

Barriers to Exporting Microenterprises

Matti Muhos

University of Oulu, Finland
matti.muho@oulu.fi

Martti Saarela

University of Oulu, Finland
martti.saarela@oulu.fi

Peetu Virkkala

University of Oulu, Finland
peetu.virkkala@oulu.fi

Jukka Majava

University of Oulu, Finland
jukka.majava@oulu.fi

Jenni Helander

NIHAK, Finland
jenni.helander@nihak.fi

Abstract

Microenterprises represent the great majority of businesses and are essential enablers of renewal and sustainable growth. Only a small fraction of micro-sized firms are involved in international activities. Despite this fact, little is known about what prevents microenterprises from starting exports. This study bridges this gap by studying export barriers from the perspective of the managers of microenterprises through the following research question: What are the barriers to export perceived by the managers of microenterprises? This multiple-case study answers the research question by analysing the barriers to export in 10 Finnish microenterprises. A framework of export barriers (Leonidou, 2004) was devised in this analysis. This study provided an in-depth analysis of export barriers in a microenterprise context, and the findings underscore informational, functional, marketing, and environmental barriers as central to microenterprise exports.

Keywords: internationalisation, export, barriers, microenterprises, micro-sized enterprises