

Research Article

Export Commitment, Export Market Orientation and Performance: An Analysis of Turkish Exporters

İhracat Bağlılığı, İhracat Pazar Oryantasyonu ve Performans : Türk İhracatçıların Analizi

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Abstract

In this study, (i) the effect of attitudinal export commitment on behavioral export commitment, (ii) the effect of behavioral export commitment on both export performance and export market orientation sub-dimensions, (iii) effects of export intelligence generation and export intelligence dissemination on export intelligence responsiveness, and finally (iv) the effect of export intelligence responsiveness on export performance were investigated. The data that were collected from 289 exporting firms from Turkey with the help of a structured questionnaire, were statistically analyzed by using the SmartPLS 3.0 software. All hypotheses proposed in the study were supported, and positive and meaningful relationships were determined in all of them. In addition to strengthening the existing literature, this study has provided authenticity by examining the simultaneous effects of export commitment and export market orientation on export performance and also by revealing the positive affects between behavioral export commitment, which is a sub-dimension of export commitment and all sub-dimensions of export market orientation.

Keywords: Export commitment, export market orientation, export performance

Öz

Bu çalışmada (i) tutumsal ihracat bağlılığının davranışsal ihracat bağlılığına etkisi, (ii) davranışsal ihracat bağlılığının hem ihracat performansına hem de ihracat pazar oryantasyonu alt boyutlarına etkisi, (iii) ihracat istihbarat üretimi ve ihracat istihbarat yayılımı'nın ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap vermeye etkileri ve son olarak (iv) ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap vermenin ihracat performansına etkileri araştırılmıştır. Türkiye'den 289 ihracatçı firmadan yapılandırılmış anket yardımıyla toplanan veriler SmartPLS 3.0 yazılımı kullanılarak istatistiksel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma kapsamında önerilen bütün hipotezler desteklenmiş ve hepsinde pozitif ve anlamlı yönlü ilişkiler tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışma mevcut literatürü güçlendirmesinin yanında, ihracat bağlılığı ve ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun ihracat performansı üzerine eşzamanlı etkilerini inceliyle ve ihracat bağlılığının bir alt boyutu olan davranışsal ihracat bağlılığının ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun bütün alt boyutlarına pozitif yönde etki gösterdiğini ortaya koymasıyla özgünlük sağlamıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İhracat bağlılığı, ihracat pazar oryantasyonu, ihracat performansı

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1. Introduction

Export is one of the main methods used by companies to open up to and grow in the international arena (Leonidou, 1995). Export, which is one of the important elements of economic development, is also of great importance for companies (Aktepe and Karşlı, 2020). Companies have started to use exports frequently in the international arena especially in the last two decades. Interest in exports is largely related to increasing liberalization, integration and global competition, which are changing economic factors around the world. Export is important because it contributes to the growth rate of economies, creates new jobs and improves people's living standards, increases the competitiveness and profitability of companies (Chugan & Singh, 2015). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2013), the fastest and easiest way for companies to open up to the international arena is exports. However, exporter companies must face various obstacles in order to achieve superior performance in international markets. Over the years, the factors that affect and determine the export performance of firms have been studied by researchers. Careful attention to these determinants is essential for companies to be successful in international markets (Chugan and Singh, 2014). In this context, one of the determinants of successful export performance is export commitment. Export commitment usually contributes to a firm's export performance significantly (Cavusgil and Kirpalani 1993; Navarro et al., 2010; Chugan and Singh, 2015; Bianchi and Wickramasekera, 2016). The firm's commitment to exports relates to “the degree of allocation of organizational and managerial resources to export initiatives” (Lages and Montgomery, 2004). This is behavioral export commitment (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994). Attitudinal export commitment includes firms' beliefs and thoughts about the position, importance and priority of export for themselves (Stump et al., 1998). Research shows that firms with high export commitment allocate more resources to export activities (Lages and Montgomery, 2004). Another determinant of successful export performance is the high market orientation of firms, as stated by the international marketing literature (Rose and Shoham 2002; Kropp et al., 2006; Murray et al. 2007; Pascucci et al., 2016; Chung, 2012; Birru et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2011). The market orientation is about companies keeping up with the latest information on the market in order to respond to the ever-changing tastes and preferences of consumers and the strategic movements of competitors (İpek and Peynirci, 2019). Market orientation is an important factor in providing sustainable competitive advantage and creating high customer value, and provides remarkable performance in the market (Slater and Narver, 1994). Highly market-oriented firms in export operations have been more successful than counterparts in international markets in terms of understanding customers' needs and desires, responding to competitors' strategies and being more competitive (Cadogan et al., 2002).

Many studies have examined the effects of export market orientation on export performance (Rose and Shoham, 2002; Kropp et al., 2006; Pascucci et al., 2016; Chung, 2012; Birru et al., 2019; Murray et al. 2011). Likewise, in many studies, the effect of export commitment on export performance was examined (Navarro et al., 2010; Chugan and Singh, 2015; Bianchi and Wickramasekera, 2016). In addition, there are a limited number of studies (Chi and Sun, 2013) in the literature investigating the effect of export commitment on export market orientation. Also in Turkey, the limited number of studies have been made on these issues. These are the studies that examining the effect of export market orientation on export performance in the textile sector (Akyol and Akehurst, 2003), examining the effect of export market orientation on export performance in the Aegean region (Kayabasi and Mtetwa, 2016), examining the effect of export commitment with cooperation and trust variables within the scope of intermediary relationship quality on export performance in Istanbul city sample (Erdil, 2014). Unlike the studies mentioned above, in this study, the effects of behavioral export commitment on export intelligence orientation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness variables were examined. In addition, the simultaneous effect of export market orientation and export commitment on export performance has been examined. Except for the original contributions mentioned above, also this study has contributed to the literature with containing many different regions of Turkey and the sectors.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Next section is devoted to the literature review and hypotheses development in which propose the research model and hypotheses with theoretical arguments. Following this section, explanations on the methods to be used to collect data and test the structural and measurement model proposed were provided in the paper. Finally, findings from the data analysis were presented. The paper ends with the conclusion and discussions on the possible contribution and implications of this research.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Export Commitment

In this study, the concept of export commitment has been evaluated in the context suggested by Stump et al. (1998). Stump et al. (1998) argued that export commitment has two important dimensions. These are divided into two as attitudinal and behavioral export commitment. Attitudinal export commitment includes companies' beliefs and thoughts about the position, importance and priority of export for them. When evaluated from an attitudinal point of view, export commitment can be defined as the desire of managers to divide their management, financial and human resources into export activities (Donthu and Kim, 1993). Behavioral export commitment is related to the clear manifestation of the structure. It relates to actions that actually occur within the scope of export commitment. The company's budget allocation for export sales at certain rates, the company allocates time to export activities and foreign customers visit can be shown as an examples (Stump et al., 1998). Behavioral export commitment implies the resources (financial, managerial and humanitarian) that the company actually allocates to foreign trade operations (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994) to achieve the results expected by its managers.

It can be mentioned that attitude plays an important role in explaining behavior within the scope of Theory of Planned Behavior. Attitude towards behavior refers to the positive or negative attitudes of the individual who thinks to act in the direction of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991, pp. 188). From this point, it can be thought that attitudinal export commitment will have an effect on behavioral export commitment. In accordance with the above explanations, the following hypothesis is proposed :

Hypothesis 1: Attitudinal export commitment positively influences behavioral export commitment.

There are many studies showing that export commitment positively affects export performance (Navarro et al., 2010; Chugan and Singh, 2015; Bianchi and Wickramasekera, 2016). Also, based on the RBV logic, recent researches have shown that export commitment increases the likelihood of success in foreign markets (Navarro et al., 2010). In addition, Stump et al. (1998) showed that behavioral export commitment has an positive impact on export performance. In accordance with the above explanations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Behavioral export commitment positively influences export performance.

In the context of attitudinal export commitment, Chi and Sun (2013) examined the effect of export commitment on the export market orientation, and revealed that there was a positive relationship between them. But, some researchers (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Cavusgil and Zou (1994) have identified export commitment, emphasizing the importance of manifestation in behavioral context in export commitment. There is also the possibility that attitudes do not always turn into behavior (Urban, 1991). From this point of view, it can be evaluated that behavioral export commitment will represent export commitment better. Based on the above explanations, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3a: Behavioral export commitment positively influences export intelligence generation.

Hypothesis 3b: Behavioral export commitment positively influences export intelligence dissemination.

Hypothesis 3c: Behavioral export commitment positively influences export intelligence responsiveness.

2.2. Export Market Orientation

In this study, the concept of export market orientation has been evaluated in the context suggested by Cadogan et al. (1999). Accordingly, export market orientation consists of three sub-dimensions. These are export intelligence generation, dissemination and responsiveness. Export intelligence generation includes activities to produce export market intelligence. These are activities to obtain information about; the forces and trends affecting the needs and wishes of export customers, the changes in the export environment, and the measurement of export customer satisfaction. Export intelligence dissemination is related to activities involving the distribution and sharing of export market intelligence related to customers and competitors within the enterprise. Export market intelligence responsiveness represents practices implemented based on produced, collected and distributed export-related intelligence in an exporting company. These are practices resulting from possible changes regarding export customers, competitors and other environmental factors affecting them (Cadogan et al., 1999, pp. 691-2). Response to competitor campaigns, price adjustments according to competitive conditions (Ju et al., 2011) and product changes to adapt to customer needs, etc. activities can be shown as an examples of practices.

Market-oriented companies are considered as companies that collect information about the market atmosphere and use this information in making strategic decisions and meet the different expectations of their stakeholders (Cadogan et al., 1999). It has been observed that firms who understand customer needs in the foreign market, adapt to external factors, and struggle and compete better with competitors have higher export market orientation levels (Murray et al., 2007). In addition, some studies (Murray et al., 2007; Pascucci et al., 2016) showed that market intelligence generation and dissemination are basic drivers of responsiveness. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Export intelligence dissemination positively influences export intelligence responsiveness.

Hypothesis 5: Export intelligence generation positively influences export intelligence responsiveness.

Many studies have shown that export market orientation has a positive effect on export performance (Rose and Shoham, 2002; Kropp et al., 2006; Birru et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2011). According to Murray et al. (2007) the export performance depends on response design and response implementation, which is on the firm's capability to use market intelligence in an effective way. Also, export intelligence responsiveness have been shown by some studies to have a positive effect on export performance (Pascucci et al., 2016; Chung, 2012). In accordance with the above explanations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6: Export intelligence responsiveness positively influences export performance.

The conceptual model developed based on the literature with hypothesis explanations above is shown in Figure. 1 below.

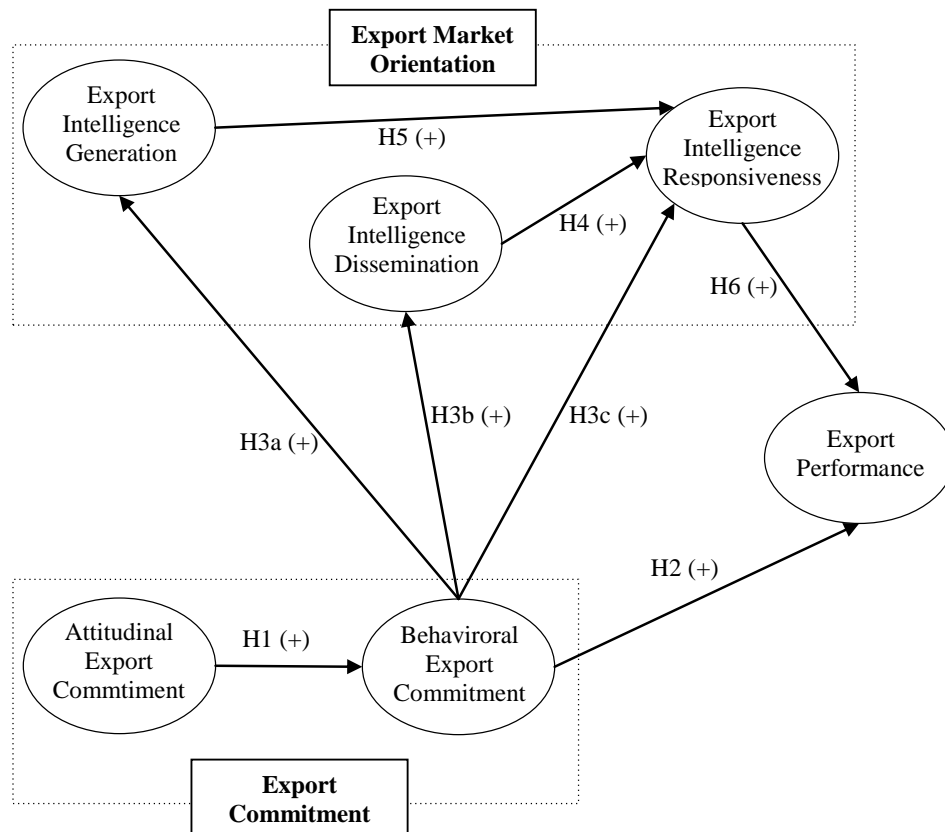


Fig. 1 Conceptual model

3. Research Methodology

The necessary information about sampling, data collection, measurement and the research methodology applied to test hypotheses are explained in the following sections.

3.1. Measurement

Export commitment construct which is consisting of attitudinal export commitment and behavioral export commitment sub-dimensions, export market orientation construct which is consisting of export intelligence generation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness sub-dimensions and finally export performance construct were measured in this study.

Export intelligence generation, export intelligence dissemination, export intelligence responsiveness and attitudinal export commitment were measured by multiple items, using a five-point Likert-type scale with measure indicators ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). We intended to gauge the extent of export performance compared with those of its major rivals in the export market. So export performance constructs were measured with multiple items, using a five-point Likert-typescale (1 = "much worse," 5 = "much better") to register the response on each item. In addition, the items that constitute the behavioral export commitment were asked on the basis of % values.

All of the items were taken from international marketing literature's previously-validated scales. In accordance with the suggestion of Nunnally (1978), a minimum of three items were used per construct with a view to ensure adequate reliability. In Table 1, the measurement items are shown together with the sources which they were taken.

Table 1 Measurement items

Construct	Item no.	Measurement items	Source
Export Intelligence Generation	EIG1	We periodically review the likely effect of changes in our export environment (e.g., technology and regulation).	Ju et al. (2011)
	EIG2	In this company, we generate a lot of information concerning trends (e.g., regulation, technological developments, politics, and economy) in our export markets.	
	EIG3	We generate a lot of information in order to understand the forces that influence our overseas customers' need and preferences.	
	EIG4	We constantly monitor our level of commitment and orientation to serving export customer needs.	
Export Intelligence Dissemination	EID1	Information about the activities of our export competitors usually reaches relevant personnel before it is too late.	Hoang B.P. (2015)
	EID2	Important information about export market trends (regulatory, technology) reach our relevant staff effectively.	
	EID3	Information that can affect the way we serve our export customers, does not take long to reach export personnel	
Export Intelligence Responsiveness	EIR1	If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our foreign customers, we would implement a response immediately.	Ju et al. (2011)
	EIR2	We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' price structures in foreign markets.	
	EIR3	We rapidly respond to competitive actions that threaten us in our export markets.	
Attitudinal Export Commitment	AEC1	Our export business is a high priority for us	Stump R.L. et al. (1998); Czinkota and Johnston (1983)
	AEC2	Exports could make a major contribution to my firm's growth	
	AEC3	Exports could make a major contribution to my firm's profits	
	AEC4	If its easier to market here, you don't market in foreign countries	
	AEC5	We have made a clear decision to expand the export part of our business	
	AEC6	My firm is planning for exporting	
	AEC7	My firm is actively exploring the possibilities of exporting	
Behavioral Export Commitment	BEC1	Approximately what proportion of your time was spent last year on export related activities?	Stump R.L. et al. (1998)
	BEC2	Approximately what proportion of your time was spent last year traveling to visit foreign customers?	
	BEC3	Approximately what proportion of your firm's overall budget was spent last year to finance export promotion	

Export Performance	EP1	Export sales volume	Cavusgil and Zou (1994); Katsikeas et al. (2000)
	EP2	Contribution of exporting to profits	
	EP3	Overall export performance	

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

Capable of exporting with their their own facilities without using intermediaries export companies in various sectors in Turkey have been identified for the research as the target audience. In order to do effective research, respondents were selected from different sectors and from different regions of Turkey. A questionnaire was applied to the willing participants (export firm's owners / decision-makers) by trained interviewers. The questionnaires were mostly applied with a written questionnaire. In addition, methods such as telephone and e-mail were also used.

The number of samples should be at least ten times the arrow of the endogenous variable that receives the highest number of relationship arrows (Hair et al., 2011). Accordingly, the minimum sample number for this study should be 30. Of the 289 export firms owners/decision makers solicited to participate in the study, 289 usable responses were obtained. This is remarkably above the minimum sample size requirement.

4. Data Analysis and Results

Partial least squares (PLS) methodology with Smart PLS 3.0 were used in this study to test the proposed model and related hypotheses. The following sections present the results of the statistical analysis.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the sample are presented in Table 2. As can be seen in the descriptive statistics table, as mentioned above, firms from different sectors were included in the study. Export companies from different cities such as Istanbul, Konya, Mersin, Bursa, Antalya and Karaman were reached and the scope of the research was tried to be kept broad in the context of location. Furthermore most of the participants have more than 10 years of export experience is also a remarkable element.

Table 2 Sample characteristics

Sample characteristics		Frequency	Percent (%)
Sector of enterprises' operation	Electronic	28	9,7
	Food	71	24,6
	Machinery	75	26,0
	Textile	87	30,1
	Others	28	9,7
Number of full-time employees	1-10	15	5,2
	11-50	101	34,9
	51-200	119	41,2
	201-500	44	15,2
	500+	10	3,5
City	İstanbul	135	46,7
	Konya	67	23,2
	Mersin	37	12,8
	Bursa	20	6,9

	Antalya	19	6,6
	Karaman	11	3,8
Gender	Male	203	70,2
	Female	86	29,8
Level of education	Below high school	0	0,0
	High school	47	16,3
	Associate degree	52	18,0
	University diploma/degree	141	48,8
	Postgraduate degree	48	16,6
	Doctorate	1	0,3
Position of respondent in the enterprise	Owner	31	10,7
	Director	19	6,6
	Manager	239	82,7
Years of firm's existence	1-5	21	7,3
	6-10	30	10,4
	11-15	45	15,6
	16-20	54	18,7
	20+	139	48,1
Years of total export activity	1-5	43	14,9
	6-10	71	24,6
	11-15	56	19,4
	16-20	43	14,9
	20+	76	26,3

4.2. SEM Analysis

The model estimation was carried out in SmartPLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2015). This study first analysed measurement for its validity. This step was followed by the analysis of the structural equation model to test the relationships hypothesised in the research model.

4.2.1. Measurement Model Analysis

With the help of confirmatory factor analysis, the convergent validity of each structure was tested. Test results related to the convergent validity of constructs are given in Table 3. Examining the standardised factor loadings of each item in the measurement model, the reliability, and the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct were examined to evaluate convergent validity.

A factor loading greater than 0.5 is considered a valid condition for item reliability (Hair et al. 2010). In this respect, the standardised factor loadings of each item were observed and the reliability of the individual items was confirmed.

Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs are above the stipulated level of reliability (0.70), and the AVE for each construct higher than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As a result, the model satisfies the requirements for convergent validity.

Table 3 Validity of constructs

Construct	Items	Factor loading	Std. Error	t value	AVE (>0.5)	Cronbach's alpha (>0.7)
Attitudinal Export Commitment	AEC1	0.772	0.043	17.945	0.578	0.880
	AEC2	0.773	0.052	14.728		
	AEC3	0.751	0.060	12.618		
	AEC4	0.776	0.053	14.599		
	AEC5	0.760	0.044	17.338		
	AEC6	0.782	0.043	18.312		
	AEC7	0.703	0.054	13.005		
Behavioral Export Commitment	BEC1	0.890	0.018	49.451	0.638	0.721
	BEC2	0.835	0.025	32.780		
	BEC3	0.651	0.070	9.271		
Export Intelligence Generation	EIG1	0.751	0.043	17.369	0.557	0.735
	EIG2	0.804	0.038	20.923		
	EIG3	0.565	0.196	2.892		
	EIG4	0.835	0.025	33.501		
Export Intelligence Dissemination	EID1	0.884	0.021	42.742	0.839	0.904
	EID2	0.936	0.012	75.873		
	EID3	0.927	0.016	58.278		
Export Intelligence Responsiveness	EIR1	0.807	0.035	22.935	0.777	0.855
	EIR2	0.922	0.014	66.350		
	EIR3	0.912	0.016	57.885		
Export Performance	EP1	0.935	0.010	92.707	0.822	0.892
	EP2	0.844	0.030	27.658		
	EP3	0.938	0.013	73.732		

Table 4 Construct cross-loadings

	Attitudinal Export Commitment	Behavioral Export Commitment	Export Intelligence Generation	Export Intelligence Dissemination	Export Intelligence Responsiveness	Export Performance
AEC1	0,772	0,291	0,376	0,333	0,391	0,197
AEC2	0,773	0,191	0,394	0,425	0,188	-0,042
AEC3	0,751	0,185	0,315	0,338	0,126	-0,007
AEC4	0,776	0,203	0,408	0,335	0,241	0,188
AEC5	0,760	0,276	0,365	0,378	0,227	0,173
AEC6	0,782	0,312	0,397	0,285	0,367	0,233
AEC7	0,703	0,246	0,312	0,254	0,190	0,093
BEC1	0,334	0,890	0,291	0,260	0,357	0,251
BEC2	0,216	0,835	0,220	0,222	0,280	0,224
BEC3	0,234	0,651	0,036	0,081	0,096	0,263

EIG1	0,366	0,191	0,751	0,374	0,406	0,040
EIG2	0,372	0,243	0,804	0,421	0,327	0,081
EIG3	0,261	0,103	0,566	0,199	0,186	0,044
EIG4	0,422	0,208	0,835	0,570	0,417	0,105
EID1	0,383	0,260	0,570	0,884	0,398	0,176
EID2	0,423	0,243	0,460	0,936	0,356	0,172
EID3	0,389	0,184	0,470	0,927	0,325	0,153
EIR1	0,273	0,200	0,344	0,405	0,807	0,288
EIR2	0,318	0,315	0,461	0,300	0,922	0,294
EIR3	0,316	0,358	0,428	0,352	0,912	0,335
EP1	0,255	0,312	0,185	0,243	0,370	0,935
EP2	0,069	0,270	-0,061	0,047	0,226	0,844
EP3	0,129	0,223	0,091	0,179	0,329	0,938

Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct. If the square root of its AVE is higher than each correlation values with other constructs, discriminant validity is achieved (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The results showed in Table 5, indicating good discriminant validity.

Table 5 Square root of AVE (Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity criteria)

	Attitudinal Export Commitment	Behavioral Export Commitment	Export Perform ance	Export Intelligenc e Disseminat ion	Export Intelligenc e Generation	Export Intelligenc e Responsive ness
Attitudinal Export Commitment	0,760					
Behavioral Export Commitment	0,332	0,799				
Export Perform ance	0,177	0,298	0,907			
Export Intelligence Dissemination	0,436	0,254	0,184	0,916		
Export Intelligence Generation	0,484	0,258	0,093	0,551	0,746	
Export Intelligence Responsiveness	0,344	0,334	0,347	0,397	0,468	0,882

Table 6 HTMT discriminant validity criteria

	Attitudinal Export Commitment	Behavioral Export Commitment	Export Perform ance	Export Intelligence Disseminat ion	Export Intelligenc e Generation	Export Intelligenc e Responsive ness
Attitudinal Export Commitment						
Behavioral Export Commitment	0,393					

Export Performance	0,214	0,379			
Export Intelligence Dissemination	0,493	0,286	0,191		
Export Intelligence Generation	0,589	0,315	0,166	0,636	
Export Intelligence Responsiveness	0,373	0,385	0,389	0,450	0,562

Discriminant validity was also evaluated with the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) that has high power in detecting validity issues in variance-based SEM. HTMT values, showed in Table 6, are below the suggested 0.9 threshold (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt 2015).

4.2.2. Hypothesis testing

As summarized in Fig. 2 and Table 7, all of the hypothesised paths were significant.

Table 7 Summary of hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis				Original Sample	<i>t</i>	s.d.	<i>p</i>	Supported
H1	Attitudinal Export Commitment	-->	Behavioral Export Commitment	0.332	61.949	0.054	0.000	Yes
H2	Behavioral Export Commitment	-->	Export Perfomance	0.204	33.314	0.061	0.001	Yes
H3 a	Behavioral Export Commitment	-->	Export Intelligence Dissemination	0.254	42.114	0.060	0.000	Yes
H3 b	Behavioral Export Commitment	-->	Export Intelligence Generation	0.258	37.946	0.068	0.000	Yes
H3 c	Behavioral Export Commitment	-->	Export Intelligence Responsiveness	0.210	47.072	0.045	0.000	Yes
H4	Export Intelligence Dissemination	-->	Export Intelligence Responsiveness	0.164	22.135	0.074	0.027	Yes
H5	Export Intelligence Generation	-->	Export Intelligence Responsiveness	0.323	46.705	0.069	0.000	Yes
H6	Export Intelligence Responsiveness	-->	Export Perfomance	0.279	39.540	0.070	0.000	Yes

Attitudinal export commitment was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.332$, $t = 61.949$, $p < 0.001$) related to behavioral export commitment. Thus Hypothesis 1 is supported. The results further show that behavioral export commitment was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.204$, $t = 33.314$, $p < 0.01$) associated with export performance, providing support for Hypothesis 2. The results also found that behavioral export commitment was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.254$, $t = 42.114$, $p < 0.001$) related to export intelligence dissemination. Hypothesis 3a is thus supported. Similarly, behavioral export commitment ($\beta = 0.258$, $t = 37.946$, $p < 0.001$) was positively associated with export intelligence generation. Thus support was obtained for Hypothesis 3b. Also behavioral export commitment was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.210$, $t = 47.072$, $p < 0.001$) related to export intelligence responsiveness. Hypothesis 3c is thus supported. Additionally export

intelligence dissemination was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.164$, $t = 22.135$, $p < 0.05$) related with export intelligence responsiveness and export intelligence generation was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.323$, $t = 46.705$, $p < 0.001$) related with export intelligence responsiveness. Finally export intelligence responsiveness was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.279$, $t = 39.540$, $p < 0.001$) related with export performance. Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 5 Hypothesis 6 are thus supported.

Behavioral export commitment and export intelligence responsiveness together explained 15,8% of the variance in export performance, and export intelligence responsiveness support being the stronger predictors of export performance.

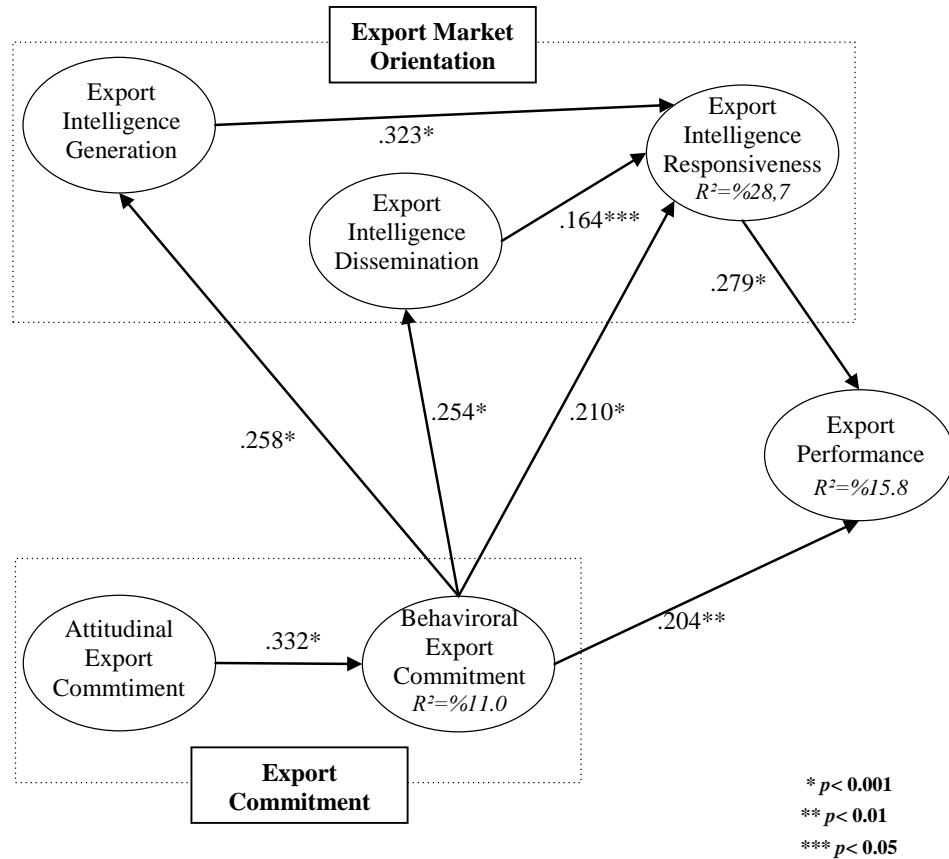


Fig. 2. PLS results of the structural model

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the effects of behavioral export commitment on export intelligence orientation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness variables were examined. In addition, the simultaneous effect of export market orientation and export commitment on export performance has been examined. To confirm the hypothesized research model, a field study containing exporting firms from different sectors and provinces in Turkey was utilized. The results on the findings that were obtained are discussed in the paragraphs below.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications

In this study, firstly the effect of attitudinal export commitment on behavioral export commitment and behavioral export commitment on export performance were examined and positive relations were determined in both. In this context, similar results have been obtained with studies (Navarro et al., 2010; Chugan and Singh, 2015; Bianchi and Wickramasekera, 2016) examining the effect

of export commitment on export performance and finding a positive relationship. Also similar results have been obtained with a limited number of studies (Stump et al., 1998) examining the effect of behavioral export commitment on export performance and finding a positive relationship, thus existing literature has been strengthened.

In the literature, there are a limited number of studies (Chi and Sun, 2013) that investigate the effect of export commitment on export market orientation. In the context of attitudinal export commitment, Chi and Sun (2013) examined the effect of export commitment on the export market orientation, and revealed that there was a positive relationship between them. As distinct from this study, in this study, the effects of behavioral export commitment on the sub-dimensions of export market orientation; export intelligence generation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness were examined, and it was determined that it had a positive effect on each of them. This is new information for the literature. In addition, in this study, the effect of export intelligence responsiveness on export performance was examined and similar results were obtained with studies (Rose and Shoham 2002; Kropp et al., 2006; Pascucci et al., 2016; Chung, 2012; Birru et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2011) examining the effects of export market orientation on export performance.

In Turkey, the limited number of studies have been made on these issues. These are the studies that examining the effect of export market orientation on export performance in textile sector (Akyol and Akehurst, 2003), examining the effect of export market orientation on export performance in exporters in the Aegean region (Kayabasi and Mtetwa, 2016), examining the effect of export commitment with cooperation and trust variables within the scope of intermediary relationship quality on export performance in Istanbul city sample (Erdil, 2014). Unlike the studies mentioned above, in this study, the effects of behavioral export commitment on export intelligence orientation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness variables were examined. In addition, the simultaneous effect of export market orientation and export commitment on export performance has been examined Except for the original contributions mentioned above also, this study has contributed to the literature with containing many different regions of Turkey and the sectors.

Export managers should develop an effective strategy in the context of adapting to international markets. While developing these strategies, they have to produce the necessary information about the market for the business (technological changes, regulations, costumer needs etc.) and ensure that this information is distributed effectively by the relevant units in firm. If this happens, export intelligence responsiveness may be required, and changes in the export market (price, competitor campaigns, customer needs, etc.) can be quickly responded. As a result, export performance will increase. In addition, export companies should periodically review export commitment in both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions and give importance to both factors.

In the companies, it should be taken into consideration that the low dependence on exports in the attitudinal context will affect the export commitment in the behavioral context. Educational activities can be organized within the scope of increasing the attitudinal commitment of the employees. Export managers' commitment to export and their ability to demonstrate this in a particularly behavioral context are important factors for achieving export performance. In this context, time and budget should be allocated to export activities, and importance should be given to promotion activities, customer visits activities, etc.. Furthermore, importance should be given to behavioral export commitment in order to perform export market orientation by performing export intelligence generation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness. Companies which can allocate time and budget for export-related activities within the scope of behavioral export commitment will be successful in export intelligence generation, export intelligence dissemination and export intelligence responsiveness, and so export market orientation will be able to provided and export performance will be increased.

When the subject is evaluated in the context of government actions and policies, it can be thought that importance should be given to organizing educational activities for companies with low attitudinal commitment, and providing financial supports for companies with high attitudinal

commitment but low behavioral commitment. In this way, companies will be supported to increase their export commitment. Furthermore, governments should establish and continuously develop platforms that provide companies with up-to-date market information within the scope of export intelligence generation. This will contribute to realization of export intelligence responsiveness and support for the actualization of export market orientation. In this way, export performances of companies with increased export commitment and export market orientation levels will be able to reach higher levels.

5.2. Future Research Suggestions and Limitations

In this study, although contributing to the literature by revealing the relationships between export commitment and export market orientation and export performance of export firms operating in Turkey, there are some limitations that provide scope for future research. Research data were obtained only from firms operating in Turkey. The results may be culture-specific, and although they are generalized on a national basis, additional studies should be carried out in different countries and cultures to be generalized on an international basis. Also, similar studies can be applied in different sectors.

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Araştırma Makalesi

Export Commitment, Export Market Orientation and Performance: An Analysis of Turkish Exporters

İhracat Bağlılığı, İhracat Pazar Oryantasyonu ve Performans : Türk İhracatçılarının Analizi

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Firmaların uluslararası arenaya açılmalarında ve büyümelerinde kullandıkları yöntemlerin başında ihracat gelmektedir (Leonidou, 1995). Ekonomik kalkınmanın önemli unsurlarından birisi olan ihracat, firmalar açısından da büyük önem taşımaktadır (Aktepe ve Karslı, 2020). Firmalar özellikle son yirmi yılda ihracatı uluslararası arenada sıklıkla kullanmaya başlamışlardır. İhracata olan ilgi, büyük ölçüde dünyada değişmekte olan ekonomik etkenlerden artan liberalleşme, entegrasyon ve küresel rekabet ile ilgilidir. İhracat ekonomilerin büyüme hızına katkı sağladığı, yeni işler ortaya çıkardığı ve insanların yaşam standartlarında iyileşmeler meydana getirdiği, firmaların rekabet gücünü ve karlılığını artırdığı için önemlidir (Chugan ve Singh, 2015). Kotler ve Armstrong’a (2013) göre firmaların uluslararası arenaya açılmalarında en hızlı ve en kolay yol ihracattır. Bununla birlikte, ihracatçı firmalar uluslararası pazarlarda üstün performans elde etmek için çeşitli engellerle karşılaşmak zorundadır. Yıllar boyunca, firmaların ihracat performansını etkileyen ve belirleyen unsurlar araştırmacılar tarafından incelenmiştir. Bu belirleyiciler üzerinde özenle durulması firmaların uluslararası pazarlarda başarılı olmaları için şarttır (Chugan ve Singh, 2014). Bu bağlamda başarılı ihracat performansının belirleyicilerinden biri de ihracat bağlılığıdır. İhracat bağlılığı genellikle bir firmanın ihracat performansına önemli katkıda bulunur (Cavusgil ve Kirpalani 1993; Navarro ve Diğ., 2010; Chugan ve Singh, 2015; Bianchi ve Wickramasekera, 2016). Firmanın ihracata bağlılığı - “ihracat girişimlerine organizasyonel ve yönetimsel kaynakların tahsis derecesi” ile ilgilidir (Lages ve Montgomery, 2004). Bu davranışsal ihracat bağlılığıdır (Cavusgil ve Zou 1994). Tutumsal ihracat bağlılığı ise firmaların kendileri için ihracatın konumu, önemi ve önceliği hakkındaki inanç ve düşüncelerini içermektedir (Stump ve Diğ., 1998). Araştırmalar, ihracat bağlılığı yüksek firmaların ihracat faaliyetlerine daha fazla kaynak ayırdığını göstermektedir (Lages ve Montgomery, 2004). Başarılı ihracat performansının belirleyicilerinden bir diğeri de uluslararası pazarlama literatürünün belirttiği gibi firmaların pazar oryantasyonunun yüksek olmasıdır (Rose ve Shoham 2002; Kropp ve Diğ., 2006; Murray ve Diğ., 2007; Pascucci ve Diğ., 2016; Chung, 2012). Birru ve Diğ., 2019; Murray ve Diğ., 2011). Pazar oryantasyonu, tüketicilerin sürekli değişen zevklerine ve tercihlerine ve rakiplerin stratejik hareketlerine uygun bir şekilde cevap verebilmek için, firmaların piyasadaki en son bilgilere dayanarak ayak uydurmaları ile ilgilidir (İpek ve Peynirci, 2019). Pazar oryantasyonu kavramının, sürdürülebilir rekabet avantajı sağlamada ve yüksek müşteri değeri meydana getirmede büyük önem taşıdığı ileri sürülmektedir; bu da pazarda dikkat çekici bir performans sağlamaktadır (Slater ve Narver, 1994). İhracat operasyonlarında yüksek derecede pazar yönelimli firmalar, müşterilerin istek ve ihtiyaçlarını anlama, rakiplerin

stratejilerine cevap verebilme ve daha rekabetçi olabilme bağlamında uluslararası pazarlardaki meslektaşlarından daha başarılı olmuştur (Cadogan ve Diğ., 2002) .

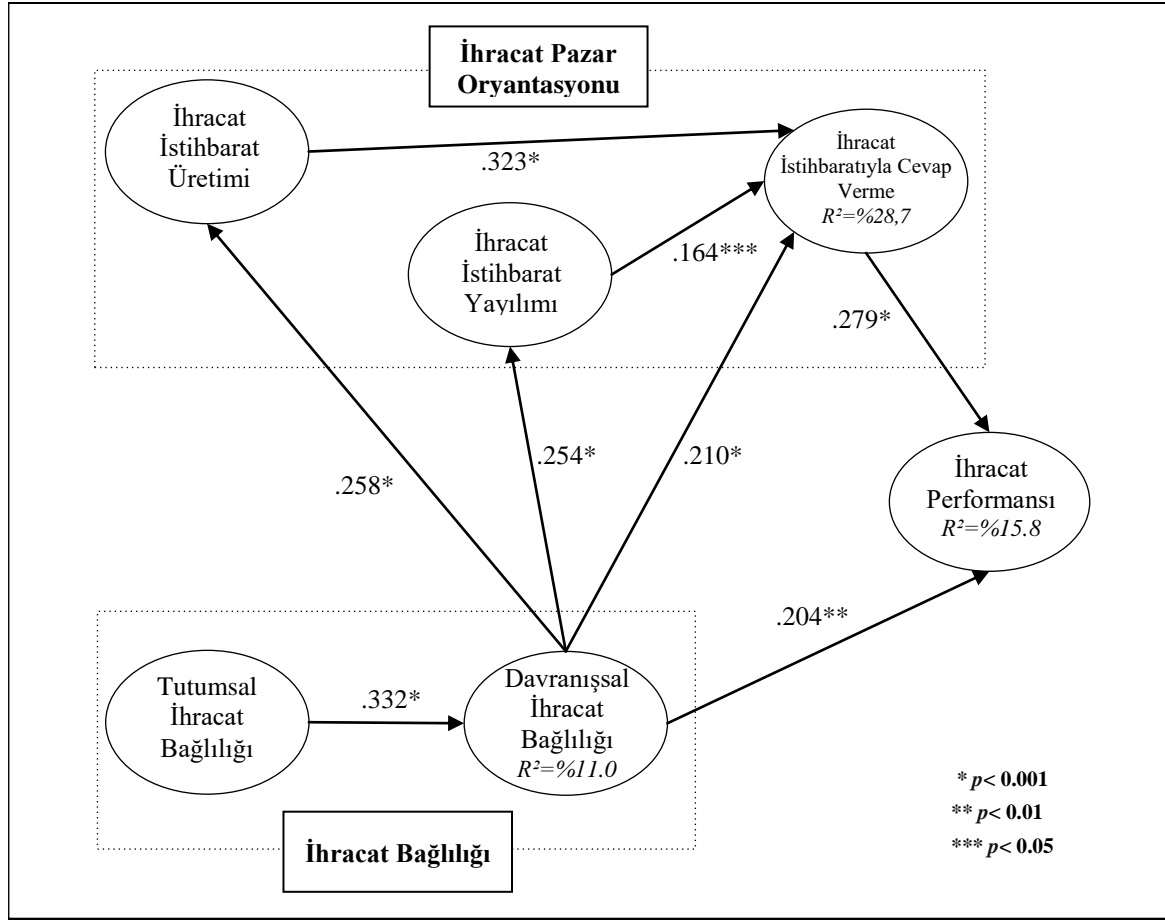
Bu çalışmada mevcut literatürden farklı olarak, davranışsal ihracat bağlılığının, ihracat pazar oryantasyonu bileşenlerinden ihracat istihbarat üretimi, ihracat istihbarat yayılımı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme değişkenlerine etkileri incelenmiştir. İlave olarak ihracat pazar oryantasyonu ve ihracat bağlılığının ihracat performansı üzerinde eşzamanlı etkisini incelenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırma Türkiye'nin değişik bölgeleri ve birçok sektörünü içermesiyle literatüre katkı sağlamıştır.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada önerilen model ve ilgili hipotezleri test etmek için Smart PLS 3.0 ile kısmi en küçük kareler (PLS) metodolojisi kullanılmıştır. Türkiye'nin çeşitli sektörlerindeki ihracat şirketleri, araştırma için hedef kitle olarak belirlenmiştir. Etkili araştırma yapabilmek için farklı sektörlerden ve Türkiye'nin farklı bölgelerinden işletmeler seçilmiştir. Katılımcılara eğitimli anketörler tarafından anket uygulanmıştır. Anketler çoğunlukla yazılı şekilde uygulanmıştır. Ayrıca telefon ve e-posta gibi yöntemler de kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılmak isteyen 289 ihracat firmasından 289 kullanılabılır yanıt alınmıştır.

Bulgular

Aşağıda şekilde değişkenler arasındaki katsayılar ve anlamlılık değerleri görülmektedir. Bütün hipotezler desteklenmiştir. Tutumsal ihracat bağlılığının davranışsal ihracat bağlılığı üzerinde, davranışsal ihracat bağlılığının ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun alt boyutları olan ihracat istihbarat üretimi, yayılımı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme üzerinde, son olarak davranışsal ihracat bağlılığı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap vermenin ihracat performansı üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif etkileri olduğu görülmüştür. Davranışsal ihracat bağlılığı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme, ihracat performansındaki varyansın % 15,8'ini açıklamıştır.



Şekil. 1 Yapısal Modelin PLS Sonuçları

Tartışma

Bu çalışmada ilk olarak tutumsal ihracat bağıllığının davranışsal ihracat bağıllığına, davranışsal ihracat bağıllığının da ihracat performansına etkisi incelenmiş ve her ikisinde de pozitif yönde ilişkiler tespit edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda ihracat bağıllığının ihracat performansına etkisini inceleyen ve pozitif ilişki bulan çalışmalarla (Navarro ve Diğ., 2010; Chugan ve Singh, 2015; Bianchi ve Wickramasekera 2016) ve davranışsal ihracat bağıllığının ihracat performansına etkisini inceleyen ve pozitif ilişki bulan sınırlı sayıda çalışmayla (Stump ve Diğ., 1998) benzer sonuçlar elde edilmiş ve var olan literatüre katkı sağlanmıştır.

Literatürde ihracat bağıllığının ihracat pazar oryantasyonu üzerine etkisini araştıran sınırlı sayıda çalışma (Chi ve Sun, 2013) bulunmaktadır. Chi ve Sun (2013) tarafından, tutumsal ihracat bağıllığı düşüncesi kapsamında, ihracat bağıllığının ihracat pazar oryantasyonuna etkisini incelemiş, ve aralarında pozitif ilişki olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Söz konusu çalışmadan farklı olarak bu çalışmada davranışsal ihracat bağıllığının, ihracat pazar oryantasyonu bileşenlerinden ihracat istihbarat üretimi, ihracat istihbarat yayılımı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme değişkenlerine etkileri incenmiş ve herbirine pozitif yönde etkisi olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu literatür için yeni bir bilgidir. Bunlara ilave olarak bu çalışmada ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap vermenin ihracat performansına etkisi incelenmiş ve ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun ihracat performansı üzerine etkilerini inceleyen çalışmalarla (Rose ve Shoham 2002; Kropp ve Diğ., 2006; Pascucci ve Diğ., 2016; Chung, 2012; Birru ve Diğ., 2019; Murray ve Diğ., 2011) benzer sonuçlar elde edilmiştir.

Türkiye’de ise daha önce bu konularda sınırlı sayıda yapılmıştır. Bunlar; ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun ihracat performansı üzerinde etkisini inceleyen ve tekstil sektörü üzerine araştırma yapan (Akyol ve Akehurst, 2003), yine aynı şekilde ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun ihracat performansı üzerinde etkisini inceleyen ve Ege bölgesindeki ihracatçılarda araştırma yapan (Kayabasi ve Mtetwa, 2016), aracı ilişki kalitesi kapsamında işbirliği ve güven değişkenleriyle birlikte ihracat bağlılığının ihracat performansına etkisini İstanbul şehri örnekleminde inceleyen (Erdil, 2014) çalışmalarıdır. Bu araştırma ise Türkiye’nin değişik bölgeleri ve birçok sektörünü içermesiyle, ihracat bağlılığı ve ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun ihracat performansı üzerinde eşzamanlı etkileri ile davranışsal ihracat bağlılığının ihracat pazar oryantasyonunun alt boyutlarına etkisini de incelemesiyle özgünlük ve katkı sağlamış ve literatürü kuvvetlendirmiştir.

İhracat yöneticileri uluslararası pazarlara uyum sağlama bağlamında etkin bir strateji geliştirmelidirler. Bu stratejileri geliştirirken işletme için pazar hakkında gerekli bilgileri üretmek (teknolojik değişiklikler, mevzuatlar, müşteri istek ve ihtiyaçları vb.) ve bu bilgilerin ilgili birimler arasında etkin bir iletişimle dağılımını sağlamak zorundadırlar. Eğer bu gerçekleşirse ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme gerçekleştirebilecek, ihracat pazarında meydana gelen değişikliklere (fiyat, rakip kampanyaları, müşteri ihtiyaçları vb.) hızla yanıt verilebilecektir. Bunun sonucu olarakta ihracat performansı yükselecektir. Bunlara ilave olarak ihracat firmaları hem davranışsal hemde tutumsal boyutlarda ihracat bağlılığını periyodik olarak gözden geçirmeli ve iki unsura da önem vermelidirler. İşletmede tutumsal bağlamda ihracat bağlılığındaki düşüklüğün davranışsal bağlamda ihracat bağlılığına etki edeceği gözönüne alınmalıdır. Bu kapsamda işletmelerde çalışanlara, tutumsal bağlılığı artırma kapsamında eğitimler düzenlenebilir. İhracat yöneticilerin ihracat bağlılığı göstermeleri ve bunu özellikle davranışsal bağlamda ortaya koyabilmeleri ihracat performansı elde etmede önemli etkenlerdendir. Bu bağlamda ihracatla ilgili aktivitelere zaman ve bütçe ayrılmalı, tutundurma faaliyetlerine, müşteri ziyaretleri vb. aktivitelere önem verilmelidir. Ayrıca ihracat istihbarat üretimi, ihracat istihbarat yayılımı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme gerçekleştirip ihracat pazar oryantasyonu sağlayarak başarılı olabilmek için davranışsal ihracat bağlılığına önem verilmelidir. Davranışsal ihracat bağlılığı kapsamında gerçekleştirilen ve ihracatla ilgili faaliyetlere zaman ve bütçe ayırabilen firmalar ihracat istihbarat üretimi, ihracat istihbarat yayılımı ve ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap verme boyutlarında başarılı olup ihracat pazar oryantasyonu sağlayabilecekler ve ihracat performanslarını arttırabileceklerdir.

Kamu eylem ve politikaları bağlamında konu değerlendirildiğinde, ihracat tutumsal bağlılığı düşük olan firmalara eğitimsel faaliyetlerin düzenlenmesi, tutumsal bağlılığı yüksek lakin davranışsal bağlılığı düşük olan firmalara finansal destek uygulamalarına önem verilmesi düşünülebilir. Bu şekilde firmaların ihracat bağlılığını arttırmaya destek verilmiş olunacaktır. Ayrıca devletler firmalara ihracat istihbarat üretimi kapsamında güncel pazar bilgisi sağlayan platformlar kurmalı ve sürekli olarak geliştirmelidirler. Bu şekilde ihracat istihbaratıyla cevap vermenin gerçekleştirilmesine katkıda bulunulacak ve ihracat pazar oryantasyonu sağlanmasına destek verilmiş olunacaktır. Bu sayede ihracat bağlılığı ve ihracat pazar oryantasyonu seviyeleri artan firmaların ihracat performansları daha üst seviyelere çıkabilecektir.