



Michigan Apparel and Textile Manufacturing Industry: Characterization and Needs Assessment

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to (a) identify characteristics of the Michigan apparel and textile industry; (b) determine the manufacturers' perceived needs with respect to making their firms more competitive than at present; and (c) provide criteria for action, i.e., for the identification of strategies that universities can employ to help firms succeed and remain competitive. Data from County Business Patterns, Michigan 1999 were used to characterize the Michigan apparel and textile industry. The largest segment of the industry was North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 314 Textile Product Mills, followed by 315 Apparel Manufacturing, and 313 Textile Mills. Many firms were located in the southern region of Michigan, especially in the southeast, had less than 20 employees, and produced a wide variety of products. Using two rounds of a needs assessment survey, questionnaires were sent to Michigan manufacturers listed in directories and classified under Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 22 and SIC 23 (the system used by publishers at that time). The industry subsectors analyzed were based on the new NAICS. Descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis of open-ended responses were used to analyze the data collected in this study. Firms have been facing various internal and external challenges with regard to production technology, labor and management, marketing, and finance. Six main needs categories in order of rated importance were: (a) product development, (b) organization and management, (c) technology and communication, (d) marketing and international trade, (e) human resources, and (f) environmental issues and sustainability. The important specific needs in each main category and the important criteria for the identification of strategies are discussed. The impact of transition from the SIC system to NAICS on the characterization of the apparel and textile industry in Michigan and future research needs are also discussed.

KEYWORDS: apparel and textile industry, needs assessment, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), Standardized Industrial Classification (SIC), Michigan

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