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THE EXPORTING BEHAVIOUR OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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by

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ABSTRACT

Increasing emphasis has been placed on the need for manufactured exports to make a more important contribution to the New Zealand economy, due to declining demand for agricultural produce and a growing balance of trade deficit. The New Zealand government, over the past twenty years, has introduced a variety of export incentives to encourage manufacturing firms to export.

The aim of this thesis is to examine what happens to manufacturing firms when they expand their operations to international markets. The adoption of the export function has implications for growth and survival of firms, especially for small firms which predominate in the New Zealand manufacturing sector.

Firms can be classified according to their different stages of organisational growth. Thresholds must be overcome if a firm is to develop and expand its operation space. The stages theory of firm growth is analogous to the stages theory of exporting behaviour - a firm increases its international orientation and foreign market commitment in incremental stages as it acquires knowledge and experience in the exporting field.

Discussion centres on describing the actual exporting activity of manufacturers at a macro level. This discussion then provides a platform for analysing the exporting behaviour within the individual firms and finally leads to an examination of how exporting firms have contributed to the peripheral urban economies to which they belong.

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