

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGIC THOUGHT AND COMPETITIVENESS IN EDUCATION ORGANIZATION

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### Abstract:

The main purpose of the current research is to survey the relationship between the strategic thought and competitiveness of the organization of the Mazandaran province. The research was carried out by the descriptive (correlative) method. The statistical society of the research includes the entire offices of education organization in the Mazandaran province, numbering 33 offices. 16 offices were selected by the matching method (on the basis of the precedent (past record), rate of the employees, and stability of the management, and in the second level, 178 individuals of the employees of the selected offices were chosen to respond to the questionnaires based on the Morgan's table. The tools used in this research included two questionnaires of: A- Strategic thought with five dimensions of (the systemic mental models, concentration on the objective, intelligent opportunism, timely thought, creation and test of the hypotheses.) and B- Competitiveness of the organization. The collected data were analyzed using the multiple regression analysis tests and the Pearson's correlation coefficient. The Findings obtained from the research showed that there exists a positive and significant relationship between the strategic thought and competitiveness of education organization, and the variables of the timely thought and intelligent opportunism, as the most effective predictor variables, predict the changes of the competitiveness of the organization at the rate of 70.1 and 58.99 respectively.

Keywords: Strategic Thought, Competitiveness

### 1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, we see a lot of pressure to come into the organization, this pressures is entered from all directions on organizations, including global competition, increased customer demand for improved quality of service, a strong need to keep pace with ongoing changes and ... However, need to sustain life of organizations in terms of the current changing is caused that organizations be more flexible and adaptable and improve their goals and strategies and in this regard, their strategies and policies is reviewed and modified. In addition to these pressures, organizational culture and internal politics has a lot of emphasis on effective implementation of strategies. In order for an organization maintain its life in the global competition requires to manager that has been capable of strategic thought and foresight and can be an excellent strategist (Wilson & Steisy, 2008, p 347).

In fact, many countries and organizations, despite a lot of resources and capacities and talents seems that they still need guidance and proper management to achieve reasonable degree of competitiveness. Considering that one of the characteristics of successful organizations is having a competitive power and yet unique characteristic of successful organizations is lack of power, has needed to effective management that have broad prospect and with farsighted vision to look at affairs and with insight and guidance provide fulfillment of goals. This manager is strategist manager that sees unknown aspects of the cases and design the best solution and strategy and finally implement their flexibility. To increase competitiveness, organizations should consider and identify the factors affecting competitiveness that strategic

thought is in top of these factors (Garly, 2005, p608). It is believed that in the past two decades due to the rapid advancement of technology and increasing individuals' competence and improves efficiency and creates strategic advantage, has increased competitiveness. In fact, today's organizations need to strategic and dynamic thought that by using the resources and opportunities inside and outside of the organization and increase the level of qualifications, competence and specialization and knowledge-oriented and foresight can increase the competitiveness of their organizations (Boss & Filip, 2007, p489). In fact, manager through strategic thought should be able to offer better value than other organizations in order to increase their competitiveness.

- Research of Chaharbalesh(2006) with title "relationship strategic thought and strategic planning with organizational competitiveness" result of this study show that : Five components of strategic thought with strategic planning and competitiveness has a significant and positive relationship and predicts strategic planning and competitiveness.

Research of Ali Ahmadi (2007) with title "The relationship between strategic thought with competitiveness IRIB of Tehran province" result of this study show that: there is significant and positive relationship between strategic thought and competitiveness of IRIB and among the components of strategic thought , timely thought components, creating hypotheses test, mental models are predictors suitable for organizational competitiveness.

Research of Akhavadegan & Mehrparvar (2008) "Impact of strategic thought on performance and competitiveness of business enterprises in Tehran" Statistical population of study was all business firms in Tehran that were engaged in the import and export of goods that was 59 firms, 27 firms were chosen randomly. Result of research show that strategic thought and its components have positive and significant impact on the organization's performance and competitiveness and among the variables timely thought, intelligent opportunism, focusing on goal have impact on the competitiveness of organization and it predicts its changes and components (creating and testing hypotheses, timely thought, and intelligent opportunism) can predict the performance of organizations.

Research of Etemadi & et al (2008) with title "the relationship between strategic thought with competitiveness and productivity in planning and management organization. Result of research show that: there is positive and significant relationship between strategic thought with competitiveness and productivity in organization and components of intelligent opportunism, timely thought , and focusing on goal can predict in competitiveness changes of organization and components of intelligent opportunism, systematic mental models are predictors suitable for organizational productivity.

Research of Alikhani (2009) with title "The relationship between application components of strategic thought with organization effectiveness and competitiveness in Iran insurance". Result of research show that there is positive and significant relationship between application components of strategic thought with organization effectiveness and competitiveness and components of intelligent opportunism, timely thought, and focusing on goal can predict organizational effectiveness and competitiveness.

Research of Javadzadeh (2009) with title "relationship of strategic thought with quality of the performance and competitiveness of manufacturing companies in Zanjan". Result of this research show that there is positive and significant relationship between strategic thought with quality of the performance and competitiveness of companies and components of intelligent opportunism, timely thought can predict the organizational competitiveness and components of focusing on goal, intelligent opportunism and creating and testing hypotheses can predict and improve quality of the performance in organization.

Research of Lin et al (2009) with title "relationship of strategic thought with competitiveness and performance of new businesses. Result of this research shows that: there is positive and

significant relationship between strategic thought with competitiveness and performance of new businesses and components of (timely thought, focusing on goal and intelligent opportunism) can predict changes in competitiveness and performance of new businesses.

Research of Slater with title: "Role of the application of the strategic thought in the creativity and competitiveness in the universities of the Norway ». Result of research show that application of strategic thought has a significant and positive impact on creativity and competitiveness of universities. Components of (intelligent opportunism, systematic mental models and timely thought) are predictors suitable for predicting changes in creativity and competitiveness of universities.

Olhoy & et al (2006) in research with title "The effect of the strategic thought on the enter premiership and competitiveness in the Danish innovation institute" Achieved to the conclusion that strategic thought and its components have positive and significant impact on entrepreneurship and enterprise competitiveness and components of (intelligent opportunism, timely thought and creating and testing hypotheses) have the greatest impact on entrepreneurship and competitiveness and be able to predict changes.

Research of Bockly et al (2007) with title "Strategic thought relationship with competitiveness of the industry" result of research show that: there is relationship between strategic thought and competitiveness of industry organization and components of timely thought, creating and testing hypotheses and taking experience could have predicted the industry's competitiveness and have a positive and significant impact on competitive performance and process management.

Research of Harris & Adamz (2008) with title "The relationship of the strategic thought with the competitiveness of the economic institutions of the Scotland's west". Result of this study indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between the strategic thought and all of their components with competitiveness of the economic institutions and components of (timely thought and intelligent opportunism) are good predictors for firms' competitiveness and will improve the competitiveness of firms.

Since education organization is fundamental to any system and is responsible for education of children and youth in society and due to increasing demand for education and training, authorities should be looking to develop and improve educational opportunities for everyone and because far quantity is considered greater than the quality of education in countries like our country and the quality of education has been neglected and on the other hand development trend of advanced countries shows that the main success factor in advanced countries has been education. Therefore education organization should improve the quality in our country and it is not possible unless through improved management and enhanced thinking and strategic vision of the organization in relevant authorities, given the above subjects, this article seeks to examine the relationship between strategic thought and competitiveness of education organization in Mazandaran province.

To achieve this goal, the following hypothesis is presented:

***Main hypothesis***

There is relationship between strategic and competitiveness of education organization.

***Sub-hypotheses***

- 1- There is relationship between systemic mental models and competitiveness of education organization.
- 2- There is relationship between focusing on goals and competitiveness of education organization.

- 3- There is relationship between intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of education organization.
4. There is relationship between creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness of education organization.
5. There is relationship between timely thought and competitiveness of education organization.

## 2. Methodology

This research is description from type of a correlation. Statistical population is consisted the entire education offices in Mazandaran province, 16 office were selected random sampling and based on Morgan table were selected a sample of 278 individuals to answer the questionnaire. The tool used in this study included two questionnaires.

1- Strategic thought questionnaire: questionnaire is made by researcher and was designed based on Lidtka model (1998) and five components (the systemic mental model, focusing on goals, intelligent opportunism, timely thought, creating and testing hypotheses) is measured and evaluated and has 30 questions with a 5-point Likert scale.

B - Competitiveness questionnaire of the organization: This questionnaire contains 30 questions from a 5-point Likert scale and was designed based on Dimitr model (2003) and is standard and was used earlier in the same study, Aghazadeh (2007) and in evaluating these items of questionnaire is used respectively from very low to very high scores from 1 to 5. to examine and confirm of questionnaire validity is used from supervisor and consultant lecturers and after review and making any necessary modifications, was approved the questionnaire validity. The questionnaire reliability of strategic thought was 0.91 in Esmi study (2009) and for competitiveness was 0.90 in Aghazadeh study (2007). In present study, questionnaire of strategic thought and organizational competitiveness was performed to test samples from 30 people and then alpha coefficient of strategic thought by using SPSS software are calculated 0/91 and the competitiveness questionnaire alpha coefficient is equal to 0/89. For analysis and to test hypotheses is used multiple regression analysis and to test specific hypotheses of the study is used Pearson correlation coefficient test.

## 3. Data analysis

1- There is relationship between Strategic and competitiveness of education organization in Mazandaran province.

Table 1: The correlations between the criterion variables of competitiveness and predictor variable of systematic mental model, focusing on goal, intelligent opportunism, timely thought, creating and testing hypotheses.

competitiveness	systematic mental model	focusing on the target	intelligent opportunism	timely thought	creating and testing hypotheses
<b>Criterion variables</b>					
competitiveness	0/693 **	0/664**	0/518**	0/701**	0/653**
<b>predictor</b>					
Systematic mental model		0/879 **	0/952 **	0/813 **	0/994 **
focusing on goal		-			
intelligent	-	-	0/828 **	0/899**	0/876 **
opportunism	-	-	-	0/763 **	0/941 **
timely thought	-	-	-		0/805 **
creating and testing hypotheses	-	-	-	--	-

p<0/01 \*\*

To determine the best predictor of competitiveness among the predictor variables was used stepwise regression method. It is noteworthy that variable of timely thought, intelligent opportunism adds in the equation. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of stepwise regression analysis of variables timely thought, intelligent opportunism

Predictive variables	Step	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	Error Standard
timely thought intelligent opportunism		0/70			
	first	1	0/492	0/455	5/59
	Second	0/81	0/670	0/619	4/67
		8			

Above table results indicate that timely thought variable to be able to justify the 2/49% of the variance in the competitiveness (R<sup>2</sup>= 0/492). to add variable of intelligent opportunism to timely thought is caused to increase 18% to the variance of the competitiveness in second model (R<sup>2</sup>= 0/670) and have been able to explain about 67% of the variance in organizational competitiveness.

Table 3: ANOVA test for significant regression of timely thought, intelligent opportunism

Statistical index	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
regression of timely thought variable	423/563	1	423/563	15/533	<b>0/002</b>
Remaining	438/187	14	31/299		
Total	861/750	15	-		
Regression of timely thought , Intelligent opportunism	577/314	2	288/657	13/193	<b>0/001</b>
Remaining	284/436	13	21/88		
Total	861/750	15	-		

According to the above table results because calculated F variable of timely thought is significant in level of 0/05 (f(1,14)=15/533,p=0/05) So can be said with 95 percent confidence that there is relationship between timely thought with competitiveness of the organization and variable of timely thought can predict criterion variable (competitiveness) and also calculated F variable of intelligent opportunism is significant in level of 0/05 (f(2,13)=13/193,p=0/05) So can be said with 95 percent confidence that there is relationship between Intelligent opportunism with competitiveness of the organization and variable of Intelligent opportunism can predict criterion variable (competitiveness).

Table 4: Regression analysis (stepwise model of the regression equation)

Model	(B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig
First step	Constant	117/962			
	timely thought	0/749	0/204	0/701	3/679

	Constant	124/731				
Second step	timely thought	2/010	0/505	0/678	3/979	0/002
	Intelligent opportunism	1/399	0/528	0/589	2/651	0/020

According to result of table 4 show that because t calculated for significant slope of the regression line (B) for a variable of timely thought is significance in level of 0/05 ( $t=3/679, p=0/05$ ). So the predictive power of timely thought for the competitiveness is significance statistically and also t calculated for intelligent opportunism is significance in level of 0/05 ( $t=2/651, p=0/05$ ). So the predictive power of intelligent opportunism is significance for competitiveness of the organization statistically.

Table 5: role and share of predictive variables (timely thought, intelligent opportunism) in predicting changes of the organization competitiveness criterion variable

predictive variables (timely thought , intelligent opportunism)	The scores predicting criterion variables change according to the stepwise regression equation based on standardized beta values by predictive variables	Changes scores in standard deviation of the criterion variable per unit change in the standard deviation of each of the predictive variables based on obtained standardized beta
timely thought $x_1$	0/701	0/204
Intelligent opportunism $X_2$	0/589	0/528

the results of table 5 shows, according to first stepwise model, timely thought variable has been entered the regression equation as the most effective variables in organization competitiveness and can predict 70/1 percent criterion variables (organization competitiveness) and while one unit change in standard deviation of time thinking variable causes that the standard deviation of the criterion variable will change organization competitiveness the amount of 0/204.

the results of table 5 shows, according to second stepwise model, Intelligent opportunism variable has been entered the regression equation as the most effective variables in organization competitiveness and can predict 58/9 percent criterion variables (organization competitiveness) and while one unit change in standard deviation of Intelligent opportunism variable causes that the standard deviation of the criterion variable will change organization competitiveness the amount of 0/528. Thus there is relationship between strategic thought and competitiveness of education organization in Mazandaran province

2- There is relationship between the systemic mental models and competitiveness of education organization.

Table 6: Correlations between variables (systemic mental models and competitiveness of education organization)

Variable	r	n	p
the systemic mental models and competitiveness	0/693**	16	0/003

\*\*  $p < 0/01$

Result of table 6 show that there is significant relationship between systemic mental models and competitiveness of of education organization statistically ( $p=0/01, r= 0/693$ ). It is also a direct and positive correlation. Because significance level  $p=0/003$  is smaller than  $p= 0/05$ , thus the correlation coefficient calculated is significant in the level of 0/05 statistically. Therefore research hypothesis based on there is significant relationship between systemic mental models and competitiveness of education organization, is confirmed with 0/95 confidence.

3- There is relationship between focusing on goals and competitiveness of education organization.

Table 7: Correlations between variables (focus on goals and competitiveness of education organization)

Variable	r	n	p
Focusing on goals and competitiveness of education organization	0/664**	16	0/005

\*\*  $p < 0/01$

Result of table 7 show that there is significant relationship between focusing on goal and competitiveness of education organization statistically ( $p=0/01, r= 0/664$ ). It is also a direct and positive correlation. Because significance level  $p=0/005$  is smaller than  $p= 0/05$ , thus the correlation coefficient calculated is significant in the level of  $0/05$  statistically. Therefore research hypothesis based on there is significant relationship between focusing on goal and competitiveness of education organization, is confirmed with  $0/95$  confidence.

4- There is relationship between intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of education organization.

Table 8: Correlations between variables (intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of education organization)

Variable	r	n	p
intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of education organization	0/518**	16	0/040

\*\*  $p < 0/01$

Result of table 8 show that there is significant relationship between intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of education organization statistically ( $p=0/01, r= 0/518$ ). It is also a direct and positive correlation. Because significance level  $p=0/040$  is smaller than  $p= 0/05$ , thus the correlation coefficient calculated is significant in the level of  $0/05$  statistically. Therefore research hypothesis based on there is significant relationship between intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of education organization, is confirmed with  $0/95$  confidence.

5. There is relationship between timely thought and competitiveness of education organization.

Table 9: Correlations between variables (timely thought and competitiveness of education organization)

Variable	r	n	p
timely thought and competitiveness of education organization	0/701**	16	0/006

\*\*  $p < 0/01$

Result of table 9 show that there is significant relationship between timely thought and competitiveness of education organization statistically ( $p=0/01, r= 0/701$ ). It is also a direct

and positive correlation. Because significance level  $p=0/006$  is smaller than  $p=0/05$ , thus the correlation coefficient calculated is significant in the level of  $0/05$  statistically. Therefore research hypothesis based on there is significant relationship between timely thought and competitiveness of education organization, is confirmed with  $0/95$  confidence.

6. There is relationship between creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness of education organization.

Table 10: Correlations between variables (creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness of education organization)

Variable	r	n	p
Creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness of education organization	0/653**	16	0/002

\*\*  $p < 0/01$

Result of table 10 show that there is significant relationship between creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness of education organization statistically ( $p=0/01, r=0/653$ ). It is also a direct and positive correlation. Because significance level  $p=0/002$  is smaller than  $p=0/05$ , thus the correlation coefficient calculated is significant in the level of  $0/05$  statistically. Therefore research hypothesis based on there is significant relationship between creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness of education organization, is confirmed with  $0/95$  confidence.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Test results of above hypotheses show that there is positive and significant relationship between strategic thought and all of its components with competitiveness of education organization and variables (timely thought and intelligent opportunism) can predict 70/1%, and 58/9 percent of organization competitiveness changes respectively.

This result is consistent with results of research of Alikhani (2009), Etemadi & et al (2008), Javadzadeh (2009), Aghazadeh et al (2008), Ghafarian (2009), Ali Ahmadi (2007), Bockly et al (2007), Slater (2006), Harris and Adamz (2008), Kriden (2007). These studies showed that there is positive and significant relationship between strategic thought and its components with competitiveness, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship and between components of strategic thought, variables of timely thought, intelligent opportunism and focusing on goals can predict changes in competitiveness and performance, innovation and entrepreneurship. Based on these results it can be stated that if organizations can think based on accurate and timely information and knowledge and use the opportunities efficiently, can increase their competitiveness and enhance its position in today's competitive.

Test results of above hypotheses show that there is relationship between systemic mental models and competitiveness of organization ( $r=0/693$ ) and this relationship is positive and significant in level of  $0/05$ . This result is consistent with results of research of Harati (2008), Akhavizadegan & Mehrparvar (2008), Slater (2006), Harris and Adamz (2008), Ghafarian (2009), Ali Ahmadi (2007). These researches also showed that there is relationship between systemic mental models and competitiveness of organization and some studies show that can predict changes in organization competitiveness. It can be stated that having a mental model is caused comprehensive and holistic view to the personnel of an organization and draws specific prospects for future of organization in employees can increase organization capabilities and improve the competitiveness of organization with other organizations. Mental model of each individual according to the organization and its goals is a conceptual design based on individual differences that help to adopt the right decisions in individuals.

Test results of above hypotheses show that there is relationship between focusing on goal and organization competitiveness and this relationship is significant in level of  $0/05$ . This result is

consistent with results of research of Alikhani (2009), Etemadi & et al (2008), Lin & et al (2004), Kriden (2007), Akhavizadegan & Mehrparvar (2008). This study indicate that there is relationship between focusing on goal and competitiveness, innovation and organizational performance and component of focusing on goal can be expected the organization's competitiveness. Results of the present study is that setting clear goals for the organization and focus on its activities will cause to prevent the waste of resources and with careful planning take steps toward achieving the goals and deficiencies of the implementation of programs resolve according to target and increase the competitiveness.

Test results of above hypotheses show that there is relationship between Intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of the organization ( $r=0/518$ ) and this relationship is significant in level of 0/05. This result is consistent with results of research of alikhani (2009), etemadi & et al (2008), javadzadeh (2009), Olhoi & et al (2006), Lin & et al (2004), Harris and Adamz (2008),Kriden (2007), akhavizadegan & mehrparvar (2008), harati (2008) and slater (2006). These researches also showed that there is relationship between intelligent opportunism and competitiveness of their organizations and innovation and entrepreneurship and this component can predict the competitiveness of organizations. In fact proper use of the opportunities that arise for organizations In order to compete with competitors and anticipate of them is causes to increase competitiveness.

Test results of above hypotheses also indicate that there is relationship between timely thought and competitiveness of the organization ( $r=0/701$ ) and this relationship is significant in level of 0/05. This result is consistent with results of research of Ghafarian (2009), Ali Ahmadi (2007), Bockly et al (2007),Harati (2008), Slater (2006), Akhavizadegan & Mehrparvar (2008), Harris and Adamz (2008), Olhoi & et al (2006), Lin & et al (2004), Javadzadeh (2009) and Etemadi & et al (2008). These studies indicated that there was a positive relationship between these two variables.

Test results of above hypotheses show that there is relationship between creating and testing hypotheses and competitiveness ( $r=0/653$ ) and this relationship is significant in level of 0/05. This result is consistent with results of research of Olhoi & et al (2006),Kriden (2007), Harati (2008), Ghafarian (2009), Ali Ahmadi (2007), Bockly et al (2007). These studies showed that there is relationship between creating and testing hypotheses with competitiveness. By analysis of the organization situation and consider different ways objectives facing the organization can be made assumptions about future possibilities.

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