Export intensity of clothing manufacturers: the mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation

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Abstract: This article explores the interplay between firms' specific capabilities and their export intensity. Drawing on the resource-based view, the article offers insights into the mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation in the relationship between manufacturing capability and export intensity from an African perspective. A structural equation model for 45 surveyed export manufacturers is analysed to uncover the phenomenon at hand. The empirical evidence underpins the previous scholarly work which considers firms' internal capabilities as the dominant explanation of firms' success in international markets. More specifically, statistical testing results reveal that the effect of manufacturing capability on export intensity is mediated by entrepreneurial orientation. In essence, firms' operational processes provide entrepreneurially oriented managers with the mental map that enables them to find the most appropriate opportunities in the export markets.

Keywords: exporting; export intensity; firm capabilities; structural equation modelling; resource-based view.

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1 Introduction

Exporting is a straightforward internationalisation initiative and cheaper way widely used by firms that seek to enter and eventually expand into foreign markets (Majocchi et al., 2005; Ang, 2007; Fernandez-Mesa and Alegre, 2015). It is a non-equity mode of foreign

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