

Will The Global Covid-19 Pandemic Increase The Importance Of Green Business Strategy?

Gülaçtı ŞEN¹, Belkis ÖNEL²

¹(Assist. Prof., Department of Transportation Services / Istanbul Esenyurt University, Turkey)

²(Lecturer, Department of Foreign Trade / Istanbul Esenyurt University, Turkey)

*Corresponding Author: Gülaçtı ŞEN¹

ABSTRACT:*In the Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged in the last quarter of 2019 and spread all over the world in a short time, individuals became more conscious about activities that could harm people and nature, and discussions on protecting the environment started; brought the concept of green business strategy to the fore in businesses. In the pandemic that continued in 2021, it is not clear which strategies businesses will follow after the pandemic, depending on the uncertainty, complexity and variability in the business world. This study investigates whether a green business strategy is important for businesses that continue their activities after the Covid-19 pandemic or will continue their activities after the pandemic. Accordingly, one of the qualitative research methods, the case study method was applied in the study. Green business strategy has been explained by making a literature review, and the green practices that have become increasingly important in businesses to protect the natural environment are explained. The green business strategy is an important strategy for surviving the pandemic crisis, and when implemented across the entire enterprise, it appears to facilitate decisions and initiatives that improve the environment.*

KEYWORDS -Covid-19 Pandemic, Crisis, Green Business, Green Business Strategy, Natural Environment

I. Introduction

The main task of businesses is to continue their activities by meeting the needs and expectations of consumers. Businesses that continue their activities have to fulfill their responsibilities towards the state, society, environment, stakeholders, employees and consumers (Ceyhan and Ada, 2015: 116). Because businesses, which have an important position in meeting the unlimited needs of people, cause a continuous increase in the use of limited natural resources. This is straining the capacity of the earth's natural systems. However, environmental threats occurring at the regional and global level make it necessary for businesses to develop green-oriented strategies. In other words, businesses have to implement policies within the framework of targets for more efficient use of natural resources and ensuring their sustainability, with an understanding of dynamic environmentalism based on the understanding of minimizing environmental threats (Karahan, 2017: 360).

Despite the wealth, prosperity and development brought about by decades of industrial development, the planet's serious environmental problems (for example, air/water pollution, global warming and soil erosion) that constantly endanger life are increasingly on the agenda of governments, advocacy groups, business firms and other stakeholders in many parts of the world. is gaining more importance (Leonidou et al., 2017: 585). However, a process that brought the seriousness of this situation to the forefront for all humanity emerged in 2019. With the Covid-19 virus, which spread rapidly all over the world, a deadly threat was encountered on a global scale, and 'normal life' was suspended as people were locked in their homes. This situation has increased the importance of natural life, which is necessary for all people. It is known that the global climate crisis has begun to be adopted by the society as a crisis that needs to be resolved, and governments are called upon, and governments are attempting to take action, albeit slowly, in the face of this situation (www.cdpturkey.sabanciuniv.edu.tr). With the Covid-19 global pandemic, businesses have great responsibilities in the efforts to protect the natural environment and to address the climate crisis. It is necessary to take measures to protect the natural environment at all stages from the presentation of products/services, even from production to consumption, without harming the natural environment. In this direction, green business strategy applications have gained importance in businesses.

Today, one of the main indicators of successful business understanding is seen as "the ability of businesses to create green strategies". Green business strategy; It refers to the inclusion of environmental elements in the basic strategic functional areas of the company, such as production, marketing, finance, purchasing, human resources and research and development aimed at protecting the natural environment (Leonidou et al., 2017: 587). With the green business strategy, while businesses try to realize their commercial goals, they also try to realize their goals to prevent environmental problems (Şenocak and Mohan, 2018: 165).

On the other hand, incorporating the green business approach into basic business strategies increases business performance (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2020: 57).

While the importance of natural life is given more importance by individuals with the pandemic, it has been better understood by businesses that this situation cannot be ignored. Therefore, an increase in initiatives to protect the natural environment is expected as an exit strategy from the crisis after the pandemic in businesses that will continue to operate after the pandemic is over. One of the most important of these initiatives is for the implementation of the green business strategy. In this study, first of all, the green business strategy is explained and the green practices that increase in importance in the businesses aimed at protecting the natural environment are conveyed. Afterwards, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses were revealed and green business strategy applications for businesses were investigated in studies for the protection of the natural environment, the importance of which was better understood with the pandemic. It has been tried to explain whether the green business strategy will be effective in the crisis exit strategies of the enterprises.

II. Review of the literature

In recent years, with the effect of globalization, businesses that have been successful in national markets are turning into a structure that can adapt to environmental policy in order to achieve success in international markets. In fact, they are quick to invest in technologies that can support the implementation of green methods. They are reorganizing their industrial systems with a green focus. Because it has become a necessity to do these in order to achieve sustainability, longevity, competitive advantage and profitability. Therefore, environmental practices such as the establishment of green businesses, the production of environmentally friendly products, the implementation of green marketing activities, the development of clean technologies provide success to businesses both at the national and international level. Adoption and implementation of green business strategies help businesses reduce their costs and increase their income, and it is seen that it is of great importance in gaining advantage with a competitive strategy.

2.1. Green Business Strategy

The effect of globalization and technological developments in all areas of life and the liberalization process that allows the circulation of resources in the international arena brings with it the intensity of competition. As an effect of this situation, there are radical changes in traditional business rules. These changes also impose great responsibilities on businesses. Businesses, which have an important share in the depletion of natural resources and environmental pollution, primarily adapt to the changing world order, but also turn to green business practices by using production methods and technologies to prevent environmental problems from their source. In this context, strategies are developed primarily to prevent pollution through improvement efforts in all processes of business activities. Strategies developed to reduce waste and emissions basically provide businesses with a competitive advantage based on continuous improvement of processes (Çavuş and Tancı, 2013: 74). As a result of rapidly changing environmental conditions, businesses need an effective management approach in order to survive in difficult competitive conditions. For this reason, it aims to make the organizational management processes of higher quality based on the quality of the production processes. Businesses that aim to increase productivity by improving quality make a significant contribution to preventing environmental pollution by using natural resources effectively and efficiently (Karakuş and Erdirençelebi, 2018: 685).

The sensitivity of society and people to the environment has also had an impact on their businesses. Businesses that act with the understanding of social responsibility have started to act with environmental awareness in all their business activities (Yıldırım and Göktürk, 2004). As a result of the changes in environmental values, the way of "green business" has emerged in enterprises. In green ways of doing business, businesses determine their activities by considering their environmental strategies. In this respect, businesses that direct their decision-making mechanisms depending on environmental effects are switching from traditional strategies to green strategies. Another strategy developed to reduce environmental pollution and resource consumption is clean technology. Clean technology refers to environmentally friendly sustainable energy, products, services and processes that use renewable energy sources and renewable materials, reduce the use of natural resources, and reduce emissions and waste. The aim of clean technology is to provide high efficiency in solving problems related to environmental pollution. In addition, it aims to eliminate the negative factors created by resource consumption and input costs. By ensuring process efficiency, it is aimed to reduce the consumption rate of natural resources, to reduce raw material consumption and waste and to ensure profitability. Thus, while businesses increase their environmental performance on the one hand, they provide a competitive advantage on the other hand (Tunç, 2019: 24).

Businesses trying to realize their commercial goals with their traditional strategies, in addition to realizing their commercial goals with green business strategies, also realize their environmental goals with environmentally friendly practices (Akatay and Aslan, 2018:316). In this direction, green business practices in the literature are used in production, management, marketing, etc. visible in its activities. Green business

practices, which have an increasing importance in enterprises (1) lean production (2) production management system (3) energy management (4) environmental management issues are explained.

2.2. Green Business Strategy Practices

The acceleration of globalization and the rapid growth of economic and technological developments in parallel with it have also revealed environmental problems. Trying to meet unlimited needs with limited resources has made it threatening human life and ecological balance. The fact that environmental problems have become a global problem out of a national dimension has created the necessity of developing effective environmental policies with international cooperation, apart from the policies developed by the countries themselves in solving environmental problems. In addition, the rapid increase in social environmental awareness today has changed people's lifestyles and shopping habits, enabling them to act more sensitive to the environment. As a result, green strategies have started to be implemented in businesses.

Within the framework of green strategies, enterprises should consider green management, green design, green purchasing, green production, green marketing and service, green supply chain management strategy, etc. perspective should continue to work (Chen et al., 2012: 2545-47). A few of these practices, which are referred to as green business practices, are explained below.

Lean production: Basically, lean production is a flexible and open-to-development production system that enables to do the right work at the right time and at the right place, and aims to minimize the level of error. With lean production, businesses can increase the intended production level and minimize labor and material costs. It is desired to improve the quality and cost by increasing the speed and shortening the flow time during production. Thus, a system emerges in which cost, stock, labor, error and customer dissatisfaction are minimized. The focus of this system is to provide continuous improvement in process and design by creating customer satisfaction. At the same time, it aims to use valuable resources effectively as a system that acts with the principle of zero error with correct production (Bilgin, 2018: 586). One of the basic dynamics of my lean production system is customer focus. The aim with customer orientation is to realize production at the time the customer wants and by spending less resources. Businesses want to create a sense of satisfaction in the customer by focusing on the activities that are important to the customer (time to market, delivery time). Another dynamic of the lean production system is to create value. Producing an unsuitable product or service correctly or not producing a suitable product or service correctly causes a waste of resources and time. For this reason, it is important to evaluate all stages in the activity chain (Özçelik, 2013: 105). Studies show that companies using lean production system provide radical improvements in parameters such as timely work, reduction of inventory costs, labor productivity, and timely delivery of the right product to the customer. However, there is a strong relationship between lean practices and the ecosystem. Studies show that companies that act with lean manufacturing practices have positive effects on environmental performance. Businesses that ensure continuity in the lean production system on the axis of environmental management practices can also provide competitive advantage (Tikici and Aksoy, 2006: 29).

Production Management System (MES): MES is a system that aims to increase productivity in production by providing maximum performance in enterprises carrying out production activities, and ensures the most appropriate use of workforce, materials and resources. The Manufacturing Execution System is abbreviated as MES. Its Turkish equivalent is Production Management System (<https://proente.com/mes/>). The production management system is a technology-based system and is used at every stage of production, such as resource planning, data collection and analysis. Besides helping to evaluate the production process correctly, it also plays an important role in the management and regulation of resources. It provides data flow of all kinds of methods and tools in the production process in the online environment. Enterprises can better plan their process management with the production management system. Thus, it allows more efficient use of resources. The production management system provides many advantages to businesses. For example, it provides simultaneous data collection in the production area and stores the data in a central database. In addition, it increases the quality of the product by reducing the production cycle and delivery time. In this way, it supports the reduction of costs by contributing to the development of customer relations (Yumaşak, 2013).

Energy Management: The activities carried out to ensure the efficient use of energy resources are called 'energy management'. With energy management, it is aimed to use energy efficiency by preventing current energy losses. Undoubtedly, energy is needed in every field. With the effect of increasing population and technological developments, the need for energy is increasing day by day. At this point, it is very important to use energy resources efficiently and to save money. For this reason, countries are developing methods to use their limited energy resources in the most efficient way (Uzun and Değirmen, 2018: 84). Businesses that have a significant share in the use of energy resources, on the other hand, develop efficiency-enhancing projects by determining their targets and priorities for energy management. Because the efficient use of energy and the reduction of costs provide a competitive advantage to businesses. At the same time, environmentally friendly actions of businesses play a supportive role in increasing their profitability by both creating customer

satisfaction and providing businesses with the opportunity to open up to new markets (Kavar and Yılmaz, 2019: 92).

Environmental Management: With the environmental management system, businesses plan all their production processes from the first stage of the product or service to the moment it is presented to the customer, taking into account the philosophy of protecting the ecosystem. For this purpose, environmental problems and strategies for the solution of these problems are developed. Within the framework of these strategies, many businesses operating in the national or international arena have been redesigned to improve their environmental and energy capabilities. At this stage, it has been observed that businesses that perceive environmental management practices as a cost and act outside the system are missing new opportunities to a great extent. On the other hand, businesses that adopt practices aimed at protecting the environment and reducing environmental pollution are taking important steps towards becoming a green business with a green management approach (Bolat and Gözli, 2003).

Studies show that green business practices have positive effects on business performance. Businesses that find opportunities to open up to new markets with green business practices, create a positive image in the society and provide consumer satisfaction, as well as gain competitive power by increasing productivity. As a result, businesses that increase their profitability experience positive changes in their success graphics with green-oriented strategies (Kirhallı, 2013). It becomes possible for businesses using sustainable green methods to minimize the negative effects on the environment. Determining the protection of the ecosystem as a priority target directs businesses to the correct use of biological resources, while at the same time creating an area of opportunity for reducing the cost expenses arising from the degradation of the ecosystem. In addition, the increasing environmental awareness of consumers constitutes an important driving force for businesses to adopt and implement green culture (Yeşilyıldın, 2018: 4).

2.3. Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Businesses

The virus called Covid-19, which emerged in China and spread rapidly all over the world, caused a great economic shock as well as its effect on public health (Bartik et al., 2020: 17656). Closing the border gates of the countries, the implementation of curfews to reduce human mobility, the transition to the remote working system in enterprises, the interruption of production, the temporary or permanent closure of some workplaces while some businesses are downsizing, etc. These reasons had a negative impact on the economy (Kara, 2020: 271). From the first moment the virus emerged and spread, it has negatively affected almost all sectors. While the oil and gas, aviation, tourism, automotive, energy and infrastructure, media and entertainment sectors were adversely affected by the pandemic; technology, telecommunications, retail, etc. sectors are considered to be positively affected by investors (www.ey.com). In the pandemic, which affected more than 436 million enterprises worldwide, approximately 232 million enterprises were transferred as wholesale and retail, 111 million as manufacturing, 51 million as accommodation and catering services, and 42 million as real estate and other commercial activities (ILO, 2020c). Activities in many workplaces in sectors negatively affected by the pandemic have come to a standstill. While measures such as reducing working hours and switching to the remote working system were taken in most enterprises, some enterprises dismissed millions of employees globally, and some declared that they went bankrupt (Erol, 2020: 226). Employees have also faced situations such as losing their jobs, taking unpaid leave, and decreasing their weekly working hours (Kara, 2020: 270).

In 2020, the effects of the pandemic on businesses and the labor market greatly exceeded the negative effects of the 2009 global financial crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic is expressed as the heaviest global crisis since the Second World War. With a major economic upheaval it has created, the Covid-19 crisis affects 3.3 billion workforce worldwide. Decreases in economic activities cause a serious decrease in employment in terms of both the number of jobs and the total time worked. In many countries, economic activities in all sectors have been severely restricted, resulting in sharp declines in the income streams of many enterprises (ILO, 2020a: 4-5). Businesses have started to experience cash flow problems from the first moment of the virus, and this has negatively affected production, debts, employees and customers (Deloitte, 2021).

According to the report published by the International Labor Organization (ILO) on March 18, 2020, it listed how the economic shocks due to Covid-19 affected working life in three dimensions (ILO, 2020a: 3);

- Quantity of jobs (both in the context of unemployment and underemployment)
- Quality of work (wages and access to social protection, etc.)
- Effects on certain groups that are relatively more vulnerable among competitors.

The interruption of the activities of the enterprises due to the Covid-19 pandemic reduces the amount of work. This situation draws attention to a significant increase in unemployment and underemployment. In addition, the decrease in wages and working hours in businesses that continue their activities will affect the quality of the work. The effects of the pandemic on certain groups that are relatively more vulnerable among competitors will differ. Among these groups, special measures will be needed, primarily among young, elderly, female and migrant workers who lack job security and work in low-paying jobs, those who are self-employed,

those who work part-time and those in temporary employment, and those who are not eligible for unemployment or health insurance Erol, 2020: 215-217).

While the pandemic continues in 2021 and the future remains uncertain, it is not clear what strategy businesses will follow regarding their future. According to a study conducted by TUSIAD in 2020, the risks that businesses foresee for their future in the face of the pandemic are given in table 1 accordingly, the inadequacy of domestic demand, the inability to allocate their receivables, the inability to find qualified labor and the increase in costs stand out as the topics that companies attribute the highest risk to.

Table 1 Projected Risks for the Future of Businesses

	1- (Low risk)	2	3	4- (High risk)	Risk score	Risk score (2nd quarter)
Insufficient domestic demand	16%	26%	22%	37%	2,8	3
Inability to collect receivables	13%	21%	30%	36%	2,9	-
Inability to find skilled labor	17%	25%	23%	35%	2,8	1,9
Increasing production and operating costs	13%	21%	35%	31%	2,9	-
Supply chain disruptions	17%	26%	26%	30%	2,7	2,5
Inability to borrow / unable to find credit	20%	22%	29%	28%	2,7	2,2
Insufficient foreign demand (exports)	21%	22%	32%	25%	2,6	2,6
Inability to pay debt	18%	27%	38%	18%	2,6	2,3

Source: TUSIAD. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 Crisis on Businesses. 4th Quarter Survey (21 December 2020 – 15 January 2021) Final Report. 1-27.

In the face of the risks foreseen for the future of the enterprises, the business volume contracted and employment decreased due to the effect of the pandemic. However, the impact of the pandemic on businesses has affected businesses not only in economic terms, but also in many aspects. It can be stated that the effects of the pandemic on businesses have changed or will change directly and indirectly around the following factors (Escarus, 2020: 36-40);

Change in the Economy: With the pandemic, production and trade were interrupted, economic activities came to an almost complete standstill, the increase in bankruptcy rates in enterprises, the change of business, the decrease in growth rates, the increase in business debts, the increasing unemployment, had a profound effect on the economy. How the change in the economy will be managed by national governments after the pandemic is important for businesses.

Change in Technology: Today, it is possible to adapt quickly to changing conditions with technology. For this reason, it will be seen that there will be changes in technology after the pandemic and some technologies that are already known / used will be used more widely than in the past. Digitalization, internet of things, robotic technologies, executive support systems, office automation systems, cyber security system will be vital for businesses.

Change in Business Model: Due to the pandemic, remote working and flexible working systems have been implemented in many businesses. With the increase in technological opportunities, it is predicted that there will be a long-term change in the business model wherever computers and internet are available. In addition, while it is predicted that travel for business purposes will decrease with remote working, there is an increase in online sales and payment system with the widespread use of technology, and accordingly, there is an increase in sustainability sensitivities in the business.

Change in Education: The transition to the distance education system with the pandemic had a negative impact on both students and teachers. Unfamiliarity with distance education platforms, students' anxieties, and teachers' unpreparedness in the face of the crisis caused stress. Despite this, the distance education system, which is popular with the pandemic, offers alternatives to teaching with advanced technological tools.

Changes in Consumption Behaviors: Although it differs in each country, there are changes in consumer behavior. This situation affects businesses on a sectoral basis. For example, worldwide demand for textile products or motor vehicles has fallen; however, demand for computer components, TV viewing systems, healthcare products and durable food materials has increased.

Among the measures to be taken by businesses and all actors in the economy for the future are providing working capital, postponing debts or restructuring loans, restructuring companies by taking into account the dynamics of the sector, expanding or downsizing according to needs, and continuing activities by

establishing partnerships with other companies (Escarus, 2020: 48-50). However, in the long term, one of the most important issues of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses and individuals is climate change. It is known that climate change and environmental destruction are effective especially in the formation of infectious diseases. Environmental changes are very effective in the formation of diseases such as malaria, cholera and Lyme Disease (Aslan, 2020: 25). Therefore, governments, businesses and individuals have duties to prevent diseases and pandemics. As governments initiate economic recovery programs to reduce unemployment and stabilize key industries, they must also consider the climate change crisis that threatens human well-being and health. Covid-19 is a global crisis and it has been accepted by both governments and businesses that climate change is also a global crisis, and measures should be taken in this direction (Rosenbloom and Markard, 2020: 447).

Regarding the global climate crisis, green business and green economy are recommended for governments and businesses that will fight the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Studies have started around the world on this subject, while the United States of America increases investments in 'green economy sectors' (www.yesilekonomi.com), the European Union plans to make the 'green economy transition' an important part of its plan to get rid of the economic effects of the pandemic (cdpturkey.sabanciuni.edu.tr).

III. Method

In this article, the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The importance of environmental factors has increased with the Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged in 2019 and affected businesses all over the world. This situation has led people to businesses that protect nature and attach importance to environmental factors. It has become necessary for businesses to implement strategies that do not harm the natural environment, strive for this and organize all their activities accordingly. Considering the environmental factors of enterprises, technology, research and development, economy, etc. It is necessary for the enterprise to continue its investments by protecting the natural environment in all areas. In this direction, green strategies are recommended to avoid unnecessary use of natural resources and to save money. With the green business strategy, businesses succeed in making profits by acting for the benefit of society by including environmental elements in the basic strategic functional areas of the company, such as production, finance and human resources, which aim to protect the natural environment. In other words, while achieving their goals to prevent environmental problems, they gain competitive advantage by continuing their commercial activities. This study investigates the importance of green business strategy for businesses that continue their activities after the Covid-19 pandemic or that are newly established so that they can compete in national or international markets and gain competitive advantage. In this direction, first of all, the green business strategy has been explained in the study and the green practices of increasing importance in the businesses aimed at protecting the natural environment have been explained. Afterwards, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses were revealed and green business strategy applications for businesses were investigated.

IV. The importance of green business in the global covid-19 pandemic

While the Covid-19 pandemic has caused many businesses to close, it has led to unprecedented trade recessions in many industry sectors. Industries related to retailers and brands, health and safety, supply chain, workforce, cash flow, consumer demand, sales and marketing have faced many challenges in a short time. Even overcoming difficulties and being successful does not provide any guarantee for the future of the industry and the business. Because after the pandemic ends, a very different world is expected compared to the previous period (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020: 284). It is thought that the changes in the job market with the pandemic will inevitably affect all businesses. Remote work, part-time work, use of digitalized tools, etc. It can be said that the changes in the behavior of consumers who have been isolated from social life for a long time due to the pandemic will inevitably affect all businesses in the new job market.

With the global Covid-19 pandemic, businesses, economic, social, technological, etc. In the face of this situation, it is looking for ways out of the crisis in order to get rid of the negative effects of the pandemic with the least damage or to survive. For this, it is obvious that businesses have to keep up with the change. One of the issues that should be taken into account in keeping up with the change in businesses is the sustainability studies, which are gaining in importance today. The concept of sustainability in businesses can be defined as 'the use of strategies and approaches by businesses to eliminate the damage they cause to the environment in the production process for business continuity in the long term' (Kuşat, 2012: 229). Particular attention should be paid to sustainability studies in the new job market after the pandemic. In this regard, the sustainability issues that businesses should focus on are suggested as follows (Escarus, 2020: 52-104);

- Risk management approach
- Ensuring workforce management and continuity
- Community health, safety and welfare

- Waste management during pandemic days
- The relationship between pandemic and climate change
- Sustainable finance solutions that stand out with the pandemic crisis.

It can be said that green business strategy practices have gained importance in businesses related to the sustainability issues listed above. In the literature, there are studies especially within the framework of the relationship between pandemic and climate change. Newell and Dale (2020: 3), in their research on the Covid-19 pandemic and global climate, addressed the Covid-19 pandemic as a future socio-economic disturbance that we may encounter with climate change and other public health crises, and addressed sustainability, health imperatives and climate change through long-term integrated planning. They saw it as an opportunity to address critical gaps in community resilience by integrating their goals. Fuentes et al. (2020: 1) discussed the similarities and differences between the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change, which are expressed as two global problems. To them, the Covid-19 pandemic, however frightening and devastating as a crisis, is only a preview of the severe disruptions that climate change will bring. In fact, the pandemic itself is a reality check for climate policy. In other words, it is a fake climate change laboratory in which the time scale of the events is reduced from decades to days. The former is usually measured in days, weeks, months, years, while the latter is measured in years, decades and centuries. On the other hand, in the relationship between the pandemic and the environmental factor, green business strategies, green economy, green energy and green business practices are recommended for businesses to gain competitive advantage. However, it has also been stated that the economic crisis that has arisen all over the world due to the pandemic may prevent or delay businesses from investing in green businesses (<https://csdsafrika.org/covid-19-and-green-business-in-africa/>). Reasons such as insufficient domestic demand in enterprises, inability to allocate receivables, and increase in costs can be seen as an obstacle to the transition to green strategies. Despite everything, it seems that the green business strategy for changing consumer behavior with the pandemic has become a necessity. It is seen that consumers have become more conscious and sensitive to the environment with the pandemic. Because consumers adversely affected by the health, economic and social trauma caused by COVID-19 are more aware of the fragility of the planet, air and water pollution, water scarcity and other environmental problems. In other words, consumer awareness about the links between consumption and the global climate crisis is increasing. In addition, the negative effects of the pandemic can also trigger the impulse to "return to normal" of the pre-Covid-19 lifestyle (Mende and Misra, 2021: 98). Therefore, it can be stated that the pandemic accelerated the implementation of green strategies.

It can be said that Covid-19 has almost 'paused' the whole world; but it also opened a window of opportunity. Falling oil prices have finally eliminated massive subsidies for fossil fuels; It recalled practices to protect the natural environment, such as making it more politically viable to redirect investments in climate-friendly community infrastructure, such as distributed and regional energy systems. In fact, it has been instrumental in making significant progress for sustainability in businesses (Newell and Dale, 2020: 2). Specifically, a significant reduction in local pollution has been noted since the Covid-19 pandemic (Fuentes et al., 2020: 2). The pandemic needs to be seen as an opportunity to effectively promote and implement the green business strategy.

In fact, as a result of the international reactions to environmental problems before the pandemic, the necessity of creating new and important laws and regulations for the efficient use of environment and resources was emphasized on the one hand, and the necessity of green management on the other hand. Green management is a way of thinking that acts to reduce and prevent environmental impacts in business activities by restructuring the business processes of a business. Although green management is a young discipline, it is a management style that reduces the use of materials and energy with its conservation policy, makes more use of recycled energy and inputs, and tries to compensate for consumption with renewal activities (Stringer, 2009). The pandemic's negative impact on human life and people's better understanding of the value of environmental elements; brought to the agenda the importance of this form of management. Aside from the way or causes of the pandemic, the fact that it is the human factor that causes environmental destruction is accepted by everyone. Therefore, the pandemic is expected to accelerate green business strategy implementations in businesses that want to gain competitive advantage.

Green strategies also have enormous potential to influence the products and services the business offers to its customers. Prioritizing product development projects according to their "green" contribution can open up an entirely new channel for idea generation in the idea generation process. While green concepts are still new and companies are learning how to incorporate them into their business, this can make it an area that effectively creates strategic differentiation that is sustainable, at least for a time.

The green paradigm seeks to increase life well-being around the world and to create a sustainable development with environmental gains. For this reason, businesses are under more pressure to take on environmental responsibility and reorganize their business processes and reflect green practices more in their activities. With strategic management, it helps to use production resources efficiently and effectively in order to maintain its existence in the global market in the long term and to provide competitive advantage (Esty, &

Winston, 2008). Businesses that adopt a green culture adopt green strategies before switching to green methods in their practices. All levels of a business are responsible for the adoption and development of green strategies. First of all, it is very important for senior managers to adopt a green-oriented approach and be involved in the process. Then, training programs should be created to ensure the commitment of other employees to the green initiative. However, it is very important to monitor and measure the results as well as the execution and development of green strategies, which are created by taking environmental factors into account (Tunç, 2019: 140).

V. Conclusion

With green strategies, businesses avoid the use of unnecessary natural resources and save money. At the same time, it creates a strong business image by acting with an advanced understanding of social responsibility. Of course, it is not possible to say that this practice is adopted or cared for by all businesses. However, it is possible to say that the importance of the green business strategy has increased with the Covid-19 pandemic that emerged in 2019 and affected all humanity. The worldwide disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has had multiple impacts on both humans and the environment. Isolation of people from social life, closing of restaurants, shopping malls, remote working system etc. The changes reminded how valuable the natural environment is for human life and made people become conscious about protecting the environment. In addition, the serious decrease in planned travels has also resulted in a temporary clearing of the sky and, accordingly, a decrease in air pollution in many regions. As a result of such environmental transformations, the change in consumers' behavior has been directed towards businesses and products that do not harm the environment and even protect the environment. Therefore, especially in the post-pandemic period, green business strategy implementations have become a necessity for businesses to continue their activities, enter national and international markets, and gain competitive advantage. Unlike other strategies in a business, the green business strategy; It will also influence decisions made across the entire enterprise, including business strategy, business strategy, organizational strategy, information strategy, implementation strategy, technology strategy, and supporting infrastructure. Therefore, when the green business strategy is implemented across the entire enterprise, it will facilitate decisions and initiatives that improve the environment.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, the opportunity to realize green goals and invest in a sustainable future has been obtained for all humanity. All businesses that develop environmentally oriented strategies; It has started to be preferred by customers, employees and everyone who acts with green consciousness. It primarily increases the market value by providing financial savings, and as a result, it provides efficiency and profitability. The green business strategy allows businesses to define environmental-oriented goals and to make long-term plans for the implementation and execution of these goals. The green business strategy, which is a continuous improvement and evaluation process to achieve environmental excellence, enables businesses to determine and analyze their impact on the environment. The green business strategy, which is extremely important for businesses to continue their activities and gain competitive advantage, can be considered as an important strategy to get rid of the pandemic crisis.

References

- [1] Ceyhan, S. ve Ada, S. (2015). İşletme Fonksiyonları Açısından Çevreye Duyarlı İşletmecilik. *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 11(26):115-137.
- [2] Karahan, M. (2017). İşletme Yöneticilerinin Çevre Duyarlılığı Ve Farkındalık Düzeylerinin Belirlenmesi. *MANAS Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 6(4): 359-374.
- [3] Leonidou L.C., Christodoulides, P. Kyrgidou, L.P. &Palihawadana, D. (2017). Internal Drivers and Performance Consequences of Small Firm Green Business Strategy: The Moderating Role of External Forces. *J Bus Ethics* (2017) (140): 585–606.
- [4] <https://cdpturkey.sabanciuniv.edu/tr/content/iklim-ekonomi-coronavirus> (23.04.2021).
- [5] Şenocak, B. ve Mohan Bursalı, Y. (2018). İşletmelerde Çevresel Sürdürülebilirlik Bilinci ve Yeşil İşletmecilik Uygulamaları İle İşletme Başarısı Arasındaki İlişki. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 23(1):161-183.
- [6] Bıçakcıoğlu, N., Theoharakis, V. Ve Tanyeri, M. (2020). Green Business Strategy and Export Performance An Examination Of Boundary Conditions from an Emerging Economy. *International Marketing Review*, 37(1): 56-75.
- [7] Çavuş, M. Ve Tancı, N. (2013). Yeşil İşletme Ve Çevre Yönetim Sistemleri. *Üçüncü Sektör Sosyal Ekonomi Dergisi*, 48(1): 73-82.
- [8] Karakuş, G. Ve Erdiñçebebi, M. (2018). İşletmelerin Yeşil Yönetim Algılarının İşletme Performansı Üzerindeki Etkisini Ölçmeye Yönelik Bir Araştırma. *İşletme Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 10(4): 681-704.

- [9] Yıldırım, U. ve Göktürk, İ. (2004). *Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma, Çevre Sorunlarına Çağdaş Yaklaşımlar: Ekolojik, Ekonomik, Politik ve Yönetimsel Perspektifler*. Editör: Mehmet Marın, Beta Basım Yayım, 1. Baskı, İstanbul.
- [10] Tunç, T. (2019). *Yeşil İşletme Stratejileri Ve Uygulamaları Üzerine Nitel Bir Araştırma*. (Doktora Tezi). Niğde Ömer Halisdemir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı, Niğde.
- [11] Akatay, A. ve Aslan, Ş. (2008). Yeşil Yönetim ve İşletmeleri ISO 14001 sertifikası Almanya Yönelten Faktörler. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 10(1): 313-319.
- [12] Chen, C.C., Shih, H.S., Shyur, H.J. ve WU, K.S. (2012). A Business Strategy Selection Of Green Supply Chain Management Via An Analytic Network Process. *Computer & Mathematics With Applications*, 64(8): 2544-2557.
- [13] Bilgin, E. (2018). Yalın Üretim Uygulamaları Ve Kazanımları. *Uluslararası İktisadi ve İdari İncelemeler Dergisi*, 17. ÜİK Özel Sayısı, 585-600.
- [14] Özçelik, F. (2013). Yalın Performans Ölçüleri Ve Yalın Üretim Uygulayan İşletmelerin Muhasebe Bölümlerinde Bir Araştırma. *Uluslararası İktisadi ve İdari İncelemeler Dergisi*, 5(10): 104-126.
- [15] Tikici, M. Ve Aksoy, A. (2006). Toplam Kalite Yönetiminin Radikal Unsurlarından Birisi Olarak Yalın Yönetim. *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(1): 20-23.
- [16] Proente Otomasyon (2021). <https://proente.com/mes/> (25.05.2021).
- [17] Yumaşak, S. (2013). İşletmeler üzerinde insan kaynakları planlamasının yeri ve önemi üzerine bir alan uygulaması, *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 0(36): 57-70.
- [18] Uzun, A. ve Değirmen, M. (2018). Endüstriyel İşletmelerde Enerji Verimliliği ve Enerji Yönetimi. *Uluslararası Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 4(2): 83-97.
- [19] Kavar, Ö. ve Yılmaz, M. (2019). Enerji Yönetiminde Faaliyet Tabanlı Maliyetleme Modeli: Bir Üretim İşletmesinde Uygulama. *Muhasebe ve Finansman Dergisi*, (83): 85-110.
- [20] Bolat, B. ve Gözülü, S. (2003). ISO 14000 Çevre Yönetim Sistemi Uygulamasında Etkin Olan Faktörler. *İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Dergisi*, 2(2): 39-48.
- [21] Kırhallı, K.S. (2013). *Küreselleşme ve İklim Değişikliği ile Mücadelede Alternatif Bir Çözüm: Metal Organik Kafesler; Sentez ve CO2 Tutma*. (25): 29-41.
- [22] Yeşilaydın, G. (2018). *Yeşil İşletme*. Nobel Basım Yayım, ISBN: 978-605-320-879-2. 1. Baskı.
- [23] Bartik, A., Bertrand, M., Cullen, Z., Glaeser, E.L., Luca, M. & Stanton, C. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on Small Business Outcomes and Expectations. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 117(30): 17656-17666.
- [24] Kara, E. (2020). Covid-19 Pandemisi: İşgücü Üzerindeki Etkileri ve İstihdam Tedbirleri. *Avrasya Sosyal ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi (ASEAD)*. 7(5), 269-282.
- [25] https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/tr_tr/pdf/2020/11/calisma-dunyasinin-gelecegi-covid-19-ve-yeni-normal.pdf, Çalışma Dünyasının Geleceği: Covid-19 ve Yeni Normal. (21.04.2021).
- [26] International Labour Organization (2020c). Which policies can help small businesses withstand COVID-19. 24 Kasım 2020, <https://iloblog.org/2020/04/16/which-policies-can-help-small-businesses-withstand-covid-19/> (22.04.2021).
- [27] Erol, S.I. (2020). Covid-19'un Çalışma Hayatına Yansımaları: Salgından Etkilenen Bazı Ülkeler Tarafından Alman Önlemler. *Dicle Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 10(19): 212-231.
- [28] International Labour Organization (2020a). ILO Gözlem 2nci Baskı: COVID-19 ve Çalışma Yaşamı. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---iloankara/documents/briefingnote/wcms_741784.pdf (21.04.2021).
- [29] Deloitte. (2020). <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/tr/Documents/financial-advisory/COVID-19-un-isletmelere-olan-finansal-etkileri.pdf> (Erişim Tarihi: 22.04.2021).
- [30] TUSIAD. (2020). Covid-19 Krizinin İşletmeler Üzerindeki Etkisi. 4. Çeyrek Anketi (21 Aralık 2020 – 15 Ocak 2021) Sonuç Raporu. 1-27.
- [31] Escarus. (2020). Bir Eko-sosyal Kriz Olarak Covid-19 Salgını ve Sürdürülebilirlik. https://www.escarus.com/i/content/512_2_Escarus_Bir_Eko-Sosyal_Kriz_Olarak_Covid-19_Salgini_ve_Surdurulebilirlik_052020.pdf (21.04.2021).
- [32] Aslan, D. (2020). *Yeni Koronavirüs Hastalığı (COVID-19) ve Uluslararası Sağlık Açısından Değerlendirmeler*. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, ISBN: 978-975-491-509-9.
- [33] Rosenbloom, D. ve Markard, J. (2020). A Covid-19 Recovery For Climate. *American Association for the Advancement of Science*. 368(6490): 447.

- [34] <https://yesilekonomi.com/abd-yesil-ekonomi-sektoru-13-trilyon-dolar-buyukluge-ulasti/> (23.04.2021).
- [35] <https://cdpturkey.sabanciuniv.edu/tr/content/iklim-ekonomi-coronavirus> (29.04.2021).
- [36] Donthu, N & Gustafsson A. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on Business and Research. *Journal of Business Research*, (117): 284-289.
- [37] https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/tr_tr/pdf/2020/11/calisma-dunyasinin-gelecegi-covid-19-ve-yeni-normal.pdf (29.04.2021).
- [38] Kuşat, N. (2012). Sürdürülebilir İşletmeler İçin Kurumsal Sürdürülebilirlik ve İçsel Unsurları. *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, İİBF Dergisi*, 14(2): 227-242.
- [39] Newell, R. & Dale, A. (2020). COVID-19 and Climate Change: An Integrated Perspective. *Cities & Health*. Special Issue, 1-5.
- [40] Fuentes, R., Galeotti, M., Lanza, A. ve Manzano, B. (2020). COVID-19 and Climate Change: A Tale of Two Global Problems. *Sustainability*, 12(20), 8560, 1-14.
- [41] <https://csdsafrika.org/covid-19-and-green-business-in-africa/> (29.04.2021).
- [42] Mende, M. & Misra, V. (2021). Time to Flatten the Curves on COVID-19 and Climate Change. Marketing Can Help. American Marketing Association, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Vol. 40(1): 94-96.
- [43] Stringer, L. (2009). *Yeşil İşyeri- Çalışanlara, Çevreye ve Karlılığa Yarar Sağlayan Sürdürülebilir Stratejiler*. (Ed: Pınar Şiraz) MESS Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- [44] Olson, E.G. (2008). Creating An Enterprise-Level “green” Strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 29(2):22-30.
- [45] Esty, D.C. ve Winston, A.S. (2008). *Yeşilden Altına – Akıllı Şirketler Çevreci Stratejiler ile Nasıl Avantaj Yarattır?* L. Gökten (Çev.) İstanbul: Media Cat, ISBN: 9789944383738.

**Corresponding Author: Gülaçtı ŞEN¹*

¹(Department of Transportation Services / Istanbul Esenyurt University, Turkey)