AN EXAMINATION OF EXPORT COMPANY MANAGERS' MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Management strategies of export company managers were examined by certain variables in this research. The data were collected by applying the "Personal Information Sheet", and "Strategic Management Scale" to the managers who participated in the research. For the analysis of the data, t-test, F test and multiple comparison (Tukey) tests were used. According to the research results, textile managers' scores of learning from failure increased as their educational levels increased. It is seen that scores of following and adapting to technological changes quickly were high in favor of managers with less seniority. Environmental hostility scores were found to be higher for managers with 6-10 years of seniority than managers with 11 years of seniority and above. These results were discussed with the help of the related literature to make recommendations for researchers.

Keywords: Strategy, strategic management, export.

INTRODUCTION

With the globalization emerged in the world economy, seizing the international market opportunities, companies participate to international marketing activities in several forms both to establish a reliable market position and survive within the highly competitive environment. The most common form of entering into international markets is traditionally the export. Export not only requires less investment, and therefore, less finance and manpower source but also poses much less financial risk than other forms of engaging in international activities. Accordingly, export is considered to be an important tool of profitability and growth by many companies of different industries. Export enables countries to sell the products they manufacture to foreign markets and meet their needs with the foreign currency gained (Pirtini and Melemen, 2004).

With globalization, rapidly changing environmental circumstances and increasing competition, businesses face significant opportunities and threats. One of the most basic questions in the field of strategic management is how a business can get and maintain the advantage of competition in this environment. Despite operating in the same sector, there are great discrepancies between the performance results of businesses. Enterprises that succeed in increasingly globalizing markets where intense competition is observed are fast, flexible and innovative companies which not only make long term plans and also are open to short term changes. It is necessary to look into strategy types and strategy development processes of companies, too, when investigating why certain businesses are more successful in general.

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Strategy is the process of analyzing the business and its surroundings and specifying the objectives that will correspond, planning the operations and reorganizing the required tools and sources in order to guide the business and provide competition.

Production materials, energy, financial instruments used and know-how possessed by the business are among the areas addressed by the strategic management as operation instruments (Asunakutlu & Coşkun, 2000).

Since strategic management is primarily a concern of top management, senior managers play a very important role in the process. The function undertaken by managers in the formation of long-term approaches and determination of the style of action mainly include preferences to create the structure of organization. In this sense, foresights and skills of top management is the main determinant in defining and achieving organization's mission (Dinçer, 2004).

In the first phase of strategic management process, managers evaluate current conditions of the business, analyze, plan and improve internal sources and competences. It is required to follow the changes around and specify the objectives to be achieved in consideration of opportunities and threats so that strategic plans can be developed.

Analysis of the market in which a company operates is an important part of the strategic analysis process. Market analysis studies present basic input for developing a strategy because structure and behaviors of the market plays a critical role in selecting the appropriate strategy and placing it into the organization.

Performing an efficient and accurate analysis of competition requires having detailed information. Just analyzing suppliers, customers and the sector does not suffice. That is why many companies' systems develop several systems to perform competitor analysis. Information on competitor companies such as sales, customers, financial status, etc. is analyzed in a detailed way. Competition analysis is performed so that weaknesses and strengths can be identified against competitors and strategies can be accordingly developed

Unless strategic planning is not made, objectives cannot be specified clearly and accurately, necessary calculations cannot be made, sources cannot be used efficiently and productively, and shortcomings are observed in analysis and evaluation. When strategic planning is not utilized especially in direct marketing practices, why, when, how to perform what operations and by whom they will be performed cannot be known and practices are put into place in disorder.

As is based on the idea that organizational structures are built on the principle of division of labor, it would not be wrong to say that tasks, interrelationship of tasks and commitments, degree and level of operational decision making as well as responsibilities that may arise from these subjects mainly depend on organizational structures which also include managers. In other words, as mentioned previously, decision making processes and levels in businesses is about to what extent the organizational structure is central. This is a process in which it is expected from managers to exhibit an efficient leadership while taking charge by putting forth their managerial and organizational skills in an efficient way. In this process, it is expected from managers who have been assigned or taken charge to accommodate activities they are in charge of in the organizational structure to each other, ensure the coordination of efforts, establish and maintain the order among objects and individuals, supervise and guide the practices, be able to respond to changes rapidly and have prepared alternative plans.

Every manager assigned to implement needs to inform their employees accurately and efficiently and provide a prepotent guidance. Such a manager can gain momentum via the active assistance of his/her employees and make more productive decisions in the guidance until the objective is achieved.

In the light of these facts, it was thought that it is remarkable to examine management strategies used by export company managers for business life, social development - transformation and national economies.

METHOD

As conducted in accordance with the relational survey model, the population of the research was composed of the companies which export in Bursa. The sample of the research was composed of 300 individuals working as managers in export companies who were selected with the random sampling method.

Data Collection Instruments

1-Personal Information Sheet: Aiming to collect information on the characteristics of the participants, Personal Information Sheet comprises of questions about independent variables which are the subjects of examination in the research on the basis of resource review and expert opinions. The Sheet was developed by the researchers in accordance with the purpose of the research and the independent variables as the subject of examination.

2- Strategic Management Scale
The management strategies inventory developed by Doğan (2008) to measure the effects of strategy types and strategic management processes on company performance was used in the research. The scale is composed of three subdimensions: strategic planning, strategy types and environmental factors. It is a 5-point Likert-type scale. 1 means “hardly exhibits” while 5 means “always exhibits”.

According to the result of the factor analysis performed for the strategic planning components, explained total variance was found to be 58.15% and loaded on 5 factors. These include screening intensity, planning flexibility, participation, formalization and learning from failure.

According to the result of the factor analysis performed for the types of business strategy, explained total variance was found to be 51.56% and loaded on 3 factors. These are prospectors, analyzers, and reactors respectively. Despite being under 0.70, value of the reacotrs factor is a quite reliable one.

According to the result of the factor analysis performed for the environmental competitive conditions, explained total variance was found to be 58.15% and loaded on 3 factors. These include technology turbulence, market turbulence and environmental hostility. Despite being under 0.70, the last value is a quite reliable one.

Data Analysis
The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test, F test and Tukey tests to be able to see the relationships among variables.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Results of t test for the strategy scale subdimensions regarding whether the managers speak foreign language

Dimensions	Speaking Foreign Language	N	X	SD	t	p
Prospectors	Yes	206	16.00	5.53	2.566	**.011**
	No	94	14.25	5.93		
Analyzers	Yes	206	15.95	5.42	2.706	**.007**
	No	94	14.13	5.74		
Reactors	Yes	206	14.50	3.89	-.554	.580
	No	94	14.76	3.64		
Market Confusion	Yes	206	22.63	5.83	.740	.560
	No	94	22.10	6.39		
Technology Turbulence	Yes	206	14.54	3.89	-.614	.439
	No	94	14.90	3.49		
Environmental Hostility	Yes	206	21.74	6.52	-3.253	**.001**
	No	94	24.28	5.67		
Screening	Yes	206	63.05	5.93	1.897	.059
	No	94	61.48	6.35		
Participation	Yes	206	12.35	6.42	-2.672	**.008**
	No	94	14.47	6.81		
Formalization	Yes	206	20.87	4.05	-1.728	.085
	No	94	21.72	3.69		
Learning from Failure	Yes	206	7.09	1.40	9.353	**.000**
	No	94	5.41	1.77		
Planning Flexibility	Yes	206	23.17	14.84	-2.107	**.036**
	No	94	27.01	15.08		

When examining the subdimensions of Strategic Management Scale by whether the managers speak foreign language, the arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =16.00) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =14.25). A significant difference (t= 2.566, p>.05) was found between the means. In the subdimension of analyzers, the arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =15.95) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =14.13). A significant difference (t= 2.706, p>.05) was found between the means. The arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =14.50) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =14.76) in the subdimension of reactors. No significant difference (t= -.554, p>.05) was found between the means. In the subdimension of market turbulence, the arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =22.63) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =22.10). No significant difference (t= .740, p>.05) was found between the means. The arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =14.54) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not

was found to be (X =14.90) in the subdimension of technology turbulence. No significant difference (t= -.614, p>.05) was found between the means. The arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =21.74) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =24.28) in the subdimension of environmental hostility. A significant difference (t= -3.253, p>.05) was found between the means. In the subdimension of screening, the arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =63.05) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =61.48). No significant difference (t= 1.897, p>.05) was found between the means. The arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =12.35) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =14.47) in the subdimension of participation. A significant difference (t= -2.672, p>.05) was found between the means. The arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =20.87) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =21.72) in the subdimension of formalization. No significant difference (t= -1.728, p>.05) was found between the means. The arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =7.09) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =5.41) in the subdimension of learning from failure. A significant difference (t= 9.353, p>.05) was found between the means. In the subdimension of planning flexibility, the arithmetic mean of the managers who speak foreign language was found to be (X =23.17) while the arithmetic mean of the managers who do not was found to be (X =27.01). A significant difference (t= -2.107, p>.05) was found between the means.

Table 2. *F* Test results concerning whether there is a difference between the strategic management scale subdimensions by managers' educational status

Dimensions	Educational Level	N	X	SD	F	P
Prospectors	Bachelor's Degree	133	15.82	5.66	1.100	.334
	Master's Degree	93	16.06	5.53		
	Doctorate	74	15.10	5.70		
Analyzers	Bachelor's Degree	133	15.74	5.43	.907	.404
	Master's Degree	93	15.95	5.51		
	Doctorate	74	15.10	5.63		
Reactors	Bachelor's Degree	133	14.16	3.87	1.531	.217
	Master's Degree	93	14.74	3.88		
	Doctorate	74	14.84	3.75		
Market Turbulence	Bachelor's Degree	133	22.67	5.86	.207	.813
	Master's Degree	93	22.30	5.98		
	Doctorate	74	22.67	5.96		
Technology Turbulence	Bachelor's Degree	133	14.08	3.90		

	Master's Degree	93	14.71	3.89	2.140	.119
	Doctorate	74	15.01	3.67		
Environmental Hostility	Bachelor's Degree	133	22.98	6.16		
	Master's Degree	93	21.33	6.50	2.971	**.049**
	Doctorate	74	22.01	6.71		
Screening	Bachelor's Degree	133	62.09	5.71		
	Master's Degree	93	63.09	6.05	2.211	.111
	Doctorate	74	63.52	6.26		
Participation	Bachelor's Degree	133	12.61	6.56		
	Master's Degree	93	12.32	6.46	.882	.415
	Doctorate	74	13.32	6.57		
Formalization	Bachelor's Degree	133	21.17	3.85		
	Master's Degree	93	20.95	4.14	.246	.782
	Doctorate	74	20.87	4.06		
Learning from Failure	Bachelor's Degree	133	6.31	1.76		
	Master's Degree	93	7.25	1.13	17.520	**.000**
	Doctorate	74	7.00	1.66		
Planning Flexibility	Bachelor's Degree	133	24.16	14.86	.440	.644
	Master's Degree	93	22.94	14.81		
	Doctorate	74	24.40	15.26		

*p<.05

As for managers' educational levels in the Strategic Management Scale subdimensions, no significant differences were found in the subdimensions of Prospectors, Analyzers, Reactors, Market turbulence, Technology turbulence, Screening, Participation, Formalization, and Planning flexibility whereas significant differences were found in the subdimensions of Learning from Failure and Environmental hostility. A significance analysis was conducted to determine by which groups the difference is caused by textile managers' educational levels. Findings obtained from Tukey's test performed to find out by which by which groups the difference is caused by textile managers' educational levels are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the multiple comparison test for strategic management scale subdimensions concerning by which groups the difference is caused by managers' age

Dimensions	(I) Education	(J) Education	Difference between means (I-J)	SH	Sig.
Prospectors	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	-.24349	.59561	.912
		Doctorate	.71261	.64322	.510
Analyzers	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	-.20964	.58354	.931
		Doctorate	.63932	.63019	.568
Reactors	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	-.57651	.40687	.333
		Doctorate	-.67621	.43939	.274
Market Turbulence	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	.36587	.62779	.829
		Doctorate	.00352	.67797	1.000
Technology Turbulence	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	-.63265	.43758	.318
		Doctorate	-.93450	.46770	.114
Environmental Hostility	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	**1.64501***	.68005	.042
		Doctorate	.96867	.73441	.385
Screening	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	-.99503	.66374	.292
		Doctorate	-1.42663	.71307	.113
Participation	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	.28518	.69101	.910
		Doctorate	-.71556	.74624	.603
Formalization	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	.22039	.42470	.862
		Doctorate	.29777	.45865	.793
Learning from Failure	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	**-.93658***	.16372	.000
		Doctorate	**-.68063***	.17680	.000
Planning Flexibility	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	1.22706	1.58188	.718
		Doctorate	-.23871	1.70833	.989

*p<.05

When examining textile managers' scores of the Strategic Management Scale by their educational levels, the managers who have a bachelor's degree experience the environmental hostility more than those who have a master's degree in their organizations. According to the scores of the subdimension of learning from failure, scores of learning from failure increased as the educational level increased. Data regarding the strategic management of managers by their seniority are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *F* Test results concerning whether there is a difference between the strategic management scale subdimensions by managers' seniority

Dimensions	Seniority	N	X	SD	F	P
Prospectors	1-5 years	72	15.61	5.22		
	6-10 years	88	15.85	5.67	.058	.944
	11 years and above	140	15.68	5.73		
Analyzers	1-5 years	72	15.58	5.16		
	6-10 years	88	16.00	5.62	.365	.695
	11 years and above	140	15.50	5.57		
Reactors	1-5 years	72	15.67	3.39	4.767	**.009**
	6-10 years	88	14.64	3.71		
	11 years and above	140	14.17	3.97		
Market Turbulence	1-5 years	72	22.20	6.09	.477	.621
	6-10 years	88	22.95	6.21		
	11 years and above	140	22.45	5.74		
Technology Turbulence	1-5 years	72	15.82	3.31	4.924	**.008**
	6-10 years	88	14.37	3.73		
	11 years and above	140	14.29	3.99		
Environmental Hostility	1-5 years	72	21.94	6.15	2.904	**.046**
	6-10 years	88	23.30	6.19		
	11 years and above	140	21.67	6.61		
Screening	1-5 years	72	62.07	5.39	.800	.450
	6-10 years	88	63.14	6.40		
	11 years and above	140	62.93	5.98		
Participation	1-5 years	72	12.62	5.69	.067	.936
	6-10 years	88	12.55	6.96		
	11 years and above	140	12.79	6.56		
Formalization	1-5 years	72	21.94	2.80	2.529	.081
	6-10 years	88	20.79	4.31		
	11 years and above	140	20.86	4.12		
Learning from Failure	1-5 years	72	7.52	.63	9.966	**.000**
	6-10 years	88	6.56	1.78		

	11 years and above	140	6.74	1.64		
Planning Flexibility	1-5 years	72	32.48	13.83	23.320	**.000**
	6-10 years	88	25.75	15.39		
	11 years and above	140	20.43	13.87		

*p<.05

As for managers' educational levels in the Strategic Management Scale subdimensions, no significant differences were found in the subdimensions of Prospectors, Analyzers, Market turbulence, Screening, Participation, and Formalization, whereas significant differences were found in the subdimensions of Reactors, Technology turbulence, Learning from Failure, Planning flexibility, and Environmental hostility. A significance analysis was conducted to determine by which groups the difference is caused by textile managers' professional seniority. Findings obtained from Tukey's test performed to find out by which by which groups the difference is caused by textile managers' professional seniority are shown in Table 3.

Table 5. Results of the multiple comparison test for strategic management scale subdimensions concerning *by which groups the difference is caused by managers' management seniority*

Dimensions	*(I) Seniority*	*(J) Seniority*	*Difference between means (I-J)*	*SH*	*Sig.*
Prospectors	*1-5 years*	*6-10 years*	*-.24068*	*.80592*	*.952*
		11 years and above	*-.06693*	*.72334*	*.995*
Analyzers	*1-5 years*	*6-10 years*	*-.41026*	*.78878*	*.862*
		11 years and above	.08433	.70796	.992
Reactors	1-5 years	6-10 years	1.03555	.54574	.140
		11 years and above	**1.50259***	.48982	.006
Market Turbulence	1-5 years	6-10 years	-.74942	.84718	.650
		11 years and above	-.24614	.76037	.944
Technology Turbulence	1-5 years	6-10 years	**1.45607***	.56057	.026
		11 years and above	**1.53483***	.50217	.007
Environmental Hostility	11 years and above	1-5 years	-.27002	.82423	.943
		6-10 years	**-1.62433***	.68008	.045
Screening	1-5 years	6-10 years	-1.06621	.87565	.443
		11 years and above	-.85705	.78734	.522
Participation	1-5 years	6-10 years	.07517	.93457	.996

		11 years and above	-.16602	.83881	.979
Formalization	1-5 years	6-10 years	1.15326	.57075	.108
		11 years and above	1.08590	.51227	.087
Learning from Failure	1-5 years	6-10 years	**.96503***	.22434	.000
		11 years and above	**.77835***	.20135	.000
Planning Flexibility	1-5 years	6-10 years	**6.72960***	2.04169	.003
		11 years and above	**12.05397***	1.83249	.000

*p<.05

When examining textile managers' scores of the Strategic Management Scale by their professional seniority, the managers who had 1-5 years of seniority had higher reactors scores than those who had 6-10 years of seniority. According to the scores of technology turbulence, it is seen that the scores were in favor of the managers with less seniority. Environmental hostility scores were found to be higher for managers with 6-10 years of seniority than managers with 11 years of seniority and above. In terms of the scores of the subdimensions of learning from failure and planning flexibility, as professional seniority decreased, scores of learning from failure and planning flexibility increased.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When examining the findings regarding the research question “Is there a significant difference in managers' management strategies by whether they speak foreign language?” it was determined that the managers who speak foreign language had higher scores of prospectors, analyzer and learning from failure than those who do not whereas scores of environmental hostility, participation and planning flexibility were high in favor of the managers who do not speak foreign language.

Business are influenced significantly by technological, organizational, cultural, social, political and economic factors emerging in a complex and dynamic environment. These changes in the environment requires newer skills and business designs for businesses. Strategy developers and skills need to be obtained and improved fast and accurately so that business can succeed in this changing structure. One of the most important source of businesses' competitive skills is the function of production and production skills are the accumulation of strategic assets which are gathered thanks to long-term investments, cannot be easily obtained or copied. That is why skills such as low environmental hostility, participation, and flexibility of businesses are important strategic assets that are realized in the long run (Ward, Deborah, Bickford & Leong 1996).

When examining the findings regarding the research question “Is there a significant difference among managers' management strategies by the variable of educational level?” the managers who have a bachelor's degree experience the environmental hostility more than those who have a master's degree. According to the scores of the subdimension of learning from failure, scores of learning from failure increased as managers' educational levels increased.

For business to be able to improve themselves in an environment where technology is advancing every day, training and consulting services are of importance. It is possible for business to make progress and restructure themselves only via managers with high educational levels. As long as the educational level increases, managers who follow the current developments in world's market should be able to compete.

According to the findings regarding the question "Is there a significant difference among managers' management strategies by their professional seniority?" the managers with 1-5 years of seniority have higher scores of reactors than those with 6-10 years of seniority. According to the scores of technology turbulence, it is seen that the scores were in favor of the managers with less seniority. Environmental hostility scores were found to be higher for managers with 6-10 years of seniority than managers with 11 years of seniority and above. In terms of the scores of the subdimensions of learning from failure and planning flexibility, as professional seniority decreased, scores of learning from failure and planning flexibility increased.

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