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Perception of Strategical Management in Textile Sector

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Abstract

The aim of this research includes what the perception of textile firms operating in Denizli province about strategic management issues are, at what organizational level the strategic management decisions are taken and what the strategic goals are. Moreover, this study is important in terms of creating awareness by reminding the importance of strategic management in textile sector. The textile sector which has an important place within Denizli's economy. The textile production and sales have always been placed on the top for the economic structure in Denizli and it will continue to be an economic necessity for Denizli in the near future. Within the scope of this study, 320, 45%, of about 700 all size textile firms operating in Denizli were applied with a questionnaire about their perception of strategic management. It was concluded as a result of the study that most of the firms are family-owned, their strategic plans are set by senior managers and business owners, strategic plans are generally created during the operation and the opinion "if the competitors are changing, one should change too" is common. And it was also seen that most of the managers participated in the study exhibited a positive participation about the statements on strategic management process.

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1. Introduction

It has been getting harder and harder for firms to survive and succeed in the new competitive environment and changing environmental circumstances. A necessity arises now to benefit from the opportunities and struggle with global competitors to be able to get a share from the world trade in a global market besides struggling with the effect of operations carried on just domestically or in a multi-boundary international environment. In today's global environment, the strategies to be developed by small business are highly important for them to survive and provide competitive advantages.

The strategic management, a must for business, becomes more of a necessity for businesses to utilize the necessary methods to survive and render the most accurate service; balance the supply and demand; maximize their profits;

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provide the competitive advantage in the market; make effective decisions in the long term; make decisions for the future in accordance with their mission, vision, goal and targets. For the success of a business, it should first identify the problems and produce permanent solutions for those problems with strategic approaches in the face of rapid changes. The strategic management of which importance has been increasing especially since 1980s has further necessitated the inter-consistent strategic approaches for business to respond to recent changes and developments, becoming an important strength.

The Customs Association Agreement, entrance of Turkey into foreign markets and foreign capital, the increasing domestic competition, the diversification of markets and crises occurred across the country have increased the importance of strategies to be chosen carefully and accurately for small or big business. In an economic environment based on competition, strategy is a managerial tool that brings the changes under control, primarily providing innovation, development and constant adaptation of the business to the environment or its mutual adaptation with the environment (Cormican and O'sullgvan, 2004: 819).

Ranked among the top ten in the list of developed provinces, the most important income source of Denizli is textile production. The textile sector which has a history of 2200 years has an employment rate of about 30% among all sectors. 50% of Denizli's export income comes from textile products. This indicates that textile will continue to be an economic necessity for Denizli in the near future. It is seen in this sense how important the strategic management concept is for textile firms (Turhan et al. 2012: 1).

This study was carried out to create awareness by highlighting the importance of strategic management and identify the strategic management approach of the textile firms operating in Denizli province in the presence of the textile firms specialized in textile products and established with their local dynamics and capacities.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Strategic Management

The word "strategy" derived from "strategia" which means art and science of war in Greek (Witzel, 2004: 14) was used for the meanings of president, ruler and general in the Ancient Greece (Ghemawat, 2002: 37). The word strategy has been defined in the military literature as achieving the victory by utilizing the current resources in the most efficient and economical way with minimum loss, cost and damage (Ülgen and Mirze, 2004: 33). The word strategy was considered to be a perspective to control and shape the market forces in 19th century; it started to be frequently used in the business area in 20th century and has been considered within the scope of competitiveness to date (Ghemawat, 2002: 37).

According to Drucker (1954), the meaning of strategy is to consider the mission of a job with its all aspects and ensure that the decisions previously made will give the future results in accordance with the specified goals, asking the question "What is our job, and what should it be?" Chandler (1962: 5), defined the strategy as identifying the long-term aims and targets, achieving these targets and allocating the necessary resources in the business. Kenneth Andrews et al. (1965) combined the opinions of Drucker and Chandler with theirs: Strategy is an example of both aims and targets and the plan and policies to achieve these aims. It defines what the job is and what it should be; what kind of a business it is and how it should be (Hofer and Schendel, 1978: 16). According to another definition, strategy is the body of rules and approaches that will enable the organization which has to operate in a changing environment to achieve their targets with minimum damage (Thompson, Strickland, 2001: 18-19). Jeffs (2008: 13) explained the strategic management as "the process of applying strategies to define and evaluate the organizational targets".

In a period in which the competitive advantage comes into prominence, strategy is defined as the means and main functions that a firm tries in order to achieve their strategic goals with their resources and skills with the intention of gaining the competitive advantage to guarantee the long-term development of the firm (Nothnagel, 2008: 14). An organization gaining and maintaining the competitive superiority will be possible with a strategy development and application that will distinguish it from its competitors (Hurst, 2000: 50). Strategy should be addressed as a way to provide firm's environmental and social performances as well as economic ones (Galdwin and Kennely, 1995: 874). Firms need to have a very long-term perspective and start to invest in the process of moving themselves into the future today (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002: 130).

Firms wish to have a competitive advantage to realize their goals. The way of acquiring the competitive advantage and making it continuous is not to have strategy but a strategic management (Barca, 2002: 18). The strategic management can be defined as the management decisions and a cluster of actions that determine a firm's long-term performances (Hunger, Wheelen, 2007: 2). Managers need to be able to foresee the future with long-term plans and

programs and transparently clarify their goals (Hamal and Prahalad, 1994: 144). From another point of view, strategic management is the body of decisions and activities for developing, applying effective strategies and controlling after evaluating the results. In this sense, the process of strategic management can be thought as a specific decision-making or problem-solving process. Therefore, strategic management occurs in the stages of planning, application and evaluation in a holistic approach. The process begins with the identification of the goals and the development of appropriate strategies. This is followed by the application of these strategies and the control and evaluation of the results (Dinçer, 2003: 34).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Goal

The aim of this research includes what the perception of textile firms operating in Denizli province about strategic management issues are, at what organizational level the strategic management decisions are taken and what the strategic goals are. It was also aimed with this study that textile firms are reminded of the importance of commonly unknown strategic management and awareness is created.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

This study was performed on the textile firms operating in Denizli. The questionnaire method was used to collect the necessary data for the study. In the process of preparing the questionnaire, the research on "Strategy Developing Processes and Application in the Businesses Operating in Turkey" by Dinçer and Tatoğlu and the sources titled "Research of Evaluating the Strategic Management Activities in Businesses" and "The Relationship between Extensiveness of the Strategic Management, Strategic Preferences and Characteristics of the Manager" by Alpkan were utilized. Questions are about demographic findings on businesses and business managers, strategic plan, strategic goal and transformation, strategic management process of the management. 320, 45%, of about 700 textile firms in Denizli was reached and applied with the questionnaire (Turhan et al. 2012: 9). 320 questionnaires were evaluated for the study and necessary analyses were performed with the SPSS software package.

3.3. Analyses and Results

In this section of the study, findings on the businesses, demographic findings on the business managers, the strategic plan, the strategic goal, transformation and approaches about strategic management process and the results are investigated. This study is about perception of strategic management and it was thought that managers capable to give answers about their strategies and strategic management.

Findings on the Businesses

Table 1. Demographic findings on the Businesses

Number of Personnel	n	%	Managerial Structure	n	%
1-9	21	6.6	Family members	213	66.6
10-49	57	17.8	Non-family partners	84	26.3
50-249	151	47.2	Professional manager	23	7.2
250 and above	91	28.4	Status of Exporting	n	%
			Exporting	222	69.4
			Not Exporting	98	30.6
Total	320	100	Total	320	100

When the findings on the businesses, 21 (6.6%) of them constitute the micro-business group that employs 1-9 personnel; 57 (17.8%) of them constitute the small business group that employs 10-49 personnel As can be concluded, almost half, 151, of the businesses are medium sized businesses (47.2%) that employ 50-249 personnel. The number

of big businesses that employ 250 personnel and above is 91 (28.4%). It is seen that majority of the businesses participated in the research are medium sized businesses.

While 213 (66.6%) of them are managed by family members, 84 (26.3%) are managed by non-family partners and 23 (7.2%) by the professional managers. And 222 businesses (69.4%) export goods and 98 businesses (30.6%) do not export goods. It is seen that majority of the businesses are managed by family members and exports goods.

Table 2. Demographic Findings on the Business Managers

Gender	n	%	Marital Status	n	%
Male	227	70.9	Married	217	67.8
Female	93	29.1	Single	88	27.5
Age	n	%	Divorced	15	4.7
21-30	104	32.5	Administrative Level in the Business	n	%
31-40	139	43.4	Lower level manager	26	8.1
41-50	63	19.7	Medium level manager	116	36.3
51 and above	14	4.4	Top manager	178	55.6
Educational Background	n	%	Time Served in the Business	n	%
Primary	36	11.3	Less than 1 year	15	4.7
High School or equivalent	90	28.1	1-3 years	70	21.9
Undergraduate	136	42.5	4-6 years	83	25.9
Postgraduate	51	15.9	7-10 years	68	21.3
Doctorate	7	2.2	10 years and above	84	26.3
Management Experience	n	%	Total Time Served	n	%
Less than 1 year	17	5.3	1-5 years	69	21.6
1-3	82	25.6	6-10 years	97	30.3
4-6	96	30.0	11-20 years	89	27.8
7-9	54	16.9	21 years and above	65	20.3
10 years and above	71	22.2			
Total	320	100	Total	320	100

When the demographic information about the managers participated in the research, it is seen that the majority is males with 227 (70.9%), the number of females is 93 (29.1%) and less women are employed in the top management. It was found that 217 (67.8%) of the participants are married, 88 (27.5%) of them are single. It was also observed that 104 (32.5%) are within the age group of 21-30; 139 (43.4%) are within the age group of 31-40, and they constitute 76% of all participants. 26 (8.1%) of the participants are first level managers, 116 (36.3%) are medium level managers and the majority 178 (55.6%) are top managers.

When the educational backgrounds of the managers participated in the research are examined, 90 (28.1%) of them graduated from high school or equivalent, 136 (42.5%) are undergraduates, 51 (15.9%) are postgraduates, 7 (2.2%) of them received doctorate, and as a result, about 60% of the participants are undergraduates and postgraduates. It is understood that the education levels of the managers who filled out the questionnaire are very high. For the management experiences of the participants, 82 (25.6%) of them have experience of 1-3 years; 96 (30%) of 4-6 years; 54 (16.9%) of 7-9 years; and 71 (22.2%) of 10 years and above.

When the time the participants worked in the business is examined, it was found that 70 (21.9%) worked there for 1-3 years; 83 (25.9%) for 4-6 years; 68 (21.3%) for 7-10 years; and 84 (26.3%) for 10 years and above. For the total

working experiences of the participants, 69 (21.6%) of them have experience of 1-5 years; 97 (30.3%) of 6-10 years; 89 (27.8%) of 11-20 years; and 65 (20.3%) of 21 years and above.

Questions about the Strategic Plan

In terms of businesses' strategic plans, findings were obtained on their strategic plan durations and the application of the strategic plan, the preparers of the strategic plan and the time allocated for the strategic decisions and the collection frequency.

Table 3. Strategic Plan, Strategic Goal and Transformation

Are there any written strategic plans?			How frequently does the top management meet		
	n	%		n	%
For what period are they prepared?			for the strategic decisions?		
Never	124	38.8	Everyday	52	16.3
1 year and below	96	30.0	Once a week	73	22.8
2-4 years	70	21.9	Every 2 weeks	36	11.3
5 years	18	5.6	Once in a month	104	32.5
More than 5 years	12	3.8	Three months or more	55	17.2
Who are the contributors to the strategic plan?			What is your strategic goal at the moment?		
Top Managers	101	31.6	Increasing the market share	96	30.0
Board of Directors	69	21.6	Developing new products	71	22.2
Business Owners	93	29.1	Entering into new markets	106	33.1
Outside Professionals	12	3.8	Maintaining the status quo	35	10.9
Functional Units	32	10.0	Downsizing and practicing economy	12	3.8
Other Employees	13	4.1			
How is the strategic plan applied?			Which statements below do suit your situation best?		
Completely applied	64	20.0	Transformation is regeneration	12	3.8
Revised during the operation	60	18.8	Transformation is a waste of time	14	4.4
Prepared during the operation	159	49.7	If the competitors are changing, we should change too	64	20.0
Not applied	37	11.6	It is advantageous to change before the competitors do	230	71.9
Total	320	100	Total	320	100

It was found that 124 (38.8%) of the businesses participated in the research do not have a strategic plan, 96 (30%) of them have one for 1 year or below; 70 (21.9%) for 2-4 years; 18 (5.6%) for 5 years and only 12 (3.8%) for 5 years and above. In terms of the contributors to business' strategic plan, 101 (31.6%) of them are top managers; 69 (21.6%) are board members; 93 (29.1%) are business owners; 12 (3.8%) are outside professionals; and 32 (10%) are from functional units. The biggest contribution to the preparation of businesses' strategic plans comes from the business owners, board members and top managers (82%).

For the application of the strategic plans in the businesses, 64 (20%) business reported that they applied the plan completely; 60 (18.8%) of them reported that they revised it during the operation; 159 (49.7%) reported that they

prepared it during the operation; and 37 (11.6%) reported that the plan was not applied. When one looks at the meeting frequency of top management for the strategic decision, it was found that 52 (16.3%) of the businesses meet every day; 73 (22.8%) meet once a week; 36 (11.3%) meet every two weeks; 104 (32.5%) meet once a month; and 55 (17.2%) meet once in three months or more. It is seen that 50% of the businesses meet once in more than a month for the strategic decisions.

When one looks at the specified strategic goals of the businesses, it is seen that 96 (30%) of the businesses aimed to increase the market share; 71 (22.2%) aimed to develop new products; 106 (33.1%) aimed to enter into new markets; 35 (10.9%) aimed to maintain the status quo; and 12 (3.8%) of them aimed the strategies of downsizing and practicing economy.

When the managers' perspectives of transformation are examined, it is understood that about 72% of the businesses think that it is more advantageous to change before the competitors do. In terms of the educational levels of the managers who constitute this group and seem to be open to the transformation, it was observed that they are undergraduates or postgraduates, and those managers are aged below 40.

Table 4. Strategic Goals of Businesses

To increase the market share			To produce new products and/or enter into new markets		
	n	%		n	%
Strategy of Cost Leadership	83	25.9	Innovativeness Strategy	166	51.9
Differentiation Strategy	142	44.4	Related Diversification Strategy	124	38.8
Focusing Strategy	75	23.4	Unrelated Diversification Strategy	30	9.4
Contract Manufacturing	20	6.3			
To maintain the status quo			To downsize and make saving or exit the market		
	n	%		n	%
Slow Growth Strategy	201	62.8	Withdrawal Strategy	246	76.9
Profit and Blending Strategy	119	37.2	Liquidation Strategy	74	23.1
Total	320	100	Total	320	100

In terms of the strategic goal of increasing the market share, the most preferred strategy (45%) is the differentiation strategy and the rest are the strategies of cost leadership and focusing. In terms of the strategic goal of producing new products and/or entering into new markets, the innovativeness was preferred at a rate of 50%, the related diversification strategies were preferred at a rate of 10%, and the unrelated diversification strategy remained at 10%. For the strategic goal of maintaining the status quo, the slow growth strategy was preferred at a rate of 63% and the profit and blending strategy was preferred at a rate of 33%. It was also observed for the strategic goal of downsizing and practicing economy or exiting the market that the majority (77%) of the businesses that answered the question preferred the withdrawal strategy, only the 23% adopted the liquidation strategy.

Strategic Management Processes of Businesses

When one looks at the answers related to the strategic management processes given by businesses, 86% of the business managers reported that they gave missions and visions. While 82% of the managers thought that their businesses have common goals and targets and the strategic goals are written down with the consensus of the top managers, 20% of them disagreed or remained hesitant about this. In addition, the rate of those who thought their strategic goals are numerical and measurable is 88%.

Table 5. Statements about the Strategic Management Process of the Business

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Hesitant (%)	Partly Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Our business has a certain mission and vision.	4.1	2.2	7.2	29.4	57.2
Our business has common goals and targets.	3.8	7.2	6.6	26.9	55.6
The strategic goals of our business are written down on the consensus of the top managers.	1.3	8.8	9.4	30.9	49.7
The strategic goals of our business are numerical and measurable.	3.1	5.3	3.1	27.2	61.3
While determining our strategy, opportunities and threats around are investigated.	7.8	10.0	10.6	27.2	44.4
While determining our strategy, operations of competitors are investigated.	7.8	8.1	16.6	28.4	39.1
While determining our strategy, weakness and strengths of our business are identified.	1.3	10.3	10.0	34.7	43.8
The appropriate one is chosen among the alternative strategies.	1.6	6.6	8.8	27.2	55.9
After determining our business' strategy, related plans and budgets are set.	1.3	7.5	7.8	28.4	55.0
The results and effectiveness of strategies applied are evaluated in our business.	1.9	7.5	5.6	25.6	59.4

While 70% of the managers thought that the opportunities and threats around are investigated while determining the business strategies, 30% of them disagreed or remained hesitant about this. In addition, the rate of those who thought the operations of competitors are investigated while determining the business strategies is 67%, about 33% of them disagreed or remained hesitant about this.

%78 of the managers reported that the weaknesses and strengths of the business are identified while determining the business strategies, 22% of them disagreed or remained hesitant about this. The rate of the managers who reported that the appropriate ones are chosen among the alternative strategies is %87, which is important. While 83% of the managers thought that related plans and budgets are set after determining the business strategies, the rate of those who thought that the results and effectiveness of the strategies applied is 85%.

4. Conclusion

Within the scope of the study, the textile sector which has an important place within Denizli's economy and the firms operating in this area were examined. The textile production and sales have always been placed on the top for the economic structure in Denizli and the vicinity. With its 30% share in the employment and 50% share in the export within all sectors, this importance will clearly continue in the future. In this sense, it is evident that the strategic management is critically important for textile firms. This study is important for the fact that textile firms are reminded of the importance of commonly unknown strategic management and awareness is created.

It was seen in the study that the strategic management and related concepts were not known well and the questions were answered accordingly. As a result that 30% of the managers reported that their strategic plans are for 1 year

and/or less than 1 year, it was observed that they mistook the strategic plan for the business plans and 69% of the business managers along with the managers who reported that they do not have strategic plans are unaware of strategic plan. In addition, it is understood that the textile firms in Denizli employ less women at the management level than in the general employment and the number of female entrepreneurs is low.

In terms that strategic plans are prepared by top managers and business owners, the fact that professionals are not consulted enough during the application of strategic plans and the functional units are not asked for advice pose the risk of drawbacks in the application of strategies.

In parallel with the high educational level and young ages of business managers, it was observed that they are open to transformation and competition. As predicted in the literature, in correspondence with these characteristics, it was seen that textile firms in Denizli generally prefer growth strategies. It can be concluded from the fact that few businesses prefer downsizing strategies that textile firms in Denizli are prejudiced against downsizing strategies as previously perceived in the literature.

It was seen according to the distribution among growth strategies that the businesses respectively had the strategic goals of entering into new markets, increasing the shares in the current market and developing new products. As the most preferred strategic goal, entering into new markets is associated with believing in the urgency of renewing the marketing policies and the need for prestige as well as the achievement motive and the importance given to opportunities.

It was found that the businesses that have the strategic goal of increasing the market share tend to prefer the differentiation strategy; those that have the strategic goal of entering into new markets tend to prefer the strategies of innovativeness and related diversification; and those that aim to maintain the status quo tend to prefer slow growth strategies.

It is also seen that the businesses tend to prepare strategic plans without evaluating the opportunities and threats around and the operations of the competitors while determining their strategies. It is a contradiction to other statements that the majority agreed with the statements about the strategic management process presented to the managers, thinking the fact that statements related to the strategic management are not available in the business will create a perception of deficiency. The fact that business managers made contradictory preferences with each other awoke the opinion that they did not make those preferences that much consciously.

It can be concluded as a result of the study that firms should include the functional units in the preparation of the strategic plans and receive the support of professionals, an awareness should be raised that downsizing strategies may give positive results to eliminate the negative prejudices against the downsizing strategies, the opportunities and threats around and the operations of the competitors should be evaluated while determining the strategies and more women should be employed at the management level. To sum up, it was concluded that textile firms in Denizli should acquire the awareness and be supported in the topics of strategic management and determining alternative strategies suitable for their circumstances.

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