



THE ROLE OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN ACHIEVING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND ITS IMPACT ON STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF IRAQI PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.

Ossama Muhammed Abed

Faculty of Dentistry, Tikrit University, Iraq

Ossama-980@tu.edu.iq

Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 18th October 2022 Accepted: 18th November 2022 Published: 28th December 2022</p>	<p>The study aimed at the role of business organizations in achieving competitive advantage and its impact on strategic management through an analytical study of Iraqi public universities. To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed (387) to the employees of public universities in Iraq. The study found that there is an impact of the cost dimension on business organizations in strategic management from the perspective of members of Iraqi public universities, and there is an impact of the quality dimension in business organizations on strategic management from the point of view of employees in Iraqi public universities, There is an impact of flexibility in business organizations on strategic management from the point of view of employees of Iraqi public universities & There is a post-handover effect on business organizations in strategic management from the perspective of Iraqi public universities employees.</p>

Keywords: business organizations, competitive advantage, strategic management, Iraqi public universities

INTRODUCTION:

Competitive advantage is one of the most important goals that organizations seek, and it directly affects the behavior and trends of customers. Having it contributes to the continuity and survival of projects, which urges them to provide various alternatives of products to customers, and a distinct service to meet their expectations and desires. In order to generate the competitive advantage, projects adopt creative methods and ideas, and work to raise the efficiency of their resources, and to make the best use of them, which qualifies them to be distinguished over their competitors within the sector in which they are active. Excellence over competitors requires relying on a real competitive advantage, which is created after deep awareness and thought and based on creative ideas; In order for universities to ensure high competitiveness, to remain within this fierce competition, and to grow in the market.

There is no doubt that the issue is not limited to creating a competitive advantage, but rather working to develop and maintain it for the longest possible period. Universities also make continuous changes and improvements in their products and services, and search for serious and creative ideas, as projects work to encourage creativity in its broad sense. It can be embodied in the form of superior

quality products and new work methods, enabling it to strengthen its current competitive advantages and build others in the future.

Porter (1980) defined competitive advantage as the organization's ability to follow new methods that are more effective than competitors, and its quest to create distinct value through innovative production and distinctive services, in addition to its ability to apply them in the field, that is, it is the application of the innovation process in its broad sense. Hinterhuber & Popp (1992) added the competitive advantage as the creation of value or the unique advantage that distinguishes the organization from others that is achieved by following certain strategies for competition.

Nabil (1996) stated that it is the distinct skill or method that allows the organization to produce high quality, and services to customers that are different from what competitors provide, and this difference and distinction brings them a set of benefits and values that distinguish it from other organizations, thus creating value for it. Akram and Ragheed (2008) indicated that it is a set of methods and approaches that push the organization to achieve a different and continuous advantage over competitors, and the methods used, the internal and external environment, and the foundations of competition are determined.



Kassoum (2014) stated that it is the organization's optimal exploitation of the opportunities available to it, its knowledge of its strengths and focus on them, strengthening its weaknesses, and working to perform business in ways that generate value that differs from competitors.

The researcher believes that the competitive advantage is nothing but a set of policies and strategies that projects follow in order to survive in the market, maintain their competitive position, activate their sales, and develop their profits through the optimal use of available resources. It is the distinguished policy pursued by projects to achieve the goals they aim at, and to develop methods that will create a competitive advantage for the projects over other competitors.

However, the world witnessed the last two decades of the twentieth century major shifts in the way educators view the learning and teaching process, some of which were represented in the view of learning as an active building carried out by the learner through his interaction with his environment, and through the reorganization of his mental structures, and some of them represented in giving The social contexts that influence the learning process are of great importance. These fundamental developments are related to the changing events, the latest of which is the Corona virus, which directly affected the progress of the educational process and the effectiveness of learning (Kassoum,2014).

Hence, the educational environment is considered one of the most important foundations for upgrading the educational system. Because it is directly related to the educational outcomes that lead to the achievement of its goals and objectives, thus contributing to the development and enrichment of educational content for students. Therefore, the concept of strategic management is linked to its ability to create a good educational environment that includes advanced methods to be followed by the educational process in all its stages, levels and roles, which contributed to reaching the required level of education, and enriching education with modern methods and methods in order to obtain educational outcomes in the cognitive, emotional and skill areas(Ragheed,2008).

This traditional image of university management is no longer acceptable to educators at the present time, and there are many innovative ideas and opinions that look at the educational process in different ways, in a way that ensures excellent performance management by following the strategic management approach. Where educational

researchers called for creating a complete educational culture based on knowledge and its interpretation through interaction with natural phenomena and with others in order to manage performance as it should (Tayeh,2012).

Strategic management is the organization's ability to plan for everything, and to plan at all administrative levels, and to work on planning to manage operations and activities that bring it back to achieve the desired goals. Using the methods and tools used in planning (Madroud, 2016).

Strategic management constitutes the cornerstone of the organization that seeks success, and organizations have become more in need of planning after the chances of success and continuity have become complicated, as they rely on adopting everything that contributes to maintaining their competitive performance, and their ability to survive in the market, and within the progress in the industry, as planning leads Efficient strategy to achieve entrepreneurship, the ability to avoid any obstacles that may occur, development and increase the efficiency of individuals working in organizations (Al-Alaq, 2004).

The concept of strategy is one of the first function of management, which precedes other functions and is based on the process of choosing between alternatives to work procedures for business organizations as a whole, for each department or part of its parts, and for each of its employees. This means that the strategic management function must precede the rest of the other administrative functions, as it is based on a conscious choice, and this choice is between a set of alternatives. Fayol defines it as "predicting the future and preparing for it. It is a foresight that is manifested in the ability to predict the future and prepare for it by preparing the appropriate plan." changing conditions (Tayeh,2012). It is also the scientific method that includes inventorying human and material resources and using them in the most efficient way in a scientific, practical and humane way to meet the needs of the institution." As planning is a scientific method that is based on the resources necessary for the production process, the organization of financial resources and their use in the best way, by making a comprehensive plan, and clarifying the choice related to facts, setting and using assumptions related to the future when conceiving the proposed systems that you believe are necessary to achieve the desired results (Abu Al-Nasr,2009).

The concept of strategy is a framework with comprehensive dimensions related to the success and future of the business organization. There have been



many directions and ideas of researchers in discussing this concept. Strategy is a relatively recent field of study, so the concept is rapidly developing, and this reflects part of the reason for the difference in the views of writers and those interested in this right. However, these cases of differences are not always negative, but rather It is a true case that enriches scientific research in the field of strategy study (Ben Sedira,2013). Despite this difference, they converge in substance and content, and the studies are complementary to each other when looking at them in a holistic manner to reflect the extent of development in the concept of strategy. Thus, the trends of researchers and thinkers in the field of strategic management and strategic planning increased in defining the concept of strategy - whose first uses in the military field emerged clearly; To meet the management's need for future stability and to develop strategic plans that lead the organization to success by relying on an understanding and awareness of the requirements of the environmental variables surrounding the organization and the opportunities and threats it creates, and in line with the reality of the organization's internal conditions and its strengths or weaknesses(Bryson,2003).

Porter (1985) has pointed out that there are a range of dimensions to competitive advantage:

First: the cost dimension: projects seek to obtain large competitive positions, and activate their sales as a basis for achieving their progress and continuity by providing their products at a lower cost than their competitors. This is also one of the operational objectives of the leading projects that depend on the cost to compete and create a competitive advantage for them over other projects.

Dodgson (2014) indicated that organizations are able to reduce their costs through optimal use of production capacity, efficient use of existing materials, as well as continuous improvement of their operations and activities to reduce errors; Because it costs the organization a lot, and therefore management must be supportive of strategies that drive the organization to lead the cost, and access to competitive prices that enhance the competitive advantage of products in the market.

Second: The quality dimension: Quality is one of the important dimensions that organizations in general and projects in particular seek to pursue to achieve competitive advantage. Garcia (2008) indicated that the organization raises its performance and conforms to specifications and standards, and performs business in the correct manner; To deliver products that meet customer expectations. Today's customers are more

demanding of the quality that meets their needs, and what they desire. Therefore, the projects were forced to provide high quality products that meet these needs; Because if you do not do this, you will not be able to withstand the fierce and fierce competition.

Third: Flexibility Dimension: Flexibility is the basis for projects to achieve a competitive advantage. rapid response to current changes, response to customer requirements that they may request in product design, and in line with their expectations of the factors that indicate project flexibility. Liqin (2009) stated that flexibility is the organization's ability to change methods and processes to other methods in response to changes that have occurred. Among the requirements for flexibility referred to by Macmillan (2008)) First: product flexibility, and the ability to introduce new or developed products. Second: The organization's ability to provide more than one alternative or a combination of alternatives. Third: Flexibility in the delivery of products, and its ability to change times as requested by customers.

Fourth: Post-delivery: John & John (2014) pointed out that the delivery dimension is the basis for competition between projects in the industry by focusing on on-time delivery, reducing lead times, and speeding up the design of competitive products and delivering them to the market in a timely manner. That is, there are three main pillars of the delivery dimension: speed of delivery, delivery on time, and speed of development.

The researcher believes that the competitive advantage is how the organization can distinguish itself from its peers and competitors and achieve for itself superiority and distinction over them. Their actualization and identification, such as cost reduction, quality improvement, length of experience, and some others depend on the perception, expectations, and what the customers' audience holds in their minds for these products. Or organizations mainly stem from the value or satisfaction with which it can offer to its customers at a price lower than the prices of its competitors or to provide distinct or unique benefits where the satisfaction derived from it outweighs the prices paid for it.

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Organizations have sought to visualize the competitive threat and confront it by meeting the needs and desires of customers, as well as seeking to satisfy them in various ways, and this forces them to adopt marketing concepts; To achieve competitive advantage, and work on innovating new products, new markets, and new methods of strategic management.



The problem of the study is that the public universities in Iraq have not yet reached the required level of scientific competence, and the extent they have reached has not been done in a scientific way that guarantees them a competitive advantage, which makes them in dire need to follow a strategy capable of raising the efficiency of these colleges that have neglected the importance of achieving competitive advantage. As a component of economic growth, and the active in it. The problem revolves around the inability of the planners to accurately define the goals that were set, and the lack of conviction of the senior management of the importance of strategic management as a basic pillar in the organization.

Through his briefing, the researcher noted that the government universities in Iraq are located within a highly competitive environment, which aroused their desire to work hard and continuously, especially after moving towards more competitive advantage with its different patterns.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The research problem revolved around a set of questions, as follows:

1. What is the impact of the cost dimension on business organizations in strategic management from the point of view of employees of Iraqi public universities?
2. What is the impact of the quality dimension in business organizations on strategic management from the point of view of employees of Iraqi public universities?
3. What is the impact of flexibility in business organizations on strategic management from the point of view of employees of Iraqi public universities?
4. What is the impact of post-handover on business organizations in strategic management from the point of view of employees of Iraqi public universities?

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH:

The importance of this research stems from the following things:

The importance of the study is that all organizations, including public universities, have become interested in development and achieving competitive advantage because it is one of the good strategic management mechanisms through the use of information systems methods and policies followed in business organizations that lead to raising the efficiency of performance in them. Its importance also stems from the role it plays in translating the mission

and clear strategic vision of Iraqi public universities, which leads to improving work performance in them.

As public universities have an active role in the development of the economy because of their importance in society, where the researcher hopes that this study will help in preserving human capital by reviewing the strategic performance of public universities, and ensuring the provision of permanent updates to it in order to achieve competitive advantage.

RESEARCH LIMITS:

The limitations of this research are as follows:

- Spatial limits: The research was carried out in public universities in Iraq.
- Time limits: This research was implemented in 2020/2021.
- Human limits: the sample of this research was limited to a sample of public universities in Iraq.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is a descriptive study, and at the same time it is an analytical study that aims to identify the role of business organizations in achieving competitive advantage and its impact on strategic management through an analytical study of Iraqi government universities; To make a comprehensive description of the data and information used in this study, and convert it from qualitative to measurable quantity to describe the study variables and to reach results and recommendations.

DATA COLLECTION SOURCES:

In order to prepare this study, and achieve its objectives, the researcher is asked to refer to two types of information sources, which are secondary and primary sources, as follows:

- Secondary sources: In preparing this thesis, the researcher relied on many sources of available information and data, which were collected for the purposes of the study, by reviewing previous literature and studies, reviewing books and references related to competitive advantage and its impact on strategic management, and taking into account scientific materials and reports. Relevant to the subject of this study, and information available on various approved websites.

- Primary Sources: The researcher relied on the data and information available to him in preparing the questionnaire for this study, and it also covered all aspects related to it, on which hypotheses were built, and were addressed in the theoretical framework, in



addition to the fact that the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the study sample.

Study Tool

The researcher prepared a tool for the study to collect data, which was prepared based on the theoretical framework of the study, and the study tool included three main parts, which are as follows:

The first part: is represented by the demographic variables represented by (age group, educational level, number of years of experience, and occupational level).

The second part: It consists of the independent variable represented by the competitive advantage in its dimensions (quality, cost, delivery, and flexibility).

The third part: consists of the dependent variable represented in strategic management.

Field study data analysis

• Characteristics of the members of the community and the study sample:

The study population consisted of workers in Iraqi government colleges, and an appropriate sample was taken from the study community due to the large size of the study community, as the number of sample members reached (450) people, the questionnaire was distributed in the appropriate ways, and (391) questionnaires were retrieved with a percentage of (87%) from The study sample, and (4) questionnaires were excluded for their unsuitability for analysis from the distributed questionnaires, as the final number that was analyzed reached (387) questionnaires, and Table (1) Shows the distribution of the sample members according to demographic variables

Table (1): Distribution of the sample members according to demographic variables (n = 387).

Variable	the level	Repetition	percentage
Age	Less than 30 years old	21	5.4
	From 30 to 40 years old	171	44.2
	From 40 to less than 50 years old	160	41.3
	50years or more	35	9.0
	total	387	100
Educational level	High School	24	6.2
	diploma	152	39.3
	Bachelor's	189	48.8
	Postgraduate	22	5.7
	Total	387	100
Experience	less than 5 years	70	18.1
	5 years and less than 10 years	159	41.1
	10 years - less than 15 years	127	32.8
	15 years or more	31	8.1
	Total	387	100

Table No. (1) Shows the following:

1- Age group: Accordingly, the highest percentage of the study sample members according to the age group ranging from 30 to 40 years old was (44.2%), while the lowest percentage was for the age group less than 30 years old (5.4%). This is because

small and medium enterprises in Jordan employ middle-aged people.

2- Educational level: The percentage of the study sample members who held a "bachelor's degree" reached the highest percentage, which was (48.8%), where their numbers were "189", followed by those



who hold a "diploma" degree with a percentage of (39.3%), where Their numbers were "152", while the lowest percentage of "general secondary" degrees was (6.2%) and their numbers were "24".

3- Number of years of experience: based on the table, it was found that the highest percentage of the study sample members whose experience ranges between 5 years and less than 10 years" where their numbers amounted to "159" at a rate of (41.1%), while the lowest percentage of those whose experience exceeds 15 years or more By (8.1), their number was "31" individuals.

The results of the descriptive statistics for the fields of study

Presentation of the results related to the study variables

First: Presentation of the results related to the axis of "quality dimension":

In order to answer the first question, the arithmetic averages of the answers of the study sample members on the paragraphs of the "quality dimension" axis were extracted. The tables below illustrate this:

Table (2): Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the quality dimension.

NS	Phrases	Arithmetic average	standard deviation
1.	Public universities seek to adopt strategic plans to enhance quality in them.	3.67	1.25
2.	Public universities have clear criteria for evaluating private activities.	3.04	1.74
3.	Public universities adopt the international standard for quality to raise the level of their products or services provided.	3.23	1.47
4.	Preparing a strategic plan to improve the level of quality in public universities.	3.60	1.48
5.	Public universities depend on modern technology to increase the quality of their products or services.	3.74	1.46
6.	As a whole	3.45	medium

Table (2) indicates that the arithmetic averages for (after quality) came at the average level, and the paragraph that states "Public universities depend on modern technology to increase the quality of their products or services" came in the first place with an arithmetic average of (3.74), while The paragraph that states "Public universities have clear criteria for evaluating private activities." It ranked last with an

arithmetic mean (3.04). The overall result indicates (3.45), and this indicates that the responses of the study sample were positive, with high and medium degrees, distributed over the paragraphs of this field. As for the standard deviation values, they are high, and this indicates that the answers of the study sample are varying and far between in this area to some extent.

Table (3): Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the responses of the sample members "to the items after "cost

NS	Phrases	Arithmetic average	standard deviation
1.	Reducing the cost of producing products and providing services is one of the priorities of the objectives of public universities.	3.40	1.30



2.	Government universities support research and development in order to reduce the costs of producing its products or services.	3.54	1.66
3.	Public universities are interested in achieving the optimum use of their resources in order to reduce costs.	3.72	1.77
4.	The production and service systems of public universities are designed to reduce its total cost.	3.12	1.40
5.	The production and service capacity is efficiently exploited, and the waste of resources is reduced.	3.65	1.75
6.	As a whole	3.49	medium

Table No. (3) shows that the arithmetic averages of the responses of the sample members to the items after "cost" ranged between (3.72-3.12), the highest of which was paragraph (3) concerned with public universities in achieving the optimal use of their resources in order to reduce costs." With a high evaluation degree , while below for Paragraph (3) "Public universities are interested in achieving the optimum use of their resources in order to reduce costs." with a medium evaluation score.

Table No. (3) shows that the standard deviations of the answers of the study sample members ranged between (1.30-1.77), which indicates the high dispersal rate of the answers of the study sample members from the arithmetic mean, which indicates the existence of differences in the opinions of the study sample members about the acceptable level of cost.

Table (4): Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the responses of the sample members about the items after "delivery"

NS	Phrases	Arithmetic average	standard deviation
1.	Public universities aims at speed of completion to deliver products on time to customers.	3.51	0.90
2.	Activities are completed on time for public universities.	3.70	1.00
3.	Public universities enjoy the trust of their customers through the speed of providing products or services to customers.	3.68	0.92
4.	Public universities are keen to meet market demands at the appropriate speed.	2.92	1.51
5.	Public universities rely on modern technology to accurately deliver their products or services to customers.	3.62	1.38
6.	As a whole	3.65	medium



Table No. (4) shows that the arithmetic averages of the responses of the sample members to the paragraphs after the "handover" ranged between (3.70-3.51), the highest of which was paragraph (2) Activities are completed on time for public

universities." With a high evaluation degree, while the lowest Paragraph (4) "Public universities are keen to meet market demands at the appropriate speed.." with a medium rating.

Table (5): Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the answers of the sample members on the items after "flexibility"

NS	Phrases	Arithmetic average	standard deviation
1.	The activities of public universities respond flexibly to market requirements.	3.35	0.89
2.	Public universities have the power to change and reshape their activities.	3.38	1.02
3.	Offering a wide range of products to meet customer requirements and achieve the greatest flexibility.	3.86	0.95
4.	Public universities can transform their operations from old line products and services to new line products and services.	3.45	1.06
5.	Public universities depend on modern technology to increase the flexibility of their products or services.	3.63	0.99
6.	As a whole	3.53	medium

Table No. (5) shows that the arithmetic averages of the responses of the sample members to the items after "flexibility" ranged between (3.86 -3.35), the highest of which was paragraph (4) "offering a wide range of products to meet customer requirements and achieve the greatest flexibility". "With a high evaluation degree, while the lowest for paragraph (1) "The activities of public universities respond flexibly to market" with a medium evaluation degree.

Study hypotheses test results

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to study the effect of several independent variables on a dependent variable. The explanatory independent variables may be continuous or categorical. Here are the results of multiple regressions to test the main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses:

Table (6): Results of applying the multiple regression equation to a study.

Sig	t	Std. Error	B	variable
0.069	5.693	0.128	0.318	1
0.00	5.510	0.172	0.319	2
0.00	5.510	0.147	0.319	3
0.392	0.857	0.160	0.053	4



It appears from Table (6) that the value of the coefficient of determination is (86%), that is, approximately 86% of the changes to the role of business organizations in achieving competitive advantage and its impact on strategic management through an analytical study of Iraqi public universities. Which means not accepting the nihilistic hypothesis which states that there are no statistically significant differences for the role of business organizations in achieving competitive advantage and its impact on strategic management through an analytical study of Iraqi public universities.

In order to verify the validity of the first main hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses, the multiple regression equation was applied to study as a whole. Table (7) shows that:

Table (17): Results of applying the multiple regression equation for a study as a whole

Statistical significance	F	R Square Adjusted	R ²	R	Statistical significance	t	β	Variables
0.00	1.246	0.863	0.865	0.93	0.069	5.693	0.318	1
					0.00	1.825	0.958	2
					0.00	5.510	0.319	3
					0.392	0.857	0.053	4

It appears from Table (7) that the value of (F) amounted to (1.246) and with statistical significance (0.00). The value of (R) amounted to (0.93), which represents the correlation coefficient of the overall model, and the value of (R²) amounted to (0.865), which represents the percentage of the impact or interpretation of all independent variables on the dependent variable, which indicates the existence of the role of business organizations in achieving Competitive advantage and its impact on strategic management through an analytical study of Iraqi public universities.

RESULTS:

1. There is an impact of the cost dimension on business organizations in strategic management from the perspective of members of Iraqi public universities.
2. There is an impact of the quality dimension in business organizations on strategic management from the point of view of employees in Iraqi public universities.
3. There is an impact of flexibility in business organizations on strategic management from the point of view of employees of Iraqi public universities.
4. There is a post-handover effect on business organizations in strategic management from the perspective of Iraqi public universities employees.

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