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Strategic Analysis of Border Markets of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, a SWOT Approach

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ABSTRACT

Context and purpose. Border areas are considered as sensitive and strategic points of the country. The isolated and unproductive nature of the border areas, especially in the mountainous and desert areas of Iran, has continuously been the cause of political, economic and security problems for governments, due to the lack of prosperity and incentives for life. The potential inability to produce, lack of employment, low income and inability to satisfy the basic needs as the main socio-economic characteristics of these areas, provided the basis for smuggling goods. In this study, we strategically analyse the border markets of Sistan and Baluchestan Province by using a SWOT approach.

Methodology: According to the nature of the subject, this study is based on operational data in terms of methodologies used in the descriptive-analytical research. The statistical population includes all the managers, deputies, experts of border markets, and managers of relevant organizations (customs, governorate, provincial administration, transport terminal, bazaar activists) in Sistan and Baluchestan Province. To select the sample, Purposeful Judgmental (Expert) sampling method was used. A 59 items researcher-made questionnaire examining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the border markets of the province was used. Questions are rated on a five-point Likert scale from "very little" (1) to "very high" (5). Reliability coefficients revealing Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 for the entire scale. To analyse the data, a SWOT matrix was prepared, which is one of the most important tools managers use to compare information and present four types of strategies.

Conclusion: the results of aggressive-competitive strategies (SO) shows: the focus is on internal strengths and external opportunities, which are: 1. the employment of young and cheap forces in the region (s1o8). 2. The expansion of non-oil exports according to the interest of the Pakistani people in Iranian goods (s2o1). And the results of revision strategies (WO): while emphasizing internal weaknesses, tries to take advantage of external opportunities to overcome the upcoming weaknesses of the system, which are: 1. satisfying the needs of the border cities of the province through imports from Pakistan and other Southeast Asian countries, considering the high cost of transportation and the long distance between producers and Rimdan border market (w4o5). 2. Increase in imports due to cost-effectiveness with considering the lack of production and distribution cooperatives in the province, the low cost of transportation, and the short distance between Pakistan, Gwadar and Iran, Rimdan border market (w5o9).

Keywords: strategic analysis, border market, Sistan and Baluchestan province, SWOT approach

INTRODUCTION

Today, the excessive increase in the population due to the weak security and maintenance of the population in the border areas has created a very complex horizon for the future of the suburb areas. In the future world, a country will be successful if it can minimize its population problems and, make the population interested in staying in the border areas and their birthplace by using various economic, social and security solutions. On the other hand, because of being far away from the city center, geographical isolation and underdeveloped, there are significant differences between border areas and populated cities in prosperity and development (Mohammadi, 2004, p. 56).



In order to actively participate in global trade and be more successful in economic and trade development, countries should expand exchanges in the region through various policies. Today, the export of goods through the border markets at the border points of the country is also one of the issues considered by the economic politicians for the development of deprived areas (Falahti et al., 2013, p. 3). According to the definition of the Ministry of Commerce, “a border market is an area enclosed at the zero point border or places created based on the memorandums between Iran and neighboring countries and enables the export and import of goods with some facilities.” Residents of each two countries that live on both sides of the border can supply their goods in this market by observing the export and import regulations. Among the facilities for border dwellers are: ease of exporting goods, no need to register an order and no register payment to import the goods beside export. The establishment of border markets is in the direction of increasing regional cooperation and as a part of an economic solution to reduce regional crises, creating stability in border areas, and expanding production and commercial activities. The performance of border markets in the country should be purposeful, so as to lead to the expansion of production, employment, and exports, otherwise it will harmfully affect the country's economy, e.g., an increase in smuggling goods (ibid, p. 5).



Border areas are considered as sensitive and strategic points of the country. The isolated and unproductive nature of the border areas, especially in the mountainous and desert areas of Iran, has continuously been the cause of political, economic and security problems for governments, due to the lack of prosperity and incentives for life. The potential inability to produce, lack of employment, low income and inability to satisfy the basic needs as the main socio-economic characteristics of these areas, provided the basis for smuggling goods (Ismailzadeh, 2015, 39). The depopulation of the borders and the migration of border dwellers have a negative impact on security. Also, the border dwellers are the primary and main defenders of the country's borders during political crises such as war. These issues required the governments to use new methods of regional cooperation in the health of the border areas. Such cooperation has been shown in the form of joint border markets (Fakhr Fatemi, 2013, p. 2).

Due to their particular geographical location, the border areas are considered deprived areas in which commercial activities and border exchanges can lead to the economic prosperity of these areas, followed by providing new jobs and improving the standards of living of its people (Ismailzadeh, 2006, p. 40). According to the above, it is necessary to identify problems, as well as the areas' potentials for development.

Sistan and Baluchestan, the largest province of Iran is located in the extreme southeast of the country and within limits of about 1100 km of land border with Afghanistan and Pakistan and about 300 km of water border. Although Sistan and Baluchestan province is one of the border and deprived provinces of the country, it will significantly impact the prosperity of its economy, if the culture of trade fosters in this region. A review of the performance documents of the border markets of the studied regions shows that the trade balance of these markets is continuously negative and their performance is mainly imports (Ebrahimzadeh, 2019, p. 109).

In this regard, all abilities and talents necessary for the development of the border markets of the province should be examined and no opportunity should be lost. This development is not possible without extensive studies and appropriate external and internal analysis of environment.

To effectively deal with the factors affecting an organization's ability to grow and be profitable, managers turn to strategic planning. So far, many quantitative tools and techniques have been used in the field of strategic management. Since the most important component in strategic management is decision-making with respect to synchronous multiple considerations, the multi-criteria decision-making techniques (MCDM) have been used. One of the tools used in the strategy development phase for analysis of the internal and external strategic items is SWOT analysis (Sahat et al., 2018, p. 12).

The purpose of this analysis is to examine and evaluate the opportunities and threats of the environment and the weaknesses and strengths of an organization, to find out whether an organization is able to make use of the opportunities and avoid the threats of the uncontrollable external environment such as price fluctuations, political instability, social evolutions and changes in laws and regulations, etc.,. SWOT summarizes the most important internal and external factors that can affect the future of an organization. And it can also be a very good basis for developing a strategy, if used correctly (ibid, p. 13).

Therefore, this study aims to strategically analyze the border markets of the province. In other words, to find out what opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses these markets have; consequently, what are the growth strategies?

The Literature

The past research has examined the variables of this study separately, some of which mentioned below.

Ashari et al. (2013) study, "Evaluation of the economic-social and security effects of the establishment of border markets and its role in the development of border areas, the case study of Javanrood border market" shows the activity of the border market has created direct and indirect employment, as well as the job mobility of border residents. The indirect employment share is much higher than direct employment, and it has increased the income of border dwellers and residents of the city, and consequently has prevented the migration of residents into other cities, hindered the informal economy, and satisfied the needs of the border residents. These can lead to relatively economic and social security in the region and increase in investments.

Gholamrezaei (2013) study, "The role of border markets in economic and social development, the case study of Sanam Balaghi in Poldasht" found that the establishment of the border market in the region of Poldasht is a turning point in employment, to stabilize the border-dwelling population, increase income, improve the standards of living, and in sustainable development.



And it also increases mutual regional cooperation; a prominent example is mutual cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mohammadi Yaganeh et al. (2012) study, "Evaluation of the economic effects of the Mehran border market on the development of rural areas, a case study of Mohsen Abad district" investigated the economic effects of the Mehran border market on the development of its surrounding rural areas. The results show that Mehran border market has increased employment, reduced poverty, increased income, and reduced the tendency of border dwellers toward migrate to other places.

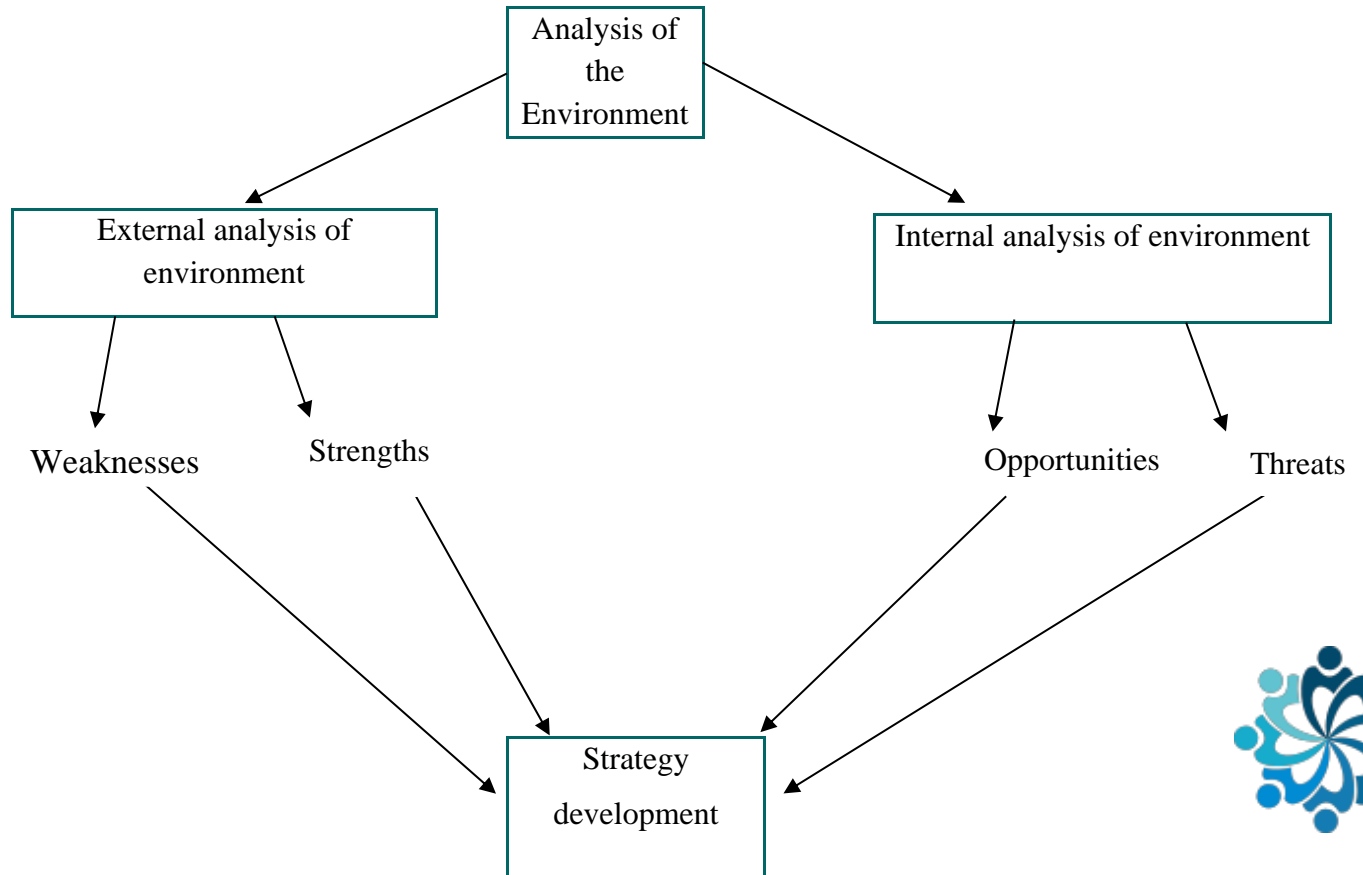
Morshed et al. (2005) study, "The Cross Border Economies of Cambodia" examines the border exchanges in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. In this research, four aspects related to the border economy in Cambodia investigated: Cambodia's legal regimes and trade liberalization policies, political issues or development strategies, the trade agreements in border areas, and the effects of poverty in border area economies on local levels. The results show that despite the increase in market competition and formal and informal costs to get goods through customs especially for small businesses, the risk of investment has increased.

Le Pape et al. (2004) study focused on the "social-economic effects of cross-border trade on improving the living standards of people" in three states of Laos. This research is in three parts; the political framework of trade and economy in the border areas, the goods produced in the studied areas and how they are exported, and the analysis of the effects of cross-border trade on the living standards of the people. The results show that cross-border trade has been effective in increasing the variety and quality of goods, employment, and generally increasing the living standards of these states.

Conceptual framework

The analytical model of the research is designed to guide the researcher in collecting and analyzing data. Therefore, it is presented as a model.





Research methodology

According to the nature of the subject, this research is based on operational data in terms of methodological divisions in descriptive-analytical research. If one tries to describe the events, incidents, characteristics of a situation or a subject objectively and realistically by using statistical data, or tries to show related factors through the classification and analysis of information, then your research method is "descriptive". The researcher in descriptive study acts as an active observer. That is, he is an observer of events that have already started and are currently ongoing. He cannot effect on the factors related to the subject of research. The presence or absence of the researcher has no contribution to the continuation of the research (Danaei Fard et al., 2013, p. 27). And also, this research is a cross-sectional study, because looks at data at a single point in time.

How to identify the strategies for border markets of the province

The four types of SWOT strategies (opportunity, threat, strength and weakness) for border markets can be identified through the following steps:

1. Environmental factors affecting the province's border markets are listed through a review of reliable scientific sources and documents available in libraries and related sites.
2. Academic professors, managers and market activists modified identified factors. Finally, 59 indicators were selected and a questionnaire was developed.

In the final step, the questionnaire was delivered among the statistical sample to confirm the prioritization of the factors. In this way, the collected data was analyzed generally, according to the purpose of the research, research questions, measurement scale, and research method using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with SPSS 19 software.

First, descriptive statistics (frequency table, column chart, mean and standard deviation of variables) were used to summarize and describe the data of demographic factors. In the second part, inferential statistics (one sample t-test and Friedman test) were used to test the hypothesis. Finally, the SWOT matrix was compiled and analyzed.

Table 1. Indicators of border markets

Variable	Indicator
Strength	1. The ability to create employment for the border dwellers and improve their living standards
	2. Development of non-oil exports and marketing for domestic products
	3. The ability to create a healthy economic relationship
	4. Preventing the informal markets, such as smuggling goods
	5. The ability to help the regional development in the border provinces located between the two countries through the proper organization of exchanges
	6. Delegation of part of the government's responsibilities in satisfying the needs of the residents of the region to Rimdan border market
	7. Development of communication, interactions and family bonds
	8. The presence of non-native people in these areas brings people together and makes them familiar with each other's customs.
	9. Maintaining the demographics of the border areas
	10. Establishing cultural communication and friendly relations with neighbors at the border
	11. Flourishing local talents
	12. Creating stability and security and reduce government costs of maintaining the region security
	13. Strengthening and stabilizing the administration and military forces of the government during the transport of goods from Pakistan to Iran and vice versa.
	14. Reducing the crime rate in the village, city and region
	1. Exchange rate fluctuations

<p>Weakness</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. High risk to trade due to security and economic reasons 3. Limitation of maximum border exchanges in markets 4. A determined list of regional imported goods rather than a general list for the country's markets as their needs are different 5. High cost of transportation due to the long distance between producers and the market 6. Most traders and border dwellers are unfamiliar with export and import regulations 7. Lack of sufficient expert and knowledgeable staff in the field of trade in the border markets and customs 8. Absence of border customs in Rimdan border market 9. Prohibition of the import and export of some goods caused smuggling these goods. 10. Successive changes in the commercial regulations of the country 11. Problems in standard licensing 12. Numerous decision-making bodies in border markets 13. The severe administrative bureaucracy and unnecessary procedures in the work process 14. Lack of clarity in executive instructions in border markets 15. Absence or lack of infrastructures and facilities such as warehouses, electricity, etc. 16. The lack of production and distribution cooperatives in the province has reduced the market potentials to supply export goods. 17. Failure to connect southern cities to the country's rail network 18. The problem of communication routes from Rimdan border market to the transit line
<p>Opportunity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Pakistani people's strong interest in Iranian goods 2. Iran-Pakistan trade agreement related to trade exchanges through Rimdan border market 3. Agreement between Iran and Pakistan on organizing informal exchanges between the two countries 4. Satisfying part of the country's import needs from Pakistan and other Southeast Asian countries 5. Lack of oil and gas reserves in neighboring countries and the possibility of transfer through the border markets 6. Iran joining the World Trade Organization 7. Pakistan great demands for Iranian products, especially petroleum and petrochemical products 8. Availability of cheap labor in the region 9. Low cost of transportation in Pakistan 10. The possibility of using the potential facilities for goods transport from Pakistan to European countries 11. Existence of transit road from Gwadar city in Pakistan to Rimdan border



	<p>12. The extent of the rail network and the possibility of using combined transportation (road-rail-sea)</p> <p>13. Short distance between Gwadar city to Rimdan border (80 km)</p>
Threat	<p>1. Lack of Pakistan willingness and full cooperation due to exchange rate fluctuations</p> <p>2. Absence of border market in Pakistan instead of Rimdan border market</p> <p>3. Easing the goods smuggling for the Pakistani businessmen due to the absence of a border market and customs on the other side of the border</p> <p>4. Existence of a wide network of informal exchanges and goods smuggling due to high profitability</p> <p>5. Pressure and sanctions from the world powers against our country</p> <p>6. The prevalence of other cultures due to the presence of Pakistani and Indian people in some border markets</p> <p>7. The trend of foreign fashion and clothing, especially among teenagers and young people</p> <p>8. Increasing desire to watch television programs through foreign broadcasts</p> <p>9. Increasing desire to listen to the foreign music</p> <p>10. Access to vulgar videos and photos</p> <p>11. The closure of markets is sometimes due to political reasons</p> <p>12. Increasing foreign forces aggression against the country</p> <p>13. Pakistan government negligence in controlling the borders and the illegal entry of smugglers and criminals into our county</p> <p>14. A lot of brokers and swindlers in Pakistan</p>

Research findings

The research questions

Firstly, the indicators of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities were identified by using the one sample T-test. So the factors - partial (indicators) and general (variables) - were prioritized, analyzed and discussed by using the Friedman test.

1.3.4. The first question: What are the strengths of the province's border markets?

Table 2. One sample T-test to compare the sample mean with the theoretical population mean of the border markets strengths

Test Value = 3					facto rs
Confidence interval (95%)	Mean deviatio n	Level of signif icanc	Deg ree of free	T	

Maximum	Minimum		e Two-tailed tests	do m			
1.0818	.6515	.86667	.000	59	8.060	The ability to create employment for the border dwellers and improve their living standards)Strengths(
1.1018	.6649	.88333	.000	59	8.092	Development of non-oil exports and marketing for domestic products	
.9089	.4911	.70000	.000	59	6.704	The ability to create a healthy economic relationship	
.9296	.4704	.70000	.000	59	6.101	Preventing the informal markets, such as smuggling goods	
1.0800	.6867	.88333	.000	59	8.989	The ability to help the regional development in the border provinces located between the two countries through the proper organization of exchanges	
1.1361	.6972	.91667	.000	59	8.358	Delegation of part of the government's responsibilities in satisfying the needs of the residents of the region to Rimdan border market	
.8670	.4330	.65000	.000	59	5.992	Development of communication, interactions and family bonds	
.6069	.1598	.38333	.001	59	3.431	The presence of non-native people in these areas brings people together and makes them familiar with each other's customs	
.6018	.1649	.38333	.001	59	3.512	Maintaining the demographics of the border areas	
.4553	.0447	.25000	.018	59	2.437	Establishing cultural communication and friendly relations with neighbors at the border	
1.2073	.7927	1.00000	.000	59	9.652	Flourishing local talents	
.9557	.5109	.73333	.000	59	6.598	Creating stability and security and reduce government costs of maintaining the region security	
.8613	.4054	.63333	.000	59	5.560	Strengthening and stabilizing the administration and military forces of the government during the transport of goods from Pakistan to Iran and vice versa	
.8435	.3565	.60000	.000	59	4.932	Reducing the crime rate in the village, city and region	

Table 2 shows that in all indicators of the strength variable, the calculated t-test with 59 degrees of freedom for two-tailed tests at the 5% level of significance is greater than $t_{crit} =$

1.96, so the null hypothesis (there is no difference between the sample mean and the population mean), in all indicators is rejected. Therefore, it can be said that the sample mean is greater than the population mean in all indicators, at the 95% level of confidence. As a result, according to the sample views, all the above factors considered as the strengths of the province's border markets.

2.3.4. The second question: What are the weaknesses of the province's border markets?

Table 3. One sample T-test to compare the sample mean with the theoretical population mean of the border markets weaknesses

Test Value = 3							factors
Confidence interval (95%)		Mean deviation	Level of significance Two-tailed tests	Degree of freedom	T		
Maximum	Minimum						
1.2306	.8694	1.05000	.000	59	11.631	Exchange rate fluctuations	
1.0116	.5884	.80000	.000	59	7.564	High risk to trade due to security and economic reasons	
1.1009	.5991	.85000	.000	59	6.779	Limitation of maximum border exchanges in markets	
1.1086	.7247	.91667	.000	59	9.555	A determined list of regional imported goods rather than a general list for the country's markets as their needs are different	
1.1453	.7213	.93333	.000	59	8.810	High cost of transportation due to the long distance between producers and the market	
1.2173	.8493	1.03333	.000	59	11.237	Most traders and border dwellers are unfamiliar with export and import regulations	
1.0451	.6549	.85000	.000	59	8.718	Lack of sufficient expert and knowledgeable staff in the field of trade in the border markets and customs	
1.1542	.7458	.95000	.000	59	9.311	Absence of border customs in Rimdan border market	
1.4007	.9993	1.20000	.000	59	11.966	Prohibition of the import and export of some goods caused smuggling these goods	
1.1287	.7380	.93333	.000	59	9.561	Successive changes in the commercial regulations of the country	

) weakness(

1.1086	.7247	.91667	.000	59	9.555	Problems in standard licensing
1.0885	.7115	.90000	.000	59	9.556	Numerous decision-making bodies in border markets
1.0320	.6014	.81667	.000	59	7.590	The severe administrative bureaucracy and unnecessary procedures in the work process
1.1256	.7078	.91667	.000	59	8.780	Lack of clarity in executive instructions in border markets
1.1506	.7161	.93333	.000	59	8.596	Absence or lack of infrastructures and facilities such as warehouses, electricity, etc.
1.2501	.8833	1.06667	.000	59	11.639	The lack of production and distribution cooperatives in the province has reduced the market potentials to supply export goods
1.3190	.9144	1.11667	.000	59	11.045	Failure to connect southern cities to the country's rail network
1.2378	.7622	1.00000	.000	59	8.414	The problem of communication routes from Rimdan border market to the transit line

Table 3 shows that in all indicators of the weaknesses variable, the calculated t-test with 59 degrees of freedom for two-tailed tests at the 5% level of significance is greater than $t_{crt} = 1.96$, so the null hypothesis (there is no difference between the sample mean and the population mean), in all indicators is rejected. Therefore, it can be said that the sample mean is greater than the population mean in all indicators, at the 95% level of confidence. As a result, according to the sample views, all the above factors considered as the weaknesses of the province's border markets.

3.3.4. The third question: What are the opportunities for the province's border markets?

Table 4. One sample T-test to compare the sample mean with the theoretical population mean of the border markets opportunities

Test Value = 3							factors
Confidence interval (95%)		Mean deviation	Level of significance Two-tailed tests	Degree of freedom	T		
Maximum	Minimum						
1.5242	1.2092	1.36667	.000	59	17.362	The Pakistani people's strong interest in Iranian goods	opportunities
1.2922	.8744	1.08333	.000	59	10.377	Iran-Pakistan trade agreement related to trade exchanges through Rimdan border market	



1.1485	.7515	.95000	.000	59	9.575	Agreement between Iran and Pakistan on organizing informal exchanges between the two countries
1.0018	.5649	.78333	.000	59	7.176	Satisfying part of the country's import needs from Pakistan and other Southeast Asian countries
1.2750	.7584	1.01667	.000	59	7.876	Lack of oil and gas reserves in neighboring countries and the possibility of transfer through the border markets
1.1069	.6598	.88333	.000	59	7.907	Iran joining the World Trade Organization
1.5741	1.1925	1.38333	.000	59	14.508	Pakistan great demands for Iranian products, especially petroleum and petrochemical products
1.3432	.9235	1.13333	.000	59	10.807	Availability of cheap labor in the region
1.0878	.5456	.81667	.000	59	6.028	Low cost of transportation in Pakistan
1.0271	.5729	.80000	.000	59	7.049	The possibility of using the potential facilities for goods transport from Pakistan to European countries
1.0921	.6412	.86667	.000	59	7.693	Existence of transit road from Gwadar city in Pakistan to Rimdan border
1.1019	.6314	.86667	.000	59	7.371	The extent of the rail network and the possibility of using combined transportation (road-rail-sea)
1.0422	.5911	.81667	.000	59	7.245	Short distance between Gwadar city to Rimdan border (80 km)

Table 4 shows that in all indicators of the opportunity variable, the calculated t-test with 59 degrees of freedom for two-tailed tests at the 5% level of significance is greater than $t_{crit} = 1.96$, so the null hypothesis (there is no difference between the sample mean and the population mean), in all indicators is rejected. Therefore, it can be said that the sample mean is greater than the population mean in all indicators, at the 95% level of confidence. As a result, according to the sample views, all the above factors considered as the opportunities for the province's border markets.

4.3.4. The fourth question: What are the threats to the province's border markets?

Table 5. One sample T-test to compare the sample mean with the theoretical population mean of the border markets threats

Test Value = 3

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Confidence interval (95%)		Mean deviation	Level of significance Two-tailed tests	Degree of freedom	T		ors
Maximum	Minimum						
1.1559	.6775	.91667	.000	59	7.668	Lack of Pakistan willingness and full cooperation due to exchange rate fluctuations	threats
.9399	.5267	.73333	.000	59	7.103	Absence of border market in Pakistan instead of Rimdan border market	
1.1428	.7572	.95000	.000	59	9.862	Easing the goods smuggling for the Pakistani businessmen due to the absence of a border market and customs on the other side of the border	
1.1946	.7387	.96667	.000	59	8.486	Existence of a wide network of informal exchanges and goods smuggling due to high profitability	
1.2839	.8494	1.06667	.000	59	9.824	Pressure and sanctions from the world powers against our country	
.9372	.4295	.68333	.000	59	5.386	The prevalence of other cultures due to the presence of Pakistani and Indian people in some border markets	
.5547	.1119	.33333	.004	59	3.013	The trend of foreign fashion and clothing, especially among teenagers and young people	
.6043	.1290	.36667	.003	59	3.087	Increasing desire to watch television programs through foreign broadcasts	
.3722	~.0722	.15000	.182	59	1.351	Increasing desire to listen to the foreign music	
.2471	~.2471	.00000	1.000	59	.000	Access to vulgar videos and photos	
1.0772	.6228	.85000	.000	59	7.485	The closure of markets is sometimes due to political reasons	
1.0372	.5962	.81667	.000	59	7.411	Increasing foreign forces aggression against the country	
1.4133	1.0200	1.21667	.000	59	12.381	Pakistan government negligence in controlling the borders and the illegal entry of smugglers and criminals into our county	



1.337 7	.9289	1.133 33	.000	59	11.09 6	A lot of brokers and swindlers in Pakistan
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Table 5 shows that in all indicators of the variable, except for the two indicators of increasing desire to listen to the foreign music and access to vulgar videos and photos, the calculated t-test with 59 degrees of freedom for two-tailed tests at the 5% level of significance is greater than $t_{crit} = 1.96$, so the null hypothesis (there is no difference between the sample mean and the population mean), in all indicators except for the two, is rejected. Therefore, it can be said that the sample mean is greater than the population mean in all indicators, at the 95% level of confidence. As a result, according to the sample views, all the above factors, except for the two, considered as the threats to the province's border markets.

5.3.4. What is the prioritization of internal and external environmental factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of border markets of the province?

Table 6. The results of Friedman test regarding the prioritization of the available opportunities for the border markets of the province

priority ranking	mean rank	Factors
2	8.46	The Pakistani people's strong interest in Iranian goods
5	7.28	Iran-Pakistan trade agreement related to trade exchanges through Rimdan border market
6	6.72	Agreement between Iran and Pakistan on organizing informal exchanges between the two countries
12	6.12	Satisfying part of the country's import needs from Pakistan and other Southeast Asian countries
4	7.48	Lack of oil and gas reserves in neighboring countries and the possibility of transfer through the border markets
7	6.71	Iran joining the World Trade Organization
1	8.88	Pakistan great demands for Iranian products, especially petroleum and petrochemical products
3	7.73	Availability of cheap labor in the region
10	6.33	Low cost of transportation in Pakistan
13	6.02	The possibility of using the potential facilities for goods transport from Pakistan to European countries
9	6.42	Existence of transit road from Gwadar city in Pakistan to Rimdan border
8	6.65	The extent of the rail network and the possibility of using combined transportation (road-rail-sea)
11	6.20	Short distance between Gwadar city to Rimdan border (80 km)

Table 6 shows the rank of each of the indicators of the border markets opportunities of the province. In other words, it shows the importance of each indicator (compared to other opportunity indicators) as an existing opportunity. According to these data, Pakistan great

demands for Iranian products, especially petroleum and petrochemical products, and their strong interest in Iranian goods are as the most important opportunities. On the other hand, the possibility of using the potential facilities for goods transport from Pakistan to European countries is as the least important opportunity (compared to other mentioned opportunities).

Table 7. The results of Friedman test regarding the prioritization of the existing threats to the border markets of the province

priority ranking	mean rank	Factors
5	8.28	Lack of Pakistan willingness and full cooperation due to exchange rate fluctuations
9	7.66	Absence of border market in Pakistan instead of Rimdan border market
3	8.67	Easing the goods smuggling for the Pakistani businessmen due to the absence of a border market and customs on the other side of the border
4	8.48	Existence of a wide network of informal exchanges and goods smuggling due to high profitability
6	8.1	Pressure and sanctions from the world powers against our country
10	7.50	The prevalence of other cultures due to the presence of Pakistani and Indian people in some border markets
12	5.76	The trend of foreign fashion and clothing, especially among teenagers and young people
11	5.90	Increasing desire to watch television programs through foreign broadcasts
8	7.77	The closure of markets is sometimes due to political reasons
7	7.98	Increasing foreign forces aggression against the country
1	9.49	Pakistan government negligence in controlling the borders and the illegal entry of smugglers and criminals into our county
2	9.23	A lot of brokers and swindlers in Pakistan

Table 7 shows the rank of each of the indicators of the border markets threats of the province. In other words, it shows the importance of each indicator (compared to other threat indicators) as an existing threat. According to these data, Pakistan government negligence in controlling the borders and the illegal entry of smugglers and criminals into our county, and a lot of brokers and swindlers in Pakistan are as the most important threats. On the other hand, the trend of foreign fashion and clothing, especially among teenagers and young people is as the least important threat (compared to other mentioned threats).

Table 8. The results of Friedman test regarding the prioritization of the existing strengths of the border markets of the province

priority ranking	mean rank	Factors
3	8.36	The ability to create employment for the border dwellers and



		improve their living standards
4	8.35	Development of non-oil exports and marketing for domestic products
8	7.52	The ability to create a healthy economic relationship
6	7.68	Preventing the informal markets, such as smuggling goods
5	8.29	The ability to help the regional development in the border provinces located between the two countries through the proper organization of exchanges
2	8.49	Delegation of part of the government's responsibilities in satisfying the needs of the residents of the region to Rimdan border market
9	7.42	Development of communication, interactions and family bonds
12	6.26	The presence of non-native people in these areas brings people together and makes them familiar with each other's customs
13	6.20	Maintaining the demographics of the border areas
14	5.45	Establishing cultural communication and friendly relations with neighbors at the border
1	9.04	Flourishing local talents
7	7.60	Creating stability and security and reduce government costs of maintaining the region security
10	7.30	Strengthening and stabilizing the administration and military forces of the government during the transport of goods from Pakistan to Iran and vice versa
11	7.04	Reducing the crime rate in the village, city and region

Table 8 shows the rank of each of the indicators of the border markets strengths of the province. In other words, it shows the importance of each indicator (compared to other threat indicators) as an existing strength. According to these data, flourishing local talents, and delegation of part of the government's responsibilities in satisfying the needs of the residents of the region to Rimdan border market are as the most important strengths. On the other hand, establishing cultural communication and friendly relations with neighbors at the border is as the least important strength (compared to other mentioned threats).

Table 9. The results of Friedman test regarding the prioritization of the existing weaknesses of the border markets of the province

priority ranking	mean rank	Factors
4	10.02	Exchange rate fluctuations
18	8.63	High risk to trade due to security and economic reasons
16	8.83	Limitation of maximum border exchanges in markets
8	9.47	A determined list of regional imported goods rather than a general list for the country's markets as their needs are different
11	9.31	High cost of transportation due to the long distance between producers and the market

5	9.85	Most traders and border dwellers are unfamiliar with export and import regulations
17	8.67	Lack of sufficient expert and knowledgeable staff in the field of trade in the border markets and customs
10	9.42	Absence of border customs in Rimdan border market
1	11.20	Prohibition of the import and export of some goods caused smuggling these goods
9	9.44	Successive changes in the commercial regulations of the country
12	9.17	Problems in standard licensing
14	9.16	Numerous decision-making bodies in border markets
15	8.82	The severe administrative bureaucracy and unnecessary procedures in the work process
13	9.18	Lack of clarity in executive instructions in border markets
6	9.68	Absence or lack of infrastructures and facilities such as warehouses, electricity, etc.
3	10.07	The lack of production and distribution cooperatives in the province has reduced the market potentials to supply export goods
2	10.47	Failure to connect southern cities to the country's rail network
7	9.63	The problem of communication routes from Rimdan border market to the transit line

Table 9 shows the rank of each of the indicators of the border markets weaknesses of the province. In other words, it shows the importance of each indicator (compared to other threat indicators) as an existing weakness. According to these data, prohibition of the import and export of some goods caused smuggling these goods and failure to connect southern cities to the country's rail network are as the most important weaknesses. On the other hand, high risk to trade due to security and economic reasons, and lack of sufficient expert and knowledgeable staff in the field of trade in the border markets and customs are as the least important weaknesses (compared to other mentioned threats).

Table 10. The results of Friedman test regarding overall ranking of the opportunities and threats to the border markets of the province (comparison of ratio)

Percentage	Mean rank	Factor
47	4.1	Opportunities
53	6.1	Threats

As Table 10 shows, in total, the mean of threats are more than the mean of existing opportunities. In other words, threats outweigh opportunities.

Table 11. The results of Friedman test regarding overall ranking of the strengths and weaknesses of the border markets of the province (comparison of ratio)

percentage	Mean rank	Factor
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44	1.3	Weaknesses
56	1.7	Strengths

As Table 11 shows, in total, the mean of strengths are more than the mean of weaknesses. In other words, strengths outweigh weaknesses.

In the square matrix, points 1 to 3 on the horizontal axis indicate weaknesses and points 3 to 5 indicate the strengths of the organization. Similarly, points 1 to 3 on the vertical axis indicate threats and points 3 to 5 represent the opportunity of the organization (Fig. 1).

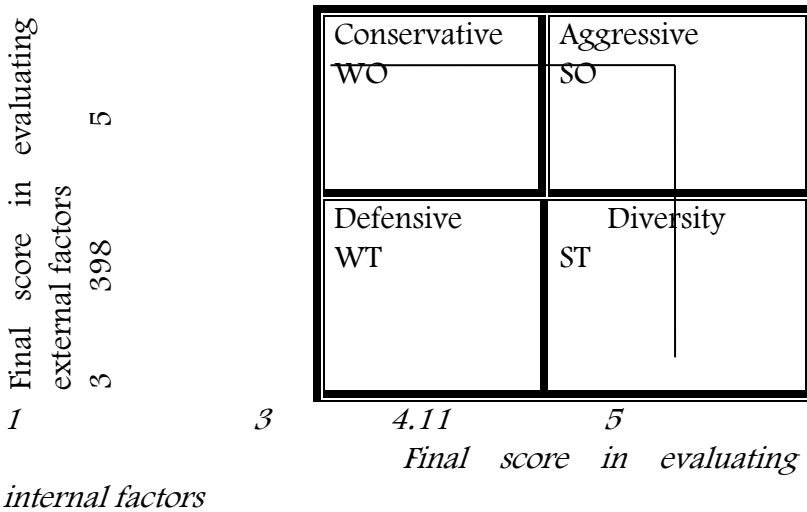


Figure 1. The square matrix of internal and external factors

According to the square matrix, the organization of border markets emphasis is on the aggressive strategy (SO). Therefore, the organization can neutralize or reduce the impact of environmental threats and external damage and achieve growth and excellence by focusing on internal strengths and external opportunities.

Discussion

After analyzing the data, the results of this research are as follows:

The first question: What are the strengths of the province's border markets?

The results of test showed that the border markets of the province have important strengths such as: flourishing local talents, delegation of part of the government's responsibilities in satisfying the needs of the residents of the region to Rimdan border market, the ability to create employment for the border dwellers and improve their living standards, development of non-oil exports and marketing for domestic products, the ability to help the regional development in the border provinces located between the two countries through the proper organization of

exchanges, preventing the informal markets, such as smuggling goods, and creating stability and security and reduce government costs of maintaining the region security.

The second question: What are the weaknesses of the province's border markets?

The results of test showed that the border markets of the province have serious weaknesses such as: the prohibition of the import and export of some goods caused smuggling these goods, failure to connect southern cities to the country's rail network, the lack of production and distribution cooperatives in the province has reduced the market potentials to supply export goods, exchange rate fluctuations, most traders and border dwellers are unfamiliar with export and import regulations, absence or lack of infrastructures and facilities such as warehouses, electricity, etc., the problem of communication routes from Rimdan border market to the transit line, a determined list of regional imported goods rather than a general list for the country's markets as their needs are different, and successive changes in the commercial regulations of the country.

The third question: What are the opportunities for the province's border markets?

The results of test showed that the border markets of the province have some opportunities. Among the most important ones are: Pakistan great demands for Iranian products, especially petroleum and petrochemical products, the Pakistani people's strong interest in Iranian goods, availability of cheap labor in the region, Lack of oil and gas reserves in neighboring countries and the possibility of transfer through the border markets, Iran-Pakistan trade agreement related to trade exchanges through Rimdan border market, agreement between Iran and Pakistan on organizing informal exchanges between the two countries, and Iran joining the World Trade Organization.



The fourth question: What are the threats to the province's border markets?

The results of test showed that border markets of the province face some threats. Among the most serious ones are: Pakistan government negligence in controlling the borders and the illegal entry of smugglers and criminals into our county, a lot of brokers and swindlers in Pakistan, easing the goods smuggling for the Pakistani businessmen due to the absence of a border market and customs on the other side of the border, existence of a wide network of informal exchanges and goods smuggling due to high profitability, lack of Pakistan willingness and full cooperation due to exchange rate fluctuations, pressure and sanctions from the world powers against our country, increasing foreign forces aggression against the country, and the closure of markets is sometimes due to political reasons.

The fifth question: What is the prioritization of the effective (internal and external) environmental factors of the province's border markets?

The results of test showed that the opportunities of the markets outweigh threats and weaknesses. And in total, the mean of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) is more than external factors (opportunities and threats).

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