

Current Strategic Trends – A Comparative Analysis of Hungarian Corporations

Gyula Fülöp, Bettina Hernádi

Abstract—This paper deals with current strategic challenges related to the reshaping of the basic conditions of corporate operations. Through the experimental analysis of some domestic corporations, it presents how and to what extent Hungarian corporations are prepared for the current strategic challenges. The study examines how strategic directions and answer opportunities have changed in the following interrelated areas in the past five years: economic globalization, corporate sustainability, IT applications, labor force diversity and ethical competences. The conclusions of the empirical survey give a reliable basis on which economic organizations and enterprises can formulate their strategy.

Keywords—Economic globalization, corporate sustainability, IT applications, labor force diversity, ethical competences.

I. INTRODUCTION

STRATEGY and strategic challenges play an important role in the life of each company. The correspondence between the two must be constantly assessed by companies and they need to make decisions according to the currently existing situation.

In the first part of our paper, as a theoretical foundation of the empirical study, we take a look at the trends of the main characteristics that provide sure guidelines for most companies to reshape their strategy. According to [8], [6], [2], in the course of examining the current strategic challenges that companies are subjected to, five main areas are required to be explored: economic globalization, corporate sustainability, IT applications, labor force diversity and ethical competences. These areas cannot be separated from one another since each has an effect on the others and these effects can be examined only in combination, embedded in a specific corporate environment.

In conducting an empirical study, we were interested to know what influence current corporate strategic challenges had on the operation of Hungarian corporations, furthermore to what extent they were able to respond to the various challenges in an adequate way. During our analysis, we compared the results of our survey conducted in 2014 with the findings of research done five years earlier [4]. The significant changes were evaluated in search of an explanation for the reasons for differences.

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II. ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

The first and most conspicuous tendency is the formation of globalization. Globalization can be interpreted through economic, social, environmental, political, cultural and institutional dimensions. *"In an economic sense, globalization is nothing more than the process of transforming the world economy into an organic system extending to all countries to a greater and greater extent... due to and as a result of the deepening and intensifying mutual (though not symmetrical) dependencies between them or the (asymmetric) interdependencies between them"* [14].

Economic globalization is examined on the basis of the globalization of the factors of production and the specific strategic issues of competition as well as strategic alternatives and their values. The most important element of economic globalization is the globalization of the factors of production, including capital. Traditionally, the mobility of people was the lowest among the factors of production. However, the end of the 20th century also brought some changes in this respect. The cost of the labor force dropped to less than a third of its previous level it has also been globalizing. The uniformization of technologies and technology standards is an old phenomenon. But globalization has come up with a new quality in connection to technology.

Our global economic system is characterized both by the worldwide cooperation of the economic actors and their global competition. Compared to its domestic or national version, the current competition on a global scale has got some *specific strategic issues* [3]. Although solving these issues depends on the industry concerned and the parent or the host country, global competitors have to deal with the following issues in some way or another:

- Industrial policy and competition behavior,
- Relationships maintained with the host governments of big markets,
- Competition in the global economic system,
- Difficulties in analyzing the actions of competitors.

The answers given to these specific "questions" greatly influence the strategic latitude of globally-minded companies. The task of a *global strategy* is to organize the company's domestic and foreign stakeholders in a way that effectively serves the fundamental goals of the company. A great number of *general strategic versions* can be found in global industries. The first thing a company has to decide is whether it is worth competing globally or if a market niche can be found where the company can develop a defendable strategy in one or more national markets. According to [9] the alternatives are as follows:

- Pursuing global competition on a large scale,
- Focusing on global markets,
- Focusing on one single country,
- Protecting a market niche.

The *value of the global corporate strategies* should be analyzed from two aspects. First, the potential benefits resulting from the application of such strategies can be summarized, while the circumstances that pose a risk in pursuing the strategies can also be described. The potential benefits of global strategies can be summarized concisely in the following four points:

- Gaining new consumers for existing products and services,
- Access to low-cost factors of production,
- Developing new substantial skills,
- Utilizing existing skills and abilities in a novel way.

The value of global strategies can be decreased by economic conditions and political events to a great extent [7].

III. CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

According to [12], *corporate sustainability* is the integration of the dimension of sustainability into corporate strategies and activities. Corporations bearing in mind the strategic requirements of sustainability such as economic goals, social orientation, and environmental awareness should prepare for the fact that, while social and environmental standards continue to become stricter, the social and environmental nature of their activities are expected to become one of the important factors in their competitiveness.

During the last third of the 20th century, it became directly apparent that the activities of mankind basically – and mostly negatively – affect the state of the natural environment. It is also important to take the environmental impact of society into consideration during the strategic analysis because it makes it clear that consumption is an essential and even a pleasant part of life; however, excessive consumption has serious hidden dangers. Conspicuous consumption is not only a danger to itself but it also poses a threat to the public. The prevailing consumption patterns, as pointed out by Homer-Dixon [5] in his book, result in the formation of environmental scarcity.

Environmental scarcity, as Homer-Dixon uses the term, means the insufficient amount of renewable resources. The factors resulting in the *scarcity of renewable resources* are usually complex. The depletion and degradation of a resource depends on its physical vulnerability, the size of the population using it, and the technologies and practices used by the population in its consumer behavior. Apart from these, the depletion and degradation of a resource together is only one of the three sources of environmental scarcity. Depletion and degradation brings about a decrease in the total resource supply. But population growth and changes in consumer habits can also trigger greater scarcity by increasing the demand for resources. Finally, structural scarcity is often created by a serious imbalance in the distribution of goods and power. Resource scarcity is an inevitable process, as it is inherent in everyday life. However, scarcity can be considered in a different way as well, it can also be interpreted as an incentive for performing institutional and technological changes.

The expansion of consumption in view of the state of the environment, sustainability-oriented companies and institutions and investors balancing their decision according to the social and environmentally friendly nature of projects could all lead to the 'green' transformation of the traditional economy. The potentials of strategic adaptation and correction of a '*green economy*' are as follows:

- Making institutional purchases more 'green',
- Identifying green products,
- Overcoming the obstacles, extending the green movement.

IV. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS

Network economy, e-business, information technology –these are the concepts that managers open to new, modern concepts and ideas are concerned with. This is no doubt due to the renewal and changes in a number of management processes, organizations and behavioral culture. The research results presented by [11] indicate that the effect of technology is more robust and it definitely covers a more general scope of company operations – and, as a result, their strategy – than other previous changes in technology. An increasing number of companies and managers are facing the fact that the earlier relevant environment linked to strategy making has changed and needs to be reinterpreted along the roots of these concepts. Only the integration of information technology into the general strategy can turn this truly new technology into an effective driver of economic competition and cooperation.

The *principles of e-business*, that is the processes that determine our economic future, on the basis of [5] are as follows:

- E-business changes the traditional structure of the industry,
- It potentially enhances the multiple interrelatedness of business processes,
- It broadens existing distribution channels,
- It reorganizes the value chain,
- It increases the value of products offered to consumers,
- It establishes the development of operational efficiency by leaps and bounds,
- It 'streamlines' purchase and supply processes,
- It helps the management to reintegrate the organization in a unique way.

In addition to the major characteristics of e-business, we must not forget about the trends that are causes or consequences of the formation of an e-economy and that determine the directions of further development. Such phenomena are the convergence of telecommunications and information technology together with the globalization discussed earlier and the strengthening role of business and public services.

However, in order to organize all business processes in a virtual way, a number of conditions must exist together. First, the technological background is outstandingly important, while another essential prerequisite is a properly developed banking system along with the legislation and supervision of electronic business processes.

It is hardly disputable that the challenges of information technology do not and cannot leave the substantive, methodological and technical framework for *strategic thinking*

untouched. In this context, the current 'new' conditions should not be overreacted to, but of course there is a need for new approaches and fundamental principles which are summarized below:

- Values related to the organization have to be found,
- It is necessary to integrate information technology into business processes,
- Priorities have to be shifted in the direction of quicker implementation,
- There is a need for industry-specific knowledge,
- It is necessary to be consumer-oriented,
- Strategic management competences have to be formulated.

V. LABOR FORCE DIVERSITY

At the end of the last century a typical company maintained production and service units in many different parts of the world, employing people with various cultural and civilizational background. Nowadays, people with different qualifications working as a team have to solve problems together, mostly in critical situations and under the crushing weight of strict deadlines [10]. This suggests that the variety and diversity of the labor force has increasingly widened in most workplaces. At the same time, masses of workers can be met in the labor market. However, a distinction should be made between the workers based on the goals they wish to achieve, the form of work in which they want to achieve them, and the personal skills and abilities they should possess to reach their final goals.

Thus the needs and aspirations of employees have also become significantly more varied. There are individuals who are led by the inner need for self-realization; some other people think that achieving appreciation is of utmost importance for them, whereas many employees are primarily interested in money. Some employees wish to change jobs quite often, and they are willing to spend their spare time on doing extra work. Others find stability or job security much more valuable and they would opt for more free time. The financial background of employees and, as a consequence, their need for employment can also be fundamentally different.

During the examination of labor force diversity, it is important to determine in what form of employment workers are hired by companies. Apart from those who are in favor of more traditional forms of employment, the number of people seeking part-time jobs, flexible working hours and teleworking, together with those who require more free time or, on the contrary, more work has gradually increased. All these tendencies will result in greater differences in culture, motivation and skills; that is, in the employees' willingness to make decisions, their performance requirements, their readiness to take risks, their distance from power and their attitude towards self-realization.

These changes have basically created a new situation for organizations that pose new requirements for the activities of companies and the work of strategic experts.

VI. ETHICAL COMPETENCES

Corporations are multi-faceted constructions, having not only positive but sometimes negative impacts on their local and global environment taken in a broader sense [1]. These impacts raise the question of their ethical responsibility as well, which, in turn, requires the development of specific ethical competences. *Those companies can be regarded as ethically competent* that on the one hand take broader responsibility for their operations, reaching well beyond strict economic responsibility and integrating social as well as environmental aspects, and on the other hand are able to integrate structural and cultural elements into their operating strategies that allow them to demonstrate this wider sense of responsibility in practice. From this definition it follows that ethical competence includes the following set of components: *corporate social responsibility* that facilitates corporations to make their contribution to sustainable development, that is, it creates a balance among economic interests, social expectations and environmental demands by integrating them into a business strategy; a *corporate sustainability strategy* that includes the strategic objectives of sustainability and the actions needed to implement them, coherently built on the corporation's core values and communicated to corporate stakeholders; and finally, *ethical institutions and ethical corporate culture* that provide the structural and cultural background in line with an ethical strategy.

In the course of their work, employees should consider the company's ethical norms or standards in addition to the content of their work contract. The most common ethical standards are as follows:

- Ethical business practices,
- Respecting legal regulations and contracts,
- Taking business customs into consideration,
- Prohibition of restricted economic competition,
- Meeting professional requirements,
- Keeping social interests in mind.

Mainly meeting these requirements contributes to raising the awareness of the importance of ethical standards and the creation and development of an ethical corporate culture. Managers have a particularly crucial role in this process, and must be aware of the fact that their behavior is set as an example to their subordinates, as well as the fact that ethical competences must also belong to their managerial skills [13].

Naturally, it is not easy to integrate the above-mentioned principles into everyday practice. The process by which real positive effect can be reached poses broader requirements for the employees such as:

- Commitment to the goals of the company,
- Active participation in improving the operations of the company,
- Loyalty to the company in terms of keeping internal information, confidential data and business secrets,
- Protecting and preserving the capital and the assets of the company,
- Prohibition of psychological or physical aggression.

VII. THE PURPOSE AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF RESEARCH

The basic aim of the research is to compare the conclusions of our previous study [4] to the results of the current survey.

We studied how Hungarian corporations were influenced by effects rooted in economic globalization, corporate sustainability, IT applications, labor force diversity and the growing role of ethical competencies as inevitable tendencies of our age, how they were able to deal with the consequences of these five interrelated trends and what strategic choices they made as an answer to those challenges. More specifically, the research intended to answer two main questions:

1. Overall situation: in what form and to what extent did the preparedness of Hungarian corporations for current strategic challenges change compared to 2009?
2. Expected changes: how did strategic directions and answer opportunities change during the past five years?

The conceptual model of the research is based on the assumption that the change in the direction of corporate strategies is determined by five important groups of factors that are closely related to one another.

The main feature of the conceptual model is that all factors in the process contribute to the evolution the strategic direction changes and answer opportunities. The system context shown in Fig. 1 is likely to contain elements that are not readily identifiable. The process of reshaping company strategies is probably much more complex than was assumed by the creators of the conceptual model at the beginning of the research.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING

Due to the lack of relevant statistical data and in order to gain better judgement on current strategic challenges, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted. To avoid methodological debates over questionnaire-based surveys, the questionnaire itself contained all the answer options to the standardized questions but it also allowed a more detailed discussion of the responses with the necessary anonymity provided. Since the main aim of the research was to compare the new findings to the results of the situation in 2009, the questions of the earlier survey could be taken into consideration when determining the content of the current questionnaire. Thus the comparative evaluation of the results became possible.

The eight-page questionnaire for senior management consists of four parts:

1. Economic globalization – the current elements of global competition and cooperation
2. Corporate sustainability – the sources of the scarcity of renewable resources and the current alternatives of their elimination
3. IT applications – the current principles and approaches of network economy
4. Labor force diversity – the current employment needs and role of workers in the workplace
5. Ethical competences – the substantive elements of ethical competences and the importance of ethical standards.

The sample of the comparative study includes only corporations. The selection of corporations was carried out as a

representation of their industry, geographic location, ownership structure and the form of capital investment, based on HVG TOP 500 in 2014, which is a list containing the 500 biggest Hungarian corporations. The same corporations were asked to fill out the questionnaire as before from the list of the top 50 members producing the largest net revenues, and 23 evaluable questionnaires were sent back.

IX. THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

The results of the empirical survey were assessed in relation to economic globalization, corporate sustainability, IT applications, labor force diversity and ethical competences. We compared the results from the years 2009 and 2014 to identify the change of strategic tendencies and their connections in a five-year period.

A. Economic Globalization

– In addition to the fact that the globalization of the factors of production is a general phenomenon, significant differences can be found in the speed of the globalization of individual factors. In 2014, 74% and 57% of the Hungarian corporations thought that the internationalization of machine technology and financial capital, respectively, became the fastest, while in 2009 this proportion was 65% and 61% (Fig. 2 (a)). This can be attributed to the large-scale changes in the level of technology and to a high degree of mechanization.

In contrast, according to 87% and 83% of the respondents, the globalization of labor force and of products and services showed the lowest pace, which corresponds to the previous tendency (83% and 74%). This suggests that the labor force of the Hungarian corporations is still less involved in the international division of labor, and their manufactured products or provided services could not become dominant global brands.

– 61% of the corporations in the sample (87% in 2009) said it was very important for them to find solutions to specific strategic issues in the competitive global economic system, along with the globally harmonized implementation of market positions, facilities, and investments (Fig. 2 (b)). There is no doubt that this is still the most important factor but it is not regarded as being as important as it was earlier.

However, more than half of the companies, 57% (which is lower by 8% than in 2009) stated that among the strategic factors, industrial policy and competition regulation were essential for them. Consequently, they need a high level of awareness of political issues, as the industrial policy of the government in the host country may transform the aims of corporations and influence their position in the global competition in many ways. There was no change in the issue of maintaining relationships with the governments of big markets, as 35% of the responding corporations regarded this issue as less important, and this makes it difficult for them to defend their position on main markets, which may affect the ability to realize their global strategy.

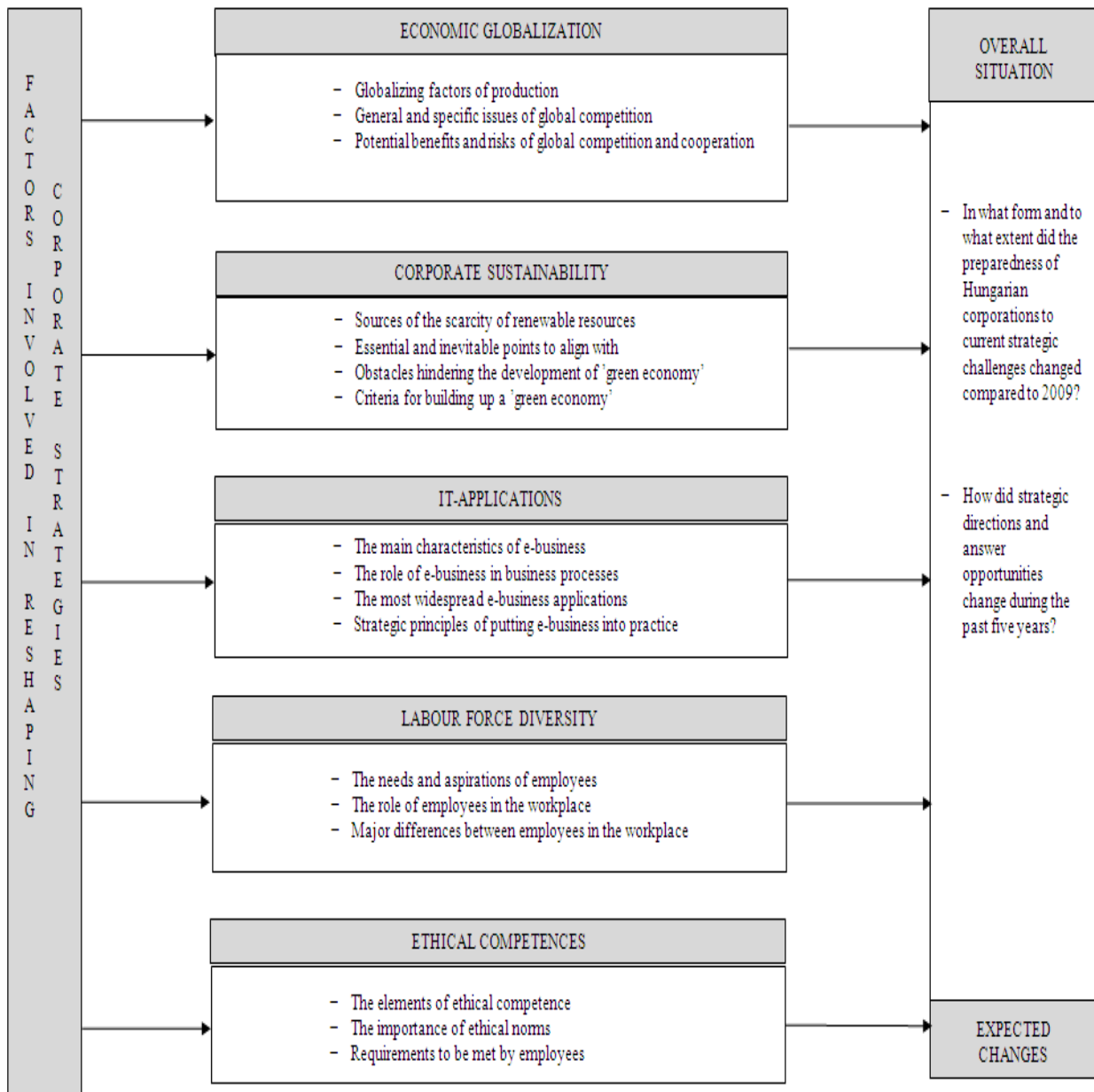


Fig. 1 Conceptual Model of the Empirical Analysis: Factors Reshaping Corporate Strategies

- The most significant change in the implementation of strategic alternatives was that in 2014 nearly twice as many corporations chose global competition on a large scale against focusing on global markets, however, this proportion was the same as in 2009. Among the generally used strategies, 87% of the Hungarian corporations (74% in 2009) saw their success in pursuing competition on a large scale (Fig. 2 (c)). This strategy is directed to the exploitation of the opportunities provided by their global competitive advantage with the corporation's entire product range to differentiate their products and to maneuver into a global low-cost position. Focusing on global markets was chosen by 43% of the corporations

surveyed (which is lower by 27% than in 2009); they chose an industry segment in which global competition obstacles are minor and the position of the corporation can be protected against the penetration of companies taking part in the global competition with a wide range of products. In 2014 none of the responding corporations aimed at focusing on a single country, since acquiring a single market is not necessarily sufficient to maintain the satisfactory operation of corporations.

- The most obvious economic advantage that may encourage a company to follow a global strategy is, on the one hand, that the company can gain new consumers for its existing products and services (invariably 70% in 2009), which

directly increases the company's revenue; on the other hand, it can have access to such low-cost factors of production (57% in 2014 and 70% in 2009) as cheap raw materials, low-cost labor or new technology (Fig. 2 (d)). The third most important motivation was utilizing existing skills in a novel way in 2014 (43%) despite the fact that in 2009 developing new substantial skills was more pronounced.

B. Corporate Sustainability

The analysis of the findings of the empirical survey on corporate sustainability is presented based on the statistics shown in Fig. 3.

- The three main causes of the formation of the scarcity of renewable resources, such as the scarcity of agricultural land, forests and rivers, were evaluated in a widely differing way by the corporations involved in the comparative study: the scarcity of supply – a decrease in the quality and quantity of renewable resources – reached 26% (48% in 2009). Structural scarcity, unequal access to resources (43%), and the scarcity of demand, population growth and changes in consumer habits (43%) did not change significantly compared to 2009 (Fig. 3 (a)). The expansion of renewable energy sources may be in the background of the change of the scarcity, as they have become the focus of worldwide research and development in recent years. At the same time, it is not appropriate to discuss the three sources of scarcity independently, since these types of scarcity interact with each other and reinforce each other in a very dangerous way.
- Taking the basic and inevitable strategic adaptation options into account, 61% of the corporations said that the solution was provided in making institutional purchases more 'green', that is, posing environmental requirements for suppliers (Fig. 3 (b)). Meanwhile, the identification of green products (environmental labeling) was preferred by 43% of the responding executives, which indicates a change in the prioritization of adaptation options. It is positive, however, that the possibility of extending the 'green movement' (introducing explicit written directives or laws) was identified by 39% of the managers compared to 30% of them in 2009. A new landmark is the use of voluntary certification and quality insurance systems (39%) and this proportion is expected to increase further in the future. These indicate a positive change in the corporate strategists' way of thinking which may have a significant influence on the practical efforts in the near future.
- About the criteria for building a green economy – which is a new area in the survey – the respondents felt that the primacy of utilizing local resources and securing the preservation of stability and diversity were present in their operations (70% each). It turns out that the use of local resources is important indeed, for how could a green economy could be created if the most easily available resources are not used by the companies, despite the fact that corporate costs can also be significantly raised by

relying on local resources? The preservation of diversity is also one of the aims of corporations, that is, using a broad range of natural resources to preserve biodiversity, as well as the diversity of their product portfolio. It is unfortunate that only 22% of the surveyed corporations seek to place their activities in a sustainable cycle.

- The obstacles hindering the emergence of a "green economy" are explained by the corporations with the following factors. Compared to 2009, short-term interests and ways of thinking appeared as a new inhibitory factor, which met with the full agreement of 61% of the respondents (Fig. 3 (c)).

In 2014, almost all corporations felt that the non-appropriate selection of the priorities in green purchases and political opposition hampered the extension of the green economy. Of the executives surveyed, 13% partially and 70% of them fully agreed that legal uncertainty was an inhibitory factor (the rules may exclude environmentally preferable products) compared to the high rates of 43% and 40% in 2009. This is due to the fact that the formerly ambiguous legal regulations have been simplified. An additional problem – with at least a partial agreement of 83% (74% in 2009) – is the existence of internal institutional obstacles (the lack of precise targets and accounting systems).

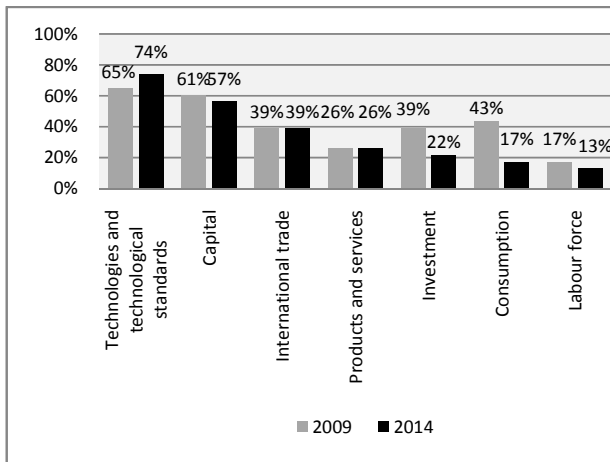


Fig. 2 (a) Which Factors Globalized at the Fastest Pace?

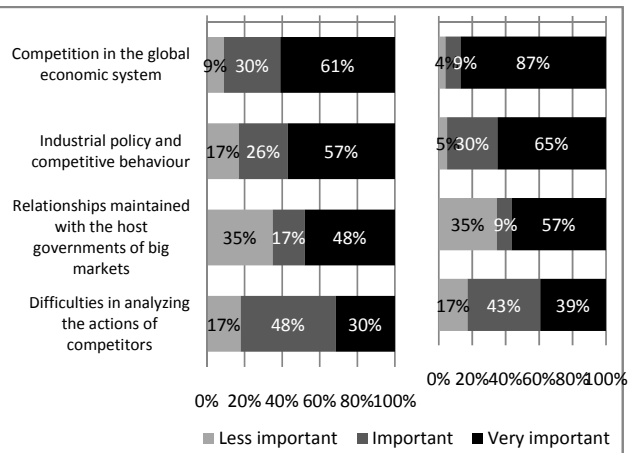


Fig. 2 (b) What are the Typical Strategic Questions of Global Competition?

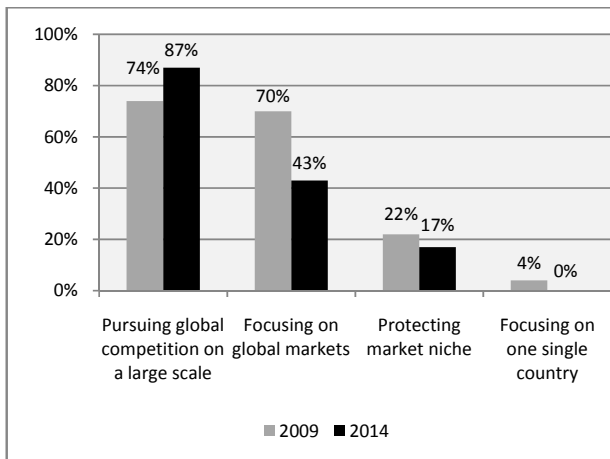


Fig. 2 (c) What are the General Strategic Types of Global Competition?

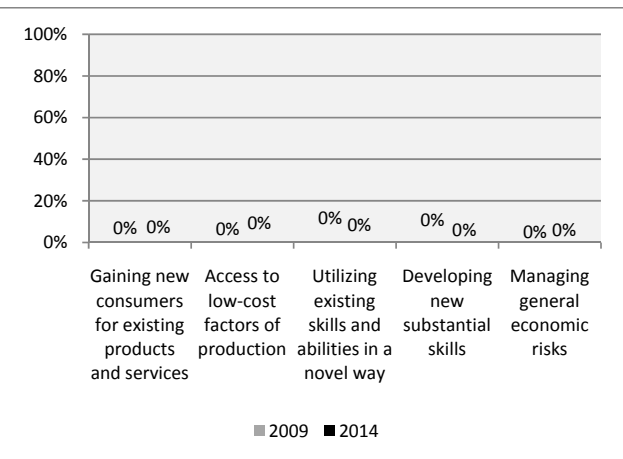


Fig. 2 (d) What Potential Benefits are Global Competition and Cooperation Accompanied with?

Fig. 2 Economic Globalization

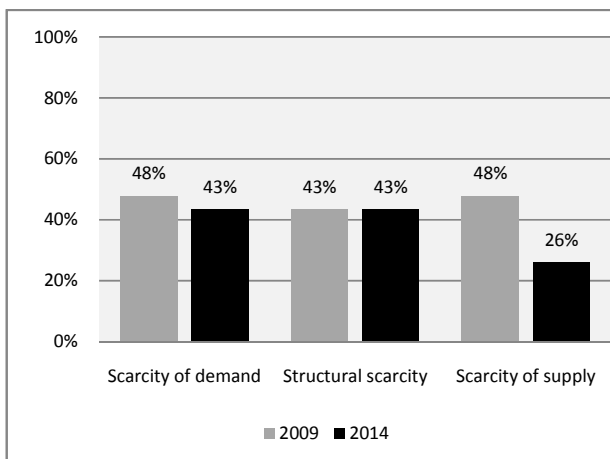


Fig. 3 (a) What are the Sources of the Scarcity of Renewable

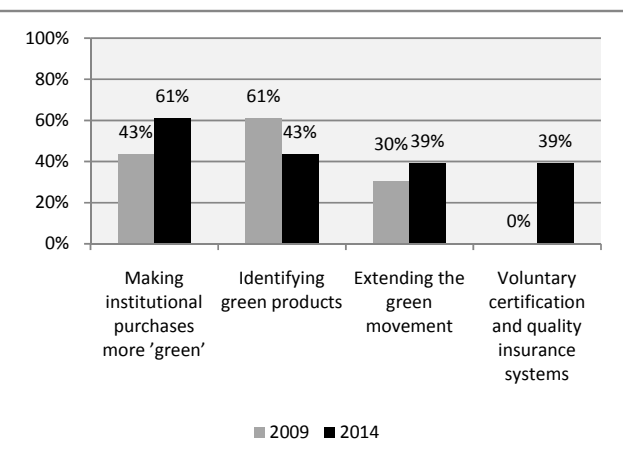


Fig. 3 (b) What are the Basic and Inevitable Points to Align with?

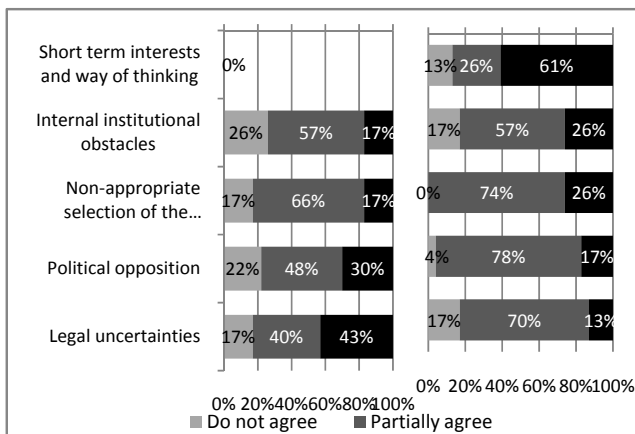


Fig. 3 (c) What Obstacles Hinder the Unfolding of Green Economy?

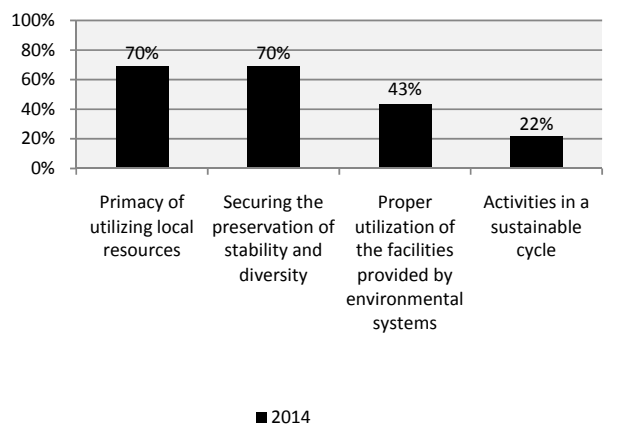


Fig. 3 (d) What are the Basic Criteria for Building Up a Green Economy?

Fig. 3 Corporate Sustainability

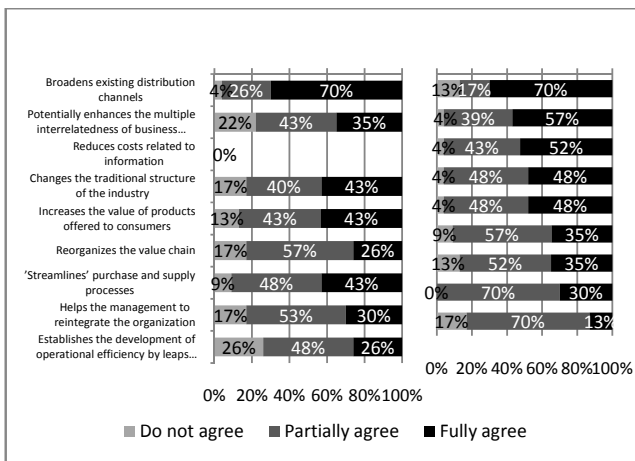


Fig. 4 (a) What are the Main Characteristics of E-business?

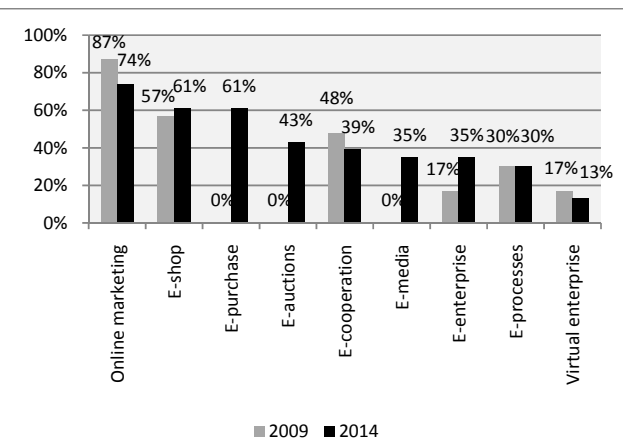


Fig. 4 (b) What are the Most Widespread E-business Applications?

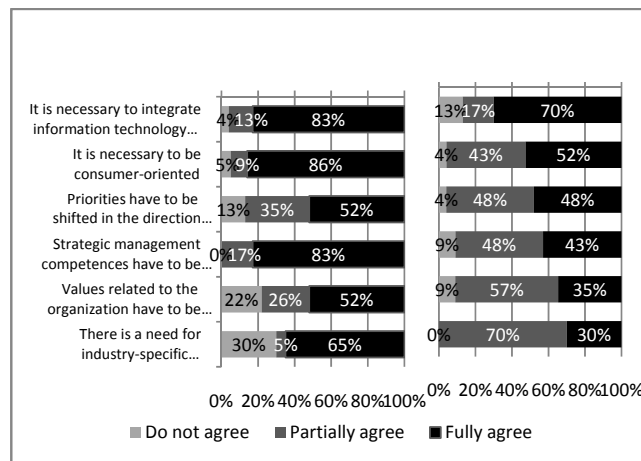


Fig. 4 (c) What are the Strategic Principles of Putting E-business into Practice?

Fig. 4 IT Applications

These barriers can be averted by corporations with conscious and systematic activities in this direction over the years.

C. IT Applications

- Most of the corporations involved, 70% of them, still fully agreed with the statement that one of the main characteristics of e-business was that it broadened the existing distribution channels (Fig. 3 (a)). The rate of the respondents sharing the opinion that e-business potentially enhances the multiple interrelatedness of business activities increased dynamically (57% in 2014, 35%). During the assessment of its impacts in 2014, nearly the same number of executives fully agreed with the statement that e-business would reduce costs related to information (52%); it could increase the value of products offered to consumers (48%); and it was changing the traditional structure of the industry (48%). These statements reflect the fact that the Internet, in addition to decreasing costs, is a very useful tool for accelerating the operation of the business processes and systems and for adapting to the specific needs of consumers regarding quality, price and style. Conversely, the opinion of corporations were divided as to whether e-business "streamlined" purchase and supply processes or it substantially contributed to the reorganization of the value chain implementing the production of added value (35% and 35% fully agreed, 13% and 9% disagreed, respectively). Only 13% of the respondents argued strongly that e-business applications increased the efficiency of production and service processes by leaps and bounds. This may be due to the fact that not all organizations are enabled by web-based analytical and organizational methods to eliminate unnecessary costs or inefficient organizational and technological stages and steps.
- The vast majority of the corporations in the sample (74%) thought – similarly to the 2009 survey results – that the most widely used e-business application was online marketing, which was followed by e-store (61%) and e-purchase (61%) in a significantly smaller proportion (Fig. 3 (b)). This is understandable, since a variety of e-business solutions exist that are partially built on each other. Online marketing is customarily considered as the basic level of e-business, it is an expectation at most companies in order to remain competitive, and an improved position can be achieved by opening towards an e-shop (selling an end product) or e-purchase.
- According to Fig. 3 (c), a significant shift has taken place among the most important strategic principles of the implementation of e-business. Today 48% of the corporations think it is extremely important to shift priorities in the direction of quicker realization (52% in 2009), 52% of them highlight the necessity to be consumer-oriented (86% in 2009) and 70% of them stress the importance of integrating information technology into business processes (83% in 2009). Strategic planning frameworks and tools are necessary for each of these principles. But the main issue does not really lie here. The

key to success can be found in energetic targets and wise actions. Through these, the organization can start using Internet capabilities to strategic effect, to build unique resources which can result in gaining a unique competitive position. In the course of defining strategic principles, none of the responding executives denied the importance of industry-specific expertise. Its negligence cannot even be imagined in particular industries where products, services and technologies have inherent interdependency.

The assessment of labor force and ethical competences is not dealt with here due to space limitations.

X. CONCLUSIONS, CHANGES IN STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PROPERTIES

We believe that the results of the analysis, based on our previous research, have greatly enriched our understanding of the preparedness of Hungarian corporations for current strategic challenges. The main results of the comparative empirical study are summarized below, giving an answer to the important question of what changes in the strategic direction and what shifts in focus have taken place in the past five years.

- The impact of technology and technology standards related to globalization has intensified during the past five years, thanks to the high level of technological developments as well as a high degree of mechanization at corporations.
- There has been no change in the globalization of domestic products and services, so their development should be made more explicit in the future with the aim of creating global brands, achieving economies of scale and avoiding any unnecessary duplication of resources.
- The pace of globalization of consumption dropped drastically, since consumers could arrange their purchases all across the world five years ago.
- The globalization of the labor force is still at the lowest level but the labor force of Hungarian corporations should utilize the opportunities provided by globalization and benefit from the division of labor in a better way. The essential condition for this is to develop a global mindset in order to exploit the knowledge and skills acquired at home on a global scale. Pursuing global competition on a large scale still remains dominant for global corporations, focusing on a single country is not common. Global competition and strategy currently focus on access to new markets and reaching low-cost factors of production, which requires a high level of awareness of the various segments of the global market.
- The decrease in the scarcity of supply compared to 2009 seems favorable; this is due to the significant technical progress and the emergence of alternative resources. However, striving for wider use is important because even a positive change can be ineffective if consumer habits remain unchanged.
- The success factor of developing a green economy is still making the greening of institutional purchases more 'green'; the identification of green products is becoming

increasingly important, as is the introduction of certification and quality assurance systems.

- The short-term way of thinking among business executives intensified and corporations did not order their activities in a sustainable cycle; therefore, a long-term strategic view must be promoted, taking into account the aspects of corporate sustainability.
- Today, broadening the applications of information technology greatly contributes to increasing competitiveness. This expands the purchase and supply process, reduces the costs related to information, and changes the structure of traditional industries.
- Future changes will be characterized further by the incorporation of information technology into business processes and the integration of IT strategy into overall corporate strategies. The developments beyond the most common IT applications – online marketing, e-shop and e-purchase – require the provision of an adequate financial, technological and legal background.

The trends presented in our study are mutually interrelated to one another, sharing many common features, and they pose strategic challenges for the corporations that must be answered. Corporate executives have to make their decisions by taking these particular focal points into consideration. In doing so, they need to apply new strategic models and methods enabling the achievement of their strategic goals.

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