

## **INVESTIGATING THE SUCCESS FACTORS IN EXPORT PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE HORTICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN GHANA.**

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### **Abstract**

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the key factors that contribute to the export performance of Ghanaian horticultural firms. The study was theoretically underpinned by the resource-based view (RBV) perspective and the contingency theory. In terms of hypotheses, the study tested 12 hypotheses, which included four direct effect hypotheses and eight moderating effect hypotheses.

The philosophical assumption that underpinned the study was pragmatism. Thus, the study employed a sequential explanatory research design. The population of the study covered senior managers and managers in the Ghanaian horticultural export industry. A total sample size of 241 was used for the qualitative phase of the study while four respondents were used for the qualitative phase guided by the saturation rule. Based on the results, two out of the four direct effect hypotheses were accepted, and three out of the eight moderating effect hypotheses were accepted. Thus, foreign market demand characteristics and managerial characteristics were found to have a direct significant positive effect on export performance. Moreover, better firm characteristics significantly moderated the effect of certification and benchmarking on export performance and the effect of foreign market demand characteristics on export performance, respectively. Lastly, domestic market characteristics significantly moderated the effect of managerial characteristics on export performance.

The results of the study imply that to achieve export performance, horticultural firms need to improve their managerial competencies and understand nuances of the demand characteristics in the foreign market. Moreso, to enhance the effect of managerial characteristics and foreign market demand characteristics on export performance, horticultural firms need a better understanding of the characteristics of the domestic market and the characteristics of the focal firm, respectively. Lastly, certification or benchmarking on its own is merely an entry requirement and does not lead to export performance until certain better firm characteristics are considered.

**Keywords:** Export Performance, Horticultural Industry, Foreign Market Characteristics, Certification or Benchmarking Managerial Characteristics, Organizational Structure, Domestic Market Characteristics, Better Firm Characteristics.