

**MARKETING ADAPTATION STRATEGY AND EXPORT
PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN MANUFACTURERS:
MODERATING ROLE OF EXTERNAL MARKET
ENVIRONMENT**

KUI JUAN TIANG

**DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
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KUI JUAN TIANG

**Dissertation Submitted to
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,
Universiti Utara Malaysia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Doctor of Business Administration**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant relationship between marketing adaptation strategy and export performance among Malaysian manufacturers. The marketing adaptation factors surveyed include product adaptation, pricing adaptation, distribution adaptation and promotion adaptation. Furthermore, this study also examines the moderating effect of external environment on the relationship between marketing adaptation strategy and export performance. The two major external environment factors under study include market turbulence and competitive intensity. In the survey, data were gathered from 163 Malaysian manufacturers through emailed questionnaires and personal interviews. Data were then analysed using descriptive statistics, normality and reliability tests, factor analysis, correlation and multiple regression analyses. The findings suggest significant and positive relationship between marketing adaptation strategy and export performance of Malaysian manufacturers. This is especially so among consumer products manufacturers, large and medium firms, and more export experienced firms. Factors of significance are export product and pricing adaptation strategies while the significant factor in the external environment is market turbulence. The results signify the importance of Malaysian manufacturers adapting their marketing strategies in order to attain competitive advantage over their rivals in the international market place, leading to a more enhanced export performance. Also of paramount importance is the need to monitor the external market changes over time to provide directions in anticipating and responding to market volatility effectively which in turn will have an impact on export performance. Future research can be extended to be longitudinal to track changes and gain more insights over time. In addition, this study can be replicated in other developing as well as developed economies to facilitate comparisons of results under different conditions.

Keywords: marketing adaptation strategy, export performance, market turbulence, competitive intensity, Malaysian manufacturers.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini ialah untuk menentukan sama ada terdapat hubungan yang signifikan di antara strategi adaptasi pemasaran dan prestasi eksport di kalangan pengilang-pengilang Malaysia. Faktor-faktor strategi adaptasi pemasaran yang dikaji termasuk adaptasi produk, adaptasi harga, adaptasi pengedaran dan adaptasi promosi. Selain itu, kajian ini juga meneliti kesan penyederhanaan persekitaran luar ke atas hubungan di antara strategi adaptasi pemasaran dan prestasi eksport. Dua faktor persekitaran luaran utama di bawah kajian termasuk pergolakan pasaran dan keamatan persaingan. Dalam kajian ini, data telah dikumpul daripada 163 pengilang-pengilang Malaysia melalui borang soal selidik emel dan temu-bual peribadi. Data kemudian telah dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, ujian kenormalan dan kebolehpercayaan, analisis faktor, korelasi dan analisis regresi berganda. Hasil kajian menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan dan positif antara adaptasi pemasaran eksport dan prestasi eksport pengilang-pengilang Malaysia. Ini adalah lebih ketara di kalangan pengeluar produk pengguna, firma-firma besar dan sederhana, dan firma-firma eksport yang lebih berpengalaman. Faktor-faktor signifikan ialah strategi-strategi adaptasi produk eksport dan harga eksport manakala faktor yang signifikan dalam persekitaran luaran adalah pergolakan pasaran. Hasil kajian menunjukkan kepentingan pengilang-pengilang Malaysia menyesuaikan strategi pemasaran mereka untuk mencapai kelebihan persaingan berbanding pesaing-pesaing mereka di pasaran antarabangsa, yang akan membawa kepada peningkatan prestasi eksport. Juga amat penting adalah keperluan untuk memantau pasaran luar yang berubah dari semasa ke semasa, membantu dalam menjangka dan bertindak balas kepada pergolakan pasaran dengan lebih berkesan dalam menentukan prestasi eksport. Kajian di masa hadapan boleh diperluaskan melalui kajian membujur (*longitudinal*) untuk mengesan perubahan dan mendapat hasil kajian yang lebih mendalam dari semasa ke semasa. Di samping itu, kajian ini boleh direplikasikan di kalangan ekonomi negara-negara membangun yang lain serta negara-negara maju untuk membuat perbandingan keputusan di bawah keadaan yang berbeza.

Kata kunci: strategi adaptasi pemasaran, prestasi eksport, pergolakan pasaran, keamatan persaingan, pengilang-pengilang Malaysia.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The increasing international trade has led to the importance of exporting for national economies in this era of globalisation. As such, research interest witnessed an increase in the field of export performance and difficulties faced by exporters (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho, 2008). Navarro, Losada, Ruzo and Diez (2009) stress that exporting has become instrumental in ensuring survival of firms and that they attain competitive advantage in overseas markets to sustain present and future business performance through exporting. Therefore, firms are focusing their effort and resources to export their products.

The advent of globalisation of markets has led to companies seeking opportunities beyond traditional local markets not only for growth but, increasingly important, for survival. Due to lower resources requirements, the attractive mode of international market entry is exporting. The resources commitment is not as high as compared to green field investments or international joint ventures (Sousa & Lengler, 2009). In the economic development of a country, exports are also essential in Government's economic planning to develop national industries, enhance productivity as well as creating employment (Czinkota, 1994). As a consequence, the role of exporting to companies is becoming increasingly important (Leonidou & Katsikeas, 1996). Given the importance of export markets, the area of export performance has been given more emphasis and attention by both academicians and managers (Sousa, 2004). As a result, the significance of exporting has led to more research focused on the issue of export performance in the immediate past years (Sousa & Lengler, 2009).

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