

Original Research Article

Motives and partner selection criteria of emerging economies in establishing international strategic alliances

Abstract: The motivation of enterprises from emerging economies lies in their selection of international strategic alliance partners, while also considering market location, international expansion, and technological exchanges. Social network theory is adopted in this study to explore the influence of network location and creative assets on how these enterprises select their partners. These enterprises must select the central position in the network and then consider closer structural holes and rich creative assets as their strategic alliance partners.

Keywords: Emerging economies; Strategic alliance; Partner selection; Social network; Creative assets

1、 Introduction

How do enterprises from emerging economies gain profit from international joint ventures? Although strategic motives and partner selection criteria have become popular research themes in the examination of international strategic alliances (ISAs), only few studies have specifically investigated the perspective of local partners (Hitt et al., 2004; Luo, 2002; Yan & Gray, 1994), with the aim of providing a detailed analysis of enterprises from emerging economies. The continuous global economic integration has driven enterprises to expand via cross-border mergers and acquisitions, through which ISAs are established to develop the international market.

However, ISA studies from developing countries have given little consideration to the strategic objectives of local firms and have mainly treated them as passive partners (Li & Shenkar, 1996, 1997). This lack of consideration presents a particular weakness because the underlying motivations for ISA formation can differ markedly between

29 local firms and their foreign partners (Dacin, 1997; Demirbag, 1995; Tallman, 1990;
 30 Yan, 1994). Many studies on ISA partner selection have investigated the perspective of
 31 western multinational enterprises (MNEs) (Arino, 1997; Geringer, 1988; Glaister,
 32 1997), but only few have specifically examined the perspective of enterprises from
 33 emerging economies (Hitt et al., 2004; Luo, 2002). Hitt et al. (2004) and Luo (2002)
 34 contend that foreign and local partners differ tremendously in their strategic
 35 motivations and partner selection criteria for alliance formation. They find that
 36 organizational background and competitive advantage exert different effects on
 37 strategic alliance; hence, they encourage additional research on the perspective of local
 38 partners (Hitt et al., 2004; Luo, 2002).

39 To solve these problems, we examine several aspects of the main topic, including
 40 those stated below.

41 (1) We investigate the motivation of enterprises to establish ISAs. The strategic
 42 motives of enterprises from both developed and emerging economies differ in many
 43 areas. An ISA is a cross-country partnership among enterprises, which aims to achieve
 44 a specific strategic target. Strategic alliances can be formed through equity sharing,
 45 mergers, joint ventures, research and development (R&D) partnerships, joint
 46 production, joint marketing and distribution, and other forms of non-equity (Durning,
 47 1995). Coalition partners aim to achieve cooperation among international enterprises
 48 (Geringer, 1991). Previous studies have investigated the key factors involved in the
 49 selection of ISA partners, with earlier studies focusing on the perspective of local
 50 partners (Hitt, 2005). However, empirical studies on the partner selection process of
 51 enterprises from emerging economies are relatively few, considering that these
 52 enterprises are often investigated as extensions of western MNEs (Hitt, 2005).

53 (2) We explore the relationship between the strategic motives and the partner selection
 54 criteria of enterprises from emerging economies, in accordance with a specific strategic
 55 purpose. The aim is to determine how such enterprises select task- or partner-related
 56 ISA partners.

57 (3) We investigate the enterprise network center location and creative assets partner
58 selection criteria to explore whether enterprise network centrality and creative assets
59 can influence partner selection.

60 We use cases and data from MNEs in China, arguably the biggest emerging economy in
61 the world, to test our assumptions. The development of China can be inferred from the
62 data of its MNEs. Studies on the ISA partners of Chinese MNEs are mainly conducted
63 from the perspectives of organization control, ownership arrangement, get-into strategy,
64 and performance influence.

65 Studies on how Chinese enterprises establish ISAs are relatively insufficient.
66 Studies on foreign investment and transnational investment mainly focus on Chinese
67 enterprises and their current partner selection criteria. In response to the lack of related
68 studies, the current study will investigate the actual situation of Chinese enterprises
69 through literature review, web research, and other empirical research methods. We also
70 analyze how Chinese enterprises select their ISA partners. We specifically investigate
71 the international enterprise partner selection model of Huawei, which is the most
72 representative MNE in China, and is included among the Fortune 500 companies. We
73 investigate the partnership of Huawei with 32 software and terminal product firms by
74 examining the social networks that exist among them, and by analyzing the data from
75 enterprises that tend to choose ISA partners based on their network center position and
76 rich creative assets.

77 This article is arranged into several sections. First, we introduce the theory of ISA
78 partner selection and its assumptions. Second, we discuss the motives of enterprises to
79 seek strategic alliance partners. Third, we investigate the partnerships of Huawei with
80 foreign companies from a social network perspective, with the aim of investigating how
81 network location and creative assets influence its selection of strategic partners. We
82 find that network center position, closer structural roles, and rich creative assets of
83 foreign enterprises are the criteria used by enterprises from emerging companies to
84 select ISA partners.

85 **2、 Theory and hypothesis**

86 The selection of ISA partners must be driven by a certain motive. By establishing
87 such partnerships, enterprises can gain complementary resources and additional market
88 knowledge. This venture also helps a company study the management knowledge,
89 technology, and new products of their partner firms to improve the former's
90 competitive advantage.

91 Local and multinational enterprises have different strategic motives for selecting
92 ISA partners. The considerable heterogeneity in the institutional environments,
93 resources, and asymmetric abilities may affect the motivation of enterprises from
94 developed and developing countries to form ISAs. Such differences often lead to
95 formation of different partner selection criteria. For example, enterprises from
96 developing countries consider technology exchange, learning management skills, and
97 access to the international market as their main strategic motivations (Beamish, 1987).
98 Such firms also choose strategic partners to improve their technical abilities (Beamish,
99 1997), learning management experience (Pearson, 1991), and profit (Shenkar, 1990) as
100 well as to earn foreign exchange through exports. By contrast, enterprises from
101 developed countries consider access to the local market, international expansion
102 (Glaister, 1993), local government policy implementation (Teagarden, 1991), and
103 access to cheap resources (Child, 1990) as their strategic motivations. From the
104 perspective of enterprise resource base theory, Hitt et al. (2004) find that a technical
105 (technological) gap exists between enterprises from emerging and developed countries,
106 in which the former depends on the latter to enhance their technical abilities.
107 Specifically, enterprises from emerging economies are attracted by the highly advanced
108 enterprises from overseas. By cooperating with these advanced enterprises, those from
109 emerging economies can quickly learn new key technologies.

110 Enterprises from emerging economies also consider market location, international
111 expansion, and technological exchanges as their motivations for establishing ISAs.
112 These enterprises select task- and partner-related partners according to their strategic

113 motives.

114 **2.1 Selection of ISA partners**

115 The continuous global economic integration has led to the emergence of
 116 international business strategic alliances. The formation of such alliances not only
 117 presents the most common strategy for enterprises to enter the international market,
 118 they also provide opportunities to shared resources and acquire knowledge through
 119 long-term cooperation. However, the formation of strategic alliances has a very high
 120 failure rate; thus, selecting the right partner is a key factor in the success of such
 121 alliances. Choosing the appropriate ISA partners is essential in ensuring the success of
 122 such alliances (Harrigan, 1998). Having the right selection criteria also helps strengthen
 123 the skills and resources of the involved enterprises, thus affecting the ability of such
 124 alliances to achieve their strategic goals (Geringer, 1991).

125 Given that choosing ISA partners is a very difficult process, which affects the
 126 success of an alliance, several studies have investigated several ISA partner selection
 127 criteria. Geringer (1988) classifies such criteria into task-related selection and
 128 partner-related selection criteria. The former refers to the success of an enterprise in
 129 gaining competitive and strategic resources as well as in securing the required skills for
 130 establishing strategic consistency between partners. The latter refers to how partners
 131 collaborate effectively to achieve consistent cooperation among organizations.

132 Johnson (1995) proposes five dimensions related to how enterprises choose their
 133 partners, namely, duration, frequency, link diversity, symmetry, and cooperation.
 134 Seirra (1995) proposes the "3C" standard, namely, Compatibility, Capability and
 135 Commitment, for choosing strategic partners. Wilkinson (1995) analyzes the "4C"
 136 framework for choosing ISA partners, in which partner firms that provide
 137 complementary skills and organization culture with one another have the same goals
 138 and commensurate levels of risk, allowing them to realize their cooperation target.
 139 However, Rackham (1996) finds that business relationship cannot be used as the basis
 140 of partner selection; instead, he proposes the following conditions of partnership

141 options: creation of contribution potential, shared value, environment, and favorable
142 partnership with suppliers.

143 From the perspective of foreign enterprises, Luo (1998) suggests that the desire of
144 Chinese enterprises to access the local market, secure scarce or cheap resources, and
145 promote international expansion has driven them to establish strategic alliances with
146 foreign companies. The differences in their motives have led to the formation of
147 different partner selection criteria. Luo (1998) argues that variations in culture,
148 infrastructure, and government policies across countries have generated different
149 purposes for establishing strategic alliances. Moreover, a change in the external
150 environment of the partner selection criteria can also change the purpose behind the
151 formation of strategic alliances.

152 Li Dong (2006) argues that the selection criteria are highly associated with the task
153 determined by the strategic motivation. The task type related to the selection criteria is
154 usually specific to the alliance, whereas the partnership type related to the selection
155 criteria is more inclined to the comprehensive properties of the alliance.

156 Based on the literature review, we find that the research on the ISAs of enterprises
157 from developed countries has attracted relatively mature transnational investments,
158 whereas the partner selection criteria of enterprises from emerging economies have
159 attracted limited research attention. Previous studies have mostly employed a static
160 perspective to explore such alliance. Given its different development stages and
161 characteristics, alliance management is considered a dynamic process.

162 Therefore, from the perspective of motivation, we argue that enterprises from
163 developed countries and emerging economies have different strategic motivations and
164 partner selection criteria. Enterprises from emerging economies also have different
165 motives for selecting task- and partner-related partners.

166 In this work, we investigate the network centrality and creative assets of enterprises
167 from emerging economies and their ISAs partners through a case study. An excellent
168 network location attracts more social capital for the enterprise, provides quick access to

resources, facilitates the rapid collection and dissemination of information on market and technology, and enhances the credibility of the individual or organization.

The location of the “central” social network reflects its ability to control and use its embedded resources. Network centrality has three forms, namely, degree centrality, mediation centrality and closeness centrality. Degree centrality reflects the embedded importance of the enterprise in its social network, while mediation centrality reflects the closeness of an enterprise in the social network to the structure hole. It is also of the main measures of the individual in the network between two structural indexes.

An enterprise with a higher degree centrality has higher reputation, credibility, and capability to use external resources. Degree centrality can bring more resources and information that are beneficial to the enterprise (Ibarra, 2011). The external network takes a center position in the social network; here, a closer contact with an increasing number of enterprises provides an organization with more access to the latest industry knowledge and enhances the depth of the latter’s existing knowledge (Tsai, 2001). In other words, an enterprise that is more inclined to choose a strategic partner is located in the core of the enterprise cooperation network (Stam, 2008).

Known as strategic assets, creative assets are developed from natural resources. These assets are tangible on the day they are created, but may become invisible two days after they are created. Creative assets include the inherent assets of people, the ownership system, as well as the capability of organizations to accumulate knowledge, skills, learning, and experience. In terms of information superiority, an enterprise located at the center of the network has a higher tendency to increase its creative assets. Therefore, enterprises from emerging economies tend to place themselves at the center of the enterprise network to establish an ISA. Based on these, we formulate the hypotheses below.

Hypothesis 1a: A central position in the enterprise network affects the ability of an enterprise to accumulate creative assets. Furthermore, a higher degree centrality makes an enterprise more conducive to accumulate creative assets.

197 **Hypothesis 1b:** A central position in the enterprise network affects how enterprises
198 select their ISA partners. Furthermore, a higher level of degree centrality motivates
199 enterprises from emerging economies to establish a strategic alliance.

200 By contrast, an enterprise that is positioned closer to the hole (intermediary
201 centrality) of the enterprise network has a higher capability to disseminate information
202 in the bridge (bridging). Given that a hole has a large number of “weak links” or ties
203 (Burt, 1992), an enterprise located near a hole has the advantage of being able to
204 diversify its information control by understanding the status of other industries and the
205 future development of the market and technology (Tsai, 2001). By diversifying
206 information superiority and advantage, thus facilitating information control, an
207 enterprise can increase its creative assets. Therefore, enterprises from emerging
208 economies tend to establish ISAs in the core of the network, increase their access to a
209 variety of market information, enhance their information control, and boost their
210 creative assets.

211 **Hypothesis 2a:** The position of the hole in the enterprise network can influence how
212 enterprises accumulate creative assets. Furthermore, a higher degree of mediation
213 centrality increases the breadth of the accumulated creative assets.

214 **Hypothesis 2b:** The position of the hole in the enterprise network affects how
215 enterprises from emerging economies select their strategic partners. Furthermore, a
216 higher intermediary centrality increases the tendency for enterprises from emerging
217 economies to establish an international alliance.

218 **3、Case study**

219 Huawei is the second largest telecommunication equipment supplier, the third
220 largest smartphone manufacturer, and the leading supplier of information and
221 communication solutions in the world. Huawei constantly promotes the
222 internationalization of its R&D department and actively seeks ISA partners. However,
223 its partner selection criteria remain unknown.

224 Given that Huawei primarily provides software, network and terminal products, we

select several enterprises that develop software and related end products according to the following criteria: (1) higher turnover, high level of technical production and a strong capability to digest and absorb technology; (2) a large number of creative assets; and (3) a high proportion of corporate research and development input. After the screening process, we select the following companies: from the US, Motorola(摩托罗拉), Microsoft(微软), Dell(戴尔), Apple(苹果), Utstarcom(UT斯达康), Palm, IBM, Cisco(思科) and Alcatel-Lucent(阿尔卡特朗讯); from Germany, Siemens(西门子), Bosch(博世), SAP, Covey(科维), 3S, Bit-side, Cekay(科策) and Keller; from Japan, Toshiba(东芝), Sony(索尼), Panasonic(松下), Sharp(夏普), Fujitsu(富士通) and NEC; from South Korea, Samsung(三星), LG, NC and Tmaxcore; and from India, Seeley(斯利技术公司), Infodys, HCL(HCL技术公司), Mr Dia(萨迪亚姆), and Micromax.

Table 1 International strategic alliance of enterprise cooperation network nodes

	USA	Germany	Japan	Korea	India
C1	MOTOROLA (摩托罗拉)	Siemens (西门子)	Toshiba (东芝)	Samsung (三星)	Seeley (斯利技术公司)
C2	Microsoft(微软)	Bosch(博世)	SONY (索尼)	LG	Infodys
C3	Dell(戴尔)	SAP	Panasonic (松下)	NC	HCL (HCL技术公

					司)
C4	Apple (苹果)	Covey (科维)	Sharp (夏普)	Tmaxcore	Mr Dia (萨迪亚姆)
C5	UTstarcom (UT 斯达康)	3 s	Fujitsu (富士通)		Micromax
C6	Palm	Bit - side	NEC		
C7	IBM	Cekay (科策)			
C8	Cisco (思科)	KELLER			
C9	Alcatel-lucent (阿尔卡特朗 讯)				

239

240 3.1 Network links of measurement and data acquisition

241 The links between nodes reflect the cooperative relationships among enterprises.

242 This study adopts the network retrieval method to determine the cooperation among the

243 enterprises within the networks. At present, the lack of systematic information or data

244 can result in massive workload. Given that the cooperation among international

245 enterprises cannot be accurately reflected by statistical data alone, the network

246 information retrieval method can be used to determine the cooperation among

247 enterprises. Information must be retrieved as much as possible to create a

248 comprehensive, accurate, and complete dataset.

249 For the study, we retrieve information from two sources, namely, search engines

250 and company websites. We compare two enterprises using the retrieved information to

251 determine whether a partnership exists between them. Cooperation is established

252 between two enterprises if they have signed an agreement to cooperate with each other.

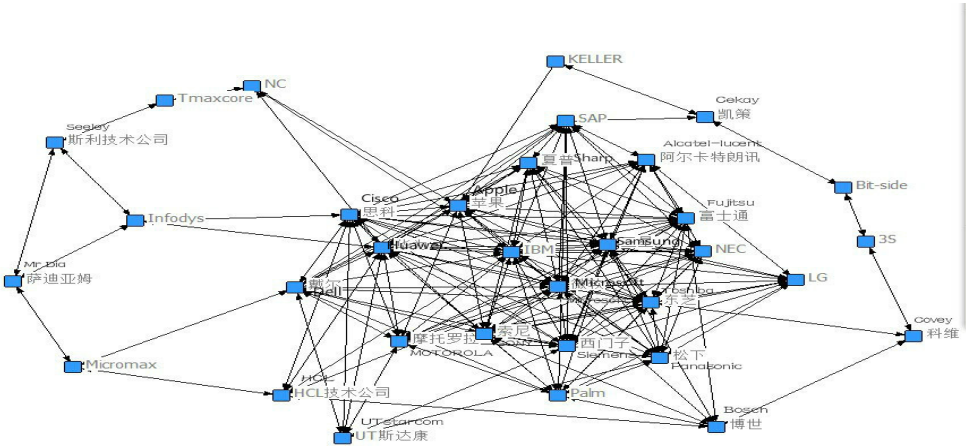
253 We obtain information on the cooperation and exchange of the 32 selected enterprises

by visiting their websites. We use columns as benchmarks for the company selection process, in order to determine the relationship of one enterprise with another. When two companies sign a cooperation agreement or framework, the cooperation network relations between these companies is marked as 1, if there is no agreement, it is marked 0. Table 2 shows the 496 observations collected in the data search.

Table 2 international strategic alliance cooperation access list

Search engine		Company web		Other way		Not retrieved		Total
Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	
105	21.20%	18	3.60%	9	1.80%	364	73.40%	496

Ucinet is used on the collected enterprise cooperation data. NetDraw is then used to illustrate the enterprise cooperation network, which is presented in the following figure.



3.3 Central degree analysis

3.3.1Degree centricty

Degree centricty reflects the importance of the enterprise in its embedded social network. A higher level of degree centricty signifies that an enterprise has high reputation, credibility, and capability to use external resources, enabling it to generate more resources and information for its own advantage. According to Tsai, an enterprise

located closer to the center of the social network has a greater access to a large number of other enterprises and to the latest knowledge of the industry, allowing it to enhance the depth of its existing knowledge. Stam and Elfeng argue that an enterprise located at the core of the enterprise cooperation network has a higher tendency to select strategic partners. In terms of information superiority, an enterprise positioned at the center of the network has the advantage of increasing its creative assets. Therefore, enterprises from emerging economies tend to be positioned at the center of the network to establish an ISA. The degree centrality of the selected firms is analyzed below.

Table 3 The degree centrality of the selected firms

	1	2	3
	Degree	NrmDegree	Share
IBM	19.000	61.290	0.064
Microsoft	18.000	58.065	0.060
Cisco	17.000	54.839	0.057
Samsung	17.000	54.839	0.057
Toshiba	16.000	51.613	0.054
Apple	16.000	51.613	0.054
Sony	15.000	48.387	0.050
Fujitsu	14.000	45.161	0.047
Siemens	14.000	45.161	0.047
Dell	13.000	41.935	0.044
NEC	13.000	41.935	0.044
SAP	13.000	41.935	0.044
MOTOROLA	12.000	38.710	0.040
Sharp	12.000	38.710	0.040
Panasonic	12.000	38.710	0.040
Palm	11.000	35.484	0.037
Alcatel-lucent	10.000	32.258	0.034
LG	10.000	32.258	0.034
Bosch	7.000	22.581	0.023
UTstarcom	5.000	16.129	0.017
HCL	5.000	16.129	0.017
Covey	3.000	9.677	0.010
Mr Dia	3.000	9.677	0.010
Cekay	3.000	9.677	0.010
Infodys	3.000	9.677	0.010
NC	3.000	9.677	0.010
Seeley	3.000	9.677	0.010
Micromax	3.000	9.677	0.010
Tmaxcore	2.000	6.452	0.007
KELLER	2.000	6.452	0.007
Bit-side	2.000	6.452	0.007
3S	2.000	6.452	0.007

Located at the center of the enterprise network, IBM is considered the most important enterprise within the cooperation network diagram. This is followed by Microsoft, Apple and Cisco, which has a large number of creative assets similar to the top 500 enterprises in the world. Meanwhile, HCL technologies, Infodys, and Keller have the least number of creative assets and are considered the least important enterprises in the network. Therefore, when choosing ISA partners, enterprises must choose those firms with a high degree centrality (e.g., IBM, Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco).

3.3.2 Closeness centrality

Closeness centrality determines the tightness or distance between each node within the social network. A higher degree of closeness centrality indicates that a node has the shortest distance to other nodes and that the rest of the nodes are closely positioned with one another. This measure also identifies the node located at the center of the network.

Located at the center of the network, IBM has the highest closeness degree with the other companies in the network, followed by Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco. HCL Technologies, Infodys, and Keller have the least amount of creative assets and have the lowest closeness degree with other companies. Therefore, when choosing ISA partners, enterprises must select those firms that are located in the center of the network (e.g., IBM, Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco).

Table 4 The closeness centrality of the selected firms

	1	2	3	4
	inFarness	outFarness	inCloseness	outCloseness
IBM	47.000	48.000	65.957	64.583
Microsoft	49.000	50.000	63.265	62.000
Apple	50.000	54.000	62.000	57.407
Toshiba	51.000	56.000	60.784	55.357
Cisco	52.000	50.000	59.615	62.000
Samsung	52.000	53.000	59.615	58.491
DELL	53.000	54.000	58.491	57.407
Fujitsu	54.000	55.000	57.407	56.364
SAP	54.000	54.000	57.407	57.407
Sharp	55.000	59.000	56.364	52.542
Siemens	55.000	55.000	56.364	56.364
NEC	56.000	56.000	55.357	55.357
MOTOROLA	57.000	59.000	54.386	52.542
Sony	57.000	56.000	54.386	55.357
Alcatel-lucent	60.000	61.000	51.667	50.820
Palm	61.000	60.000	50.820	51.667
Panasonic	61.000	63.000	50.820	49.206
LG	63.000	67.000	49.206	46.269
HCL	64.000	65.000	48.438	47.692
Bosch	67.000	67.000	46.269	46.269
UTstarcom	70.000	71.000	44.286	43.662
NC	72.000	72.000	43.056	43.056
Covey	73.000	77.000	42.466	40.260
Micromax	74.000	75.000	41.892	41.333
Infodys	75.000	73.000	41.333	42.466
Cekay	77.000	77.000	40.260	40.260
Mr Dia	92.000	93.000	33.696	33.333
Tmaxcore	95.000	95.000	32.632	32.632
3S	97.000	100.000	31.959	31.000
Seeley	99.000	97.000	31.313	31.959
Bit-side	101.000	101.000	30.693	30.693
KELLER	107.000	77.000	28.972	40.260

3.3.3 Betweenness centrality

307 This refers to the distance between a node and the center of the network. The extent
308 to which the other nodes are connected with one another is termed “mediation.” A node
309 located close to the network structural holes (intermediary centrality) of an enterprise
310 generates a bridge (bridging) effect in the information dissemination process. As shown
311 in the figure below, a structural hole has a large number of “weak links” or weak ties.
312 The mediation degrees of Cisco and IBM are high, and the location of these enterprises
313 enables them to diversify their information control as well as to understand the
314 technological status quo and future development of other sectors in the market; in turn,
315 this increases the breadth of their information. As mentioned earlier, diversifying
316 information superiority, advantage, and control can increase the creative assets of an
317 enterprise. Therefore, an enterprise must position itself at the center of the network to
318 establish an ISA. Such position allows it to access a variety of market information,
319 enhance its information control, and boost its creative assets.

320 Table 5 The betweenness centrality of the selected firms

	Betweenness	nBetweenness
Cisco	141.403	15.205
IBM	113.103	12.162
Toshiba	88.244	9.489
Cekay	83.659	8.996
Dell	73.197	7.869
Infodys	70.516	7.582
Apple	60.156	6.468
Covey	57.500	6.183
NC	53.730	5.777
Microsoft	38.666	4.158
Micromax	32.253	3.468
Bosch	23.513	2.528
Samsung	22.773	2.449
HCL	19.648	2.113
Fujitsu	16.844	1.811
SONY	16.258	1.748
Siemens	15.957	1.716
Panasonic	12.070	1.298
MOTOROLA	10.918	1.174
3S	10.471	1.126
Seeley	9.933	1.068
NEC	9.827	1.057
Bit-side	9.338	1.004
Mr Dia	9.070	0.975
Palm	8.082	0.869
Tmaxcore	7.664	0.824
Sharp	4.729	0.509
Alcatel-lucent	3.603	0.387
KELLER	1.873	0.201
UTstarcom	1.813	0.195
LG	1.810	0.195

321

322

323 4 、 Conclusion

324 A distinguishing feature of this paper is that the findings are reported based on a
 325 case study of Chinese parent firms and their strategic alliances with foreign enterprises.
 326 The highest-ranked strategic motives of enterprises from an emerging economy include
 327 maintaining market position, international expansion, and technology exchange. By
 328 contrast, the major strategic motives of foreign firms (as perceived by their Chinese
 329 partners) include market penetration and learning how to operate successfully in China.
 330 This study contributes to the existing literature by identifying the relative importance of
 331 network location and creative assets on the formation of strategic alliances between
 332 ISA partners, which has been rarely investigated in previous studies. Based on our
 333 findings, the distance of an enterprise from the center of the network affects its
 334 selection criteria when forming ISA partnerships. A higher degree centrality increases
 335 the tendency of enterprises from emerging economies to establish an alliance, hence
 336 supporting Hypothesis 1b.

337 We also examine how the position of a hole in the network structure can influence
 338 the accumulation of creative assets. Table 5 shows that a higher mediation centrality
 339 improves the breadth of the accumulated creative assets. The location of the hole can
 340 also affect how enterprises from emerging economies select their strategic alliance
 341 partners. A higher intermediary centrality increases the tendency of enterprises from
 342 emerging economies to establish alliances with a particular enterprise, hence
 343 supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

344 Selecting ISA partners has an important theoretical and practical significance for
 345 enterprises from emerging economies. These enterprises are motivated to form ISAs to
 346 penetrate the market and obtain knowledge from partner enterprises coming from
 347 developed countries. The former also aim to secure a position in the market, achieve
 348 international expansion, and facilitate technology transfer. By empirically analyzing
 349 the selection criteria of Huawei, a major Chinese company, we find that enterprises
 350 from emerging economies must choose those firms that are located in the center of the

351 network and have a large number of creative assets when forming strategic alliances.

352 The significance of this article is three-fold. First, the process by which enterprises
353 from developed countries choose their ISA partners has been documented in many
354 studies. However, how enterprises from emerging economies choose their strategic
355 alliance partners has gained limited research attention. This study has a certain practical
356 significance by addressing this research gap.

357 Second, the formation of ISA has a high failure rate. Given that strategic motivation
358 and partner selection standards differ across enterprises, enterprises hailing from
359 emerging economies must choose their partners according to their own unique strategic
360 motives.

361 Third, creative assets are very important to an enterprise, and those with a large
362 number of creative assets are usually positioned at the core of the network. Therefore,
363 enterprises from emerging economies must choose partners with a large number of
364 creative assets when establishing strategic alliances to increase their own creative
365 assets.

366 Despite its contributions, this field of study still has several limitations. First, a
367 universal international partner selection model for enterprises from emerging
368 economies has yet to be developed. Second, related studies are being hindered by
369 limited amounts of data. Therefore, future studies must expand their data sample to
370 improve the reliability of their results. Third, it is not easy to categorize emerging
371 economies into a homogenous group, because these countries greatly vary from one
372 another. Therefore, further national-level and comparative research must be conducted
373 to determine the differences among these economies.

374

375 5、Acknowledgements

376 The authors would like to thank the editors and anonymous referees for their
377 valuable comments and suggestions, which led to significant improvements in the
378 paper. This work was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China

under Grant Nos.71202054,the National Soft Science Research Project of China under Grant Nos.2013GXS4D120,and “the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities.”

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