MARKETING ORIENTATION COMPONENTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON EXPORT COMPETENCIES[1]

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ABSTRACT

Exporting firms feel the need to get a share from the world-wide trade and take advantage of the opportunities and advantages in foreign markets; therefore, export competencies should be enhanced and the marketing orientation components must be chosen and implemented correctly. This study examines the level of export competencies and the importance level of the marketing orientation components of the firms. Then, the effects of marketing orientation components on export competencies are exposed. Within the framework of the research sample, 169 exporting firms that operate in the automotive supply industry in Turkey are chosen by using convenience sampling method. Reliability analysis, validity analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis are applied to the collected data. The results indicate that quality of the products is the main competence and being customer oriented is the most important marketing orientation component of the firms. Moreover, marketing orientation components in general significantly affect the export competencies. Study suggests that firms should give sufficient importance to R&D activities and technology use and prioritize cost and efficiency in their production. It is also a necessity for exporting firms to increase their international competencies through international innovation efforts by communicating with foreign markets, adopting international environmental and market conditions, and gaining international marketing skills.

Keywords: Exporting firms, Export competencies, Marketing orientation components

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of local markets, many studies satisfactorily explain the relationship between marketing strategies and business performance. However, many empirical studies on the relationship between firms' export performance and marketing strategies are ultimately fragmented (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994: 1).

Mohamed and Al-Shaigi (2014: 1631) examine the relationship between export performance and marketing strategies in their study. In their analysis, they find that the price and distribution strategies of the firms are more effective on export performance. However, they state that this interaction is not as strong as non-business factors affecting export performance.

In another study, Knight and Kim (2009: 271) find that international marketing strategies, international innovation activities and international market orientation in small-scale firms increase business competence in export markets. They emphasize that there is a positive relationship between business competence and export performance.

Finally, Madsen (1989: 54,55) reveal that it is a necessity to integrate safe and stable export activities resulting in high business performance with the marketing strategies and internationalization levels determined by the firms while entering the foreign markets.

In the literature, the narrow features of the models used in many empirical studies on this subject have led to the conclusion that they are complex in their results. Therefore, it would be better for studies that include more features in terms of model and more numerical integrity related to export marketing to examine and define the problems in depth. At this point, the aim of the study is to examine the effects of marketing orientation components on export competencies of exporting firms.

2. MARKETING ORIENTATION COMPONENTS

Export activities are the traditional method of international business movements, and firms to accurately determine their export marketing strategies will facilitate the efforts of exchanging goods and services, which are the most distinctive feature of international trade, across national borders (Seyoum, 2009:6).

Knowledge is essential in generating successful marketing strategies. Especially firms operating in foreign markets and physically far from customers, competitors, and marketing environments; They make an effort to collect information about the targeted markets (Hollensen, 2007: 153). In the market research process, firms primarily examine the foreign markets in which they will operate. Market selection is critical for the

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[1] The study is based on the author's Ph.D. thesis

firm to choose the most suitable and profitable one among the potential markets (Reid, 1981: 108). Successful exporters want not only to increase sales, but also to gather information about foreign markets and learn about business practices in these markets. The purpose of doing this is to keep communication and information flow constantly alive (Czinkota and Johnston, 1983: 152).

Product positioning, which plays a critical role in all marketing strategies, should not be neglected in export activities. Because firms that do not have a certain position in the eyes of consumers; The prices of their products will be perceived as low and their quality as ordinary. Price and competitive advantage are directly related to the perception of customers about products and services. Moreover, even the presentation of products and services offered to the markets makes it possible to stand out from competitors (Hollensen, 2007: 437).

When we look at highly successful exporters; these firms do not neglect to speak the language of the foreign markets they enter, and they act according to the needs of the markets in which they sell their products and determine their strategies in this direction (Kotler and Keller, 2011: 604).

Firms that have reached saturation in local markets will mostly turn to foreign markets. In order to do this, they should be able to adapt their products to foreign market conditions, that is, product strengthening and product adaptation (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1985). Product features, services, budgets and distribution networks are generally among the standard items of marketing strategies. Price and promotional activities are elements of marketing strategies that need adaptation. Large businesses set their marketing strategies in an effort to standardize. Small businesses, on the other hand, form their marketing strategies within the framework of attempts to adapt their products and services to foreign markets (Shoham, 1996: 66).

Changing and adapting the products according to the characteristics of the foreign market is one of the main conditions to increase export sales. (Donthu and Kim, 1993: 60). Adaptation activities are sometimes classified into various groups and appear as applications and changes regarding product content, packaging, brand name and other product features (Diamantopoulos and Inglis, 1988: 54).

The level of export pricing (low, equal, high) is closely related to the attitude of management towards export and export motivation, export strategy of the firm, and the frequency and depth of the use of international marketing research. It is observed that the pricing levels of export products are high in firms where managers have a positive attitude towards exports and exhibit proactive behaviors and in firms that frequently and deeply conduct international market research (Koh, 1991: 50).

Promotion and pricing efforts have often been closely linked to success. Export enterprises generally determine the prices they can offer in export markets in advance and pay attention to the prices that are attractive to their customers. In addition, exporting companies try to keep the price level competitive by using methods such as different price levels, promotions and various discounts (Kirpalani and Macintosh, 1980: 86). Some products may be at a high price level due to their features. This is related to the advantages arising from product qualities. Some product advantages associated with product quality can be listed as follows (Cavusgil, 1984: 7): the products are at a competitive price; the products have superior technical features; licensed products; unique products that are not found in competitors in the market.

Wilkinson and Brouthers (2006: 233) study the relationship between promotion practices and export performance. They made examinations on small and medium-sized exporting firms, based on a comprehensive literature review. The result of the study shows that participating in trade fairs and the correct job descriptions of business distributors and other cooperated intermediaries positively affect export performance. In another study, Cavusgil, Zou and Naidu (1993) examine the mutual relationship between product adaptation and promotion adaptation in export activities. Obtained results show that both product adaptations and promotion adaptations are highly affected by business characteristics, product characteristics, industry characteristics and export market characteristics.

Establishing good relations with the members in export activities and distribution channels has a positive effect on the increase of competence and skills that lead firms to success in export planning and control (Madsen, 1989: 50). Market information about distribution channels is essential in the selection of distribution channels. According to the information obtained, firms choose between independent distribution channels, their own distribution channels, or options such as partnership, joint venture, and franchising (Cavusgil and Kirpalani, 1993: 7).

Ravichandran and Jayanthi (2014) study product adaptation, promotion adaptation, price adaptation and distribution adaptation separately in their studies and examined their relations with export performance. In

their analysis, it has been determined that there are strong relationships between each adaptation effort and export performance. Although product adaptation is costly to firms, it increases their market share in foreign markets; promotion adaptation provides a great potential sales opportunity as it increases the awareness of the products to the buyers; price adaptation directly affects the attractiveness of products in the foreign market; distribution adaptation increased profitability through the use of effective distribution channels and encouraged other businesses to export.

Customers prefer certain products and services because they reflect their own values. Customers buy products and services because of their functional features, symbolic values they carry, or because they want to experience certain experiences. For this reason, firms that sell products to both local and international markets should comprehend customer values and design and market products in this direction (McAuley, 2001: 3). Keith (1960: 35) stated that customers are at the center of businesses and emphasized that businesses should act according to customer needs and requests. One of the best ways to delight customers and create value is through customer service. After customers purchase products, firms are in constant contact with customers and make sure that the purchasing experience is at its best. Also, through customer service, it can be learned whether customers are satisfied with their products after purchasing. Customer satisfaction is very important because businesses have a great share in the creation of their loyal customers (McAuley, 2001: 195).

3. EXPORT COMPETENCIES

Exporter firms must develop their international competencies to carry out their international trade activities in an impressive way. These competencies can be developed by adopting international environments through interaction with foreign markets. The dimensions of international qualification can be listed as follows (Knight and Kim, 2009: 260-261): adaptation to the international environment; international marketing skills; international innovation; and compliance with the international market.

Strong market position, strong human resources structure and strong functional competencies are among the most important determinants of a firm. These qualifications affect the total activities of the firms as well as the export performance and are among the determinants of the export performance of the firms (Zou and Stan, 1998: 349).

The international competencies of enterprises are considered among the most important factors affecting export performance. However, other descriptive variables can be listed as follows (Cavusgil and Kirpalani, 1993: 6): business size; product type; technology orientation of the industry; local market experience; and intra-industry price competitiveness.

It is important that firms are aware of their skills and competencies, as well as industry characteristics. Firms can take advantage of the impact of marketing strategies on profitability to evaluate their current situation. In this context, sectoral databases are a valuable resource used to analyze corporate performance and to show an objective approach (Wilson and Gilligan, 2005: 112).

As a result, firms need to have strong multiple competencies, not just one competence, to be successful in understanding international markets. Firms that want to achieve internationally sustainable success with strong management capabilities should focus on innovation. However, since international innovation alone cannot guarantee success, firms must develop the right skills, build strong management teams, and know their customers well. Gathering these qualifications together is a requirement to increase the performance of firms (Zalina, Firdaus and Azman, 2015: 397-398).

4. RESEARCH MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

In the first two sections, empirical studies which are related with concepts of marketing orientation components and export competencies were detailed. A review of the literature indicates that marketing orientation components and their relationship with export competencies have not been examined deeply and sufficiently with using more numerical integrity. For this reason, this study, which examines the interaction of marketing orientation components with the export competencies of the exporter firms, is considered important and it is hoped that it will make a significant contribution to the literature. In addition, the study is a unique research conducted in the automotive supplier industry in Konya province in Turkey. In this regard, it is anticipated that the results of the research will guide business executives engaged in international trade and contribute to the adoption of accurate and consistent approaches in their export activities.

In order to examine the effects of marketing orientation components on export competencies of the exporting firms, a model was developed and can be seen below in Figure 1:
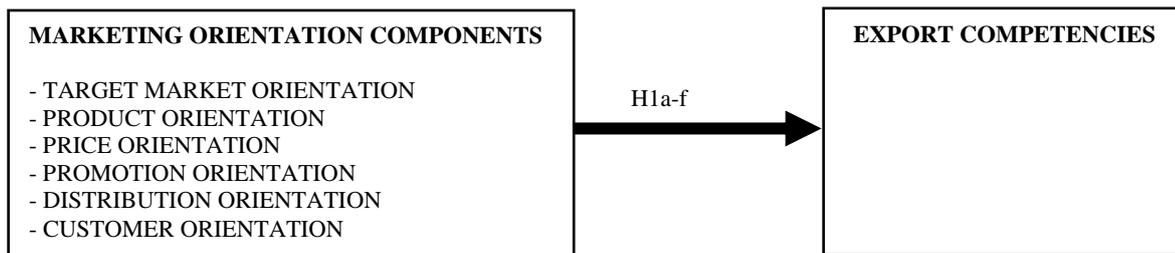

Figure 1. Research Model

The model proposes various relationships between marketing orientation components (target market orientation, product orientation, price orientation, promotion orientation, distribution orientation, customer orientation) and export competencies. In order to test the relationships seven hypotheses were developed as follows:

H1: The marketing orientation components positively affect the export competencies.

H1a: Target market orientation positively affects the export competencies.

H1b: Product orientation positively affects the export competencies.

H1c: Price orientation positively affects the export competencies.

H1d: Promotion orientation positively affects the export competencies.

H1e: Distribution orientation positively affects the export competencies.

H1f: Customer orientation positively affects the export competencies.

5. METHODOLOGY

The marketing orientation components are gathered under six headings within the framework of literature on the subject, related studies, and the aim of this study. These; target market orientation, product orientation, pricing orientation, promotion orientation, distribution orientation, and customer orientation. Along the same line, the export competencies of the firms are stated in eight items; product quality, product price, responsiveness to customer requests, services offered with the product (assembly, warranty, after-sales service, etc.), patent / trademark ownership, support of distribution channel members in technical matters, establishing close relationships with the distribution channel members (wholesalers, retailers, agents), and develop completely new products for foreign markets.

Within the framework of the research sample, questionnaires are distributed to 169 firms registered with the chambers of industry and commerce by using convenience sampling method. At this stage, it is treated as sensitively as possible in sending questionnaires primarily to export managers of the firms, and as a second alternative to senior officials such as business owners and managers. Of the 169 questionnaires distributed, 150 are returned. The return rate is 88.7%. Of the 150 returned questionnaires, 4 of them are not included in the analysis due to the lack of information, and the analysis phase is started with a total of 146 questionnaires. The return rate of the surveys in this study is at an acceptable level considering the similar studies on this subject.

6. ANALYSIS

At this stage, the aim is to determine which analyzes will be used for the obtained data in line with the research purposes, and which of the parametric or non-parametric analysis methods will be used. Accordingly, the analysis methods to be used for data analysis in the research can be listed as follows: Reliability analysis, Validity analysis, Descriptive statistics, Correlation analysis, and Multiple linear regression analysis.

6.1. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha value is the harmony value depending on the correlation between questions or statements. This value shows the reliability levels of the questions in the scales. In cases where the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.70 and above, the scale is considered to be reliable. However, in social sciences, this limit is accepted as 0.60 and above in cases where the number of questions is low (Sipahi et al., 2008: 89).

Table 1. Scale Reliabilities

Scale	Sub-scale	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Export Competencies		0,767
Marketing Orientation Components (α=0,787)	Target Market Orientation	0,792
	Product Orientation	0,777
	Price Orientation	0,773
	Promotion Orientation	0,771
	Distribution Orientation	0,780
	Customer Orientation	0,775

In this research, the reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients for each scale are represented in Table 1. As can be seen, all reliability coefficients are above 0.70. These results indicate that all reliability coefficients for the constructs were found satisfactory.

6.2. Validity Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to determine how many sub-dimensions the scale regarding the factors affecting the export competencies of firms was perceived by the participants. To test the suitability of the data set for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the KMO value was significant between 0.627 and 0.50 and the Bartlett test tail probability was significant at 0.05 significance level, so the data set was suitable for factor analysis (Sipahi et al., 2008: 80; Kalaycı, 2005: 322). Analyzes were carried out using principal components method and Varimax rotation method.

Table 2. Factor Analysis

Factor	Item	Loadings
Export Competencies	Develop completely new products for foreign markets	,745
	Support of distribution channel members in technical matters	,669
	Responsiveness to customer requests	,617
	Patent / trademark ownership	,612
	Establishing close relationships with the distribution channel members (wholesalers, retailers, agents)	,576
	Product price	,533
	Services offered with the product (assembly, warranty, after-sales service, etc.	,514
	Product quality	,455
Value		4,26
Explained variance (%)		18,63
Total explained varience (%)		60,23
Notes: (i) Varimax Rotation Method (ii) KMO = 0,627; Bartlett Test = 1810,21; p=0,00 (p<0,05)		

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis; the total explained variance of export competencies was found to be 60.23%. When the individual contributions of the dimensions related to this explained variance are examined; it was found to be 18.63% for the dimension of export competencies. When the factor loads of the scale are examined; It is seen that the factor loadings are above 0.4 (Sencan, 2005: 390) which is the acceptable limit in social sciences. Therefore, the factor loads of the items given in Table 2. are statistically sufficient.

6.3. Descriptive Statistics

Table 3. below includes descriptive statistics regarding the export competence level of the firms participating in the research.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Export Competencies

	Mean	Mean rank	S.D.
Product quality	**4,48**	**6,15**	,63
Product price	4,04	4,86	,74
Responsiveness to customer requests	4,13	5,25	,78
Services offered with the product (assembly, warranty, after-sales service, etc.	3,75	4,38	,96
Patent / trademark ownership	3,67	4,41	1,25
Support of distribution channel members in technical matters	3,52	3,70	1,03
Establishing close relationships with the distribution channel members (wholesalers, retailers, agents)	3,74	4,48	,98
Develop completely new products for foreign markets	**2,88**	**2,77**	1,29
Notes: (i) n=138, (ii) According to Friedman bidirectional Anova test **χ2= 214,62**; p=0,00 (p<0,01) results are statistically significant. (iii) On the scale; 1 = means "Very weak" and 5 = "Very strong".			

In the Table 3. above, it is seen that the strongest export competencies of the firms are "the quality of the products" (Avg. = 4.48; Mean Rank = 6.15). It is followed by; the responsiveness to customer requests,

prices of the products, services offered with the product (assembly, warranty, after-sales service, etc.), establishing close relationships with the distribution channel members (wholesalers, retailers, agents), patents / trademark ownerships, and support of distribution channel members in technical matters. It is also seen that the weakest export competence of the firms "develop completely new products for foreign markets" (Avg. = 2.88; Mean Rank = 2.77).

In Table 4. below, descriptive statistics regarding the importance levels of the market orientation components implemented by the firms participating in the research are given.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Market Orientation Components

	Mean	Mean rank	S.D.
Target Market Orientation	**3,15**	**2,63**	,74
Product Orientation	3,33	3,02	,76
Price Orientation	3,68	3,90	,81
Promotion Orientation	3,27	3,03	,92
Distribution Orientation	3,28	2,96	,73
Customer Orientation	**4,32**	**5,46**	,65
Notes: (i) n=126, (ii) According to Friedman bidirectional Anova test $\chi 2$= **204,48**; p=0,00 (p<0,01) results are statistically significant. (iii) On the scale; 1 = means "Never applied" and 5 = "Very highly applied".			

In the table 4. above, it is seen that the "customer orientation" take the most importance (Avg. = 4.32; Rank Avg. = 5.46). It is followed by, the price orientation, product orientation, distribution orientation, and promotion orientation. Among the components, the least important one is the "target market orientation" (Avg. = 3.15; Mean Rank = 2.63).

6.4. Correlation Analysis

As a result of the Spearman correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables, the findings in Table 5. were obtained.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

Variables		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Export Competencies (1)	r	1						
	p	-						
	n	138						
Marketing Orientation Components (2)	r	,574(**)	1					
	p	,000	-					
	n	126	126					
Target Market Orientation (3)	r	,255(**)	,494(**)	1				
	p	,003	,000	-				
	n	136	126	138				
Product Orientation (4)	r	,502(**)	,680(**)	,155	1			
	p	,000	,000	,069	-			
	n	138	126	138	140			
Price Orientation (5)	r	,415(**)	,666(**)	,241(**)	,469(**)	1		
	p	,000	,000	,004	,000	-		
	n	138	126	138	140	140		
Promotion Orientation (6)	r	,455(**)	,762(**)	,212(*)	,373(**)	,287(**)	1	
	p	,000	,000	,013	,136	,001	-	
	n	134	126	136	136	136	136	
Distribution Orientation (7)	r	,419(**)	,583(**)	,406(**)	,292(**)	,144	,408(**)	1
	p	,000	,000	,000	,001	,095	,000	-
	n	134	126	136	136	136	134	138
Customer Orientation (8)	r	,336(**)	,581(**)	,168	,404(**)	,433(**)	,330(**)	,122
	p	,000	,000	,056	,000	,000	,000	,166
	n	132	126	130	132	132	128	130

According to the results of correlation analysis, there is;

Moderately positive and statistically significant relationship between the export competencies and the implementation level of the market orientation components in the firms participating in the study (r = 0.574; p <0.01).

A low level positive and statistically significant relationship between the export competencies and the implementation level of the target market orientation of the firms participating in the study (r = 0.255; p <0.01).

Moderately positive and statistically significant relationship between the export competencies and the implementation level of the product orientation of the firms participating in the study (r = 0.502; p <0.01).

Moderately positive and statistically significant relationship between the export competencies and the implementation level of the price orientation of the firms participating in the study (r = 0.415; p <0.01).

Moderately positive and statistically significant relationship the export competencies and the implementation level of the promotion orientation of the firms participating in the study (r = 0.455; p <0.01).

Moderately positive and statistically significant relationship between the export competencies and the implementation level of the distribution orientation of the firms participating in the study (r = 0.419; p <0.01).

Moderately positive and statistically significant relationship between the export competencies and the implementation level of the customer orientation of the firms participating in the study (r = 0.336; p <0.01).

6.5. Regression Analysis

Under this heading, the findings of multiple linear regression analysis conducted to test whether the independent variables influence the dependent variables and the relationships between the sub-dimensions of the independent variable and the dependent variables are included.

First, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the effect of the independent variable export competencies and its sub-dimensions on the dependent variable market orientation components. The findings are given in the table 6. below.

Table 6. Regression Analysis of Marketing Orientation Components - Export competencies

Model Summary and ANOVA[a,b]									
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**R**	**R²**	**Adj. R²**	**F**	**p**
1	Regression	16,72	6	2,79	0,68	0,46	**0,44**	17,03	**0,00***
	Residual	19,47	119	0,16					
	Total	36,19	125	-					

a. Independent variables: (constant*), Target Market Orientation, Product Orientation, Price Orientation, Promotion Orientation, Distribution Orientation, Customer Orientation*
b. Dependent variable: Export Competencies *Overall)*; *p<0.05*

According to Table 6. above, as a variable independent from the value in the Adjusted R² column, "Target Market Orientation", "Product Orientation", "Price Orientation", "Promotion Orientation", "Distribution Orientation"," Customer Orientation" variables, in other words, market orientation components explain the variance (change) of the dependent variable "export competencies" by 44%, that is to say, the export competencies variable is shaped by 44% depending on the market orientation components. The value in the p (significance) column of the table shows that the interaction between the variables is statistically significant (p = 0.00 <0.05), therefore, the model is significant as a whole. In summary, it is seen that the market orientation components of the firms are a significant predictor of export competencies (R² = 0.44; p <0.05). In this context, the H1 hypothesis was accepted.

Table 7. Coefficients

Independent variables	B	β	SH	t	p
(Constant)	1,396	,278		5,024	**,000**
Target Market Orientation	,015	,054	,021	,288	,774
Product Orientation	,169	,062	,239	2,721	**,007**
Price Orientation	,129	,058	,194	2,219	**,028**
Promotion Orientation	,119	,048	,203	2,497	**,014**
Distribution Orientation	,150	,060	,204	2,508	**,013**
Customer Orientation	,076	,065	,093	1,172	,244

Dependent variable: *Export Competencies (Overall); *p<0.05*

According to the Table 7; product orientation (β = 0.062; p = 0.007), price orientation (β = 0.58; p = 0.028), promotion orientation (β = 0.048; p = 0.014) and distribution orientation (β = 0.60; p = 0.013) variables positively and statistically significantly affect the variable of export competencies. In this context, H1b, H1c, H1d and H1e hypotheses are accepted.

It is also revealed that the variables of target market orientation (β = 0.54; p = 0.774) and customer orientation (β = 0.65; p = 0.244) do not have a significant effect on the export competencies variable. Hence, the H1a and H1f hypothesis are rejected.

7. RESULTS

In the light of the analyzed data, the participant firms that export automotive supplier industry products are strong in terms of export quality, prices and responsiveness to customer demands; Compared to these factors, it can be said that they are weaker in developing completely new products for foreign markets, supporting distribution members in technical matters and having patents / trademarks. At this point, providing affordable prices and high-quality export products together will be an important advantage for success. Cavusgil (1984) emphasize that technically superior, licensed products with competitive prices will take firms one step ahead in export activities with the use of high technology.

According to the results, participant firms mostly see themselves as customer oriented. In this direction, it can be said that firms carry out their activities by considering customer satisfaction and value for foreign markets at a high level. Again, the same results show that the firms implement target market orientation to a lesser extent.

In general, it is revealed that the marketing orientation components positively affect the export competencies. In other words, as the export competencies of firms increase, the level of implementation of market orientation components will also increase. The findings are also parallel with the study of Knight and Kim (2009) which claim a positive relationship between the business competence and international market orientation, marketing strategies, and innovation activities.

8. CONCLUSION

There are several business functions that affect the export activities of firms in the automotive supplier industry. These functions are a determinant of the strengths and weaknesses of the firms. In this case, the point where the firms participating in the research feel most strongly about export is the quality of their products. In addition, being able to respond to customer requests, the prices of the products and the services offered by the product together create the strengths of the firms can be seen as an advantage for ensuring export success. The fact that the factor of having a patent / trademark is not among the strong competencies show that the firms do not give the necessary importance to their branding efforts. It can be said that establishing close relations with distribution channel members and supporting them in technical matters are seen unsatisfactory, due to the inadequacy of distribution adaptation in the export process of firms and the lack of knowledge in export markets. Finally, the reason why firms see themselves not competent about developing completely new products for foreign markets can be reasoned that the automotive supplier industry products are standard for many brands and models around the world, or the firms do not have enough R&D activities to develop new products and they do not have the necessary technology.

The implementation of customer orientation at a higher level than the others can be explained as the fact that firms see their customers at the center of all their activities. In addition to being customer-focused, the high-level implementation of price and product orientation of the firms show that export perceptions are based on customers, prices and products. Distribution and promotion orientations have lower levels of implementation, and it is also noteworthy that target market orientation is implemented to a minimum level.

As a result, it should be stated that the entire market orientation components play an active role in shaping the export competencies. In this context, within the framework of the outputs obtained from the study, it is a must for exporting firms to increase their international competitiveness to achieve sustainable success in global markets. In this direction, they need to give importance to R&D activities and technology use and prioritize cost and efficiency in their production. Exporting firms should give the necessary importance to their branding efforts. Considering that a significant part of the firms participating in this research are engaged in contract manufacturing, the importance of creating added value that can be gained through branding efforts becomes apparent. It is a necessity for exporting firms to increase their international competencies. This is made possible through international innovation efforts by communicating with foreign markets, adopting international environmental and market conditions, and gaining international marketing skills.

8.1. Limitations

169 automotive supply industry firms operating within the Konya province of Turkey constitute the sample of the research. Firms operating in other industries are not included in this research. Also, the firms that are, the subject of the study, currently engaged in export activities. Potential exporting firms were excluded. Applying the same study on other industries and countries may yield different results.

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