Networking as an Entrepreneurial Aid to Export Marketing

Audrey Gilmore
University of Ulster, Jordanstown

David Carson
University of Ulster, Jordanstown

Darryl Cummins
University of Ulster, Jordanstown

Aodheen O'Donnell
University of Ulster, Jordanstown

Damian Gallagher
University of Ulster, Jordanstown

Abstract: In many peripheral regional economies, the decline in indigenous industries has shifted the focus of attention onto SMEs. With a small firm base and a small local market, an economic priority in a regional economy is to instigate growth. In this context exporting is an essential growth strategy for SMEs. Therefore the focus of this study was to understand what stimulates SME entrepreneurs to initiate export marketing, examine the difficulties and problems they encounter and ascertain what marketing activities can be used to overcome these and ensure their success in export marketing. In pursuing these issues, the findings illustrate the value of networking as an aid for entrepreneurial exporting activities.

The overall conclusion of this study was that SME entrepreneurs were moving rapidly from initial stimulation to their current export positions, encountering a variety of difficulties and problems. In order to overcome these problems SME entrepreneurs used networking extensively and responded to opportunities by benefiting from their inherent flexibility and developing marketing activities to suit specific export markets.