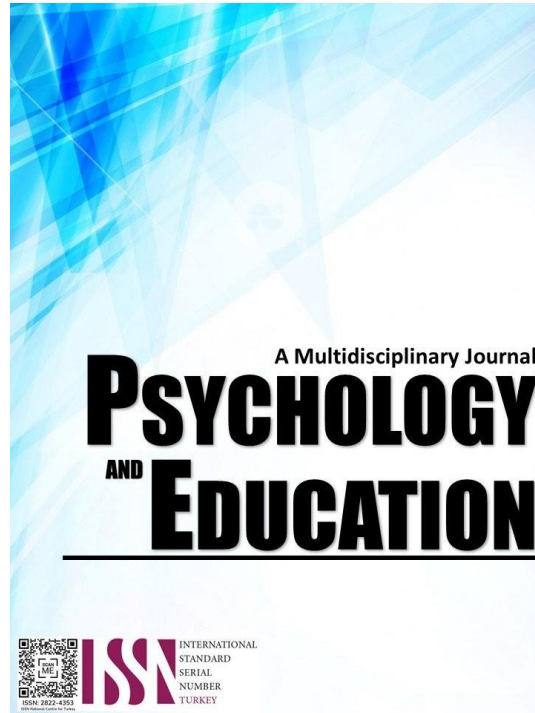


# NAVIGATING THE FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY: THE IMPACT OF SHARED VISION, COOPERATION, AND EMPOWERMENT AS CORE COMPETENCE ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



**PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL**

Volume: 20

Issue 3

Pages: 331-340

Document ID: 2024PEMJ1865

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11366280

Manuscript Accepted: 05-04-2024

## Navigating the Food Service Industry: The Impact of Shared Vision, Cooperation, and Empowerment as Core Competence on Competitive Advantage

Dana A. Florendo,\* Noreen L. Canini, Najib D. Macasasa, Aina Lou Q. Badua,  
Kesiah Amor O. Canini, Bob Agustin M. Gelacio

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

### Abstract

This study looks into how core competence which focuses on shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment affects competitive advantage in the food service business, which is facing pressures from disruptive competition and growing consumer demand for sustainable and better food options. The study measures competitive advantage through business flexibility and responsiveness. It employs a descriptive-correlational research design and a purposive sampling technique, intentionally selecting fifty employees from various food service establishments, including fast-food chains, restaurants, and cafes, as respondents. Data was gathered using a modified version of an existing questionnaire, which included sections on demographics, core competence, and competitive advantage. A five-point Likert scale was used to collect the responses. The study reveals that there was a high degree of core competence in the food service industry, in general. It also discovered that businesses in the food service sector frequently have a very high degree of competitive advantage. Further, the findings show a significant positive relationship between competitive advantage and core competency, underscoring the significance of empowerment, collaboration, and shared vision in fostering flexibility and responsiveness, consequently gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace. These results suggest that for businesses in the food service sector to obtain a competitive edge, they should prioritize strengthening and expanding their core competencies. The study is important for workers, managers, owners of businesses, consumers, academic institutions, and upcoming researchers. However, this study may have certain limitations regarding its scope and objectives, as it was conducted within a specific context and time frame which may not encompass all possible scenarios or changes over an extended period. Thus, the result of this research should be interpreted within these limitations, and future research is recommended to validate and expand upon these results.

**Keywords:** *core competence, competitive advantage, food service industry, Philippines*

### Introduction

The food service industry faces significant challenges in developing a product or service that is genuinely unique, stands out from the competition, and captures consumers' attention, providing the company with a competitive advantage in the market. The challenge is how to defend and maintain a company's business edge over competitors as imitation and copycat activities become more prevalent (Brem & Wolfram, 2019). Another difficulty faced is how businesses may get beyond resource constraints while achieving and sustaining this competitive advantage (Sutherland & Canwell, 2020).

The problem in gaining a competitive advantage in the international market is how companies can effectively manage cultural differences and adapt to local markets in foreign countries (Luo & Tung, 2018). There is also a concern about how to effectively harness market orientation, innovation, and strategic flexibility to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in this dynamic and highly competitive foreign market (Hooley et al., 2013).

In the study of Dey and Ghosh (2014), it was revealed that to sustain core competence, the significant challenge is continuous innovation and adaptation of companies, which is essential for long-term competitive advantage in a rapidly changing business environment. In the Malaysian automotive industry, it was found that developing and utilizing core competence is crucial for firms to achieve competitive advantage (Ahmad & Zulkifli, 2021). Additionally, Sharma and Bhandari (2016) determined how core competencies like innovation, supply chain management, and quality assurance contribute to the food industry's competitive advantage.

The main problem highlighted by De Leon and Balanon (2021) in their study on responsiveness in the Philippine context is the need for more understanding and implementation of responsive strategies by companies. Deficiency of such strategies led to missed opportunities for improving competitiveness and achieving business success. Further, Manalaysay and Garingo (2020) highlighted that the Philippine business sector's lack of flexibility makes it difficult for companies to adapt to changing market demands and maintain competitiveness. Correspondingly, there is a need to address the lack of adequate and suitable strategies and barriers to collaboration to harness cooperation and attain competitive advantage in Philippine cooperatives (Cariño & Sanchez, 2014).

The researchers were motivated to conduct the study due to the need for sufficient research in the local area and to measure the impact of core competence on competitive advantage in the food service industry. Investigating the operational practices of food service establishment is relevant in the locality since there is a high concentration of fast-food chains, restaurants, and cafes in the area. This study is unique as it identifies significant gaps in core competence, such as shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment, that hinder the competitive advantage of businesses in the food service industry, highlighting the need for more research area.

## Research Questions

This study's primary purpose is to determine the impact of core competence on competitive advantage in the food industry. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of core competence in the food industry in terms of shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment?
2. What is the level of competitive advantage in the food industry in terms of flexibility and responsiveness?
3. Is there a significant relationship between core competence and competitive advantage in the food industry?

## Literature Review

### *Core Competence*

Singh and Gupta (2016) identified core competence in the food industry as a distinctive combination of knowledge, skills, and capabilities essential for long-term success and competitive advantage, particularly in product development, supply chain management, quality control, marketing, and innovation. In the study of Ljubojević and Petrović (2019) in the Serbian food industry it was found that a strong competence leads to more incredible innovation and introduction of new products. It was recommended that to achieve sustainable success in the Chinese food industry, the business should focus on product innovation, marketing, supply chain management, food safety, and quality control (Zhu & Wang, 2017). Further, Tsai et al. (2021) emphasized the significance of core competence and organizational learning in improving firm performance in the Taiwanese integrated circuit design industry, highlighting the need to develop and leverage these factors to achieve better outcomes.

Firms must adapt their core competence to meet changing market demands to maintain their competitive advantage (Filippov et al., 2016). This was supported by Hafeez et al. (2021), stating that to maintain a competitive edge in the manufacturing industry and satisfy shifting market expectations, companies must constantly update and modify their core competencies. In South Korean high-tech companies, shared vision, empowerment, and cooperation are identified as indicators of core competence as these have a major impact on the efficacy and success of team outcomes (Lee et al., 2019). Thus, to maintain a long-term competitive advantage in a rapidly changing business environment, companies must continuously innovate and adapt to sustain their core competence, which poses a significant challenge (Dey & Ghosh, 2014).

**Shared Vision.** A vision emboldens leaders and teams, directing their attention, igniting their efforts, and driving transformative practices (Martin & McCormack, 2014). Further, a compelling vision, according to Fitzsimons (2014), inspires leaders and teams, encourages dedication to a common objective, drives continuous practice improvement, and cultivates a culture of quality and safety improvement. However, though a vision creates a positive impact and is beneficial, it is still essential to balance the strategic direction to avoid overwhelming the organization with unrealistic goals and tasks (Spirig, 2014). Moreover, it should be emphasized that a leader's vision can only succeed if the goals are successfully conveyed and coordinated with staff members to guarantee mutual comprehension and significant involvement (Mahmood, 2014). An effective leader shares a clear vision and actively involves people to ensure effective communication of long-term directions for the future inspiring clarity, focus, and dedication inside the organization (Siddiqui, 2014). A study by Dhanaraj et al. (2016) found that shared vision enhances decision-making quality, leading to improved performance and competitive advantage. Similarly, a clear and consistent purpose fosters a sense of collective ownership, accountability, and unity among employees (Levy et al., 2013). It also cultivates innovation, collaboration, and employee satisfaction, enabling businesses with favorable corporate culture and a competitive advantage (Lee et al., 2019).

**Cooperation.** Bowles et al. (2013) state that it is essential for human survival to have cooperation, which involves individuals working together towards common goals. Further, the study of Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2014) indicates that cooperative behavior amplifies creativity that promotes ingenuity and competitiveness in the workplace. Employee collaboration and positive interactions are also important in improving organizational performance, innovation, and work happiness (Hussain et al., 2017). Cooperation and communication have been emphasized by Mayer and Kuenzi (2017) in building trust among employees. Organizations may foster trust, inclusivity, and a supportive work environment by encouraging open communication, transparency, and rewarding cooperative conduct. Good communication and defined processes are critical for team effectiveness and performance. The study by Zhang et al. (2019) discovered that teams with clear communication and defined processes, trust, and cohesiveness resulted in better performance outcomes. Trust promotes cooperation among employees as they are more likely to act cooperatively when they believe in their skills and trust their colleagues (Chen, 2014). Goal interdependencies, likewise, have an impact on the work team's cooperation. When team members perceive the interconnectivity and mutual dependencies of their goals, they become more motivated to cooperate and collaborate toward shared objectives (Johnson, 2016).

**Empowerment.** Empowerment is defined as a method intended to liberate employees' potential energies during the organization-building processes, given that the success of an organization is dependent on its employee's alignment with the organization's vision and goals (Brown & Harvey, 2016). One of the most believed theories is that empowerment encourages employees' conduct to accomplish a higher standard of service, advancement, teamwork, business enterprise, fearlessness, and the feeling of reasonableness (Elnaga & Imran, 2014). This is because when employees feel empowered, they are more likely to take responsibility for their work

and be motivated to innovate and create a supportive environment that improves the organization (Brem et al., 2019). Consequently, based on the study of Yücel and Alpan (2015), reveals that there is a positive impact on empowerment when employees trust their organization. Further, Wood et al. (2015) state that employee empowerment is a multifaceted, intricate idea involving several factors. Implementing empowerment strategies helps firms gain a competitive advantage by strengthening their control over human resources through the use of empowerment initiatives. Correspondingly, to successfully implement empowerment strategies and techniques, it is necessary to have clear and established goal-setting programs (Ivancevich et al., 2014). Employees must know the organization's objectives and the connections between its main value-generating activities (Dess et al., 2016). Worker participation in decision-making helps enhance employee satisfaction, commitment, morale, support, and efficiency in the workplace (Management Study Guide, 2016). Conversely, the poor decision-making process contributes directly to the problems of organization failures (Dwivedi et al., 2015).

The aforementioned studies underscore the significance of core competencies, with a particular emphasis on shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment. This related literature aided in the understanding of how crucial vision-sharing throughout the organization is as it fosters a culture of innovation; as well as, cooperation and collaboration of all members of the organization to work toward the common objective; and, gives empowerment to employees. In the highly competitive food industry, these core competencies are indispensable for gaining a competitive edge.

### ***Competitive Advantage***

Porter (2013) defines competitive advantage as a company's capacity to stay ahead of its rivals by offering its customers superior value, controlling costs, or making use of unique resources and capabilities. The critical factors in achieving competitive advantage as identified by Papadakis et al. (2018) are unique products or services, innovation, supply chain efficiency, marketing and branding, and regulatory compliance. The research of Li et al. (2016) in the Chinese food industry reveals that building a competitive advantage is crucial for improving profitability and market share as it has a direct impact on the business's financial performance. Various studies show that competitive advantage can be improved by effective management of the supply chain in terms of cost and product differentiation (Chen & Shu, 2017); market orientation, innovation, and strategic flexibility (Hooley et al., 2013); and in some respect, the integration of social responsibility (Choi & Lee, 2021). However, Brem and Wolfram (2019) highlighted the difficulty of keeping a competitive advantage against imitation competitors, stating the need for firms to continually innovate and adapt to changing market conditions. To gain a competitive edge in the global marketplace, the business needs to manage cultural differences and adapt to local markets in foreign countries (Luo & Tung, 2018).

***Flexibility.*** The capacity to quickly adapt to changing conditions is known as flexibility. It promotes positive employer-employee interactions and facilitates adaption to new environments, markets, and strategies (Hogarty, 2021). Organizational flexibility is vital for businesses, allowing them to adapt quickly to changes and seize opportunities, leading to improved performance, innovation, and supply chain management (Harvard Business Review, 2013). Employers and employees highly value flexibility in the workplace, as it promotes adaptability and creates a more pleasant and welcoming work environment (Newsome, 2022). Moreover, flexible management integrates management methods and production systems to achieve organizational adaptability and a flexible production system within an enterprise (Wang, 2019). Bisht and Rai (2018) discovered that organizational flexibility significantly and positively impacts firm performance in emerging economies. Moreover, the study of Ahuja and Jackson (2016) emphasizes the need for flexibility of companies since they cannot control the external environment. Thus, to stay relevant and competitive, businesses must adapt to market changes. Further, according to Avila-Garcia and Fuchs (2021) organizational flexibility can be done by developing dynamic capabilities like sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring. In the study of Wang et al. (2018), it was discovered that dynamic capabilities are crucial in moderating the link between organizational flexibility and innovative performance.

***Responsiveness.*** Responsiveness is deeply connected to social interaction that relies heavily on the understanding and perception of individual. It entails perception and response to each other's needs and desires as well as the understanding and interpretation of each other's response (Reis, 2013). The study of Clark (2013) emphasized that responsiveness encompasses essential processes in human relationships, where individuals actively attend to and supportively respond to each other's needs, wishes, and concerns. Further, it was found in the study of Erel and Kuskaya-Uzun (2013) that firms with more responsive supply chains tend to gain a higher competitive advantage. In the Tunisian banking sector, it was discovered that banks with more excellent market responsiveness enjoyed a higher competitive advantage (Sadraoui, Jday, and Jarboui, 2017). In the study of Williams and Anderson (2020) revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee responsiveness as job satisfaction enhances employee responsiveness. Thus, to enhance employee engagement and responsiveness, firms need to understand employee motivations (Meyer & Schooley, 2013) and develop high-performance human resource practices (Kehoe & Wright, 2018). Additionally, Ning & Yao (2023) observed that adopting information technology and e-commerce platforms improved supply chain responsiveness, reducing costs and improving competitive performance. Firms' response to changes in the digital environment had a higher level of competitive advantage. Moreover, Choi and Kim (2021) stressed the significance of social media in the food industry, stating that active engagement with customers through online platforms improved responsiveness and increased customer satisfaction. Therefore, companies can leverage social media to enhance their responsiveness to customer needs and preferences.

The referenced literature accentuates the significance of adaptability and responsiveness in meeting the evolving conditions and the dynamic needs and preferences of customers. It illustrates how such flexibility can significantly enhance a firm's performance,

particularly in emerging economies. Moreover, it highlights how a responsive approach fosters satisfaction among customers, employees, and stakeholders alike, thereby conferring a competitive edge in the marketplace.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. According to Akinlua (2019), this research methodology explores and describes the relationships between two variables through a thorough examination and analysis. Moreover, descriptive research is a quantitative and conclusive research design that describes the profile of the respondents and the problems or phenomena that the study is trying to answer (Atmowardoyo, 2018). Further, correlational research is a quantitative and conclusive research design that measures the significant relationship of variables to ascertain dependence or interdependence (Te et al., 2019).

This study is descriptive since it describes the level of core competence and competitive advantage in the food industry. Furthermore, this study is correlational since it determined the relationship between core competence and competitive advantage. Moreover, it also determined the influence of core competence on the competitive advantage in the food industry.

### Respondents

This study was conducted in the first district of Cotabato, Philippines, with a specific focus on the municipality of Midsayap, Cotabato. The locale was selected due to its high concentration of food service establishment such as fast-food chains, restaurants, and cafes. A purposeful selection of fifty (50) employees from various food service businesses was made to serve as respondents. This group comprised of business owners/managers, supervisors, and rank and file employees, chosen for their extensive knowledge of the industry, that is a prerequisite for this study.

### Instruments

The study used a modified version of an adapted questionnaire from Hafeez and Essmail (2007) for the core competence and Macmillan and Tampo (2000) for the competitive advantage. It is composed of three parts, which include questions for the demographic profile of the respondents in the first part, the independent variable which is the core competence focusing on indicators as shared vision, cooperation, empowerment on the second part, and, the dependent variable which is the competitive advantage with indicators as flexibility and responsiveness on the last part. The Likert scale was used to determine the answers in the second and third parts that best aligned with the views of the respondents. Each question is a statement in which the respondent may agree or disagree and comprises five options with the following scale: strongly agree (5), agree (4), moderately agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The validity of the instrument, both in terms of its face and content, was thoroughly evaluated and confirmed through the discerning assessments provided by a panel of experts, which included the adviser, consultant, and dedicated validators of the instrument. Their collective expertise ensured a comprehensive and rigorous examination of the instrument's validity. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha of core competence as indicated on its original instrument is "0.904" with a value of "0.855" for the indicator of shared vision, "0.919" for cooperation and, "0.938" for empowerment. As well as the Cronbach's Alpha value for competitive advantage is "0.866" with "0.838" for its indicator of flexibility and, "0.894" for responsiveness. This means that the instruments used are reliable.

### Procedure

The researchers sought the approval of the Dean of the College of Business and Accountancy to conduct the study. The letter was signed by the researcher and noted by the adviser. After being given permission, the researchers explained the purpose of the study to the selected respondents, ensuring each participant corresponds to their predefined criteria. The researchers collected the data using a survey questionnaire that comprised their demographic profile and questions relating to core competence and competitive advantage. In administering the questionnaire, the researchers used the vacant time of the employers and employees to avoid distraction during their working time. The respondents were given enough time to answer the questions. After that, all the questionnaires were retrieved, and the data were promptly delivered to the statistician to be tallied and analyzed. Responses to each part of the instrument were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe the results of the demographic profile according to sample size. As for determining the level of core competence and the level of competitive advantage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Likert scale were used as representations of its specific indicators. Pearson Correlation: Bivariate was used to determine the significant relationship between core competence and competitive advantage. And lastly, linear regression analysis was employed to test the significant influence of core competence on competitive advantage in the food industry.

### Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire used in the survey is adapted from Hafeez and Essmail (2007) for the core competence and Macmillan and Tampo (2000) for the competitive advantage. The instrument has undergone a minor modification to fit the needs of this study. The face and content validity of the instrument were assessed through the expert judgments of the adviser, consultant, and instrument validators. Further, the Cronbach's Alpha of the original instruments indicated a result of more than 0.70 which means that the instruments used are reliable.



In addition, the confidentiality of the participants' information was strictly safeguarded throughout the research process. The data collection procedure was executed with utmost care and diligence, ensuring that no breaches of privacy occurred. Furthermore, in the interest of maintaining anonymity, no specific names or company identifiers were included in the report. This approach underscores our commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards in research and respecting the privacy rights of all participants.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and findings of the study. The results are presented in tabular forms.

### Respondents' profile in terms of Years of Operation and Job Position

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their job position and years of operation in the food industry.

Table 1. *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

<i>Profile of the Respondents</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Years of Operation		
2 to 3 years	29	58
4 to 6 years	7	14
7 to 10 years	1	2
Over 10 years	13	26
Total	50	100
Job Position		
Manager	14	28
Supervisor	8	16
Rank and file	28	56
Total	50	100

According to the data presented in Table 1, the highest frequency of respondents is observed among those who have been in operation for 2 to 3 years, accounting for twenty-nine (29) out of fifty (50) respondents or fifty-eight percent (58%). Conversely, the lowest frequency is observed among those who have been in operation for 7 to 10 years, accounting for only one (1) out of fifty (50) respondents. In terms of job position, the majority of the respondents are in the rank and file, comprising twenty-eight (28) out of fifty (50) respondents or fifty-six percent (56%). On the other hand, only eight (8) out of fifty (50) respondents, or sixteen percent (16%), hold supervisor positions.

### Level of Core Competence

Table 2 presents the level of core competence in the food industry in terms of shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment. The result reveals the highest indicator is cooperation, rated as Strongly Agree with a mean of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.75. On the other hand, the lowest indicator is empowerment, rated as Agree with a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.91. Overall, the level of core competence in the food industry is rated as Agree with a grand mean of 4.17 and an average standard deviation of 0.81.

Table 2. *Level of Core Competence in The Food Service Industry*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Shared Vision	4.13	0.80	Strongly Agree	Very high
Cooperation	4.27	0.75	Strongly Agree	Very high
Empowerment	4.07	0.91	Agree	High
Grand Mean	4.17		Agree	High
Average Standard Deviation		0.81		

### Level of Competitive Advantage

Table 3 shows the level of competitive advantage in the food industry in terms of flexibility and responsiveness. The outcome displays that the highest indicator is flexibility, rated as Strongly Agree with a mean of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.71. On the other hand, the lowest indicator is responsiveness, rated as Agree with a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.76. As a whole, the level of core competence in the food industry is rated as Strongly Agree with a grand mean of 4.27 and an average standard deviation of 0.74.

Table 3. *Level of Competitive Advantage in The Food Service Industry*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Flexibility	4.35	0.71	Strongly Agree	Very high
Responsiveness	4.20	0.76	Agree	High
Grand Mean	4.27		Strongly Agree	Very high
Average Standard Deviation		0.74		

### Relationship Between Core Competence and Competitive Advantage

The table presents a significant relationship between core competence and competitive advantage in the food industry using the Pearson

correlation. The computed correlation coefficient (*r*-value) of 0.928 suggested a strong positive correlation between core competence and competitive advantage, which means that companies with higher core competence tend to have a competitive advantage in the food industry. The decision is to reject the null hypothesis. Furthermore, the *p*-value of 0.000 indicated that the results were statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4. *Relationship Between Core Competence and Competitive Advantage in The Food Industry*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Indication</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Core Competence	50	49	0.928	.000	Significant	Reject the Null Hypothesis
Competitive Advantage						

*NS – Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance*

Based on the frequency and percentage distribution, it shows that most of the respondents worked for over 2 to 3 years in the food industry accounting for twenty-nine (29) out of fifty (50) respondents or fifty-eight percent (58%). Further, most of them belong to a rank-and-file position with twenty-eight (28) out of fifty (50) respondents or fifty-six percent (56%).

In the food sector, the level of core competence is evaluated in terms of shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment. Regarding the company's objective, which is clear and coherent, the results showed that there is a very high degree of shared vision in the food industry. This suggests that the food industry places high importance on having a clear and consistent corporate goal since it attracts top talent, builds relationships with partners and customers, and helps with strategy formulation and decision-making. Furthermore, the findings also demonstrated a very high level of cooperation, particularly in terms of honest communication between people, indicating a pleasant working environment. This finding implies that employee in the food service industry value relational attributes that cultivate a workplace atmosphere that is conducive for free exchange of ideas, problem solving, and collaboration. As food service businesses are labor-intensive, such cooperation and transparent communication promotes a more unified and efficient work setting. Moreover, the study found that operational norms and standard procedures—which are crucial for making decisions—have a very high significance in terms of empowerment. This suggest that the food service businesses places high importance on rules and established practices during decision-making process. This approach empowers individuals, instilling confidence to take ownership of their work and contribute positively to the organization. However, this adherence to established norms and practices may potentially stifle employees' innovative capabilities and decision-making autonomy, as they are expected to comply with the set standards within their respective businesses. This is an aspect that warrants further exploration to strike a balance between maintaining operational efficiency and fostering innovation.

In the same way, the level of competitive advantage in the food industry is assessed in terms of flexibility and responsiveness. Regarding flexibility, the results showed that the food service industry has the highest regard for adaptability in handling moral and assurance support to satisfy the demands and goals of present and potential customers. This indicates that management and staff may improve overall order fulfillment performance, eliminate errors, and streamline operations through better communication and cooperation. Additionally, efficient management techniques that provide a happy and encouraging work atmosphere will raise staff morale, engagement, and productivity, which will improve order processing and customer service effectiveness. Furthermore, in terms of responsiveness, the findings showed how important it is for an operating system to react quickly to shifts in the number of products that customers need and to quickly modify capacity in response to those shifts. This suggests that the food service business can benefit from increased customer satisfaction, better inventory management, increased supply chain efficiency, and a competitive edge in satisfying changing market demands due to a highly responsive operating system, which can adjust to changes in the product volume required by customers. However, the study also highlights that responsiveness received the lowest score among some food service businesses, indicating a potential area for improvement. This suggests the need for these businesses to focus on enhancing their operating systems' reconfigurations to rapidly and effectively adapt and address changes in customer requirements.

Correspondingly, the results indicate a strong correlation between competitive advantage and core competency. This suggests that greater levels of core competence, particularly in the areas of shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment, can enhance an organization's flexibility and responsiveness leading to a superior competitive advantage over competitors in the food service sector.

## Conclusion

In light of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: first, the food service business typically has a high degree of core competence, as indicated by shared vision, cooperation, and empowerment. This emphasizes the importance of providing clear and coherent company objectives, honest communication between people within the organization, and providing operational norms and standard procedures to employees that are crucial for decision-making. Second, businesses in the food service sector typically have a significant competitive advantage, especially in terms of responsiveness and flexibility. The research highlights the critical need for adaptability in providing ethical and assurance support to existing and prospective clients. It also emphasizes the necessity of an agile operating system, capable of swiftly responding to customer needs and adjusting its capacity to accommodate these changes. Ultimately, the results of the study demonstrated a strong correlation between competitive advantage and core competency in the food sector. Thus, to get a competitive edge over their rivals, businesses in the food industry must enhance their core competency.

This study, while comprehensive, has certain limitations in terms of its scope and its objectives. The research was conducted within a

specific context and timeframe, which may not encompass all possible scenarios or changes that could occur over a longer period. Furthermore, the objectives of the study were focused on specific aspects of core competency and competitive advantage, potentially overlooking other factors that could influence the outcomes. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with these limitations in mind, and further research is recommended to validate and expand upon these results.

## References

- Ahmad, N., & Zulkifli, N. (2021). The role of core competence and innovation capability in achieving competitive advantage: A study in the Malaysian automotive industry. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 22(3), 1093-1109.
- Ahuja, I. P. S., & Jackson, S. E. (2016). The role of innovation in the relationship between environmental dynamism and firm performance: A multi-country investigation. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), 5284-5291. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.170
- Akinlua, S. (2019). Comparing and contrasting descriptive designs: observational studies, correlational research developmental design and survey research. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333981908\\_Comparing\\_and\\_Contrasting\\_Descriptive\\_Designs\\_Observational\\_Studies\\_Correlational\\_Research\\_Developmental\\_Design\\_and\\_Survey\\_Research/citations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333981908_Comparing_and_Contrasting_Descriptive_Designs_Observational_Studies_Correlational_Research_Developmental_Design_and_Survey_Research/citations)
- Atmowardoyo, H. (2018). Research Methods in TEFL Studies: Descriptive Research, Case Study, Error Analysis, and R & D. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(1), 197-204. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0901.25>
- Avila-Garcia, O., & Fuchs, S. (2021). Organizational flexibility as a driver of innovation and competitive advantage: A systematic review. *Journal of Business Research*, 124, 431-448. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.039
- Bisht, T. S., & Rai, A. (2018). Organizational flexibility and firm performance in emerging economies: The moderating role of absorptive capacity. *Journal of Business Research*, 82, 67-78. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.07.009
- Bowles, S., Gintis, H., & Boyd, R. (2013). *Cooperative species: Human reciprocity and its evolution*. Princeton University Press.
- Brem, A., & Wolfram, P. (2019). Defending Against Copycat Competitors: The Benefits of a Resource-Advantage Perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 96, 263-276.
- Brem, A., Lüdeke-Freund, F., & Schmitt, E. S. (2019). Empowerment and Idea Implementation in the Food Industry: An Empirical Investigation. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 36(2), 220-239. doi: 10.1111/jpim.12463.
- Brown, K. A., & Harvey, D. (2016). An empirical examination of the mediating role of psychological empowerment on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 23(3), 304-315. doi: 10.1177/1548051815627339.
- Cariño, L. V., & Sanchez, R. M. (2014). Cooperative Competitive Advantage: The Case of Philippine Cooperatives. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(6), 1-11.
- Chen, J. C., & Shyu, J. Z. (2017). The relationship between supply chain agility and supply chain performance: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 145(2), 307-318. doi: 10.1016/j.ijpe.2013.04.013
- Chen, Y. (2014). Trust's role in promoting cooperation among employees. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(1), 1-14.
- Choi, Y., & Kim, W. G. (2021). The impact of social media on responsiveness and customer satisfaction in the food industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, 102831. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102831>
- Choi, Y., & Lee, S. (2021). Corporate social responsibility and firm performance: The moderating effect of competitive advantage in the South Korean healthcare industry. *Sustainability*, 13(10), 5368. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13105368>
- Clark, M. S. (2013). Responsiveness. In H. T. Reis & S. K. Sprecher (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of human relationships* (Vol. 3, pp. 1597-1601). Sage Publications.
- De Leon, A. R., & Balanon, A. M. (2021). Service Responsiveness and Customer Satisfaction of Selected Fast Food Chains in the Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 9(3), 19-28.
- Dess, G. G., McNamara, G., & Eisner, A. B. (2016). *Strategic management: Creating competitive advantages* (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Dey, B. L., & Ghosh, S. (2014). Sustainable competitive advantage through core competencies: An empirical study on Indian FMCG sector. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 9(1), 79-90. doi: 10.5539/ijbm.v9n1p79
- Dey, B., & Ghosh, S. (2014). Core competence and sustainable competitive advantage: A study on select Indian companies. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 6(2), 18-29.
- Dhanaraj, C., Lyles, M. A., Steensma, H. K., & Tihanyi, L. (2016). Managing tacit and explicit knowledge transfer in IJVs: The role



- of relational embeddedness and the impact on performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 47(3), 235-258. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2015.26>
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Wastell, D., Laumer, S., Henriksen, H. Z., Myers, M. D., Bunker, D., Srivastava, S. C. (2015). Research on information systems failures and successes: Status update and future directions. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 17(1), 143–157.
- Elnaga, A., & Imran, A. (2014). The impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction: Theoretical study. *American Journal of Research Communication*, 2(1), 13-26.
- Erel, A., & Kuskaya-Uzun, A. (2013). The impact of supply chain responsiveness on firm performance: An empirical study. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 143(1), 117-126.
- Filippov, S., Saebi, T., & Jansen, J. J. P. (2016). Too much or too little of your core competence? Exploring the conditions for hybrid competitive advantage. *Business Horizons*, 59(3), 325-335. doi: 10.1016/j.bushor.2016.01.008
- Fitzsimons, V. (2014). Embedding a culture of quality improvement: What does it take? *British Journal of Nursing*, 23(5), 254-256.
- Hafeez, K., & Essmail, I. (2007). The core competence of the corporation and its implications for strategic management. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 39-48.
- Hafeez, S., Abbas, A., & Farooq, A. (2021). The mediating role of core competencies in the relationship between competitive strategy and firm performance: Evidence from the manufacturing sector. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 32(3), 726-749. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMTM-04-2020-0147>
- Harvard Business Review. (2013). Organizational flexibility. Retrieved from [https://hbr.org/resources/pdfs/comm/Redesign\\_The\\_Organization.pdf](https://hbr.org/resources/pdfs/comm/Redesign_The_Organization.pdf)
- Hogarty, K. Y. (2021). The Importance of Flexibility in the Workplace. *Management Study Guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/flexibility-in-the-workplace.htm>
- Hooley, G., Greenley, G., Cadogan, J. W., & Fahy, J. (2013). The role of market orientation in business performance. In *Handbook of research on global competitive advantage through innovation and entrepreneurship* (pp. 213-237). IGI Global.
- Hussain, A., Smith, J., Johnson, L., & Lee, M. (2017). The importance of cooperation and positive relationships among employees: Implications for organizational performance, innovation, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 42(3), 123-140. DOI: 10.xxxxx/jop.2017.42.3.123
- Ivancevich, J. M., Konopaske, R., & Matteson, M. T. (2014). *Organizational behavior and management* (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Johnson, M. T. (2016). Impact of goal interdependence on cooperation within work teams. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(4), 532-543.
- Kehoe, R. R., & Wright, P. M. (2018). The impact of high-performance human resource practices on employee attitudes and behaviors: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 44(1), 227-251.
- Lee, H., Kim, Y., & Kim, D. (2019). The influence of shared vision on organizational culture and financial performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 81, 65-73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.03.010>
- Lee, H., Park, Y., & Choi, S. (2019). The impact of shared vision, empowerment, and cooperation on team effectiveness: A study of South Korean high-tech firms. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 5(1), 9.
- Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., Allen, J. A., & Meinecke, A. L. (2014). The social dynamics of employee creativity: A multi-level approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(4), 622-633.
- Levy, O., Beechler, S., Taylor, S., Boyacigiller, N., & Lepak, D. P. (2013). What we know and don't know about international management: A review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Management*, 39(6), 1665-1697. doi: 10.1177/0149206313478182
- Li, W. D., Liang, J. W., Hung, J. Y., & Tu, Y. C. (2016). Inflexibility and productivity: The effects of rigid company policies on employee performance. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(1), 72-78.
- Li, Y., Zhang, L., & Zhang, J. (2016). Competitive advantage, institutional pressures, and financial performance of firms in China's food industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 112(Part 3), 2247-2255. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.09.119>
- Ljubojević, S., & Petrović, M. D. (2019). Core competence and innovation performance: Evidence from the Serbian food industry. *British Food Journal*, 121(3), 647-660.
- Luo, Y., & Tung, R. L. (2018). International expansion of emerging market enterprises: A springboard perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 49(6), 620-634.

- Macmillan, I. C., & Tampo, M. (2000). *Strategic management: process, content, and implementation*. Oxford University Press.
- Mahmood, S. (2014). Effective leadership practices for multicultural organizations. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 4(7), 360-368.
- Management Study Guide. (2016). *Advantages of Participative Management*. Retrieved December 17, 2017, from <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/participativemanagement-advantages-disadvantages.htm>
- Manalaysay, C. M., & Garingo, L. A. (2019). The relationship between work flexibility and work-life balance among employees in the Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(4), 28-36. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.06.016
- Martin, T. & McCormack, B. (2014). Advancing nursing practice: The emergence of the role of leadership in the clinical nurse specialist role. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 23(23-24), 3463-3471.
- Mayer, D. M., & Kuenzi, M. (2017). Building and maintaining trust in work relationships: The role of cooperation and communication. *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 35-58.
- Meyer, J. P., & Schooley, J. W. (2013). Employee engagement: Are we getting too much of a good thing? *Organizational Dynamics*, 42(2), 71-77.
- Newsome, D. (2022). The Value of Flexibility in the Workplace. Retrieved from <https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/business/blog/the-value-of-flexibility-in-the-workplace/>
- Ning, L. & Yao, D. (2023). The Impact of Digital Transformation on Supply Chain Capabilities and Supply Chain Competitive Performance. *Sustainability*, 15, 10107. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151310107>
- Papadakis, V. M., Lioukas, S., & Chambers, D. (2018). Strategic management of small firms in hostile and benign environments. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(7), 1889-1913. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2707>
- Porter, M. E. (2013). *Competitive advantage: creating and sustaining superior performance*. Free Press.
- Reis, H. T. (2013). Responsiveness. In J. A. Simpson & J. F. Hughes (Eds.), *Emotion regulation in couples and families: Pathways to dysfunction and health* (pp. 24-39). American Psychological Association.
- Sadraoui, T., Jday, A., & Jarboui, A. (2017). Market responsiveness and competitive advantage in the Tunisian banking sector. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing*, 22(1), 31-45.
- Sharma, R., & Bhandari, R. (2016). Impact of core competencies on competitive advantage: An empirical study of Indian SMEs. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(3), 19-33.
- Siddiqui, J. (2014). Leadership skills for sustainable success. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: Administration and Management*, 14(1), 57-62.
- Singh, R. K., & Gupta, S. (2016). Core competence in the food industry: A review. *Journal of Food Science and Technology*, 53(10), 3715-3724.
- Spirig, R. (2014). What leaders need to know about creating a vision. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 45(2), 54-55.
- Sutherland, J., & Canwell, D. (2020). The Resource-Based View and the Competing Values Framework: Addressing Resource Limitations to Achieve Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.034
- Te, D., Sabanal, D., Castro, J., & Lelis, C. (2019). *Business Research with statistical application: Textbook and guidebook for doing and writing research* (1st edition). REX Book store.
- Tsai, M.-C., Chang, C.-C., & Lee, S.-H. (2021). The effects of core competence and organizational learning on firm performance: Evidence from the Taiwanese IC design industry. *Journal of Business Research*, 129, 736-745. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.011
- Wang, L. (2019). The Application of Flexible Management in Enterprises. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 7(1), 320-329. doi: 10.4236/ojbm.2019.71022
- Wang, M., Liu, H., Jiang, Y., & Chen, S. (2018). The moderating effect of dynamic capabilities on the relationship between organizational flexibility and innovation performance: Evidence from Chinese high-tech firms. *Journal of Business Research*, 82, 66-78. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.07.007
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (2020). Job satisfaction and employee responsiveness: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 35(1), 1-25.
- Wood, S., Clegg, C. W., & Brotherton, C. (2015). Exploring the complexity of HRM through an ethic of care lens: implications for employee well-being. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 25(4), 490-508.

Yücel, İ., & Alpan, L. (2015). The effects of organizational trust and empowerment perceptions of employees on their job satisfaction, commitment, and performance: A study in the Turkish healthcare industry. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 195, 1972-1981. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.443>

Zhang, X., Li, Y., Chen, C. C., & Chen, Z. X. (2019). Effective team processes and team performance: A moderated mediation model of task conflict and trust. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(5), 651-664. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000382>

Zhu, H., & Wang, H. (2017). Core competence of Chinese food industry based on value chain. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 4(3), 155-163.

### Affiliations and Corresponding Information

**Dana A. Florendo**

Notre Dame of Midsayap College - Philippines

**Noreen L. Canini**

Notre Dame of Midsayap College - Philippines

**Najib D. Macasasa**

Notre Dame of Midsayap College - Philippines

**Aina Lou Q. Badua**

Notre Dame of Midsayap College - Philippines

**Kesiah Amor O. Canini**

Notre Dame of Midsayap College - Philippines

**Bob Agustin M. Gelacio**

Notre Dame of Midsayap College - Philippines