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The effects of marketing capabilities on export performance using resource-based view: assessment on manufacturing companies

Gul Nalcaci^{a*}, Mehmet I. Yagci^b

^a*Cukurova Makina Imalat ve Tic.A.S., Mersin 33470 Turkey*

^b*University of Mersin, Department of Business Administration, Mersin 33160 Turkey*

Abstract

For the last years, under increasing intensive competitive conditions, manufacturing firms have been seeking ways to create advantages against their competitors that lead them to change their product-oriented strategy to adopt market-oriented strategy. Thus, it is important for those firms to define their activities better and to use their resources to increase their export performance. In this study, using resource-based view, important resources and marketing capabilities of manufacturing companies which play key roles in their export performance were examined. Then, in order to understand the effects of various defined resources and marketing capabilities on manufacturing firms' export performance in depth, export activities of 14 Turkish manufacturing firms in different sectors were investigated using critical incident method.

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1. Introduction

Manufacturers operating in international markets have been facing many strategic and corporate difficulties. Mostly low-cost competing products urge manufacturers to employ different strategies. Researchers believe that the most profitable strategies are basically those based on differentiation advantages (MacMillan, Ian C. and Rita Gunther McGrath, 1997). The two main ways, which lead to differentiation are products and services. Although the significance of the latter is proven, its role on differentiation is generally ignored (Asugman, Gulden, Jean L. Johnson and James McCullough, 1997), (Balabanis, George, 2000), (Cloninger, Peggy A. and Benjamin Oviatt, 2007), (Skaggs, Bruce C. and Scott B. Droege, 2004). In order to differentiate in given services, it is necessary for firms to adopt market-oriented strategy with understanding of market dynamics. However, accessing market

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90-532-794-0816; fax: +90-324-616-3220

E-mail address: gulnalcaci@hotmail.com

information in export markets could be restricted compared to local markets and when a market is complicated, it would be more difficult to perform successful market-oriented activities. Therefore, while building their competition strategies, firms need to take into account implications of their resources and capabilities in support of how they will compete for target customers and how they will achieve their goals (Cavusgil, S. T., & Zou, S., 1994).

Although various distinctions have been attributed to the resources, the main idea is that when brought together in an efficient way, resources will be leading in terms of development of organizational skills and capabilities. While capabilities are regarded as hidden assets, management capabilities (Hadjimanolis, A., 2000) are regarded as essential information resource that firm has that can be translated into an organizational skill (Moingeon, B., B. Ramanantsoa, E. Metais ve J. D. Orton, 1998) and an essential feature which distinguish them from their competitors. Therefore, it is critical that these resources and capabilities should not be reproducible, transferable and accessible. This paper recognizes the distinction between resources and capabilities (Day, G. S., 1994). Many resources are accessible by exporters. Yet, two of them pose significance for this study, which are “Informational Resources” and “Financial Resources”. Considering the competitive advantage of the capabilities that arise out of firm’s current resources, “Management Capabilities” and “Customer Relations Capabilities” which are regarded to be holding key roles in export performance effect comprise another important part of the paper.

2. Methodology

2.1. The goal, model and method of the research

The goal of this research is to find out, by means of resource-based view (RBV), to what extent resources and marketing capabilities affect the export performance of manufacturers operating in international markets and to contribute to the development of knowledge in this field. In this paper, by using critical incident method, 14 manufacturing firms will be asked to give detailed information about critical events encountered in the course of managing export market, facilitative and complicating factors to understand their export performance determinants based on their resources and capabilities borne from these resources. Those critical incidents will give more clear information in understanding firms’ management mechanisms and their approach to export markets as it is aimed to make deeper and efficient study.

2.1.1. Selection of firms

Firms needed to fulfill the following four criteria to be included in this study: it must be an independent Turkish firm; it must be a manufacturer; it must be dealing with export; its international performance for the last four years must be either high or low. Regard to the last criteria, high-performance firms are those having remarkable performance superior to competition, classified in the following way; firms whose international sales average ratio in last four years is at least 35% of total sales chosen in order to study firms which aim growth in export or prioritize international markets. In addition, within their four year of international performance managers were asked about their satisfaction regarding average market share they obtained; average profit return and international benefits they gained; special goals they set in export markets. The managers responded that their goals are accessing to certain or new markets, exceeding the performance of main competitors, rendering services for certain customers or achieving a few of these goals together perceived as high satisfaction.

On the contrary, in the low-performance group, manufacturers whose performance is relatively lower than their competition were chosen. The meaning of this is; firms whose international sales average ratio in the last four years within firm’s total sales is maximum 35% to find out firms which attribute secondary importance to their international existence and international performance was perceived as low in the field stated above.

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