

Entrepreneurship Impact in Improving Competitive Advantage in the Health Services Sector

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Abstract—The study aimed at the following: Defining the concepts of entrepreneurship and competitive advantage in the health services sector. And studying the role of entrepreneurship in improving competitive advantage. The descriptive analytical method was used in the study by designing and distributing a questionnaire to a sample of 90 administrators in hospitals and government health centers in Syria. results of study: Entrepreneurship in the health services sector affects the competitive advantage in Lattakia., there is a statistically significant relationship between dimensions of entrepreneurship and competitive advantage in the health services sector.

Keywords— competitive advantage, entrepreneurship, creativity, independence, competitive offensive, proactivity

I. INTRODUCTION

Various hospitals around the world work to raise their competitiveness in a variety of ways, due to the high intensity of competition between hospitals and the high demand for health services. In spite of the various ways to raise the capacity and competitive advantage of hospitals, most of the methods are linked to a key key to the solution, which is the human resource, which is the essence of the administrative process in the work of organizations, and from it hospitals that focus on the importance of their human resources and work to benefit from and develop them, remain the leading hospitals in the work and competition,

In fact, entrepreneurship is one of the means that helps organizations to enhance their competitive position. The basic idea in the field of entrepreneurship is to invest opportunities and search for value. Entrepreneurship is a renewable phenomenon that has the creators' ideas and perceptions to improve performance, increase productivity, and use everything new for the success of businesses and projects according to bold ideas that depend on calculated risk. {1 }

The current business environment is characterized by intense competition between organizations, as contemporary organizations compete in an environment characterized by dynamism, speed and randomness.

Study problem:

Relying on previous studies related to the topic, the study problem can be formulated as follows:

Is there a good role for entrepreneurship in achieving competitive advantage in the health services sector in Syria. There are many sub-problems related to the study variables, as follows:

- What is the impact of creativity in the health services sector on the competitive advantage during the Corona pandemic period?
- What is the impact of competitive offensive in the health services sector on the competitive advantage during the Corona pandemic period?
- What is the impact of proactivity in the health services sector on the competitive advantage during the Corona pandemic period?
- What is the impact of independence in the health services sector on the competitive advantage during the Corona pandemic period?
- What is the impact of risk taking in the health services sector on the competitive advantage during the Corona pandemic period?

Study Objectives:

- Defining entrepreneurship concepts, competitive advantage in the health services sector.
- Studying the role of entrepreneurship in improving competitive advantage.
- Reaching a set of results, May can help to improve the reality of competitive advantage in the health services sector by relying on entrepreneurship

Study Importance:

The importance of the study is implied in being one of the few studies that focused on the role of entrepreneurship in improving the competitive advantage state in Syrian private hospitals. Syria has suffered from several difficulties due to the current war. The pandemic made

these difficulties sharper. Here comes the role of entrepreneurs and talented people in confronting those crises. Moreover, the importance of the study is implied by measuring the entrepreneurship elements on the competitive advantage. This helps many private hospitals apply the common measurement methods and develop their works during the crises period by depending on results and recommendations achieved by the study.

Study Hypotheses:

Main Hypothesis: There is no correlation between entrepreneurship and the competitive advantage

A set of sub-hypotheses are derived from it:

First sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between creativity and the competitive advantage

Second sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between risk taking and competitive advantage

Third sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between proactivity and the competitive

Fourth sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between competitive offensive and the competitive

Fifth sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between independence and the competitive advantage

Study Methodology:

descriptive analytical approach used, which is one of the appropriate approaches that gives a clear image about the study problem. In addition, it helps understand the study by clarifying and explaining the relationship among its variables.

1 Study Tool:

The study tool was designed in three parts. demographic information. entrepreneurship (creativity, risk taking, proactivity, competitive offensive, and independence). competitive advantage (quality, efficiency, and competitive creativity). However, the questionnaire items were designed depending on Five Likert scale.

2 Study Community and Sample:

They include administrative workers in Lattakia Public hospitals and health centers. Since the community is definitive and heterogeneous, the relative deliberate stratified sample has been applied. The questionnaire was distributed on all Lattakia private hospitals, whose number is 4 hospitals. The number of responders is 90 administrative workers of different levels in these hospitals and health centers.

3 Study variables and limitations:

Independent Variable: Entrepreneurship (creativity, risk taking, proactivity, competitive attack, independence)

Dependent variable: competitive advantage: quality, efficiency, creativity)

Time period: The questionnaire was distributed to hospital workers in 2022.

4 Study Models:

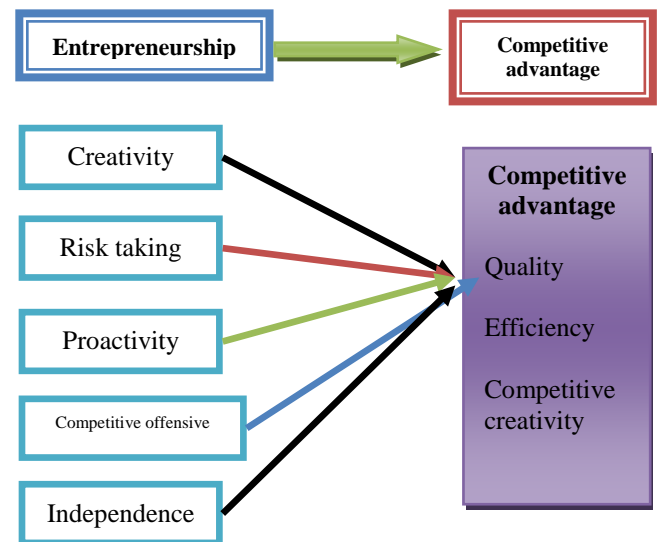


Figure (1): Study Model
Source: prepared by the researcher

II. RELATED WORK

{2} study focused on connecting between talents management and the competitive advantage. {3} study also focused on talents management and competitive advantage of service in Europe. The study of {4} concentrated on the role of entrepreneurship in achieving the competitive advantage in Egyptian beverage companies. Moreover, {5} study focused on the role of talents management in improving nurses' performance in Indonesia. The previous studies are important that concentrated on the entrepreneurship and talents management roles in achieving the competitive advantage. However, the current study is different from others in its focus on different dimensions of the two variables and illustrating the impact on private hospitals during the Corona pandemic.

III. METHODOLOGY

First: entrepreneurship:

The concept of entrepreneurship refers to the innovation and continuous improvement that entrepreneurs focus on by focusing on different modern methods. {3}

Entrepreneurship is defined as: A work style that leads to improving work within business organizations, through excellence and creativity in performance. {6}

The importance of entrepreneurship stems from being a means; The majority of hospitals face difficulties in competition, and look for chances to expand and spread through innovative ways and non-traditional products to make a profit that enables these projects to face expenses and expand, spread and withstand against competition. {7}

Entrepreneurship Goals:

The most important goals of entrepreneurship can be identified as follows:

- Focusing on change in performance and improvement of work in order to increase the competitiveness of health services sector projects.
- Adopting creativity at work within organizations.
- Increasing efficiency and effectiveness at work.
- Creating long-term job opportunities to foster economic growth. {4} {6}

Third: Entrepreneurship Strategies:

Entrepreneurship, in its strategic perspective, aims to find intellectual and creative trends and activate them at the level of organizations. There is a great concern with all concepts, contents and dimensions it has. In addition, finding the entrances and challenges facing hospitals with contemporary entrepreneurial trends to achieve strategic goals. In fact, there is a difference between writers and researchers about the dimensions of the entrepreneurship strategy. Therefore, three dimensions have been focused on, which are: creativity, risk acceptance, and proactivity. The necessity of using all these dimensions for measuring entrepreneurship was confirmed, as follows: {21}

- **Creativity:** Creativity is a goal that many hospitals around the world seek to achieve through leadership. Thus, it is often the main source in achieving competitive success, especially in the hospital sector, which is characterized by high competition. Creativity is described as one of the most important dimensions of leadership, as there must be an effective strategy of creativity for each organization through which it can meet the environmental challenges represented by the increase of competition first, and the lack of resources, whether material or human, in addition to other changes. {2}
- **Risk Taking:** Taking risks is one of the essential elements of entrepreneurship. It is not possible to start business and projects without the entrepreneur and the organization bearing a degree of risk and its current and future effects. Risk is the organization's desire to obtain opportunities despite the uncertainty surrounding it, and to act audaciously without knowing the results. Entrepreneurial-oriented organizations should look for alternatives, which are risky. Therefore, risk is the acceptance of work through uncertain situations. . {1} {2}
- **Proactivity:** It is one of the most important characteristics of entrepreneurial organizations, which involves the desire of senior management for the organization to be the first to respond to customers' needs and achieve their needs and desires. In fact, the entrepreneurial hospitals seek to act quickly in order to get maximum benefit of the market before any other hospital. So, many hospitals tend to take risk of entering new markets with a variety of products in conditions of uncertainty, as they expect to obtain a high market share {6} {22}
- **Competitive Offensive:** Competitiveness refers to management tendencies and trends that reflect the

organization's desire to continue and work in order to control the competitive situation as one of the competitors through proactive moves and creative endeavors so that it is the first to take the initiative in introducing new services, administrative techniques, and modern technology, which increases its competition ability. {8}

- **Independence:** Independence is one of the internal environment factors of the organization that affect supporting creativity in the organization. It means the freedom granted to individuals and management by encouraging them to practice their creativity by presenting and following up new ideas to reach the necessary results of exploiting opportunities. Independence refers to the extent that employees are allowed to do things and activities that are not prevented by organizational limitations and allow individuals to self-manage themselves. {9}

Fourth: competitive advantage:

Achieving competitiveness is based on the development of competitive strategies on sound foundations in order to gain that advantage. The competitive strategy focuses on the difference between organizations and does not focus on the common tasks between them. It is concerned with how to do the job better than the competing organizations do. {10}

In fact, the competitive advantage has increased in various sectors, especially in the health services sector, and with the administrative and technical development in the field of medicine and health services, competitiveness has become the title of this sector. {2}

Competition is defined as: the multiplicity of marketers to win the customer based on different methods such as prices, quality, specifications, timing of sale, method of distribution, after-sales service and gaining commodity loyalty and others. {11}

Competitive advantage is also defined as: the quality that a firm acquires through its ability to face its competitors in the market. {12}

Fifth: Competitive Advantage:

Components and dimensions of competitive advantage in hospitals are many and varied. The most important dimensions of competitive advantage can be identified as follows:

- ❖ **The quality of services in the hospital sector:** The concept of quality in hospitals can be viewed from different points of view. The customer looks at service quality as the services that hospitals provide to customers and is characterized by the degree of satisfaction with those services. On the other hand, the management looks at quality through the quality of the processes applied in service delivery. Paying attention to the quality of services is not a new topic, but what is new here the process of using scientific and modern statistical methods to apply quality management programs. Hospitals seek to race towards acquiring market shares in a competitive environment depending on quality, which refers to the ability of the service or

product to meet or increase customer expectations, when the organization succeeds in designing, implementing and providing products that satisfy the needs and expectations of consumers. Quality has a doubled effect on competitive advantage. {13}{23}

- ❖ **Efficiency in the hospital sector:** Efficiency is one of the important concepts in developing and improving work in hospitals. Without administrative or individual competence in hospitals, it is expected that the desired goals will not be achieved. Efficiency has a close relationship with competitive advantage. The higher the efficiency is, the higher the competitiveness of the hospital is. Competitive advantage occurs when hospital personnel are qualified to gain a competitive advantage in terms of products, services, strategies, skills, etc. from their competitors. {14}{15}
- **Creativity in the hospital sector:** Healthcare organizations are distinguished from each other by their diverse products and services provided with high quality to customers, and to achieve this distinction, creative human elements must be available in hospitals or health centers. Creativity can be done by individuals or services. Studies indicate that hospitals that innovate in providing new and distinctive services have a high competitive ability in the market. Those factors that contribute to the hospital's distinction and raise its competitiveness. Administrative creativity also constitutes an important factor and tool of solving internal problems and reduce their negative effects. Without an organized internal administrative climate, it is difficult for the hospital to raise its competitive ability outside. {16}{24}

Sixth: The role of entrepreneurship in achieving competitive advantage in hospitals during the Corona pandemic:

Entrepreneurship has an important role in influencing the competitive advantage in the business sector, as productivity increases competitiveness, and excellence and creativity in offering health services increases competitiveness.{17}

Because of the spread of the Corona pandemic around the world, and the state of great fear and horror among people due to the rapid spread and transmission of the disease, private hospitals in Lattakia suffered from a decreased demand on many health services provided during the climax period of the pandemic between 2020-2021, where operations and reviews stopped except for infected patients. Although private hospitals did not follow the policies of public hospitals in terms of quarantine, did not receive patients except serious emergency cases, and did not stop cold operations, they suffered from a decrease in demand at the beginning of 2020. The entrepreneurs and distinguished cadres in these hospitals contributed to restoring confidence and facing high competition through paying attention to quality and customer satisfaction, the efficiency of medical cadres in dealing with operations and reviews the pandemic period, and the role of its

experts by finding methods of dealing, sterile corridors and movement conditioned by health instructions during the pandemic. {18}{19}

In fact, talent management is one of the assets through which the organization can build competitive advantage, because talent contributes mainly to the development of individuals who help the organization enhance its competitive advantage through their capabilities. In fact, all talented individuals are seen as a competitive advantage, because they lead organizations by providing outstanding abilities, helping develop organizational culture in a way that enhances its competitive advantage, and adding value and good application for competitive advantages. {20}

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First: Validity and reliability of the study Tools:

After designing the questionnaire to measure the variables and dimensions of the study and the effect between the independent and dependent variables, the questionnaire was judged by a number of specialists to confirm its validity. As a result, some questions were merged, and others were deleted before distributing the questionnaire to the study sample. The form was distributed to sample of 90 administrative workers of different levels in these hospitals and health centers. The retrieved data were entered into the SPSS programme for analysis. Also, the Alpha Cronbach test was conducted to determine the degree of internal consistency and stability among questions. The test result was as follows:

Table (1) Measuring the internal consistency and stability of the questionnaire questions

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
.943	45

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

This means that if the questionnaire, with its different indicators, is distributed at different times to another sample other than the study sample, there is a 94% probability of obtaining the same results.

A five-point Likert scale has been used in answering questions directed to the study sample as follows:

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

The arithmetic mean is $1+2+3+4+5=15/5=3$, which is the value by which the arithmetic mean is compared for each question.

The criteria for judging average responses according to the Likert scale:

Category length = (highest response score – lowest response score)/number of response categories

Category length = $(5-1) /5 = 0.8$

Accordingly, the closed tab was used, and the following areas were identified:

Table (2) - Five-point Likert Scale of answers

Field	Degree of agreement	Relative importance
1.8-1	Very weak	36-20
2.60-1.81	Weak	52-36.1
3.40-2.61	moderate	68-52.1
4.20-3.41	Strong	84-68.1
5-4.21	Very strong	84.1-100

Source: Assembled by the researcher, based on Asaad (2016)

If the arithmetic mean of the question or expression lies within the range (1-1.8), it corresponds to the "very weak" answer. Meanwhile, if it is within the range (1.81-2.60), it corresponds to the "weak" answer. If it is within the range (2.61-3.40), it corresponds to the "moderate" answer. If it is within the range (3.41-4.20), it corresponds to the "strong" answer. Finally, if it is within the range (4.21-5), it corresponds to the "very strong" answer.

Second: Results Analysis and Discussion:

A. Description of Study Variables:

The study relied on the average means method in collecting data. The arithmetic mean was calculated for each question, then for each independent sub-variable, and then the independent and dependent variables. The results of the arithmetic means and the standard deviation for all variables are as in the following table:

Table(3) Descriptive data for all study variables

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Creativity	2.87	0.591
Risk taking	2.95	0.799
Proactivity	3.10	0.775
Competitive offensive	3.12	0.763
Independence	3.20	0.657
Entrepreneurship	3.05	0.652
Quality	3.20	0.875
Efficiency	2.90	0.958
Competitive creativity	3.30	0.992
Competitive advantage	3.13	0.773

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using SPSS programme

The previous table (4) shows the following: The arithmetic mean of the independent variables and sub-variables lies within the range (2.61-3.40), corresponding to the "moderate" answer on the areas of the five-point Likert scale, and with a significant difference.

The arithmetic mean of the dependent variable and sub-variables lies within the range (2.61-3.40), corresponding to the "moderate" answer on the areas of the five-point Likert scale, and with a significant difference.

Thirds: Structural modeling

Both independent and dependent variables can be either discrete or dependent and can be either measured factors or variables. {19}

To test the validity of the hypotheses and analyze the study data by using the Smart PLS program for modelling structural equations by small squares, {13} which is a methodology based on an algorithm to estimate the specific model. It uses two models (internal and external models) simultaneously when performing the assessment process. {19}

The following figure shows the presence of the latent variables forming the path and the set of questions that were asked through the questionnaire as follows:

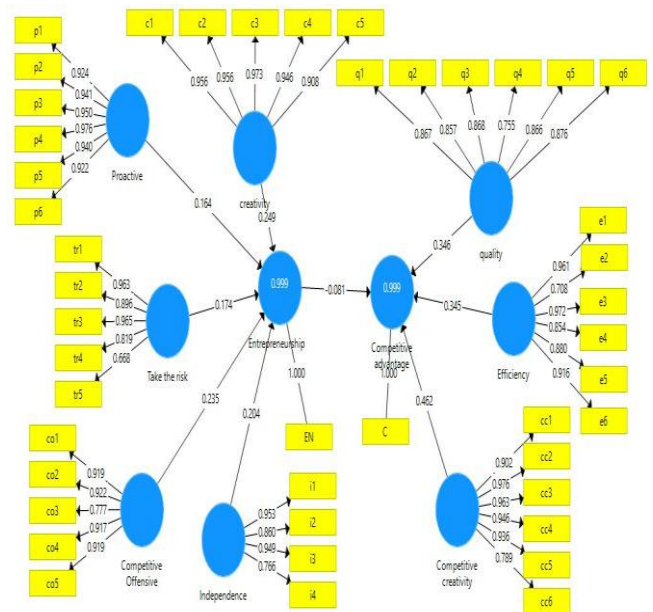


Figure (2) The model Path of Entrepreneurship Impact on Competitive Advantage

Source: Prepared by researchers depending on the SMARTPLS program

Fifth: Hypothesis Testing:

Bye using the simple Pearson correlation coefficient to study the relationship strength or consistency between two variables. Its value varies in the range (-1, +1) and is symbolized by R.

The value of the correlation coefficient is the intensity of the relationship.

Table (4): Correlation Coefficient Values

Correlation coefficient	Relationship
R > 0.90	Very strong
0.90 > R > 0.80	Strong
0.80 > R > 0.70	Good
0.70 > R > 0.60	Not bad (accepted)
0.60 > R > 0.50	Weak
0.50 > R	Very weak

Source: Assembled by the researcher, using Assad (2016)

Main Hypothesis: There is no correlation between entrepreneurship and the competitive advantage

Table (5): The study of the correlation between entrepreneurship and competitive advantage

Correlations		entrepreneurship	competitive advantage
entrepreneurship	Pearson Correlation	1	.801
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.801	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

It is clear from the previous table that the value of Pearson Correlation = 0.801, which means that there is a strong, positive correlation between the two variables, and the value of the probability $P(\text{Sig}) = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the correlation is significant. Since the value of P is less than the connotation level $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the Main hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: There is correlation between entrepreneurship and the competitive advantage

First sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between creativity and the competitive advantage

Table (6): The study of the correlation between creativity and competitive advantage

Correlations		creativity	competitive advantage
creativity	Pearson Correlation	1	.820
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.820	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

It is clear from the previous table: The value of Pearson Correlation = 0.820, which means that there is a strong and positive correlation between the two variables, and the probability value $P(\text{Sig}) = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$, therefore the correlation is significant. Since the value of P is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: There is correlation between creativity and the competitive advantage

Second sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between risk taking and competitive advantage

Table (7): The Study of the Correlation between risk taking and competitive advantage

Correlations		risk taking	competitive advantage
risk taking	Pearson Correlation	1	.771
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.771	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

It is clear from the previous table that the value of Pearson Correlation = 0.771, which means there is a good, positive correlation between the two variables. Since the value of the probability $P(\text{Sig}) = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$, the correlation is significant. Since the value of P is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: There is correlation between risk taking and competitive advantage

Third sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between proactivity and the competitive

Table (8): The study of the correlation between proactivity and competitive advantage

Correlations		proactivity	competitive advantage
proactivity	Pearson Correlation	1	.650
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.650	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

It is clear from the previous table: that the value of Pearson Correlation = 0.650, which implies there is an accepted and positive correlation between the two variables, and the value of the probability $P(\text{Sig}) = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the correlation is significant. Since the value of P is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: There is correlation between proactivity and the competitive

Fourth sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between competitive offensive and the competitive

Table (9): The study of the correlation between competitive offensive and competitive advantage

Correlations

		competitive offensive	competitive advantage
competitive offensive	Pearson Correlation	1	.802
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.802	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

It is clear from the previous table: that the value of Pearson Correlation = 0.802, which means that there is a strong and positive correlation between the two variables, and the value of the probability $P(\text{Sig}) = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the correlation is significant. Since the value of P is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: There is correlation between competitive offensive and the competitive

Fifth sub-hypothesis: There is no correlation between independence and the competitive advantage

Table (10): The study of the correlation between independence and competitive advantage

Correlations

		independence	competitive advantage
independence	Pearson Correlation	1	.802
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.802	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

Source: Prepared by the researcher, using the SPSS programme

It is clear from the previous table: that the value of Pearson Correlation = 0.802, which means that there is a strong and positive correlation between the two variables, and the value of the probability $P(\text{Sig}) = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the correlation is significant. Since the value of P is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we reject the hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: There is correlation between independence and the competitive advantage

The results of the study:

1. Entrepreneurship contributed reducing impact of Corona pandemic in Lattakia private hospitals.
2. Entrepreneurship contributed to improving the competitive advantage of Lattakia private hospitals, despite the uncertainty situation in private hospitals and the difficulties imposed by the Corona pandemic.
3. There is correlation between entrepreneurship and the competitive advantage during the Corona pandemic.

4. There is correlation between creativity and the competitive advantage
5. There is correlation between risk taking and competitive advantage
6. There is correlation between proactivity and the competitive
7. There is correlation between competitive offensive and the competitive
8. There is correlation between independence and the competitive advantage
9. The importance-performance map shows competitive innovation as a component of competitive advantage that has the highest value of 0.395 and performance 61.727. This means that the increase of competitive innovation only one unit will raise the importance of competitive advantage to 39.5%.
10. Depending on the importance-performance map, the study dimensions can be arranged as follows (competitive creativity, efficiency, quality, competitive advantage).
11. Concerning the entrepreneurship components, they are arranged as follows (proactivity, competitive offensive, creativity, independence, entrepreneurship, risk taking). It means adopting the components of competitive advantage as important variables in their performance.

Recommendations:

- Increasing interest in entrepreneurship and talented people in private hospitals, and giving them greater powers because of their role in facing crises.
- Raising workers' skills and capabilities in the hospital, through continuous training to improve skills and increase capabilities, in order to improve the reality of work and raise the competitiveness of Lattakia hospitals.
- Relying on modern scientific methods in measuring the impact and role of entrepreneurship on improving the reality of work in Lattakia private hospitals and the permanent measurement of its impact on competitive advantage.
- Permanent material and immaterial motivation of entrepreneurs to keep them in hospitals and reduce their transfer to other hospitals,
- Attracting talented people and employing them, especially in administrative positions that suffer from problems and difficulties in solving problems because of high competition.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

Entrepreneurship is of great importance in the health services sector, as it leads to the improvement and development of work and the emergence of excellence and creativity within health organizations. The most competitive and attractive sectors for investment, and with the increase in the future population, competition will increase and the importance of entrepreneurship and creativity will appear more.

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