

KONYA FOOD AND AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY
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THE EFFECT OF SNACK MANUFACTURERS'
MARKETING STRATEGIES ON COMPETITION: AN
EXAMPLE OF ISTANBUL

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

İrem Serenay DUMAN

KONYA
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İSTANBUL**

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This study titled “**The Effect of Marketing Strategies on Competitiveness of Snack Manufacturing Businesses: An Example of İstanbul**” prepared by İ**m S*****y D***N has been accepted with consensus/majority jury on 29/08/2024 as a **MASTER THESIS** in the DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF MARKETING STRATEGIES ON COMPETITIVENESS OF SNACK MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES: AN EXAMPLE OF İSTANBUL

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Competition, amplified by globalization, significantly influences international marketing activities. Therefore, identifying the factors that affect competitive strength is crucial for companies aiming to succeed in foreign markets. Existing literature extensively discusses the determinants and defining factors influencing company competitiveness and success. Specifically, variables affecting export performance are categorized into three main groups: managerial factors, organizational factors, and marketing mix decisions including standardization versus adaptation. In the context of export-oriented companies in Turkey, research predominantly covers general sectors with limited focus on specific industries such as the food sector, particularly in English literature. Notably, the snack sector plays a pivotal role in Turkey's dynamic export landscape, necessitating tailored export marketing strategies. The impact of the marketing mix (4Ps) on competitive power in export markets is profound, especially in sectors like snacks. Given the significance of exports to Turkey's economy, investigating the influence of marketing strategies on competitive power becomes imperative. This study focuses on the confectionery sector within the food industry in Istanbul, examining how marketing strategies employed by snack manufacturers affect competition. A survey conducted among Istanbul-based manufacturers revealed insights into demographic details, business characteristics, and the application of marketing strategies. The findings underscored the direct correlation between effective marketing strategies and enhanced competitive power in export markets. In conclusion, this research contributes a novel perspective to the literature by shedding light on the specific dynamics of the snack sector in Turkey's export endeavors. It sets a precedent for future studies and underscores the pivotal role of strategic marketing in achieving competitive success in global markets.

Keywords: Competition, export, competitive power, managerial factors, organizational factors, marketing mix, marketing strategies, food industry, snack industry.

ÖZET

ATIŞTIRMALIK İMALATI İŞLETMELERİNDE PAZARLAMA STRATEJİLERİNİN REKABET GÜCÜNE ETKİSİ: İSTANBUL ÖRNEĞİ

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Globalleşme ile artan rekabet, uluslararası pazarlama faaliyetlerinde de etkisini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, rekabet gücünü etkileyen faktörleri belirlemek, şirketlerin yabancı pazarlarda başarılı olması için stratejik öneme sahiptir. Mevcut literatür, şirketlerin rekabetçilik ve başarılarını etkileyen belirleyici faktörleri geniş bir şekilde ele almaktadır. Özellikle, ihracat performansını etkileyen değişkenler yönetsel faktörler, organizasyonel faktörler ve standartlaştırma ve adaptasyon kararları dahil pazarlama karması olmak üzere üç ana gruba ayrılmaktadır. Türkiye'deki ihracat odaklı şirketler üzerine yapılan araştırmalar genellikle genel sektörlere odaklanmakta, özellikle gıda sektörü gibi belirli endüstrilere İngilizce literatürde sınırlı sayıda çalışma bulunmaktadır. Türkiye'nin dinamik ihracat yapısında atıştırmalık sektörü önemli bir rol oynamakta ve özelleştirilmiş ihracat pazarlama stratejilerini gerektirmektedir. Pazarlama karmasının (4P) ihracat pazarlarında rekabet gücü üzerindeki etkisi özellikle atıştırmalık gibi sektörlerde derinlemesine hissedilmektedir. Türkiye ekonomisi için ihracatın önemini göz önünde bulundurarak, pazarlama stratejilerinin rekabet gücü üzerindeki etkisinin incelenmesi kaçınılmaz hale gelmektedir. Bu çalışma, İstanbul'daki gıda sektöründe özellikle şekerleme sektörüne odaklanarak, atıştırmalık üreticilerinin uyguladığı pazarlama stratejilerinin rekabet üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. İstanbul'daki üreticiler arasında yapılan bir anket, demografik detaylar, işletme özellikleri ve pazarlama stratejilerinin uygulanması hakkında veri toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın sonuçları, etkili pazarlama stratejilerinin ihracat pazarlarında rekabet gücünü artırmada doğrudan bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin ihracat girişimlerinde atıştırmalık sektörünün özel dinamiklerini aydınlatarak literatüre yeni bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar için bir örnek oluşturur ve küresel pazarlarda rekabetçi başarıya ulaşmada stratejik pazarlamanın kilit rolünü vurgular.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rekabet, ihracat, rekabetçi güç, yönetsel faktörler, organizasyonel faktörler, pazarlama karması, pazarlama stratejileri, gıda sektörü, atıştırmalık sektörü.

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İ**m S*****y D***N

August 2024

TEXT OF OATH

The study titled " The Impact of the Marketing Strategies Applied to Export-Oriented Manufacturing Businesses: A Study on Manufacturers in İstanbul Area", which I presented as a master's thesis, has been written by me without any help that would contradict scientific ethics and traditions, and that the works I have benefited from consist of those shown in the bibliography, and that they have been used by referring to them, and I confirm this with my honor.

29.08.2024

İ**m S*****y D***N



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

4P	: Kotler's Four Marketing Strategies (Product, Price, Place and Promotion).
AMA	: American Marketing Association.
7P	: Product, Price, Promotion, Place, People, Packaging and Process.
SWOT	: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
NPD	: New Product Design
USA	: United States of America
S.A.	: Société Anonyme
AG	: Aktiengesellschaft
GMBH	: Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
Co.	: Company
Ltd.	: Limited
HS	: Harmonized System Code
USD	: United States Dollar
TOBB	: Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği
NACE	: Nomenclature of Economic Activities
PRODCOM	: Products of the European Community
KMO	: Kaiser Mayer Olkin

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1. INTRODUCTION

When we consider today's business world in terms of marketing, factors such as accessing new markets, protecting existing markets and increasing market shares, providing competitive advantage, and making them sustainable, creating marketing strategies and policies, developing new products, developing different pricing, promotion and distribution strategies stand out. It is one of the most basic facts to keep up to date with the factors in the changing world. In this way, businesses will become more sensitive and resistant to changes (İnan, 2019).

Many factors continue to affect the competitive power of businesses. On the other hand, the effect of these factors changes from day to day. For example, in which sectors they operate, how much workforce they have in their fields of activity, and even the strategies they implement can affect competitive power. The most important tool that affects this power is to stay up to date, that is, to keep up with the ever-changing and developing world. Meanwhile, the marketing mix comes into play, one of the most important findings of this, called “4P”. For this marketing mix, a basic structure should be established by using primary data integration should be ensured for this marketing mix (Singh, 2012).

In this context, the study is important in terms of dealing with companies operating in snack production and exports in Türkiye. The study consists of six main parts. In the first part of this study, A general introduction is given on the effect of marketing strategies on competitive power.

In the second part of this study, the marketing strategies of companies that involves in manufacturing products for foreign markets will be discussed. In this part, marketing strategies are examined by considering the four basic marketing mix elements as well as the framework of marketing research strategy. At the end of the first part, various studies in the literature on the marketing strategies applied in export-oriented businesses are mentioned.

In the third part, the general characteristics of the businesses are mentioned. These features are examined under two headings: organizational and managerial factors.

In the fourth part, the concept of competitiveness is discussed. After explaining the concepts of competition and competitiveness, competition theories and new foreign trade model is explained in detail. At the end of this part, some of the studies on the competitiveness of the field are included.

In the fifth part of the research; general information on biscuit, cake, wafer, chocolate, gum and confectionary products industry is given. This sector has been examined both for world and Türkiye.

The final part of the study consists of information about the application made for the businesses that manufacture snack in Türkiye. In this part, the purpose, scope, sample, and research methodology of the research are explained in detail. Afterwards, the findings obtained from the survey were analyzed with various statistical methods. Almost, in this part, the results and evaluations made regarding the findings, the limitations of the research, and the suggestions brought to the literature and businesses because of the study are elaborated.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR FOOD EXPORTERS

There are many studies in the literature that deal with various sectors in determining the factors affecting competitiveness. There are some studies on the effect of marketing strategies on competitiveness. In these studies, it has been stated that competitive power can only influence marketing strategies such as standardization, adaptation, and Porter's Generic strategies (Schilke et al., 2009).

One of the most important studies on this subject is "Marketing strategy determinants of export performance: a meta-analysis" conducted by Leonidou, Katsiekeas and Samiee (2002). This study declare it is generally accepted that there is a strong relationship between export marketing strategy and export performance. Therefore, the main conclusion of this study is that the implementation of an effective export marketing strategy can indeed determine export success. Because most of the marketing strategy elements are significantly related to overall export performance. Market segmentation, product quality, pricing strategy, dealer support and advertising have been found to positively impact performance in export markets. These relationships support the propositions made by leading international marketing experts. However, poor marketing strategy and performance relationships on some marketing metrics may vary depending on the situation. For example, the choice of an appropriate distribution method may vary depending on the firm's stage of export development and may account for poor results. However, the link between marketing strategy variables and export performance has been found to be stronger in recent research and is particularly evident in European studies. Despite positive results at the overall export performance level, marketing strategy variables appear to be significantly correlated only with certain individual performance measures. On the contrary, with few exceptions, marketing strategy variables have been observed to have a weak relationship with export market share, profit contribution and sales volume. The lack of relationship between export marketing strategy and export market share and profit contribution is likely due to measurement difficulties. However, only a few marketing parameters, namely product advantage, pricing strategy and dealer support, significantly influence different performance measures, highlighting their strategic importance in exports (Leonidou, Katsiekeas and Samiee, 2002).

Another challenge in the context is the competing theories to explain export performance. For example, Çavuşgil and Zou's (1994) framework based on industrial organization theory argues that export performance is mainly shaped by certain internal organizational factors such as export marketing strategy, export commitment and international experience, while external factors and other internal factors are determined only by export marketing strategy suggests (Zou and Stan, 1998: 343). Another important study is titled "Competitive priorities of businesses in mainland China" by Zhao, Yeung and Zhou in 2002. Among the six competitive dimensions they examined, quality, services, innovation, and flexibility are listed as the most important dimensions in the next five years. On the other hand, cost/price ranks the lowest in terms of importance among the six main dimensions (Zhao, Yun, and Zhou, 2002).

A similar study titled "The Effect of Marketing Strategies Applied in Businesses Producing Automotive Spare Parts for Export on Competitiveness", conducted by Ümmü Saliha Eken İnan, focusing on Konya province. The results of this study are generally like the results obtained by Zhao et al., 2002. In this thesis study, it was determined that quality, cost, and price are the most important factors. While the quality component was compatible with the results of this study, the cost and price element and the services and flexibility sub-elements differed. This difference may be due to geographical differences. In addition, the results of this study coincide with the results of Kathuria's (2000) research on 196 participants. In the study conducted by Ekber Akgün et al. (2014), product, distribution, price, and promotion activities as marketing mix elements were considered as marketing strategies and standardization and adaptation in foreign markets were emphasized. The results of this study were found to be compatible with the results of this thesis study.

In this context, it is observed that the biscuit, cake, wafer, chocolate, chewing gum and confectionery products sector has not been examined holistically, also has not been analyzed in terms of competitive power, and studies on the sector at the national level are incomplete and insufficient in national and international research. In this context, the marketing strategies of export-oriented businesses are discussed in the first part. Four basic strategies namely, product, distribution, promotion, and pricing issues are examined under sub-headings.

2.1. Marketing Concept

Marketing has passed through many stages throughout history and has come to the present day. It continues to develop and change in the ongoing process. As people started to exchange their belongings with the barter method, the concept of trade began to form over time. Also, the concept of marketing began to emerge in this way too. In the future, a clear definition has never been accepted by all segments. (Öndoğan, 2010: 3). This definition may change according to different ages, different segments, and different orders. However, according to the Turkish Language Association (TDK), marketing is defined as “the whole of activities that include promoting, packaging, training sales personnel, determining and meeting market requirements in order to improve the sales of a product, a good or a service” in the Contemporary Turkish Dictionary (TDK, 2014). Another universal definition is Philip Kotler's (2000) “Marketing is a social process in which individuals and groups create, offer, and exchange products and services that they need, desire, and think have value.”

On the other hand, according to Toby Bloomberg definition extends beyond just communicating product features. Marketers are responsible for a 360-degree experience. It is a concept that aims to reach customers through many channels or platforms (Alhusain, 2023). Every customer touchpoint from customer service to sales to accounting and more are part of the “new marketing” mentioned on March 29, 2011, by Heidi Cohen. First, AMA (American Marketing Association) defined in 1985 that marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. Finally, AMA approved marketing definition in 2017 that marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. As can be seen from these definitions, when this concept was first created, it was only seen as an advertising tool to increase consumption. In the 1970s, definitions began to evolve on the aim of increasing this sense of satisfaction instead of creating a sense of satisfaction in the consumer. As a result, changing needs and even the changing world will continue to cause all these definitions to differ. In this context, the evolution of marketing will be examined.

2.2. Evolution of Marketing Concept

We can say that marketing has 6 concept phases as Production, Product, Sales, Marketing, Societal Marketing and Digital Marketing. The concepts in which this evolution has taken place are briefly mentioned under this subtitle.

2.2.1. The Production Oriented Concept

The focus of this concept, which was formed in the early 1800s, is mass production. For this purpose, they have developed their strategies according to the principles of mass production. This trend, which started with agriculture, left itself to factories with the Industrial Revolution. The main focus is on the amount of production and earnings. Quality and product features have kept in the background. Until the 1920s, this concept was the center of attention (Albrecht et al., 2023).

2.2.2. The Product Oriented Concept

At the beginning of the 1920s, the understanding that focused on mass production left itself to the product-centered approach. In previous years, the focus has started to be on issues such as quality, product features and performance. Thus, great steps have been taken in manufacturing better and higher quality products. Moreover, the level of competition between companies has started to increase. For example, instead of just a car that transports you from one point to another, new cars with more features have started to be designed. This understanding continued until the 1950s (Albrecht et al., 2023).

2.2.3. The Sales Oriented Concept

With the increase in competition in the 1950s, companies started to search for new concepts because they could not meet the demands. With this need, the concept of sales has emerged. They looked for a tool to persuade people to buy unless it was enough to differentiate the product and then manufacture it. Armstrong and Kotler defined this concept as selling a product or service with using techniques such as advertising and one-to-one sales (Keelson, 2012). In this concept, volume of sales is more important than the others. Although such techniques still exist today, other marketing strategies remain more effective.

2.2.4. The Marketing Oriented Concept

With the evolution and development of the Sales-Oriented concept, the concept of marketing has started to become clear. This concept, which was first started by adapting the needs of the target audience to the goals of the business, then continued to develop and increase customer satisfaction. Researches and studies have been carried out to find the reasons that will push the customer to buy. In addition, they have started to segment their customers with companies and the concept. In 1912, defined this concept as focusing on customer satisfaction rather than the quantity sold, while today definitions have been developed and changed by adding concepts such as customer value (Shaw, 1912: 736).

2.2.5. The Societal Oriented Concept

In the 1970s, societal oriented concept started to focus not only on customer satisfaction but also on the social environment. It has enabled companies to develop new strategies by becoming aware of the need to expand their areas of responsibility. In these years, the concept of ethics has gained importance. Within the framework of ethics, there is a need for new projects on environmental factors. Environmental factors cannot be ignored in the actions taken by companies because the effect of the inseparability of the environment and society has begun to be noticed in many concepts. In addition, the impact of the strategies created with these factors on the image of companies and even customer loyalty has become undeniable. In this concept, social welfare is at the forefront (Čihovská, 2014). Thus, it has become necessary for companies to create new strategies by focusing on the long term rather than short-term goals. With these obligations, the concepts of strategy and strategic marketing have started to form.

2.3. Marketing Strategy

With competition is gaining momentum, companies need many strategies to position themselves in the market and stay sustainable. They follow different ways and apply different strategies for this. Marketing strategy also acts as a compass for these businesses and allows them to create value. It creates a holistic approach by providing a broader perspective. With this information, marketing strategy can be defined as the

creation of an operational and systematic plan by using the resources of a business in the most effective way possible. Market research is the building block of this strategy. Thus, the marketing strategy helps businesses to gain the right opportunities in the market.

The tools of these strategies are the marketing mix called the 7Ps. The marketing mix created by Kotler was first specified as Product, Price, Promotion, and Place (4P). Later, this concept was expanded and revised as Product, Price, Promotion, Place, People, Packaging and Process (7P). Today, with the changing world, this concept continues to be expanded. Businesses' awareness of the market and themselves increases by using these tools, and in this way, they can achieve efficiency. Each business or even brand can find its own unique strategy. This allows them to make his own difference. Businesses should pay attention to the following issues when marketing strategies applied (Aghazadeh, 2015);

- *The business should determine its own mission and goals.
- * They should analyze the situation in line with the goals and objectives they have set.
- * They should create a target marketing strategy applied by a marketing mix.
- *Finally, evaluation and control should be made after the implementation of the relevant strategy.

There are some important considerations to carry out this whole process successfully. First, the product or service to be sold should be determined. After the main subject is determined, the goals will be created more accurately. In this context, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, which was put forward by Harvard University professors in the 1960s, is designed to identify and examine internal and external factors. Also, it helps determining a strategy in the light of a goal and purpose. In this way, the business can see its strengths and weaknesses and also identify the threats and opportunities that may occur.

Another important analysis is the Ansoff Matrix, created by Ansoff and named after him. This matrix, which was first published in the Harvard Business Review in 1957, has been one of the most effective methods and tools of strategic marketing. It helps businesses analyze themselves and create their strategies, both in terms of products

and the market. This matrix, which is of great importance in terms of competitive advantage, allows businesses to evaluate products and classify them according to the market and is an effective tool in determining possible growth targets. It plays an important role in the evaluation of the strategy. The Ansoff Matrix is as follows:

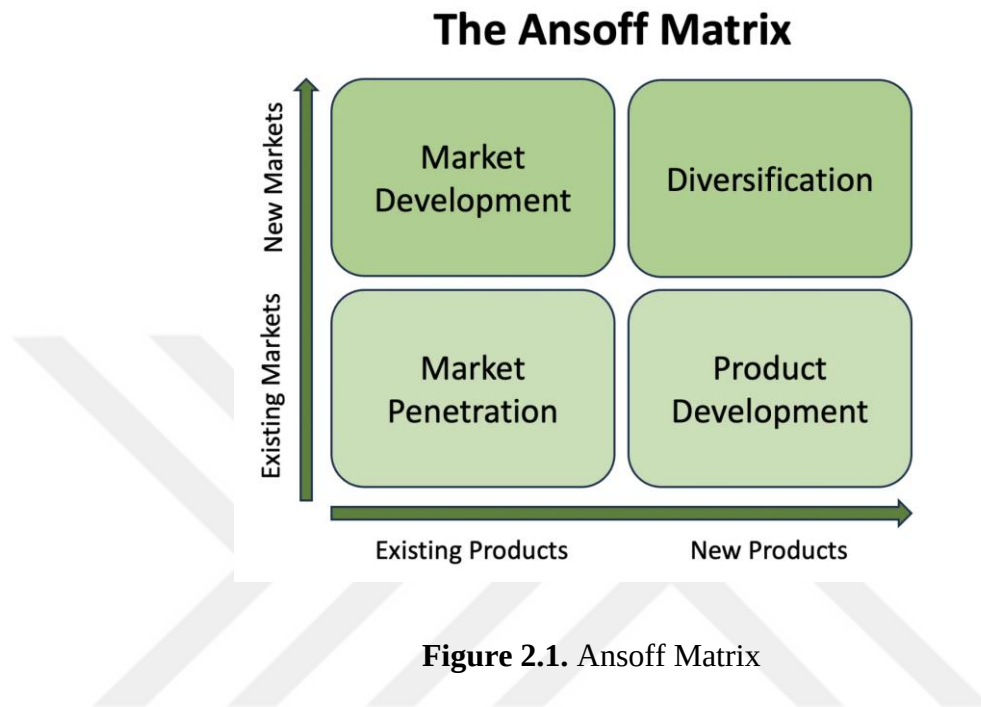


Figure 2.1. Ansoff Matrix

(Source: Hopkins, 2023)

In the continuation of the study, the marketing strategies that should be applied in export-oriented businesses and how to follow will be discussed in detail.

2.4. International Marketing

Trading between countries has been a part of our lives for quite a long time. After the Second World War, the export sector started to grow rapidly (Karafakioğlu, 1997). The concept of international marketing has been created with this growth. As a result, businesses have started to carry out and manage their relevant resources on an international scale. Thus, "International Marketing" appears as a more expanded version of marketing boundaries. Due to the developing and changing consumption processes, products have started to be homogenized internationally. This has enabled growth in the export sector, but the competition in the sector continues to grow at the same pace. Businesses have started to pursue different marketing strategies for their

target markets for this reason. In the following of the study, these strategies, and tools to be pursued were examined.

2.5. Marketing Strategies of Businesses Manufacturing for Export

Foreign trade requires new rules and new needs for the business world. Not all companies can be expected to specialize in the same areas. According to factors such as resources, etc., they realize foreign trade by exporting products or services in the fields they specialize in. Planning according to the needs and demands of the target market is essential in foreign trade. Many factors such as geographical structure, culture, demographic structure, economy cause businesses to implement different strategies. In the light of these factors, all marketing activities carried out within national borders are called international marketing, while the strategies used are described as international marketing strategies. It contains many activities such as the development process, promotion, pricing and distribution of the products or services in question. The popularity of the export sector has increased with globalization. This has also led to an increase in competitiveness. It cannot be said that it creates a direct advantage because the export strategies used are very important in this regard. Aaby and Slater, (1989) Zou and Stan, (1998); Dhanaraj and Beamish, (2003); and Ibeh and Wheeler, (2005) stated that the effect of export strategies and performances of companies carrying out export activities is directly proportional. The model of export performance of the study, which they created based on the suggestions and findings of Ibeh and Wheeler (2005) and other previous studies, is presented in Figure 2.

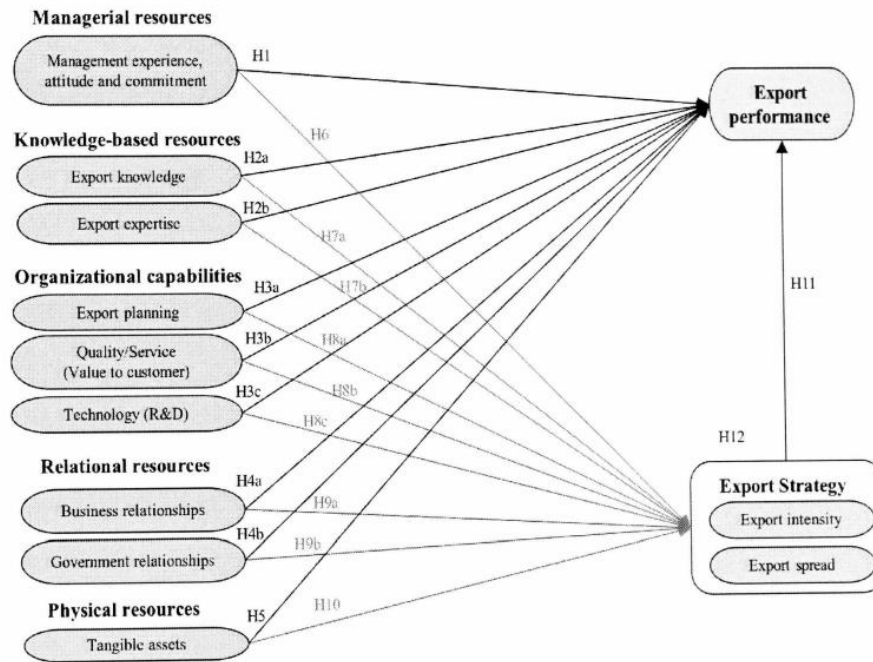


Figure 2.2. Resource-based model of export performance

(Source: Ibeh and Wheeler, 2005)

As can be seen in Figure 2, it can be said that export strategies have a positive relationship with export performance. In addition, managerial sources, knowledge-based sources, organizational capabilities, relational sources, and physical sources will also affect the export performance of the business.

On the other hand, it is examined by many researchers that the marketing strategies applied by the businesses have a great impact on the export performance. For example, Zou and Stan (1998: 343) examined 50 studies conducted between 1987 and 1997. They stated that the 4Ps are the basis of export marketing strategies: product adaptation, product durability, promotional intensity, price adaptation, competitive pricing, and distribution channels. Also, Jafarizadeh (2012)'s research focused on the effect of export marketing strategies and marketing opportunities on export performance. As a result of his research, he concluded that the effect of marketing opportunities is higher than marketing mix. In addition, because of his study on Iranian hand-woven carpets, which he completed in 2009, Mohammadi Khoshno concluded that price is more dominant for in terms of 4P in this sector. Another example is the study by Usman, Ullah, Bilal Kayani, Haroon and Khan published in the Journal of

Economics and Behavioral Studies in 2012. The result of this study that marketing mix has a significance effect on export performance. This relationship is showed in Figure 3.

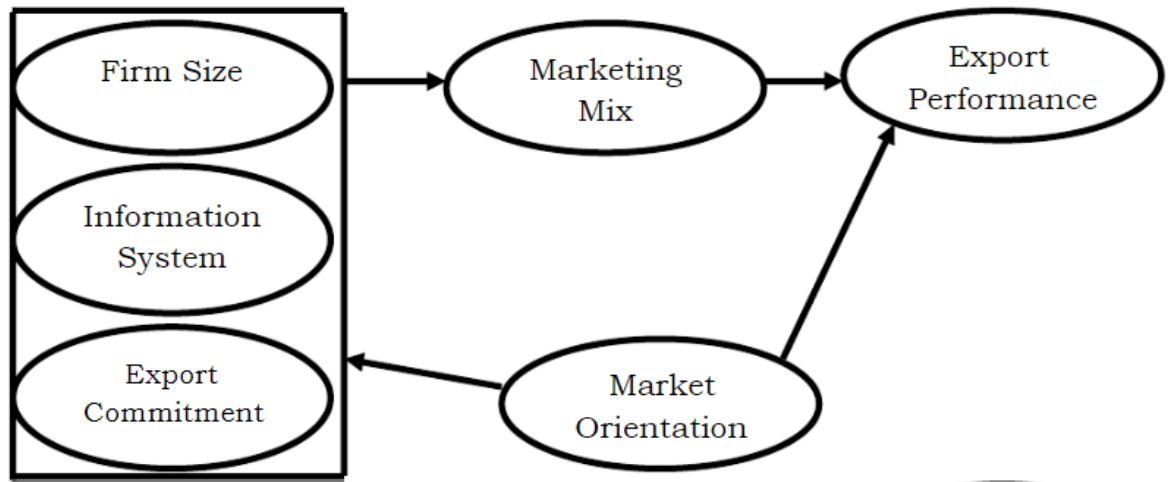


Figure 2.3. The Impact of Marketing Mix and Market Orientation on Export Performance

(Source: Khan et al., 2012)

In summary, companies use export marketing strategies as a tool to achieve their goals. In the light of the above-mentioned literature reviews, the export marketing mix stands out as the most important elements of export marketing strategies. In the ongoing study, product, price, promotion, and distribution strategies, which are among the 4P strategies, were examined in detail.

2.6. Marketing Mix Elements

The definition of marketing mix was first used by Marketing professor McCarthy to develop an effective marketing strategy in 1960, and in 1962, it was symbolized by Bordon as 4P, namely product, price, place, and promotion. (Yıldırım, 2014) On the other hand Czinkota, defined it in 2000 as "The marketing mix is a complex of tangible and intangible elements to distinguish it in the market". The marketing mix is of great importance for businesses to gain their competitive power, easily reach relevant target audiences and gain a permanent place in the market. (Czinkota, 2000) In the study, the

effect of the marketing mix on the businesses engaged in export-oriented production will be mentioned.

2.6.1. Product

The product emerges as the most basic element in the orientation of companies to their target audience and market. In line with their goals, the first step is the product or service in response to the requests and needs of the relevant customer. As a result, when companies create their export marketing strategies, they should start with the product, which is one of the marketing mix. In today's export world, where competition is increasing day by day, businesses should develop the most suitable product by using the findings obtained from relevant market research to consolidate their leadership (Keegan and Green, 2015: 285). While creating the most accurate and appropriate product or service, the requests and needs of the relevant should be taken into consideration.

There are many different definitions of the product concept in the literature. According to Kotler, Armstrong, and Adam (2006), "A product is anything that can be introduced to a market to meet a customer's desire or need." On the other hand, Stanton described the product as "A product is a set of tangible and intangible attributes, including packaging, colour, price, manufacturers and retailers' prestige and services, which the buyer may accept as offering satisfaction of wants and needs." Another definition is "A product may be regarded from the marketing viewpoint as a bundle of benefits which are being offered to consumers." (GkToday, 2016).

In addition to product definitions, service has also many definitions in literature. For instance, service described as "any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything." (Kotler et al., 2009: 372). It is intangible and does not result in ownership. According to Karalar (2001), "Contrary to physical goods in the economy, they are activities such as tourism, communication and consultancy, which are intangible and cannot be stored, manufactured or organized to meet human needs." While products can be offered together with services, services can also be offered with products. However, there are many differences between products and services. These differences are shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 2.1. Differences between products and services

Service	Product
Non-physical	Physical
Non-Stock Able	Stock Able
No Change of Ownership After Purchase	Change of Ownership After Purchase
Production and Consumption are not Separate	Production and Consumption are Separate
Interaction Between Service Technician and Customer Represents Realization Of Service	Production without Integration of Customers

(Source: Aurich et al., 2010)

The same is not the case for the service while the product can be felt concretely (Table 1), while the product can be felt concretely, the same is not the case for the service. While the product is stockable, the service cannot be stocked. While the roles of production and consumption can be separated in the product concept, it can be the opposite for the service concept. Also, interaction is much more effective in service than product. In addition to all these differences, businesses should see the product and service as a whole and evaluate it as such. In this context, in the continuation of the study, the product and service were accepted as a whole and evaluated as such.

2.6.1.1. Classification of Product

Product classification strategies are determined by many factors such as market conditions, production processes and level of competition. In line with these factors, the products were classified according to their market types, durability and touchability. (Erdogan, 2019)

According to Market Types: It is divided into two as consumer and industrial products. On the other hand, consumer products are listed as convenience products, shopping products, specialty products and unsought products (Tarver, 2024). Convenience products include products such as basic food and beverages, products that make you want to buy instantly, such as newspapers, and products that are urgently needed, such as diesel. Cost and unit prices are lower. It creates a habit of frequent purchases. Shopping products that should be liked are used for products that consumers buy by considering many factors. Dishwashing liquid and sofa set are examples of this type.

Specialty products, also called luxury products, appeal to a special group of consumers. (Kotler, 2003: 411) Specially designed clothes are an example for this classification. Finally, unsought products are products that consumers buy only when they need them. They do not want to buy this product. Life insurance is an example of this classification (Kavak and Sığındı, 2012).

If we mention to industrial products, they can be listed as raw materials, equipment goods, goods that help production, operating equipment, and processed materials/parts (Erdogan, 2019). Raw materials are characterized as the physical and chemical factor of the product in question. Equipment goods, on the other hand, are goods that are not directly involved in long-life production, such as machines in a factory. Forklifts can be given as examples of goods that help production. They are goods that provide convenience without directly entering production. Products that do not go into production, such as office supplies, but are needed by businesses are called business supplies. Finally, processed substances are auxiliary products that enter the production directly but have already been manufactured. In the production of an automobile, the tire serves this task.

According to Their Durability: It is the classification type used for shelf life and estimated useful life. While undurable products' usage and consumption periods are short, durable products' usage and consumption periods are longer. As a result, the costs are also changeable.

According to Their Touchability: It is expressed to classify according to the physical properties of the product. Product and service are the subjects of this distinction.

2.6.1.2. Levels of Product

According to Philip Kotler's five product level, there are five dimensions of the product: Core benefit, generic product, expected product, augmented product and potential product.

Core Benefit: It is called the level at which the main benefit and effect are achieved. It refers to what the consumer buys. For example, when a consumer purchases a dishwasher, they are purchasing a machine that washes dishes.

Tangible Product: This level refers to the physical appearance of the product such as quality, features, design, package. It also gives the essence product an aesthetic feature while this level increases the consumer's perception of the product. The packaging of the Ülker chocolate wafer can be shown as an example of this situation.

Expected Product: In addition to the basic features of the relevant product or service, it must also meet the expected features within the purchasing process. For example, special privileges such as hire purchasing offered to a consumer who purchases a refrigerator during payment can be considered as such.

Augmented Product: It can be called the additional benefit offered by the relevant product or service. It is a condition that provides additional functions or opportunities to its basic function. For example, giving a spare parts guarantee to a consumer who buys a car shows this situation.

Potential Product: It is the level that provides different experiences and surprises to the consumer beyond the product or service. While the other levels refer to the current situation, this level includes benefits and services for the future. Electric cars are an example of this.

2.6.1.3. Product Strategies for International Marketing

The product, which is one of the most important elements in the target markets of businesses, also plays a critical role in the marketing strategies they will implement in the competitive environment. As a result, it is the right tool to help them achieve their goals and objectives.

a. Packaging/Labelling

Packaging and labeling are at the forefront of product strategies, which are one of the first and most important elements of the marketing mix. In this sense, the design of the relevant packaging and label has a huge role in determining the identity of that product. While creating the design in question, issues such as the requests and needs, culture and beliefs of the target market should be taken into account. Thus, packaging has become more of a way of life (Odabaşı and Oyman, 2016: 243). Moreover, it helps to differentiate itself from its competitors. Many factors such as font, color, images and

shapes form the identity of the product in this context. Consumers can understand which brand the product belongs to as soon as they see the packaging. They do not need to read brand name. Another important function of packaging and labels is to provide information about the product to the consumer. It includes many factors that make up the identity of the product, such as the content information of the product, the production date, the manufacturer's information. Moreover, it carries out the main tasks such as providing protection and hygiene to the relevant product. For this strategy, tea bags stand out as one of the most creative and different designs. Labeling is also used for parallel purposes with packaging. It aims to solve situations such as some ambiguities in the packaging. Thus, it increases the reliability of the product. Moreover, it can be used to provide additional information (Shipman and Saygı, 2020). In that case, the label has a direct impact on the purchasing behavior of the target audience too (Grankvist, et al., 2004; Bandara et al., 2013; Escandon-Barbosa and Rialp-Criado, 2019). All this information shows that packaging and labeling are of great importance within product strategies. In this context, the importance of packaging and labeling has a more critical role for exporting companies too. Values such as international language, culture and belief greatly increase the importance of packaging and labeling. Considering the values and preferences of the target customer, differentiation or labeling is used in packaging. For example, the company chooses different packaging for the biscuit product it wants to export, for the relevant region or even the country where it has agreed and is working. Different languages, figures or logos can be added, and even the design may vary. In this context, packaging takes on the role of adaptation. Labelling is also the another solution for these important tasks. Instead of changing the packaging design, they prefer to add the information to their labels. This is made for customs process and also the values or interests of the relevant target customer. Considering all these details, the role of packaging and labeling in exports is undeniable.

b. Branding

One of the biggest elements of marketing is branding. It plays a huge role in establishing the identity of the product. A brand can be not only a name, but also a logo, shape, symbol, and color. According to Kotler and Armstrong, the brand reaches its customer in four basic senses (Kotler and Armstrong, 1999: 571).

a. Qualities: One of the first factor that remind us of the qualities of a product is its brand. For example, the Volvo brand directly makes consumers feel the quality of safety. In line with these qualities, companies can create their original marketing strategies.

b. Benefits: In most cases, consumers display purchasing behavior against the benefits of the product in question rather than the quality of the product it provides. Of we go back to our previous Volvo example, the quality of being safe gives the consumer the feeling that he will be safer in the event of an accident. In addition, the feel of the leather seats helps to connect with the consumer.

c. Values: The brand should also align with consumer values. The value in question should also reflect the values of consumers. The values that the Volvo brand reflects to the consumer are safety and security.

d. Personality: The brand also shows a personality. The personality figure that a brand evokes in the consumer also shows the personality of that brand. The Volvo brand reflects a reliable personality, that is, a strong and reliable personality like a father figure in the consumer.

Considering that competition is so high in today's business world, factors such as the demographic structure and cultural characteristics of the target customer should be considered. Companies can become brand leaders when they consider all these factors. The role of brand awareness on consumer purchasing behavior is quite high. In the study conducted by Çavuşgil and Zou in 1994, the effect of brand awareness on exports was emphasized. Companies operating in this sense can implement the branding strategy in three different ways:

Local Branding: It is the company's use of a local brand suitable for the relevant country or region. In this way, it is aimed to prevent differences and ambiguities in areas such as local culture (Doyle, 2003: 426). In addition, it can gain tax advantages through collaborations with local brands in the relevant region or country. For example, in McDonalds Spain, the name on the menu is "Patatas Deluxe"; and the United States changed it to "McRibs".

International Marketing: It is the branding that operates within their own country or region. It is preferred for the necessity of international adaptation of the local brand. It requires a strategy to be carried out in accordance with the needs and ideas of the target region. New marketing concept accelerates the penetration process. McDonalds' offering of halal menus and names specific to the Middle East region is an example of this branding.

Global Branding: It is the name given to branding that has a worldwide presence and has the same name and identity. This strategy, which is applied globally, is very difficult to construct and implement. It must be able to adapt to all ethnic cultures, values, and expectations at the same time. This difficulty may vary depending on the service or offered. For example, while the global branding strategy is more difficult to develop in the food industry, it is easier to develop in the sports shoe industry. For all these reasons, there are many issues to be considered in global branding. All information such as color, logo, related symbols are critical for global marketing. For example, the product sold as Eti Negro for years has been changed to Eti Nero, as the word "Negro", which is the biscuit brand of the Eti brand, can be used as an expression of discrimination in some countries. When such issues are taken into consideration, it is much more effective and easier to become a global brand (Wikipedia, 2024).

c. Product Mix Strategy (Width, Length, Depth and Consistency)

Product mix, which is one of the marketing strategies, consists of four dimensions: Width, length, depth, and consistency. The first dimension, width, refers to the total number of product lines owned by the relevant company. Length, which is another dimension, refers to the total number of products manufactured by the company in all the lines it owns. Depth, on the other hand, refers to the product variety of the company. It refers to the number of different products manufactured by each line. Consistency, which is the last dimension, refers to the consistency of the products in terms of details such as their end use after production, production methods/lines and distribution tools (Mishra, 2012).

These dimensions of the product mix are of great importance for companies, but there are many factors affecting these dimensions. Many factors such as the location of the countries and regions in which companies operate, their economic conditions, political

developments, and the competitive environment with other companies have an impact on these dimensions. For such reasons, these factors should be considered when creating and developing the product or service in question. It includes elements of product strategies such as packaging, labeling, and branding mentioned earlier. The decisions taken at this stage are very important, but making these decisions is quite difficult. According to Doyle (2003), there are two main factors affecting these decisions: The first is to achieve strategic goals and the other is to adapt to a strategically oriented understanding and approach. Companies should first determine their own strategic goal. If businesses are to expand in line with the target customer base, it must also expand in terms of all these product mix dimensions. On the other hand, if it is only for profit, it wants to reduce the costs by reducing these dimensions. Companies attribute different meanings to these dimensions according to their relevant strategic goals and understandings and carry out their processes in this way.

d. Innovative/Unique Product Strategy

Where competition is increasing between businesses, there are many product strategies that highlighting the companies. Businesses must take on a dynamic structure by keeping up with this changing world. The first step in creating this structure is to identify the target customer. By conducting a correct market research process, they can determine the requests and needs of the relevant target customer and create a new product strategy accordingly. Innovative/unique product strategy is to create and present a new and different product to the target market. Different features, from a technical feature to software and parts, enable that product or service to be classified as innovative. Such situations provide companies with a competitive advantage. For example, Nestlé has realized a successful strategy in the field of product innovation by offering the Baklava series, so that a niche customer can be gained with this different feature or different product that is focused on. This strategy, which can also appear as a differentiation strategy, adds a special value to the relevant brand. Another step to follow to gain and maintain this value is to research competitors and examine the legal process. These two critical factors allow this strategy to have a stronger structure. The last step, which takes place after all other steps, is the feasibility study. Companies should research in detail the cost, sales price and profitability rate of the product or service they will create because of this strategy and should be able to reach the most

accurate result because of this research. Thus, it can present a unique and innovative product to the market successfully (Kheirandish & Mousavi, 2018).

e. Product Quality

Nowadays, there are many alternatives in almost all sectors. Factors such as the fact that consumers have many alternatives and that the products can be accessed very easily provide a competitive environment. It also plays a key role in increasing product quality with the increase of competition in the market. Thus, product quality is another important strategy that distinguishes companies from their competitors. Factors such as the properties, durability and aesthetics of the relevant product form the basis of quality. According to Porter, this strategy appears as a product or service that includes meaningful and innovative features. In this competitive environment with an understanding of excellence, companies try to surpass each other for a higher quality product or service to consumers, but it may be necessary to maintain this quality and even make updates according to the changing world. As the level of quality increases, the customer's loyalty to the brand also increases, but at this stage, it is necessary to know the customer well. Meeting the expectations of the target customer is one of the phrases that show the accuracy of the understanding of quality. At the last point, the stability of this understanding of quality should be ensured (Kotler and Keller, 2016: 164).

f. Product Advantage

Product advantage is defined as a privileged product feature or benefit that enables the adoption of the relevant product. (Healy et al., 2018) This strategy, which is parallel to product innovation, can enable small and medium-sized businesses to develop rapidly. They improve their capabilities not only with a new product, but also by bringing a rapid change to an existing product. These activities, which are mostly carried out by teams called NPDs, are responsible for activities that increase competition in the market. First, marketing investment is made. Then, many projects are developed by the NPD team. Since it can be a costly process, they need to carry out the most accurate process possible. Product advantage can be gained with these projects. In this context, they create products that have become symbols. In addition, product advantage can benefit the organizational performance of the company by

providing compelling reasons for purchasing behavior to its target customer (Healy et al., 2018).

g. Product Adaptation Strategy

Product adaptation is the activities of creating the product or service suitable for the needs, wishes and values of the target market and audience of the companies. According to the definition made by Çavuşgil, Zou and Naidu in 1993; it is the degree of differentiation of the relevant product within the national market limits. With the growth of competition in the markets, companies have made it one of their main goals to ensure the satisfaction of consumers. For this reason, they try to adapt their products to get ahead of their competitors. This adaptation strategy focuses on the culture, geographical structure, technological opportunities, and similar factors of the target customer. This strategy is influenced by many factors such as the understanding of quality, the fact that the target markets have very different values and opinions, and the identity role of packaging/brand name. For this strategy, there are some points to be considered. Decisions must be made in accordance with the laws and values of the relevant target market. For example, businesses should be careful about pork and pork' additives in Muslim countries. Such criteria should be specified both in the product content and on its packaging. While carrying out all these processes, businesses should be careful about complying with the legal regulations of the relevant country. Considering these and similar issues, this strategy also causes the expansion of the product range of companies in the international arena. This strategy, which provides a great opportunity to adapt to the foreign market, also increases the export rates of the businesses. In this way, businesses can have the opportunity to be a global brand. (Çavuşgil, et al., 1993).

2.6.2. Price

The second element of the marketing mix is the price. In the most basic terms, the cost to be paid for a good or service is called a price. While the systems play a regulatory role for the customer, they also have the task of reflecting the quality of the relevant product.

This concept, which forms the basis of the market, has a strategic role for companies. Businesses are affected by many factors such as environmental conditions, costs, technological developments, and market situation in pricing decisions process. The reason why it has the most critical role among the marketing mix elements is that it has a revenue-generating effect because companies earn more income with this factor and take an important step towards financial growth. On the other hand, this critical role can carry many risks for companies. For that reason, there are some points should be considered. For example, while trying to reflect the quality of the product, making the wrong pricing decision can lead to bad results (Borden, 1964). In addition, the market and market analysis play a critical role for this strategy too. Pricing decisions should be made by considering all factors such as the living standards, price perceptions of the target groups, climatic factors, legal regulations, and fluctuations in the market. Almost, when making pricing decisions, all costs should be carefully analyzed. For all such reasons, when making pricing decisions, a certain way should be followed in terms of both the business and the consumer. This process is shown in Figure 4:

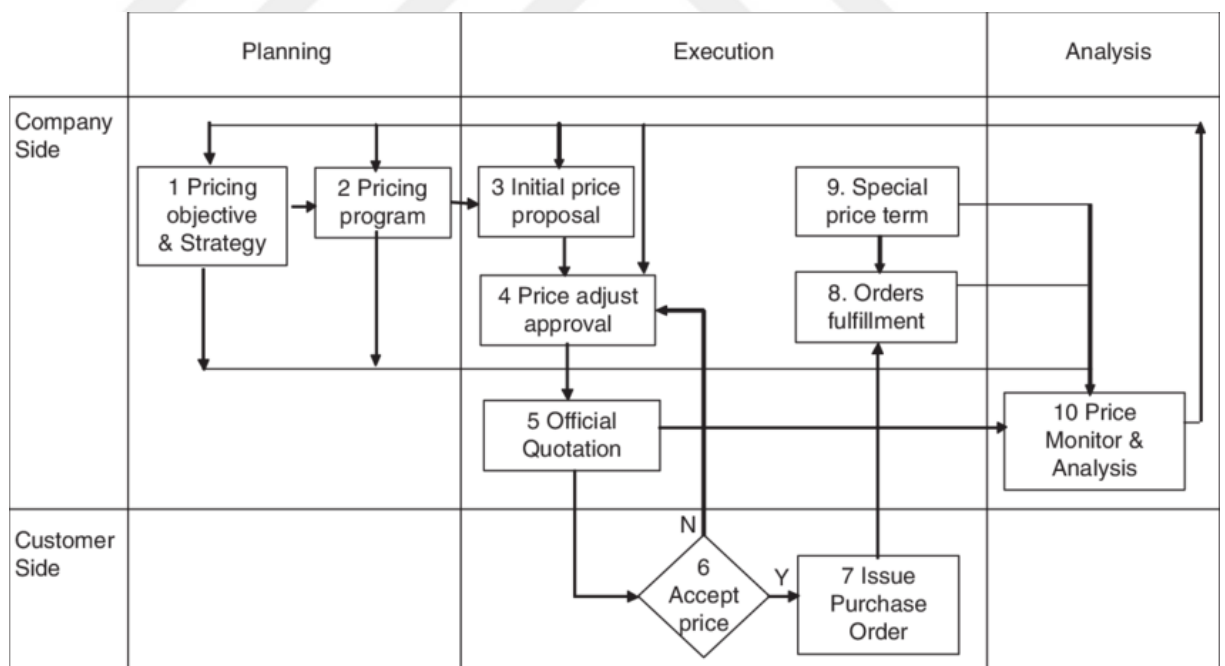


Figure 2.4. Pricing Management Process

(Source: Hwang, Tsai, Yu and Chang, 2009)

If this process is examined in terms of businesses; There are three basic stages when making pricing decisions. The first stage is the planning process. Firstly, businesses develop the business plan. Then, they determine pricing strategies and programs according to their sales revenue and profitability. In the second stage, sales representatives and support teams become involved. In this stage, which consists of many transactions, the pricing strategies and programs determined in the previous stage are applied on the relevant target customer. The purchasing process begins once the consumer accepts the price. The final stage is the analysis. Companies measure their performance after all transactions. Businesses can use these experiences to make predictions about the future (Hwang et al., 2009).

2.6.2.1. Price Strategies for International Marketing

Price and pricing strategies can be defined as plans and activities that are directly aimed at pricing. Pricing, which is one of the most important factors affecting competitive power, carries great risk for companies. In addition, businesses should not rely on a single criterion when making pricing decisions; in other words, these decisions should be made with detailed control. In the following part, pricing decisions and policies applied in the field of international trade will be examined.

a. Pricing Method (Cost Based Pricing, Demand Based Pricing, Competitiveness Based Pricing)

The pricing method, which is at the top of the critical decisions that can be used to measure consumer value, also plays a key role for marketing managers. For this reason, the first step should be determining the list price correctly. After this price, the final price may undergo some changes according to the conditions, shipping methods and distribution strategies of the relevant target markets. There are many different classifications in the literature. Pricing method decisions are generally examined under three main headings. These are cost based pricing, demand-based pricing, and competition-based pricing.

➤ Cost Based Pricing

In cost-oriented pricing method, which is generally used by mass production companies, the final price is determined by adding the profitability margin on top of

the price resulting from the costs. Costs can include both fixed and variable costs, but in this system, they may vary when demand differs and the market changes. Due to these reasons, there are many factors that directly affect this type of pricing method. As a result, the most appropriate method would be to make a pricing decision between the floor and the ceiling (Dealhub, 2023).

➤ **Demand Based Pricing**

It is a type of pricing that is generally used for products that will be launched as a technological product that will be released to the market or as a monopoly. The prices of such products are carried out with the pricing determined by the manufacturer or consumer. For example, this pricing method can be applied when the airfryer is first introduced to the market. Since it is a new product, it would be suitable to choose this method. At this point, if the strategy of market skimming is implemented, the company can achieve high profitability margins in the product and keep the supply and demand of the market in hand (Dealhub, 2023).

➤ **Competition Based Pricing**

Companies have to make many critical decisions in the international market. One of them is the price it will offer to the foreign market. This pricing method, which is more effective than products that require specific features and technological factors, is much more suitable for fast-moving consumer goods. When there are large price differences between companies with the same or similar products, it can change the perception of consumers intensely. For this reason, price analysis of competitors and equivalent products should be done and the final price should be determined. "Premium Price" is offering a higher price than the market. On the other hand, offering a lower price than the market is defined as a "Lowest Cost" strategy. When making this decision, all threats and opportunities should be carefully examined. For example, if a higher price is to be determined compared to the competitor, this product should have a differentiating feature. If a low price is offered, this offer may create the impression in the consumer that he/she can buy more of the lower priced product than the other product. However, balance is very important in this regard. When all conditions can be carefully examined and the analysis can be completed, the most accurate results can be obtained (Eightception, 2024).

b. Price Adaptation

Price adaptation is one of the pricing strategies that has a wide scope. It is the name given to pricing decisions created to adapt to different geographical regions, customer demands and many other factors. After these adaptation processes, companies can get one step closer to consumers. In the literature, price adaptation strategies are examined as follows:

➤ Geographical Pricing

Geographic pricing is the pricing method developed by companies based on country, region, etc. These pricing decisions can directly affect the marketing activities. The costs between the location of the relevant target audience and the location where production activities are carried out can also affect these decisions. Many factors such as price sensitivity of the target market, exchange rate differences and consumption rates underlie the geographic pricing strategy. For example, the pricing applied by the Snickers brand for Türkiye and the pricing method applied for France are quite different. These decisions are one of the most important strategies affecting the profitability and success of international companies (Gawande, 2021).

➤ Promotional Pricing

This type of pricing is a temporary price reduction policy applied to attract the attention of consumers in purchasing behavior. From these policies; Loss-leader pricing, Special Event Pricing, Special Customer Pricing, Cash Rebates, Low-Interest Financing, Warranties and Service Contracts and Psychological discounting." According to the "Loss-leader Pricing" strategy, the company encourages customers to buy by setting a sales price that is even lower than its cost. Thus, it can realize a high volume of sales." In the "Special Event Pricing" strategy, companies grow special pricing campaigns under the name of special events such as festivals and parties. On the other hand, consumer-specific pricing strategies are called "Special Customer Pricing". For this pricing, which is applied specifically to the customer or customer base, the relevant market-specific cards used in the markets can be given as an example (Daga, 2023). These markets carry out a separate campaign and pricing for those who have this card. A similar pricing is that a special one-hour discount is offered for fish varieties with

an announcement while you are shopping at the market. This type of pricing is an example of "Cash Rebates". Executing a pricing by offering a lower interest rate is an example of "Low-Interest Financing". Another strategy is "Warranties and Service Contracts". In this strategy, companies offer special warranty opportunities and after-sales services. This is how they gain the attention of the customer. As a final strategy, "Psychological discounting" can be mentioned. This strategy is one of the most popular today. When you look at the labels in stores, you'll see that the previous price is crossed out and a lower price is written. Such pricing strategies attract the attention of customers intensely and cause them to realize purchasing behavior (Gawande, 2021).

➤ **Price Discounts and Allowances**

Price reductions and discounts are at the beginning of the pricing methods applied in almost all markets where competition is quite intense. These strategies, which are an important step in ensuring consumer awareness, help to increase sales volume and consume stocks by making them more affordable for the customer. It can be given as an example end of season discounts. These strategies are divided into four as quantity discounts, functional discounts, seasonal discounts and cash discounts. The strategy that increases the purchase amount of the relevant product and applies a discount to the excess purchase is referred to as "Quantity Discount" in the literature. "Functional Discounts" are discounts applied to encourage dealers and distributors. On the other hand, discount campaigns that include a certain season or time interval are called "Seasonal Discounts". Cash Discounts", on the other hand, have examples such as the discount applied when the payment is made in advance in traffic fines. It encourages the consumer to pay quickly (Daga, 2023).

➤ **Discriminatory Pricing**

Conducting a special pricing policy for the relevant target audience, product, location, etc. is called discriminatory pricing. In a sense, it is to modify the price according to the situation and the subject. This pricing is based on customer-segment pricing, product-form pricing, image pricing, channel pricing, location pricing, and time pricing. Applying a different pricing strategy by dividing customers into segments is called customer-segment pricing. The old and young people discounts used in train

schedules can be given as an example. Pricing depending on the shape and version of the product is called product-form pricing. For example, the pricing is different between Coca-Cola in a plastic bottle and Coca-Cola sold in a glass bottle. On the other hand, image pricing is the company's classification of products according to image differences and carrying out pricing activities. Also, the fact that companies offer different and special prices to different sales channels is called channel pricing. An example of this is Migros' different pricing specific to the “Migros Hemen” application. Moreover, location pricing is the special pricing application for different sales points of the companies. The last pricing method is time pricing. According to this pricing, the brand applies different pricing at certain time intervals. Black Friday discounts are an example of this. This is a good example of pricing that is applied depending on the time frame (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

c. Price Determination of Market

For this type of pricing strategy, typically used for unique and specialized products, the initial introduction of a new product often establishes a price range that remains consistent throughout the product's lifecycle. On the other hand, if the product is specialized, there is a risk that competitors will be quickly identified upon its entry into the market at a high price. Furthermore, for this approach to be successful, it is essential to thoroughly understand the target market and ensure that the pricing reflects the company's values and principles. However, this pricing strategy may prove inadequate with the entry of an equivalent product into the market. To mitigate such risks and achieve success, it is crucial to have comprehensive market dominance, which entails knowing every detail about the market and applying the appropriate strategies based on this knowledge. (Öztürk and Şahin, 2022).

2.6.3. Place

Another element of the marketing mix is place. In this term, the company decides on which channel, when and how its products will be presented to the customer and how they will be sold accordingly. Supply chain and inventory management are the most important elements of this step. In this regard, it is necessary to carefully determine and develop the entire chain.

2.6.3.1. Place Strategies

The production and post-production distribution network of the businesses are the most important steps in delivering the relevant products to the customers under the right conditions and on time. For this reason, each distribution network needs to be carefully identified and analyzed, and all connections and businesses in that network must proceed in coordination with each other. For example, a chocolate manufacturer has a relationship with a cocoa wholesaler for a specific purpose, and the coordination between them needs to be carried out carefully. In this management network, which is carried out within a system, each business has its own duties and services. This system is carried out within certain rules and rankings. The following Figure 5 outlines how this system is carried out:

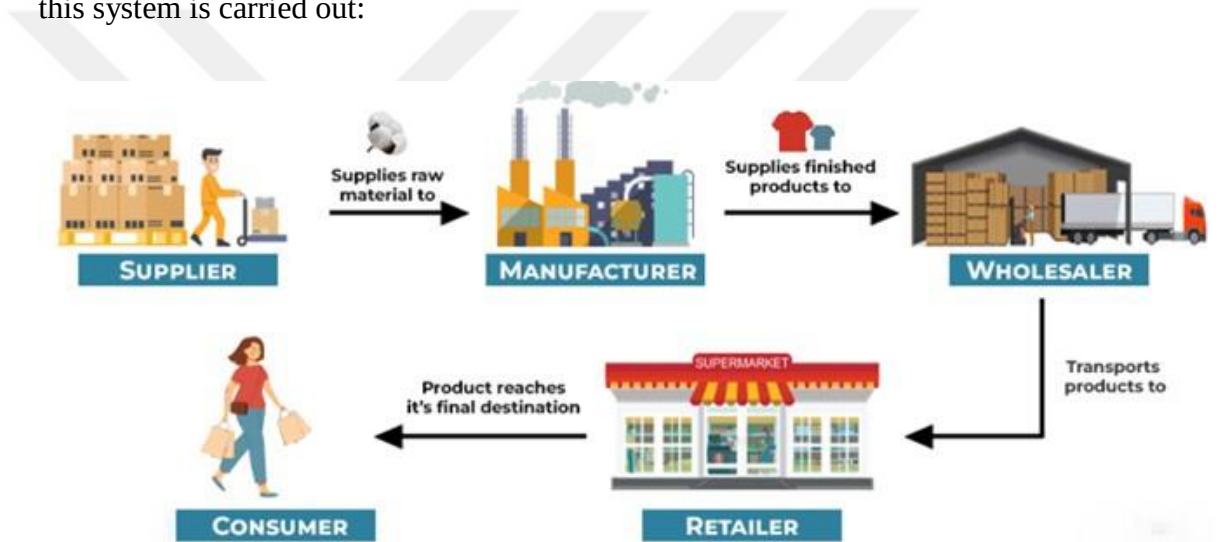


Figure 2.5. Distribution Management

(Source: Madari and Thakur, 2023)

As can be seen in Figure 5, first, the relevant manufacturer company obtains the raw material it needs from its supplier and starts production. After production, it sends its final product to its wholesaler or distributor. The retailer, on the other hand, buys as many products as he requests from the wholesaler or distributor. The consumer reaches these products through the retailer. This order may vary according to factors such as the sector in which the product is located, the characteristics of the product and the distribution policy (EDUCBA, 2023). In the ongoing study, the strategies of the companies that put them ahead of their competitors in this chain will be examined.

a. Distribution Adaptation (Restricted Distribution, Selective Distribution, Intensive Distribution)

It is not sufficient for a company to merely manufacture goods. These strategies are of much greater importance for exporting companies; otherwise, brand awareness cannot be achieved, and export activities cannot be successfully conducted. Additionally, many situations in foreign markets require adaptation. It has to determine a distribution adaptation strategy suitable for many factors such as cultural differences, geographical characteristics and market conditions of the target regions and even countries. Because when businesses expand into foreign markets, they encounter all these factors. In this context, it is examined under three main headings according to distribution density: intensive distribution, restricted distribution, and selective distribution (İnan, 2019).

➤ **Intensive Distribution**

According to this distribution strategy, the manufacturer is the process of offering his products to all points that can be reached by his consumers through a distribution network. Wholesalers and retailers play a role in this strategy, which is mostly used for fast-moving consumer goods and easy goods. With these intermediaries, customers can access products more easily and quickly. The impact of this strategy on the decision-making process of customers cannot be ignored because such products aim to reach the relevant product more easily and quickly, and when these qualities are not met, they cause them to turn to another brand. With this strategy, the spread of products is accelerating (İnan, 2019).

➤ **Restricted Distribution**

Some manufacturers collaborate with a select number of businesses to better supervise and regulate their supply chains. In this strategy, which is implemented with fewer partners compared to intensive distribution, sales activities are conducted through intermediary businesses. Also, consumer access is restricted to these designated sales points. In this strategy, which is used more for special and luxury products, the consumer is made to feel more privileged and special. In this context, the brand's value also improves (İnan, 2019).

➤ **Selective Distribution**

In this form of distribution, a certain region is determined, and distribution activities are carried out with a limited number of intermediary businesses. Similar to restricted distribution, retailers and wholesalers play a significant role in this distribution strategy; however, it is much more selective, with activities conducted through designated intermediaries. This distribution strategy can also be selected later. The manufacturer primarily uses other distribution strategies and selects from among its intermediaries as a result of the experience it has gained. It can carry out its activities by selecting the best retailers and wholesalers that are beneficial and effective for it by eliminating the companies that cause high costs, those with weak distribution networks, insufficient and weak sales points, those with low profit impact on the manufacturer, etc. (Delihoca, 2008).

b. Delivery Time

The interval between when the manufacturer receives the order and when it is delivered is referred to as the delivery time. When determining their distribution strategies, companies should conduct a detailed analysis to optimize this period effectively. Especially export-oriented production companies, the effect of this strategy can be felt much more intensely because more factors can come into play during export. According to the study conducted by Ciani and Mau on the Chinese market in 2003, it was observed that the effect of delivery time on competitiveness was positive. The prolongation of delivery times may create limitations on the diversification and development of exports. Due to these reasons, businesses resort to many ways. In this regard, it can also influence the power delivery time of large companies. For example, Walmart charts its own ships to manage its deliveries. On the other hand, such opportunities may not be available for small-scale businesses. As a result, it should effectively develop the supply chain network by establishing the right purchasing team. For example, when the raw material supply time is set correctly, the process of putting orders into production accelerates. Receiving pre-orders and forecast orders is one of the other factors that accelerate this process. Inventory management, on the other hand, can reduce the cost of holding and speed up the lead time. Another effective strategy is to find an optimum solution by analyzing all the criteria in air, land and sea transportation. When distribution logistics is turned into a

successful network with such reasons and factors, businesses can get ahead of their competitors by accelerating the average delivery time (Ciani and Mau, 2023).

c. Distributors/Agents

In the distribution network, an agent is a business or person who is responsible for promoting, selling, and distributing the products or services received from the manufacturer to the final buyer. The aim of the agency is to increase sales efficiency by acting as a bridge between the manufacturer and the target market and to effectively present its experience and services in the target market to the consumer. In this way, while reducing financial risks, the consumer's loyalty to the brand can be ensured more comfortably and effectively. There may be bargaining and contracting authority directly on behalf of the relevant brand. The commission rate is lower than the distributor, and the manufacturer's influence on the end users can continue due to the presence of a special contract (JWPM, 2023).

On the other hand, distributor is the name given to individuals and businesses that purchase the product from the manufacturer and sell it to the final consumer in order to make their own profit. Due to their extensive knowledge of the relevant markets, they provide manufacturers with the opportunity to expand into new markets and product lines. On the other hand, according to the agency, the dominance and influence on the final consumer may be lower. In both relationships, when factors such as limits, payment methods, commission rates, responsibilities, rights, brand, and logo use are carefully understood, it will have more positive results than negative result (Bello and Lohtia, 1995).

d. Dealer Support

In today's business world, most companies continue their distribution activities using a regional dealer network. Dealers are intermediary institutions that sell the products or services they receive from the manufacturers by working on their own behalf. Dealers who act as representatives of the relevant brand and business play a major role in the strengthening of the business. For this reason, manufacturers are trying to use the dealer support strategy effectively. According to this strategy, they choose the most appropriate distribution channel in order to deliver the relevant product or service to

the relevant customer base. This relationship begins with the creation of a common marketing strategy and the combination of goals. When the right materials are provided, the power of dealer support can be felt much more effectively. For example, Ülker company provides many promotional materials such as printed t-shirts and mugs with Ülker written on it to its Azerbaijan dealer. They offer dealers opportunities to conduct effective marketing activities with such resources. Moreover, through various training and orientation support, they collaborate in unified efforts towards common objectives.

This business environment, which is open to continuous development, is one of the strategies that maximize the sales performance of companies. By strengthening the brand, they can offer opportunities open to development to companies through various information exchanges and analyzes. In this way, businesses take important steps to achieve growth by increasing their revenues with dealer support (Hofbauer, 2021).

e. Closeness to Market

In today's marketing world, another factor that increases sales revenues has been determined: proximity to the market. Although it is not felt to be very important by businesses at first glance, proximity to the market has become more important due to the increase in expenditures such as freight. According to research conducted by Linmao and Venables in 2001, they found that increases in shipping costs reduce international trade volumes. Thus, this factor has become unignorable. For this reason, businesses need to analyze many factors before entering a new market. As a result, the proximity of the origin of the businesses to the market allows the relevant company to enter the international market more effectively. On the other hand, proximity, whether physical, economic, social, cultural, etc., is one of the factors influencing the internationalization of businesses. For example, culture determines the consumption habits of consumers living in that country, and the proximity of the business to this culture can help it understand that consumer much more easily. On the other hand, the language can be another term that determines the proximity of the business to the new market. When all these factors are considered, businesses make decisions depending on the distance from the country of origin when entering the target market, because the distance directly affects the type of product and service and the feeling of the consumer (Linmao and Venables, 2001).

2.6.4. Promotion

Promotion, which is another element of the marketing mix; to explain and promote the products and services to the relevant market and to carry out marketing activities that will strengthen this relationship. It consists of activities that include special activities such as sales promotions and advertisements. These activities, which are of great importance in terms of sustainability, brand awareness and loyalty, offer clues about where, when and how to sell the product or service (Borden, 1964).

2.6.4.1. Promotion Strategies

While other marketing mix elements include more copyable features, promotional strategies can be much more unique for consumers and businesses. This situation causes marketing departments to focus on this element. According to the research conducted by Ünüsan and Sezgin in 2007; It is a whole that includes activities such as increasing market share and volume, increasing sales rates with incentives for sales, ensuring brand and product awareness, increasing competitive power in the market environment that becomes difficult with the increase in substitute goods, understanding and recognizing the consumer more effectively. It is based on the exchange of ideas and messages between the target and the source. When discussing these stages across the product life cycle, they encompass marketing activities such as pre-promotion, promotional advertising, and distributing samples for informational purposes during the product's market entry stage. As the product enters the growth phase of the cycle, efforts to persuade customers to purchase begin. At this stage, distinctive advertising activities are conducted to differentiate from competitors, and the process of persuading intermediaries mentioned in previous discussions becomes significant. In the maturity phase, when the product has established a solid position in the market, activities such as reminder advertisements, initiatives to enhance customer loyalty, and special discount offers are implemented to prevent consumers from switching back to competitors. If the product must come to the stage of decline, marketing activities may decrease at the same rate. For such reasons, businesses should prioritize their promotion activities. Considering that the competition of companies that want to trade and grow in the international arena is quite high, it is observed that the applicability of promotion activities becomes mandatory (Ünüsan and Sezgin, 2007).

a. Advertising or Launch Strategy

Advertisement: it is the name given to the promotional activities of a product or service to the consumer with the help of various tools. These activities, which can reach large audiences, have functions such as informing, persuading, and providing brand awareness for the target market (Mucuk, 2014). To carry out this process successfully, the first step should be to learn and define the target audience in detail. For example, if the target audience is a Muslim country, religious advertisements specific to the month of Ramadan are very effective. The second step is to determine which tool will be used for which type of advertisement. For example, in today's marketing world, the Instagram application has become one of the tools where advertising activities are carried out in the most effective way and the customer can be reached most easily. On the other hand, when determining this tool, the characteristics of the target audience learned in the previous step should be considered. The next step is the message in the ad in question must contain accurate information. The message is the most important aspect for advertising. This message should be able to provide the consumer with the necessary information and arouse the desire to buy. The last step is to decide through whom this message should be carried out. It is to make the decision to work with a team or agency that is an expert in its field. Moreover, these agencies can offer market research activities beyond advertising services. As a result of these activities, companies can get ahead of the competition.

On the other hand, launch is a corporate event prepared to introduce a new product or service to the market. A special place and time are determined for this business. In this invitation, people who have been previously analyzed and determined are invited. The content of this invitation should be original, effective, and permanent. This content is remarkable, interest-raising, and informative; On the other hand, caution should be exercised to avoid being repetitive and lengthy. Another issue that should be clear about the slogan and the message to be given about the product is another issue. Considering all these issues it should be considered that the launch is a marketing activity that puts the business ahead in terms of awareness and penetration of the brand owned (Biler, 2021).

b. Sales Promotions (Coupons, promotions, gifts, give aways, discounts etc.)

Sales promotion is marketing activities that aim to increase sales volume to encourage purchasing behavior to the relevant target audience. It includes many elements such as coupons, promotions, gifts, discounts. Coupons: It is a document that is given by advertisement or by hand, which makes the customer a discount on his shopping or allows him to buy a certain number of products without having to pay for it with this document (Islamoglu, 2000). This document has a specific value on it and provides a price discount when the consumer wants to use this document. The coupon path aims to increase sales volumes by inspecting the customer for the product or service. If it is promotion; It is the activity of giving another product free of charge in addition to the product sold. Gifts, on the other hand, are products and services that aim to increase the satisfaction of the consumer in parallel with the promotion. It is especially applied in the food, beverage, and clothing sector. On the other hand, activities that aim to attract the attention of the customer by giving a target gift chance for a certain number of consumers are called Give Aways. Essentially, the goal is to boost sales volume by fostering a sense of reward among consumers. On the other hand, price reductions appear as offering a lower price than the normal price of the product in question. According to Kotler (2000), price reductions are one of the main factors that ensure success in highly competitive markets during the maturity period of the product life curve (Kotler, 2000).

c. Promotion intensity

Promotion intensity: It is the percentage obtained by dividing the sales obtained through the promotion by the total sales revenue (Zeybek and Ülengin, 2022). This percentage measures the success of both manufacturers and retailers in sales revenues from the promotion. It is possible to evaluate this rate from both sides. When evaluated in terms of retailers; It is checked to what extent the intensity of promotions affects the purchasing process. Excessive density in this regard can lead to adverse effects when assessed in terms of profitability. For this reason, it has to establish a good balance between these two elements. When this balance is achieved, it maintains a successful marketing activity and has the chance to gain the loyalty of the target audience to a great extent. If it is examined in terms of manufacturers; The intensity and success of this rate is a source for the detailed evaluation of the situation analysis in the relevant

sector. As a result of this analysis, it can gain the chance to bring its position in the market to a better place by observing the pros and cons in the relevant sector and market. On the other hand, when promotional activities are excessive, it can reduce profitability; Very low levels of promotional activities can reduce sales growth. For this reason, it is very important to achieve and maintain this balance for both the manufacturer and the retailer. To achieve this balance, a realistic swot analysis should be made by taking into account the current economic, cultural and seasonal conditions. As a result of this analysis, they can achieve very successful results when they use the intensity of promotion effectively (Gaul, 2017).

d. Promotion Adaptation

According to the Monash Business School dictionary, "Promotion Adaptation"; It is the name given to the implementation of a unique promotional strategy suitable for different geographical and cultural locations of the same product. In accordance with this definition, businesses; They determine promotion adaptation strategies based on factors such as cultural differences, legal and economic environment, costs, and seasonal differences. The importance of these factors in the international market as well as their local impact is quite high. They try to achieve success by organizing marketing activities for the target market. For example, advertisements can be used for purposes such as ensuring brand awareness and creating primary demand. In addition to these, the necessity of this adaptation strategy has become more understandable since countries can be at different economic and technological levels. For example, while some promotional adaptations can be carried out much more effectively for the USA, executing the same strategy for African countries may not manufacture successful results. For such reasons, it is necessary to carefully concentrate on the results of market analysis to successfully implement this adaptation strategy (Okazaki, 2009; Keegan and Green, 2017; Czinkota et al., 2009).

e. Fairs and Events

Fairs and events; These are special events held in a certain time interval in which businesses participate or organize for many purposes such as introducing themselves, developing their commercial environment, gaining new contacts, promoting their products and gaining awareness, and getting to know and analyze their competitors

more closely. Fairs and events that have been shaped more with the 20th century in the modern sense; It has become customary for businesses to host special activities where they not only showcase their products but also offer facilities such as sampling and taste testing. During this time, they try to present their products or services to the customer base using almost all the marketing tools they have. In addition, the role of fairs and events in product promotion is quite high, not only locally but also both locally and nationally. It can be said that export-oriented businesses carry out participation in fairs and fair organization activities at the highest rate (Yılmaz and Özkan, 2010: 306). Through these fairs, they can provide easier access to all customer groups in terms of different religions, languages, and races. On the other hand, assuming that the competition is quite high, we need to know that it is not easy to stand out from the competitors. Some steps are required to take advantage of the effective power of marketing tools. First, the company should determine its own goals. After answering the question of what my purpose in is this fair or event, the next step is to determine the target audience correctly. More effective strategies can be carried out according to the characteristics of this target audience. Another step is to determine which marketing tool and channel should be used. For instance, at a technology fair, presentations enhanced with visual effects can be highly impactful. As a result of these steps, it will be much easier to gain a large place in the memory of the target people.

3. INFORMATION ABOUT THE BUSINESSES

Organizational and managerial factors of the business are another factor that has an impact on competitive advantage. In this context, these factors will be mentioned in the ongoing study.

3.1. Organizational Factors

Organizational factors consist of the factors that make up an organizational structure and indicate the form, size and nature of the basic relationship. These factors, which play an important role in the strategy, are developed depending on the size of the company, the scope of the work and the relationships. A good manager needs to support and develop this structure in terms of size, structure and organization. On the other hand, the success of organizations is affected by factors such as differentiation, integrated characteristics and professionalization. In this context, in parallel with the study, the age and size of the business, the export experience and annual turnover of the company will be mentioned.

3.1.1. Age of the Firm

The age of the business is a phenomenon that refers to the length of time that the business has existed in the market. With the increase in this time, it causes progress in experience and professionalism. Accordingly, there is an increase in the performance of the company (Leonidou, 2000: 136). In this context, the presence and professionalism of the business in the sector also shows its impact in the international arena. On the other hand, due to generational differences, new businesses can adapt more easily to changing competitive environments. In this context, many case studies have been carried out. For example, according to Baldauf's study in 2000, it was found that there was a negative relationship between the age of the business and its export performance (Baldauf, et. al., 2000). Similar results have been obtained in many studies. According to the findings of Loderer and Waelchli (2011) in their study, it is stated that the power of the firm decreases with age. This is based on the observation that as businesses age, they become more inflexible in accepting new ideas and find it more difficult to adapt to a changing world.

3.1.2. Size of the Firm

The size of the business, as well as its age, is one of the important factors for businesses. It is generally defined as the total assets of the business. This factor includes the capital of the business, the number of employees, the materials or tools it has, and the physical facilities of the business. Since the size of the company is a factor that increases the opportunities of businesses, it can also be said that it is a tool that improves their investments and capital. In this context, many studies have been conducted that have determined that its share in exports is also important. On the other hand, for a sector with many counterparts, such as snacks, this can be quite dangerous because consumers' tastes and habits can change over time (Santos, 2021).

3.1.3. Firm's Export Experience

The export experience of the businesses is expressed as the total years in which they carry out their export activities. In this context, many researchers have carried out studies on export experience. For example; Madsen (1989) emphasized the necessity of experience in order to ensure success in export marketing strategies. Also Dominguez and Sequeria (1993) continued his research by considering the contribution of the export experience of the businesses to their internationalization. Although there are opposing views, Çavuşgil and Tamer (1984) stated that this is not a sufficient factor to explain internationalization in the opposite manner. This factor can lead to positive results as it also affects the market knowledge of the relevant businesses. When this factor can be used effectively, it can make a big difference in terms of competition.

3.1.4. Annual Turnover of Firm

Turnover is expressed as the sum of all income earned by businesses in a certain period of time. (Lev and Sougiannis, 1996) In general, it is the financial impact that the business obtains from its products or services within the scope of its activities. The difference from profit is whether the expenses are included in the relevant account. When determining the overall profit, the difference between income and expenses is taken. Turnover, on the other hand, is its definition in a more general sense. In this context, turnover is an important factor for the survival and performance of the

business. As a result, the turnover calculation must be made correctly in order to ensure the continuity of the business. In the international arena, this factor is of great importance for the investments and strategies of the business. Considering that it has a development effect on the country and even the world, it is a fact that the importance of turnover is accepted by everyone. Considering the developing countries, including Türkiye, and in this case where there is intense competition, businesses have to protect and develop their financial structure.

3.2. Managerial Factors

The impact of managerial factors on export performance has been extensively studied in many academic studies. These factors cover a variety of elements, from managers' knowledge and experience to their strategic management abilities and play a critical role in determining the success of companies in international markets.

Managerial factors play a vital role in determining the export performance of firms. Experienced and well-educated managers contribute to the company's success in international markets with their strategic management skills and leadership abilities. These factors influence not only the capabilities of individual managers but also the firm's overall strategic orientation and adaptive capacity. Therefore, it is of great importance for companies to invest in managerial factors to increase their export success (Al-Adaileh, 2020).

3.2.1. Education Levels of Decision Makers

Companies which have well educated, and dynamic decision makers are more likely open to doing export. (Leonidou et al., 2004: 458). Decision makers' target market selection, the way of entering market, being open to export, education level and knowledge of foreign languages have effects on export success and performance (Koçak, 1997: 473; Leonidou et al., 1998; İltar, 1999: 23; Yücel, 2005: 35).

Educated managers can increase the export performance of companies with their innovative approaches and strategic management skills. Such managers better evaluate new market opportunities and manage the challenges encountered in export processes more effectively. The education level of managers also affects employee motivation and performance. Educated managers demonstrate more effective leadership,

increasing employees' motivation towards export targets, which positively affects overall export performance.

It shows that the educational status of managers is critical not only for individual development, but also for corporate success and gaining competitive advantage in international markets. The strategic vision and management skills of trained managers can significantly improve firms' export performance.

3.2.2. Experience Levels of Decision Makers

Academic studies on the effect of managers' experience on export performance show that manager experience plays an important role on firm performance. These studies reveal that experienced managers' knowledge, strategic decision-making abilities, and experience in international markets contribute to export success. For example, Dean, David and Mengüç's (2000) study examined the impact of managers' experience and strategic decisions on export performance and showed that experienced managers achieved higher export success. In this study, it is emphasized that managers' market knowledge and strategic planning positively affect export performance.

Another study, Reid's (1981) research, revealed that the experience and knowledge managers possess when making export decisions are critical factors in enhancing export performance. It has been stated that experienced managers can develop more effective strategies by better understanding the dynamics of the market.

Other important findings on this subject show that managers' international trade experience provides a great advantage in determining and implementing export strategies. Especially in small and medium-sized businesses, experienced managers can enhance the company's export capacity, thereby helping it achieve a more competitive position.

As a result, the experience of managers stands out as an important factor that directly affects export performance. Experienced managers can more effectively carry out the necessary strategic directions and practices for the company to be successful in international markets.

3.2.3. Share of Exported Products Over Total Production

Export intensity, in other words, how much of the production activities of businesses are export-oriented, is generally seen as a factor that positively affects export performance. Businesses with high export intensity tend to focus more on export markets, which can lead to higher export performance. These companies invest more in the knowledge and experience necessary to gain competitive advantage in international markets (Belderbos et al., 2008).

Companies that adopt export-oriented manufacturing strategies optimize their manufacturing processes and products according to the demands of international markets. These companies generally have higher quality standards and place more emphasis on innovation. This positively affects export performance.

It shows that adopting export-oriented manufacturing strategies can contribute to businesses being more successful in international markets. Therefore, export-oriented manufacturing companies have a higher chance of gaining global competitive advantage and increasing their export performance (Wagner, 2007).

4. COMPETITIVE POWER AND COMPETITIVE POWER THEORIES

With the rapid growth of industries in 1970 and later, the concept of competitive power has become much more important for businesses. In this context, the strategies to be implemented will be beneficial in increasing competitiveness. In the following part of the study, the concept of competition, theories and approaches in this sense will be discussed.

4.1. Competitiveness

Along with technological and social developments, the business world has caused businesses to develop many new and basic activities. Special activities such as international order transactions, special reporting, AI-supported search engines have started to form factors that put businesses ahead of their competitors. In this context, the definition of competition is of critical importance for businesses. There are many definitions of this concept in the literature. According to the latest definition of Wikipedia (2024), competition in general; All activities carried out to gain superiority over the opponent and the competition are considered. According to the definition in the Competition Law handbook of the Department of Education and Competition Advocacy (2016), competition is defined as the competition and activities entered by businesses in a market to obtain more customers and increase their sales profitability. According to Porter (1990)'s definition it as a focus on microeconomic fundamentals that vary depending on productivity.

Since the 1980s, with the globalization process of businesses, the necessity of maintaining and even developing their place in the market has been revealed. In this sense, a competitive environment has begun to emerge. With the increase in competitors, that is, the options offered to the customer, the boundaries of competitive power have expanded even more. Previously, we could only talk about the effect of competition for large-scale companies, but now we can talk about the effect of this power for businesses of all sizes. There are many factors that affect and cause competition. Price differences, multiplicity of options and technological innovations are some of them.

4.2. Competitive Power

Since competition is constantly on the agenda of today's business world and researchers deal with this issue in a multifaceted way, the concept of competitiveness has started to form and has become the constant agenda of social life. Researchers have considered this concept in terms of two levels: macro and micro. While the competitiveness of countries in the international arena is examined at the macro level, it is considered at the micro level when measuring the level of competition of businesses and sectors (Scoot and Lod, 985:20). One of the definitions at the macro level is "To be able to increase and maintain the social welfare level of the citizens living in the relevant country" (Waheeduzzamanv and Ryans, 1996:7-17). On the other hand, there are definitions such as the fact that the relevant country provides import services, exhibits technological developments and can be successful in them. In the model created by Porter (2003), the areas of competition in terms of these two levels are summarized:

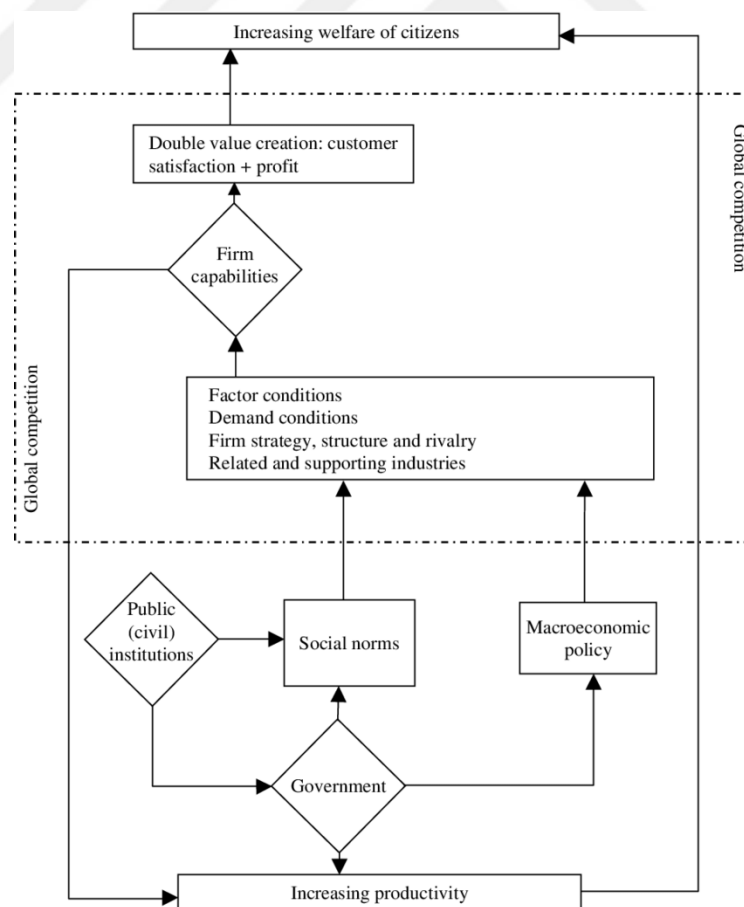


Figure 4.1. A model connecting macro and micro competitiveness

(Source: Chikán, 2008)

According to the model, there are two different levels of competition: the level of citizens' welfare and productivity, corresponding to macro and micro levels, respectively. In this model, we can observe that as productivity increases, social welfare also rises. There is a specific goal at both levels. When examined from a business point of view, the outputs are customer loyalty and satisfaction. At the national level, the welfare level of citizens is seen as an output. In this sense, they must develop their skills by focusing on these factors both at the national level and at the business level. In the continuation of the study, these two levels will be emphasized (Chikán, 2008).

4.2.1. Macro Competitive Power

As mentioned earlier, competitiveness at the macro level is to increase and maintain the welfare of citizens. The best way to do this is for governments to use their resources effectively and efficiently. For this reason, researchers have focused on the concept of efficiency. As a result of Porter's competitiveness studies in 1990, he stated that the gain from productivity should be used to increase the welfare of citizens. (Porter, 1990: 6). In addition, in most of the studies, they focused on the positive effect of technological developments and advantages on competitiveness at the macro level. In addition, approaches to price competition were also made. According to these approaches, countries' export capabilities, import and export-related ratios, capital and workforce are shown as the main factors affecting competitiveness. In addition, in Dunning's studies conducted in 1992, it was concluded that large and multinational companies such as Apple and Sonny positively affect the level of social welfare and the competitiveness at the macro level in connection with this.

4.2.2. Micro Competitive Power

When competitive power is considered in terms of businesses and sectors, micro-competitive power can be mentioned. All policies such as pricing and investment decisions determined by managers are elements that express the competitive level of businesses. Another definition at the micro level is; It is the most efficient use of resources depending on the offering, dispatch and delivery of the products or services

owned by the businesses to the customers at the most accurate prices, time and place (Cook and Rendall, 1991:1472-1473). In addition to all these definitions, the richness of human resources beyond the richness of the services of the businesses is considered as another distinguishing feature. In this sense, the skills of managers and employees are one of the most effective factors that give competitiveness in the micro sense. In addition, Aaker's (1992) study titled "Managing Assets and Skills: The Key to a Sustainable Competitive Advantage" published in California Management Review can be used to gain superiority in businesses. First, Factors such as the strategies applied by the business regarding the products and services it has, the ability to adapt easily to changes, and the strategy of providing resources for new projects indicate the way of competition. The selected market and other competitors show which channel they are competing in. In this sense, the elements it has are assets and abilities. According to this research, Aaker (1992) can gain competitive advantage to businesses when they focus on all such basic elements.

4.3. Competitive Power Theories

Many research has been carried out under the name of competitiveness and theories have been put forward as a result of these researches. Adam Smith's Theory of Absolute Superiority is one of the most important theories in this sense. According to this theory, the fact that a product or service is manufactured more efficiently in one country than in other countries is one of the reasons that create competitive advantage. In other words, if a country can manufacture a good at a lower cost, it should concentrate on the manufacturing of that product and can import that product after this expertise. If the same country can manufacture another product more cost-effectively than other countries, it should export that product (Smith, 1776). Another important theoretic is Porter's "Five Forces Model". The following image shows a summary of this theory:

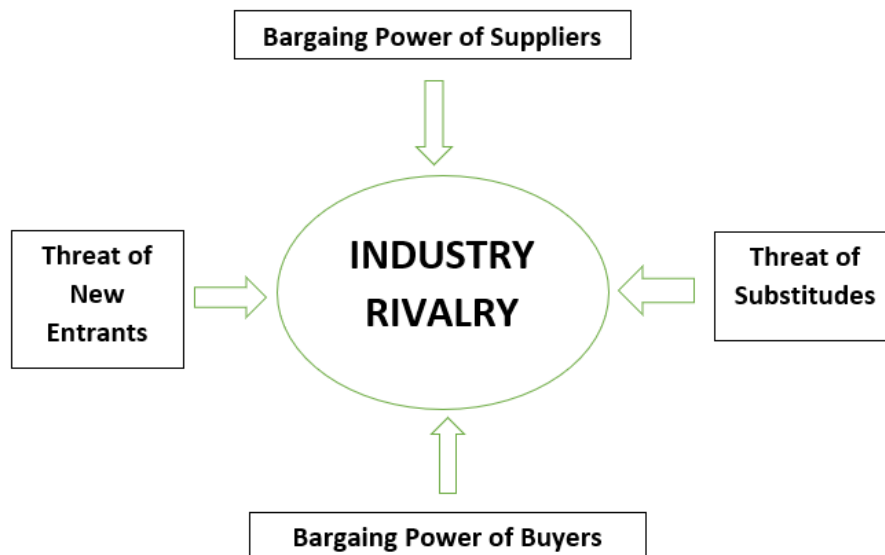


Figure 4.2. A Graphical Representation of Porter's Five Forces

(Source: Wikipedia, 2014)

According to this theory, there are five main factors that affect competition: the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of customers, the threat posed by new entrants to the sector and the threat of substitute products. The customer negotiates with the seller to buy a better and higher quality product at a much lower price, causing the seller to be in a difficult situation. Such situations lead to an increase in competition in the sector. Another threat is the bargaining power of suppliers. Suppliers play the most critical role in the sectors. The quality and price of the relevant raw materials increase the power of the suppliers against the manufacturers. The third factor is the threat posed by potential entrants into the sector. Since they are new entrants to the market, they do their best to gain a permanent place in the relevant market. In addition, it can create fluctuations in prices with the threat they pose to the sector. Substitute products, which represent another risk, can cause fluctuations between ceiling and floor prices within the relevant sector. For example, flight and bus prices are highly affected by each other. This has become one of the other factors that increase competition (Porter, 1979).

Another theory of competition is Joseph Schumpeter's "Theory of Creative Destruction". According to this theory, which is based on the factors of innovation and creativity, it is based on the destruction of the existing structure and the basis of these

factors. Schumpeter described this decision as creative destruction. As a result of this destruction, transmissions shape themselves with new activities for the future. This theory bridges the gap between small and large businesses." The "Heckscher-Ohlin Their" is based on the factor of production. He argues that a country should export the product it is good at manufacturing and import the goods that it is more difficult to obtain. In this way, they gain an advantage in the competition. Porter's "Diamond Model" is one of the most important theories on competition. The basis of success depends on the strategy implemented by the company, factor conditions and basic elements such as the sector in which it is located. When these elements are encouraged, they allow businesses to get ahead of their competitors (Yalçın and Eroğlu, 2013). On the other hand, Nash (1950) introduced the theory of "Nash Equilibrium" by examining the concept of competition from a mathematical perspective. He sees businesses and countries as players and believes that they should balance with each other. When this balance is established, a step is taken to lead to success in the competitive world.

Over time, all these theories evolve and develop in accordance with contemporary conditions, technological advancements, and the dynamics of competition. These theories will continue to be a guide for both businesses and countries to stay ahead of the competition.

4.4. Global Competitive Power

Globalization causes the removal of borders in terms of trade. With the effect of this situation, it has become inevitable for businesses to compete in the international arena. As a result, globalization allows businesses to gain value by requiring them to take on a more dynamic structure. On the other hand, to understand the competitive power of the businesses in the global sense, it is necessary to better understand the sector in which the businesses are located, to determine the possible threats and future opportunities. As a result of the analyzes and tests carried out with Porter's "Five Forces Model", which was mentioned before, they can determine the profitability they will gain from the competition and the capital they will obtain. The strategic position of that sector can both improve the business technologically and gain marketing capability (Porter, 2000: 348-353). For such reasons, they should act in coordination with their competitors and the sector they are in.

There are several factors that distinguish international competitiveness from national competition:

- Having different conditions due to their presence in the international arena
- Political factors come into play
- Having different factor costs

When such factors are examined, it can be said that multinational businesses are in a more difficult competition system. To carry out this confrontation, they need three basic activities. These activities include investments in exports or direct investments, as well as patenting. Through these activities, companies can gain an economic advantage for themselves. In addition, the production quality and product technology of the businesses are some of the factors that increase their export potential and put them ahead of the competition (Porter, 2000: 348-353).

4.4.1. Factors Affecting Global Competitive Power

The factors affecting global competitiveness will be examined under two headings as traditional and innovative approaches:

4.4.4.1. Traditional Approaches for Competitive Power

According to the traditional approach, competitiveness is explained according to the theories of superiority in economic theory. According to Adam Smith, the source of wealth can be developed through free trade. In this way, countries will specialize more in the areas they are good at, that is, in less costly production areas, and thus a competitive environment will be created. The concept of absolute superiority, which was mentioned earlier, comes into play in this regard. However, this theory remains unresolved at certain junctures. For example, will the country that does not have a definite advantage not be able to trade with the other country? There are some shortcomings like this. To fill the gaps in this theory, David Ricardo proposes the "Comparative Advantages Theory". According to this theory, the fact that a country can manufacture a product at a lower cost does not mean that it has absolute superiority. The main thing is its ability in manufacturing. Depending on the amount of labor, they will gain superiority. Ricardo's shortcoming of this theory is that it states

superiority only depending on the labor factor. The fact that it excludes resources has left out the issue of efficient use of these resources (Porter, 1980). The Heckscher Ohlin model is based on factor densities in countries. According to this model, when the factor density is available, it can manufacture cheaper. In this context, while exporting products in which it holds a comparative advantage, it may need to import other products. Furthermore, the Stolper-Samuelson model, consistent with the Heckscher-Ohlin model, posited that factor abundance would increase the share of national income and negatively impact national income in countries with low factor abundance.

Traditional approaches have been criticized in many ways. For example, it is not a correct method to compare countries only according to factor densities. Many countries have similar factor concentrations, and investment factors between both firms and countries have not been given much attention. While the impact of multinational businesses in this area is quite high, these theories have not been emphasized. Competitive power, which requires a comprehensive assessment from multiple perspectives, has historically been analyzed within a significantly narrower framework in traditional approaches (DeToni and Meneghetti, 2000).

4.4.4.2. Innovative Approaches for Competitive Power

In new approaches, unlike traditional approaches, the factors affecting competitive power have been expanded. These approaches, which consist of four different stages, first started to be put forward when the technology was not yet very developed, and this first approach, which was formed in the early 1950s, included the savings obtained from costs. The development of technology in the 1970s caused a second step to be taken in these approaches. Technology had become an element that increased these savings. This provided businesses with a competitive advantage. With this element, it has created new products and services, causing the expansion of markets. Thus, the escalation of the competitive environment required businesses to switch to a strategic management style. Since the 1980s, they have started to pursue a policy based on public support and tactics; Quality perception has become a philosophy that has settled in the minds of businesses. Superiority in quality was seen as the biggest step in gaining superiority in competition. Along with quality, speed in production is included in their philosophy as another important factor. With the 2000s, the "Value Creation" factor has started to become widespread among businesses and countries. The fact that

consumers have too many options has brought the obligation of businesses to create a different value and be permanent (DeToni and Meneghetti, 2000).

4.5. Competitive Power Dimensions

In the relevant study, the dimensions discussed in the competitive power researchers conducted by Zhao, Yeung and Zhou (2002), Kroes and Ghosh (2009), Gjerde and Slotnick (2002), Boyer and Lewis (2002), Almaz and Çağlıyan (2019), Lee and Griffith (2004) were used. These dimensions can be listed as follows:

-Innovationess: In today's business world, where the speed of change has increased considerably, innovation is shown as one of the most important sub-dimensions of competitive power. This dimension, which can be used for both products and services, includes not only innovations in production activities, but also all elements that require innovation. It is seen as one of the most valuable strategies to open up to the foreign market.

-Services: One of the requirements brought by many innovations such as technology is the special services provided to the customer. This dimension, which provides added value to the product or service, includes services such as after-sales services, providing replacement products and warranty.

-Flexibility: When consumers purchase a product or service, they also consider the flexibility of the respective manufacturer. It is the ability to easily adapt to all strategies such as production, volumetric, design-oriented and made according to demand. Assuming that there are quite different types and numbers of interests, beliefs and values in the international arena, the role of this dimension cannot be denied.

-Quality: The quality subdimension, which is one of the most important elements of today's competitive environment, can include the performance, durability, compliance with the environment and the buyer, and even the internal working conditions of the product or service in question. This dimension provides reliability and loyalty to the relevant brand.

-Delivery/Time: It is observed that not only production activities but also post-production delivery activities play a critical role for businesses. Timely and accurate

delivery can lead to an acceleration of the order cycle and thus an increase in sales. For such reasons, it emerges as one of the elements that provide competitive power.

-Cost&Price: Cost and pricing decisions include all activities such as raw materials, production, packaging, labor. This ability is of high importance for businesses as it directly affects profitability. For this reason, these decisions, which can put businesses ahead in terms of competitive power, require businesses to focus on them.



5. BISCUIT, CAKE, WAFER, CHOCOLATE, GUM AND CONFECTIONARY PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

5.1. History of Biscuit, Cake, Wafer, Chocolate, Gum and Confectionary Products Industry in the World

The history of chocolate dates back 4000 years. According to ancient sources, it was consumed as a beverage for the first time in Mexico. Later, it started to be consumed as a paste after fermentation in Latin America. After that, many countries tried to hide this product with its spread to Europe or abroad, but this culture began to spread with special situations such as marriages between countries. With the increase in demand in the European continent, cocoa machines began to be invented and thus production was made so that they could be consumed both as liquid and solid. The history of the biscuit dates to the Ancient Roman period. They baked their bread twice to meet the food needs of their soldiers. Over time, these breads began to be manufactured as biscuits. In the Middle Ages, it became a product preferred by sailors because they needed a durable food. With the 19th century, mass production started with the effect of industry and technology. It has become widespread in the world with its production in different flavors and shapes. Wafers are a product that emerged historically with the invention of waffle irons and irons for the first time. This product, which traces its origins back to the 9th century, was first documented under the term "wafer" in 1377. After the 1890s, its production became widespread and commercialized. Cakes, on the other hand, were very different from today's format when they were first manufactured. The Ancient Egyptians manufactured the first cakes that looked more like bread. It was made by grinding grains, soaking them and cooking them on hot stones. Later, they started to bake cakes by building ovens like today's bakeries. It was first used with the word "cake" in the 13th century. With the French Revolution in 1789, it began to evolve into modern pastry. It is known that the origin of sugar comes from the islands in the Pacific Ocean. For the first time, it was used to detect this taste by chewing sugar cane and to sweeten foods in the following years. After the 13th century, the Arabs used various. Since the beginning of the 17th century, sugar has also become the main ingredient that enables the development of foodstuffs. With this evolution, the field of confectionery began to develop. Chewing gum, which first emerged by chewing the resins of trees, was used by the Greeks for cleaning their teeth. The Mayans and

Aztecs, on the other hand, created the first chewing gums by boiling the resin obtained from the tree and then drying it. After the 1800s, with the progress and development of industrial production, mass production started and has survived to the present day (Bhattacharya, 2023).

5.2. Biscuit, Cake, Wafer, Chocolate, Gum, and Confectionary Products Industry in the World

According to the snack sales data of 2023, these companies are listed as follows: Mars Wrigley (USA), Mondelēz International (USA), Ferrero Group (Italy), The Hershey Company (USA), Nestle SA (Switzerland), Chocoladefabriken Lindt & Sprungli AG (Switzerland), Pladis (UK), Haribo GmbH & Co. (Germany), Perfetti Van Melle (Netherland) and Meiji Co. Ltd. (Japan) (Candy Industry, 2023). On the other hand, the companies that hold this sector in their hands continue most of the trade with developed countries.

The purpose of existence of this sector is to want to enjoy rather than a basic need and to be purchased and consumed as a product for a quick snack in the fast-paced day. Based on this fact, it can be said that this sector plays a critical role in developing countries. In addition, according to the study carried out by the Mevlana Development According to the Agency in 2018, per capita income and snack consumption are directly proportional. In accordance with the relevant research, the 5-year figures of the first 15 countries (according to export sales figures), which were prepared by considering the tariff codes "170410, 170490, 180620, 180631, 180632, 180690, 190531, 190532, 190590, 210690" in the international customs tariff (Table 1), are shown below:

Table 5.1. 2019-2023 Top 15 Countries Export Sales Data for Specified HS Codes
belongs to Snack Products

Countries	YEARS (Million USD)					TOTAL
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
World	121.321	123.000	142.078	149.897	-	536.296
Germany	13.784	14.335	16.006	16.615	18.971	79.710
United States of America	9.665	9.195	10.578	10.759	10.745	50.942
Netherlands	7.829	7.802	9.036	9.030	11.065	44.762
Belgium	7.128	7.111	8.464	8.285	9.786	40.774
Italy	6.238	6.287	7.680	7.871	8.895	36.971
Canada	6.109	6.155	7.139	8.446	9.108	36.958
Singapore	5.754	6.346	7.052	7.497	6.123	32.773
Poland	4.811	5.234	6.133	7.229	8.588	31.996
France	5.456	5.428	6.601	6.583	7.535	31.603
China	3.549	3.538	4.353	5.274	6.185	22.900
United Kingdom	3.945	3.914	3.907	3.879	4.205	19.850
Spain	2.902	2.981	3.691	4.050	5.154	18.777
Türkiye	2.518	2.524	2.947	3.553	3.924	15.466
Mexico	3.017	3.031	3.445	4.268	-	13.762
Austria	1.814	1.888	2.155	2.199	2.643	10.699

(Source: Trademap, 2024)

Table 1 shows the total export figures of the top 15 countries of the world biscuits, cakes, wafers, chocolate, chewing gum and confectionery products between 2019-2023. However, as Mexico's figures for 2023 have not been disclosed, its position on

this list is not clearly ascertainable. Considering the total figures for 5 years, it can be said that Germany is at the forefront of this sector with 79,710 million USD compared to its competitors. In addition, if we consider the figures of the Netherlands over the years, we can observe that it has a rapid development rate. As can be seen from the Table 1, there is an increase in the export figures of almost all the countries on the list and around the world compared to the years. This may be a clue that the industry continues to grow and expand.

5.3. Biscuit, Cake, Wafer, Chocolate, Gum, and Confectionary Products

Industry in the Türkiye

The snack sector in Türkiye has entered our lives with the start of the production of products such as Turkish delight and halva in the Ottoman years. In the commercial sense, the snack sector, which is in the food industry, is one of the sectors that are open to development and developing.

The first productions in terms of biscuits and wafers started with traditional production methods in Central Anatolia. With technological advancements, the production of biscuits and wafers expanded to include cakes, chocolates, chewing gum, and other confectionery products. This sector, which has spread to almost all provinces of Türkiye, continues to develop, and grow with export incentives. On the other hand, there may be seasonal and historical demand differences in products such as chocolate. For example, during the Ramadan holidays, the consumption of sugar and chocolate and even its export increases. On the other hand, chocolate exports may decrease in the summer months due to seasonal reasons. Based on current data, it can be observed that nearly all cities are involved in manufacturing goods in this sector (TOBB, 2024). Türkiye 's 5-year export figures, which are prepared by considering the HS (Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System) codes numbered 170410, 170490, 180620, 180631, 180632, 180690, 190531, 190532, 190590 and 210690, are listed in Table 2:

Table 5.2. 2019-2023 Türkiye Export Sales Data for for Specified HS Codes belongs to Snack Products

Code (Harmonized System)	Product label	Exported value in 2019	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023
210690	Food preparations, n.e.s.	398,32	399,142	441,781	527,06	658,808
'180620	Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa, in blocks, slabs or bars weighing > 2 kg or in liquid, paste, powder, granular or other bulk form, in containers or immediate packings of a content > 2 kg (excl. cocoa powder)	31,67	29,866	32,127	62,165	65,603
'180631	Chocolate and other preparations containing cocoa, in blocks, slabs or bars of <= 2 kg, filled	104,924	116,156	146,091	183,8	189,562
'180632	Chocolate and other preparations containing cocoa, in blocks, slabs or bars of <= 2 kg (excl. filled)	76,879	70,422	92,931	108,499	105,996
'180690	Chocolate and other preparations containing cocoa, in containers or immediate packings of <= 2 kg (excl. in blocks, slabs or bars and cocoa powder)	351,871	337,634	416,446	486,167	516,449

'170410	Chewing gum, whether or not sugar-coated	44,419	39,059	50,462	59,111	68,512
'170490	Sugar confectionery not containing cocoa, incl. white chocolate (excl. chewing gum)	437,104	447,99	585,437	736,59	838,582
'190590	Bread, pastry, cakes, biscuits and other bakers' wares, whether or not containing cocoa; communion wafers, empty cachets of a kind suitable for pharmaceutical use, sealing wafers, rice paper and similar products (excl. crispbread, gingerbread and the like, sweet biscuits, waffles, wafers not mentioned, rusks, toasted bread and similar toasted products)	393,809	386,924	446,516	522,523	580,141
'190531	Sweet biscuits	344,68	357,749	359,244	431,826	455,542
'190532	Waffles and wafers	334,608	338,642	375,832	434,776	445,281
TOTAL		2518,284	2523,584	2946,867	3552,52	3924,476

(Source: Trademap, 2024)

According to the available data, Türkiye was also affected by the "Covid-19" pandemic, which affected the whole world in some products in 2020. On the contrary, based on the overall figures, it can be noted that there is still an observed increase. This upward trend persisted in the subsequent years. In addition, as can be seen from the Table 2, the largest export sales figure in this sector belongs to "Cocoa-free sugar products (including white chocolate". Taking all this information into account, it can be asserted that Türkiye's role in this sector is significant.

6. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this part of the research, the effect of the marketing strategies used by the export-oriented companies on the competitive power of the relevant businesses is emphasized. In addition, the purpose of this research, its hypotheses, the method used for the research and its scope, and its limitations are discussed. Finally, the findings obtained because of the survey study, which was carried out to measure the effect of the marketing strategies used by snack companies operating in Istanbul and manufacturing for export, on their competitive power, were analyzed and interpreted with statistical tools and methods.

6.1. Model and Methodology of the Research

In this part of the study, the model and methodology of the relevant research will be explained in detail.

6.1.1. Model of the Research

The rise in competition has compelled contemporary businesses to prioritize marketing activities and increasingly rely on them. Recognizing these activities as a source of strength for businesses, a conceptual model has been developed to explore the impact of marketing strategies implemented by export-oriented manufacturing firms on their competitive power. Based on this model, the effect of all dimensions of marketing mix strategies on competitiveness was examined in parallel with the relevant literature studies. The developed conceptual model is shown in Figure 1.

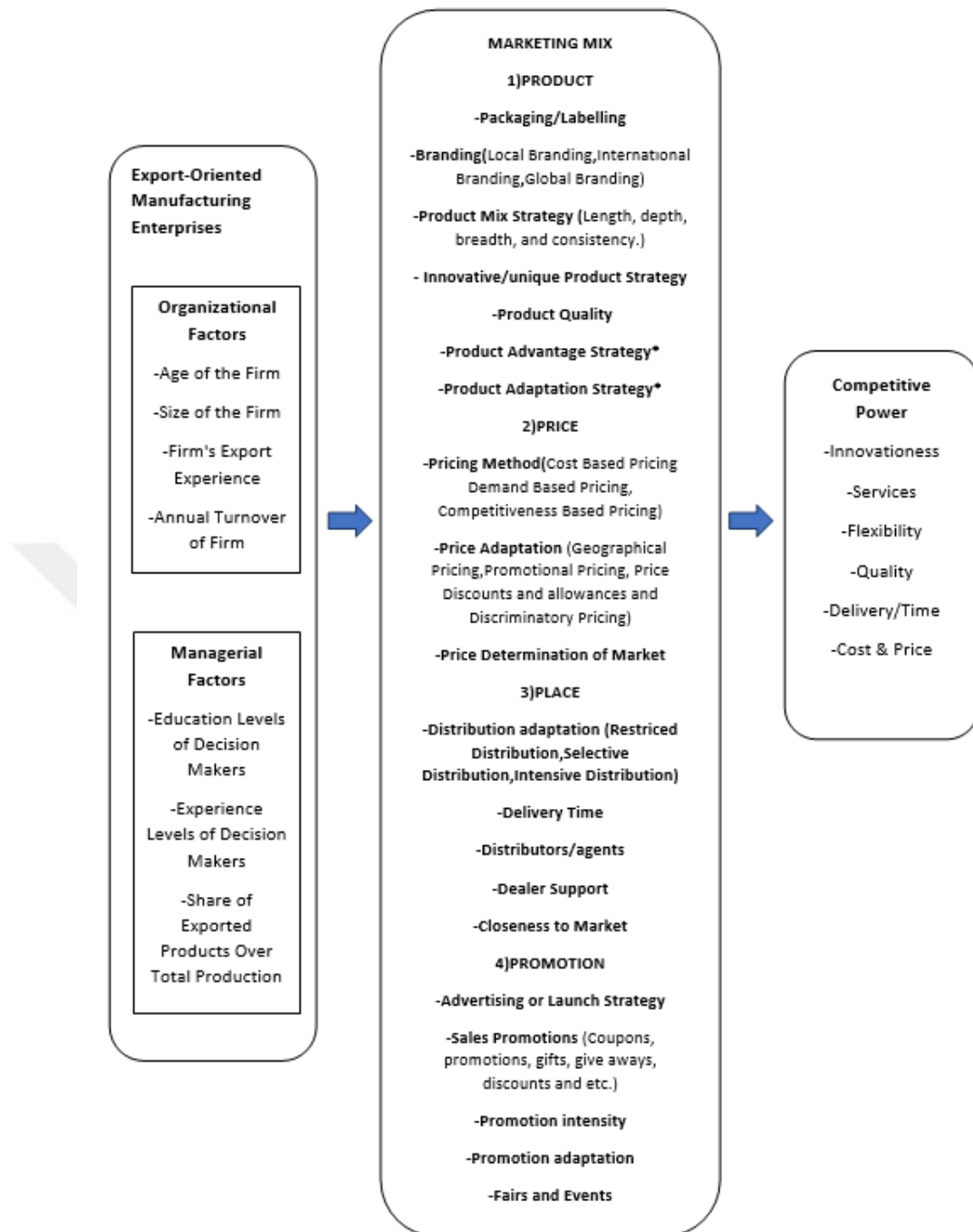


Figure 6.1. Research Model

As can be seen in Figure 1, the main dimension of the model is the relationship between the competitiveness of the marketing strategies applied by the export-oriented production businesses. There are 20 sub-dimensions depending on the marketing mix

strategies and finally 6 sub-dimensions depending on the competitive power. All groups also have interaction within themselves.

6.1.2. Importance of Research

The role of the snack industry, which dates to the Ottoman period, starting with Turkish delight and halva, is very important for Türkiye. Both domestic sales and export figures, which have been increasing year by year, underscore the significance of this sector. The fact that Türkiye is in a good position in this sector worldwide is also an indication that its impact on the Turkish economy is significant. In this context, the study holds significance as a substantial portion of manufacturers in the relevant sector are based in Istanbul, thus this research is focused on this sample. In Turkey, Istanbul is preferred for this study due to the highest number of registered businesses in NACE 10.72 (Manufacture of rusks and biscuits; manufacture of preserved pastry goods and cakes) with 97 businesses and NACE 10.82 (Manufacture of cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery) with 238 businesses.

Depending on the result of the study; We think that it will cause businesses operating in the biscuit, cake, wafer, chocolate, gum and confectionary products sector to take themselves further in this field and moreover, it will be a guiding work for investors who want to invest in this field. In this sense, the main purpose of the research is to examine the effect of the marketing strategies applied by export-oriented snack manufacturers on competitive power. In this context, the main question of the study was determined as "What is the impact of marketing strategies on competition?". The sub-objectives are also listed below:

- Analyzing the effect of product strategies on competitiveness from the elements of the marketing mix
- Analyzing the effect of pricing strategies on competitiveness from the elements of the marketing mix
- Analyzing the effect of distribution strategies on competitiveness from the elements of the marketing mix
- Analyzing the effect of promotion strategies on competitiveness from the elements of the marketing mix

6.1.3. Hypotheses of Research

In the content of the research, the effects of product, place, price, and promotion strategies, which are called the four mixes of marketing, on competitive power were examined. For this study, some hypotheses that may be suitable for our study were created by considering the answers and thoughts of the relevant managers and executives responsible for handling export activities to the questions in the questionnaire. The main hypotheses determined to achieve the goals and objectives of the study and to conclude the research and the sub-hypotheses developed based on these main hypotheses are as follows.

H1: Marketing strategies have significant effects on competitive power.

H1a: Product strategies have significant effects on competitive power.

H1b: Price strategies have significant effects on competitive power.

H1c: Place strategies have significant effects on competitive power.

H1d: Promotion strategies have significant effects on competitive power.

H2: The fact that businesses have an export department has a significant effect on their marketing strategies.

H3: Having an export department has a significant effect on the competitive power of the businesses.

H4: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on marketing strategies.

H5: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power.

H6: The increase in the number of countries to which businesses export their activities has a significant impact on marketing strategies.

H7: The increase in the number of countries in which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power.

H8: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on marketing strategies.

H9: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on competitive power.

6.1.4. Research Methodology

One of the most important steps when conducting a research study is to determine its methodology well. For methodology, which is an important step in terms of accuracy and reliability, respectively; It is necessary to identify and define the problem or opportunity, to plan the research design, to choose the research method, to carefully select the sampling procedure, to collect data, to analyze these data and finally to report these analyzes. This methodology is shown in Figure 2.

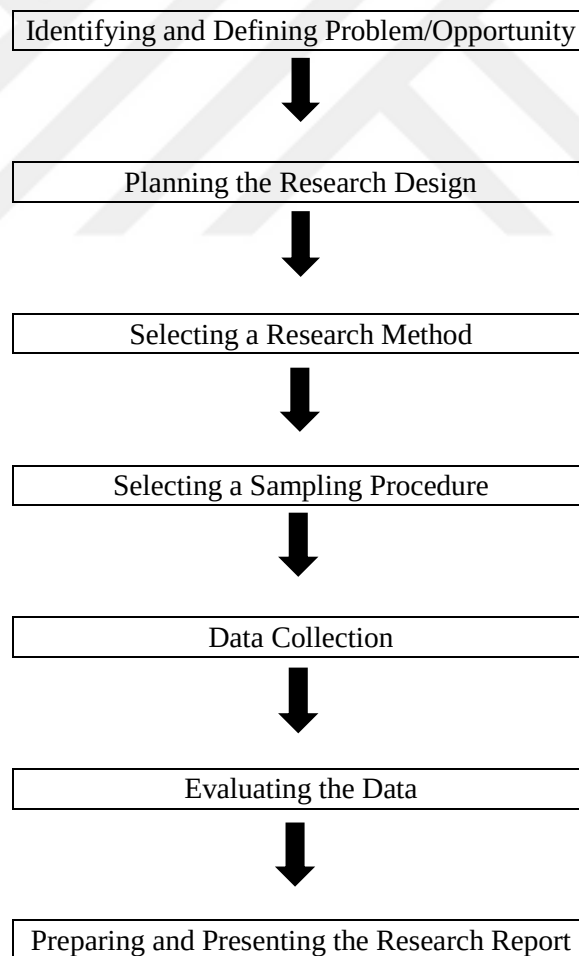


Figure 6.2. Methodology of Research

6.1.4.1. Data Collection Technique and Preparation of the Survey Form

The main data sources are primary. Primary data includes information received directly from primary individuals or sources, while secondary data is information that has already been researched and has already been acquired by someone else. In this study, survey technique was used by using primary data source. While using the face-to-face interview technique with the managers of the businesses that are accessible; For other businesses, the questionnaire technique via e-mail was applied. The relevant questionnaire form was based on the scales whose validity and reliability were stated in the literature searches on similar subjects. The 40 scales used in the study were Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002), Çavusgil, Tamer and Shaoming Zou (1994), Zhao, Yan Yeung, and Zhou (2002), Kroes and Ghosh (2009), Gjerde, Slotnick and Sobel (2002), Boyer and Lewis (2002), Almaz and Çağlıyan (2019), Kathuria and Partovi (2000), Bozarth and Handfield (1998), Lee, Chol and David (2004).

Table 6.1. Sources of Scales

MARKETING MIX SCALES	NO	SCALE	AUTHOR
PRODUCT	1	Packaging/Labelling	Leonidou et al., (2002)
	2	Branding	
	3	Product Mix Strategy	
	4	Innovative/Unique Product Strategy	
	5	Product Advantage Strategy	
	6	Product Quality	
	7	Product Adaptation Strategy	
PRICE	8	Pricing Method	Çavusgil et al., (1994)
	9	Price Adaptation	
	10	Price determination of Market	
PLACE	11	Distribution adaptation	Leonidou et al., (2002)
	12	Delivery Time	
	13	Distributors/agents	
	14	Dealer Support	
	15	Closeness to Market	Yükselen (1996)
PROMOTION	16	Advertising or Launch Strategy	Leonidou et al., (2002)
	17	Sales Promotions	
	18	Promotion intensity	Çavusgil et al., (1994)
	19	Promotion adaptation	
	20	Fairs and Events	Leonidou et al., (2002)

COMPETITIVE POWER SCALES	NO	SCALE	AUTHOR
QUALITY	1	Ability to provide reliable products	Zhao et al., (2002)
	2	Ability to improve product design quality	
	3	Ability to improve process capability and cycle times	Kroes et al., (2009)
INNOVATIVENESS	4	Ability to develop or expand foreign markets	Zhao et al., (2002)
	5	Ability to create intellectual property	
	6	Differentiation from Competitors' product technology	Gjerde et al., (2002)
	7	Offering large number of product features or options	Boyer et al., (2002)
	8	Ability of Marketing Research	Gelmez et al., (2019)
SERVICES	9	Ability to customize products to meet customer specifications	Kathuria et al., (2000)
	10	Ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements	
	11	Meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences	
	12	Activities such as sales promotions and advertising are more effective than competitors	Gelmez et al., (2019)
FLEXIBILITY	13	Ability to introduce new products quickly	Zhao et al., (2002)
	14	Ability to make rapid design changes	
	15	Ability to offer a wide range of products	
	16	Ability to make rapid product mix changes	
	17	Ability to make rapid volume changes	
	18	Ability to allow customer to access product easily	
	19	Increase volume through new market penetration	C. Bozarth et al., (1998)
DELIVERY /TIME	20	Ability to provide dependable delivery	Zhao et al., (2002)
	21	Ability to provide fast delivery	
	22	On time delivery performance	Lee et al., (2004)
COST AND PRICE	23	Ability to make profit in price competitive market	Zhao et al., (2002)
	24	Ability to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs	
	25	Reduce Logistics cost	Kroes et al., (2009)
	26	Low Inventory Costs	Boyer et al., (2002)

6.1.4.2. PreTest of Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire form prepared based on the research was applied to 25 businesses and arranged in the questionnaire according to the feedback received on the comprehensibility, language, compatibility, and efficiency of the relevant survey. The questionnaire form, which was reshaped with these feedbacks from 30 people, took its final form.

6.1.4.3. Designing Survey Form

In the first part, 16 questions were asked to determine the basic qualifications of the participants and the relevant business. In the second part, 20 items were prepared with a 5-point Likert scale to detail the marketing strategies implemented by the businesses. In the last part, there are 26 items for competitive power, which are also prepared with a 5-point Likert scale. The evaluation criteria of the second part are 1: We do not use it at all – 5: We use it very often, it is in the form of evaluation criteria of the competitiveness scale, while the criteria of the third part are 1: Not affected at all – 5: Completely affected.

6.1.4.4. Sample Selection and Sample Size Determination

For the research, first, it is necessary to determine the problem or opportunity and then to determine the research method. The next stage is to decide from whom or from whom the data will be collected. The cluster formed by all units related to the target audience of the problem or opportunity of the relevant research is called the universe of the research. However, due to many limitations, it is very difficult to include the whole universe in the research. Therefore, a subset is selected in this set of universes that can accurately represent the research. This selection is called sample selection. This set of samples is called a sample (Lin, 1976: 146).

For biscuit, cake, wafer, chocolate, gum, and confectionary products, which constitute the main subject of the research, the relevant products are not under one roof in the current classifications of the Ministry of Commerce and TOBB. This study is based on the European Community Statistical Classification of Economic Activities (NACE Rev.2). In this classification, the production of biscuits, cakes and wafers is included in the main activity of "Manufacture of Food Products" "10.72.- Manufacture of rusks and biscuits; manufacture of preserved pastry goods and cakes"; chocolate, chewing gum and confectionery are also included in the subdivision "10.82.- Manufacture of cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery", which is part of the main activity of "Manufacture of Food Products". NACE 10.72: Rusks and biscuit manufacturing; Considering the classifications of canned pastry products and cake manufacturing and NACE 10.82: Cocoa, chocolate and confectionery manufacturing, the term "Snack" will be used instead of these classifications in the study. In this classification, the

distribution of the businesses engaged in manufacturing activities according to the provinces was determined and the ranking was made according to the total manufacturer quantities. In both subdivisions, the province of Istanbul, which has the highest number of manufacturers, was selected and the universe for this research was determined as "businesses operating in the snack sector in Istanbul and manufacturing for export". The data obtained from TOBB for the population are given in Table 2.

Table 6.2. Top 10 Registered Manufacturers of Türkiye in Prodcum (TOBB,2024)

NACE 10.72: Manufacture of rusks and biscuits; manufacture of preserved pastry goods and cakes		NACE 10.82: Manufacture of cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery	
City	Registered Manufacturer	City	Registered Manufacturer
Total	473	Total	1195
İSTANBUL	97	İSTANBUL	238
ANTALYA	43	GAZİANTEP	120
KONYA	40	KONYA	88
İZMİR	31	ANTALYA	54
BURSA	22	ANKARA	48
GAZİANTEP	20	İZMİR	45
KARAMAN	19	AFYONKARAHİSAR	37
ANKARA	17	BURSA	36
ADANA	16	MERSİN	31
KAYSERİ	12	ADANA	30

In addition, the fact that the products manufactured by the companies in the biscuit, cake, wafer, chocolate, gum, and confectionary products sector are largely intertwined and most of the companies manufacture both classifications made it difficult to report the data. For these reasons, the biscuit, cake, wafer, chocolate, gum, and confectionary products sector was examined. Based on these information, simple random sampling method was used. As a result of these data, the universe size used in the 5% sampling error was 238, and the number of samples was 111 It has been determined as.

6.1.4.5. Implementation of the Survey Form

The e-mails and addresses of the manufacturers in Istanbul in the relevant sector were taken from TOBB's website. As a result of this information, the survey was carried out with the determined sample using both email and face-to-face interview methods. These questionnaires applied for the research were carried out in May 2024, with a total of 111 samples. Upon initial review of the obtained data, one survey was excluded from the primary analysis due to its unsuitability for statistical analysis. Consequently, the analysis and evaluation were conducted using data from 111 samples.

6.1.4.6. Reliability and Validity of Survey Form

In order to test the reliability of the scales used in this study, Cronbach's Alpha value, which is widely used in reliability analyzes and expresses the consistency of the relevant scales, was used. While the alpha value, that is, the number of coefficients, consists of values between "0" and "1". If the Alpha Coefficient falls within the range of $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$, the scale is considered unreliable; if it falls within $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$, it is of low-grade reliability; if it falls within $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, it is considered quite reliable; and if it falls within $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, the scale is deemed significantly reliable. Based on these values, in order for a scale to be reliable, the Alpha value must be higher than 0.60. The reliability analysis results of this study are given in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 6.3. Reliability Analysis of Marketing Strategies Scales

Reliability Statistics			
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Marketing Total	0.935	0.936	20
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Products	0.850	0.849	7
Price	0.740	0.812	3
Place	0.838	0.843	5
Promotion	0.869	0.872	5

Table 6.4. Reliability Analysis of Competitive Power Scales

Reliability Statistics			
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Competitive Power Total	0.962	0.963	26
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Quality	0.823	0.829	3
Innovativeness	0.875	0.877	5
Services	0.819	0.833	4
Flexibility	0.929	0.93	7
Delivery/Time	0.864	0.864	3
Cost and Price	0.875	0.875	4

First of all, if the reliability for Marketing Strategies is measured; As a result of the calculations, it was observed that Cronbach's alpha values varied between 0.7 and 0.9. It has been concluded that it is safe enough because the Price is measured in the range of $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, that is, the Alpha value is 0.74, which is one of the sub-dimensions of marketing strategies. Since the scales of other marketing strategies are in the range of $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, it has been concluded that they are significantly reliable.

When reliability analysis is applied to competitive power strategies; It was observed that all Cronbach's Alpha values were in the range of $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$. Thus, it can be said that the scales of competitive power strategies are significantly reliable.

In addition to the reliability analysis, the structural validity of the marketing strategies and competitiveness scales used in the study were examined by exploratory factor analysis. First, Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO) and Barlett tests were applied to determine their suitability for factor analysis. KMO represents the size of the sample and is expected to be above 0.60. The results of the KMO test and the Barlett test are shown in the Table 5 and Table 6 below.

Table 6.5. KMO and Barlett Tests Results of Marketing Strategies

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.874
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1462.833
	df	190
	Sig.	<.001

Table 6.6. KMO and Barlett Tests Results of Competitive Power Strategies

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.907
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2047.782
	df	253
	Sig.	<.001

According to KMO and Barlett Tests Results of Marketing/Competitive Power Strategies tables (Table 5 and Table 6), it was observed that the test result of the relevant data set was above 0.60, that is, 0.874 for the marketing strategies scales, so it was very suitable for the analysis and the sample number of the relevant factors was sufficient. In addition, it was determined that the correlation between the data was suitable for factor analysis because the significance value was less than 0.05 according to the Barlett test.

In addition, when the tests for competitive power were applied, it was observed that the result of the KMO test for the scales was above 0.60, that is, 0.906, so it was very suitable for the analysis and the sample number of the relevant factors was sufficient. In addition, it was determined that the correlation between the data was suitable for factor analysis because the significance value was less than 0.05 according to the Barlett test.

6.1.4.7. Factor Analysis

In this part of the study, factor analysis, a method of multivariate analysis, was used. The aim of this analysis is to reduce the number of variables in studies containing a large number of variables by determining the baseline factors.

As a result of the researches (İnan, 2019) (Zou and Stan, 1998: 343), it has been observed that some variables, which is a common situation in social sciences, cannot be determined by a single factor. For this reason, according to the 5-point likert expressions used for marketing strategies scales, it was determined how many basic factors the participants perceived the relevant scales. The results of the factor analysis obtained are given in Table 7.

Table 6.7. Marketing Strategies Scales Factor Analysis

Pattern Matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Promotional Adaptation	0.881		
Promotion Intensity	0.852		
Sales Promotion	0.835		
Dealer Support	0.766		
Distribution Adaptation	0.636		
Distributors/agents	0.63		
Closeness to Market	0.618		
Delivery Time	0.591		
Advertising or Launch Strategy	0.545		
Branding		0.822	
Product Mix Strategy		0.777	
Packaging/Labelling		0.75	
Innovative/Unique Product Strategy		0.687	
Fairs and Events		0.615	
Product Quality		0.534	
Price determination of Market		0.533	
Product Advantage Strategy		0.469	
Pricing Method			0.893
Price Adaptation			0.849
Product Adaptation Strategy			0.498
Eigen Value	9.096	1.99	1.468
Variance	45.48%	9.95%	7.34%
Total Variance	62.78%		

According to the findings in Table 7, there are 3 factors. Variables in the 1st component; Promotional Adaptation (0.881), Promotion Intensity (0.852), Sales Promotion(0.835), Dealer Support(0.766), Distribution Adaptation(0.636), Distributors/Agents (0.683), Closeness to Market (0.618), Delivery Time (0.591) and Advertising or Launch Strategy (0.545).Variables in the 2nd component; Branding (0.822),Product Mix Strategy (0.777), Packaging/Labelling (0.75), Innovative/Unique Product Strategy (0.687), Fairs and Events (0.615), Product Quality (0.534), Price determination of Market (0.533) and Product Advantage Strategy (0.469).Variables in the 3rd component; Pricing Method (0.893), Price Adaptation (0.849) and Product Adaptation Strategy (0.498).

According to the analysis results, it has been observed that the scales are grouped under 3 factors. In addition, the component importance orders are as follows: The first component explains 45.48% of the total variation. The second component explains 9.95% of the variation and the final scale 7.34%.

6.2. Data Analysis and Results

The data obtained as a result of the survey technique applied to the companies carrying out export activities in Istanbul were tested for normality in order to observe the distribution of the data using the SPSS v29.0.10 and STATA 17.0 programs. Subsequently, frequency and descriptive analysis in order to obtain demographic information of the relevant businesses and respondents participating in the survey; correlation was applied to measure the significant relationships between variables, t-test and ANOVA were applied to measure the significant differences of the variables, and regression analysis was applied to measure the direction of the scales and their effects on each other.

6.2.1. Sample Characteristics

This part of the study contains data related to the descriptive questions from the related questionnaire.

6.2.1.1. Characteristics of Participants

In this part, the specifics of the general profile of the survey participants are provided:

56.0% of the respondents participating in the study were male and 44.0% were female. In addition, 5.0% of the respondents stated that they were business owners, 40.0% managers, 27.0% export responsible, 10.0% of the respondents stated that they were working as marketing supervisors and 18.0% of the respondents stated that they were working outside of other categories.

Table 6.8. Results of Respondents' Gender and Title in the Company

Descriptive Statistics		
Gender	n	%
Men	62	56%
Women	49	44%
Title	n	%
Other	20	18%
Owner	6	5%
Export Specialist	30	27%
Marketing Specialist	11	10%
Export Executive	44	40%

Among women participating in the survey, 2.0% work as business owners in their respective companies, 39.0% work as managers, and 22.0% work as export managers.

In addition, 12% of women are in charge of marketing, while 25% are in another title in the study. Among the female survey participants, 2.0% work as business owners within their company, 39.0% work as managers, and 22.0% work as export managers. In addition, 13% of male employees stated that they worked outside the specified department or title. According to the results, it was observed that the gender factor may differ according to the title of the employees in the relevant company.

Table 6.9. Comparisons of Respondents' Gender and Business Title

Descriptive Statistics		GENDER		TOTAL
TITLE		Men	Women	
Other	Count	8	12	20
	% within Gender	13%	25%	18%
Owner	Count	5	1	6
	% within Gender	8%	2%	5%
Export Specialist	Count	19	11	30
	% within Gender	31%	22%	27%
Marketing Specialist	Count	5	6	11
	% within Gender	8%	12%	10%
Export Executive	Count	25	19	44
	% within Gender	40%	39%	40%
TOTAL	Count	62	49	111
	% within Gender	100%	100%	100%

These details are shown in the figure below with a histogram chart. As seen in the Figure 3, it can be said that a large proportion of the women involved in the research are in managerial positions. Subsequently, they work in other positions also as export specialist, marketing specialist, and business owner. Similarly, a large majority of men are in managerial positions as well. The remaining male participants work as export specialists, in other roles, marketing specialists/business owners. If it is checked in detail; the number of women working in other positions is higher in percentage; there are almost no women who own companies; the vast majority of employees who are export specialists are men; the percentage of women working as marketing specialists is higher; in the managerial position, they are very close in percentage. Thus, it can be said that decision-makers largely serve in executive positions.

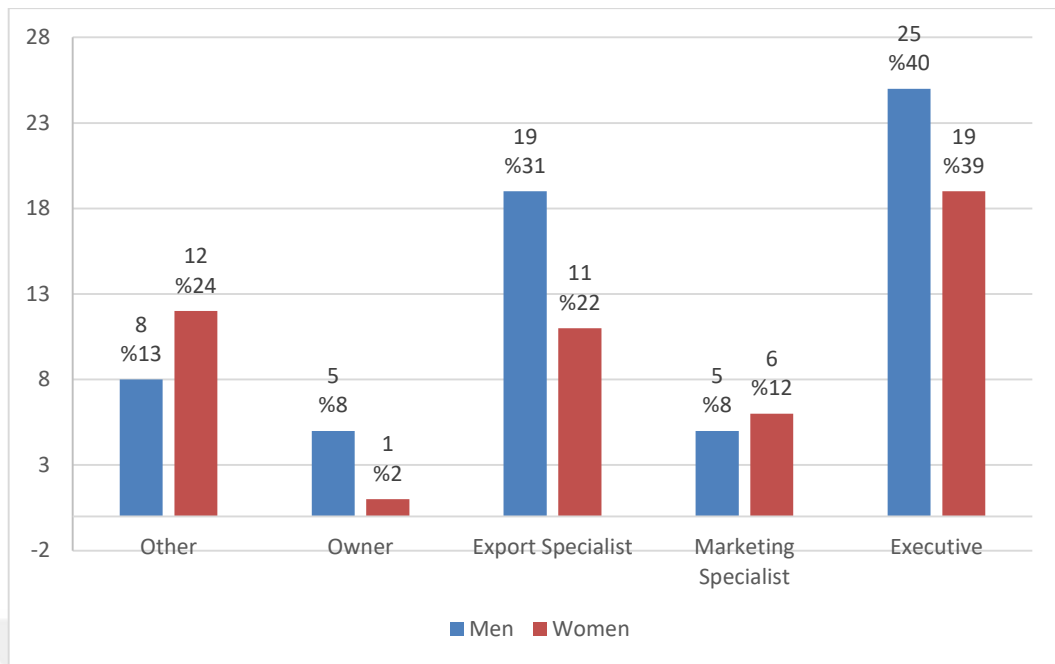


Figure 6.3. Comparisons of Respondents' Gender and Business Title

6.2.1.2. Characteristics of Businesses

The descriptive characteristics of the businesses participating in the survey study are stated in the study.

Table 6.10. Findings on Businesses Information

Numbers of employees	N	%
Less than 500	41	36.9%
500-999	25	22.5%
1000-2999	10	9.0%
3000-4999	8	7.2%
More than 5000	27	24.3%
Export department in company	N	%
Exist	96	86.50%
Does not exist	15	13.50%
Numbers of employees in export department	N	%
1-5 employees	9	9.38%
6-10 employees	18	18.75%
11-15 employees	17	17.71%
16-20 employees	12	12.50%
21 and over	40	41.67%
Number of years firm exists	N	%
1-5 years	4	3.60%
6-10 years	11	9.90%

11-15 years	13	11.70%
16-20 years	15	13.50%
Over 20 years	68	61.30%
Annual turnover (USD)	N	%
Less than 5.000.000	13	11.70%
5.000.001 – 25.000.000	18	16.20%
25.000.001 – 50.000.000	4	3.60%
50.000.001 – 100.000.000	15	13.50%
100.000.001 – 200.000.000	16	14.40%
Over 200.000.000	45	40.50%

As can be seen in the Table 10 above, the information provided by the businesses participating in the study regarding the number of employees, the existence of the export department, the number of employees in this department, the duration of their activity and their annual turnover are included. In this sense, 24.3% of the relevant businesses have less than 500 employees, 7.2% have 500-999 personnel, 9.0% have 1000-2999 personnel, and 22.5% have 3000-4999 personnel. In addition to these, 36.9% of the businesses have more than 5000 employees. 86.5% of the related businesses have an export department. 9.38% of the businesses with an export department work with a unit consisting of 1 to 5 people, 18.75% manage the foreign trade unit with 6 to 10, 17.71% with 11 to 15 people, and 12.50% with 16 to 20 people. In addition, 41.67% of the businesses operate with a team of more than 21 people. According to this result, we can assume that businesses attach importance to the export department. Among the businesses participating in the survey, 3.6% reported operating for 1-5 years, 9.9% for 6-10 years, and 11.7% for 11-15 years in the relevant sector. In addition, 13.5% of the businesses reported that they have been in the sector for 16-20 years, and 61.3% reported that they have been operating in the sector for more than 20 years.

In addition to all this information, if we look at the annual turnover figures of the relevant businesses, 11.70% of them reported less than 5.000.000, 16.20% between 5.000.001 – 25.000.000, 3.60% between 25.000.001 – 50.000.000, 13.50% between 50.000.001-100.000.000, 4.40% between 100.000.001 – 200.000.000 and 40.50% over 200.000.000.

Considering all these results, it can be said that the businesses participating in the study operate intensively in the relevant sector and have a strong position in their sectors.

In the following figure, the results of the number of employees in the businesses participating in the survey are shown.



Figure 6.4. Number of Employees in Businesses

Moreover, the size of a business can be expressed through various criteria such as total asset value, sales, market value, and number of employees (Ruwanti, Chandrarin, and Assih, 2019). In this context, the gender distribution based on the number of employees is analyzed in the following Figure 5.



Figure 6.5. Gender of Managerial People Regarding Company Size (Number of Employees)

As seen in the Figure 5, it can be said that the number of female employees does not vary based on the size of the business. On the other hand, the number of male employees is determined to be higher in larger businesses. The following Figure 6 provides information on the existence of export departments according to the size of businesses (number of employees).

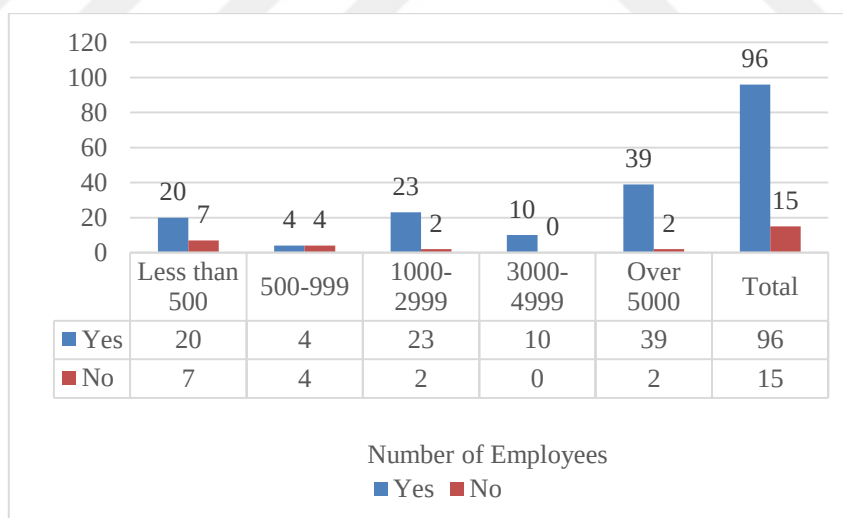


Figure 6.6. Existence of Export Department Regarding Company Size(Number of Employees)

As can be understood from the chart, an increase in the presence of export departments is observed along with the size of the business. Consequently, it can be concluded that as a business grows, the need for an export department increases.

In the Figure 7 below, information about the number of personnel working in the export department of the businesses participating in the survey is included.

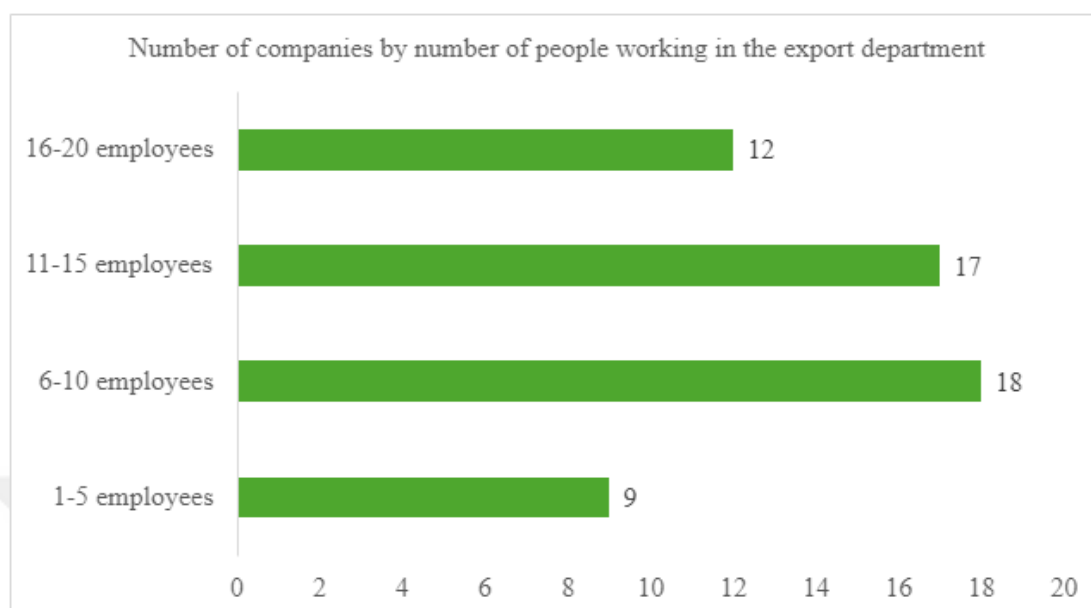


Figure 6.7. Number of Companies by Number of People Working in the Export Department

Other findings obtained within the scope of the research are the export information of the businesses participating in the relevant study. The information on the export activities of the relevant businesses consists of the duration of the export activities, how much of their production belongs to the export and the number of countries where they carry out export activities. This information is given in Table 11.

Table 6.11. Findings on the Export Activities of Businesses

Total years companies export	N	%
1-5 years	17	15.30%
6-10 years	20	18.00%
11-15 years	12	10.80%
16-20 years	13	11.70%
Over 20 years	49	44.10%
Export share in production	N	%
Less than %10	17	15.30%
Between %10- %20	25	22.50%
Between %20- %30	23	20.70%
Between %30- %40	21	18.90%
Between %40- %50	10	9.00%
Over %50	15	13.50%
Number of countries that companies export	N	%
1-5 countries	14	12.60%
6-10 countries	18	16.20%
11-15 countries	10	9.00%
16-20 countries	4	3.60%
Over 20 countries	65	58.60%

According to the information in Table 11, it was concluded that the execution period of export activities was between 1-5 years in 15.30%, between 6-10 years in 18.0%, in 11-15 years in 10.8%, in 11.7% of the businesses between 16-20 years and in 44.1% over 20 years. Additionally, among the businesses participating in the survey, 15.3% have an export share of less than 10%, 22.5% have a share between 10% and 20%, 20.7% between 20% and 30%. Moreover, 18.9% of the businesses have an export share between 30% and 40%, while 9.0% have a share between 40% and 50%, and 13.5% have an export share exceeding 50%. Also, it has been determined that the export share allocated for the relevant businesses in their production is not at a very high level. In this context, it can be interpreted that the domestic market shares of the relevant businesses in their production are higher and they need development strategies to increase their export shares.

In addition to all these, it was observed that 12.6% of the participating businesses exported to 1-5 countries, 16.2% exported to 6-10 countries, 9.0% exported to 11-15 countries, and 3.6% exported to 16-20 countries, while 58.6% exported to 20 or more countries.

In the study, the information about the regions exported by the relevant businesses is given in the Table 12 below.

Table 6.12. Export Regions of Businesses

COUNTRIES	n	Percentage
Middle East Countries	91	82%
Asian Countries	79	71%
Western European Countries	79	71%
Eastern European Countries	73	66%
African countries	71	64%
North American Countries	64	58%
Central and South American Countries	53	48%
Australia and New Zealand	49	44%
Middle East countries	11	10%
Eastern European Countries	11	10%
North American Countries	1	1%

According to Table 12, it has been determined that the companies participating in the study mainly export to the Middle East region and the least to the North America region.

Table 6.13. Brand Decisions of Businesses on Behaviour

Brand	n	Percentage
Own brand	97	87%
Private label	62	56%
Another brand for export market	49	44%
None	4	4%

In the Table 13 above, information is given about which branding strategy the businesses participating in the research carry out for their export activities. According

to the relevant data, 87% of the participants export with their own brand, 56% with Private Label, 44% with another brand and the remaining 4% without brand.

If we examine the literature, we can find many researches about Turkish branding decisions. Becoming a global brand necessitates first establishing a strong infrastructure and a professionally managed brand strategy within the Turkish market, ensuring appropriate positioning (Power, 1998). Moreover, the pursuit of a global brand status requires a positive national image (Şaylan, 2000). Without fostering a favorable national image, the development of a global brand is nearly unattainable. Given these circumstances, the likelihood of Turkish companies creating global brands is exceedingly limited.

However, the potential for Turkish companies to establish strong regional brands is considerably higher. Owing to Turkey's strategic geographical location, there is a distinct advantage in developing regional brands across Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. This geographical proximity endows Turkey with several benefits, including ease of transportation, strategic positioning along trade and energy routes, and cultural and climatic similarities.

These advantages significantly enhance the prospects of creating regional brands by facilitating export operations, the establishment of production facilities, the development of distribution and sales networks, and easing promotional and advertising efforts. Brands such as Beko, Mavi Jeans, Zeki Triko, Ülker, Duru, and Efes Pilsen are making substantial progress toward becoming successful regional brands. For example, Beko is the market leader in refrigerators in the UK, and Gala holds the leading position in Kazakhstan. Additionally, Efes operates factories in Eastern Europe. It is posited that the strategies these brands employ to achieve regional success will, in the long term, enable them to attain global brand status (Power, 1998).

In Table 14 below, the results obtained regarding the reasons for exporting are given to the relevant businesses:

Table 6.14. Reasons to Export

Reasons to export	n	Percentage
Growth and develop	102	92%
Increase sales	98	88%
Increase profit margin	92	83%
Promoting the brand name abroad	87	78%
Ensuring the business adapts to the developing and changing world	87	78%
Receiving orders from abroad	75	68%
Benefit from government incentives	65	59%
Reducing the negativities of the domestic market	64	58%
Gaining power in competition because other businesses are exporting	57	51%
Provide tax advantages	56	50%

If the results in the Table 14 are interpreted, it can be said that the majority of the businesses carry out export activities in order to grow and develop. In addition, businesses prefer to continue their export activities for the purposes of increase sales, increase profit margin, promoting the brand name abroad, ensuring the business adapts to the developing and changing world, receiving orders from abroad, benefit from government incentives, reducing the negativities of the domestic market, gaining power in competition because other businesses are exporting and provide tax advantages.

6.2.2. Distribution of Data

In this part, two different tests were conducted to examine the distribution of the data. The normal distribution is the one in which there is no skewness and kurtosis. As a result, skewness and kurtosis values are expected to be between -1 and +1. The following Table 15 shows these test results:

Table 6.15. Skewness and Kurtosis Test Results

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Marketing St.	111	77.2252	0.02	0.229	-0.566	0.455
Competitive Pow.	111	101.1802	-0.077	0.229	-0.861	0.455
Valid N (listwise)	111					

According to these results, it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values given were between -1 and +1. This shows that there is a normal distribution.

The normality test is another tool in which the normal distribution is determined. In cases where the number of participants is more than 50, attention is paid to Kolmogorov-Smirnov values and if the p value is above 0.05, it can be determined that there is a normal distribution.

Table 6.16. Test of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Marketing St.	0.074	111	0.175	0.976	111	0.039
Competitive Pow.	0.062	111	.200*	0.971	111	0.016
* This is a lower bound of the true significance.						

Since the p value was observed to be above 0.05, it was requested that the data showed normal distribution.

6.2.3. Correlation Analysis

In this part of the study, a study was carried out using Pearson correlation analysis on the relationships between the factor parameters. The correlation coefficient (r) calculated between two variables can be interpreted as follows: According to the correlation coefficient, an r value less than 0.20 and close to zero indicates no relationship or a very weak relationship, an r value between 0.20 and 0.39 signifies a weak relationship, an r value between 0.40 and 0.59 indicates a moderate relationship, an r value between 0.60 and 0.79 signifies a strong relationship, and an r value between 0.80 and 1.0 indicates a very strong relationship (Hinkle et al., 2003).

In the Table 17 below, the correlation between annual turnover, number of employees, firms age, export activities period, competitive power and marketing strategies is examined.

Table 6.17. Correlations of Organizational and Managerial Factors

		Annual Turnover	Number of Employees	Firms Age	Export Activities Period	Competitive Power	Marketing Strategies
Annual Turnover	Pearson Cor.	1	.697**	.693**	.769**	-.233**	-0.123
Number of Employees	Pearson Cor.		1	.643**	.694**	-.222**	-0.061
Firms Age	Pearson Cor.			1	.816**	-0.016	0.121
Export Activities Period	Pearson Cor.				1	-0.153	-0.02
Competitive Power	Pearson Cor.					1	.818**
Marketing Strategies	Pearson Cor.						1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

A positive and strong correlation of 0.697 was observed between annual turnover and number of employees. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

A positive and strong correlation of 0.693 was observed between annual turnover and firms age. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

A positive and strong correlation of 0.769 was observed between annual turnover and export activities period. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

A negative and weak correlation of 0.233 was observed between annual turnover and competitive power. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.007$).

A negative and very weak correlation of 0.123 was observed between annual turnover and marketing strategies. However, This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.099$).

A positive and strong correlation of 0.643 was observed between number of employees and firms age. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

A positive and strong correlation of 0.694 was observed between number of employees and export activities period. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

A negative and weak correlation of 0.222 was observed between number of employees and competitive power. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p=0.01$).

A negative and very weak correlation of 0.061 was observed between number of employees and marketing strategies. However, This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.262$).

A positive and very strong correlation of 0.816 was observed between firms age and export activities period. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p<0.001$).

A negative and very weak correlation of 0.016 was observed between firms age and competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.435$).

A positive and very weak correlation of 0.121 was observed between firms age and marketing. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.103$).

A negative and very weak correlation of 0.153 was observed between export activities period and competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.054$).

A negative and very weak correlation of 0.02 was observed between export activities period and marketing strategies. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.418$).

A positive and very strong correlation of 0.818 was observed between competitive power and marketing strategies. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p<0.001$).

Table 6.18. Correlations of Education Levels of Decision Makers and Experience Levels of Decision Makers

Correlations				
		Marketing Strategies	Experience Levels of Decision Makers	Education Levels of Decision Makers
Competitive Power	Pearson Cor.	.818**	0.034	-0.032
Marketing Strategies	Pearson Cor.	1	0.114	0.018
Experience Levels of Decision Makers	Pearson Cor.		1	-0.029

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

A positive and very weak correlation of 0.018 was observed between education level of decision makers and marketing strategies. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.424$).

A negative and very weak correlation of 0.032 was observed between education level of decision makers and competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.371$).

A positive and very weak correlation of 0.114 measured between experience levels of decision makers and marketing strategies. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.117$).

There was a positive and very weak correlation of 0.034 measured between the experience levels of decision makers and competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.36$).

6.2.4. T-test and Anova Analysis

T-Test and Anova analyses were used to investigate the organizational and managerial factors of the businesses and the significant differences between the marketing and competitive power strategies implemented by the businesses. The T-test is used to determine if there is a significant difference between two groups, whereas ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is employed to measure significant differences among three or more groups.

Table 6.19. Results on the Existence of Export Department in Businesses of Marketing Strategy and Sub-Dimensions

	Existance of Export Department	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Value	t
Marketing Strategies	Yes	96	3.9458	0.6375	<.001***	3.608
	No	15	3.32	0.52976		
Product Strategies	Yes	96	4.0923	0.63786	<.001***	3.818
	No	15	3.4286	0.53995		
Price Strategies	Yes	96	4.0174	0.74515	<.001***	5.541
	No	15	3.2889	0.41532		
Place Strategies	Yes	96	4.0271	0.75984	0.08*	1.765
	No	15	3.6667	0.54336		
Promotion Strategies	Yes	96	3.6167	0.88718	0.002***	3.163
	No	15	2.84	0.86586		
* p<0.10 **p<0.05 *** p<0.01						

According to the results in the Table 19 above, the existence of the export department of the businesses and the scores of the marketing strategies and sub-dimensions were examined. According to the findings in the Table 19, the average marketing strategy score of the businesses with an export department was 3.95 ± 0.63 , while the marketing strategy score of the businesses without an export department was determined as 3.32 ± 0.53 . The scores of the marketing strategies of the businesses with an export department were determined to be statistically significantly higher than the businesses without an export department ($t=3.61$; $p<.001$). Therefore, one of the aims of the research, "***H2: The fact that businesses have an export department has a significant effect on their marketing strategies.***" hypothesis has been accepted. It is in harmony with the literature. While the product strategies score was determined as 4.09 ± 0.64 in businesses with an export department, it was observed as 3.42 ± 0.54 in businesses without an export department. The scores of the product strategies of the businesses with an export department were determined to be statistically significantly higher than the businesses without an export department ($t=3.82$; $p<.001$). In the export department businesses, the score in question was determined as 3.29 ± 0.41 . The difference between the groups was found to be statistically significant ($t=5.54$; $p<.001$). While the place strategies scores were observed as 4.02 ± 0.76 in businesses with export departments, they were determined as 3.66 ± 0.54 in businesses without

export departments. It is understood from the point values of the distribution strategies in the businesses with export departments, and there is statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t=1.765$; $p=0.08>0.05$). While the promotion strategies score of businesses with export departments was determined as 3.62 ± 0.89 , the score for businesses without foreign trade units was determined as 2.84 ± 0.86 . The difference in mean scores between the two groups was also statistically significant ($t=3.163$; $p=0.002<0.05$).

Table 6.20. Results on the Existence of Export Department in Businesses of Competitive Power and Sub-Dimensions

	Existence of Export Department	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	p	t
Competitive Power	Yes	96	3.9788	0.66582	0.06795	<.001***	3.583
	No	15	3.3333	0.51901	0.13401		
Quality	Yes	96	4.1632	0.6398	0.0653	<.001***	3.393
	No	15	3.5778	0.4792	0.12373		
Innovativeness	Yes	96	3.9146	0.751	0.07665	<.001***	3.687
	No	15	3.1333	0.84063	0.21705		
Services	Yes	96	3.8724	0.8111	0.08278	0.01**	2.625
	No	15	3.2833	0.78982	0.20393		
Flexibility	Yes	96	3.9792	0.79903	0.08155	<.001***	3.84
	No	15	3.1429	0.67655	0.17469		
Delivery	Yes	96	4.1632	0.73667	0.07519	0.06*	1.949
	No	15	3.9111	0.4076	0.10524		
Cost and Price	Yes	96	3.888	0.84283	0.08602	0.02**	2.359
	No	15	3.35	0.66009	0.17043		
* p<0.10 * *p<0.05 *** p<0.01							

In line with the results in the Table 20, the average competitiveness score of the businesses with export departments was observed as 3.98 ± 0.66 , while the competitiveness score of the businesses without export departments was determined as 3.33 ± 0.52 . The competitiveness of businesses with export departments was statistically significantly higher compared to those without them ($t=3,583$; $p<.001$). While the quality score, a sub-dimension of competitiveness, was determined as 4.16 ± 0.63 in businesses with an export department, it was found to be 3.58 ± 0.48 in businesses without an export department. The mean value difference between the

groups was also statistically significant ($t=3.393$; $p<.001$) Innovativeness scores were observed as 3.91 ± 0.75 in businesses with export departments, while they were determined as 3.13 ± 0.84 in businesses without export departments. It is understood from the score values obtained that the perception of innovativeness improves more in businesses with export departments, and the difference between the two groups is statistically significant ($t=3.687$; $p<.001$). While the mean service score values of the businesses with export departments were observed as 3.87 ± 0.81 , the service points of the businesses without export departments were determined as 3.28 ± 0.79 . Although the service score of the businesses compared to those without, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups ($t=2.625$; $p=0.01<0.05$) While the average flexibility score of businesses with an export department was observed to be 3.98 ± 0.80 , the innovation score of businesses without an export department was determined to be 3.14 ± 0.68 . The difference between the innovation scores of the businesses with an export department compared to those without them was statistically significant ($t=3.84$; $p<.001$). While the average delivery score of businesses with an export department was observed to be 4.16 ± 0.74 , the delivery score of businesses without an export department was determined to be 3.91 ± 0.40 . There was statistically significant difference between the innovation scores of the businesses with an export department compared to those without them ($t=1.949$; $p=0.06>0.05$). While the average cost and price score of businesses with an export department was observed to be 3.89 ± 0.84 , the cost and price score of businesses without an export department was determined to be 3.35 ± 0.66 . There is a statistically significant difference between the cost and price scores of the businesses with export departments compared to those without them ($t=2.359$; $p=0.02<0.05$).

Considering all these results; The fact that the businesses have an export department has a positive effect on both their marketing strategies, competitiveness and sub-dimensions related to these parameters. According to this results; ***H3: Having an export department has a significant effect on the competitive power of the businesses.*** hypothesis has been accepted.

Table 6.21. : Results of ANOVA in Terms of Organizational and Managerial Factors
Related to Marketing Strategy and Its Sub-Dimensions' Scales

Marketing Mix Scales	No	Scale	Number Of Employees	Activity Period	Export Activity Period	Export Share In Production	Number Of Countries Exported	Annual Turnover
			Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Product	1	Packaging/Labelling	0,173	0,416	0,789	0,627	0,395	0,532
	2	Branding	0,316	0,375	0,986	0,086*	0,249	0,471
	3	Product Mix Strategy	0,107	0,411	0,036**	0,667	0,003***	0,095*
	4	Innovative/Unique Product Strategy	0,028**	0,328	0,557	0,796	0,098*	0,362
	5	Product Advantage Strategy	0,336	0,258	0,749	0,204	0,827	0,779
	6	Product Quality	0,062*	0,594	0,373	0,743	0,865	0,728
	7	Product Adaptation Strategy	0,127	0,806	0,324	0,158	0,155	0,155
Price	8	Pricing Method	0,756	0,849	0,694	0,330	0,891	0,393
	9	Price Adaptation	0,337	0,566	0,927	0,117	0,927	0,338
	10	Price determination of Market	0,771	0,214	0,589	0,180	0,152	0,379
Place	11	Distribution Adaptation	0,133	0,619	0,341	0,324	0,120	0,270
	12	Delivery Time	0,377	0,598	0,688	0,390	0,093*	0,266
	13	Distributors/agents	0,761	0,368	0,860	0,305	0,691	0,782
	14	Dealer Support	0,695	0,308	0,931	0,524	0,683	0,569
	15	Closeness to Market	0,472	0,581	0,512	0,562	0,325	0,164
Promotion	16	Advertising or Launch Strategy	0,716	0,296	0,683	0,355	0,030*	0,356
	17	Sales Promotions	0,307	0,301	0,764	0,855	0,221	0,212
	18	Promotion Intensity	0,363	0,264	0,875	0,599	0,611	0,447
	19	Promotion Adaptation	0,498	0,083*	0,580	0,605	0,961	0,581
	20	Fairs and Events	0,098*	0,920	0,939	0,621	0,363	0,484
* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01								

First, Levene's Test was applied to test whether the variances were homogeneously distributed. It has been determined that the variances are homogeneously distributed. For this reason, Tukey test, one of the Post Hoc, was used for Anova analysis. According to the results obtained;

There is no statistically significant difference between the number of employees and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, product mix strategy, product advantage strategy, product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, market price determination; place strategies such as

distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, and promotion adaptation ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be inferred that the number of employees does not have any significant impact on these strategies. On the other hand, a significant difference was found between the number of employees and the innovative/unique product strategy ($p=0.028$), while a statistically significant difference was observed with the product quality strategy ($p=0.062$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was also detected between the number of employees and the fair and events strategy within promotion strategies. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the number of employees has an impact on the innovative/unique product strategy, product quality strategy, and fair and events strategy.

There is no statistically significant difference between the activity period of the business and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, product mix strategy, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, and fairs and events ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be inferred that the activity period of the business does not have any significant effect on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between the activity period of the business and the promotion adaptation strategy within promotion strategies ($p=0.083$). Accordingly, it can be suggested that the activity period of the business has an impact on the promotion adaptation strategy.

There is no statistically significant difference between the export activity period and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity,

promotion adaptation, and fairs and events ($p>0.10$). In this regard, it can be stated that the export activity period does not have any significant effect on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between the export activity period and the product mix strategy ($p=0.036$). Therefore, it can be suggested that the export activity period has an impact on the product mix strategy.

According to the results, no statistically significant difference was found between the export share in production and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, product mix strategy, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies such as advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events strategies ($p>0.10$). In this regard, it can be concluded that the export share in production does not have any significant effect on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between the export share in production and the branding strategy among product strategies ($p=0.086$). Therefore, it can be suggested that the export share in production has an impact on the branding strategy.

There is no statistically significant difference between the number of countries exported to and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events strategies ($p>0.10$). In this regard, it can be concluded that the number of countries exported to does not have any significant effect on these strategies. However, a significant difference was found between the number of countries exported to and the product mix strategy, as well as a statistically significant difference with the innovative/unique product strategy ($p=0.003$; $p=0.098$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the number of countries exported to and the place strategy of delivery time, as well as the promotion strategy of advertising or launch strategy ($p=0.093$; $p=0.030$).

Therefore, it can be suggested that the number of countries exported to has an impact on these strategies.

There is no statistically significant difference between annual turnover and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events strategies ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be stated that annual turnover does not have any significant impact on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between annual turnover and the product mix Strategy ($p=0.095$). Therefore, it can be suggested that annual turnover has an impact on the product mix strategy.

Table 6.22. Results of ANOVA in Terms of Organizational and Managerial Factors Related to Marketing Strategy and Its Sub-Dimensions

	Number Of Employees	Activity Period	Export Activity Period	Export Share In Production	Number Of Countries Exported	Annual Turnover
	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Marketing Mix	0,217	0,514	0,949	0,395	0,249	0,621
Product	0,041**	0,502	0,557	0,420	0,094*	0,467
Price	0,681	0,431	0,684	0,081*	0,414	0,384
Place	0,426	0,825	0,806	0,446	0,425	0,495
Promotion	0,411	0,327	0,993	0,772	0,283	0,665
* $p<0.10$ * * $p<0.05$ * * * $p<0.01$						

When examining the differences between the number of employees, activity period, export activity period, export share in production, number of countries exported, and annual turnover with marketing strategies across their sub-dimensions, a significant difference was found between the number of employees and product strategies ($p=0.041$). In this context, it can be suggested that the number of employees has an impact on product strategies. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the export share in production and pricing strategies ($p=0.081$). This

indicates that the export share in production has an effect on pricing strategies. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference was detected between the number of countries exported and product strategies ($p=0.094$). Therefore, it can be inferred that the number of countries exported has an impact on product strategies.

When examining the overall effect on marketing strategies, no statistically significant differences were found between number of employees, activity period, export activity period, export share in production, number of countries exported, and annual turnover between their marketing strategy. ($p>0.10$) As a result;

The hypothesis "H4: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on marketing strategies." was rejected.

The hypothesis "H6: The increase in the number of countries to which businesses export their activities has a significant impact on marketing strategies." was rejected.

The hypothesis "H8: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on marketing strategies." was rejected.

Table 6.23. Results of ANOVA in Terms of Organizational and Managerial Factors
Related to Competitive Power and Its Sub-Dimensions' Scales

Competitive Power Scales	No	Scale	Number Of Employees	Activity Period	Export Activity Period	Export Share In Production	Number Of Countries Exported	Annual Turnover
			Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Quality	1	Ability To Provide Reliable Products	0,493	0,627	0,968	0,569	0,497	0,753
	2	Ability To Improve Product Design Quality	0,312	0,476	0,724	0,982	0,115	0,376
	3	Ability To Improve Process Capability And Cycle Times	0,801	0,576	0,793	0,565	0,512	0,327
Innovativeness	4	Ability To Develop Or Expand Foreign Markets	0,139	0,688	0,339	0,031**	0,157	0,152
	5	Ability To Create Intellectual Property	0,642	0,473	0,826	0,591	0,854	0,471
	6	Differentiation From Competitors' Product Technology	0,199	0,152	0,190	0,075*	0,096*	0,200
	7	Offering Large Number Of Product Features Or Options	0,044**	0,489	0,567	0,222	0,161	0,339
	8	Ability Of Marketing Research	0,839	0,832	0,971	0,166	0,822	0,452
Services	9	Ability To Customize Products To Meet Customer Specifications	0,448	0,786	0,475	0,410	0,273	0,462
	10	Ability To Adjust Deliveries To Meet Customer Requirements	0,482	0,715	0,478	0,731	0,769	0,540
	11	Meeting And Exceeding Customer Needs And Preferences	0,160	0,646	0,557	0,250	0,225	0,257
	12	Activities Such As Sales Promotions And Advertising Are More Effective Than Competitors	0,399	0,068*	0,694	0,950	0,438	0,663
Flexibility	13	Ability To Introduce New Products Quickly	0,174	0,342	0,271	0,795	0,06*	0,196
	14	Ability To Make Rapid Design Changes	0,442	0,463	0,313	0,931	0,154	0,084*
	15	Ability To Offer A Wide Range Of Products	0,610	0,586	0,695	0,597	0,459	0,322
	16	Ability To Make Rapid Product Mix Changes	0,178	0,723	0,698	0,769	0,553	0,132
	17	Ability To Make Rapid Volume Changes	0,162	0,063*	0,269	0,241	0,091*	0,079*
	18	Ability To Allow Customer To	0,006***	0,07*	0,046**	0,819	0,008***	0,008***

		Access Product Easily						
	19	Increase Volume Through New Market Penetration	0,062*	0,077*	0,201	0,737	0,017**	0,036**
Delivery /Time	20	Ability To Provide Dependable Delivery	0,077*	0,363	0,178	0,975	0,107	0,136
	21	Ability To Provide Fast Delivery	0,036**	0,278	0,299	0,917	0,093*	0,126
	22	On Time Delivery Performance	0,031**	0,459	0,534	0,746	0,120	0,142
Cost And Price	23	Ability To Make Profit In Price Competitive Market	0,009***	0,187	0,102	0,904	0,023**	0,030**
	24	Ability To Reduce Product Cost By Reducing Overhead Costs	0,018**	0,065*	0,137	0,897	0,115	0,055*
	25	Reduce Logistics Cost	0,026**	0,089*	0,255	0,876	0,180	0,06*
	26	Low Inventory Costs	0,323	0,859	0,948	0,899	0,901	0,773
* p<0.10 ** *p<0.05 *** p<0.01								

First, Levene's Test was applied to test whether the variances were homogeneously distributed. It has been determined that the variances are homogeneously distributed. For this reason, Tukey test, one of the Post Hoc, was used for Anova analysis. According to the results obtained for competitive power;

There is no statistically significant difference between the number of employees and quality strategies such as the ability to provide reliable products, the ability to improve product design quality, the ability to enhance process capability and cycle times; innovativeness strategies including the ability to develop or expand foreign markets, the ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, and the ability to conduct marketing research; services strategies such as the ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, the ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, and activities like sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; flexibility strategies including the ability to introduce new products quickly, the ability to make rapid design changes, the ability to offer a wide range of products, the ability to make rapid product mix changes, and the ability to make rapid volume changes; and cost and price strategies including low inventory costs ($p>0.10$).

In this context, it can be inferred that the number of employees does not have any significant impact on these strategies. On the other hand, a significant difference was found between the number of employees and the innovative/unique product strategy ($p=0.028$), while a statistically significant difference was observed with the product quality strategy ($p=0.062$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was also detected between the number of employees and the fair and events strategy within promotion strategies. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the number of employees has an impact on the innovative/unique product strategy, product quality strategy, and fair and events strategy. In conclusion, it can be stated that the number of employees does not have any impact on these specified strategies. In contrast, a statistically significant difference was found between the number of employees and innovativeness strategies such as offering a large number of product features or options; flexibility strategies such as the ability to allow customers to access products easily and increasing volume through new market penetration; delivery/time strategies including the ability to provide dependable delivery, fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and cost and price strategies such as the ability to make a profit in price-competitive markets, the ability to reduce product costs by lowering overhead costs, and reducing logistics costs. ($p= 0,044$; $p=0,006$; $p= 0,062$; $p= 0,077$; $p= 0,036$; $p= 0,031$; $p= 0,009$; $p= 0,018$; $p= 0,026$) Among these strategies, the differences between the number of employees and the ability to allow customers to access products easily and the ability to make a profit in price-competitive markets were found to be significant. ($p= 0,006$; $p=0,009$)

Different results were obtained when analyzed in terms of activity period. According to these results, no statistically significant difference was found between the activity period and quality strategies such as the ability to provide reliable products, the ability to improve product design quality, and the ability to improve process capability and cycle times; innovativeness strategies including the ability to develop or expand foreign markets, the ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, offering a large number of product features or options, and the ability to conduct marketing research; services strategies such as the ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, the ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, and meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences; flexibility strategies including the ability to introduce new products

quickly, the ability to make rapid design changes, the ability to offer a wide range of products, and the ability to make rapid product mix changes; delivery/time strategies such as the ability to provide dependable delivery, the ability to provide fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and cost and price strategies including the ability to make a profit in price-competitive markets and low inventory costs ($p > 0.10$). In this context, it can be concluded that the activity period does not have an impact on these strategies. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the activity period and services strategies such as activities like sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; flexibility strategies including the ability to make rapid volume changes, the ability to allow customers to access products easily, and increasing volume through new market penetration; and cost and price strategies including the ability to reduce product costs by reducing overhead costs and reducing logistics costs. ($p = 0,068$; $p = 0,063$; $p = 0,07$; $p = 0,077$; $p = 0,065$; $p = 0,089$) As a result, it can be suggested that the activity period of the business has an impact on these strategies.

When analyzed based on the export activity period, different results were identified. According to these results, no statistically significant difference was found between the export activity period and quality strategies such as the ability to provide reliable products, the ability to improve product design quality, and the ability to improve process capability and cycle times; innovativeness strategies including the ability to develop or expand foreign markets, the ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, offering a large number of product features or options, and the ability of marketing research; services strategies such as the ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, the ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, and activities like sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; flexibility strategies including the ability to introduce new products quickly, the ability to make rapid design changes, the ability to offer a wide range of products, the ability to make rapid product mix changes, the ability to make rapid volume changes, and increasing volume through new market penetration; delivery/time strategies such as the ability to provide dependable delivery, the ability to provide fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and cost and price strategies such as the ability to make profit in a price-competitive market, the ability

to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs, reducing logistics costs, and low inventory costs ($p>0.10$). A statistically significant difference was found only between the export activity period and the flexibility strategy of the ability to allow customers to access products easily ($p=0.046$). In this context, it can be stated that the export activity period has an impact on the ability to allow customers to access products easily strategy.

When analyzing the differences between all these strategies and export share in production, a statistically significant difference was found between export share in production and the innovativeness strategies of the ability to develop or expand foreign markets and differentiation from competitors' product technology ($p=0.031$; $p=0.075$). No statistically significant differences were found for the other competitive power strategies ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be stated that export share in production only has an impact on the ability to develop or expand foreign markets and differentiation from competitors' product technology strategies.

In addition, when examining the significant differences between the number of countries exported and competitive power scales, statistically significant differences were observed between the number of countries exported and the innovativeness strategy of differentiation from competitors' product technology; the flexibility strategies of ability to introduce new products quickly, ability to make rapid volume changes, ability to allow customers to access products easily, and increase volume through new market penetration; the delivery/time strategy of ability to provide fast delivery; and the cost and price strategy of ability to make profit in a price competitive market. ($p<0.10$) As a result, it can be concluded that the number of countries exported has an impact on these strategies. Among these, a statistically significant relationship was found between the ability to allow customers to access products easily and the number of countries exported in competitive power scales ($p=0.008$), which may indicate a strong effect. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was found between the number of countries exported and the innovativeness strategy of differentiation from competitors' product technology; the flexibility strategies of ability to introduce new products quickly and ability to make rapid volume changes; and the delivery/time strategy of ability to provide fast delivery. No significant differences were found between the number of countries exported and the remaining

strategies, including the ability to provide reliable products, ability to improve product design quality, ability to improve process capability and cycle times, ability to develop or expand foreign markets, ability to create intellectual property, offering a large number of product features or options, ability of marketing research, ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, activities such as sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors, ability to make rapid design changes, ability to offer a wide range of products, ability to make rapid product mix changes, ability to provide dependable delivery, on-time delivery performance, ability to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs, reduce logistics costs, and low inventory costs ($p>0.10$).

Lastly, difference analyses were conducted between annual turnover and competitive power scales. No statistically significant differences were found between annual turnover and the quality strategies of ability to provide reliable products, ability to improve product design quality, and ability to improve process capability and cycle times; the innovativeness strategies of ability to develop or expand foreign markets, ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, offering a large number of product features or options, and ability of marketing research; the services strategies of ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, and activities such as sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; the flexibility strategies of ability to introduce new products quickly, ability to offer a wide range of products, and ability to make rapid product mix changes; the delivery/time strategies of ability to provide dependable delivery, ability to provide fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and the cost and price strategy of low inventory costs ($p>0.10$). Additionally, statistically significant differences were found between annual turnover and the flexibility strategies of ability to make rapid design changes, ability to make rapid volume changes, ability to allow customers to access products easily, and increase volume through new market penetration; as well as the cost and price strategies of ability to make profit in a price competitive market, ability to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs, and reduce logistics cost ($p<0.10$). Notably, a statistically significant difference was found for the ability to allow customers to

access products easily strategy compared to the others ($p=0.008$). It can be concluded that annual turnover has an impact on these strategies.

Table 6.24. Results of ANOVA in Terms of Organizational and Managerial Factors Related to Competitive Power and Its Sub-Dimensions

	Number Of Employees	Activity Period	Export Activity Period	Export Share In Production	Number Of Countries Exported	Annual Turnover
	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Competitive Power	0,084*	0,271	0,505	0,702	0,074*	0,111
Quality	0,517	0,465	0,853	0,749	0,256	0,337
Innovativeness	0,252	0,587	0,782	0,108	0,288	0,324
Services	0,501	0,482	0,529	0,647	0,421	0,352
Flexibility	0,083*	0,219	0,313	0,761	0,045**	0,044**
Delivery /Time	0,034**	0,283	0,231	0,912	0,062*	0,093*
Cost And Price	0,015**	0,198	0,319	0,934	0,135	0,081*
* $p<0.10$ ** $p<0.05$ *** $p<0.01$						

In this part, after confirming the homogeneous distribution of variances, competitive power is examined both generally and through its sub-dimensions.

A statistically significant difference was found between the number of employees and competitive power ($p=0.084$). In this context, it can be said that the number of employees has an impact on competitive power. Specifically, a statistically significant difference was observed between the number of employees and the sub-dimensions of flexibility, delivery/time, and cost and price strategies ($p<0.10$). Similarly, it can be stated that the number of employees has an impact on these strategies. On the other hand, difference analyses conducted for activity period, export activity period, and export share in production with competitive power did not reveal any statistically significant difference between them ($p>0.10$). Therefore, it can be concluded that these factors do not have an effect on competitive power. In this context, the hypothesis *"H5: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power."* has been rejected. Also, the hypothesis *"H9: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on competitive power."* was rejected. A statistically significant difference was found between the number of countries exported and competitive

power strategies ($p=0.074$). In this context, ***the hypothesis "H7: The increase in the number of countries in which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power" has been accepted.*** Specifically, a statistically significant difference was observed between the number of countries exported and the flexibility and delivery/time strategies ($p=0.045$; $p=0.062$). As a result, it can be concluded that the number of countries exported has an impact on the flexibility and delivery/time strategies. Finally, it was determined that annual turnover generally does not have an impact on competitive power strategies ($p=0.111$). On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was observed between annual turnover and the competitive power sub-dimensions of flexibility, delivery/time, and cost and price strategy ($p<0.10$). It can be said that annual turnover has an impact on these strategies.

6.2.5. Regression Analysis

Ordered logistic regression is a statistical model used when the dependent variable has ordered categories. This model is based on the assumption that the dependent variable has a specific order and that this order is related to the independent variables. For example, responses from a survey such as "poor," "average," and "good" can be analyzed using this type of model. Ordinal logistic regression is also a powerful tool for analyzing ordered data and is used to understand the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable (Agresti, 2010).

With the data obtained as a result of the survey study and the analyzes carried out in the previous titles, many meaningful quantities, that is, parameters, were obtained. Also, more consistent data was obtained because robust standard errors were used. Regression models will be created for these parameters obtained by regression analyses and the direction and effect of the relationship between the relevant parameters will be tried to be measured. Single or more variables can be used in this analysis method. If multiple variables are to be used, the calculation is made by leaving the other variables constant.

Before the analysis, the following equations can be created:

$$\text{Competitive Power} = \alpha + \beta \sum \text{Marketing Strategies} \quad (6.1)$$

$$\text{Competitive Power} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.2)$$

$$\text{Quality} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.3)$$

$$\text{Innovativeness} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.4)$$

$$\text{Services} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.5)$$

$$\text{Flexibility} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.6)$$

$$\text{Delivery Time} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.7)$$

$$\text{Cost/price} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Product} + \beta_2 \text{Price} + \beta_3 \text{Place} + \beta_4 \text{Promotion} \quad (6.8)$$

According to the data obtained in Table 25, it has been observed that the product variable has a statistically significant effect on the quality sub-dimension of competitive power. Additionally, the effects of the following variables have been examined. The variables product, place, promotion, and number of employees have a significant impact on innovativeness. The variables product, place, promotion, and firms' age demonstrate a statistically significant effect on services. The variables price and promotion have a significant effect on flexibility. The variables price, place, and promotion have a statistically significant effect on delivery time. The variables promotion and export share have a significant impact on cost/price. Overall, when controlled, it can be concluded that the variables price, place, and promotion have a statistically significant effect on competitive power.

Table 6.25. Regression Analysis Results for Effect of Marketing Strategies and Organizational/Managerial Factors on Competitive Power

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable						
	Quality	Innovativeness	Services	Flexibility	Delivery Time	Cost/price	Competitive Power
Product	1.041*	1.279**	0.829**	0.357	-0.624	0.142	0.529
	(0.600)	(0.565)	(0.339)	(0.516)	(0.517)	(0.428)	(0.470)
Price	0.561	0.536	0.392	0.605**	0.552*	0.421	0.760**
	(0.399)	(0.473)	(0.355)	(0.294)	(0.315)	(0.375)	(0.306)
Place	0.498	0.905**	0.875**	0.446	0.947*	0.225	0.831*
	(0.400)	(0.423)	(0.405)	(0.459)	(0.519)	(0.467)	(0.460)
Promotion	0.394	1.031***	1.615***	1.127***	0.954**	1.374***	1.607***
	(0.332)	(0.347)	(0.354)	(0.359)	(0.372)	(0.377)	(0.360)
Number of Employees	0.114	-0.243*	0.166	0.0943	-0.137	-0.165	0.00583
	(0.207)	(0.144)	(0.178)	(0.173)	(0.186)	(0.188)	(0.171)
Firms' Age	0.0115	0.353	-0.657**	-0.0222	0.0524	0.124	-0.0999
	(0.255)	(0.217)	(0.268)	(0.216)	(0.227)	(0.212)	(0.215)
Export Share	0.147	0.0430	0.0509	0.112	0.0146	0.233**	0.167
	(0.134)	(0.124)	(0.128)	(0.122)	(0.108)	(0.109)	(0.113)
Observations	111	111	111	111	111	111	111
Wald chi2	70.21	86.40	87.95	90.22	58.16	87.52	112.6
Prob>chi2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pseudo R2	0.165	0.206	0.216	0.132	0.144	0.138	0.152

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

As a result of all these findings, the main hypothesis of our study is "**H1: Marketing strategies have significant effects on competitive power.**" *His hypothesis has been accepted.*

The evaluation of these hypotheses in accordance with our regression model is listed below.

“H1: Marketing strategies have a significant effect on competitive power.” hypothesis has been accepted.

“H1a: Product strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis has been rejected.

“H1b: Price strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis was accepted.

“H1c: Place strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis was accepted.

“H1d: Promotion strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis has been accepted.

6.2.6. Hypothesis Test

Table 6.26. Acceptance and Rejection of Hypotheses

H1: Marketing strategies have significant effects on competitive power.	ACCEPTED
H1a: Product strategies have significant effects on competitive power.	REJECTED
H1b: Price strategies have significant effects on competitive power.	ACCEPTED
H1c: Place strategies have significant effects on competitive power.	ACCEPTED
H1d: Promotion strategies have significant effects on competitive power.	ACCEPTED
H2: The fact that businesses have an export department has a significant effect on their marketing strategies.	ACCEPTED
H3: Having an export department has a significant effect on the competitive power of the businesses.	ACCEPTED
H4: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on marketing strategies.	REJECTED
H5: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power.	REJECTED
H6: The increase in the number of countries to which businesses export their activities has a significant impact on marketing strategies.	REJECTED
H7: The increase in the number of countries in which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power.	ACCEPTED
H8: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on marketing strategies.	REJECTED
H9: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on competitive power.	REJECTED

6.2.7. Results

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of marketing strategies on their competitive power implemented by snack manufacturers operating and exporting in Istanbul. Within the framework of this purpose, a survey was conducted with these companies operating in Istanbul, including the sub-dimensions of marketing. It was implemented by conducting both online and face-to-face survey with authorized persons. This survey, consisting of 3 parts and 62 questions, was prepared with the help of studies in the literature. Validity and reliability analysis of this form was conducted and it was observed that it is appropriate. Afterwards, it was determined that the sample size was sufficient and the data set was suitable for analysis. The analysis of survey suggest that the marketing strategies sub-dimensions explained marketing strategies scale to the participants at a rate of 62.78%. Participants were asked to score using a 5-point Likert scale. Regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants; 56% of the participants are men and the rest are women. The majority of the employees who participated in the survey are export managers. In general, the reasons for exporting for the majority of the participants were observed for growth and development of the business.

If it is examined in terms of managerial and organizational factors of the business;

- A negative correlation of 0.233 was observed between annual turnover and competitive power. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p=0.007$). Having a high turnover can lead businesses to reach market saturation, which, in turn, may result in increased competition. In such a market, acquiring new customers can become challenging, thereby diminishing competitive power. According to Love and Rachinsky (2006)'s research explores the relationship between firm size, measured by annual revenue, and competitive strength, finding that larger firms often face diminishing competitive advantages due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and slower decision-making processes. Dunne et al. (2013) stated that in certain industries, firms with higher revenues may have reduced competitive agility, which can negatively impact their market position over time. Berger and Ofek (1995)'s research discusses how extensive diversification, often a characteristic of firms

with high annual revenues, can lead to a dilution of competitive strength and focus, ultimately harming the firm's overall market performance.

- A negative correlation of 0.123 was observed between annual turnover and marketing strategies. However, This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.099$). The relationship between a company's annual turnover and its marketing strategies has been a subject of scientific inquiry, with differing opinions on whether turnover significantly influences the formulation and implementation of marketing strategies. The resource-based view posits that competitive advantage stems from internal resources and capabilities rather than external factors such as turnover. Pelham and Wilson (1996) found that no direct relationship between annual revenue and marketing strategies. The study emphasizes that the effectiveness of marketing strategies is more closely related to the firm's market structure and culture. Moorman and Slotegraaf (1999)'s research explores the value of complementary capabilities in the product development process and does not find a significant relationship between firms' annual revenues and their marketing strategies. The study indicates that the success of marketing strategies is more linked to the firm's innovation capacity and market responsiveness. This study examines the impact of market orientation and managerial capabilities on business performance, finding no direct link between annual revenue and marketing strategies. The success of strategies is more closely related to the capabilities of managers and the firm's degree of market orientation.
- A negative correlation of 0.222 was observed between number of employees and competitive power. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p=0.01$). Large businesses may face challenges in innovation and rapid decision-making processes due to their high number of employees. A lack of innovation can weaken competitive power, as competitors may have the opportunity to offer more innovative solutions and increase their market share. Consequently, small businesses may achieve a greater competitive advantage. Small businesses can adapt more swiftly to rapidly changing market conditions and implement innovative ideas more quickly due to their more flexible structures. The academic literature provides several studies indicating the negative relationship of workforce size on competitive strength. According to Child (1973), firms with larger workforces tend to develop more hierarchical

and bureaucratic structures, which reduces organizational flexibility and negatively related with competitive strength. Additionally, Hannan and Freeman (1984) argue that a large workforce can create structural inertia within organizations. This inertia hampers the ability to quickly adapt to market changes and innovations, consequently undermining competitive strength.

- A negative correlation of 0.061 was observed between number of employees and marketing strategies. However, This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.262$). Marketing strategies can focus on the differentiation of products or services and innovation. The number of employees may not directly influence the success of these strategies, as a business can develop effective marketing strategies even with a small workforce. Menon, et al. (1999)'s analyzes the outcomes of marketing strategy formation. It finds no significant effect of the number of employees on the creation and success of marketing strategies. Instead, internal processes and external environmental factors are considered more critical. Also, Moorman and Rust (1999)'s research explores the role of marketing within organizations and finds that the number of employees does not significantly impact marketing strategies. The study suggests that strategic alignment and organizational support for marketing are more important factors.
- A correlation of 0.016 was observed between firms age and competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.435$). Older businesses may have developed more complex organizational structures. However, this complexity can slow down decision-making processes and weaken competitive strength. Consequently, this situation decreases the impact of firm age on competitive power.
- A positive correlation of 0.121 was observed between firms age and marketing strategies. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.103$). New businesses tend to be more innovative and flexible. This characteristic can enhance their ability to rapidly change and adapt their marketing strategies. Therefore, the age of a firm may not directly influence the effectiveness of its marketing strategies.

In addition to these, managerial factors were examined:

- A positive correlation of 0.018 was observed between education level of decision makers and marketing strategies. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.424$). While education level ensures that an individual possesses theoretical knowledge, the effectiveness of marketing strategies is often shaped by practical experience and industry-specific knowledge. Based on the findings of Eylül (2014)'s study, it can be inferred that the educational background of managers does not related with export marketing strategies.
- A negative correlation of 0.032 was observed between education level of decision makers and competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.371$). Competitive power is influenced by external factors such as market conditions, consumer demands, and competitors' strategies. These factors can determine competitive power independently of the decision-makers' education levels. It coincides with Eylül's 2014 study " The evaluation of export performance of the firms in manufacturing sector". Based on the findings of this study, it can be inferred that the educational background of managers does not related with export performance. While there are studies indicating a positive relationship between the education level of managers and export performance, other studies have found no significant relationship (Anıl, 2009: 140).
- A positive correlation of 0.114 was observed between experience levels of decision makers and marketing strategies. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.117$). Marketing strategies typically require teamwork. A decision-maker's level of experience can be complemented by the knowledge and skills of other team members. Therefore, experience level alone may not determine the success of the strategies. Also, there are academic examples indicating that the experience level of managers may not significantly impact marketing strategies. Hambrick and Mason (1984) 's upper echelons theory suggests that no significant effect of managerial experience on marketing strategies. Instead, other factors such as company culture and industry dynamics are highlighted as more influential on strategic decisions. Similarly, Menon et al. (1999) found that no significant effect of managerial experience on the creation and success of marketing strategies. Internal processes and external environmental factors are considered more critical. These studies demonstrate that managerial experience levels do not have a direct impact on the success of marketing strategies. Instead, strategic decisions and marketing strategies are more shaped by

factors such as company culture, industry dynamics, internal processes, and external environmental factors.

- A positive correlation of 0.034 was observed between experience levels of decision makers and on competitive power. This relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($p=0.36$). Similarly, competitive power often requires teamwork and collaboration. A decision-maker's level of experience can be complemented by the knowledge and skills of other team members. Therefore, experience level alone may not determine competitive power. There are some similarities between Eylül's 2014 study "The evaluation of export performance of the firms in manufacturing sector" and this research. According to this study, no relationship was found between managers' export entrepreneurship experience and export performance. Also, Hambrick and Mason (1984)'s upper echelons theory, investigates how top managers' characteristics influence organizational outcomes. The findings suggest no significant relationship between managerial experience levels and competitive strength. Instead, other factors such as organizational culture and strategic choices are more impactful. Crossland and Hambrick (2011)'s study explores how national-level institutions affect the impact of CEOs on firm performance. It finds no significant relationship between CEO experience and competitive strength, suggesting that institutional context and managerial discretion play more substantial roles. These studies collectively suggest that managerial experience levels do not have a direct and consistent impact on competitive strength. Instead, competitive advantage is more often shaped by strategic decisions, organizational context, and external environmental factors.
- When the data of the research is tested with factor analysis, the marketing strategy according to the results of this analysis is as follows: The first component explains 45.48% of the total variation. The second component explains 9.95% of the variation, and the last scale explains 7.34%. Regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants; 56.0% of the respondents participating in the study were male and 44.0% were female. In addition, 5.0% of the respondents stated that they were business owners, 40.0% managers, 27.0% export responsible, 10.0% of the respondents stated that they were working as marketing supervisors and 18.0% of the respondents stated that they were working outside of other categories. While 2.0% of the women participating in the survey work as business owners within their companies, 39.0% work as managers, and 22.0% work as export managers. In addition, 12% of women are in charge of marketing, while 25% are in another title in the study. While 8.0% of

the male participants stated that they were business owners, 40.0% reported working as managers, 31.0% as export managers, and 8.0% as marketing managers. In addition, 13% of male employees stated that they worked outside the specified department or title. According to the results, it was observed that the gender factor may differ according to the title of the employees in the relevant company. If we talk about the descriptives of the businesses; the existence of the export department, the number of employees in this department, the duration of their activity and their annual turnover are included. In this sense, 24.3% of the relevant businesses have less than 500 employees, 7.2% have 500-999 personnel, 9.0% have 1000-2999 personnel, and 22.5% have 3000-4999 personnel. In addition to these, 36.9% of the businesses have more than 5000 employees. 86.5% of the related businesses have an export department. 9.38% of the businesses with an export department work with 1 to 5 people in the said unit, 18.75% manage the foreign trade unit with 6 to 10, 17.71% with 11 to 15 people, and 12.50% with 16 to 20 people. In addition, 41.67% of the businesses operate with a team of more than 21 people. According to this result, we can assume that businesses attach importance to the export department. While 3.6% of the businesses participating in the survey indicated they have been operating for 1-5 years, 9.9% reported working in the relevant sector for 6-10 years, and 11.7% for 11-15 years. In addition, 13.5% of the businesses reported that they have been in the sector for 16-20 years, and 61.3% reported that they have been operating in the sector for more than 20 years.

In addition to all this information, if we look at the annual turnover figures of the relevant businesses, 11.70% of them reported less than 5.000.000, 16.20% between 5.000.001 – 25.000.000, 3.60% between 25.000.001 – 50.000.000, 13.50% between 50.000.001-100.000.000, 4.40% between 100.000.001 – 200.000.000 and 40.50% over 200.000.000.

Considering some of descriptive results, it can be said that the businesses participating in the study operate intensively in the relevant sector and have a strong position in their sectors. Other findings obtained within the scope of the research are the export information of the businesses participating in the relevant study. The information on the export activities of the relevant businesses consists of the duration of the export activities, how much of their production belongs to the export and the number of

countries where they carry out export activities. Also according to findings on the export activities of businesses; it was concluded that the execution period of export activities was between 1-5 years in 15.30%, between 6-10 years in 18.0%, in 11-15 years in 10.8%, in 11.7% of the businesses between 16-20 years and in 44.1% over 20 years. In addition to these, while the export share of 15.3% of the businesses participating in the survey study is less than 10%, 22.5% is between 10%- 20%, 20.7% is between 20%- 30%, in addition, 18.9% of the businesses have an export share of 30%- 40%, while the share of 9.0% is between 40% and 50%, and 13.5% has an export share of more than 50%. In addition, it has been determined that the export share allocated for the relevant businesses in their production is not at a very high level. In this context, it can be interpreted that the domestic market shares of the relevant businesses in their production are higher and they need development strategies to increase their export shares. In addition to all these, it was observed that 12.6% of the participating businesses exported to 1-5 countries, 16.2% exported to 6-10 countries, 9.0% exported to 11-15 countries, and 3.6% exported to 16-20 countries, while 58.6% exported to 20 or more countries.

In addition to these, the regions of export may differ according to the businesses. According these results; it has been determined that the companies participating in the study mainly export to the Middle East region and the least to the North America region. If we talk about the preferred branding strategy for these regions; According to the relevant data, 87% of the participants send with their own brand, 56% with private label, 44% with another brand and the remaining 4% without brand. Finally, the descriptive results of the research give us the following information too: it can be said that the majority of the businesses carry out export activities in order to grow and develop. In addition, businesses prefer to continue their export activities for the purposes of increase sales, increase profit margin, promoting the brand name abroad, ensuring the business adapts to the developing and changing world, receiving orders from abroad, benefit from government incentives, reducing the negativities of the domestic market, gaining power in competition because other businesses are exporting and provide tax advantages.

According to the normality test performed after descriptive analysis, it was observed that the data were normally distributed. As a result of the detection of normal change,

statistical analyses were continued. In this context, correlation analysis was applied to measure the relationship between product, price, distribution and promotion strategies, which are the sub-dimensions of marketing strategy, and innovationess, services, flexibility, quality, delivery/time and cost & price, which are the sub-dimensions of competitive power. According to the results, it was determined that there were positive and significant relationships between both their own sub-dimensions and their mutual dimensions. It has been determined that quality, which is one of the sub-dimensions of competitive power, is most effective on product strategies among marketing strategies. It has been observed that innovation, which is one of the sub-dimensions of competitive power, has the most effect on promotion. It has been observed that service, which is one of the competitive power sub-dimensions, has the most effect on promotion strategies. In addition, it has been determined that the sub-dimension of elasticity has the most effect on promotion. Of the competitive power sub-dimensions, the delivery strategy was found to have the most impact on promotion and distribution strategies. The biggest effect of the price and cost sub-dimension is also observed in the promotion strategy. In addition, the competitive power scale is most affected by the positive development of promotional strategies.

Additionally T-Test and Anova analyses were used to investigate some of the organizational and managerial factors of the businesses and the significant differences between the marketing and competitive power strategies implemented by the businesses.

Almost, the existence of the export department of the businesses and the scores of the marketing strategies and sub-dimensions were examined. According to the findings, the average marketing strategy score of the businesses with an export department was 3.95 ± 0.63 , while the marketing strategy score of the businesses without an export department was determined as 3.32 ± 0.53 . Therefore, one of the aims of the research, **"H2: The fact that businesses have an export department has a significant effect on their marketing strategies." hypothesis has been accepted.** Export departments can analyze international competitors, allowing the business to shape its marketing strategies according to this competitive environment. Also, it is in suitable with the literature. If we examine the average competitive power score of the businesses with export departments, The fact that the businesses have an export department has a

positive effect on both their marketing strategies, competitiveness and sub-dimensions related to these parameters. No statistically significant difference was obtained for some parameters, but the mean values were found to be higher in the relevant parameters compared to the other group. According to this results;” ***H3: Having an export department has a significant effect on the competitive power of the businesses.” hypothesis has been accepted.*** For example, export departments develop strategies for how products will be delivered to international markets. Effective distribution and logistics can enhance the competitive power of the business. According to İnan's (2019) study, the presence of an export department results in significant differences as follows: Businesses with an export department show statistically higher levels of marketing strategies compared to those without such department. Similarly, businesses with an international trade unit demonstrate statistically higher levels of competitiveness compared to those without. This situation is expected, indicating that having an export department places a business in a more advantageous position in terms of both marketing capability and competitiveness compared to businesses without such a department.

According to results of anova in terms of organizational and managerial factors related to marketing strategy and its sub-dimensions’ scales;

There is no statistically significant difference between the number of employees and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, product mix strategy, product advantage strategy, product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, and promotion adaptation ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be inferred that the number of employees does not have any significant impact on these strategies. On the other hand, a significant difference was found between the number of employees and the innovative/unique product strategy ($p=0.028$), while a statistically significant difference was observed with the product quality strategy ($p=0.062$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was also detected between the number of employees and the fair and events strategy within promotion strategies. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the number of employees has an

impact on the innovative/unique product strategy, product quality strategy, and fair and events strategy.

There is no statistically significant difference between the activity period of the business and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, product mix strategy, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, and fairs and events ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be inferred that the activity period of the business does not have any significant effect on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between the activity period of the business and the promotion adaptation strategy within promotion strategies ($p=0.083$). Accordingly, it can be suggested that the activity period of the business has an impact on the promotion adaptation strategy.

There is no statistically significant difference between the export activity period and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events ($p>0.10$). In this regard, it can be stated that the export activity period does not have any significant effect on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between the export activity period and the product mix strategy ($p=0.036$). Therefore, it can be suggested that the export activity period has an impact on the product mix strategy.

According to the results, no statistically significant difference was found between the export share in production and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, product mix strategy, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution

adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies such as advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events strategies ($p>0.10$). In this regard, it can be concluded that the export share in production does not have any significant effect on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between the export share in production and the branding strategy among product strategies ($p=0.086$). Therefore, it can be suggested that the export share in production has an impact on the branding strategy.

There is no statistically significant difference between the number of countries exported to and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events strategies ($p>0.10$). In this regard, it can be concluded that the number of countries exported to does not have any significant effect on these strategies. However, a significant difference was found between the number of countries exported to and the product mix strategy, as well as a statistically significant difference with the innovative/unique product strategy ($p=0.003$; $p=0.098$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the number of countries exported to and the place strategy of delivery time, as well as the promotion strategy of advertising or launch strategy ($p=0.093$; $p=0.030$). Therefore, it can be suggested that the number of countries exported to has an impact on these strategies.

There is no statistically significant difference between annual turnover and product strategies such as packaging/labelling, branding, innovative/unique product strategy, product advantage strategy, product quality, and product adaptation strategy; pricing strategies including pricing method, price adaptation, and market price determination; place strategies such as distribution adaptation, delivery time, distributors/agents, dealer support, and closeness to market; and promotion strategies including advertising or launch strategy, sales promotions, promotion intensity, promotion adaptation, and fairs and events strategies ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be stated that annual turnover

does not have any significant impact on these strategies. On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between annual turnover and the product mix Strategy ($p=0.095$). Therefore, it can be suggested that annual turnover has an impact on the product mix strategy.

When examining the differences between the number of employees, activity period, export activity period, export share in production, number of countries exported, and annual turnover with marketing strategies across their sub-dimensions, a significant difference was found between the number of employees and product strategies ($p=0.041$). In this context, it can be suggested that the number of employees has an impact on product strategies. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the export share in production and pricing strategies ($p=0.081$). This indicates that the export share in production has an effect on pricing strategies. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference was detected between the number of countries exported and product strategies ($p=0.094$). Therefore, it can be inferred that the number of countries exported has an impact on product strategies.

When examining the overall effect on marketing strategies, no statistically significant differences were found between number of employees, activity period, export activity period, export share in production, number of countries exported, and annual turnover between their marketing strategy. ($p>0.10$) As a result; ***the hypothesis "H4: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on marketing strategies." was rejected.*** Marketing strategies are based on long-term objectives and the overall business strategy. Thus, they may not be influenced by this strategic planning, as marketing strategies typically encompass a broader time frame. It has been observed that it is consistent with the results in the literature. With a similar study titled "the effect of marketing strategies applied in businesses producing automotive spare parts for export on competitiveness", conducted by İnan, there are same results with this research. According this thesis, "The increase in the export period of businesses has significant effects on marketing strategies." rejected the results of the analysis of this hypothesis. ***The hypothesis "H6: The increase in the number of countries to which businesses export their activities has a significant impact on marketing strategies." was rejected.*** Marketing strategies are shaped by the competitive environment. The number of countries to which exports are made may

influence the competition; however, this may not alter the overall framework of marketing strategies. According to Johanson and Vahlne (1977), an increase in the number of countries where exports are conducted may necessitate the spreading of firm resources across more countries. This situation could make it difficult to allocate sufficient resources for marketing strategies and could reduce strategic alignment. Another example is provided by the study of Leonidou and Katsikeas (1996). Cultural, political, and economic differences across different countries can influence the success of marketing strategies and increase the challenges of conducting business with numerous countries. This situation may adversely affect the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

The hypothesis "H8: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on marketing strategies." was rejected. The share of exports in production can influence the management of resources; however, marketing strategies are based on general principles related to the effective utilization of resources and can therefore be developed independently of the export share. Similar to this result, effective marketing strategies prioritize understanding and responding to customer needs, regardless of whether production is export-oriented or domestic-focused (Narver and Slater, 1990). Also, Porter (1985) stated that differentiation and market positioning strategies are critical in international markets, influencing marketing strategy formulation irrespective of production orientation. In conclusion, while export-oriented production is important for international market expansion, its direct impact on marketing strategies is shaped by broader market dynamics, competitive positioning, and strategic objectives. The literature reviewed supports the argument that effective marketing strategies prioritize customer orientation, competitive analysis, and strategic alignment with market conditions over production orientation alone.

According to the results obtained for competitive power;

There is no statistically significant difference between the number of employees and quality strategies such as the ability to provide reliable products, the ability to improve product design quality, the ability to enhance process capability and cycle times; innovativeness strategies including the ability to develop or expand foreign markets, the ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product

technology, and the ability to conduct marketing research; services strategies such as the ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, the ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, and activities like sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; flexibility strategies including the ability to introduce new products quickly, the ability to make rapid design changes, the ability to offer a wide range of products, the ability to make rapid product mix changes, and the ability to make rapid volume changes; and cost and price strategies including low inventory costs ($p > 0.10$).

In this context, it can be inferred that the number of employees does not have any significant impact on these strategies. On the other hand, a significant difference was found between the number of employees and the innovative/unique product strategy ($p = 0.028$), while a statistically significant difference was observed with the product quality strategy ($p = 0.062$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was also detected between the number of employees and the fair and events strategy within promotion strategies. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the number of employees has an impact on the innovative/unique product strategy, product quality strategy, and fair and events strategy. In conclusion, it can be stated that the number of employees does not have any impact on these specified strategies. In contrast, a statistically significant difference was found between the number of employees and innovativeness strategies such as offering a large number of product features or options; flexibility strategies such as the ability to allow customers to access products easily and increasing volume through new market penetration; delivery/time strategies including the ability to provide dependable delivery, fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and cost and price strategies such as the ability to make a profit in price-competitive markets, the ability to reduce product costs by lowering overhead costs, and reducing logistics costs. ($p = 0.044$; $p = 0.006$; $p = 0.062$; $p = 0.077$; $p = 0.036$; $p = 0.031$; $p = 0.009$; $p = 0.018$; $p = 0.026$) Among these strategies, the differences between the number of employees and the ability to allow customers to access products easily and the ability to make a profit in price-competitive markets were found to be significant. ($p = 0.006$; $p = 0.009$)

Different results were obtained when analyzed in terms of activity period. According to these results, no statistically significant difference was found between the activity

period and quality strategies such as the ability to provide reliable products, the ability to improve product design quality, and the ability to improve process capability and cycle times; innovativeness strategies including the ability to develop or expand foreign markets, the ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, offering a large number of product features or options, and the ability to conduct marketing research; services strategies such as the ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, the ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, and meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences; flexibility strategies including the ability to introduce new products quickly, the ability to make rapid design changes, the ability to offer a wide range of products, and the ability to make rapid product mix changes; delivery/time strategies such as the ability to provide dependable delivery, the ability to provide fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and cost and price strategies including the ability to make a profit in price-competitive markets and low inventory costs ($p > 0.10$). In this context, it can be concluded that the activity period does not have an impact on these strategies. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the activity period and services strategies such as activities like sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; flexibility strategies including the ability to make rapid volume changes, the ability to allow customers to access products easily, and increasing volume through new market penetration; and cost and price strategies including the ability to reduce product costs by reducing overhead costs and reducing logistics costs. ($p = 0,068$; $p = 0,063$; $p = 0,07$; $p = 0,077$; $p = 0,065$; $p = 0,089$) As a result, it can be suggested that the activity period of the business has an impact on these strategies.

When analyzed based on the export activity period, different results were identified. According to these results, no statistically significant difference was found between the export activity period and quality strategies such as the ability to provide reliable products, the ability to improve product design quality, and the ability to improve process capability and cycle times; innovativeness strategies including the ability to develop or expand foreign markets, the ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, offering a large number of product features or options, and the ability of marketing research; services strategies such as the ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, the ability

to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, and activities like sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; flexibility strategies including the ability to introduce new products quickly, the ability to make rapid design changes, the ability to offer a wide range of products, the ability to make rapid product mix changes, the ability to make rapid volume changes, and increasing volume through new market penetration; delivery/time strategies such as the ability to provide dependable delivery, the ability to provide fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and cost and price strategies such as the ability to make profit in a price-competitive market, the ability to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs, reducing logistics costs, and low inventory costs ($p>0.10$). A statistically significant difference was found only between the export activity period and the flexibility strategy of the ability to allow customers to access products easily ($p=0.046$). In this context, it can be stated that the export activity period has an impact on the ability to allow customers to access products easily strategy.

When analyzing the differences between all these strategies and export share in production, a statistically significant difference was found between export share in production and the innovativeness strategies of the ability to develop or expand foreign markets and differentiation from competitors' product technology ($p=0.031$; $p=0.075$). No statistically significant differences were found for the other competitive power strategies ($p>0.10$). In this context, it can be stated that export share in production only has an impact on the ability to develop or expand foreign markets and differentiation from competitors' product technology strategies.

In addition, when examining the significant differences between the number of countries exported and competitive power scales, statistically significant differences were observed between the number of countries exported and the innovativeness strategy of differentiation from competitors' product technology; the flexibility strategies of ability to introduce new products quickly, ability to make rapid volume changes, ability to allow customers to access products easily, and increase volume through new market penetration; the delivery/time strategy of ability to provide fast delivery; and the cost and price strategy of ability to make profit in a price competitive market. ($p<0.10$) As a result, it can be concluded that the number of countries exported

has an impact on these strategies. Among these, a statistically significant relationship was found between the ability to allow customers to access products easily and the number of countries exported in competitive power scales ($p=0.008$), which may indicate a strong effect. Additionally, a statistically significant difference was found between the number of countries exported and the innovativeness strategy of differentiation from competitors' product technology; the flexibility strategies of ability to introduce new products quickly and ability to make rapid volume changes; and the delivery/time strategy of ability to provide fast delivery. No significant differences were found between the number of countries exported and the remaining strategies, including the ability to provide reliable products, ability to improve product design quality, ability to improve process capability and cycle times, ability to develop or expand foreign markets, ability to create intellectual property, offering a large number of product features or options, ability of marketing research, ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, activities such as sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors, ability to make rapid design changes, ability to offer a wide range of products, ability to make rapid product mix changes, ability to provide dependable delivery, on-time delivery performance, ability to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs, reduce logistics costs, and low inventory costs ($p>0.10$).

Lastly, difference analyses were conducted between annual turnover and competitive power scales. No statistically significant differences were found between annual turnover and the quality strategies of ability to provide reliable products, ability to improve product design quality, and ability to improve process capability and cycle times; the innovativeness strategies of ability to develop or expand foreign markets, ability to create intellectual property, differentiation from competitors' product technology, offering a large number of product features or options, and ability of marketing research; the services strategies of ability to customize products to meet customer specifications, ability to adjust deliveries to meet customer requirements, meeting and exceeding customer needs and preferences, and activities such as sales promotions and advertising being more effective than competitors; the flexibility strategies of ability to introduce new products quickly, ability to offer a wide range of products, and ability to make rapid product mix changes; the delivery/time strategies

of ability to provide dependable delivery, ability to provide fast delivery, and on-time delivery performance; and the cost and price strategy of low inventory costs ($p > 0.10$). Additionally, statistically significant differences were found between annual turnover and the flexibility strategies of ability to make rapid design changes, ability to make rapid volume changes, ability to allow customers to access products easily, and increase volume through new market penetration; as well as the cost and price strategies of ability to make profit in a price competitive market, ability to reduce product cost by reducing overhead costs, and reduce logistics cost ($p < 0.10$). Notably, a statistically significant difference was found for the ability to allow customers to access products easily strategy compared to the others ($p = 0.008$). It can be concluded that annual turnover has an impact on these strategies.

In this part, after confirming the homogeneous distribution of variances, competitive power is examined both generally and through its sub-dimensions.

A statistically significant difference was found between the number of employees and competitive power ($p = 0.084$). In this context, it can be said that the number of employees has an impact on competitive power. Specifically, a statistically significant difference was observed between the number of employees and the sub-dimensions of flexibility, delivery/time, and cost and price strategies ($p < 0.10$). Similarly, it can be stated that the number of employees has an impact on these strategies. On the other hand, difference analyses conducted for activity period, export activity period, and export share in production with competitive power did not reveal any statistically significant difference between them ($p > 0.10$). Therefore, it can be concluded that these factors do not have an effect on competitive power. In this context, the hypothesis ***"H5: The period during which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power." has been rejected.*** While longer export durations may provide experience and market knowledge, they do not inherently guarantee a competitive advantage. With a similar study titled "the effect of marketing strategies applied in businesses producing automotive spare parts for export on competitiveness", conducted by İnan, there are same results with this research. According İnan (2019), "The increase in the export period of businesses has significant effects on competitiveness." rejected the results of the analysis of this hypothesis. (İnan, 2019) In addition to this, according to Katsikeas (2002) Model, it is argued that

firm size and export experience have no impact on firm's export performance. Also, some studies suggest a negative relationship between a firm's export experience and its export performance (Kaynak & Kuan, 1993: 44), while others indicate no significant relationship (Katsikeas et al., 1996: 25; Yücel, 2005: 159). Also, the hypothesis **"H9: The increase in the export share of businesses in their production has significant effects on competitive power."** was rejected. While a higher export share may indicate a company's market reach, it does not necessarily gain competitive power. Other elements, such as operational efficiency and adaptability to market changes, play a more significant role in establishing and maintaining competitive power. According to Grant (1991)'s study demonstrated that effective market entry and competitive strategies are crucial for establishing a strong market position, driven by market analysis and competitive positioning rather than production orientation alone. Also export-oriented production rates, while significant, must be complemented by firm-specific resources (e.g., technology, brand equity) to contribute to sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

A statistically significant difference was found between the number of countries exported and competitive power strategies ($p=0.074$). In this context, ***the hypothesis "H7: The increase in the number of countries in which businesses carry out their export activities has a significant effect on their competitive power" has been accepted.*** Exporting to more countries diversifies the business's market and thereby reduces risks. When economic uncertainties or crises affect only certain markets, establishing a strong position in other markets provides a competitive advantage. Specifically, a statistically significant difference was observed between the number of countries exported and the flexibility and delivery/time strategies ($p=0.045$; $p=0.062$). As a result, it can be concluded that the number of countries exported has an impact on the flexibility and delivery/time strategies. The market dynamics, customer expectations, cultural norms, and legal frameworks differ across countries. As the number of countries to which you export increases, there is a greater need for flexibility to manage these variations. For instance, the expectations regarding delivery timelines may vary among consumers in different countries. Finally, it was determined that annual turnover generally does not have an impact on competitive power strategies ($p=0.111$). On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was observed between annual turnover and the competitive power sub-dimensions of flexibility,

delivery/time, and cost and price strategy ($p < 0.10$). It can be said that annual turnover has an impact on these strategies. Inan's (2019) study, upon general evaluation, suggests that engaging in export activities to different countries positively influences the competitiveness of businesses. Torlak et al. (2002) conducted a survey across 38 cities in 7 geographical regions of Turkey involving 581 exporting firms to assess their export performance. The study examined the share of exports in total sales as an indicator of success, focusing on firm characteristics, size, and export experience. According to their findings, as firm size, export experience, the number of countries exported to, and the number of exporting firms increased, the share of exports in total sales also increased, thereby enhancing export performance. The study concluded that while firm characteristics and export strategies influence performance, the mode of export was not found to affect performance significantly (Torlak et al., 2007: 112).

As a result of the regression analysis, the effect of marketing strategies, which is the main subject of our study, on competitive power was examined. According to findings;

With the data obtained as a result of the survey study and the analyzes carried out in the previous titles, many meaningful quantities, that is, parameters, were obtained. Regression models will be created for these parameters obtained by regression analyses and the direction and effect of the relationship between the relevant parameters will be tried to be measured. Single or more variables can be used in this analysis method. If multiple variables are to be used, the calculation is made by leaving the other variables constant.

According to the data obtained from regression analysis, it has been observed that the product variable has a statistically significant effect on the quality sub-dimension of competitive power. Additionally, the effects of the following variables have been examined. The variables product, place, promotion, and number of employees have a significant impact on innovativeness. The variables product, place, promotion, and firms' age demonstrate a statistically significant effect on services. The variables price and promotion have a significant effect on flexibility. The variables price, place, and promotion have a statistically significant effect on delivery time. The variables promotion and export share have a significant impact on cost/price. Overall, when controlled, it can be concluded that the variables price, place, and promotion have a statistically significant effect on competitive power.

The evaluation of these hypotheses in accordance with our regression model is listed below. ***“H1: Marketing strategies have a significant effect on competitive power.” hypothesis has been accepted. “H1a: Product strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis has been rejected.*** Snack products are typically presented in a standard format. For instance, food items such as chips, nuts, and chocolate are offered in similar packaging types and sizes. Consequently, product strategies—such as branding and packaging—exhibit negligible differentiation within the snack industry. According to a study similar in nature to the research by Cohe and Levinthal (1990), while product strategies are important, the ability of firms to absorb and utilize external knowledge may play a more critical role in competitive power, suggesting that product strategies alone may not have a significant effect. ***“H1b: Price strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis was also accepted.*** Low-price strategies provide a competitive advantage for businesses that manage to reduce their costs. Cost-effective production and distribution methods enable a company to enter the market with lower prices, thereby facilitating customer acquisition. Pricing strategies can influence a firm's competitive power both positively and negatively. Consequently, it is crucial for businesses to develop appropriate pricing strategies by considering market dynamics, cost structures, and target audiences. Related with this hypothesis; Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasize that the importance of pricing strategies in achieving competitive advantage and how they can significantly impact a firm's market power. ***“H1c: Place strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis was accepted.*** With the implementation of effective strategies, a firm can augment its market share, enhance customer satisfaction, and minimize costs. This, in turn, contributes positively to the overall sustainability of the business. In Kotler and Keller (2016)’s comprehensive marketing textbook, the authors highlight the importance of place strategies in reaching target markets and how they can significantly impact a firm's competitive positioning. ***“H1d: Promotion strategies have significant effects on competitive power.” hypothesis has been accepted.*** Effective promotion strategies enhance brand awareness, creating a level of recognition among the target audience. Elevated brand awareness can positively influence customer preferences, thereby providing a competitive power. Similarly, analyses conducted in the study by Inan (2019) revealed that firms' competitiveness is positively influenced by their promotional strategies.

If we refer to the results of the similar studies, the literature reviewed in parallel with our study, namely Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002), Çavuşgil, Tamer and Shaoming Zou (1994), Zhao, Yan Yeung and Zhou (2002), Kroes and Ghosh (2009), Gjerde, Slotnick and Sobel (2002), Boyer and Lewis (2002), Almaz and Çağlayan (2019), Kathuria and Partovi (2000), Bozarth and Handfield (1998), Lee, Chol and David (2004). In this study, as a result of the correlation analysis, a positive and significant correlation relationship was found between competitive power and innovationess, services, flexibility, quality, delivery/time and cost & price subdimensions.

A similar study titled "the effect of marketing strategies applied in businesses producing automotive spare parts for export on competitiveness", conducted by İnan (2019), focusing on Konya province. According to this study, there are similarities in the effect of marketing strategies on competitive power. In general, the effect of marketing strategies on competitive power was found to be positive, while their dimensions were found to be partially effective.

An examination of the literature indicates that numerous studies have explored the relationship between export marketing strategies and export performance (Anıl, 2009: 148; Zou and Stan, 1998; Çavuşgil and Zou, 1994: 4; Aaby and Slater, 1989; Leonidou et al., 2002: 52; Katsikeas et al., 2000; Yücel, 2005: 182; Kahveci, 2012: 14; Lee and Griffith, 2004), consistently finding that these strategies play a crucial role in influencing export performance. Our research also supports this conclusion, revealing that the adaptation levels of the marketing mix elements—product, price, promotion, and distribution—significantly affect performance. Specifically, the development of products tailored for foreign markets is shown to enhance export performance, and a significant relationship exists between distribution activities and export success.

The results of our study are consistent with findings in the existing literature. For example, Katsikeas et al. (2000) identified that the influence of marketing strategies on export performance can be limited. Similarly, Leonidou et al. (2002) demonstrated that the impact of marketing strategies on export performance varies according to the sector, target market, and a multitude of other factors.

In addition, it has similarities with the study "the evaluation of export performance of the firms in manufacturing sector: a research in Konya, Karaman, Aksaray" conducted by Erul (2014). For example, in both studies, the export experience of the business did not have an effect on export performance or competitive power. On the other hand, in this study, it was determined that marketing strategies had no effect on competitive power or performance, while in my study, it was determined that they did. In both theses, while the effect of promotion activities on performance/competitive power was determined, different determinations were made about the effect of distribution strategies. As a result, similarities and differences were found between the two studies.

Limitations of the Research

In this study, which aims to measure the effect of the marketing strategies applied by the snack companies engaged in export-oriented production on their competitive power, many meaningful results have been determined, but some limitations have been identified along with these findings. These constraints, which can consist of many elements, are summarized below:

- The selected sample is representative, but does not have the ability to generalize. The universe of this research consists of the manufacturers in TOBB's system. These questionnaires applied for the research were carried out in May 2024, with a total of 111 samples. These businesses have the ability to export the results of their production as well as carrying out joint activities. For these reasons, the scope of the research can be expanded and analyzes can be applied with different clustering methods. This study was also limited to the province of Istanbul.
- Another limitation of the research is that the structures of the businesses in the universe have changed for different reasons (bankruptcy, mergers, etc.) and these details have not yet been reflected in TOBB's system.

Suggestions to Researchers

- Within the scope of the research, research can be continued periodically and the effect of marketing strategies on competitive power can be observed. For this reason, it can guide entrepreneurs who want to enter this sector. On the

other hand, since the research needs to be repeated at certain periods, it may create a restriction situation.

- To obtain easy and reliable results, the survey questions were posed to participants with a range of responses. However, it is believed that directly asking for their answers would yield more accurate results.

Suggestions to Businesses

- Businesses have to focus on marketing strategies in order to gain competitive power in the ever-changing and developing business world. Among the sub-dimensions, two issues that should be focused on are product and promotional strategies. Businesses should give importance to these strategies and keep their brands up-to-date. In this context, various trainings or seminars can be organized for exporters. Certified trainings can be organized for startups.
- While this study found that the impact of marketing strategies on competitiveness is important for exporting businesses, the effectiveness of these strategies can vary greatly based on factors such as industry, geographic location, target market, and several other variables. Therefore, it is essential for businesses to develop tailored marketing strategies that take into account their industry, location, and target market characteristics.
- In highly competitive industries, a well-developed marketing strategy can provide a significant competitive advantage. Thus, it is crucial for businesses in highly competitive industries to invest more in their marketing strategies and to continuously reevaluate and improve these strategies.
- Consumer needs and preferences can vary widely across different geographic regions. Therefore, it is advisable for businesses to create marketing strategies that cater to the distinct needs and preferences of consumers in various regions.
- The characteristics of the target market play a critical role in the success of marketing strategies. For example, a marketing strategy targeting younger consumers may be more effective than one aimed at older consumers. Consequently, businesses should conduct thorough analyses of their target markets and develop strategies that are appropriately aligned.

- Since it has been determined that having an export department has a positive effect on both marketing strategies and competitive power, The importance of the existence of the export department can be emphasized in order for businesses to increase their competitiveness. Establishing a well-structured export department and team is one of the factors that can give businesses a competitive advantage. Therefore, businesses must consider these aspects carefully.
- It has been observed that the competitive power increases with the number of countries to which exports are made. In this context, businesses can conduct market research to increase the number of countries and regions they export to. This constitutes the first step in developing an effective strategy.
- It has been determined that businesses can achieve competitive strength depending on their annual turnover. This factor, which distinguishes the business, can be presumed to indicate its capability and power. Consequently, strategies for increasing and enhancing sales revenue can be implemented.
- It has been identified that the number of employees within a business serves as another factor indicating its size and power. Businesses can gain competitive advantage in the market by developing and expanding their departments and teams.
- If due attention is paid to the sub-dimensions of competitiveness, they can strengthen their position in the current market.

To better understand the impact of marketing strategies on competitiveness, there is a need for broader studies that encompass a variety of sectors. Hence, businesses and researchers are encouraged to undertake comprehensive studies that cover different industries and markets. Such research can aid businesses in crafting more effective marketing strategies.

On the other hand, since the scope of this study is only in the province of Istanbul, it prevents detailed conclusions from being reached on a sectoral basis. For this reason, if the studies to be carried out from now on are carried out in different sectors and regions in a more comprehensive manner, this study can be applied throughout Türkiye.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

MASKELENMİŞTİR







ATTACHMENTS

MASKELENMİŞTİR







