

## TURKEY'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXPORT MARKETING: STRATEGIES, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS\*

### 100. YILINDA TÜRKİYE İHRACAT PAZARLAMASI: STRATEJİLER, FIRSATLAR, ZORLUKLAR VE GELECEK YÖNLERİ

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#### ABSTRACT

Exports is crucial in driving economic growth and development for all countries worldwide. The export sector is critical for Turkey's economic growth and for boosting the country's standing in international trade. Exports is an essential source of Turkey's national income. It increases employment and contributes to economic growth. Exports is utilized as a strategic instrument to attain foreign trade balance, encourage knowledge transfer, gain access to new markets, and boost competitiveness. In recent years, Turkey, as an essential player in global commerce, has used various tactics to enhance its export activity. Turkey's export marketing strategy focuses on expanding export volume, diversifying exports, and maintaining competitiveness in foreign markets. The effectiveness of export marketing directly affects export performance. Turkey's export performance has shown a significant improvement. 2023 is essential as the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey and the beginning of the second century. The study would outline Turkey's export history, underline the importance of export marketing, and examine how Turkey's export marketing techniques have evolved. It would also investigate Turkey's role in global commerce.

**Keywords:** Export, Export Marketing, Export Performance, International Marketing, Türkiye.

**JEL Classification Codes:** M31, F23.

#### ÖZ

İhracat, dünya çapındaki tüm ülkeler için ekonomik büyüme ve kalkınmayı yönlendirmede çok önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Türkiye açısından ihracat sektörü, ülkenin uluslararası ticaretteki yerini güçlendirmesi ve ülkenin ekonomik büyümesi için büyük bir öneme sahiptir. İhracat, Türkiye'nin ulusal gelirin önemli bir kaynağıdır. İstihdamı artırır ve ekonomik büyümeye katkı sağlar. Stratejik bir araç olarak ihracat, dış ticaret dengesini sağlamak, teknoloji transferini teşvik etmek, yeni pazarlara erişmek ve rekabet gücünü artırmak için kullanılır. Küresel ticarete önemli bir aktör olan Türkiye, son yıllarda ihracat faaliyetlerini artırmak için çeşitli stratejiler benimsemiştir. Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlaması, ihracat hacminin artırılması, ihracat çeşitliliğinin geliştirilmesi ve uluslararası pazarlarda rekabet edebilirliğin sağlanması gibi hedeflere odaklanmaktadır. İhracat pazarlamasının etkinliği ihracat performansını doğrudan etkilemektedir. Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan bu yana Türkiye'nin ihracat performansı büyük bir gelişme göstermiştir. 2023 yılı, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin 100. yılı olması ve ikinci yüzyılın başlangıcı olması açısından büyük bir önem taşımaktadır. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin ihracat tarihine bir bakış sunacak, ihracat pazarlamasının önemini vurgulayacak ve Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlaması stratejilerinin nasıl şekillendiği konusunda bir genel değerlendirme yapacak ve Türkiye'nin küresel ticaretteki rolü analiz edilecektir.

**Keywords:** İhracat, İhracat Pazarlaması, İhracat Performansı, Uluslararası Pazarlama, Türkiye.

**JEL Classification Codes:** M31, F23.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Amaç ve Kapsam:

İhracat pazarlaması uzun zamandır uluslararası pazarlama literatüründe odak noktası olmuştur. Makro düzeyde ülkeler, işletmelerin ihracat performanslarını artırmaya ilişkin çabalar içinde olmuşlardır. Çünkü ihracat ekonomik büyümenin lokomotifleri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Mikro düzeyde, iç pazardaki başarının dış pazarlarda başarıyı garanti etmediği ve ihracat pazarlarında başarılı olmak için benzersiz stratejilere ihtiyaç duyulduğu görülmüştür. Son yıllarda, Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlama stratejileri önemli ölçüde gelişme göstermiştir. Değişen küresel ekonomik yapı ve rekabet ortamına uyum sağlama becerisi Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlamasındaki başarısının temelidir. Özellikle yeni pazarlara açılmayı ve ihracat çeşitliliğini teşvik eden dış ticaret politikaları itici bir güç olmuştur. Uluslararası pazarlarda yaşanan ekonomik, siyasi ve teknolojik gelişmeler Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlama stratejilerini etkilemiştir. Ayrıca yakın zamanda daha da hızlanan tüketici beklenti ve tercihlerindeki değişimlerde ihracat pazarlama stratejilerini etkilemektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlamasındaki gelişmelerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlama stratejilerini, mevcut fırsatları, zorlukları ve gelecekteki yönelimleri ele alarak Türkiye'nin ihracat potansiyelini artırmak için nasıl ilerleyebileceğine odaklanmaktadır.

### Yöntem:

Çalışma ihracat performansını kavramsal bir perspektiften incelemektedir. İlk aşamada ihracat, ihracat performansı ve ihracat pazarlaması kavramları tanımlanmıştır. İhracat performansının ülke kalkınması üzerindeki etkilerine yer verilmiştir. Türkiye'nin ihracat faaliyetlerindeki gelişmeler tarihsel veriler ışığında değerlendirilmektedir.

### Bulgular:

Çalışmanın sonuçları, ihracat pazarlamasının Türkiye'nin ikinci yüzyılında sürdürülebilir rekabet avantajı sağlaması açısından büyük önem taşıdığını göstermektedir. İhracatın artırılması ekonomik büyümeyi desteklemekte, istihdamı artırmakta, teknoloji transferine olanak sağlamakta ve ekonomik riskleri azaltmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlamasına önem vermesi ve ihracat potansiyelini en üst düzeye çıkarması uluslararası pazarlarda rekabetçi üstünlük sağlayabilmesi için önemlidir. İhracat pazarlaması stratejileri, ihracatçı işletmelerin uluslararası pazarlardaki başarısını etkileyen en önemli unsurdur. İşletmeye ilişkin iç ve dış faktörlerin ihracat performansına ve pazarlama kültürüne etki ettiği görülmüştür.

### Sonuç ve Tartışma:

Uluslararası ticaretin gelişmeye devam etmesi, dijitalleşme ile birlikte oluşan yeni pazarlara erişim olanakları ve tüketici tercihlerindeki değişim Türkiye'nin ihracat potansiyelini artırmakta ve önemli fırsatlar sunmaktadır. Yenilikçilik ve markalaşma gibi stratejik adımlar ile hızlı büyüme potansiyeli olan yeni pazarlara girmek Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlamasının gelecekteki başarısına olumlu katkı sağlayacaktır. Dış ticaret politikalarında (teşvik politikaları vb.) ortaya koyulan stratejik yaklaşımlar Türkiye'nin uluslararası pazarlarda rekabetçi bir güç olmasını sağlamak ve ihracatı artırmak için büyük önem taşımaktadır. İhracatçı Türk işletmelerin üretim ve ihracat pazarlaması süreçlerinde sorunlar yaşadıkları görülmektedir. Bunlar arasında küresel ekonomik dalgalanmalar, siyasi belirsizlikler, ticaret engelleri, finansman gerekleri ve rekabetçi pazarlarda faaliyet gösterme zorlukları gibi faktörler yer almaktadır. Bu zorluklar, Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlama stratejilerinin geliştirilmesi gereken alanları işaret etmektedir. Türkiye'nin yaşadığı önemli zorluklardan birisi de dış ticaret açığıdır. Dış ticaret açığını oluşturan sebeplerden birincisi, yüksek enerji ve hammadde/yarı mamul ithalatıdır. İkincisi düşük ihracat performansıdır. İhracat yapılan ürünler incelendiğinde nispeten daha düşük katma değerli ürünlerin yer aldığı görülmektedir. Küresel pazarlar yaşanan üst düzey rekabet ve pazarlara girişte Türk ihracatçıların zorlanmaktadır. Üçüncü bir neden de sermaye yetersizliğidir. Özellikle yurt içi tasarrufların düşük olması ve yabancı sermayeye olan ihtiyaç dış ticaret açığını artırmaktadır. Yabancı sermaye girişi, dış finansman ihtiyacını artırırken, cari açığı da büyütmektedir. Dünya ve bölge açısından en büyük risklerden birisi olan Rusya-Ukrayna savaşının kısa vadede bitmesi beklenmemektedir. İhracatçı işletmelerin jeopolitik sorunların kısa vadede çözülmemeye ihtimaline göre hareket etmeleri gerekir. Rusya-Ukrayna savaşı ile ortaya çıkan enerji arzı güvenliği ve gıda arzı güvenliği sorunları da devam etmektedir. 6.02.2023 tarihinde yaşanan Kahramanmaraş depremi sonrası ekonomik faaliyetler sektöre uğramıştır. Depremin ihracat üzerinde olumsuz etkisinin 2,6 milyar USD olması beklenmektedir. Depremin olmadığı senaryoda 2023 ihracat beklentisi 267,3 milyar dolar düzeyinde iken depremin etkisi ile beklenti 264,7 milyar dolar seviyesindedir. Türkiye ihracatın %40 lık kısmını AB ülkelerine yapmaktadır. Türkiye ve AB arasındaki dış ticareti düzenleyen gümrük birliği anlaşmasının üzerinden çeyrek asır geçti. Bu zaman diliminde ihracatın ürün içeriklerinde değişiklikler olduğu, bu doğrultuda geleneksel sektörler dışında, makineler, dayanıklı tüketim malları ve otomotiv gibi daha yüksek katma değerli orta-yüksek teknoloji sektörlerinin hem ihracattaki paylarının hem de AB ve dünya pazarında rekabet edebilirliklerinin arttığı görüldü. Bu değişim ve çerçevesinde ve günümüz koşullarında mevcut Gümrük birliği anlaşmasının güncellenmesi gereklidir. Özellikle AB pazarı yeşil ve dijital dönüşüm uyum süreçleri hızlandırılmalıdır. Türk Ticaret bakanlığının bu konudaki çabaları devam etmektedir. Gelecekte Türkiye'nin ihracat pazarlamasının başarısını artırmak için bazı önemli adımlar atılmalıdır. Bunlar arasında küresel pazarlarda rekabetçi fiyatlar ve kaliteli ürünler sunmak, inovasyon ve Ar-Ge'ye yatırım yapmak, pazar çeşitliliğini artırmak, dijital pazarlama ve e-ticaret alanında güçlü bir varlık oluşturmak, markalaşma ve itibar yönetimine odaklanmak yer almaktadır. Ayrıca, kamu politikalarının ihracat teşviklerini desteklemesi ve iş dünyası ile devletin işbirliği içinde olması da büyük önem taşımaktadır. Avrupa Yeşil Mutabakatı kapsamında AB'ye ihracat yapan işletmelerin uyum sürecini başlatmaları olası pazar payı kayıplarını önüne geçecektir. Yeşil dönüşümle ilgili finansman modelleri oluşturulmalı ve devlet destekleri artırılmalıdır.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of marketing the products and services that emerged with the industrial revolution made the concept of foreign trade the main subject of discussion. The paradigm of this period was the gains that a single country would bring to its country by opening up to foreign markets. The foreign trade policies of countries differed periodically depending on how this concept of gain was defined (Yılmaz, 2014, p. 1). More open economies, increased economic integration through liberalized trade systems, advances in communication and information technologies, and developments in the transportation sector have led businesses to focus more seriously on performance. This has made the idea of performance and growth through exporting attractive for companies. In particular, exporting has been identified as a priority activity for expanding business risk, generating higher revenues and profits, improving business technology and service quality, increasing production capacity and efficiency, in short, achieving competitive advantage. Export performance is considered fundamental for sustainability in providing a competitive advantage for businesses. Exports are particularly important for the growth and competitiveness of countries and businesses. Export is a strategic variable that helps to increase sales and profits, increase the share in world markets, reduce dependence on the domestic market in sales, stabilize market fluctuations, sell excess production capacity, increase competitiveness, create employment, and close the foreign trade deficit (Songur, 2019, p. 15-22). Today, businesses are forced to engage in international activities for economic, political, technological, and social reasons. Many businesses strategically plan their actions in this direction and try to realize their plans. In general, international activities can take many forms, but the most striking activity and the first step of internationalization is export activities. Small-scale export activities gradually move towards internationalization.

Export marketing performance increases income for countries in the first place. It provides foreign currency inflow to the country by providing an external source of income. Continuous foreign currency inflow offers financial stability. It will strengthen the central bank reserves, one of the most debated issues in Turkey's 100th year, and make it easier to meet imports. Balance of trade is a priority for the stability of countries. Effective export marketing enables a country to reduce its trade deficit by increasing its exports. Through effective export marketing strategies, Turkey can strengthen its foreign trade balance by exporting products from different sectors to world markets. Exports enable businesses to grow and increase productivity.

Export marketing increases Turkey's economic growth rate. Exports contribute to the growth of companies and increase their productivity while increasing production and employment. This supports economic growth in general. Business export creates new business opportunities within the country, rising labor demand, and employment growth. It helps to reduce Turkey's unemployment rate, which is 10.2% (SBB, 2023). Many companies that fail to thrive in exporting may not survive in a saturated domestic market in a severely competitive climate (Zou et al., 2009). Turkey is a country that exports in many different sectors. Diversification in exported products will diversify the country's economic structure and reduce export risk. The fact that the economy is not dependent on a single industry reduces financial risks and ensures healthy growth for the country's economy. The capacity of the country's economy to generate innovation is essential for long-term growth. Opening new markets and developing relationships in those markets will facilitate the transfer of innovations and technology. Technology transfer will improve local production capabilities and contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage of Turkish enterprises in the international market.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. International Marketing

International marketing refers to the marketing activities of international/multinational enterprises (Karafakıoğlu, 2012, p. 11). International marketing is a broader concept that includes export marketing. Export marketing deals with producing goods in one country and marketing them in different countries worldwide. International marketing includes joint ventures, foreign collaborations, multinational companies, transnational companies, and globalization (Acharya et al., 2009: p. 27). According to the definition of the American Marketing Association, International marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges internationally that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. (AMA, 2023).

International markets are highly competitive markets. In these markets, the price comes to the fore in determining the enterprise's competitiveness. Large-scale enterprises that benefit from economies of scale can be competitive by providing cost advantage. International markets are dominated mainly by international businesses originating from developed countries (USA, EU countries, Japan, etc.). These enterprises operating globally have large-scale resources (physical and financial). These resources are essential to provide a competitive advantage by reducing production costs.

International marketing may involve trade barriers, defined as artificial restrictions on the free movement of goods from one country to another. They include tariffs, quotas, taxes, duties, levies, exchange restrictions, trade agreements, and trade blocs. These barriers are tariff or fiscal controls (taxes and duties) and non-tariff or quantity restrictions (quotas and licenses). Some countries form trade associations (such as the European Union (EU), BRICS, Arab League, etc.) to overcome trade barriers or to facilitate international trade activities between specific countries. These associations of countries in a particular region have reached a common understanding of the rules and regulations to be followed when exporting and importing goods between them.

Although international marketing is a change in the market scale of national marketing activities, the success of businesses operating in international markets depends on effective marketing research. Because the wants and needs of consumers differ from region to region, determining the wants and needs of consumers in different parts of the world is only possible through effective marketing research. Another critical factor in the formation of competitive power in international markets is the level of technology. Businesses in countries with advanced technology, such as the USA, Japan, and Germany, stand out. It is necessary to make R&D investments to have advanced technology and to make it sustainable. Businesses carry out commercial activities with different currencies in international markets. Other countries have foreign currencies and conversion rates. These rates are subject to fluctuation in the free market. Governments have separate rules for collecting export revenues and import payments. Many organizations have been created to promote international trade. International organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) guide international business through their rules and regulations. These organizations promote world trade and increase the export potential of countries by removing trade barriers as much as possible.

## 2.2. Export Marketing

There are two options in front of businesses that will turn to international markets. The first of these is export. It is to attach the mandatory labels to the product, send it abroad, and hope it will find buyers in foreign markets. This approach is an activity without creative power and fails in the long run. The second option is export marketing. This approach is aimed at investigating what the business can sell by examining foreign markets and evaluating whether the demands of foreign markets can be realized with the information obtained. The main factor affecting the long-term and permanent performance of the business in foreign markets is the skill and ability of business managers to manage the variables that make up the marketing component.

For this reason, the adoption and implementation of the concept of "export marketing" by enterprises will effectively determine their success in the markets they export to. (Yücel, 2019: p. 221). The difference in international markets is not the marketing methods but the market environment that determines their quality and level (Karafakioğlu, 2012, p. 12).

Export marketing refers to the marketing of goods and services across national borders. In export marketing, products are shipped abroad according to procedures outlined by the exporting and importing countries. It involves lengthy procedures and formalities. Export marketing is more complex than domestic marketing due to international restrictions, global competition, lengthy procedures, politeness, etc. Despite all these difficulties, export marketing offers ample opportunities to generate significant profits and foreign exchange earnings. Export marketing is economically important as it provides various advantages to the national economy. In every respect, it promotes national development, generates foreign exchange earnings, and ensures optimum utilization of available resources. Every country takes various policy initiatives to boost exports and participate effectively in global marketing. Every country has to participate in international trade for mutual benefit. Countries should open their markets to other countries and try to penetrate them in the best possible way. In the current global marketing environment, this is a standard rule that every country must follow. With such participation in international marketing, the country's economic development process is protected (Zou et al. 2019, p. 3-8).

With the increase in global competition, the strategic benefits of exporting have become more important than its economic benefits. At this point, export marketing strategies stand out as a critical determinant of business performance. (Sağlam & Serdar, 2019, p. 433). Many studies emphasize that export marketing strategies are an essential determinant of export performance (Zou & Stan, 1998; Çavuşgil & Zou, 1994; Namiki, 1994; Koh, 1991; Walters & Samiee, 1990; Aaby & Slater, 1989; Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1985; Bilkey, 1982). However, there is no common opinion on which strategies or factors affect export performance in which direction (positively or negatively). Each study has conducted research with its own sample and variable set (Yücel, 2019; p. 206).

Export marketing strategies can be considered in three different ways: (i) export target market, (ii) marketing mix (4Ps), (iii) adaptation and standardization of marketing mix (Lee & Griffith, 2004; Leonodio et al., 2002; Lages, 2000; Aaby Slater, 1989; Madsen, 1989). In the export marketing literature, export marketing strategies for target markets refer to market selection, market segmentation, and export market growth/expansion strategy (concentration and differentiation). The main criterion is the number of export markets (Kaynak & Kuan, 1993; Ayal & Zif, 1979; Beamish et al., 1993; Leonidou et al., 2002). A positive relationship between market segmentation and export performance (sales growth, sales intensity, and profitability) is found. In contrast, firms that tend to export to nearby markets and do not engage in market segmentation exhibit lower export performance (Leonidou et al., 2002; Namiki, 1994). Market concentration strategies (sales volume, sales intensity, and sales growth) were positively related to performance but weakly to market share. Market differentiation strategies (sales, sales growth, and sales intensity) positively affected performance but not to the same extent as sales volume (Leonidou et al., 2002).

Many studies have evaluated the impact of each element of the marketing mix on marketing strategies separately and found significant effects. Many studies have measured the relationship between product attributes (design, style, quality, brand, product technology, packaging and labeling, customer service, design, etc.) and export performance (Leonidou et al., 2002; Lages & Melewar, 1999; Beamish et al., 1993; De Luz, 1993; Koh, 1991; Madsen, 1989; Koh & Robicheaux, 1988; Amine & Çavuşgil, 1986). This study found a positive relationship between product quality and performance. Product style and design were found to positively affect performance (Leonidou et al. 2002). It was found that there is a significant positive relationship between a product with solid characteristics and export sales, export growth, and export profitability. High product quality effectively reduces uncertainty, the most critical customer problem in foreign markets. In this context, differentiated products and high product quality strongly impact export performance (Madsen 1989). For the price, many studies have been conducted to measure the relationship between pricing methods, strategies, sales and financing conditions and performance (Koh & Robicheaux, 1998; Zou & Stan, 1998; Katsikeas et al., 1996; Çavuşgil & Zou, 1994; Madsen, 1989). No relationship was found between pricing methods and the perceived profitability of exports (Yücel, 2019, p. 215). Some studies have found a significant association between competitive prices and export success (Kirpalani & Macintosh 1980). On the other hand, some studies have emphasized that a low pricing strategy may increase customer uncertainty (Madsen, 1989). No relationship has been found between selling and financing conditions and export intensity and export growth indicators (Leonidou et al., 2002).

Distribution channel, including channel type, distributors (agents, etc.), channel strategy, and direct distribution (Lee & Griffith, 2004; Leonidou et al., 2002; Katsikeas et al., 1996; Çavuşgil & Zou, 1994; Koh, 1991; Madsen, 1989; Koh & Robicheaux, 1988). Although there is no dominant result from the studies on the type of distribution channel, the choice of the appropriate export channel strategy can affect export performance (Sousa & Alserhan, 2002). It has been found that the use of direct distribution channels has a positive effect on export performance. Enterprises exporting through direct distribution channels are more successful (Lee & Griffith, 2004). A positive relationship exists between supporting export intermediaries and some performance measures (sales volume, sales growth, sales intensity, and profitability) (Leonidou et al., 2002; Çavuşgil & Zou, 1994). Effective on-time delivery of export products, the most important feature of the distribution function, is a major factor that directly affects the supplier choice of importing firms. There is a positive relationship between the on-time delivery of products and export performance (export sales growth and export sales intensity) (Leonidou et al., 2002; De Luz, 1993).

Marketing communication includes advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, trade fairs, and face-to-face selling. A positive relationship has been found between export performance and the level of marketing communication efforts (Lee & Griffith, 2004; Leonidou et al., 2002; Çavuşgil & Zou, 1994; Zou & Stan, 1998; Aaby & Slater, 1989; Madsen, 1989). For exporters in export-oriented growth countries that have not yet established brand awareness in foreign markets, a positive relationship has been found between increased

advertising expenditures and business performance (Zou & Stan, 1998). Sales promotion activities (purchase discounts, free products, samples, premiums, etc.) combined with advertising and personal selling have contributed positively to performance (Lee & Griffith, 2004; Leonidou et al., 2002). Trade fairs, in which exporters prefer to develop new relationships and follow market developments, have positively affected the export intensity and different performance criteria (Leonidou et al., 2002; Seringhaus & Rosson, 1998). Customer visits to find new customers in foreign markets and develop relationships with existing customers positively impact export performance (Leonidou et al., 2002).

The issue of marketing mix standardization and adaptation is that the marketing mix (4P) components are presented in a standard way without being changed according to foreign market conditions or presented by adapting them to foreign market conditions. Literature results do not point to a common finding (Yücel, 2019; Theodosiu & Leonidou, 2003). Although there are studies that conclude that product adaptation strategy increases export performance (Lee & Griffith, 2004; Shoham, 1999; Shoham & Albaum, 1994; Madsen, 1987), there are also studies that conclude that it does not affect performance (Sousa & Alserha, 2002; Samiee & Roth, 1992). Product adaptation can offer businesses high sales rates. However, it has been emphasized that businesses that apply economies of scale can also be successful with low costs and standardized products (Christensen et al., 1987).

Regarding price adaptation, some studies conclude that export sales, export growth, and export profitability are positive and insignificant (Zou & Stan, 1998). With changing distribution channels, it may be possible to use a uniform distribution channel and strategy in all export markets in different geographical and environmental conditions. Studies have found a strong positive relationship between distribution channel adaptation and export performance (Leonidou et al., 2002; Shoham, 1996). Standardizing promotional efforts for similar consumer groups in different countries or adapting to other cultural, economic, or political practices of nations has been debated. Promotion adaptation positively affects export performance (Leonidou et al., 2002). The results of applied studies in the context of standardization and adaptation reveal that product, distribution, and promotion adaptation have a positive effect on business performance although they contain different results on price adaptation (Shoham, 1999). The export marketing strategy preferred by the enterprise has a significant impact on the export performance of the enterprise. Export performance is a function of the system implemented by the enterprise.

### 2.3. Export Performance

Export performance, one of the main issues in export marketing, can generally be defined as the results achieved by businesses in international sales (Mutlu & Nakıpoğlu, 2011, 116). Export performance is the extent to which an enterprise achieves its economic and strategic objectives due to exporting products to foreign markets through the planning and execution of export marketing strategies. Goals such as making sales, making profits, and growing our economic goals, while goals such as gaining a share in international markets, expanding operating markets, competitive response, and recognizing the business and the product in the foreign market are strategic goals. (Cavusgil & Zou, 1994: p. 4). Shoham (1998) sees export performance as the total result of a business's international sales. Cadogan et al. (2002) define export performance as the economic success of companies in foreign markets. Leonidou et al. (2002) described export performance as the financial and other results of a business's export activities. Diamantopoulos & Kakkos (2007) define export performance as the result of a firm's export behavior under specific and environmental conditions.

Measuring export performance validly and reliably is of strategic importance. However, both defining and measuring export performance are problematic areas. (Diamantopoulos, 1999; Shaoming et al. 1998; Thirkell & Dau, 1998; Aaby & Slater, 1989). Since export performance has a multifaceted structure, it is impossible to explain it by a single variable. Factors that are determinants of export performance also direct the export tendency of the enterprise.

Researchers have tried to explain export performance by developing models in export performance measurement. Aaby & Slater (1989) investigated the relationship between export performance and independent variables such as competencies, environmental factors, strategy, and business characteristics. Export performance was measured by export demand, export sales, export problems, exporters and non-exporters, export rate, export prospects, export development intensity, and export barriers. In his study, Madsen (1989) defined the determinants determining export performance as the export marketing policy, business characteristics, and market characteristics to discover the critical success criteria in exports. The author measured export performance regarding export profitability, sales, and export growth. Gemünden (1991) categorized the variables affecting export performance as export

market characteristics, local market characteristics, managers, activities, and business characteristics. The author measures export performance by market share, export growth, and export profit. Zou & Stan (1998) analyzed the determinants of export performance using mixed scales, financial measures (sales, profit growth), and non-financial measures (perceived success, satisfaction, and goal realizability) as performance measures. Economic measures were the most commonly used export performance measures (Cavusgil & Zou, 1994). Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee (2002) constructed the variables that affect export performance at different levels, from managerial, organizational, and environmental factors that indirectly affect export performance and variables that directly affect export performance, such as export marketing strategy targeting and marketing mix. He divided export performance into economic and non-economic factors. Dhanaraj & Beamish (2003) measure export performance through profit, market share, and growth criteria. Technological resources are tangible and intangible assets of the enterprise. Technological intensity is possible with high R&D activities. Another classification of export performance is objective and subjective criteria. Objective Measures: Measures related to export sales (sales volume, export intensity), measures related to export profitability (export profitability, ratio to profitability), and measures related to changes in export sales and profitability. Subjective measures: Strategic measures (market expansion, competitive strategies developed, increase in product awareness, etc.) and behavioral measures (satisfaction with export intensity, perception of export success) (Canitez & Yeniçeri, 2007; Mutlu & Nakipoğlu, 2011, p. 247).

### 3. GLOBAL TRADE OUTLOOK

Since the Second World War, international trade has been increasing continuously. Industrialized countries carry out import and export activities. While industrialized countries mainly export goods with high added value, they import mostly energy and raw materials (Karafakioğlu, 2012, p. 12). This section will present foreign trade figures for the world and Turkey.

#### 3.1. World Export Outlook

According to growth figures, the world economy shrank by -2.7% in 2020, grew by 6.2% in 2021, and grew by 3.4% in 2022. For developed countries, growth was realized at -4.2% in 2020, 5.4% in 2021, and 2.7% in 2022. In terms of developing countries, it shrank by -1.8% in 2020, grew by 6.9% in 2021, and grew by 4% in 2022 (IMF, 2023). World trade in goods, which was 17,429 billion USD in 2020 with shrinkage of -7.2% compared to the previous year, increased by 26.4% to 22,028 billion USD in 2021 and by 11.2% to 24,491 billion USD in 2022 (UNCTAD, 2022).

Ranked third in 2004, China has had the highest exports since 2007. China, the world's production center, has started to become the production center of global enterprises, a trend that started towards the second millennium. This long-standing trend slowed down during the pandemic due to logistics problems and costs.

When the top exporting countries are ranked, it is seen that five of the ten countries on the list are located in Europe, one in North America, and three in the Far East. There are no countries from Africa or South America in the top ranking. Turkey is the 29th largest exporter globally, with 254 billion USD in exports. The top 30 countries with the highest exports totalled 20.7 trillion USD. The total exports of these countries increased by 10.9% compared to the previous year. China ranked first with 3.5 trillion USD, the USA second with 2.1 trillion USD, Germany third with 1.7 trillion USD, the Netherlands fourth with 966 billion USD, and Japan fifth with 747 billion USD. The top three countries that increased their exports at the highest rate were oil-exporting. Norway increased its exports by 56%, Saudi Arabia by 48.6%, and the UAE by 40.8%. The countries with decreasing exports were Hong Kong at -9% and Japan at -1.2%. Country rankings are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Country Rankings in World Exports, 2022

	Country	2022	Change (%)		Country	2022	Change (%)
1	China	3.358	7,0	16	Singapore	516	12,8
2	USA	1.754	17,7	17	Taiwan	478	6,7
3	Germany	1.637	1,1	18	India	453	14,7
4	Netherlands	840	14,9	19	Spain	418	10,1
5	Japan	756	-1,2	20	Australia	412	19,5
6	South Korea	644	6,1	21	Saudi Arabia	410	48,6
7	Italy	616	6,7	22	Switzerland	402	5,7
8	Belgium	549	15,3	23	Vietnam	371	10,6
9	France	585	5,6	24	Poland	361	5,8
10	Hong Kong	670	-9,0	25	Malaysia	353	17,7
11	UAE	599	40,8	26	Brazil	334	19,0
12	Canada	597	17,7	27	Indonesia	292	26,1
13	Mexico	578	16,9	28	Thailand	287	5,5
14	Russia	532	7,7	29	Türkiye	254	12,8
15	United Kingdom	529	12,5	30	Norway	250	56,0

Source: (World Trade Organization, Eurostat, 2023).

The US has been the largest importer for many years. The main reason for this is its large population, which is consumption-oriented and has high purchasing power. However, trade concessions, raw materials, and energy imports are also among the reasons. China ranks second on the list, with the largest import items being machinery, equipment, raw materials, and energy. China imports a significant portion of its imports to sustain its existing production capacity. However, when the data of the last ten years are analyzed, the increase in the proportion of automotive, electronics, jewellery, ready-to-wear clothing, and fashion products imported due to the demands of a growing middle class and upper class in China stands out. Imports from the top 30 countries amounted to USD 21.2 trillion in 2022, up 12.9% year-on-year. The top five countries are the USA with 3.4 trillion USD, China with 2.7 trillion USD, Germany with 1.6 trillion USD, the Netherlands with 899 billion USD, and Japan with 897 billion USD. The countries whose imports increased the most compared to the previous year were Turkey 34%, India 26.2%, Brazil 24.5%, Malaysia 23.6%, and UAE 22.2%. The countries with decreasing imports were Russia with -20.9% and Hong Kong with -6.3%. Turkey ranked 20th in global imports of goods with an export figure of 364 billion USD. Table 2 shows the country's rankings in world imports.

**Table 2.** Country Rankings in World Imports, 2022

	Country	2022	Change (%)		Country	2022	Change (%)
1	USA	3.376	15,0	16	Singapore	476	17,1
2	China	2.716	1,1	17	Taiwan	436	14,1
3	Germany	1.571	10,5	18	UAE	425	22,2
4	Netherlands	899	18,6	19	Poland	381	11,4
5	Japan	897	16,7	20	Türkiye	364	34,0
6	France	824	18,6	21	Vietnam	359	8,4
7	United Kingdom	818	14,4	22	Switzerland	356	10,0
8	South Korea	731	18,9	23	Australia	309	18,4
9	India	723	26,2	24	Thailand	303	13,6
10	Italy	689	21,5	25	Malaysia	294	23,6
11	Hong Kong	668	-6,3	26	Brazil	292	24,5
12	Mexico	626	19,9	27	Russia	240	-20,9
13	Belgium	621	17,7	28	Indonesia	237	21,0
14	Canada	582	15,4	29	Czech Republic	236	11,3
15	Spain	493	17,5	30	Austria	232	5,9

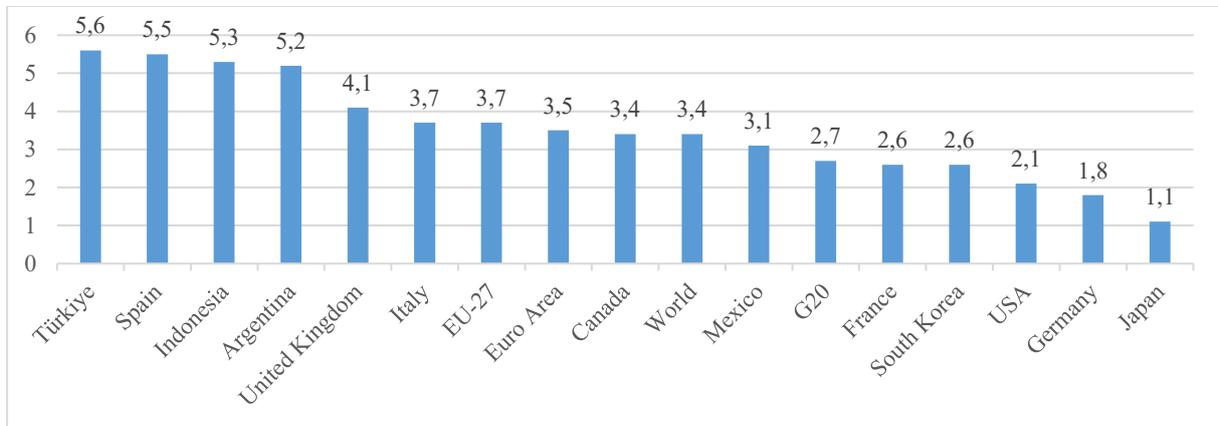
Source: (World Trade Organization, Eurostat, 2023)

### 3.2. Turkey Export Outlook

It can be stated that Turkey's annual export growth rate is high compared to many countries. Turkey is a country with a significant foreign trade deficit. This foreign trade deficit is tried to be closed with service exports, especially tourism (Karafakioğlu, 2012, p. 13).

According to 2022 world economic growth figures, G20 countries grew by 2.7%, the Euro area by 3.5%, and the EU-27 by 3.7%. The world economy grew by 3.4% on average. Turkey ranked first with a growth rate of 5.6%. Turkey's exports make a significant contribution to growth. Exports contributed 2.2%, and net exports of goods and services 0.6% to Turkey's annual growth. Nearly half of the growth in 2022 was driven by exports (TIM, 2023, p. 20). The annual growth rates of countries are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Annual Growth Rates of Countries and Turkey (%), 2022



Source: (OECD, 2023).

With its foreign trade performance in 2022, Turkey increased its share in global trade to 1.02%. Turkey's share in global trade exceeded 1% for the first time in 2021 with 1.01%. Despite all the negativity in the global conjuncture and the contraction in demand, Turkey managed to increase its share in global trade. In 2022, global trade grew by 11.5% in value terms, while the value of Turkey's exports grew by 12.8%. In 2021 and 2022, when Turkey's exports are compared on a monthly basis, each month showed an increase compared to the same month of the previous year (TIM, 2023, p. 21-22). Turkey's annual export and import figures are given in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** Turkey's Annual Exports and Imports



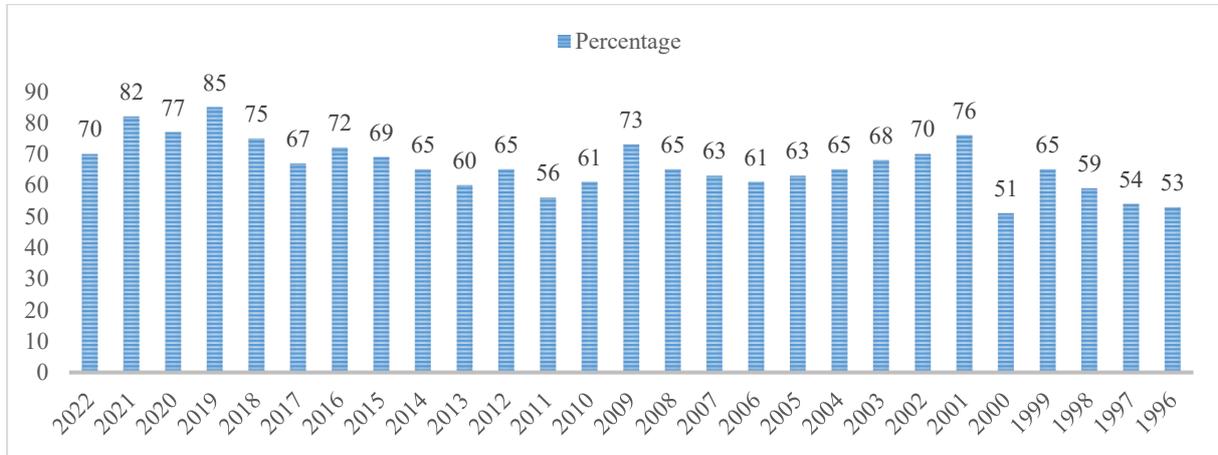
Source: (Turkstat and Ministry of Trade (GTS)<sup>2</sup>, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> The Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) has been publishing foreign trade data since 1996. Until recently, Turkey used to release data according to the Special Trade System (STS). It now uses the General Trade System (GTS). FTS data is available since 1996; GTS data is

In 2022, Turkey once again achieved a record level of exports and achieved significant success in its foreign trade performance. In 2022, Turkey's exports reached 254.2 billion USD, an increase of 12.8 percent compared to the previous year. According to the General Trade System (GTS) data of the Ministry of Trade, exports exceeded 250 billion USD for the first time, and imports exceeded 350 billion USD for the first time (TUIK, 2022).

As an essential actor in foreign trade activities, Turkey is a country integrated with the global economy. Foreign trade is the share of a country's exports and imports in economic terms. The foreign trade deficit defines Turkey's foreign trade balance as the difference between exports and imports. In 2022, Turkey realized a record export figure of 254.2 billion dollars. At the same time, there was also a record in imports and foreign trade deficit. According to the same data, imports amounted to 364.4 billion dollars. The highest trade deficit since 2013 emerged in 2022. In 2022, the trade deficit exceeded 110 billion dollars. In 2013, the deficit was 99.3 billion dollars (TUIK, 2022). The ratio of exports to imports is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Ratio of Exports to Imports

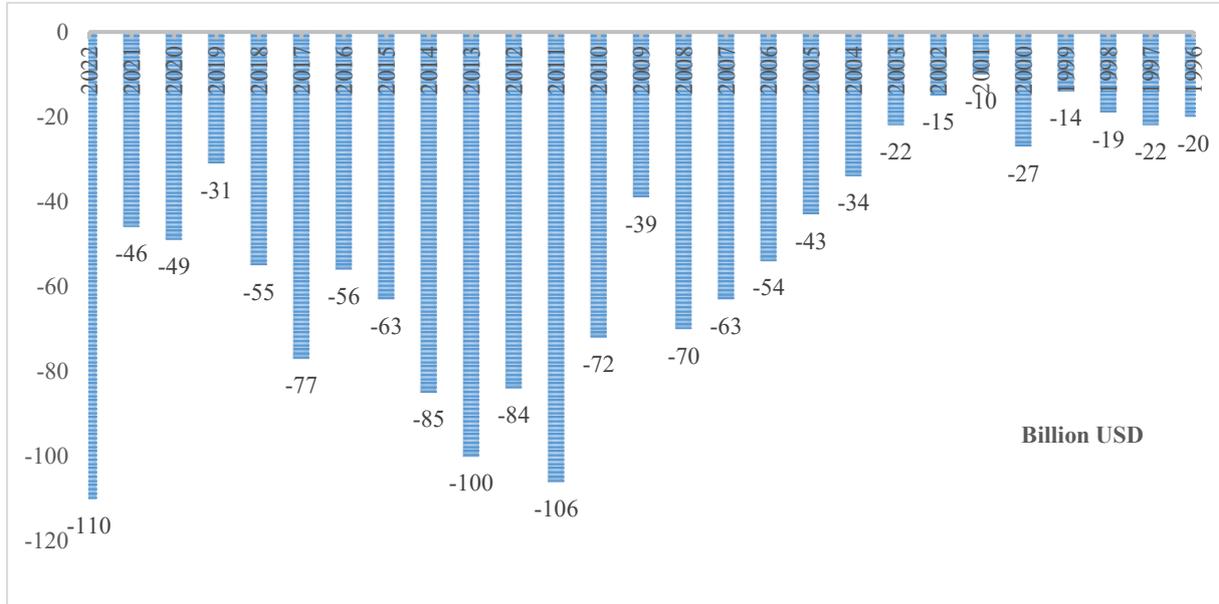


Source: (Turkstat and Ministry of Trade, 2023).

The 2022 export figures represent an all-time high annual export value for Turkey. On the import side, the level of 363.7 billion dollars was reached with an increase of 34.0 percent in 2022. With these figures, the ratio of imports to exports was 69.9 percent, and the foreign trade deficit was realized as 109.5 billion USD.

Since the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) has been showing foreign trade data since 1996, the analysis covers the last 27 years. In 2022, exports increased by 12.9 percent to 254.2 billion USD compared to the previous year and imports increased by 34.3 percent to 364.4 billion dollars. The foreign trade deficit was 110.2 billion dollars. In 2022, the ratio of exports to imports was 70%. In the previous year, this ratio was 82%. Since 1996, the lowest coverage ratio of 51% was realized in 2000, while the highest coverage ratio of 85% was realized in 2019. Turkey's foreign trade deficit exceeded \$110 billion in 2022. This was the highest trade deficit since 1996. In 2022, both exports and imports reached their highest levels in 27 years.

available since 2013. The GTS is released by the Ministry of Trade at the beginning of the month, while the SCTS and all other details are released by TurkStat at the end of the month.

**Figure 4. Turkey's Foreign Trade Deficit, 2022**

Source: (Turkstat and Ministry of Trade, 2023).

Turkey exported to Germany the most with 21.14 billion USD. The USA ranked second with 16.89 billion USD, and Iraq ranked third with 13.75 billion USD. The share of the first 20 countries in Turkey's exports was 65%. Turkey's exports to EU countries amounted to 103.1 billion USD, and their share in Turkey's exports reached 40.6% (TIM, 2023, p. 26). The top 20 countries to which Turkey exports the most and their export amounts are given in Table 3.

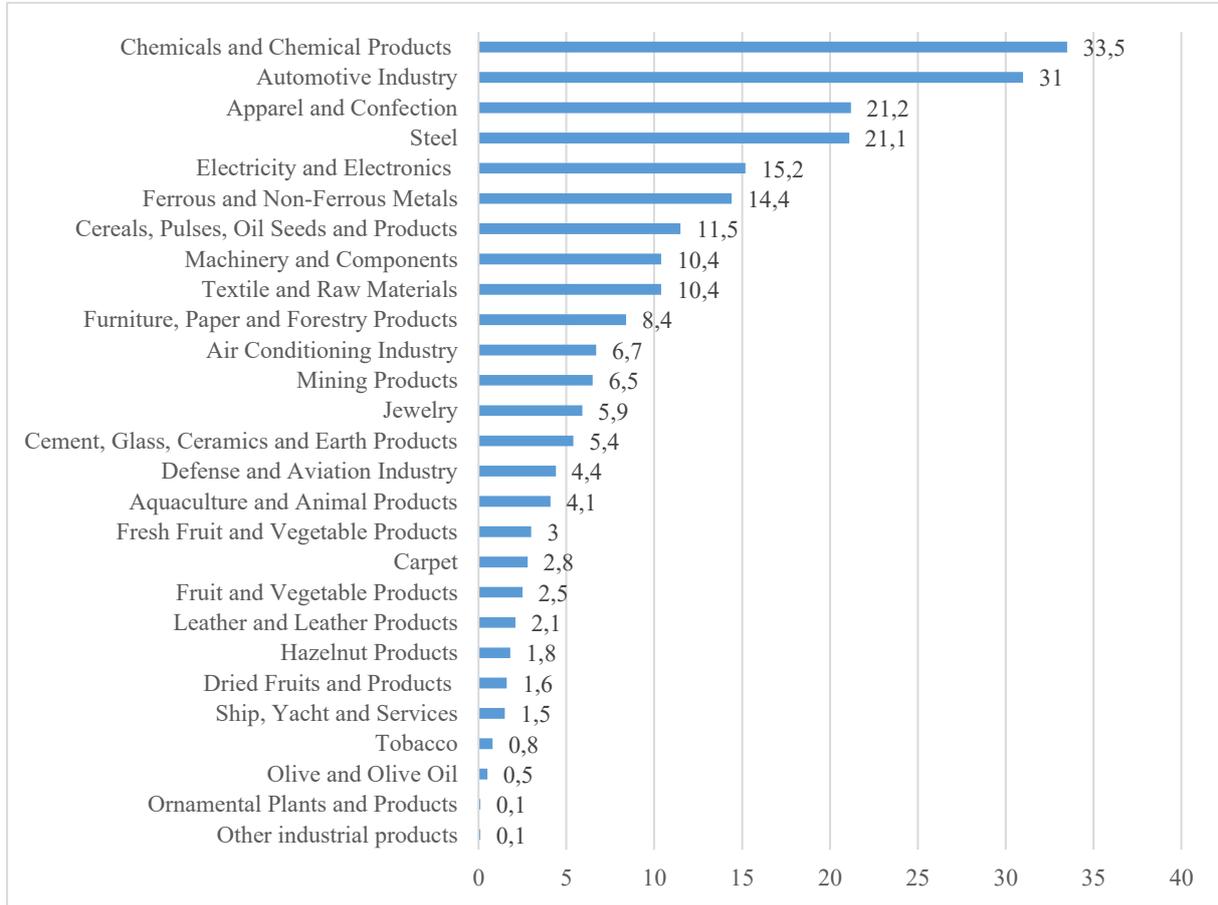
**Table 3. Turkey's Top Export Destinations, 2022**

Country	Billion USD	Country	Billion USD
1 Germany	21,14	11 Romania	6,95
2 USA	16,89	12 Poland	5,42
3 Iraq	13,75	13 UAE	5,25
4 United Kingdom	13,01	14 Belgium	4,78
5 Italy	12,39	15 Bulgaria	4,72
6 Spain	9,65	16 Egypt	4,56
7 France	9,53	17 Greece	3,30
8 Russian Federation	9,34	18 China	3,28
9 Netherlands	8,03	19 Morocco	3,09
10 Israel	7,03	20 Iran	3,07

Source: (Turkstat, 2023).

In 2022, the top 5 cities with the highest exports were Istanbul, Izmir, Kocaeli, Bursa, and Ankara. Among the top 20 cities, Mersin increased its exports the most (TIM, 2023, p. 29).

In 2022, Chemicals and Chemical Products ranked first with 33.5 billion USD, Automotive Industry ranked second with 31 billion USD, and the Ready-to-Wear and Apparel sector ranked third with 21.2 billion USD. In 2022, 20 sectors increased their export value. In addition, the number of provinces and sectors exporting 1 billion USD or more in 2022 was 23, and the number of countries was 51 (TIM, 2023, p. 23).

**Figure 5.** Turkey's Exports by Sector, 2022

Source: (TIM, 2023).

Looking at the changes in exports of sector groups, it is seen that the sectors in the agriculture group increased their exports by 13.5 percent while the sectors in the industrial group increased their exports by 9.2 percent, and the sectors in the mining group increased their exports by 8.9 percent. In 2022, the Olive and Olive Oil sector with 60.2 percent, the Defense and Aviation Industry sector with 36.0 percent, and the Chemicals and Chemical Products sector with 31.9 percent were the top three sectors that increased their exports the most. On the other hand, Hazelnuts and Products sector decreased by 22.5 percent, the Jewelry sector by 13.8 percent, and the Carpet sector by 13.4 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year. In 2022, while there was an increase of 9.7 percent in the sectors on a value basis, exports realized on a quantity basis decreased by 5.1 percent. Therefore, the unit export value increased by 15.6 percent compared to 2021. The fact that exports in quantity terms decreased while exports in value terms increased is noteworthy in terms of showing the inflationary environment both in Turkey and on a global scale in 2022 (TIM, 2023, p. 24-25). Turkey's exports by sector are shown in Figure 5.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The development of export marketing strategies can contribute to Turkey's economic development by helping Turkey to enter new markets, increase its competitiveness and achieve long-term export growth. Export marketing strategies are the most critical factor affecting the success of exporting enterprises in international markets. It has been observed that internal and external factors affect export performance and marketing culture. The alignment between marketing culture and export strategies has a positive effect on business performance (Papatya & Özkan, 2019; Hamşioğlu, 2017; Papatya et al., 2017; Durukan & Hamşioğlu, 2015).

Turkey has taken many strategic steps in export marketing. With the changes in foreign trade policies and export incentives in the past years, the country has focused on new markets and taken necessary steps to increase sectoral diversification. These strategic approaches are crucial to boost Turkey's exports and strengthen its global competitiveness. However, Turkey's export marketing offers significant opportunities in the future. Factors such as the rapid development of international trade, digitalization, technological advances, access to new markets, and changes in consumer preferences are increasing Turkey's export potential. Focusing on fast-growing markets and taking strategic steps such as innovation and branding can affect the future success of Turkey's export marketing. In their study, Tunç & Yücel (2020) stated that exporting enterprises gained new customers through e-marketing activities. They also said that fairs are highly effective in acquiring new customers. They concluded that marketing activities are related to export performance. It would be beneficial in the medium term for Turkish exporters to take quick steps to protect their market shares, especially in developed countries.

Turkish exporters need help with their production and export marketing processes. These include global economic fluctuations, political uncertainties, trade barriers, financing constraints, and location in competitive markets. These challenges point to areas where Turkey's export strategies must be developed and adapted. In their study, Tunç and Yücel (2020) stated that geographical location, product damage, sectoral problems (legislation and procedures, intensity of competition, high price in competition, contraction in the sector), procedural problems, business-related problems (lack of foreign market research, lack of equipment, communication breakdown, lack of documents by the legislation, lack of qualified personnel), foreign market differences, lack of government support as the problems faced by Turkish exporter enterprises. Foreign market research weaknesses of enterprises reduce the effectiveness of promotional activities and negatively affect export performance.

One of Turkey's key challenges is its trade deficit. The first reason for the trade deficit is high imports of energy and raw materials/semi-finished goods. The second is low export performance. When the export products are analyzed, it is seen that there are relatively lower value-added products. There are difficulties, especially in the production and export of high-value-added products. The high level of competition in global markets makes it difficult for Turkish exporters to enter these markets. A third reason is the need for more capital. In particular, low domestic savings and the need for foreign capital increase the foreign trade deficit. While foreign capital inflows increase the need for external financing, they can also widen the current account deficit.

The Russia-Ukraine war, one of the most significant risks for the world and the region, is not expected to end in the short term. The 24.06.2023 military mobilization in Russia (Wagner) indicates that regional geopolitical problems may deepen. Exporters should act according to the possibility that geopolitical issues may not be resolved in the short term. Energy supply security (Russian gas) and food supply security (grain corridor) problems arising from the Russia-Ukraine war also persist.

On 6.02.2023, economic activities were disrupted after the Kahramanmaraş earthquake. The negative impact of the quake on exports is expected to be 2.6 billion USD. In the scenario without the earthquake, the 2023 export expectation is 267.3 billion USD, while the expectation with the quake's effect is 264.7 billion USD (TIM, 2023, p. 100).

Turkey exports 40% of its exports (imports 25.7%) to EU countries. A quarter of a century has passed since the customs union agreement regulating foreign trade between Turkey and the EU. In this period, it has been observed that there have been changes in the product content of exports and that, apart from traditional sectors, medium-high technology sectors with higher added value, such as machinery, durable consumer goods, and automotive have increased both their share in exports and their competitiveness in the EU and world markets. Within this change and framework, and in today's conditions, updating the existing Customs Union agreement is necessary. In particular, green and digital transformation harmonization processes should be accelerated in the EU market. The efforts of the Turkish Ministry of Trade on this issue are ongoing (Palabıyık, 2023). To sustain and improve Turkey's export performance in the global market, it is clear that exports need to be supported, and effective policies need to be implemented. According to the results of Torlak et al.'s (2007) research on Turkish exporters, geographical regions (Marmara, Aegean, and Mediterranean) have an impact on export success. Compared to enterprises that started exporting accidentally, enterprises that export continuously and seek new markets have higher export performance. To sustain the export success of enterprises, they should also support their efforts to increase exports. In addition, Ayar & Erdil (2018) found a positive relationship between innovation and R&D activities in their study. They also found that innovation and R&D activities impact the perception of export performance.

Economic, geopolitical, and social developments are expected to affect Turkey's exports directly. Economic factors include global economic growth, exchange rate fluctuations, and global energy and commodity prices. Geopolitical factors are the Russia-Ukraine War. Social factors are the 2023 General Elections and Natural Disasters. These factors will likely affect foreign trade figures in the short and medium term. According to the medium-term program export realization forecast for 2023-2025, exports are expected to reach 265 billion USD in 2023, 285 billion USD in 2024, and 385 billion USD in 2025 (TIM, 2023: p. 34).

The global economy is expected to slow down in 2023, although no contraction is expected. The Turkish economy is expected to continue its growth trend in 2023. High inflation prevents the predicted stability of exchange rates. Exchange rates are expected to increase. Exchange rate competitiveness should be maintained for exporters. Within a month after the 28.05.2023 general elections, the USD/TL exchange rate advanced by around 25% (TCMB, 2023). Some essential steps should be taken to improve the success of Turkey's export marketing in the future. These include offering competitive prices and quality products in global markets, investing in innovation and R&D, increasing market diversification, building a strong presence in digital marketing and e-commerce, and focusing on branding and reputation management. It is also essential that public policies support export incentives and that businesses and governments cooperate. Within the scope of the European Green Deal, enterprises exporting to the EU should start the harmonization process to prevent possible market share losses. Financing models for green transformation should be created, and government support should be increased (TIM, 2023, p. 99). Accessibility to digital platforms, which have become more widespread during the pandemic and significantly reduce export business costs, should be increased. Public support should be raised at the point of access to B2B and B2C markets. For Türkiye, market research, target market selection, market segmentation, product/service diversification, compliance with international quality standards, branding, creating logistics and distribution infrastructure, international trade regulations and export incentives, developing new collaborations and partnerships, value chain improvements, environmentally friendly sustainable products development can be expressed as the primary export strategy.

In 2022, despite many adversities, Turkey's export performance reached a record high of 254.2 billion USD. As a result, Turkey's export marketing strategies, opportunities, challenges, and future directions are essential determinants of the country's role and competitiveness in global trade. Improving Turkey's export marketing is critical to support national economic growth, increase employment, and become a more effective player in international trade. This paper aims to raise awareness and discussion for further strengthening Turkey's export marketing strategies.

Pazar araştırması, hedef pazar seçimi, pazar bölümlendirme, ürün/hizmet çeşitlendirme, uluslararası kalite standartlarına uyum, markalaşma, lojistik ve dağıtım alt yapısı oluşturma, uluslararası ticaret düzenlemeleri ve ihracat teşvikleri, yeni işbirlikleri ve ortaklıklar geliştirme, değer zinciri iyileştirmeleri, çevreye duyarlı sürdürülebilir ürünler geliştirme başlıca ihracat stratejileridir.

## DECLARATION OF THE AUTHOR

**Declaration of Contribution Rate:** The author contributed to the entire study alone.

**Declaration of Support and Thanksgiving:** No support is taken from any institution or organization.

**Declaration of Conflict:** There is no potential conflict of interest in the study.

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