

The Impact of Strategic Thinking on Achieving Competitive Advantage in Container Handling Terminals in the Arab Republic of Egypt

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Abstract:- The current study aimed to measure the impact of strategic thinking on achieving competitive advantage in its dimensions (cost-quality-creativity), by conducting a field study on companies working in the field of container handling in the Arab Republic of Egypt, where the study variables were measured through a questionnaire distributed to The workers in the container handling companies in Alexandria and Port Said also measured the median effect of creative abilities, and the results of the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS 28 & AMOS 26 programs, and the results of the study concluded that there is a significant and statistically significant effect of strategic thinking on competitive advantage.

Keywords:- Strategic Thinking; Competitive Advantage

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important determinants of economic growth for most countries is foreign trade, especially developing countries that cannot manufacture many of their needs and depend mainly on imports from other countries and at the same time rely on the export of raw materials as a primary resource for hard currency. The global economy is based primarily on trade exchange. Between countries, international trade can only take place through transport. Maritime transport occupies the forefront in the transfer of international trade, as seaborne goods represent about 80% of the global trade volume, reaching 2020 about 10.7 billion tons of goods transported through various means of maritime transport. UNCTAD expects world maritime trade to recover by +4.3% in 2021 Growth in maritime trade volumes is expected to moderate and expand at an annual rate of +2.4% between 2022 and 2026. This shows the importance of maritime transport in the global economy and the extent of its contribution to it. This high percentage is due to the many advantages that distinguish maritime transport from other different modes of transport. (Review of Maritime Transport 2021)

Maritime transport has many different forms. Maritime transport by container ships is of great importance because of its many advantages, such as the speed of circulation, protection of containerized goods, the speed of turnover of container ships, and other advantages, It is reported that the total handling via container vessels by dead-weight tons during 2020 is 274.97 Million tons increased by 2.48% in 2021

to become 281.78 Million tons which are about 13 percent of handling volume of the world fleet, also the world container port traffic in 2019 was about 811.2 million TEUs and in 2020 about 815.6 million TEUs in 2020, This means that transport by container ships is constantly increasing. (Review of Maritime Transport 2021)

In light of the mergers, acquisitions and alliances that took place in recent years between shipping lines, which led to an increase in competition between container handling terminals, which prompted them to provide more competitive advantages that distinguish one station from the other in order to attract shipping lines and increase the volume of trading for these lines at these stations.

Container handling terminals in the Arab Republic of Egypt seek to increase the market share of container handling in the eastern Mediterranean region by providing more competitive advantages that distinguish it from other terminals in other countries of the eastern Mediterranean.

Strategic thinking plays an important role in achieving the competitive advantage of companies and helps companies and business organizations to make their business more distinct from other competing organizations in the market, in order to acquire a larger market share and continuity of creativity in providing the services they provide to their customers in the presence of challenges And constantly changes in the market, and this creativity needs strength in strategic intent, awareness of systems, timely thinking, opportunity thinking, and leadership of the assumptions of the company's management, which helps it maintain the competitive advantages it offers to its customers. It results from not creating competitive advantages that the company enjoys over others and leads to the loss of its customers in favor of competitors and its exit from the competition market.

The researcher found that there is a lack of studies that dealt with the relationship between strategic thinking and achieving competitive advantage by applying to container handling stations in the Arab Republic of Egypt. From this point of view, the researcher sees conducting this study in an attempt to bridge the research gap.

The importance of this study lies in the following points:

- To highlight the impact that strategic thinking plays for officials in organizations and the extent of its impact on achieving competitive advantage in those organizations.
- This study is the first in dealing with the impact of strategic thinking on achieving competitive advantage in container handling terminals in the Arab Republic of Egypt, and then this study will attempt to bridge the research gap in this sector.
- The research shows the importance of the competitive advantage of organizations and the privileges obtained by the organizations that have the competitive advantage.
- The research shows the mediating role those creative abilities play between strategic thinking and achieving competitive advantage.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

- The study (Al-Hasnawi et al., 2020) aimed to determine the impact relationship and correlation between strategic thinking skills and the strategic response process at the level of a sample of medical and nursing staff working in private hospitals in Santa Karbala, as strategic thinking skills are measured through three dimensions (reflections) of. The strategic response process is measured against four dimensions (resource mobility, business process maturity, business responsive environment, and business proactiveness to the environment). and information from a (218) sample of medical staff and paramedics from the hospitals surveyed, as well as through a statistical program (Microsoft) was used. Excel 2010, SPSS v.5, Amos V.23), the study has drawn some conclusions, the most important of which are direct and significant effects on his existence, and he has also drawn some recommendations, the most important of which are Sufficient focus needs to be placed on developing the strategic thinking skills of its members, including doctors and nurses, to ensure that they improve their ability to respond strategically to different environmental conditions.

- The study (Al-Wahidi and others, 2020) aimed to identify the role of strategic thinking in enhancing the competitiveness of mobile phone company Ooredoo in the Gaza Strip provinces. Among the middle and senior executives of the studied companies, he used a comprehensive inventory method to collect the necessary data from the study population, which included (100) people, the study came to the following conclusions :), and there was a high degree of concordance with cultural skills, relatively the weight is (73.3%). At the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), there are also positive and statistically significant positive correlations among strategic thinking, interesting dimension, discrete thinking and timely thinking. Holistic thinking) and the competitiveness of the companies surveyed and the presence of a statistically significant effect on the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) Conscious thinking and timely thinking about their competitiveness at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). The study recommends adopting a flexible strategic plan that simulates the company's current and future situations, and continually

evolves the plan based on framework conditions. Rapid change by using consultants, strategists, and experts in the field.

- The study (Targhini, 2015) It aims to measure and analyze the correlation and influence relationship between strategic thinking as an independent variable and its derived sub variables (strategic intention, dark perception, leadership assumption, time thinking, intelligent possibility) and innovation ability organization as a dependent variable. It is manifested in two dimensions by its components (receptivity, adaptability, reasoning ability) and research purpose, the first is theoretical, expressed by providing an intellectual framework for the research topic, and the second is domain or critique The impact of strategic thinking on the creative capacity of the Soidal complex was determined in research designed to answer questions, then crystallize theoretical frameworks based on those questions, and formulate hypotheses to test correlations and impacts. Data were collected from (74) managers and frameworks in the Soidal complex, using questionnaires as tools and using a range of statistical methods such as arithmetic mean and standard of deviation, coefficient of determination, percentage, Spearman's correlation coefficient, etc. to test for correlation hypotheses, and (F) values for simple and multiple regression models to test the relevant hypotheses there. By using the SPSS program to analyze the data for statistical processing, the results of hypothesis testing, analysis, and interpretation concluded that there was a statistically significant impact and correlation between strategic thinking and its sub variables and the innovation capabilities conferred by the institution.

- The study (Al-Murshid, 2019) aimed to test the relationship between strategic thinking and organizational performance of Jordanian insurance companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange from the perspective of the managers of the companies surveyed. To this end, the researchers designed a questionnaire to collect raw data from the study population, which included all employees of Jordanian Insurance Company, one of the 27 insurance companies registered on the Amman Stock Exchange. Average 74.10%. 21 questionnaires were excluded because they contained a certain proportion of missing data. The study draws a number of conclusions, the most important of which are that there is a statistically significant correlation between overall strategic thinking and organizational performance and its dimensions, with no statistically significant difference between respondents' means differences based on the role of variables gender, age, education, management level, years of experience in strategic thinking on organizational performance of Jordanian insurance companies). The study also found that Jordanian insurers are very interested in the strategic thinking and business performance dimensions. The study recommends that Jordanian insurance companies reconsider their corporate structures.

The study (Onyimbo, 2018) aimed to determine how strategic planning affects a firm's competitive advantage and performance, the purpose of the study was to determine

the impact of strategic planning and competitive advantage on investment banking performance, which was done using a questionnaire. Primary data were obtained by providing questionnaires to employees whose activities were closely related to the purpose of the study. Data is analyzed using descriptive analytics, designed to describe in-depth quantitative methods to achieve research objectives. The study concluded that strategic planning practices employed by Kenyan investment banks include goal setting and the development of strategic plans. Decisions involving engagement, rewards, appreciation, training, development, and employee ownership and reliance on these practices have been found to positively impact bank performance. in capacity building.

- The study (Gichovi, 2019) Aiming to determine the impact of strategic planning on the competitive advantage of family bank limited companies, this study is guided by four theories: supply-based theory, stakeholder theory, five carriers, and dynamic theory. Collected through face-to-face interviews, questions were open-ended, and respondents' responses were collected through content analysis to highlight common themes across responses. The study found that the bank included goal setting, strategic plan development and engagement and Rewards, appreciation, training and development, and employee participation in decision-making. The results concluded that executive engagement, employee engagement, and adoption of strategic planning tools and techniques had a positive impact on an organization's competitive advantage.

- The study (Kornelius et al., 2020) Show that the strategic planning process includes defining business objectives, understanding the external environment and strategic issues within the organization, defining strategic options, and developing implementation and control plans. A literature review suggests that for some organizations there is a positive relationship between strategic planning and performance. However, some evidence suggests that

this relationship is not strong, and there is academic debate about the strength of this relationship. This study revisits the strategic planning literature and proposes a new approach that combines strategic flexibility and responsiveness with the theory of dynamic capabilities, a concept known as "competitive strategic mobility." To bridge the gap between strategic planning and performance, we develop metrics and dimensions to measure the operational concept of competitive strategy for additional empirical research.

The research gap of this research is summarized in the following:

Model: Previous studies in this field lack a combined model to measure the impact of strategic thinking on achieving competitive advantage in container handling terminals. In this research, the impact of strategic thinking will be measured, including (strategic intention, systems awareness, time thinking, opportunity thinking, and leadership of assumptions) on achieving competitive advantage in its aspects (cost advantage, service quality, creativity and creativity), and this will be done by relying on creative capabilities. As an intermediate variable, including (sensing ability, acquisition ability, absorption capacity).

Application: This research is the first of its kind in the application of this model, which is to measure the impact of strategic thinking on achieving competitive advantage in container handling stations in the Arab Republic of Egypt, where this model has not been discussed or applied to the companies under study before. In this research, the researcher will shed light on the Alexandria Container Handling Company and the Port Said Container Handling Company as a comparative study, and the researcher will be interested in highlighting the importance of strategic thinking and its impact on achieving competitive advantage, as well as the role of creative abilities as an intermediary variable between the independent variable and the dependent variable to provide solutions and proposals to officials.

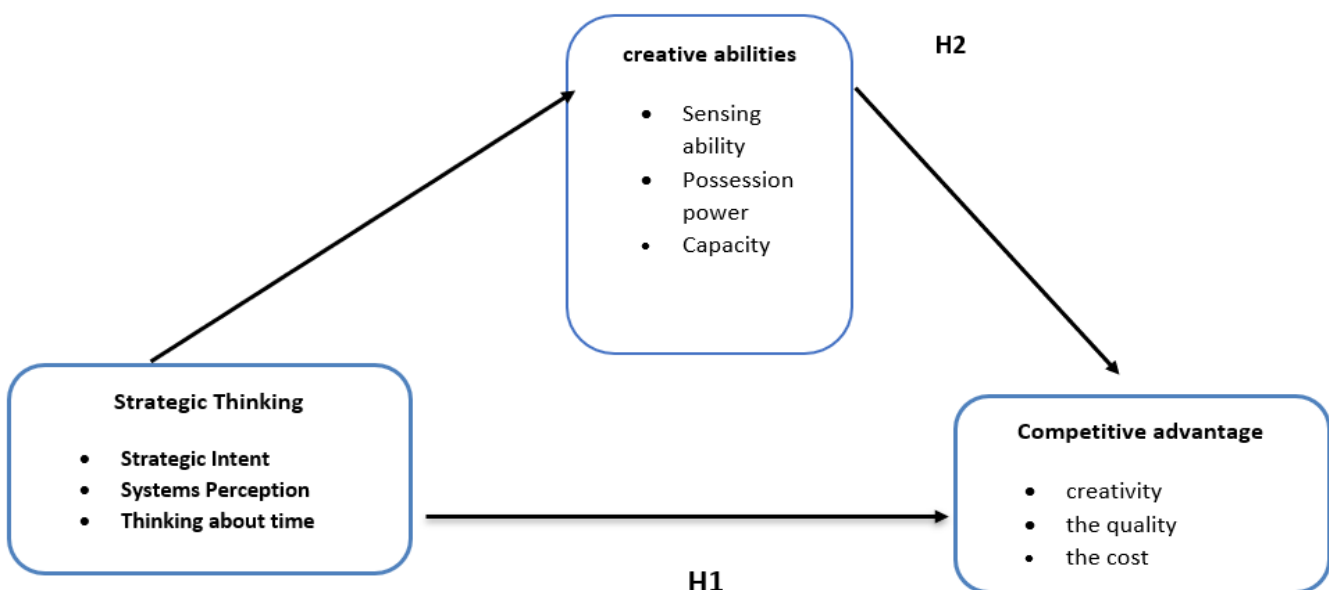


Fig (1) The Research Conceptual Framework

III. METHODS

To test the hypothesized model, this study used a survey questionnaire research design and quantitative methodology approach. In total, 161 questionnaires were distributed by drop-off to the targeted respondents to the workers in the container handling companies in Alexandria and Port Said, the SPSS software and the regression analysis were used to analyze the data collected.

➤ *Measure.*

Previous literature was the source of the techniques for measuring the variables. Strategic thinking measures were based on (Megthab,2018; Targhiny,2015). Creative abilities were adopted from (elhamadany,2018) A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses, ranging from “1” (Strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree).

First, the reliability of constructs was computed using Cronbach’s alpha. The accepted value of Cronbach’s alpha for a scale for good reliability is 0.61 or more. Average variance extracted (AVE) research were higher than the cut-off value (> 0.50). This indicates convergent validity of all constructs of the study.

IV. RESULTS

➤ *Using SPSS 28 regression analysis to test the research hypothesis, the results are as follows:*

Hypothesis Main First :there is a statistically significant effect of strategic thinking on competitive advantage achievement:

1st sub hypothesis: there is a statistically significant effect of Strategic intenton competitive advantage achievement

Table (1): Regression analysis of the impact of strategic intent on achieving competitive advantage.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²
	B	std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.164	.292		3.989	.000	.410
SI	.629	.075	.640	8.414	.000	

As it is evident from the statistical results given in Table (1) and the subsequent T-test values, it can be seen that, according to the strategic intention, this has a competitive advantage for realization, which is significant due to the calculated (t) value of (8.414) level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$), and also found that the dimension of strategic intent predicts about 41% as a factor affecting changes that occur in the process of achieving competitive advantage. This proves the validity and acceptability of the first sub-hypothesis.

2nd sub hypothesis: there is a statistically significant effect of Strategic perception on competitive advantage achievement:

Table (2): Regression analysis of the impact of systems perception on achieving competitive advantage.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²
	B	std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.692	.284		.410	.000	.31
SP	.492	.073	.557	6.773	.000	

As it is evident from the statistical results presented in Table (2), and from the follow-up of the values of the T-test that after realizing the systems It has a positive effect on achieving competitive advantage, as the calculated (T) values amounted to (6.773), which are significant values at the level of significance ($0.05 \geq \alpha$), and it was also found that after realizing the systems, it predicts about 31 % as an effective factor of the changes occurring in achieving competitive advantage. This proves the validity and acceptance of the second sub-hypothesis.

3rd sub hypothesis: there is a statistically significant effect of time thinking on competitive advantage achievement:

Table (3): Regression analysis of the effect of time thinking on achieving competitive advantage.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²
	B	std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.204	.223		5.388	.000	.537
TT	.653	.060	.733	10,867	.000	

As it is evident from the statistical results presented in Table (3), and from the follow-up of the values of the T-test that after thinking about time It has a positive effect on achieving competitive advantage, as the calculated (T) values amounted to (10,867), which are significant values at the level of significance ($0.05 \geq \alpha$), and it was also found that after thinking about the time it is predicted about 53.7 % as an impact factor of the changes occurring in achieving the advantage. Competitiveness, which proves the validity and acceptance of the third sub-hypothesis.

4th sub hypothesis: there is a statistically significant effect of opportunity thinking on competitive advantage achievement:
Table (4): Regression analysis of the impact of opportunity thinking on achieving competitive advantage.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²
	B	std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	.986	.158		6.256	.000	73.6 %
OT	.727	.043	.858	16,877	.000	

As it is clear from the statistical results presented in Table (4), and from the follow-up of the values of the T-test that after the opportunity thinking has a positive effect on achieving competitive advantage in terms of quality, where the calculated (T) values reached (16,877), which are significant values at the level of significance ($0.05 \geq \alpha$), and it was also found that after opportunity thinking predicts about 73.6 % as an impact factor of the changes occurring In achieving competitive advantage, which proves the validity and acceptance of the fourth sub-hypothesis.

5th sub hypothesis: there is a statistically significant effect of opportunity thinking on competitive advantage achievement:
Table (5): Regression analysis of the impact of opportunity thinking on achieving competitive advantage.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²
	B	std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.369	.220		6.230	.000	.51
AL	.615	.060	.714	10.309	.000	

As it is evident from the statistical results presented in Table (5), and from the follow-up of the values of the T-test that after leading the assumptions It has a positive effect on achieving competitive advantage, as the calculated (T) values amounted to (10.309), which are significant values at the level of significance ($0.05 \geq \alpha$), and it was also found that after making assumptions predicts about 51 % as an impact factor of changes in achieving competitive advantage. This proves the validity and acceptance of the fifth sub-hypothesis.

2nd main hypothesis creative abilities mediate Relationship between Strategic thinking and competitive advantage .

trace	Variables	strategic thinking		
		Lower CI	Upper CI	p-value
direct effect	creative abilities	0.792	0.875	0.01
	Achieving a competitive advantage	0.06	0.32	0.005
indirect effect	creative abilities	0	0	...
	Achieving a competitive advantage	0.005	0.86	0.051

It is noted from Table (6) that the results of conducting a median impact test analysis using AMOS 26, that there is a direct impact of strategic thinking on achieving competitive advantage (CI: 95% P-value: 0.005, UCI: 0.32, LCI: 0.06) , as found an indirect effect of strategic thinking on achieving competitive advantage Through the mediating effect of creative abilities (P-value: 0.051, UCI: 0.86, LCI: 0.005), that is, creative abilities mediate the relationship between strategic thinking and partially achieving competitive advantage, which leads to partially accepting the 2nd main hypothesis.

V. DISCUSSION

Strategic thinking is the most important factor that organizations seek and strive for. To gain the best competitive advantage, they must implement innovative strategies and practices. Innovation and strategic thinking are seen as key drivers of improved competitive advantage realization, and this study examines the impact of both, with mixed results. The impact of strategic intent on achieving competitive advantage was positive and significant (b=0.492, t=8.414, p<0.005), thus supporting H1.1. This result is consistent with many studies in previous literature. Strategic cognition has a statistically significant effect on gaining a competitive advantage: this has been empirically confirmed (b=0.492,

$t=6.773$, $p<0.05$), supporting Hypothesis H1.2. This finding is consistent with many previous studies that have found that strategic planning has a positive and significant impact on organizations. Time to think has a statistically significant effect on gaining a competitive advantage. ($b = .653$, $t = 10,867$, $p < 0.05$), supporting hypothesis H1.3

Also, there is a statistically significant effect of opportunity thinking on competitive advantage achievement, $b = .727$, $t = 16,877$, $p < 0.05$), supporting hypothesis H1.4

there is a statistically significant effect of leading the assumptions on competitive advantage achievement, $b = .615$, $t = 10.309$, $p < 0.05$), supporting hypothesis H1.5

Also, the results revealed that creative abilities partially mediate the relationship between strategic thinking and competitive advantage achievement.

This study contributes to literature, both theoretically and practically, by identifying several ways in which organizational resources and capabilities influence the achievement of competitive advantage.

The cross-sectional methods were used to collect data at specific time points. Longitudinal studies can elucidate and explain complex relationships over time due to the complex combined effects of variables. This method can detect changes in associations between variables over time. Another limitation of the study involved the study design, which prevented the researchers from seeing the dynamic relationship between variables over time.

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