Export Readiness Assessment in Food Industry companies (Case Study: Food industry companies in Lahijan)

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Abstract Export companies are considered as the most important pillar of countries' trade, because as a part of globalization process small and medium sized companies play a vital role in economic growth and prosperity of the countries. These benefits, along with some other pros have led some schools to subject the economic growth and development largely to the development of International Trade. This study was conducted with the aim of identifying and assessing the determinants of export readiness in food industry of Lahijan City and a model was used to identify the determinants which states that export drivers, export issues, competitive advantage, export commitment, product, price, promotion, and distribution channels are determinants of export readiness. Also in this study by evaluating the potential of companies, their weaknesses and limitations were investigated so we can provide a realistic image for companies by relying on such findings, to identify and analyze the readiness of companies in the presence of export market markets before entering the export and tolerance the risks for that what was said above. In this study, the research method was descriptive-analytic, its type was applied research and its method of implementation was survey and for collecting information, the library and field methods (questionnaire) were used. The statistical population of research consisted of CEOs, managers, experts and specialists of export, sales and marketing units of Food Industry Companies of Lahidjan that were active in exporting. For analyzing information in this study, the second generation of structural equation modeling techniques, i.e., method of partial least squares (PLS) was used. Results and findings of this study showed that export drivers, export problems, product, price, promotion and distribution channels are introduced as the determinants of export readiness of food industry companies active in the field of exports in Lahijan. At the end of the study, suggestions and strategies for improving and promoting the

state of export readiness in the food industry are presented. Key words: export readiness, export drivers, export issues, marketing strategies, food industry.

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