



12th International Strategic Management Conference, ISMC 2016, 28-30 October 2016, Antalya,
Turkey

Logistic and marketing performances of logistics companies: A comparison between Germany and Turkey

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Abstract

Developments in globalization and increasing foreign trade activities have given the logistics sector a strategically significant status. Formerly logistics companies were considered as companies that only performed transportation activities; however, nowadays the necessity of logistics to perform different functions is understood well. A logistic company's performance measurement is of great importance, since after performance measurement companies can observe what they have achieved and can consider what they have not. Thereby firms obtain an opportunity to learn and correct their failures. Measuring the effectiveness of the activity performed has become a topic of interest to managers in recent years. In this context, it was necessary to decide on how to measure performance. It is observed that various measures and systems are used in performance measurement. In this study, the logistic performances and marketing performances of 153 logistics companies operating in Germany and Turkey were measured and compared. As a result of the analyses performed, significant differences were found between the logistic performances and marketing performances of logistics companies in Germany and Turkey.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of ISMC 2016.

Keywords: Performance measurement, logistic performance, marketing performance.

1. Introduction

Thanks to the developments in the logistics sector, its share of the sector in the global economy has been increasing each year. While an average growth of 4-5% was observed in the global economy between the years 2008-2013, logistics business potential shows a growth of approximately 20%. Whereas the global logistics sectors potential had a volume of 4 trillion dollars in 2004, this figure reached 7 trillion dollars in 2013. In Europe, the logistics sector is

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mainly based on retail business, automotive, medicine and medical equipment. In addition, European countries such as Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Spain, Belgium and Germany, which serve as important bridges between the east and the west, have significant transportation modes and logistics centers. For instance, ports such as Poznań in Poland, Zaragoza and Barcelona in Spain, Trieste in Italy, Varna in Bulgaria, Antwerp in Belgium, and Hamburg in Germany harbor Europe's leading logistics bases within their areas (Schacke, 2001; Yarmalı, Baykara and Şahin, 2013).

Performance is defined as the level of success reached by an enterprise within a specific period, or quantitative and qualitative expression of the extent of success reached by a person, group or institution performing an activity in terms of the point aimed at with such activity (Tetik, 2003; Yüksel, 2010). According to another definition, it is the determination of how many of the objectives were realized. Evaluation to be performed on this subject must include not only the amount of work performed, but the quality of the work performed. In order to talk about the measurability of performance, firstly the purposes and the goal to be reached must be specified. The difference between the point desired to be reached and the point reached reveals the performance of the company.

When creating a performance measurement system for marketing, questions such as “What are the factors affecting the performance of the marketing department?”, “What are the performance measurement methods that can be used?”, and “How should managers evaluate the data from marketing performance measurement system?” must be answered (Lamberti and Noci, 2010). Marketing performance is one of the indicators that have an effect on the performance of a company. Managers decide the measures to be used when determining the performance of a marketing unit. When specifying these measures, the creation of a measurement system which is integrated with other units of the enterprise should be considered.

Performance measurement is vital for companies so that they can learn their actual status. Proving actual status is an indicator of the company's future ability. With the help of the performance measurement, the aims which are desired set out can be determined exactly. The measurement should be done correctly, because the result will be fundamental for the company's future decisions. In this study, we aimed to measure the performances of logistic companies and to compare them in two different countries.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Performance Measurement

The idea of measuring the performance of a company emerged a long time ago. The approach that underlies performance measurement and has maintained its importance over the years is the economic performance approach. The main reason is that enterprises are economic structures, and -except for non-profit social organizations- their essential purpose is to increase profit and continue their existence (Zerenler, 2005). The focus of performance measurement ranges from financial factors to non-financial factors. Especially since the 1990s, non-financial indicators have started to be used more frequently in performance measurement. This situation is parallel with the developments taking place in customer relation management during the same period. Customer requests and needs have become more important, and this has required enterprises to use non-financial measures more in performance measurement.

In academic studies, it is seen that authors use many different performance measures. Delivery time, quality consistency, productivity, sales costs, production time, delivery security, service quality, flexibility, market share, customer loyalty, activity, efficiency and conformance to standards are some of the performance measures that have been used in academic studies (Aziz et al., 2010; Green Jr. et al., 2006; Flynn et al., 1996; Morgan et al., 2002; Morgan et al., 2009; Sin et al., 2002). Especially in studies performed since the 1980s, it is seen that authors have focused on different performance measures. It is understood that non-financial indicators have been used more in academic studies over the course of time. Such development continued to increase during the early 2000s, and caused multi-dimensional measurement systems to arise. Internet use became more popular in this period, and internet-related measures were included in performance measurement.

The abundance of measures which can be used in performance measurement has forced enterprises to choose which measures they should use. Each unused measure prevents the performance from being fully measured. Therefore,

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