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GURC Abstract

The existing research on small U.S. manufacturing firms is limited to strategies to grow internally with focus on human resource and financial strategies, but there is little information regarding how the firms can defend themselves from competition. With the rise of globalization, firms have to compete on an international level while trying to protect their home market. Large firms have more resources such as wealth and capital to conduct international research and strategize to compete with global competition, but small domestic firms have less resources to dedicate to protection of their business. This research focuses on providing managers of small U.S. manufacturing firms with strategies to more efficiently use resources to enhance firm performance and defend against international competition. Managers were asked to complete a short survey regarding the strategies used to protect their home market. Twelve different strategies were identified in the survey and managers were asked to identify the strategies their firm is currently applying and to specify their level of satisfaction with the firm's performance. This data was used to identify how likely a particular strategy was used by the sample firms, the impact of each strategy, and which strategies were statistically significant. Four strategies were identified to have a positive relationship with firm performance along with significance under a five percent p-value: develop an association brand, target foreign markets that consider American products desirable, emphasize "Made in America", and "Other strategies". Based on this analysis, a two by two framework was created to provide managers with strategies to more efficiently use resources to enhance firm performance and defend their home market.

Keywords: manufacturing, international competition, small businesses, defense strategies