

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: A CASE STUDY OF PINAR
COMPANY**

MASTER'S THESIS

Hadil Hasan Saif ALKHULAI

**Department of Business
Business Administration Program**

AUGUST, 2023

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AUGUST, 2023

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work has been written without any assistance, in compliance with scientific ethics and traditions, throughout all the stages from the project phase to the conclusion of the thesis. Furthermore, the works referenced in the references have been utilized and acknowledged (04/08/2023).

Hadil Hasan Saif ALKHULAIDI

FOREWORD

First, I express my gratitude to God for His guidance and strength, which have enabled me to complete this thesis.

I dedicate this work to my parents, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and belief in my abilities have been a constant source of inspiration throughout my academic journey. I also extend this dedication to the memory of my grandmother, whose encouragement and unwavering support were instrumental in my journey.

Special thanks to Prof. Dr. Bilge ÇAĞATAY for her professionalism, guidance, and encouragement throughout this research.

Additionally, I acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Istanbul Aydın University, which has not only provided me with an academic environment but has also introduced me to remarkable individuals who have inspired and motivated me.

August, 2023

Hadil Hasan Saif ALKHULAIIDI

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: A CASE STUDY OF PINAR COMPANY

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the connection between strategic planning and competitive advantage within Pınar Company, a prominent dairy product company in Turkey, employing a case study approach. It evaluates how operational efficiency, capacity expansion, and strategic planning practices impact the firm's competitive position. The study administers a questionnaire to Pınar Company employees to gather quantitative data.

The results uncover a significant relationship between strategic planning and the company's competitive advantage, highlighting the crucial role of operational efficiency and capacity expansion. The research underscores strategic planning practices such as performance assessment, training, management development, and effective talent management. Moreover, it reveals diverse pursued competitive advantages, including cost, differentiation, and focus strategies.

Drawing from the findings, the study provides recommendations for future initiatives, emphasizing the importance of defining clear strategic goals, devising a competitive positioning strategy, prioritizing customer-centric approaches, and investing in talent cultivation. Ultimately, this investigation enhances our comprehension of the interplay between strategic planning and competitive advantage within Pınar Company, offering valuable insights for strategic management practitioners and researchers.

Keywords: strategic planning, competitive advantage, operational efficiency, Pınar Company, Turkey.

STRATEJİK PLANLAMA VE REKABETÇİ ÜSTÜNLÜK İLİŞKİSİ: PINAR ŞİRKETİ ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin önde gelen süt ürünleri şirketlerinden biri olan Pınar Şirketi içinde stratejik planlama ile rekabet avantajı arasındaki bağlantıyı incelemekte ve bir vaka çalışması yaklaşımını kullanmaktadır. Çalışma, firmanın rekabetçi pozisyonunu nasıl etkilediğini değerlendirmekte ve operasyonel verimlilik, kapasite genişlemesi ve stratejik planlama uygulamalarının rolünü araştırmaktadır. Çalışma, Pınar Şirketi çalışanlarına bir anket uygulayarak nicel veri toplamaktadır.

Sonuçlar, stratejik planlama ile şirketin rekabet avantajı arasında önemli bir ilişki bulunduğunu ortaya koymakta ve operasyonel verimlilik ve kapasite genişlemesinin önemli rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Araştırma, performans değerlendirmesi, eğitim, yönetim geliştirme ve etkili yetenek yönetimi gibi stratejik planlama uygulamalarını vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, maliyet, farklılaştırma ve odak stratejileri de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli rekabet avantajlarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Bulgulara dayanarak, çalışma gelecekteki girişimler için öneriler sunmakta ve net stratejik hedefler belirlemenin, rekabetçi bir konumlandırma stratejisi oluşturmanın, müşteri odaklı yaklaşımları önceliklendirmenin ve yetenek geliştirmeye yatırım yapmanın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma, stratejik yönetim uygulayıcıları ve araştırmacılar için değerli görüşler sunarak Pınar Şirketi içinde stratejik planlama ile rekabet avantajı arasındaki etkileşimin anlaşılmasını artırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Stratejik planlama, Rekabet avantajı, Operasyonel verimlilik, Pınar Şirketi, Türkiye.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA : Competitive Advantage

SP : Strategic Planning

CP : Capacity Building

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Strategic Planning and Competitive Advantage

Strategic planning involves setting organizational goals, defining strategies and tactics to achieve those goals, and allocating resources to carry out those strategies (Smith, 2010). It entails.

Examining internal and external factors that affect the organization and making decisions based on that examination. Strategic planning is a critical function for any organization and is closely linked to its competitive advantage.

As defined by Policastro's seminal work (1993), strategic planning is the process of identifying and formulating long-term objectives, guiding the organization toward their achievement. This comprehensive approach involves evaluating the current business environment, defining the company's mission and purpose, anticipating future developments, and analyzing internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Policastro, 1993). Additionally, it requires developing a well-structured plan to facilitate the organization's transition from its current state to its desired position.

Competitive advantage pertains to an organization's unique edge over its competitors, enabling it to outperform them in the marketplace. This advantage can be achieved through various approaches, such as cost leadership, differentiation, innovation, customer focus, and maintaining high-quality standards (Porter, 1996).

Pınar Company, a Turkish food and beverage specialist in dairy products, was established in 1973 and has since become one of Turkey's largest dairy producers. With a strong market presence in Turkey, it also exports its products to over 50 countries worldwide.

Additionally, an in-depth exploration of the internal organizational landscape, encompassing strengths and weaknesses, along with the external environmental factors influencing the company's performance, including potential opportunities and

threats, is imperative for a holistic understanding (Barney, 1991). Such a background study lays the groundwork for a nuanced analysis of how strategic planning has facilitated and contributed to Pınar Company's distinct competitive position in the dairy industry.

Milk is a fundamental and essential consumer good in every culture. Turkey's production of drinking milk grew by 2.4 percent in 2022, totaling 1,626,167 tons. The output of drinking milk increased by 8.0%, yogurt production increased to 170,302, cow's milk production increased by 111,057, and butter production increased by 20,049 (Turkstat government website, 2022). To maintain their presence and efficiency in the market, dairy companies must keep up with modern management styles, particularly strategic management, which focuses on an organization's long-term trends, understanding and studying its internal and external environment, identifying future opportunities and risks, capitalizing on opportunities, reducing risks, and utilizing the organization's assets and solutions to address weaknesses (Kraus, 2016).

1. The Strategic Planning

The process of strategic planning is formulating and implementing efficient goals to meet business objectives by developing a strategy, formulating policies, and creating comprehensive plans. A comprehensive approach to strategic planning must incorporate three essential elements: strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategic implementation, to be effective. Successful strategic planning requires the allocation of strategic goals. Consequently, companies must allocate resources that align with their objectives.

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that effective strategic planning enhances an organization's performance in various aspects. According to Kraus (2016), strategic decision-making involves generating, evaluating, and selecting the optimal plan from multiple alternatives. It also encompasses formulating relevant policies and a framework to facilitate the implementation of chosen strategies into practical steps.

2. Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to an organization's capability to provide a service or product that surpasses offerings from its competitors. Customers perceive it

as superior, forming the bedrock of an enterprise's performance in a competitive business landscape (Porter, 1996).

Porter further delineates that a competitive edge can be achieved through strategies such as Focus, distinctiveness, or cost leadership. Maintaining a competitive advantage above industry norms is pivotal for organizations (Mohanty And Gahan, 2015). To address business competitiveness, organizations must objectively assess critical business operations.

Many enterprises adopt strategic approaches like outsourcing business services and manufacturing operations (Graf And Mudambi, 2005). Porter (1996) identifies three primary general tactics that aid corporate management in navigating fundamental market drivers of competition. The cost of physical assets is a significant indicator of competitive advantage, potentially yielding substantial economic returns compared to rivals. Competition stems from two main sources: offering a more valuable product or service to customers compared to competitors or providing the same offering at a lower cost. Sustaining a competitive edge necessitates organizations to continually augment value.

Competitive advantage is a firm's pursuit of opportunities beyond industry standards while mitigating competitive threats. Strategic advantage and competitive advantage are closely intertwined (Aharoni, 1993). The ability to seize opportunities beyond industry norms and effectively counter competition threats are vital aspects. Aharoni (1993) underscores the strong link between competitive advantage and strategy. Competitors inadvertently create openings for firms to attain competitive advantage by not aligning with a firm's value-creation strategy (Barney, 1991).

Organizations concentrate on cultivating and enhancing crucial capabilities in customer service, premium quality, reliability, creativity, teamwork, and adaptability to environmental changes, culminating in superior performance relative to rivals (Yuleva, 2019).

According to Penrose (1959), a company's growth is contingent upon its strategic resources and their organized utilization by management. The resource-based theory (RBT) has gained traction in explaining performance. When organizational skills and resources align with market conditions, they become the bedrock for establishing competitive advantage. Long-term success hinges on components like

cost leadership and differentiation (Kornelius et al., 2020). The resource-based perspective scrutinizes potential sources of competitive advantage (Collis, 1994).

Cost advantages can result from factors such as scale-efficient manufacturing and enhanced process technologies. Conversely, differentiation advantages may arise from brand recognition, unique technology, or a comprehensive sales and service network (Grant, 1991). To gain a competitive edge, a firm must adopt a value-creating strategy that differentiates it from current and potential competitors.

Barney introduced a competitive framework based on four key attributes: value, rarity, imitability, and non-substitutability (Barney, 1991). Harnessing these attributes effectively can yield exceptional outcomes from a resource-based perspective (Domingo et al., 2019).

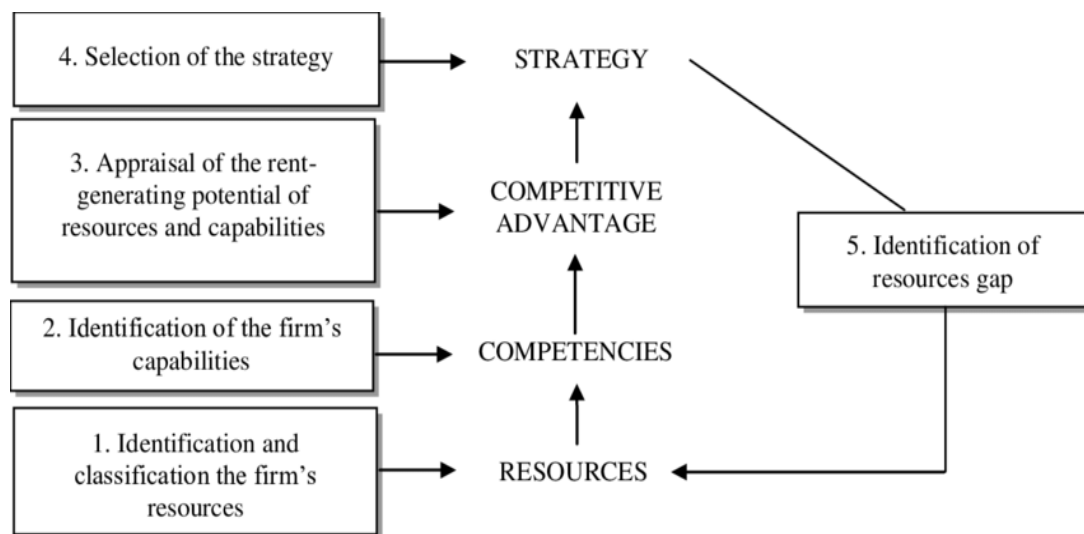


Figure 1. framework of resource-based theory

B. Significance of the Study

This study carries substantial significance by delving into how strategic planning empowers organizations to comprehend their external surroundings, identify potential opportunities and challenges, and leverage their strengths to address weaknesses adeptly. The central aim of this research is to underscore the significance of strategic planning in cultivating a competitive edge, thus illuminating how organizations can attain and sustain a competitive advantage. This study emphasizes the advantages that an organization can attain when it possesses a competitive edge.

By grasping the link between strategic planning and competitive advantage, organizations can fortify their competitive stance in the market and devise impactful strategies guided by this understanding.

C. Statement of Problem

Addressing this research problem holds significance as it can benefit Pınar Company and contribute to a better understanding of how strategic planning plays a role in creating a competitive advantage. The study aims to provide valuable insights into enhancing Pınar's competitiveness, navigating industry challenges, and ensuring long-term growth and stability.

D. Research Questions

1. What is the extent of the correlation between strategic planning and the competitive advantage of Pınar Company?
2. How do cost advantage and differentiation strategies impact Pınar Company's competitive position?

E. Research Objectives

1. To explore the correlation between strategic planning and achieving a competitive advantage at Pınar Company.
2. To identify internal and external environmental barriers that impede the implementation of strategic planning in Pınar Company.
3. To evaluate the impact of acquiring a competitive advantage on Pınar Company's ability to address current challenges.
4. To determine effective strategic planning and assess its availability in Pınar Company.

F. Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis1

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between strategic planning and the competitive advantage of Pınar Company.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between strategic planning and the competitive advantage of Pınar Company.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between operational efficiency, capacity development, and the competitive advantage of Pınar Company.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between operational efficiency, capacity development, and the competitive advantage of Pınar Company.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between cost advantage, differentiation advantage, focus advantage, and achieving competitive advantage for Pınar Company.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between cost advantage, differentiation advantage, focus advantage, and achieving competitive advantage for Pınar Company.

G. Purpose

The central purpose of this research is to underscore the significance of strategic planning in cultivating a competitive edge. By understanding the link between strategic planning and competitive advantage, organizations like Pınar Company can fortify their competitive stance in the market and develop impactful strategies guided by this understanding.

H. Research Methodology

This research employs a case study approach, focusing on the Pınar Company. A case study involves an in-depth investigation within its real-world context, providing comprehensive insights into the topic (Yin, 2018). Structured questionnaires are used to collect quantitative data on strategic planning methods and competitive advantage metrics. The collected quantitative data will be processed and examined using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression analysis to explore data linkages, patterns, and trends (Field, 2018).

The research focuses on some important factors, including operational effectiveness, capacity growth, strategic planning procedures, competitive advantage metrics, and employee views. The variable under scrutiny as the dependent factor is competitive advantage measurements, while the independent variables encompass various strategic planning approaches. The association linking strategic planning and competitive advantage is presumed to be modulated through the process of mediation and is thought to be mediated by operational effectiveness and capacity growth (Baron And Kenny, 1986).

The study concludes by providing a comprehensive overview of the study's methodology. It explores the relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage within the context of the research. Pinar Company was investigated using the case study research technique, backed by quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Eisenhardt, 1989). To guarantee a thorough and reliable research methodology, various aspects were considered, including demographic and sample characteristics, the study instrument, reliability and validity measurements, data collection and analysis procedures, and study variables (Creswell And Creswell, 2017).

I. Delimitations

This research study is subject to several important limitations and constraints. Foremost among them is the exclusive focus on Pinar Company, situated in Istanbul, Turkey. Therefore, the findings and conclusions of this study may not be directly applicable to other companies or industries, as each organization operates within a unique context and may have distinct factors influencing its competitive advantage.

Secondly, the study is limited by the availability of existing research studies on the relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage, specifically in the case of Pinar Company. The lack of a comprehensive body of literature in this specific context highlights the need for further research and exploration of this topic.

Furthermore, while the study primarily examines the effects of strategic planning on achieving a competitive advantage in Pinar Company, it may not capture the full complexity of factors influencing competitive advantage in the dairy production industry or other industries.

Additionally, the study explores the impact of achieving a competitive advantage for Pinar Company. Although these factors are important in the context of competitive advantage, there may be other variables or strategies that could also significantly contribute to an organization's competitive position.

In conclusion, the study examines how operational efficiency and capacity building impact the competitive advantage of Pinar Company. While these two factors play a significant role in organizational performance, it's important to acknowledge that there might be additional variables that intersect with or moderate their influence on competitive advantage, aspects that are not extensively explored in this research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

1. Theoretical Foundations of Strategic Planning

The objective of this research is to analyze the impact of strategic planning on achieving a competitive advantage for Pinar Company. To better understand this relationship, let's delve into the theoretical foundations of strategic planning. Strategic planning is a critical aspect of organizational management, involving the formulation of long-term objectives, strategies, and tactics to guide the organization's actions in a dynamic environment (Mintzberg, 1994).

Strategic planning encompasses several essential elements, including setting specific objectives, which are communicated by top leadership and supported by formal controls to ensure their execution within a structured framework (Mintzberg, 1994). It involves taking distinctive actions that differentiate a company from its competitors (Porter, 1996). Chandler (1962) argues that strategy involves defining a company's primary long-term goals and objectives and allocating essential resources to achieve them.

Hart (1992) emphasizes that effective strategic planning includes implementing plans generated through systematic methods and thorough analysis. Strategic planning consists of three main components: strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategic implementation (Wendy and Tushman, 2005). It involves analyzing the external environment, making strategic decisions, monitoring and controlling their execution, addressing internal strategic challenges, setting business goals, and crafting detailed implementation plans.

Strategic planning is vital for an organization as it directs its efforts toward competitive markets, technology, products, and resources, aiming to achieve its goals through a series of well-thought-out moves referred to as a competitive strategy (Korenelius et al., 2020). Resources and capabilities play a crucial role in a company's

strategy, forming the foundation for defining the company's identity, especially in response to changing external conditions (Grant, 1991).

In practice, strategic planning entails several concepts, including assessing internal strengths and weaknesses, conducting environmental scans, establishing organizational goals, and developing segment-specific strategies (Maleka, 2014). Strategic planning is a process that establishes objectives and provides actions and instruments for achieving them in the medium to long term, encompassing an assessment of the external environment and weighing potential outcomes (De Andreis, 2019).

Sheth (1985) outlines three key elements of strategic planning: developing a competitive strategy to achieve objectives, adapting the organization's future goals in response to evolving external circumstances, and designing an organizational structure that efficiently allocates resources for strategy execution.

Strategic planning, however, presents challenges. Implementation of strategies can be complex and time-consuming, requiring effective resource allocation and coordination (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2002). It often faces a substantial risk of failure, with failure rates estimated to range from 30% to 70% (Eurido and Santos, 2015). Operational strategy plays a crucial role in organizing business units to facilitate the efficient implementation of both functional and company-level plans (Cândido and Santos, 2015).

Moreover, long-term planning and strategy execution can become challenging in unpredictable environments, economic downturns, or adverse political events (World Bank, 2011; Kabeyi, 2019).

In conclusion, strategic planning is a critical component for organizations aiming to establish a competitive edge. It involves setting objectives, making decisions, and implementing methods to adapt to changing situations. Strategic planning operates at multiple levels and offers both benefits and challenges in execution. A firm's ability to grasp these principles and effectively implement strategic plans can significantly improve its performance and help it achieve its goals.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Competitive Advantage

This research aims to investigate the influence of strategic planning on the competitive advantage of Pinar Company. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of this relationship, it is essential to delve into the theoretical foundations of competitive advantage.

Competitive advantage is a concept often associated with effective business strategies that create value distinct from competitors and are not easily replicated (Barney and Hesterly, 1991). It is central to an organization's ability to excel and establish a distinct competitive position by offering superior products at lower costs, thereby delivering unique value to customers (Semen, 2019).

Competitive advantage can be achieved through various means, as proposed by Porter (1991). Porter identified two primary types of competitive advantage: cost leadership and differentiation. These strategies, along with the chosen scope of operations, give rise to three primary avenues for achieving above-average performance within an industry: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus.



Figure 2. Porter's (1991) Competitive Strategy Framework

Cost leadership involves becoming the lowest-cost producer within an industry, while differentiation entails offering unique and valued products or services (Porter, 1991). Focus strategies, on the other hand, target achieving either cost

leadership within a specialized domain (cost focus) or uniqueness in a niche market (differentiation focus).

Competitive advantage relies on an organization's competencies, capabilities, and performance (Mohsen Zadeh and Ahmadian, 2016). It also depends on the organization's ability to leverage specific resources and skills that are not easily replicated by competitors (Grant, 1991). Enterprises that capitalize on shifts in the macro-environment can gain a competitive edge, while those that overreach beyond their capabilities often face failures (Mukherjee, 2016; Leiblein and Miller, 2003).

In conclusion, competitive advantage is a critical factor for organizations aiming to excel in their respective industries. It can be achieved through various strategies, and the organization's ability to leverage its resources, competencies, and capabilities plays a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining competitive superiority.

B. Empirical Literature

This research aims to investigate the influence of strategic planning on the competitive advantage of Pinar Company. Several empirical studies have been carried out to comprehend the role of strategic planning in attaining a competitive edge.

Globocnik et al. (2020) explored the connection between strategic planning and the management of business models. They examined the formal control framework for overseeing business model portfolios and dynamics, dissecting intricate organizational activities into strategy operations, business model portfolios, and tactics. The research illustrated how formal control systems across various organizational levels ensure coherence and facilitate effective management of strategy and business model dynamics.

Kornelius et al. (2020) conducted an extensive review of the strategic planning literature and introduced an innovative approach grounded in dynamic capacities theory. They introduced the notion of "competitive strategic maneuverability" to bridge the gap between strategic planning and company performance. The study emphasized the significance of continuously adapting and assessing a company's strategy in response to external changes.

Mäntymaa (2013) focused on achieving an advantage in the banking business through service excellence. The study examined the factors in financial services that impact customer loyalty and contribute to a competitive advantage.

Hugosson (2011) studied the impact of government policies on establishing a competitive advantage in the Indian automobile sector. The research emphasized how institutional connections and effective technology and know-how transfer contributed to the success of companies like Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, and Tata.

Gualdrón et al. (2021) proposed a strategic planning and competitive advantage framework for the Carmen de Bolívar microenterprise. The research employed various methods and approaches to examine the organization's strategic planning process and its influence on proactive market positioning and growth.

Sibghatullah and Raza (2020) assessed the influence of strategic leadership on Islamic banks' competitive advantage in Jordan. They carried out a study to explore how information systems mediate the connection between strategic leadership and organizational ambidexterity. The study's outcomes demonstrated a favorable correlation between strategic leadership and competitive advantage. The research underscored the significance of information systems as intermediaries in this correlation, emphasizing their contribution to fostering organizational ambidexterity and ultimately enhancing competitive advantage.

Maingi. (2019) conducted a study to explore the mediating role of employee behavior in the relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage in large manufacturing enterprises in Kenya. The findings of the study indicated that strategic planning has a significant impact on competitive advantage, and employee behavior was identified as a crucial mediator in this relationship. The study highlighted the importance of employee behavior in translating strategic planning into a competitive advantage for organizations in the manufacturing sector.

In a study conducted by Kiyoo (2019), the relationship between strategic planning, competitive advantage, organizational structure, and employee behavior in large manufacturing businesses was investigated. The findings of the study revealed that strategic planning had a significant impact on competitive advantage, and this relationship was completely mediated by employee behavior. Additionally, the organizational structure was identified as a partial moderator in this context.

Shahraki (2021) analyzed travel behavior and transportation infrastructure systems, underlining the need for qualitative and quantitative changes. The research stressed the necessity of strategic planning in enhancing transportation infrastructure, increasing sustainability, and attracting visitors and stakeholders.

Abusharekh. (2020) conducted a study to examine the influence of strategic agility on pharmaceutical company performance. The study emphasized the significance of strategic agility, responsiveness, and flexibility in effectively responding to changing market conditions and gaining a competitive edge.

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A. Research Approach

1. Understanding Case Study Research

A case study is a research method that involves conducting a detailed investigation of a specific instance within its real-world context. The primary objective of a case study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of a particular topic by exploring its intricacies and nuances. Researchers find case studies invaluable as they facilitate profound insights into various phenomena by examining them in their natural settings.

1. Types of Case Studies

There exist several types of case studies, each catering to distinct research objectives:

- ***Descriptive Case Study:*** This type aims to provide an exhaustive account of a particular phenomenon or case, to present a comprehensive overview.
- ***Exploratory Case Study:*** Exploratory case studies are employed when investigating new or underexplored topics. They assist researchers in understanding the issue at hand and formulating hypotheses for further study.

B. Rationale For Choosing A Case Study Research Methodology

The selection of a case study research methodology for our thesis is based on several key considerations:

1. In Depth Understanding:

A case study allows for a profound exploration of a specific occurrence within its real-life context, yielding precise insights into the subject matter. It enables us to go beyond surface-level observations and delve into the complexities of our research topic.

2. Complexity of the Topic:

Given the intricacies of strategic planning processes and their impact on competitive advantage, a case study approach is particularly suitable for gaining a holistic understanding. It allows us to investigate these processes comprehensively and in-depth.

3. Unique Organizational Context:

Pınar Company, a renowned business in Turkey, offers a distinctive organizational context for studying the interplay between strategic planning and competitive advantage. By focusing on Pınar, we can explore how its specific strategies contribute to its success within the food and beverage industry.

C. Data Collection

In this section, we will discuss the data collection process, which primarily involves survey analysis.

The study's population consists of all employees at Pınar Company, which had 1,277 employees in 2022. The study used a straightforward random sampling procedure to ensure that every individual within the population had an identical likelihood of being part of the sample.

The total sample size of 289 employees was chosen at random from the population to ensure representativeness and minimize biases.

The researchers employed a random sampling procedure to guarantee that the sample was representative. Each person for the research was unbiased, providing every member of the population an equal opportunity to be included, which reduced bias and increased the generalizability of the findings.

1. Survey Scale

- Explain how the survey questions were developed and structured, emphasizing the importance of a well-constructed survey.

2. Validity and Reliability

- Describe the methods used to assess the validity and reliability of the survey scale. Include information about specific tests or measures, like Cronbach's

alpha coefficients, used to establish reliability. Explain how content validity was ensured.

D. Assessment Of Reliability And Validity

To confirm the questionnaire's authenticity and dependability, the researchers used internal consistency and content validity criteria. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each component of the questionnaire to examine internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha is quite high (above 0.70), indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the instrument, meaning that the items within each section consistently measure the same construct.

Content validity was also considered to ensure that the questionnaire adequately covers the relevant dimensions of the research topic and that the items are appropriate and relevant to the study. To refine the questionnaire and improve its clarity and understandability, pilot research was conducted with a small sample of participants.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey scale used in this research, the following steps were taken:

Reliability:

The internal consistency of the survey scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each component of the questionnaire. This analysis determined the reliability of the instrument, ensuring that the items within each section consistently measured the same construct. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated, and values above 0.70 were obtained, indicating good internal consistency and reliability.

Validity:

Content validity was considered to ensure that the questionnaire adequately covered the relevant dimensions of the research topic and that the items were appropriate and relevant to the study. To enhance the clarity and understandability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with a small sample of participants.

Furthermore, the source of the survey questions was based on a thorough examination of peer-reviewed academic papers, scholarly articles, and relevant books.

These sources provided the foundation for selecting and adapting survey questions to ensure their alignment with established research in the field.

E. Gathering And Analyzing Data

In this study, information was gathered from employees of Pınar Company in Turkey using a structured questionnaire distributed to 289 participants. The collected quantitative data were subjected to different statistical methods, encompassing descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression modeling. These statistical techniques facilitated the examination of relationships, patterns, and trends within the quantitative data.

The questionnaire consisted of divisions with distinct objectives, including capturing participant demographics and exploring the impact of operational efficiency and capacity-building strategic planning on Pınar Company's competitive advantage.

For the non-numerical data collected from the questionnaires, qualitative data analysis methods were employed. Through these methods, the researchers organized and categorized the responses to extract meaningful insights, thereby enhancing the overall comprehension of the research subject.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis allowed for a comprehensive examination. By exploring the correlation between the practices of strategic planning and the competitive advantage within Pınar Company, the research offers valuable insights into the elements that contribute to the organization's accomplishments in the field of the dairy production industry.

F. Case Study Analysis

A case study technique enables a deep exploration of a specific occurrence in its real-life context, offering precise insights and a rich grasp of the subject matter. Due to its strategic planning procedures, competitive position, and market performance, Pınar Company, a renowned business in Turkey, provides an appropriate case study.

The case study will entail gathering and evaluating data from multiple sources to gain thorough insights into the strategic planning process at Pınar Company. This may involve interviews with key stakeholders like senior management, staff, and

consumers to better understand their viewpoints and experiences. Additionally, internal papers such as strategic plans, financial reports, and performance indicators will be evaluated to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the company's strategies.

The investigation will take into account several areas of strategic planning, such as goal formulation, resource allocation, market positioning, and performance evaluation. The researchers will investigate how Pinar Company develops and implements strategic plans, how it aligns its resources to achieve strategic goals, and how it monitors and changes its strategies to changing market circumstances. The research will also look at the company's competitive position in the industry, such as its market share, customer satisfaction, and brand reputation.

Researchers want to discover the essential aspects that contribute to Pinar Company's competitive advantage by conducting an in-depth case study. This will entail finding strategic planning approaches that have shown to be effective in improving the company's performance and market position.

The research will be guided by current literature and appropriate theoretical frameworks linked to ensure the robustness and authenticity of the case study. The conclusions drawn from the case study will be juxtaposed with the existing corpus of research, offering useful insights and contributing to a better understanding of strategic planning processes for gaining a competitive advantage.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Data Screening and Cleaning

In this section, we delve into the outcomes derived from the analysis of the collected data. We also discuss the processes of data cleansing and assessment to ensure data quality and reliability. This involves addressing irregularities, outliers, and inconsistencies within the dataset. We have employed rigorous methods of face validity and content validity to ensure that the data aligns with the study's objectives.

B. Participant Demographics

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic composition of the study participants at Pinar Company. It includes data on gender, age, level of education, position within the company, years of experience, marital status, number of children, and salary distribution. These demographics are crucial for understanding the characteristics and backgrounds of the participants

Table 1. Participant Demographics

ZGender			
		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Male	174	60.21
	Female	115	39.79
	Total	289	100.00

Age			
		Frequency	Percent
Categories	20-30 years	98	33.91
	30-40 years	127	43.94
	40- 50 years	7	2.42

	50-60 years	26	9.00
	Over 60 years	31	10.73
Total	289	100.00	

Level of education			
		Frequency	Percent
	Lower than high school	18	6.23
	Master	188	65.05
Categories	Bachelor degree	37	12.80
	High school	27	9.34
	Ph.D.	19	6.57
	Total	289	100.00

Which position are they working in?			
		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Manager	209	72.32
	Operations and Production	80	27.68
	Total	289	100.00

Experience			
		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Less than one year	108	37.37
	1-5 years	66	22.84
	5-10 years	91	31.49
	More than 10 years	24	8.30
	Total	289	100.00

Marital status			
		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Single	106	36.68
	Married	43	14.88

	Widow/widower	123	42.56
	Divorced	17	5.88
	Total	289	100.00

What is the number of children?

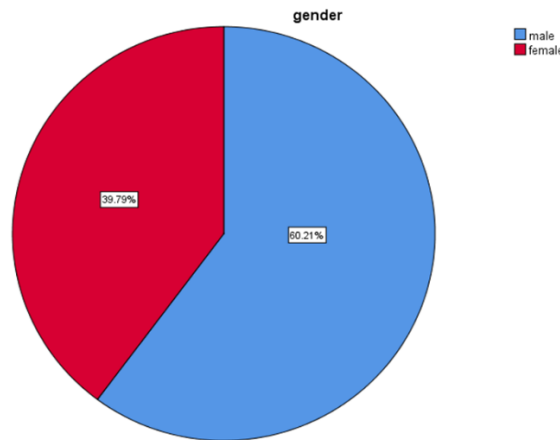
		Frequency	Percent
Categories	None	58	20.07
	One	140	48.44
	More than one	91	31.49
	Total	289	100.00

What is the distribution of salaries?

		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Less than 800	40	13.84
	800-1000	4	1.38
	1000-1200	150	51.90
	1200-1400	75	25.95
	More than 1400	20	6.92
	Total	289	100.00

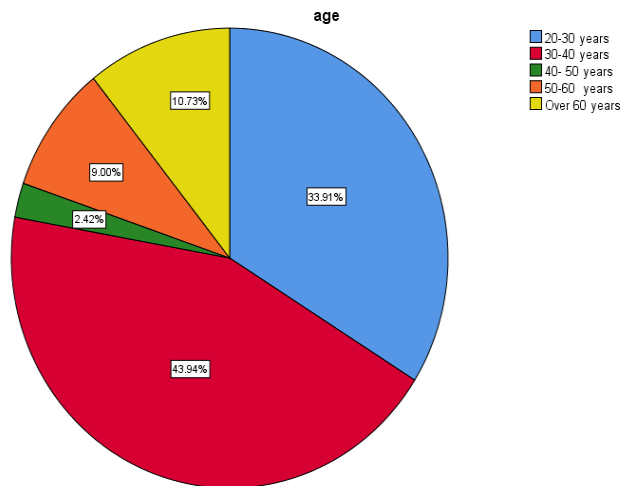
These findings provide insights into the demographic composition of the study sample at Pınar Company. Collecting demographic information about the participants can aid in comprehending their characteristics and potential.

Figure 3. gender distribution of employees in pinar company



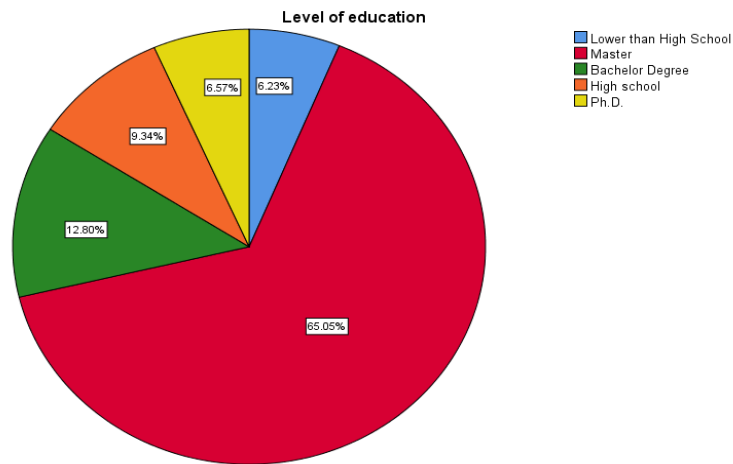
The data reveals that the percentage of male employees was higher, accounting for 60.21% of the total participants. In contrast, female employees constituted 39.79% of the participants.

Figure 4. Age of the Participants



The data shows that participant ages span from 20 to 60 years and beyond. The highest proportion was observed among those aged 30-40 years, constituting 43.94% of the total. The next most significant percentage was for participants aged 20-30 years, comprising 33.91%. Participants aged 60 and above constituted 10.73% of the total. The lowest percentages were recorded for those aged between 50-60 years, accounting for 9%, followed by individuals aged 40-50 years, which made up 2.42% of the participants.

Figure 5. Distribution of Participants' Educational Levels in the Study.



The range of high school to Ph.D. Degrees. The highest percentage of participants was in the master's degree category, accounting for 65.05% of the sample. Following that, the bachelor's degree category represented 12.80% of participants. High school participants constituted 9.34% of the sample. The percentage of Ph.D. Students were the lowest at 6.57%, and participants with those with an educational level below high school comprised 6.23% of the sample.

Figure 6. Job Position

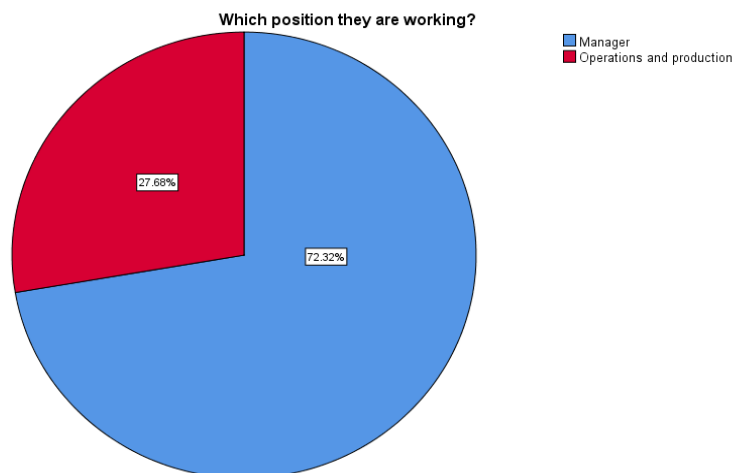
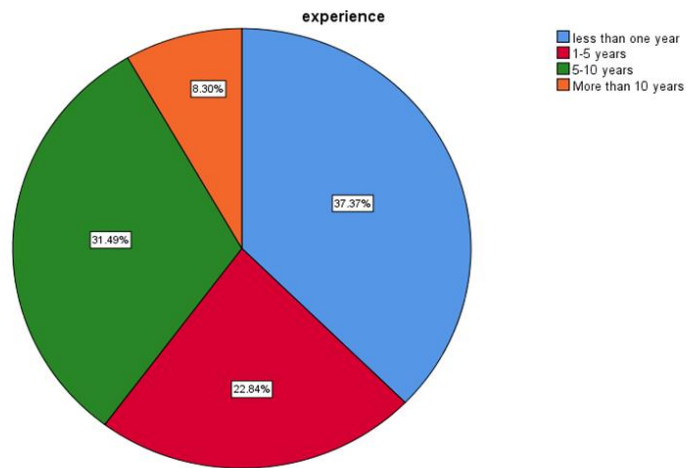


Figure 6 displays the distribution of participants' job positions in the study. The participants held various positions, including managers and operations and production roles. The majority of participants, with a percentage of 72.32%, occupied managerial

positions. On the other hand, participants in operations and production roles represented the lowest percentage at 27.68%.

Figure 7. Years of Experience



The data presented in Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of years of experience among participants in Pınar Company. The highest percentage of participants, accounting for 37.37% of the total, falls within the category of less than one year of experience. The next highest percentage, representing 31.49%, corresponds to participants with experience ranging from 5 to 10 years. Participants with experience ranging from 1 to 5 years of experience constitute 22.84% of all respondents. In contrast, the smallest percentage, 8.30%, is observed among participants with more than ten years of experience.

Figure 8. Marital Status

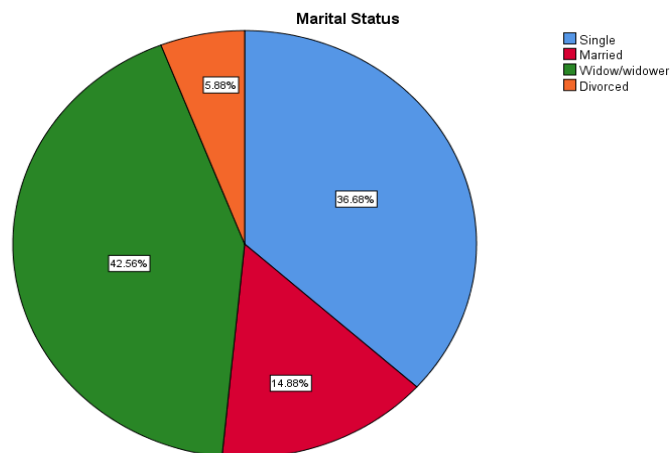


Figure 8 presents the distribution of participants' marital status in Pinar Company. The data reveals that participants' marital status is diverse, The greatest percentage, constituting 42.56% of the total, was observed among participants who identified as widows/widowers. Single participants accounted for the next highest percentage at 36.68%. The lowest percentage was for participants who identified as divorced, amounting to 5.88%.

Figure 9. Number of Children

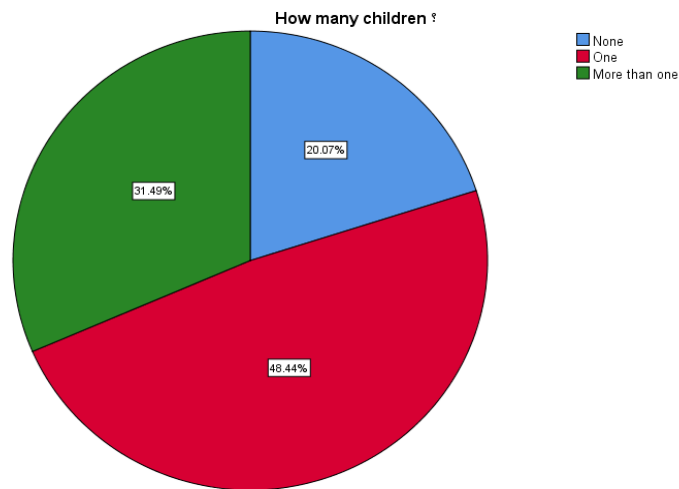


Figure 9 presents the distribution of the number of children among the participants in Pinar Company. The data shows that participants have varying numbers of children, including categories such as none, one, and more than one. The highest percentage, accounting for 48.44% of the total, was observed among participants who have one child. Participants with more than one child represented the next highest percentage at 31.49%. On the other hand, participants without any children constituted the lowest percentage, amounting to 20.07%.

Figure 10. Salary Distribution

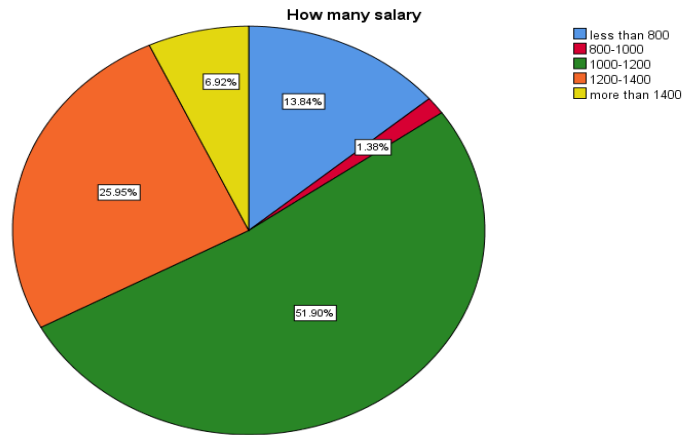


Figure 10 displays the distribution of salaries among the participants in Pınar Company. The data reveals a range of salary amounts, from less than 800 to more than 1400. The highest percentage, accounting for 51.90% of the total, was observed among participants whose salary fell within the range of 1000-1200. Participants with salaries ranging from 1200 to 1400 represented the next highest percentage at 25.95%. Conversely, the lowest percentage, amounting to 1.38%, was observed among participants whose salary fell within the range of 800-1000. Participants with salaries 13.84% of participants earned less than 800 dollars, while only 6.92% earned over 1400.

Additional Demographic Information About the Employees of Pınar Company

Provides a summary of the findings concerning participants' roles, groups, length of employment, educational attainment, degree of strategic planning practice, knowledge of the firm, years of operation, and products of the company. The distribution of responses for the "General Information" items is presented in Table 2, showing their frequencies and percentages.

Table 2. Demographic Information About the Employees of Pınar Company

Position of respondent			
	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	Middle-level management	194	67.13
	Top management	95	32.87
	Total	289	100.00

In which category do you belong?

	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	Middle-level management	194	67.13
	Top management	95	32.87
	Total	289	100.00

In your present job, how long have you been with the company?

	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	fewer than five years	111	38.41
	5 to 10 years	64	22.15
	10 to 15 years	93	32.18
	Over 15 years	21	7.27
	Total	289	100.00

Indicate your highest level of education

	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	Secondary	37	12.80
	Diploma	192	66.44
	Bachelor Degree	37	12.80
	Postgraduate	23	7.96
	Total	289	100.00

How long has your organization been implementing strategic planning?

	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	0-5years	132	45.67
	6-10years	66	22.84
	Over 10 years	91	31.49
	Total	289	100.00

Scope of information on your company

	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	National	118	40.83
	Regional	74	25.61
	Continental	79	27.34
	Global	18	6.23
	Total	289	100.00

Both local and Foreign

	Answer		
Categories	Locally owned and operated	132	45.67
	Foreign ownership	64	22.15
	Both Locally And Foreign Owned	93	32.18
	Total	289	100.00

How many years has the firm been in operation?

	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Categories	0-5	62	21.45
	6-10	23	7.96
	11-15	67	23.18
	16-20	46	15.92
	Over 20	91	31.49
	Total	289	100.00

Products

	Answer	Rate
Types	Milk	50.52
	Diary	7.96
Types	Meat	19.72
	Yogurt	7.27
	Cheese	4.15
	Beef	10.38
	Overoll	100.00

The following pie charts give specific details about the participants, such as their titles, the length of time they have been engaged in strategic planning, the range of information available about the business, titles, and ownership structures .

Figure 11. The position of the respondent

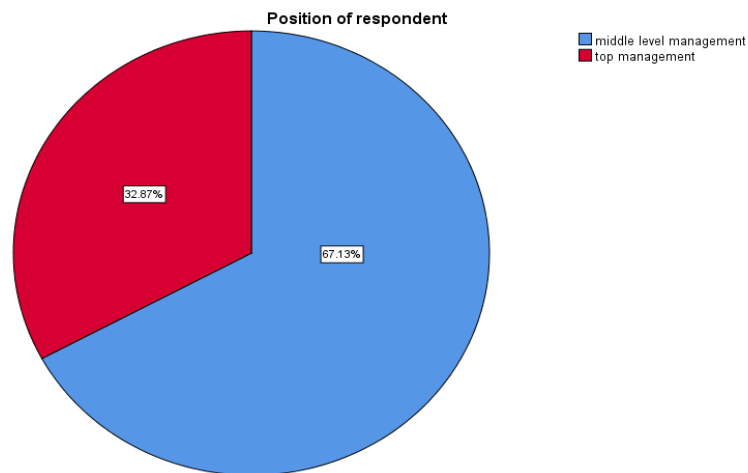


Figure 11 shows that the respondents' positions ranged from high management to middle management. Participants holding middle-level management jobs made up the largest number (67.13%), which was among all participants. On the other hand, participants in high management had the lowest proportion, which was 32.87%.

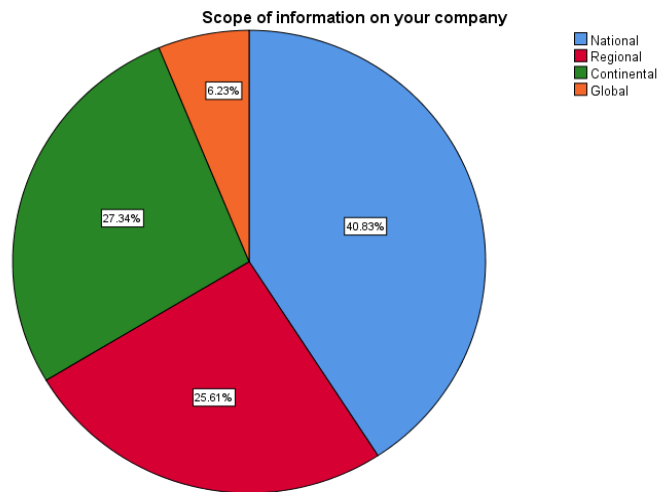
Figure 12. The duration of practicing strategic planning



Figure 12 shows that the participants' duration of strategic planning practice ranged from 0 to more than 10 years. The highest percentage (46.67%) belonged to those with 0 to 5 years of experience. Individuals with more than 10 years of

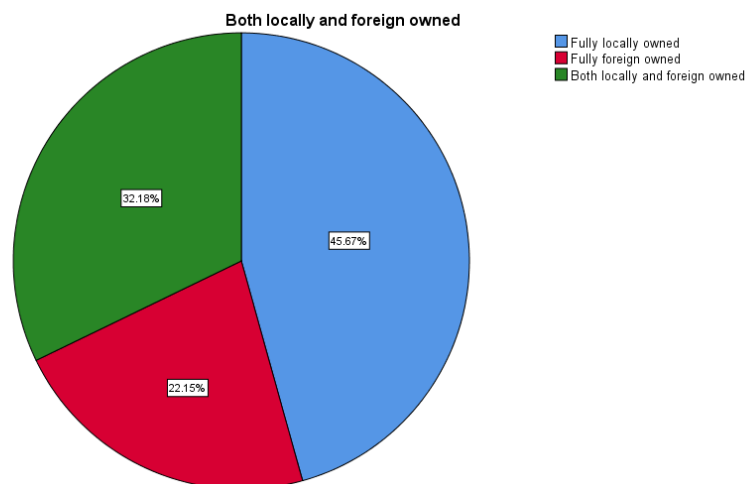
experience came in second, making up 31.49% of the total. Last but not least, 22.84% of participants had six to ten years of experience.

Figure 13. Scope of Information on your company



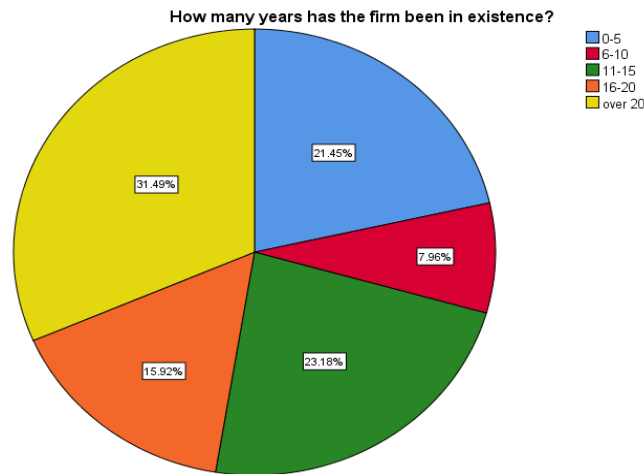
As shown in Figure 13, the company's information breadth ranged from national to worldwide. Participants with a nationwide scope of information received the greatest percentage (40.83%). This was followed by those having a regional focus, which accounted for 25.61%. As a result, participants with a continental focus made up 27.34% of the total, while those with a global scope made up 6.23%.

Figure 14. Ownership Structure



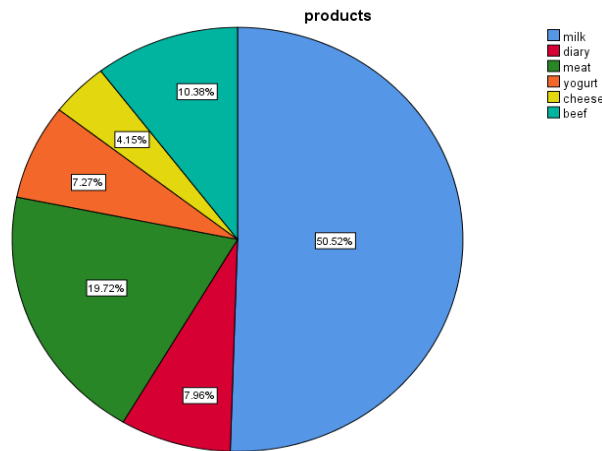
As seen in Figure 14, the Pinar Company is locally owned, with a percentage of 45.57%, followed by a combination of local and foreign ownership at 22.15%, and complete foreign ownership at 32.19 percent.

Figure 15. The existence of the company



The data, which ranges from 0 to more than 20 years, is displayed in Figure 13 as an illustration of the firms' existence throughout various periods. In the group of businesses that have been around for more than 20 years, the greatest proportion, 31.49%, was found. Next, the category with a tenure of between 11 and 15 years accounted for 23.18%. The group of businesses with a period of 0 to 5 years made up the remaining 21.45% of the total. Additionally, organizations with a length of 16–20 years made up 15.92% of the total, while the lowest percentage (7.99%) was represented by enterprises with a period of 6–10 years.

Figure 16. The Products of the Company



The chart in Figure 16 shows the company's offerings, which include milk, dairy, meat, yogurt, cheese, and cattle. The milk product category had the largest proportion, 50.52%, that was seen. The category for beef then made up 10.38% of the total. The yogurt product came in at 7.27%, while the dairy category accounted for 7.96%. The cheese product category showed the lowest proportion, which was 4.15%

C. Strategic Planning and Gaining A Competitive Edge At Pınar Company

we present the results of the study's questionnaire on "operational efficiency and capacity building" to examine the impact of strategic planning on acquiring a competitive advantage at Pınar Company, as perceived by its employees. We delve into the findings related to operational efficiency and capacity building within the context of strategic planning and their contributions to establishing a competitive edge within the organization.

Table 3. Strategic Planning and Gaining a Competitive Edge At Pınar Company

Item	Average	The Standard. Deviation	Value
Manpower efficiency exists.	3.64	1.12	Medium
Implemented measures to enhance operational efficiency, which in turn contributes to achieving a competitive advantage.	3.53	1.24	Medium
Over the years, Pınar Company has achieved productivity efficiency, leading to the attainment of a competitive advantage.	3.42	1.06	Medium

Employee performance reviews are conducted by Pinar Company to discover opportunities for training and growth.	3.28	1.51	Medium
delivering goods and services with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.	3.25	1.44	Medium
Capacity building enhances employees' performance, thereby contributing to the achievement of a competitive advantage.	2.51	1.15	Medium
Pinar Company has obtained a competitive advantage over its competitors due to managerial development.	2.51	1.15	Middle
recruits and maintains highly competent workers in a targeted manner, contributing to its competitive advantage in the market.	2.47	1.01	Middle
Overall	3.08	0.73	

Among the answers, item 2, "Pinar Company has manpower efficiency," received the highest mean of 3.64 out of 5, indicating a medium degree of agreement. Item 1, "Pinar Company has improved operational efficiency in pursuit of a competitive advantage," earned a mean of 3.53, indicating a medium degree of agreement. Item 8, "Pinar attracts and retains the most effective employees to gain a competitive advantage, obtained the lowest average score of 2.47. The data indicate that respondents have a lower degree of agreement in the domain of operational efficiency, with an overall mean of 3.08, suggesting a medium level of agreement.

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage within Pinar Company. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.871 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a robust and meaningful association between strategic planning and competitive advantage. These results suggest that strategic planning plays a crucial role in enabling Pinar Company to attain a competitive edge.

Additionally, the study aimed to investigate the connection between operational effectiveness, capacity development, and competitive advantage. The findings indicate a significant association between operational efficiency and capacity building, with a value of 0.929 for competitive advantage ($p < 0.05$). This implies a meaningful and positive link between these factors, demonstrating the beneficial effects of operational efficiency and capacity growth on gaining a competitive edge. This underscores that achieving a competitive edge at Pinar Company depends on operational effectiveness and capacity expansion.

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal that Pınar Company's employees perceive the company as having effective personnel efficiency, improved operational effectiveness, and enhanced productivity efficiency. These factors collectively contribute to its competitive edge. The data analysis underscores the significance of strategic planning in achieving a competitive advantage, confirming the research questions and hypotheses. The study also explored how employees perceive the relationship between operational effectiveness and capacity enhancement in attaining a competitive advantage.

The results demonstrate a strong and substantial connection, supported by a significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.929 ($p < 0.05$). This acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and rejection of the null hypothesis provide compelling evidence that strategic planning and competitive advantage are significantly correlated at Pınar Company.

D. The Strategic Planning Process

In this section, we conduct an in-depth analysis of the strategic planning process at Pınar Company, as perceived by its employees. Table 4 provides insights into the key aspects of strategic planning, including the allocation of working hours, financial resources, involvement of organizational departments, structured approach, management participation, formal documentation, and board approval.

Table 4. Details How Pınar Company's Strategic Planning Process.

Items	Average	The Standard. Deviation	Value
A substantial portion of working hours is allocated to the strategic planning process when formulating the strategic plan.	3.26	1.19	Medium
Adequate financial resources are allocated to support the strategic planning process.	3.19	1.08	Moderate
The strategic planning process encompasses all organizational departments and independent sections.	3.11	1.05	Moderate
The organization follows a structured and methodical approach to the strategic planning process.	3.05	1.27	Moderate
The management actively participates in the strategic planning process.	3.03	1.45	Moderate

The strategic plan is documented formally and goes through the approval process by the board of directors.	2.02	1.17	Low
The allocation of time for the strategic planning process is deemed sufficient.	1.96	1.22	Low
Overall	2.80	0.72	

By presenting the tables in this format, you can organize and display your data analysis for each section of your chapter. If you need further assistance or adjustments, please let me know.

Item 5, "Time is invested in the strategic planning process during the creation of the strategic plan," obtained the highest average score of 3.26. This indicates that employees believe the organization allocates an appropriate amount of time to prepare the strategic plan, and they perceive a significant portion of their working hours is dedicated to the strategic planning process.

The mean score for item a2, "Adequate financial resources are allocated to the strategic planning process," was 3.19, suggesting a modest level of agreement. This indicates that employees believe Pınar Company provides adequate financial resources to assist the strategy planning process.

Similarly, item a3, which measures the engagement of all divisions and independent units involved in the strategic planning process, obtained a mean score of 3.11, indicating a moderate level of agreement among employees. This suggests that employees perceive a collaborative approach to strategic planning, in which diverse departments and autonomous units within the business actively engage and contribute to the process.

Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that Pınar Company implements strategic planning by devoting adequate working time, allocating adequate financial resources, involving all departments and autonomous sections, adhering to formal and systematic approaches, engaging management, formal documentation of the strategic plan, and seeking approval from the board of directors. These practices suggest that strategic planning is carried out in an orderly manner at Pınar organization, with active participation from all stakeholders, contributing to the overall performance of the organization.

E. The Significance Of Cost Advantage In Attaining A Competitive Edge At Pinar Company

This section investigates the cost advantage's significance in attaining a competitive edge at Pinar Company, as seen by its workers. Based on employee perspectives, the table displays the mean scores, standard deviations, and agreement degrees for each item linked with cost advantage inside the organization.

Table 5. Presents The Information Regarding the Cost Advantage Observed In Pinar Company.

N	Item	Average	The Standard. Deviation	Value
1	The company operates as a cost-efficient producer.	4.19	0.80	the highest
2	The company benefits from economies of scale in its production capabilities.	3.34	0.80	Middle
3	The company possesses a distinctive and effective production process.	3.30	0.95	Middle
4	The company holds a significant market share.	3.26	0.96	Middle
5	The company has successfully maintained long-term customer retention.	3.23	0.82	Middle
Overall			3.46	0.61

Based on employee feedback, the table displays the mean scores and degree of agreement for each item connected to the "cost advantage" domain at Pinar Company. Among the answers mentioned, "The company is a low-cost producer" (item B1) had the highest mean score of 4.19, suggesting a high level of agreement among the employees. This shows that employees believe Pinar Company has a cost advantage, allowing it to sell items at cheaper rates than competitors. This cost advantage helps the organization acquire clients and perhaps build a strong market position.

Item (4), "the company uses economies of scale in its production capacity," had a mean score of 3.34, indicating a medium level of agreement. This means that employees feel Pinar Company benefits from economies of scale in its production, which contributes to its cost advantage. Economies of scale relate to the cost benefits that a corporation gains as its production levels expand.

Item (5), "the company has retained its customers for extended periods, achieved the lowest average score of 3.23, suggesting a medium degree of agreement. This indicates that Pinar Company's workers believe the company has been reasonably effective in sustaining client loyalty and retention, which supports its cost advantage. Overall, the "cost advantage" domain Possesses an average rating of 3.46, indicating a moderate level of agreement .This implies workers believe Pinar Company has achieved cost benefits through a variety of means, including being a low-cost manufacturer, making use of economies of scale in production, and preserving customer loyalty and retention. These findings demonstrate the importance of cost advantage in contributing to the competitive advantage of Pinar Company.

In conclusion, based on employee perceptions, the Pinar Company is regarded to have a significant cost advantage, allowing it to sell items at cheaper rates than its competitors. The firm benefits from scale contests has a distinctive and efficient manufacturing line, has a large market share, and maintains customer loyalty and retention. These variables all contribute to Pinar Company's overall competitive edge in the market

F. The Significance of Differentiation Benefit İn Attaining A Competitive Edge At Pinar Company

This section presents the results related to differentiation advantage as a strategic approach employed to enhance competitive advantage, as perceived by the employees of Pinar Company.

Table 6. Differentiation Benefit and Competitiveness

Repetition	Items	average	The Standard. Deviation	Value
C1	The company experiences a limited level of competitive rivalry within the industry.	3.13	1.34	Moderate
C2	The company has established a robust brand image and reputation for its offerings.	3.12	1.37	Moderate

C5	The company has successfully grown its market presence and expanded its share.	2.76	0.86	Moderate
C3	The company has cultivated a loyal customer base over time.	2.43	0.92	Moderate
C4	The customers express satisfaction with the quality and performance of the company's products and services.	2.39	0.92	Moderate
	Overall	2.77	0.70	Moderate

Table 6 displays the average scores and agreement degrees for each item in the "differentiation advantage" category at Pınar Company, based on employee viewpoints.

Item (1), "the company is insulated from competitive rivalry in the industry, indicating a moderate level of agreement among employees," had the highest mean score of 3.13 out of 5. This indicates that employees believe Pınar Company has built a competitive position in the industry that gives some protection from fierce competition. This might be due to reasons like unique offers, patents, or market positioning that set Pınar Company apart from its rivals.

Item (2), "the company has built a strong brand reputation for its products and services," obtained a mean score of 3.12, also indicating a medium level of agreement. This implies that employees recognize that Pınar Company has successfully developed a positive reputation for its offerings, contributing to its differentiation advantage. A strong brand reputation can significantly distinguish the company's products and services, attracting a considerable number of customers.

Item (4), which concerns customer satisfaction with the company's products and services, received an average score of 2.39, indicating a moderate level of agreement. This indicates that, while customer satisfaction remains a factor contributing to differentiation advantage, there is less consensus among staff members. To enhance its differentiating advantage even further, Pınar Company should focus on addressing any potential gaps in customer satisfaction.

The overall mean score for the "differentiation advantage" domain is 2.77, indicating a moderate level of agreement among Pınar Company's employees. This suggests that the employees believe the company has taken measures to set itself apart

from its competitors. These initiatives include strategies to avoid direct competition, establish a strong brand reputation, expand market share, improve market presence, and cultivate customer loyalty. These findings underscore the significance of differentiation advantage in contributing to Pinar Company's overall competitive edge.

In conclusion, the data reveals that Pinar Company's workers view the company to have a moderate level of differentiating advantage. The firm has established a competitive position in the market that gives some protection from competition and has formed a strong brand reputation, and customer happiness is a contributing element. These variables contribute to Pinar Company's overall competitive advantage by distinguishing it from its market competitors.

G. The Impact Of Focus Advantage On Gaining Competitive Advantage At Pinar Company

This section covers the study findings for the "focus advantage" strategy as a method of gaining a competitive advantage at Pinar Company. Table 7 depicts the results, which include the mean scores and agreement degrees for each item within the focus advantage domain, as obtained from the opinions of the company's workers

Table 7. The Impact Of Focus Advantage on Gaining Competitive Advantage

Repetition	Item	Average	The Standard. Deviation	Agreement of degree
D2	The company commands premium prices for its products and services	3.28	1.51	Moderate
D1	The company targets and caters to a niche market segment(s).	3.25	1.44	Moderate
D5	The company has leveraged its unique resources to develop new market opportunities.	2.89	1.09	Medium
D4	The company has employed its unique strengths and capabilities to generate new market opportunities.	2.51	1.15	Medium
D3	The company provides products tailored specifically for a particular customer or user segment.	2.47	1.01	moderate
	Overall	2.88	0.80	moderate

Table 7 shows the mean scores and degree of agreement for each item in the "focus advantage" area at Pinar Company, based on employee feedback.

This indicates that staff believe Pinar Company can charge greater rates for its services, showing a concentration on a certain target niche prepared to pay a premium.

This demonstrates that Pinar Company has successfully positioned its products and services to target clients who appreciate its unique distinctive attributes and are willing to pay a higher price for them. Item (1), "the company serves a special market segment(s)," had a mean score of 3.25, suggesting a moderate level of agreement. Employees understand that the Pinar Company has effectively defined and targeted certain market niches for its products and services. Pinar Company can gain a competitive edge by concentrating on catering to these specific market niches. Item (5), "the company provides products specifically tailored for a particular customer segment or user," on the other hand, received the lowest average score of 2.47, with a moderate level of agreement.

This demonstrates that, while Pinar Company does offer products suited to certain customer groups, there is less agreement among employees on this subject. It might suggest that there is room for growth in terms of creating and delivering highly personalized or customized things to meet the specific needs of specific client groups. Overall, the "focus advantage" domain has a mean score of 2.88, indicating a medium level of agreement.

This shows that Pinar Company's workers believe the company has developed tactics to focus on certain market sectors. These methods include charging higher rates, catering to specialized market groups, leveraging unique assets and capabilities to establish new markets, and providing products suited to certain consumers or users. These findings emphasize the significance of focus advantage in contributing to the competitive advantage of Pinar Company. In conclusion, the data reveals that Pinar Company is seen by its employees to have a moderate level of attention advantage. The corporation can have greater costs for its solutions because it serves certain market segments and sells items suited to specific client groups. These aspects contribute to Pinar firm's overall competitive advantage by helping the firm to differentiate itself and address the particular demands of its target consumers.

H. Discussion

In this section, we will comprehensively discuss and interpret the research findings in the context of the hypotheses, shedding light on the relationship between various factors and Pinar Company's competitive advantage.

The first hypothesis aimed to investigate the relationship between strategic planning and Pinar Company's competitive advantage. The results unequivocally support the alternative hypothesis (H_1), demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between strategic planning and the company's competitive advantage. This finding underscores the pivotal role of strategic planning in enhancing Pinar Company's competitive position within the highly competitive food and beverage industry. It illuminates that the company's strategic planning processes wield substantial influence over its ability to not only gain but also sustain a competitive edge over its rivals.

The second hypothesis delved into the relationship between operational efficiency, capacity development, and Pinar Company's competitive advantage. The findings robustly corroborate the alternative hypothesis (H_1), signifying a statistically significant relationship between operational efficiency, capacity development, and the company's competitive advantage. This underscores the criticality of operational efficiency and capacity development in augmenting Pinar Company's competitive edge within the complex landscape of the food and beverage industry. It emphasizes the role of efficient resource management and continuous adaptation as key drivers of competitive advantage.

The third hypothesis scrutinized the relationship between different types of advantage (cost, differentiation, focus) and Pinar Company's ability to achieve a competitive advantage. The results firmly endorse the alternative hypothesis (H_1), revealing a statistically significant relationship between cost advantage, differentiation advantage, focus advantage, and the company's ability to attain a competitive advantage. This underscores the multifaceted nature of Pinar Company's competitive advantage, which is influenced by its strategic utilization of cost-effective practices, differentiation strategies, and a focused operational approach within the dynamic food and beverage industry.

In summary, the study's findings provide compelling evidence for the paramount importance of strategic planning, operational efficiency, capacity development, and various types of advantages in shaping and fortifying Pınar Company's competitive advantage. These results align seamlessly with established research, reaffirming the critical roles played by these factors in bolstering managerial commitment, elevating firm performance, and attaining overarching business objectives.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this study, while shedding light on several key determinants, did not extensively investigate the role of senior management in the context of gaining a competitive advantage. The influence of senior management, an area that merits further exploration, remains a potential subject for future research, offering opportunities for a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics of strategic decision-making within organizations striving for competitive supremacy.

Exploring the Factors Contributing to a Competitive Advantage in Pınar

Company Based on the study's findings, Pınar Company has effectively implemented various strategies to gain a competitive advantage in the industry. By operating at lower costs than its competitors, leveraging economies of scale, and efficiently managing its manufacturing processes, the company has been able to establish a cost advantage. This cost advantage enables Pınar Company to offer competitively priced products, attract customers, and expand its market share. However, this finding contradicts the findings of Efendioğlu and Kaebulut (2010), who primarily focused on the financial performance of Turkish industrial businesses.

Furthermore, the investigation indicated that Pınar Company boasts a unique and efficient manufacturing process characterized by well-organized sequential processes, resulting in high-quality products. This efficient manufacturing method significantly contributes to the company's competitive advantage. Additionally, the company's substantial market share, customer retention strategies, and well-trained workforce all play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining a competitive edge.

Regarding differentiation advantage, the study revealed that Pınar Company distinguishes itself in the market by offering a diverse range of products, including milk, cheese, and meat items. This differentiation sets the company apart from its

competitors and contributes significantly to its competitive advantage. Furthermore, the company has successfully built a strong reputation and brand awareness for its products and services, resulting in improved profitability, increased sales, and enhanced customer loyalty.

Lastly, the study emphasized the focus advantage strategy at Pınar Company. The company charges premium prices for its products and services, targeting customers who value quality and are willing to pay more. This strategic decision effectively helps the organization gain a competitive edge. Moreover, Pınar Company strategically serves specific market segments by tailoring its products to meet their unique needs. Leveraging its specific assets and capabilities, the firm can penetrate new markets and maintain a competitive advantage.

In conclusion, the findings illustrate that Pınar Company employs a variety of strategies to gain a competitive advantage, including cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. These strategies enable the organization to reduce costs, offer distinctive products and services, and cater to specific market niches. The study's findings align with prior research conducted on the same subject, underscoring the relevance of these strategies in achieving and sustaining a competitive edge.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Introduction

In this concluding chapter, we embark on a journey to encapsulate the essence of our entire thesis, summarizing the intricate web of research activities, findings, and their profound implications. Our exploration into the impact of strategic planning on competitive advantage at Pınar Company in Turkey has been a voyage of discovery, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of contemporary business strategies.

Our thesis set sail with the overarching goal of investigating the nexus between strategic planning and competitive advantage within the unique context of Pınar Company. Recognizing the paramount importance of strategic planning in today's fast-paced and hyper-competitive business environment, we set out to unearth the underlying mechanisms that empower organizations to gain and sustain a competitive edge.

Our research journey commenced with an exploration of the foundational concepts surrounding strategic planning and competitive advantage, laying the theoretical groundwork for our empirical investigations. As we navigated through the turbulent waters of academic literature, we encountered a vast array of theories and models, each offering a distinct perspective on how organizations can leverage strategic planning to outperform their rivals.

The port of Pınar Company, with its rich history, diverse product portfolio, and strong market presence, provided the ideal setting for our empirical investigations. With our research compass set on this strategic destination, we embarked on a multifaceted data collection expedition.

Through surveys, interviews, and data analysis, we meticulously gathered and scrutinized information from the employees and management of Pınar Company. This treasure trove of data became the lifeblood of our research, enabling us to unravel the intricacies of strategic planning within the organization.

As our research vessel sailed further into the depths of data analysis, we uncovered a tapestry of findings that shed light on the complex relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage. These findings served as beacons, illuminating the path toward understanding how Pınar Company strategically positioned itself in the Turkish market.

Key findings emerged, revealing that strategic variables such as cost advantage, differentiation advantage, and focus advantage were pivotal in enhancing Pınar Company's competitive edge. We observed the significance of efficient manufacturing processes, economies of scale, market share, customer retention, brand recognition, and targeted market segmentation as contributors to the company's competitive advantage. These findings not only reaffirmed the importance of strategic planning but also provided empirical evidence of its tangible impact.

In the wake of these findings, we have reached the shores of theoretical and practical implications. The theoretical landscape of our research has been enriched by the validation and extension of existing theories. Performance evaluation, innovation, talent retention, and various strategic advantages have emerged as critical factors influencing competitive advantage. These theoretical insights contribute to the broader body of knowledge, offering new perspectives on how organizations can navigate the complex terrain of strategic planning.

On the practical front, our research delivers actionable insights for Pınar Company and other businesses facing similar challenges. The practical implications underscore the significance of performance management, innovative manufacturing techniques, employee satisfaction, and strategic decision-making. These insights serve as a compass, guiding organizations toward the shores of competitiveness and sustainability.

As we chart the course for the remaining sections of this concluding chapter, we invite you to join us on this reflective journey. We will delve deeper into the theoretical and practical implications, exploring how our research contributes to both the academic discourse and the real-world practices of strategic planning and competitive advantage. Together, we will draw the curtains on this research voyage, hopeful that the insights garnered will serve as a guiding star for future endeavors in the ever-evolving seas of business strategy

B. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, we embarked on a comprehensive exploration of the impact of strategic planning on competitive advantage within the context of Pınar Company in Turkey. Our research journey has been marked by several significant milestones, each contributing to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

We initiated our study by establishing the importance of strategic planning as a vital element of organizational success in today's dynamic business landscape. Pınar Company, with its rich history and diverse product offerings, served as our research backdrop. Our primary goal was to assess how strategic planning practices at Pınar Company influenced its competitive advantage in the Turkish market.

Through rigorous data collection and analysis, we unveiled compelling evidence of the multifaceted relationship between strategic planning and competitive advantage. Our findings indicated that several key factors played a pivotal role in shaping Pınar Company's competitive edge. These factors included cost advantage, differentiation advantage, focus advantage, efficient manufacturing processes, economies of scale, market share, customer retention, brand recognition, and targeted market segmentation.

Moreover, our research highlighted the interplay of various dimensions of strategic planning, such as employee performance assessment, innovative manufacturing techniques, talent acquisition and retention, and the pursuit of different competitive advantages. These insights offered valuable lessons for Pınar Company's strategic decision-making processes.

C. Implications

In this section, we will explore the theoretical and practical implications of our research findings:

1. Theoretical Implications

Our study contributes to the existing theoretical knowledge in several significant ways: Performance Evaluation and Competitive Advantage: We have reinforced the notion that performance evaluation, rewarding good performance, and identifying training needs are integral components in enhancing a firm's competitive

advantage. This supports previous research emphasizing the importance of performance management (Obisi, 2011).

- a) Innovation and Productivity: The integration of productivity and innovation in Pinar Company's operations underscores their effectiveness and competitive advantage. This aligns with the concept of capacity building for socioeconomic development (Shams, 2016).
- b) Talent Retention: Our findings emphasize that retaining skilled and innovative employees is vital for gaining a competitive edge. This aligns with the understanding that a competent workforce contributes significantly to an organization's success (Larisa and Codreanu, 2021).
- c) Strategic Advantages: We have explored the diverse methods used by Pinar Company to gain a competitive advantage, including cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. These findings underscore the significance of strategic planning in acquiring and sustaining a competitive edge.

2. Practical Implications

Our research offers actionable insights with practical implications:

- a) Employee Performance: Pinar Company can enhance its competitive advantage by continuing to assess employee performance and implementing training and development initiatives. A focus on performance management can lead to improved workforce capabilities.
- b) Manufacturing Techniques: The company should continue to leverage its innovative manufacturing techniques to maintain cost advantages and increase production efficiency. Investing in technology and process improvement is critical.
- c) Talent Retention: Attracting and retaining skilled employees should remain a priority. Employee satisfaction and development programs can contribute to long-term competitive success.
- d) Strategic Advantages: Pinar Company should carefully consider the strategic advantages it employs, whether it be cost leadership, differentiation, or focus. Understanding the unique value each strategy brings can aid in decision-making.

D. Suggestions For Further Research

Building on the insights gained from this study, several promising areas for future research can provide even deeper insights into strategic planning and competitive advantage. Here are suggestions for further research

1. **Comparative Analysis:** Conduct a comparative analysis of Pınar Company with other companies in the same industry to identify industry-specific factors influencing strategic planning and competitive advantage.
2. **Longitudinal Study:** Conduct a longitudinal study to track how Pınar Company's strategic planning and competitive advantage evolve, considering different market conditions.
3. **Qualitative Research:** Complement quantitative findings with qualitative research, such as interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of employee perspectives on strategic planning.
4. **External Factors Analysis:** Investigate the impact of external factors, like regulatory changes and technological advancements, on Pınar Company's strategic planning.
5. **Cross-Cultural Analysis:** Explore how strategic planning and competitive advantage vary across different cultural contexts.
6. **Case Studies:** Analyse in-depth case studies of companies that have achieved competitive advantage through strategic planning to extract best practices.
7. **Digital Transformation:** Examine the impact of digital transformation on Pınar Company's strategic planning and competitive advantage.
8. **Benchmarking:** Implement benchmarking practices to compare Pınar Company with industry leaders for performance improvement.
9. **Sustainability and CSR:** Evaluate how sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiatives contribute to competitive advantage.
10. **Globalization:** Assess the impact of globalization on Pınar Company's strategies and competitive advantage.

Future research in these areas will undoubtedly enrich our understanding of strategic planning's role in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage, benefiting not only Pinar Company but also organizations in Turkey and beyond.

In closing, this thesis represents a significant step in unraveling the intricacies of strategic planning and competitive advantage. We hope that the insights gained from this research will guide Pinar Company and other businesses in their pursuit of excellence in the ever-evolving global marketplace.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Questionnaire

A questionnaire for examining strategic planning and its relationship to competitive advantage in Pinar Company. Identifying compliance with strategic planning is considered an important step for achieving a competitive advantage in Pinar Company. The primary purpose of this study is to elicit Pinar employees' perspectives on the extent to which they adhere to strategic planning to achieve a competitive advantage. The primary aim of this questionnaire is to collect data on how employee behavior and organizational structure affect the strategic planning and competitive advantage relationship of Pinar Company in Turkey. The information obtained will be used for academic purposes only and will be kept strictly confidential. Please take your time and provide the best responses you can. Whenever you need further clarification before answering, you can get it from the researcher (Kiiyo, 2019).

The questionnaire is classified into five sections:

First Section: Demographic Information about the Participants

Dear participants, please answer the following questions:

1. Gender:

- Male ()

- Female ()

2. Please indicate your age group:

- 20-30 years ()

- 30-40 years ()

- 40-50 years ()

- 50-60 years ()

- Over 60 years ()

3. Level of education:

- Lower than high school ()
- High school ()
- Bachelor's degree ()
- Master's degree ()
- Ph.D. ()

4. Which position are you working in?

- Executive
- Manager
- Operations and Production
- Chief executive officer
- Chief operating officer
- Chief financial officer
- Chief marketing officer
- Chief technology officer

5. How many years have you been working?

- Less than one year ()
- 1-5 years ()
- 5-10 years ()
- More than 10 years ()

6. Marital status:

- Single ()
- Married ()
- Widow/Widower ()
- Divorced ()

7. How many children do you have?

- None ()
- One ()
- More than one ()

8. What is your monthly salary?

1. Second Section: General Information Please insert a tick as necessary

9. Position of respondent:

10. To which of the following categories do you correspond?

- Top-level management
- Middle-level management

11. How many years have you worked for the company in your current position?

- Less than 5 years ()
- 5-10 years ()
- 10-15 years ()
- Over 15 years ()

12. Please indicate your highest level of education:

- Postgraduate ()
- Bachelor's ()
- Diploma ()
- Secondary ()

13. For how long has your organization practiced strategic planning?

- 0-5 years ()
- 6-10 years ()
- Over 10 years ()

14. Scope of information on your company:

- National ()
- Regional ()
- Continental ()
- Global ()

15. Ownership structure:

- Fully locally owned

- Fully foreign-owned
- Both locally and foreign-owned
- Percentage of ownership: local %; foreign %

16. How many years has the firm been in existence?

- 0-5 years ()
- 6-10 years ()
- 11-15 years ()
- 16-20 years ()
- Over 20 years ()

17. Number of employees:

- Less than 100 ()
- 100-300 ()
- 301-500 ()
- Over 500 ()

18. Kindly list all the products your company offers in the market:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

(Kiiyo, 2019)

Third section

The purpose and intention of this section are to gain insight into the effects of operational efficiency and capacity-building strategic planning on the competitive advantage of Pinar Company. Kindly state your answers on the extent to which you agree with the following statements, where 1 = strongly agree (SA), 2 = agree (A), 3 = undecided (U), 4 = disagree (D), and 5 = strongly disagree (SD).

No.	The extent to which I agree with....	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Pinar Company has enhanced its operational efficiency to					

	achieve a competitive advantage.					
2.	Pinar Company exhibits manpower efficiency.					
3.	Over the years, Pinar Company has achieved a competitive advantage through the realization of productivity efficiency.					
4.	Pinar Company produces goods and services with the utmost effectiveness and efficiency.					
5.	Pinar Company conducts employee performance reviews to identify training and development needs.					
6.	Pinar Company attracts and retains highly effective employees to gain a competitive advantage.					
7.	Through management development, Pinar Company has gained a competitive advantage over its competitors.					
8.	Capacity building enhances employee performance, leading to the achievement of a competitive advantage.					

(Codero Otieno, 2019)

Fourth section

Competitive advantage Please indicate the extent to which the following statements describe your firm's competitive advantage. Use the key below and tick as appropriate. For each question, please tick one option only.

Keywords:

1-not at all. 2-less extent. 3-moderate extent. 4-large extent. 5-very large extent.

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
A-						
16-	The company is a low-cost producer.					
17-	The company has a unique and efficient production line.					
18-	The company has a high market share.					
19-	The company enjoys economies of scale in its production capacity.					
20-	The company has retained its customers for extended periods.					
B-	The differentiation advantage					
21-	The company is shielded from competitive rivalry in the industry.					
22-	The company has established a strong brand reputation for its products and services.					
23-	The company has cultivated a pool of loyal customers.					
24-	Customers are pleased with the company's products and services.					
25-	company has successfully increased its market share.					
C-	Focus Advantage					
26-	The company caters to a niche market segment(s).					
27-	The firm offers items that are especially tailored to a certain group of clients					
28-	The company provides products tailored specifically for a particular segment of customers or users.					

29-	The company has leveraged					
30-	The organization has leveraged its distinctive resources to establish novel markets.					

(kiiyo, 2019)

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL APPROVAL

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 26.12.2023-106012



T.C.
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