Porter’s Generic Competitive Strategies and its influence on the Competitive Advantage

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Abstract— The ever-changing competitive business climate poses major hurdles to investment businesses, particularly the banking sector, as well as any other firm in Iraq’s Kurdistan area, and business managers have been striving to stay competitive. Porter demonstrated that pursuing a competitive generic strategy can lead to a stronger competitive advantage. The purpose of this research is to determine the effects of Porter’s generic strategies on competitive advantage in the investment industry, specifically in the banking sector. Also, which strategy is superior to the others in terms of gaining a competitive advantage in the investing industry? The data in this study was analyzed using a qualitative method. In Erbil, a random sample method was employed to collect data from private banks. The sample size for this study was 128 units, whereas the population was roughly 210 units. According to multiple regression analysis, the researcher discovered that cost leadership has a strong predictive value for competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.708, p.001), indicating that cost leadership approach will have a direct beneficial impact on competitive advantage. The initial hypothesis was confirmed as a result of these findings. In terms of the second research hypothesis, differentiation strategy has a weak positive influence on competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.180, p.001), implying that differentiation strategy has a weak positive impact on competitive advantage. The second hypothesis was supported based on these findings, and the third research hypothesis was supported based on these findings: focus strategy has significantly predicted competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.102, p.001), indicating that focus strategy will have a weak positive impact on competitive advantage.

Keywords— Porter’s Generic Strategy, Cost Leadership, Differentiation, Focus, Investment, Banking Sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

Investment industries have recently experienced a significant boost in demand (Hamza et al. 2021). Investment sectors are projected to continue to be the primary source of the country's economy in the foreseeable future (Ismael et al. 2021). The focus of this research is on banking investment in Iraq’s Kurdistan region. In Iraq’s Kurdistan Region (Jamal et al. 2021), the banking industry is one of the most significant and rapidly rising. Kurdistan (Sabir et al. 2021), Iraq’s Kurdistan, has recently become one of the hottest investment destinations in the world (Saleh et al. 2021).

The banking sector is constantly expanding, and it is becoming more and more appealing for investment every day (Sorguli et al. 2021). This is regarded as one of the most important contributions to a country's economy, and an increasing number of banks are looking to invest in the region. Many banks are in the beginning stages of their operations (Talim, et al. 2021), and the region as a whole is still developing and adjusting to global standards (Top & Ali, 2021).

Banks are currently in need of a defined strategy and direction. The banks are working hard to achieve the deadlines set by the region’s municipal governments and to begin serving customers as soon as feasible (Abdullah et al.
2021). Bank competition has increased, making it difficult for new potential banks to enter the market (Ahmed et al. 2021). As a result, in today's competitive market, strategies have become an extremely important managerial tool (Akoi et al. 2021). The major direction of the firm is shown by strategic management (Ali & Anwar, 2021), which comprises organizational goals, formulating plans and policies to achieve these goals, and allocating resources to implement a set of strategies (Ali et al. 2021).

This study focuses on Porter's generic strategy model (Ali et al. 2021), which includes cost leadership strategy, focus strategy, and differentiation strategy (Ali, 2014), to enable banks to get a competitive edge in the market place (Andavar et al. 2020).

**Research Objectives**

The primary goal of the study was to determine the impact of Porter's generic tactics on competitive advantage in the investment industry, namely in the banking sector. To achieve this research goal, the study needed to determine the impact of three generic strategies on competitive advantage: first, the impact of cost leadership strategy on competitive advantage, second, the impact of differentiation strategy on competitive advantage, and third, the impact of focus strategy on competitive advantage. Also, which strategy is superior to the others in terms of gaining a competitive advantage in the investing industry?

**II. LITERATURE REVIEW GENERIC STRATEGY**

Strategy, according to (Anwar & Abd Zebari, 2015), can be defined as "building a strong defense against the five competing factors (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). To cope successfully with Porters' five competing forces and so generate a lasting competitive advantage, businesses in the Oil and Gas industries must generate an insecure position through competitive strategy (Anwar & Balcioglu, 2016).

Despite the fact that a company's strengths and shortcomings may differ from those of its competitors (Anwar & Climis, 2017), it can only have one of two forms of competitive advantage: low cost or differentiation (Anwar & Ghafoor,2017). Strategy, according to (Anwar & Qadir, 2017), is the process of developing an useful and distinct position through a variety of activities (Anwar & Shukur, 2015). A company must choose between being a differentiator or a cost leader (Anwar & Surarchith, 2015); it is impossible to achieve both at the same time (Anwar, 2016). The two types of competitive advantage (Anwar, 2017), together with the range of competitive actions that the company tries to achieve them, result in three generic strategies that surpass competitors (Anwar, K., & Louis, 2017).

As seen in figure (1) the generic competitive strategies. Three kinds of strategies are considered as generic (Aziz et al. 2021), the reason is because all three strategies apply into different types of businesses (Demir et al. 2020). Every business should apply only one of those generic strategies, in case if a business fails with all three strategies this means that the business has no advantages (Faraj et al. 2021). Each of the generic strategies involves a different route to competitive advantage (Hameed & Anwar, 2018). Cost leadership strategy connects the business to be the lowest cost seller or producer within the industry with the same potential profit (Hamza et al. 2021). Differentiation strategy makes the business to produce or sell unique products or services (Ismael et al. 2021). Focus strategy that makes the business to efficiently serve a specific customer or market segment (Jamal et al. 2021).

Cost Leadership Strategy: This strategy concentrates on low cost in terms of businesses’ activities and could functionalized as low pricing, low input (Sabir et al. 2021), experience, the design of the products, economies of scale and the design of the process (Saleh et al. 2021). Concerning low pricing is the process of creating similar product in terms of features to competitors but in lower price (Sorgul, et al. 2021). While low input including having inexpensive labour and location is closer to the raw materials and storage (Talim, et al. 2021). In terms of experience, more experience will have positive impact on effectiveness and efficiency (Top & Ali, 2021). Economies of scale needs larger scale operations and the design of the process/ the design of the product effect effectively through creating goods from lower price (Abdullah et al. 2021).

Differentiation strategy: This sort of strategy concentrates on product or service uniqueness, which provides consumer
with valuable product (Ahmed et al. 2021). The differentiation can be done by special features, brand name/image, technology, supplier or distributors, marketing message or advertising (Akoi et al. 2021).

Focus strategy: This strategy concentrates on specific target or market segment (Ali & Anwar, 2021). In case of that differentiation strategy failed or cost leadership strategy failed also, then organization can adapt focus strategy (Ali et al. 2021). Also this strategy can be implementing for time limitation product or services (Ali et al. 2021).

### Conceptual Review

Figure (2) shows the conceptual framework of this study. The researcher identified two variables in below research model, competitive advantage as dependent variable on the other hand, generic strategies (focus, differentiation and cost leadership) as independent variables. The framework is according to the research hypothesis that adoption of Porter’s generic strategies in order to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

**Fig.2: Research model, created by the researcher**

Research hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive impact of differentiation strategy on competitive advantage

H2: There is a positive impact of cost leadership strategy on competitive advantage

H3: There is a positive impact of focus strategy on competitive advantage

### III. METHODOLOGY

This section introduces the design of the study, sampling size, target population and instruments.

#### Design of the study

Qualitative method used in this study to analyze data. The researcher used a questionnaire and distributed in four banks in Erbil city. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; first section was demographic questions (participants’ background information). The demographic questions consisted of participant’s age, gender, level of education and year(s) of experience. The second section of the questionnaire was questions regarding of Porter’s three generic strategies (Cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy). In terms of differentiation strategy, the researcher asked 6 questions, focus strategy 13 questions, cost leadership 8 questions and competitive advantage 6 questions.

#### Sampling size and target population

The researcher used random sampling method in order to gather data from private banks in Erbil city. The population of this study was approximately 210 units. The target population was 142 units. The researcher distrusted 150 questionnaires at four different private banks, from 150 questionnaires; the researcher was able to gather 128 questionnaires that have been completed properly. Accordingly, the sample size of this study was 128 units.

#### Instruments

The questionnaire was designed in a multiple choice questions. The respondents were asked to mark each question on five scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was adapted from two different sources (He, et al. 2012) and (Kinyuira 2014).

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Demographic analysis**

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male   | 84        | 65.6    |
| Female | 44        | 34.4    |

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Table (1) explain demographic analysis for respondents participated in this study. As seen in the above table 84 male participants participated in this study and 44 participants participated in this study. 42 respondents fall into a group of 20-29 years old, 51 respondents fall into a group of 30-39 years old, 22 respondents fall into a group of 40-49 years old, 12 respondents fall into a group of 50-59 years old and only one participant fall intro group of 60 years old and above. 121 participants had bachelor degree, 5 participants had Masters degree and 2 participants had PhD degree. Only one participant had less than one year experience, 23 participants had 1-2 years of experiences, 24 participants had 3-4 years of experiences, 33 participants had 5-6 years of experiences, 18 participants had 7-8 years of experiences, 17 participants had 9-10 years of experiences, and 12 participants had 11 and over years of experiences. This article can be downloaded from here: www.ijaems.com

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had 3-4 years of experiences, 33 participants had 5-6 years of experiences, 18 participants had 7-8 years of experiences, 17 participants had 9-10 years of experiences and 12 participants had 11 years of experiences and over.

Table 2 Reliability test

| Variables             | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of items |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Differentiation       | .776             | 6               |
| Focus                 | .960             | 13              |
| Cost leadership       | .975             | 8               |
| Competitive advantage | .823             | 6               |

Table (2), shows reliability analysis for three independent variables and competitive advantage as dependent variable. According to the reliability analysis, the researcher found out Cronbach's Alpha for differentiation factor = .776 for which is greater than .7 this means that items of differentiation factor were reliable for this study, Cronbach’s Alpha for focus factor = .960 for which is greater than .7 this means that items of focus factor were reliable for this study, Cronbach’s Alpha for cost leadership factor = .975 for which is greater than .7 this means that items of cost leadership factor were reliable for this study and Cronbach's Alpha for competitive advantage factor = .823 for which is greater than .7 this means that items of competitive advantage factor were reliable for this study.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

|                          | Correlation | Costleadership | Differentiation | Focus |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------|
| Costleadership           | Pearson     |                | .627**          | .470**|
| Correlation              | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000          | .865**          | .572**|
| N                        | 128         | 128            | 128             |       |
| Differentiation          | Pearson     | .564**         | 1               | .544**|
| Correlation              | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000          | .000            |       |
| N                        | 128         | 128            | 128             |       |
| Focus                    | Pearson     | .470**         | .544**          | 1     |
| Correlation              | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000          | .000            |       |
| N                        | 128         | 128            | 128             |       |

Correlations analysis presents the values of the identified correlation tests; Table (3) shows the correlations between the scales using person correlation. Correlation analysis is determined the strength of relationship between variables. The researcher correlated Cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy as independent variables with competitive advantage as dependent variable. According to correlation test, the researcher found out that cost leadership strategy has significant correlation (r=.627**, p<0.01) with competitive advantage. Concerning the strength of the linear relationship is moderately strong between cost leadership strategy and competitive advantage, also differentiation strategy has significant correlation (r=.865**, p<0.01) with competitive advantage. Concerning the strength of the linear relationship is moderately strong between focus strategy and competitive advantage.
advantage, and focus strategy has significant correlation 
(r=.572*, p<0.01) with competitive advantage.

Regression analysis

Table 4: Model summary

| Model | R     | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1     | .886a | .784     | .779              | .360                      |

Regression analysis is analyzing relationships among factors. Y=f(x1, x2…Xc). Regression analysis is to estimate the how Y will influence and change X and predict. In this research cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy as independent variables and competitive advantage is dependent. The competitive advantage’s overall difference could be measured by its variance. The differences are measured as the sum of the square between participant’s forecasted competitive advantage values and the total mean divided by the number of participants. After division it will clarify variance by the total variance of competitive advantage, the researcher found out the amount or the number of total difference or variance that is accounted based on regression calculation. The number should vary between 0 - 1 and is symbolized by R Square. Table (4) shows the value of R square = .784 this indicates that 78% of total variance has been explained.

Table 5: ANOVA

| Model     | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig.          |
|-----------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|---------------|
| Regression | 58.488         | 3  | 19.496      | 150.351| .0002        |
| Residual  | 16.079         | 124| .130        |        |               |
| Total     | 74.568         | 127|             |        |               |

Dependent Variable: competitive advantage

Table 6: Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t       | Sig.  |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-------|
|       | B                            | Std. Error                | Beta    |       |
| (Constant) | -.535                        | .436                      | -.128   | .225  |
| cost leadership | .911                        | .085                      | .801    | 10.715| .000  |
| Differentiation | .280                        | .171                      | .250    | 1.639 | .108  |
| Focus | .088                         | .156                      | .087    | .564  | .575  |

Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage

Table (6) explains the result of research hypotheses, in terms of first research hypothesis, cost leadership has significantly predicted competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.250, p<.001) this indicates that differentiation strategy will have a weak positive impact on competitive advantage based on this results the second hypotheses was supported, and in terms of third research hypothesis, focus strategy has significantly predicted competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.087, p<.001) this indicates that focus strategy will have a weak
positive impact on competitive advantage based on this results the third hypotheses was supported.

V. CONCLUSION

Generally most organizations have different strategies to to gain and win competitive advantage. Micheal ported developed generic strategies such us cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategy in order to enable organization to gain competitive advantage. However, previous researches have explained that there is an association between porter’s generic strategies and competitive advantage. The current research evidence demonstrated the positive association between porter’s generic strategies (cost leadership, differentiation and focus) with firm’s competitive advantage. The finding of this research was based on three different strategies and its relation with competitive advantage, the first factor is cost leadership, the correlation of cost leadership strategy as independent variable with competitive as dependent variable. According to correlation test, the researcher found out that cost leadership strategy has significant correlation (r=0.672** p<0.01) with competitive advantage. Concerning the strength of the linear relationship is moderately strong between cost leadership strategy and competitive advantage. The result of first research hypothesis, cost leadership has significantly predicted competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.708, p<.001) this indicates that cost leadership strategy will have a direct positive impact on competitive advantage based on this results the first hypotheses was supported. In terms of differentiation strategy, the researcher found out that differentiation strategy has significant correlation (r=0.516** p<0.01) with competitive advantage. Concerning the strength of the linear relationship is moderately strong between differentiation strategy and competitive advantage. The result of second hypotheses, differentiation strategy has significantly predicted competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.180, p<.001) this indicates that differentiation strategy will have a weak positive impact on competitive advantage based on this results the second hypotheses was supported. In terms of focus strategy the researcher found out that focus strategy has significantly predicted competitive advantage (Beta is weight 0.102, p<.001) this indicates that focus strategy will have a weak positive impact on competitive advantage based on this results the third hypotheses was supported. According to the multiple regression analysis, the researcher found out that the highest value was for cost leadership strategy, accordingly it concluded that a successful investment company should adapt cost leadership strategy in order to be able to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace.

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