Determinants of Export Performance Measurement: An Assessment of Export Research Articles in International Business Journals

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Abstract

Although exporting has established itself as an important field of research within the overall international business discipline, no attempt has yet been made to provide a bibliographic analysis showing how the subject has evolved over time. Increased globalization of trade has led a growing number of firms to search beyond their traditional domestic markets and focus on high-growth export markets not only to expand but also to ensure their very survival. As a result, the role of exporting in firms’ activity has become increasingly important. Recognition of this is reflected in the fact that the area of export performance has been gaining increased attention among academics and managers. Research into export performance dates back to the innovating work of Tookey (1964); since then there have been numerous studies published over the last four decades that have been concerned with the export performance of the firm. However, in spite of these research efforts, there is a lack of synthesis and agreement in the conceptualization and operationalization of the construct.

This paper reviews more than 40 empirical studies concerning the measurement of export performance published between 1998 and 2011. The study is organized into four sections: First, a description of the review methods including the criteria used for a study to be eligible for inclusion. Second, the descriptive properties of the more than 40 studies selected are summarized and evaluated along three dimensions: (a) fieldwork characteristics (i.e., country of study, industrial sector, and firm size); (b) sampling and data collection (i.e., sample size, data collection method, response rate, nonresponse bias, key informant, and unit of analysis); and (c) statistical analysis. Third, export performance measures employed in the literature are analyzed. Fourth, findings are discussed in detail, along with directions for future research.

Keywords

Export performance, objective and subjective measures, export performance, literature review