

## THE ROLE OF REGIONAL CLUSTERS IN ENHANCING EXPORT POTENTIAL: ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN THEORIES

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the role of regional clusters in enhancing export potential based on foreign theoretical approaches. In particular, the “Diamond Model” of Michael Porter, the industrial districts theory of Alfred Marshall, the new economic geography approach of Paul Krugman, as well as the concepts of innovative clusters and global value chains are examined. The study reveals that regional clusters play a crucial role in increasing export potential by creating competitive advantages, accelerating innovation, reducing production costs, and ensuring integration into global markets.

**Keywords:** Regional clusters, export potential, competitiveness, innovation, global value chains, industrial districts, economic geography, logistics, branding, international trade

The concept of regional clusters and their competitiveness in foreign markets has long been a central focus of economic research.

Regional clusters represent a geographically concentrated form of economic activity that unites interconnected firms, suppliers, research institutions, and infrastructure entities. The cluster approach is considered an important tool for increasing exports because it:

- increases production efficiency;
- accelerates innovation;
- strengthens international competitiveness.

The cluster approach is not merely a geographical concentration of enterprises but a mechanism for increasing export volume through synergy effects.

The following theories explain the role of regional clusters in enhancing export potential:

Table 1.

Cluster Theories

Theory	Main focus	Impact on exports
Porter model	Competitive advantage	Quality and innovation
Marshall theory	Local external economies	Cost reduction
Krugman theory	Geography and scale	Logistics efficiency
Innovative clusters	Knowledge and technology	High value-added
Global value chains	Global integration	Export growth and diversification

### 1. Michael Porter’s Diamond Model

The most well-known model of cluster theory is the “Diamond Model” developed by Michael Porter in his work *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (1990). He explains export potential through four main determinants:

- ✓ Factor conditions: Skilled labor, infrastructure, and resources ensure high-quality production for export.
- ✓ Demand conditions: Strong domestic demand improves product quality before entering global markets.
- ✓ Related and supporting industries: Availability of suppliers reduces production costs.
- ✓ Firm strategy, structure, and rivalry: Internal competition stimulates innovation and export success.

Impact on exports:

- Creates competitive advantage;
- Improves quality and innovation;

- Expands export geography.

## 2. Marshall's Industrial Districts Theory

Alfred Marshall introduced the concept of industrial districts. According to him, clustering expands export opportunities through:

- ✓ labor market pooling;
- ✓ specialized suppliers;
- ✓ knowledge spillovers.

This leads to lower production costs and higher competitiveness in exports.

## 3. Paul Krugman and New Economic Geography

Paul Krugman explains clusters through economies of scale and transport costs. Clusters reduce production costs and make products more competitive globally.

Key aspects:

- ✓ concentration of production;
- ✓ reduced transport costs;
- ✓ proximity to markets.

This improves logistics efficiency and lowers export prices.

## 4. Innovative Clusters Theory

Scholars such as Bjørn Asheim and Philip Cooke consider clusters as innovation systems consisting of universities, research centers, and technoparks.

Impact on exports:

- increased export of high-tech products;
- higher value-added production.

## 5. Global Value Chains (GVC) Approach

This approach integrates clusters into global production systems:

- ✓ production is divided into stages;
- ✓ each region specializes in a specific stage.

Impact:

- integration into global markets;
- increased export volume and diversification.

Conclusion. Foreign theories show that regional clusters enhance export potential by:

- ✓ creating competitive advantages;
- ✓ accelerating innovation;
- ✓ reducing production costs;
- ✓ integrating into global markets.

Clusters strengthen exports through several mechanisms.

Table 2.

Export Enhancement Mechanisms

Mechanism	Impact on exports
Innovation	Faster development of export-oriented products
Infrastructure	Reduced logistics and certification costs
Branding	Increased trust in international markets
Human capital	Skilled workforce in export and marketing

In particular, the model of Michael Porter provides the most comprehensive explanation of the role of clusters in export development.

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