

ABSTRACT

Internal Determinants of the Export Performance of Firms in Selected English-speaking Caribbean Countries: A Study

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This thesis explores the influence of internal determinants on the export performance and behaviour of 154 small and medium-sized firms in Barbados, Jamaica, and six independent islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean states.

The literature on the firm internationalisation was reviewed for perspectives on the main approaches explaining export activities of small and medium-sized firms, namely, the Uppsala internationalisation model, the innovation-related models, and the born global firm. The influence of the selected determinants on export performance was also explored.

Using an analytical model of export performance, factor analysis, binary logistic regression, and standard multiple regression were used to investigate the influence of three internal determinants on two export performance measures; perceived export success and export intensity. The internal determinants are: management attributes and resources, which consist of the motivation to export and international entrepreneurial orientation; export marketing strategy; and firm characteristics represented by firm size, export experience, market concentration, and new product development.

The international experience and focus of senior managers, along with market scope, product adaptation, and pricing strategy are the critical determinants of performance for both export performance indicators. Two motivators deemed important to perceived export success include the response to competition in the domestic market, and the quest for market expansion and financial benefits. Firm characteristics and export market concentration are also crucial. The third determinant which is essential for export performance when measured by export intensity is the marketing strategy tool identified as label language, packaging and product positioning adaptation. Firm characteristics were not selected as being critical when export performance is measured by export intensity.

The findings highlight the most important internal determinants on which researchers and policymakers should focus in order to improve the export performance of firms in small, open developing economies like those in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Keywords: Peter Daniel Alfred, Export determinants, internationalisation, analytical model, current exporters, Export performance.