2005). Exploring the role of expert power in channel management: An empirical study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34, 487– 494.
- Saleh, M. A., Ali, Y., & Julian, C. C. (2014). International buyer behaviour–commitment relationship: An investigation of the empirical link in importing. *International Business Review*, 23, 329-342.
- Saleh, M. A., Ali, M. Y., & Mavondo, F. T. (2014). Drivers of importer trust and commitment: Evidence from a developing country. *Journal of Business Research*, 67, 2523–2530.
- Sanzo, M. J., Santos, M. L., Vazquez, R., & Alvarez, L. I. (2003). The effect of market orientation on buyer–seller relationship satisfaction. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 32, 327– 345.
- Schurr ,P. H., Hedaa, L., & Geersbro, J. (2008). Interaction episodes as engines of relationship change. *Journal of Business Research*, 61, 877–884.
- Schurr, P. H., & Ozanne, J. L. (1985). Influences on exchange processes: Buyer's preconceptions of a seller's trustworthiness and bargaining toughness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11, 939-953.
- Schützwohl, A. (2008), “The disengagement of attentive resources from task-irrelevant cues to sexual and emotional infidelity. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44, 633–644.
- Shackelford, T. K., & Buss, D. M. (1997). Cues to infidelity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23, 1034-1045.
- Sharma, S., Durvasula, S., & Dillon, W. R. (1989). Some results on the behavior of alternate covariance structure estimation procedures in the presence of non-normal data. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 26, 214-221.
- Shoham, A., Rose, G. M., & Kropp, F. (1997). Conflict in international channels of distribution. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 11, 5-22.
- Simpson, J. T., & Mayo, D. T. (1997). Relationship management: A call for fewer influence attempts. *Journal of Business Research*, 39, 209-218.
- Skarmeas, D., Katsikeas, C. S., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2002). Drivers of commitment and its impact on performance in cross-cultural buyer-seller relationships: The importer's perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 33, 757–783.
- Skarmeas, D., Zeriti, A., & Baltas, G. (2016). Relationship value: Drivers and outcomes in international marketing channels. *Journal of International Marketing*, 24, 22–40.
- Skinner, S. J., Gassenheimer, J. B., & Kelley, S. W. (1992). Cooperation in supplier-dealer relations. *Journal of Retailing*, 68, 174-193.
- Solomon, D. H., & Knobloch, L. K. (2001). Relationship uncertainty, partner interference, and intimacy within dating relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 18, 804-820.

- Stoltman, J. J., & Morgan, F. W. (2002). Extending the marriage metaphor as a way to view marketing relationships. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 9, 49-75.
- Stöttinger, B., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (1998). Explaining export development through psychic distance: Enlightening or elusive? *International Marketing Review*, 15, 357–372.
- Teas, R. K., & Sibley, S. S. (1985). An examination of the moderating effect of channel member firm size on perceptions of preferred channel linkages. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 8, 277-293.
- Vadera, A., Pratt, M. G., & Mishra, P. (2013). Constructive deviance in organizations: Integrating and moving forward. *Journal of Management*, 39, 1221-1276.
- Vangelisti, A., & Sprague, R. (1998). Guilt and hurt: Similarities, distinctions, and conversational strategies. In P. Anderson & L. Guerrero (Eds.). *Handbook of communication and emotion: Research, theory, application, and contexts* (pp. 123-154). New York: Academic Press.
- Venkatraman, N., & Prescott, J. E. (1990). Environment-strategy coalignment: An empirical test of its performance implications. *Strategic Management Journal*, 11, 1-23.
- Wang, Z., Huo, B., Tian, Y., & Hua, Z. (2015). Effects of external uncertainties and power on opportunism in supply chains: Evidence from China. *International Journal of Production Research*, 53, 6294-6307.
- Wathne, K. H., & Heide, J. B. (2000). Opportunism in interfirm relationships: Forms, outcomes, and solutions. *Journal of Marketing*, 64, 36–51.
- Weiser, D. A., & Weigel, D. J. (2014). Testing a model of communication responses to relationship infidelity. *Communication Quarterly*, 62, 416-435.
- Whitener, E. M., Brodt, S. E., Korsgaard, M. A., & Werner, J. M. (1998). Managers as initiators of trust: An exchange relationship framework for understanding managerial trustworthy behavior. *The Academy of Management Review*, 23, 513-530.
- Wilkinson, I. F. (1979). Power and satisfaction in channels of distribution. *Journal of Retailing*, 55, 79-94.
- Williamson, O. E. (1979). Transaction cost economics: The governance of contractual relations. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 22, 223–261.
- Williamson, O. E. (1985). *The economic institutions of capitalism*. New York: The Free Press.
- Wu, F., Sinkovics, R. R., Cavusgil, S. T., & Roath, A. S. (2007). Overcoming export manufacturers' dilemma in international expansion. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38, 283-302.
- Yan, T., & Dooley, K. J. (2013). Communication intensity, goal congruence, and uncertainty in buyer–supplier new product development. *Journal of Operations Management*, 31, 523–542.
- Yilmaz, C., & Hunt, S. D. (2001). Salesperson cooperation: The influence of relational, task, organizational, and personal factors. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29, 335–357.
- Zemanek, J. E., & Pride, W. M. (1996). Distinguishing between manufacturer power and manufacturer salesperson power. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 11, 20-36.
- Zhang, Z., & Zhang, M. (2013). Guanxi, communication, power, and conflict in industrial buyer-seller relationships: Mitigations against the cultural background of harmony in China. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 20, 99-117.
- Zhao, X., Huo, B., Flynn, B. B., & Yeung J. H. Y. (2008). The impact of power and relationship commitment on the integration between manufacturers and customers in a supply chain. *Journal of Operations Management*, 26, 368–388.

- Zhou, Y., Zhang, X., Zhuang, G., & Zhou, N. (2015). Relational norms and collaborative activities: roles in reducing opportunism in marketing channels. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 46, 147–159.
- Zhuang, G., Xi, Y., & Tsang, A. S. L. (2010). Power, conflict, and cooperation: The impact of Guanxi in Chinese marketing channels. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39, 137–149.

Figure 1: The conceptual model

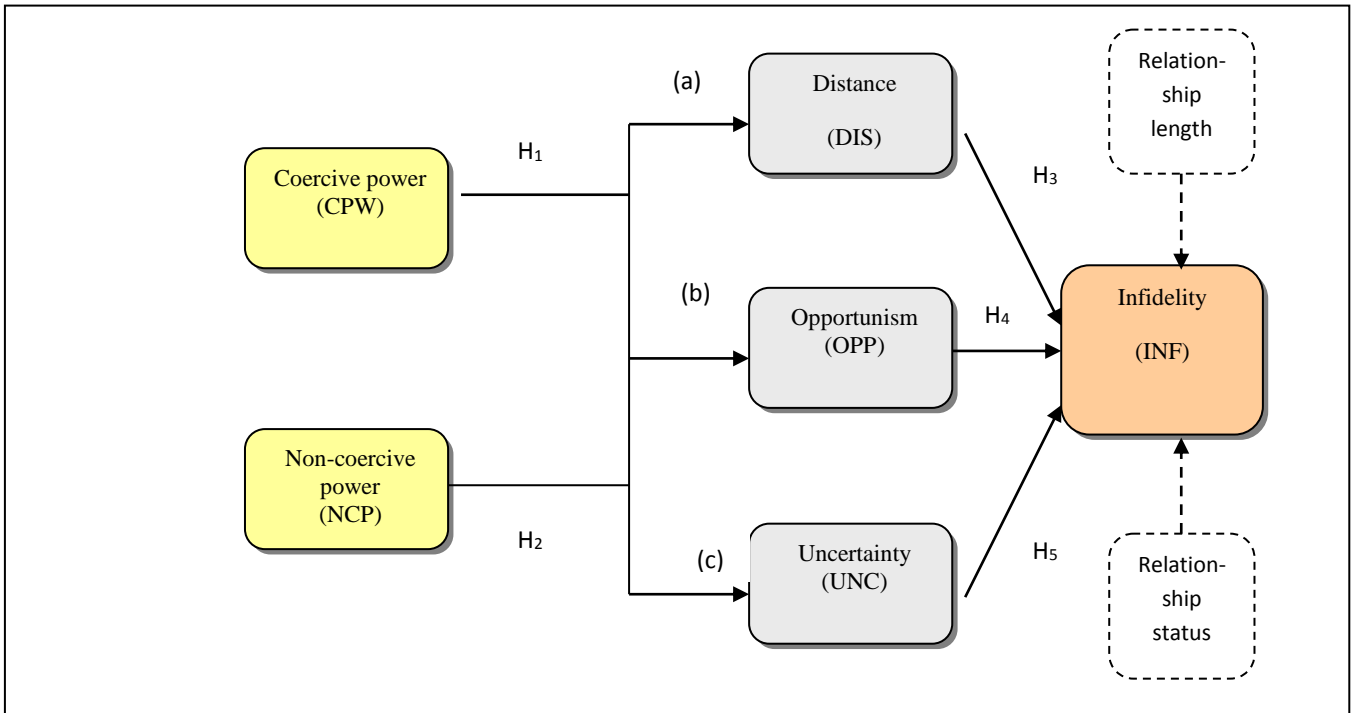


Table 1: Measurement Model and Summary Statistics

Constructs	Scale items	Standardized Loadings	t-value	α	p	AVE	Mean score	Standard deviation	Item mean	Standard deviation
Coercive Power	CPW1	.54	*	.82	.79	.52	2.75	1.29	4.24	1.98
	CPW2	.87	7.57						2.88	1.86
	CPW3	.75	7.06						2.03	1.50
	CPW4	.79	7.26						2.37	1.49
	CPW5	.60	6.21						2.21	1.54
Non-coercive Power	NCP2	.65	*	.77	.74	.50	2.69	1.23	2.61	1.61
	NCP3	.74	7.37						3.02	1.77
	NCP4	.80	7.63						2.89	1.68
	NCP5	.61	6.49						2.23	1.37
Distance	DIS1	.69	*	.82	.78	.51	3.23	1.31	3.68	2.04
	DIS2	.82	9.40						3.18	1.80
	DIS3	.65	7.76						3.14	1.61
	DIS4	.79	9.22						3.31	1.68
	DIS5	.58	6.34						2.80	1.44
Opportunism	OPP1	.73	*	.78	.75	.53	2.36	1.30	2.62	1.57
	OPP2	.81	10.02						2.05	1.32
	OPP3	.82	10.14						2.33	1.54
	OPP4	.53	6.69						2.45	2.10
Uncertainty	UNC1	.71	*	.73	.73	.50	2.93	1.09	2.33	1.41
	UNC3	.74	8.96						2.78	1.48
	UNC4	.62	7.59						3.75	1.68
	UNC5	.71	8.56						2.85	1.27
Infidelity	INF2	.92	*	.90	.85	.65	3.02	1.43	2.99	1.78
	INF3	.90	6.92						3.37	1.81
	INF4	.74	7.03						2.58	1.44
	INF5	.71	8.59						2.82	1.60
	INF6	.74	8.56						3.28	1.81

* Fit statistics of Model: $\chi^2 = 662.45$, $p = .000$, $df = 309$; $NFI = .91$; $NNFI = .93$; $CFI = .94$; $RMSEA = .07$

Table 2: Structural Model Results – Main effects

Hypothesis	Hypothesized path	Standardized path coefficients	t-value	p-value
Main effects				
H _{1a}	Coercive Power → Distance	.26	2.88	.00
H _{1b}	Coercive Power → Opportunism	.38	3.96	.00
H _{1c}	Coercive Power → Uncertainty	.34	3.30	.00
H _{2a}	Non-coercive Power → Distance	-.55	-4.59	.00
H _{2b}	Non-coercive Power → Opportunism	-.71	-5.51	.00
H _{2c}	Non-coercive Power → Uncertainty	-.76	-5.69	.00
H ₃	Distance → Infidelity	.18	2.22	.02
H ₄	Opportunism → Infidelity	.20	2.54	.01
H ₅	Uncertainty → Infidelity	.27	2.98	.00
Control effects				
	Relationship length → Infidelity	-.45	-1.69	.09
	Relationship status → Infidelity	-.22	-2.39	.02

Fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 843.29$, $p = .000$, $df = 315$; NFI = .90; NNFI = .93; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .08

Table 3: Correlation matrix

Constructs	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Coercive Power	1					
2. Non-coercive Power	.58	1				
3. Distance	.17	-.11	1			
4. Opportunism	.36	-.29	.35	1		
5. Uncertainty	.33	-.32	.50	.60	1	
6. Infidelity	.31	.40	.34	.39	.42	1

Note: Correlations greater than $|\pm 0.16|$ are significant at the .01 level.
Correlations greater than $|\pm 0.11|$ are significant at the .05 level.

Appendix A: Summary of empirical studies on the dark side of exporter-importer relationships

Study	Objectives	Method	Key findings
Johnson et al. (1993), JM	To examine the way Japanese distributors of US producers perceive the exercise of power sources.	Survey among 74 Japanese importers buying from US producers.	Exercise of aggressive power is retaliated in US-Japanese supplier-distributor relationships, while the effect of aggressive power on relationship quality is positive.
Shoham et al. (1997), JGM	To investigate the distribution system quality and cultural distance as determinants of international channel conflict.	Survey among 92 Israeli exporters	Cultural distance gives rise to international channel conflict, while distribution system quality helps to reduce it.
Skarmeas et al. (2002), JIBS	To examine the drivers of commitment in international business relationships and the impact of commitment on performance.	Survey among 216 UK importers	Exporter opportunism is very likely to arise if there is environmental volatility and if the exporter has lower levels of cultural sensitivity. Opportunism, on the other hand, strongly inhibits the development of importer's commitment.
Cavusgil, Deligonul, and Zhang (2004), JIM	To empirically investigate the individual and simultaneous effects of trust and formal contracts on opportunism in the international channel setting, as well as to examine the moderating effect of hostility in the legal environment on mechanisms to control foreign distributor opportunism.	Survey among 142 US-based export manufacturers.	Manufacturer trust in the distributor is negatively linked with the latter's opportunism, particularly in the markets characterized by higher levels of legal hostility. The effect of formal contracts on opportunism is non-significant.
Pressey and Tzokas (2004), MD	To investigate the extent to which export relationships can be sustained over time.	Mail survey of a cross-industry sample of 212 British export managers.	Commitment and contractual trust decreases over time, while competence trust and relationship performance exhibit significant increase.
Deligonul et al. (2006), JBR	To examine the roles of commitment, strategic leverage, responsiveness, and opportunism in partner satisfaction and the role of satisfaction in diminishing the likelihood of partner switching.	Survey among 141 US-based multinational companies	Commitment and responsiveness of the distributor increase, but strategic leverage of the distributor decreases manufacturer satisfaction. Manufacturer satisfaction with the distributor reduces its likelihood to switch distributors.
Leonidou et al. (2006), IMM	To investigate the impact of uncertainty, distance, and conflict on the exporter-importer relationship quality.	Survey among 151 US export manufacturers	Uncertainty negatively affects all -, while distance and conflict negatively influences most of the elements of relationship quality, namely adaptation, commitment, communication, cooperation, satisfaction, trust, and understanding.
Pressey and Selassie (2007), JCB	To diagnose the reasons for relationship dissolution in exporter-importer relationships.	Seven in-depth interviews with managers involved in international B2B operations Mail survey of a cross-industry sample of 212 UK exporters.	The interviews unveil 23 motives for the dissolution of an E-I relationship, grouped under supplier factors, buyer factors, competitor action, and environmental conditions. The mail survey shows that the most important reasons for dissolution are better price from a competitor, absence of buyer commitment, and unresolved conflict. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, these 23 motives are categorized as product defectors, change in relationship,

			relationship distance, personal relationship issues, price, and importer fault.
Wu et al. (2007), JIBS	To explore the associations between firm capabilities and corporate governance in managing export channels.	Mail survey among 142 US exporting manufacturers.	Trust diminishes the likelihood of distributor opportunism, whereas knowledge sharing increases the risk of being exposed to opportunism. Opportunism, on the other hand, has a negative impact on the exporter's competitiveness in the foreign market.
Leonidou et al. (2008), IMM	To investigate the role of coercive and non-coercive power in building trust and commitment in exporter-importer relationships, via the mediating role of conflict and satisfaction.	Survey among 151 US export manufacturers.	Coercive power escalates conflict and decreases satisfaction in exporter-importer relationships, while conflict and satisfaction are important predictors of trust, though in different directions. Trust, on the other hand, gives rise to commitment in exporter-importer relationships.
Katsikeas et al. (2009), JIBS	To find out the complexity concerning trust in importer-exporter relationships, by identifying the international exchange conditions which develop trust and moderate the effect of trust on performance.	Survey among 214 UK importers.	External uncertainty and inter-firm psychic distance give rise to opportunism in importer-exporter relationships, while transaction-specific assets accumulated by the exporter reduce the likelihood of exporter opportunism. The higher the exporter opportunism, the lower the trust in the exporter.
Barnes et al. (2010), JIM	To examine the opportunism phenomenon by forming and testing a conceptual model that shows how exporters' opportunism can predict the long-term potential of the relationship with importers through the intervening roles of trust, commitment, conflict, communication, and satisfaction.	Survey among 202 Hong Kong Chinese importers.	Exporter's opportunism increases conflict in the relationship and decreases the trust of the importer, although this association becomes weaker if the relationship is proactively initiated by the importer.
Hoppner et al. (2014), EJM	To examine the impact of the association between power, justice and relative dependence on relationship performance.	Survey on 342 US firms.	Coercion negatively influences relationship performance, while it also decreases the sense of procedural and distributive justice in relationships of US sellers with their Japanese buyers.
Griffith & Zhao (2015), JIM	To investigate contractual governance in international buyer-supplier relationships by examining the associations between contract specificity, contract violation, and relationship performance in addition to the effects of contract monitoring and a country's institutional factors.	Online survey among 151 US exporters.	The negative relationship between contract specificity and contract violation is strengthened as the country business risk decreases and country globalization increases. Contract violation reduces relationship performance, while this link becomes decreasingly negative at higher levels of contract monitoring.
Matanda et al. (2016), JSBM	To investigate the roles of relational capabilities and exercise of power on exporters' innovativeness, flexibility, and performance.	Interviews with 206 small fresh food exporters in Zimbabwe.	The exercise of coercive power by the buyer has a negative effect on the innovativeness of the supplier, as well as on the flexibility of the supplier in its relationships with the buyer.

Appendix B: Definition of study constructs

Construct	Definition	Sources
Coercive power	Power based on the anticipation of punishment by one party from another, if the former does not comply with the latter's requests.	Hunt and Nevin (1974)
Non-coercive power	Power that one party voluntarily yields to the other because the former has the belief that the latter can provide rewards for him/her; has the legitimate right to affect the former's behavior; the former identifies him/herself with the latter; or the latter has specialized and unique expertise and/or knowledge needed by the former.	Hunt and Nevin (1974)
Distance	The extent to which one party is familiar with the cultural and social characteristics of his/her business partner.	Hallén and Sandström (1991)
Opportunism	Self-interest seeking with guile, manifested in terms of subtle and/or blatant types of behavior.	John (1984); Williamson (1979)
Uncertainty	The degree to which the involvement of each relational party, as well as the future state, direction, and outcome of the buyer-seller working relationship, is predictable.	Rosson and Ford (1982); Solomon and Knobloch (2001)
Infidelity	A business partner's violation of relational norms concerning the nature of his/her business interactions with firms outside the dyad so as to evoke feelings of rivalry.	Drigotas, Saftstrom, and Gentilia (1999)
Relationship age	Number of years the working relationship existed between the buyer and the seller.	Anderson and Weitz (1989), Palmatier (2008)
Relationship status	The classification of the relationship into an exploration, build-up, maturity, decline, or deterioration stage.	Jap and Ganesan (2000)

Appendix C: Construct operationalization

Constructs	Items	Item description	Source
Coercive power	CPW1	Failing to comply with the requests of our firm will result in financial and other penalties against this importer.	Leonidou et al. (2008)
	CPW2	We threaten to withdraw from what we originally promised, if this importer does not comply with our requests.	
	CPW3	We threaten to take legal action, if this importer does not comply with our requests.	
	CPW4	We withhold important support from this importer, by requesting compliance with our demands.	
	CPW5	We threaten to deal with another importer, in order to make this importer submit to our demands.	
Non-coercive power	NCP1	We offer this importer specific incentives when s/he is reluctant to cooperate with us.	Leonidou et al. (2008)
	NCP2	We have the upper hand in the relationship with this importer, due to the power allowed us under the contract	
	NCP3	We demand the compliance of this importer because we know that s/he appreciates and admires us.	
	NCP4	We use our unique competence to make this importer accept our recommendations.	
	NCP5	We withhold critical information concerning the relationship, so as to better control this importer.	
Distance	DIS1	We do not have close relationships with individuals working in this importing firm.	Hallén and Sandström (1991)
	DIS2	We are not familiar with this importer's business environment.	
	DIS3	We are very familiar with the organizational culture, values, and attitudes of this importer. (R)	
	DIS4	We are not aware of many things about the structural characteristics of this importer's organization.	
	DIS5	We are familiar with the working methods and processes followed by this importer. (R)	
Opportunism	OPP1	This importer alters the facts slightly.	Yilmaz and Hunt (2001)
	OPP2	This importer promises to do things without actually doing them later.	
	OPP3	This importer fails to provide us with the support s/he is obliged to provide.	
	OPP4	This importer avoids fulfilling his/her responsibilities unless s/he is watched closely.	
Uncertainty	UNC1	Our relationship with this importer is characterized by a great degree of uncertainty.	Leonidou and Kaleka (1998)
	UNC2	There is adequate information for us to make future decisions regarding this working relationship. (R)	
	UNC3	We face difficulties in monitoring trends concerning the working relationship with this importer.	
	UNC4	We are confident about making future decisions regarding aspects of the relationship with this importer. (R)	
	UNC5	We cannot accurately anticipate how this importer will act in the future in the working relationship.	
Infidelity	INF1	Despite its agreement with our company, this importer has been disloyal to us many times in the past.	Mattingley et al. (2010), Atkins & Kessel (2008); Kumar et al. (1992)
	INF2	This importer searches actively for business with other export suppliers of similar goods, while s/he doing business with us.	
	INF3	This importer contacts other exporters of similar goods to explore mutual business opportunities, while still doing business with our company.	
	INF4	This importer shows greater motivation to engage in business activities with other exporters, rather than developing business with our company.	
	INF5	This importer not only does business with other exporting firms selling similar goods, but also develops social bonds with them.	
	INF6	This importer negotiates with other export suppliers of similar goods to obtain better business terms than what we can offer.	

Note: Measurement was based on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1: Strongly disagree to 7: Strongly agree. The sign (R) denotes a reverse scale