

MARKETING, MARKETING RESEARCH AND STRATEGY TOWARDS GLOBALIZATION AND CHALLENGES IN MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Marketing, marketing research and firm's strategy are some of the main tools used for the current success of most of the SME-s and large firms around the globe, while Albanian firms for several reasons don't use these tools frequently. Marketing, marketing research and firms' strategy help on gaining competitive advantage on the path of challenges towards a globalizing economy. The attention of research it has been focused on marketing, marketing research and firms' strategy, configuring the paper mainly based on primary resources. Conclusions and recommendations have been drawn as a result. Findings of the research help local firms to gain competitive advantage towards current EU integration and globalization trends. Globalization offers the opportunity of reaching a wider range of consumers. The essence of changes in marketing management is focused on use of tools/techniques which drives the company's marketing worldwide. The basics are: core technology, design, branding, product specification, marketing mix, promotion, customer support, etc, but marketing research must be the main issue for local firms, gaining competitive advantage. Working out the physical channels to market is not enough: marketers now need to understand the informational channels to market. The nature of market research and marketing is changing to take this into account. The new market environment is characterized by significantly greater organizational fluidity, especially in the marketing function. The move towards globalization requires marketing managers to abandon old fashion modifying its own views/installs a set of processes/structures that relate to the emerging reality of the business and not to past practice, applying marketing research tools.

Key words: *marketing, marketing research, globalization, integration.*

INTRODUCTION

Marketing, marketing research and firm's strategy are some of the main tools used for the current success of most of the SME-s and large firms around the globe. Marketing, marketing research and firms' strategy help on gaining competitive advantage on the path of challenges towards a globalizing economy. These concepts and their application in daily business activities help SME's and large firms to gain competitive advantage, especially firms of those countries which are looking currently towards EU integration and globalization trends.

Globalization offers the opportunity of reaching a wider range of consumers, as the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture, all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society." To achieve the globalization business organizations needs to be focused more in marketing management too, which is an changing element in the world of business. The essence of changes in marketing management is focused on use of tools/techniques which drives the company's marketing worldwide.

The basics are: core technology, design, branding, product specification, marketing mix, promotion, customer support, etc, but marketing research must be the main issue for local firms, gaining competitive advantage. Working out the physical channels to market is not enough: marketers now need to understand the informational channels to market. The nature of market research and marketing is changing to take this into account. The new market environment is characterized by significantly greater organizational fluidity, especially in the marketing function.

The move towards globalization requires marketing managers to abandon old fashion modifying its own views/installs a set of processes/structures that relate to the emerging reality of the business and not to past practice, applying marketing research tools. All of these are very strongly related with strategic management, vision, mission, strategic and operational objectives and action plans companies should have, while Albanian firms for several reasons don't use these tools frequently.

AIM OF STUDY

Creating an idea about the current level of Albanian firms' integration and globalization as well as to give some recommendations about the situation's improvement.

RESEARCH TOPICS

Marketing

Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to consumers, for the purpose of utilizing the product or service. It is a critical economic function for attracting consumers, is the link between a society's material requirements and its economic patterns of response, which satisfies these needs and wants through exchange processes and building long term relationships. It is the process of communicating the value of a product or service through positioning to customers. Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, delivering and communicating value to customers, and managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its shareholders, is the science of choosing target markets through market analysis and market segmentation, as well as understanding consumer buying behavior and providing superior customer value ⁽¹⁾.

Marketing environment

The market environment is a marketing term and refers to factors and forces that affect a firm's ability to build and maintain successful relationships with customers. Three levels of the environment are: Micro (internal) environment - forces within the company that affect its ability to serve its customers. Meso environment – the industry in which a company operates and the industry's market(s). Macro (national) environment - larger societal forces that affect the microenvironment ⁽²⁾.

The marketing orientation evolved from earlier orientations, namely, the production orientation, the product orientation and the selling orientation ^(3, 4).

¹ Kotler, Philip & Keller, L. Kevin (2012). Marketing Management 14e. Pearson Education Limited 2012

² Kotler, Armstrong, Philip, Gary. Principles of Marketing. Pearson Education

³ A Framework for Marketing Management (4th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall. 2009. ISBN 0-13-602660-5,

Orientation	Profit driver	Western European timeframe	Description
Production	Production methods	until the 1950s	A firm focusing on a production orientation specializes in producing as much as possible of a given product or service. Thus, this signifies a firm exploiting economies of scale until the minimum efficient scale is reached. A production orientation may be deployed when a high demand for a product or service exists, coupled with a good certainty that consumer tastes will not rapidly alter (similar to the sales orientation).
Product	Quality of the product	until the 1960s	A firm employing a product orientation is chiefly concerned with the quality of its own product. A firm would also assume that as long as its product was of a high standard, people would buy and consume the product.
Selling	Selling methods	1950s and 1960s	A firm using a sales orientation focuses primarily on the selling/promotion of a particular product, and not determining new consumer desires as such. Consequently, this entails simply selling an already existing product, and using promotion techniques to attain the highest sales possible. Such an orientation may suit scenarios in which a firm holds dead stock, or otherwise sells a product that is in high demand, with little likelihood of changes in consumer tastes that would diminish demand.
Marketing	Needs and wants of customers	1970s to the present day	The 'marketing orientation' is perhaps the most common orientation used in contemporary marketing. It involves a firm essentially basing its marketing plans around the marketing concept, and thus supplying products to suit new consumer tastes. As an example, a firm would employ market research to gauge consumer desires, use R&D (research and development) to develop a product attuned to the revealed information, and then utilize promotion techniques to ensure persons know the product exists.
Holistic Marketing	Everything matters in marketing	21st century	The holistic marketing concept looks at marketing as a complex activity and acknowledges that everything matters in marketing - and that a broad and integrated perspective is necessary in developing, designing and implementing marketing programs and activities. The four components that characterize holistic marketing are relationship marketing, internal marketing, integrated marketing, and socially responsive marketing.

Contemporary approaches in marketing

Recent approaches in marketing include *relationship marketing* with focus on the customer, *business marketing* or *industrial marketing* with focus on an organization or institution and *social marketing* with focus on benefits to society (⁵). New forms of marketing also use the internet and are therefore called *internet marketing* or more generally *e-marketing*, *online marketing*, "digital marketing", search engine marketing, or *desktop advertising*. It attempts to perfect the segmentation strategy used in traditional marketing. It targets its audience more precisely, and is sometimes called personalized marketing or one-to-one marketing. Internet marketing is sometimes considered to be broad in scope, because it not only refers to marketing on the Internet, but also includes marketing done via e-mail, wireless media as well as driving audience from traditional marketing methods like radio and billboard to internet properties or landing page.

⁴ Adcock, Dennis; Al Halborg, Caroline Ross (2001). "Introduction". *Marketing: principles and practice* (4th ed.). p. 15. ISBN 9780273646778.

⁵ Marketing Management: Strategies and Programs", Gultinan et al., McGraw Hill/Irwin, 1996

Orientation	Profit driver	Western European timeframe	Description
Relationship marketing /Relationship management	Building and keeping good customer relations	1960s to present day	Emphasis is placed on the whole relationship between suppliers and customers. The aim is to provide the best possible customer service and build customer loyalty.
Business marketing /Industrial marketing	Building and keeping relationships between organizations	1980s to present day	In this context, marketing takes place between businesses or organizations. The product focus lies on industrial goods or capital goods rather than consumer products or end products. Different forms of marketing activities, such as promotion, advertising and communication to the customer are used.
Societal marketing	Benefit to society	1990s to present day	Similar characteristics to marketing orientation but with the added proviso that there will be a curtailment of any harmful activities to society, in either product, production, or selling methods.
Branding	Brand value	1980s to present day	In this context, "branding" refers to the main company philosophy and marketing is considered to be an instrument of branding philosophy.

A firm in the market economy survives by producing goods that persons are willing and able to buy. Consequently, ascertaining consumer demand is vital for a firm's future viability and even existence as a going concern. Many companies today have a customer focus (or market orientation). This implies that the company focuses its activities and products on consumer demands. Generally, there are three ways of doing this: the customer-driven approach, the market change identification approach and the product innovation approach.

In the consumer-driven approach, consumer wants are the drivers of all strategic marketing decisions. No strategy is pursued until it passes the test of consumer research. Every aspect of a market offering, including the nature of the product itself, is driven by the needs of potential consumers. The starting point is always the consumer. The rationale for this approach is that there is no reason to spend R&D (research and development) funds developing products that people will not buy. History attests to many products that were commercial failures in spite of being technological breakthroughs ⁽⁶⁾.

A formal approach to this customer-focused marketing is known as *SIVA*⁽⁷⁾ (Solution, Information, Value, Access). This system is basically the four Ps renamed and reworded to provide a customer focus. The SIVA Model provides a demand/customer-centric alternative to the well-known 4Ps supply side model (product, price, placement, promotion) of marketing management.

Product		Solution
Promotion		Information
Price		Value
Place (Distribution)		Access

If any of the 4Ps were problematic or were not in the marketing factor of the business, the business could be in trouble and so other companies may appear in the surroundings of the company, so the consumer demand on its products will decrease. However, in recent years service marketing has widened the domains to be considered, contributing to the 7P's of marketing in total. The other 3P's of service marketing are: process, physical environment and people.

⁶ Dev, Chekitan S.; Don E. Schultz (January/February 2005). "In the Mix: A Customer-Focused Approach Can Bring the Current Marketing Mix into the 21st Century".

⁷ Dev, Chekitan S.; Don E. Schultz (January/February 2005). "In the Mix: A Customer-Focused Approach Can Bring the Current Marketing Mix into the 21st Century".

To be able to use above concepts a marketing research process should be actively present at the business organization.

Marketing research

Marketing research involves conducting research to support marketing activities, and the statistical interpretation of data into information. This information is then used by managers to plan marketing activities, gauge the nature of a firm's marketing environment and attain information from suppliers. Marketing researchers use statistical methods such as quantitative research, qualitative research, hypothesis tests, Chi-squared tests, linear regression, correlations, frequency distributions, poisson distributions, binomial distributions, etc. to interpret their findings and convert data into information. The marketing research process spans a number of stages, including the definition of a problem, development of a research plan, collection and interpretation of data and disseminating information formally in the form of a report. The task of marketing research is to provide management with relevant, accurate, reliable, valid, and current information.

Firm's strategy, globalization and challenges in management

Marketing planning

The marketing planning process involves forging a plan for a firm's marketing activities. A marketing plan can also pertain to a specific product, as well as to an organization's overall marketing strategy. Generally speaking, an organization's marketing planning process is derived from its overall business strategy. Thus, when top management are devising the firm's strategic direction or mission, the intended marketing activities are incorporated into this plan. There are several levels of marketing objectives within an organization. The senior management of a firm would formulate a general business strategy for a firm. However, this general business strategy would be interpreted and implemented in different contexts throughout the firm.

Marketing strategy

The field of marketing strategy considers the total marketing environment and its impacts on a company or product or service. The emphasis is on "an in depth understanding of the market environment, particularly the competitors and customers" (⁸). A given firm may offer numerous products or services to a marketplace, spanning numerous and sometimes wholly unrelated industries. Accordingly, a plan is required in order to effectively manage such products. Evidently, a company needs to weigh up and ascertain how to utilize its finite resources.

Moreover, a product may be reaching the end of its life-cycle. Thus, the issue of divest, or a ceasing of production, may be made. Each scenario requires a unique marketing strategy. Listed below are some prominent marketing strategy models. A marketing strategy differs from a marketing tactic in that a strategy looks at the longer term view of the products, goods, or services being marketed. A tactic refers to a shorter term view. Therefore, the mailing of a postcard or sales letter would be a tactic, but a campaign of several postcards, sales letters, or telephone calls would be a strategy.

Marketing Promotion strategies

Marketing promotion is divided in to two parts. Above the line promotion and below the line promotion.

- Above the line promotions primarily include mass media advertising; in mediums such as TV, radio, press, online
- Below the line promotion uses more niche focused mediums; such as email, community marketing, sms campaigns, personal sales, POS

Buying behavior

A marketing firm must ascertain the nature of customers' buying behavior if it is to market its product properly. In order to entice and persuade a consumer to buy a product, marketers try to determine the behavioral process of how a given product is purchased. Buying behavior is usually split into two prime strands, whether selling to the consumer, known as business-to-consumer (B2C), or to another business, known as business-to-business (B2B), or B2G, known as business to government.

Use of technologies

⁸ Developing Business Strategies, David A. Acker, John Wiley and Sons, 1988

Marketing management can also rely on various technologies within the scope of its marketing efforts. Computer-based information systems can be employed, aiding in better processing and storage of data. Marketing researchers can use such systems to devise better methods of converting data into information, and for the creation of enhanced data gathering methods. Information technology can aid in enhancing an MKIS' software and hardware components, and improve a company's marketing decision-making process.

In recent years, the notebook personal computer has gained significant market share among laptops, largely due to its more user-friendly size and portability. Information technology typically progresses at a fast rate, leading to marketing managers being cognizant of the latest technological developments. Moreover, the launch of smart phones into the cell phone market is commonly derived from a demand among consumers for more technologically advanced products. A firm can lose out to competitors should it ignore technological innovations in its industry.

Technological advancements can lessen barriers between countries and regions. Using the World Wide Web, firms can quickly dispatch information from one country to another without much restriction. Prior to the mass usage of the Internet, such transfers of information would have taken longer to send, especially if done via snail mail, telex, etc. Recently, there has been a large emphasis on data analytics. Data can be mined from various sources such as online forms, mobile phone applications and more recently, social media.

Quality management

Quality has been analyzed as a factor in the management process since the 1930s, but it was not until after the Second World War that it became important. North American managers brought in to advise Japanese companies on restructuring after the war devised new concepts of quality which began to be accepted as being of universal application. The important pioneers in this field were W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran and Kaoru Ishikawa. A universally agreed definition of quality still does not exist. Juran suggested that quality should be seen as "fitness for use". Another short definition from Crosby views quality as "conformance to requirements" rather than "goodness, or luxury, or shininess, or weight". These definitions from the management literature make it clear that quality cannot just be defined in relation to some abstract concept of "excellence", but should be seen in relation to the demands of the user of the final product. In the management context, quality processes can be applied to any product and / or service (⁹).

The development of the quality concept in industry has created a requirement for an organizational structure which can include quality concepts at every stage in the planning and delivery of a product or service. The process is called Total Quality Management (TQM) with the essence on:

- Focus on customers
- Base decisions on facts
- Focus on processes
- Improve continuously
- Let everybody be committed
- Etc

The important insight is that quality becomes a continuous process.

Globalization

Globalization is the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture (¹⁰) and processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, it is the international integration of intercultural ideas, perspectives, products/services, culture and technology (¹¹), which refers to processes that promote world-wide exchanges of national and cultural resources. Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure,

⁹ Ceko Enriko. Total Quality Management. Lectures for students. 2009

¹⁰ Albrow, Martin and Elizabeth King (eds.) (1990). *Globalization, Knowledge and Society* London: Sage. ISBN 978-0803983243 p. 8. "

¹¹ <https://www.boundless.com/management/introduction-to-management/current-challenges-in-management/globalization/>

including the rise of the Internet, are major factors in globalization, generating further interdependence of economic and cultural activities (¹²).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people and the dissemination of knowledge (¹³). Globalizing processes affect and are affected by business and work organization, economics, socio-cultural resources, and the natural environment.

Globalization is composed of five dimensions: economic, political, cultural, ecological, and ideological.

Global business organization

International business includes all commercial transactions (private sales, investments, logistics, and transportation) that take place between two or more regions, countries and nations beyond their political boundary. Usually, private companies undertake such transactions for profit. Such business transactions involve economic resources such as capital, natural and human resources used for international production of physical goods and services such as finance, banking, insurance, construction and other productive activities (¹⁴, ¹⁵).

International trade

An absolute trade advantage exists when countries can produce a commodity with less costs per unit produced than could its trading partner. By the same reasoning, it should import commodities in which it has an absolute disadvantage. While there are possible gains from trade with absolute advantage, comparative advantage—that is, the ability to offer goods and services at a lower marginal and opportunity cost—extends the range of possible mutually beneficial exchanges. In a globalize business environment, companies argue that the comparative advantages offered by international trade have become essential to remaining competitive.

Economic globalization

Economic globalization is the increasing economic interdependence of national economies across the world through a rapid increase in cross-border movement of goods, service, technology and capital. Whereas the globalization of business is centered around the diminution of international trade regulations as well as tariffs, taxes, and other impediments that suppresses global trade, economic globalization is the process of increasing economic integration between countries, leading to the emergence of a global marketplace or a single world market.

Depending on the paradigm, economic globalization can be viewed as either a positive or a negative phenomenon. Economic globalization comprises the globalization of production, markets, competition, technology, and corporations and industries. Current globalization trends can be largely accounted for by developed economies integrating with less developed economies, by means of foreign direct investment, the reduction of trade barriers as well as other economic reforms and, in many cases, immigration.

In 1944, 44 nations attended the Bretton Woods Conference with a purpose of stabilizing world currencies and establishing credit for international trade in the post World War II era. While the international economic order envisioned by the conference gave way to the neo-liberal economic order prevalent today, the conference established many of the organizations essential to the advancement towards a close knit global economy, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Trade Organization.

As an example, Chinese economic reform began to open China to the globalization in the 1980s. Scholars find that China has attained a degree of openness that is unprecedented among large and populous nations", with competition from foreign goods in almost every sector of the economy. Foreign investment helped to greatly increase quality, knowledge and standards, especially in heavy industry. China's experience supports

¹² Stever, H. Guyford (1972). "Science, Systems, and Society." *Journal of Cybernetics*, 2(3):1-3. doi:10.1080/01969727208542909

¹³ International Monetary Fund . (2000). "Globalization: Threats or Opportunity." 12th April 2000: IMF Publications.

¹⁴ Daniels, J., Radebaugh, L., Sullivan, D. (2007). *International Business: environment and operations*, 11th edition. Prentice Hall. ISBN 0-13-186942-6,

¹⁵ Joshi, Rakesh Mohan, (2009) *International Business*. Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-568909-7

the assertion that globalization greatly increases wealth for poor countries. As of 2005–2007, the Port of Shanghai holds the title as the World's busiest port.

Economic liberalization in India is the ongoing economic reforms in India that started in 1991. As of 2009, about 300 million people—equivalent to the entire population of the United States—have escaped extreme poverty. In India, business process outsourcing has been described as the "primary engine of the country's development over the next few decades, contributing broadly to GDP growth, employment growth, and poverty alleviation".

Challenges in management

Management is complicated. It requires skill and motivation. But most of all it requires commitment — the commitment needed to rise to these seven challenges. Management can ever remains unaffected by the changes in the environment. Due to the significant changes in the outside world today's management is facing several challenges. They are as follows.

1. Globalization
2. Technology
3. Social responsibilities
4. Change management
5. Cultural diversity
6. Ethics
7. Empowerment
8. Quality
9. Career

There are seven biggest challenges faced by a manager currently in the business environment (16)

1. Achieving a Stretch Goal
2. Bringing Out the Best in Your Employees
3. Dealing with Underperforming Employees
4. Dealing with Outstanding Employees
5. Hiring the Right People
6. Responding to a Crisis
7. Continuous Improvement

Managers must understand a company's competitive advantage, and translate this into a strategy that incorporates the competitive landscape (17)

Marketing strategy and strategic management

Marketing strategy is defined as a process that can allow an organization to concentrate its resources on the optimal opportunities with the goals of increasing sales and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage⁽¹⁸⁾ Marketing strategy includes all basic and long-term activities in the field of marketing that deal with the analysis of the strategic initial situation of a company and the formulation, evaluation and selection of market-oriented strategies and therefore contribute to the goals of the company and its marketing objectives⁽¹⁹⁾

Strategic management analyzes the major initiatives taken by a company's top management on behalf of owners, involving resources and performance in internal and external environments. It entails specifying the organization's mission, vision and objectives, developing policies and plans, often in terms of projects and programs, which are designed to achieve these objectives, and then allocating resources to implement the policies and plans, projects and programs. A balanced scorecard is often used to evaluate the overall performance of the business and its progress towards objectives.

¹⁶ Harweell. The 7 Biggest Challenges of a Manager. Careers, leadership, management

¹⁷ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_are_emerging_challenges_of_management

leading in learning organizations

¹⁸ Baker, Michael *The Strategic Marketing Plan Audit* 2008. ISBN 1-902433-99-8. p.3

¹⁹ Homburg, Christian; Sabine Kuester, Harley Krohmer (2009): *Marketing Management - A Contemporary Perspective* (1st ed.), London.

Recent studies and leading management theorists have advocated that strategy needs to start with stakeholders expectations and use a modified balanced scorecard which includes all stakeholders. Strategic management is a level of managerial activity below setting goals and above tactics. Strategic management provides overall direction to the enterprise and is closely related to the field of Organization Studies. In the field of business administration it is useful to talk about "strategic consistency" between the organization and its environment or "strategic consistency."

There is strategic consistency when the actions of an organization are consistent with the expectations of management, and these in turn are with the market and the context." Strategic management includes the management team and possibly the Board of Directors and other stakeholders. Strategic management is an ongoing process that evaluates and controls the business and the industries in which the company is involved; assesses its competitors and sets goals and strategies to meet all existing and potential competitors; and then reassesses each strategy annually or quarterly [i.e. regularly] to determine how it has been implemented and whether it has succeeded or needs replacement by a new strategy to meet changed circumstances, new technology, new competitors, a new economic environment., or a new social, financial, or political environment (²⁰).

Strategic decision processes

While much research and creative thought has been devoted to generating alternative strategies, too little work has been done on what influences the quality of strategic decision making and the effectiveness with which strategies are implemented. For instance, in retrospect it can be seen that the financial crisis of 2008–9 could have been avoided if the banks had paid more attention to the risks associated with their investments. For this, 11 forces should be incorporated into the processes of decision making and strategic implementation. The 11 forces are: Time; Opposing forces; Politics; Perception; Holistic effects; Adding value; Incentives; Learning capabilities; Opportunity cost; Risk and Style (²¹).

DETAILED RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

During commercial visits at Albanian firms which have applied for ISO certification several questions related to the topic of the research paper have been done. The questions are:

Participants

Representatives of about 60 Albanian firms which has applied for ISO certification during 2010 – 2012.

No	Question	Answer Yes	Answer No
1.	Do you know what Quality management is?	4	56
2.	Do you know what holistic marketing is?	1	59
3.	Do you know what marketing management is?	16	44
4.	Do you know what strategic marketing is?	18	42
5.	Do you export?	-	60
6.	Do you import?	34	-
7.	Do you know what strategic management is?	18	42
8.	Do you know what globalization is?	14	46
9.	Do you know what vision and mission are?	6	54
10.	Do you have strategic and operational objectives?	13	47
11.	Do you have a detailed training plan for managers and other employers?	6	54

APPLIED SCIENTIFIC METHODS

²⁰ Lamb, Robert, Boyden *Competitive strategic management*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.

²¹ Mulcaster, W.R. "Three Strategic Frameworks," *Business Strategy Series*, Vol 10, No1, pp68 – 75, 2009.

Questionnaire in about 60 commercial visits at Albanian firms which has applied for ISO certification during 2010 – 2012.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Marketing, marketing management, strategic marketing, quality management, strategic management, globalization, etc, are very important concepts and aspects of current business activities internationally, while in Albanian market, there is a lack of knowledge about these concepts and lack of application of them.
2. Representatives of local firms don't know marketing strategy and strategic management concepts.
3. Representatives of local firms don't know quality management concepts.
4. Local firms don't have strategic and operational objectives.
5. Local firms don't have a detailed training plans for managers and other employers

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Understanding and application of marketing, marketing management, strategic marketing, quality management, strategic management, globalization, etc, concepts will increase competitive advantage of Albanian firms in the region and wider.
2. Understanding and application of quality management concepts, having strategic and operational objectives and detailed training plans for managers and other employers will help Albanian firms to cope with current and future challenges in the real business world.

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