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Strategic Awareness and Its Impact on Achieving Sustainable Competitive Advantage: An Exploratory Study at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities

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Abstract: This research aims to highlight the concept of organizational awareness and its role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage through an exploratory study within the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities. The research stems from the following question: To what extent does organizational awareness, in its various dimensions, contribute to enhancing an organization's ability to achieve sustainable competitive advantage? The research employed a descriptive-analytical approach. Data was collected using a questionnaire distributed to a sample of ministry employees to identify the prevailing level of organizational awareness and its impact on the dimensions of sustainable competitive advantage: quality, efficiency, innovation, and responsiveness. The research yielded several findings, most notably a significant positive correlation and influence between organizational awareness and achieving sustainable competitive advantage. This indicates that a high level of organizational awareness contributes to improved institutional performance and enhances an organization's ability to sustain itself and adapt to changes. The results also demonstrated the importance of fostering a culture of organizational awareness through leadership, training, and knowledge sharing. The research recommends adopting administrative policies that promote organizational awareness among employees, given its pivotal role in supporting sustainable competitive advantage and achieving the ministry's strategic objectives.

Keywords: Organizational awareness, sustainable competitive advantage

Citation: Alalaaq, S. N. H & Abdulkareem, A. A. Strategic Awareness and Its Impact on Achieving Sustainable Competitive Advantage: An Exploratory Study at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities. International Journal on Economics, Finance and Sustainable Development (IJEFSO) 2026, 8(2), 76-93.

Received: 10th Jan 2026
Revised: 21st Feb 2026
Accepted: 09th Mar 2026
Published: 28th Apr 2026



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1. Introduction

The importance of strategic awareness has increased recently due to the rapid, changing, and dynamic nature of the environment, resulting from significant and accelerating changes in its various factors. This necessitates placing individuals with extensive managerial experience, high competence, and advanced skills in senior management and executive positions, as these positions are responsible for the organization's future strategic planning and defining its future direction.

Therefore, most tourism organizations today aspire to be strategically aware by employing managerial talent characterized by a high level of strategic awareness. This distinguishes them from other organizations in the same tourism sector, enabling them to achieve superiority, excellence, and leadership. The value of an organization lies in its intellectual capital, which is embodied in a mature strategic awareness that fosters innovation and creativity, is capable of addressing various environmental challenges, and supports the organization's work with the appropriate tools and ideas to save time and effort and best meet the needs of tourists.

2. Materials and Method

Scientific Methodology

Problem of the Study

The problem of the study is formulated through the following questions:

1. What is the level of understanding and awareness of the study variables (strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage) and the extent to which they align with the responsibilities and requirements of leaders in the departments operating within the ministry, and the difficulty of maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage for these departments?
2. What is the nature of the correlation between the study variables, namely (strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage), in the departments operating within the ministry?
3. Does strategic awareness enhance the sustainable competitive advantage of the study sample?
4. Does strategic awareness influence the development of tourism organizations that support a sustainable competitive advantage?

Importance of the Study

1. The study addresses intellectual and cognitive foundations related to the two study variables (strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage), which are topics within contemporary management thought.
2. The study attempts to present dimensions of the researched variables (strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage) that reveal aspects of strategic work within the tourism sector, serving the realities of the field under study.
3. To enlighten senior leaders and management within the Ministry, as well as those interested in strategic issues, and encourage them to invest their skills and capabilities, employ strategic awareness in their thinking, and achieve a high level of efficiency.

Study Objectives

1. To identify the level and nature of strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage in tourism departments.
2. To explain the philosophical and intellectual foundations of the study variables—strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage—for the departments operating within the Ministry, and to clarify the most important points raised in the literature regarding them.
3. To determine the nature of the relationship between strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage in terms of the impact and relative importance of its dimensions within the supervisory departments of the Ministry.
4. To encourage the departments operating within the Ministry to study the strategic and organizational dimensions of strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage in tourism departments, and to make them more suitable for the required performance within a turbulent organizational environment.

Study Objectives

1. To identify the level and nature of the studied variables (strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage) as realized in the mindset of tourism departments.
2. To explain the philosophical and intellectual foundations of the two study variables (strategic awareness and sustainable competitive advantage) for the departments operating within the ministry, and to clarify the most important points mentioned in the literature regarding them.
 - a. To encourage the departments operating within the ministry to study the strategic and organizational dimensions of strategic awareness and

sustainable competitive advantage in tourism departments, and to make them more suitable for the required performance within a turbulent organizational environment.

- b. To present a comprehensive framework of ideas and visions expressed in the form of recommendations that represent guiding principles that can be adopted by relevant parties to direct work mechanisms in order to achieve the overall strategic objectives.

Study Hypotheses

The study stems from the following main hypotheses:

1. Main Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant effect of the strategic awareness variable on the sustainable competitive advantage variable.
2. Sub-Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant effect of the external dimension of strategic awareness on sustainable competitive advantage.
3. Sub-Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant effect of the internal dimension of strategic awareness on sustainable competitive advantage.
4. Third sub-hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect of the current strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage.
5. Fourth sub-hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect of the future strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage.
6. Fifth sub-hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect of the combined dimensions of strategic awareness on overall sustainable competitive advantage.

Theoretical Aspect of the Research

The Concept of Strategic Awareness

Thompson et al., (2008) defined strategic awareness as "the understanding by managers within an organization of the strategies pursued by the organization, its competitors, how the effectiveness of these strategies can be improved, and the need to adapt to available opportunities for change [1]."

It has also been defined as "a set of strategic planning activities based on forecasting mechanisms and programs to diagnose environmental change and identify the totality of opportunities and threats" [2]. As defined by Thompson (1993), strategic awareness is "the systematic way in which managers become more capable of understanding and identifying the organization's strategic position, opportunities for change, and the extent to which they can control internal and external environmental factors" [3]. The researcher believes that strategic awareness is a comprehensive overview and a unique ability possessed by managers at all levels. At the highest level, they guide their employees towards a vision that is fundamentally concerned with the organization's future, its sustainability, mitigating risks, transforming challenges into opportunities, and investing all types of resources for the benefit of the tourism organization. This is achieved through a set of mechanisms and programs that accurately diagnose the organization's internal and external situation, its current state, and attempt to anticipate its future from all angles, aiming to secure the best possible position now and in the future within the tourism business environment.

The Importance of Strategic Awareness

The importance of strategic awareness can be summarized in the following points:

1. Strategic awareness is one of the most important intellectual assets that contributes to improving and developing organizations' performance by leveraging strengths and avoiding weaknesses, thus achieving sustainability and longevity [4].
2. It contributes to supporting the strategic planning process by helping decision-makers accurately define strategic objectives and ensuring coordination and alignment of decisions with long-term goals.

3. It helps the organization respond quickly to environmental changes and adapt to threats, thus enhancing its competitiveness and enabling it to deliver better value to customers [5].
4. It contributes to rational decision-making by providing leaders with the information necessary to make sound and rational decisions [6].
5. It is a fundamental element for achieving outstanding performance, as it enables leaders to develop a clear and comprehensive view of surrounding events and to benefit from diverse experiences [7].

Dimensions of Strategic Awareness

The dimensions of strategic awareness (according to Savelli et al., 2009) can be summarized concisely and clearly as follows [8]:

1. **External Strategic Awareness:** This is the organization's understanding of external environmental variables (economic, social, political, and technological) with the aim of exploiting opportunities and mitigating threats. This awareness helps organizations adapt quickly to changes and enhance competitiveness. Savelli et al. (2009) pointed out the necessity for managers to be aware of their environment and acknowledge its existence in order to build a robust strategy that ensures the organization's survival[8].
2. **Internal Strategic Awareness:** This refers to an organization's understanding of its resources and capabilities (material and intangible), as well as its strengths and weaknesses. This understanding enables the organization to improve its performance, build competitive advantages, and make effective strategic decisions. Internal strategic awareness encompasses all the resources, expertise, and knowledge that the organization possesses, in addition to its ability to transform these elements into competitive advantages that allow it to outperform competitors [9].
3. **Current Strategic Awareness:** This is the organization's understanding of its current market position in terms of performance, competitive standing, and customer satisfaction. This helps it assess its current situation and make decisions based on real data. It is essential for organizations to understand the current conditions both within the organization and in its external environment in order to anticipate future crises and capitalize on opportunities [10].
4. **Future Strategic Awareness:** This refers to an organization's ability to anticipate the future, develop strategic scenarios, and plan for the long term to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities, ensuring sustainability and future success. Awareness of the future situation reflects a company's ability to improve strategic scenarios and allocate the necessary budgets to achieve its future goals [11].

The Concept of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

According to Barney (1991), sustainable competitive advantage is "the benefits an organization gains when it implements a value-creation strategy that is not simultaneously implemented by any of its current or potential competitors[12]." Oliver (1997) defined it as "the organization's ability to manage the institutional context of its resource decisions to determine long-term, socially acceptable economic behaviors" [13]. Shaker and Ibrahim (2022) defined sustainable competitive advantage as "the unique characteristics of an organization that distinguish it from its current and potential competitors [14]." While Al-Masoudi (2007) defined it as "the organization's ability to achieve excellence with the greatest returns by maintaining its current competitive advantage and continuously strengthening it[15]," McClory (2010) defined sustainable competitive advantage as the long-term benefit of implementing a unique value-creation strategy based on a unique mix of resources and internal organizational capabilities that cannot be replicated by other competitors [16].

The Importance of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The importance of sustainable competitive advantage can be highlighted through the following points:

1. An organization achieves differentiation from its competitors when it can maximize its strengths to deliver the best in terms of quality and added value, that is, when it possesses a set of innovative attributes and competencies that make the customer loyal [17].
2. A sustainable competitive advantage allows an organization to maintain its diverse capabilities over a long period, enabling it to distinguish itself with unique characteristics and qualities that set it apart from other organizations and differentiate it from its competitors .
3. It enhances the organization's ability to focus on the skills of its employees and place human resources in the right roles [18].
4. It improves the organization's efficiency and effectiveness by adopting a range of competitive strategies, such as utilizing physical capital, human capital, and organizational capital [17].
5. A sustainable competitive advantage enables organizations to achieve a leading position in the competition by possessing superior production resources for products and services, including the necessary inputs and Outputs [19].

Dimensions of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

1. **Quality:** The concept of quality has received considerable attention from many researchers in the field of management. The evolution of quality concepts, their dimensions, and the multiplicity of their applications, especially in intangible aspects, have made it a fundamental requirement for organizational success [20].
2. **Superior Efficiency:** Efficiency is achieving objectives through the exemplary and rational use of human, material, financial, and informational resources, with high and distinctive performance that reduces costs, time, and effort, and maximizes material value. Effectiveness is doing the right things, while efficiency is doing things right [21].
3. **Innovation:** Innovation, in its general sense, refers to the introduction of new and appropriate ideas in any field of human activity, from science and the arts to business, education, and daily life. These ideas must be entirely new and different from what already exists. Innovation is essential for the long-term success of organizations. Taha (2015) views it as a combination of six distinct and interconnected resources: (1) knowledge, (2) intellectual capabilities, (3) thinking patterns, (4) personality, (5) motivation, and (6) environment [22].
4. **Responsiveness:** If an organization wants to achieve high customer responsiveness, it must be able to accomplish its tasks in a way that satisfies its customers more than its competitors in the competitive market. Responsiveness encompasses a number of values related to flexibility, reliability, and speed, which are implemented within the organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage [23].

Practical Aspect:

Evaluating the Study Models:

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Independent Variable: Strategic Awareness:

The independent variable, strategic awareness, was measured using four sub-dimensions: external strategic awareness, internal strategic awareness, current strategic

awareness, and future strategic awareness. These sub-dimensions consisted of 20 items, with 5 items for each dimension. Table 1 shows the quality of conformity indicators, demonstrating that all the extracted criteria met the acceptance criteria for the strategic awareness variable model, which can be adopted in this study.

Table 1. Evaluation of the Quality of the Independent Variable: Strategic Awareness

Dimensions of the independent variable: strategic awareness	Cronbach's standard alpha	Non-standard Cronbach's alpha	Compound stability (rho_c)	Mean Variance Extracted (AVE)
CSA_Current_Strategic Awareness	0.892	0.892	0.893	0.624
ESA_External_Strategic Awareness	0.818	0.819	0.865	0.510
FSA_Future_Strategic Awareness	0.877	0.875	0.876	0.587
ISA_Internal_Strategic Awareness	0.835	0.834	0.857	0.517
Standard	0.70≤	0.70≤	0.70≤	0.50≤

“Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program.”

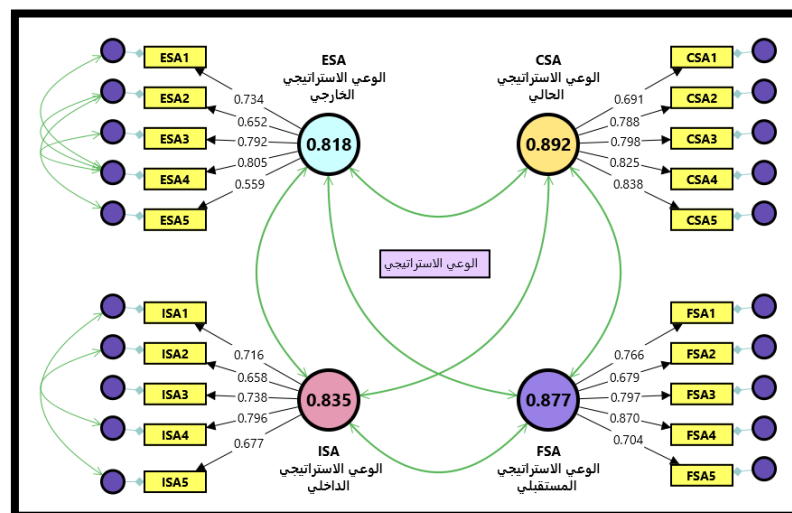


Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis of the independent variable strategic awareness

“Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program.”

Note: The values within the circles represent the standardized Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the dimensions, while the values on the arrows represent the standardized estimates for each item.

Table (2) reveals the specific details regarding the standardized estimates and significance levels for the items of the Strategic Awareness scale in the structural model. It is evident that the estimates for the Strategic Awareness items range from (0.87-0.559), which is a good range. Furthermore, it is clear that all items are significant, as demonstrated by the T-values for the Strategic Awareness items, which ranged from (9.825-5.535), exceeding the critical T-value of (1.984). This indicates that all items of the Strategic Awareness variable are statistically significant, providing a good and sufficient indicator for adopting this variable in its final form for subsequent analyses.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Indicators for the Independent Variable Strategic Awareness

Paragraphs of the dimensions of the strategic awareness variable	Standardized estimates	T value	Level of significance
CSA1 <- CSA_Current_Strategic_Awareness	0.691	---	---
CSA2 <- CSA_Current_Strategic_Awareness	0.788	7.869	0.000
CSA3 <- CSA_Current_Strategic_Awareness	0.798	7.901	0.000
CSA4 <- CSA_Current_Strategic_Awareness	0.825	8.133	0.000
CSA5 <- CSA_Current_Strategic_Awareness	0.838	8.182	0.000
ESA1 <- ESA_External_Strategic_Awareness	0.734	---	---
ESA2 <- ESA_External_Strategic_Awareness	0.652	6.696	0.000
ESA3 <- ESA_External_Strategic_Awareness	0.792	7.896	0.000
ESA4 <- ESA_External_Strategic_Awareness	0.805	7.387	0.000
ESA5 <- ESA_External_Strategic_Awareness	0.559	5.535	0.000
FSA1 <- FSA_Future_Strategic_Awareness	0.766	---	---
FSA2 <- FSA_Future_Strategic_Awareness	0.679	7.508	0.000
FSA3 <- FSA_Future_Strategic_Awareness	0.797	8.823	0.000
FSA4 <- FSA_Future_Strategic_Awareness	0.870	9.825	0.000
FSA5 <- FSA_Future_Strategic_Awareness	0.704	7.648	0.000
ISA1 <- ISA_Internal_Strategic_Awareness	0.716	---	---
ISA2 <- ISA Strategic Awareness Internal	0.658	6.779	0.000
ISA3 <- ISA Strategic Awareness Internal	0.738	7.575	0.000
ISA4 <- ISA Strategic Awareness Internal	0.796	8.075	0.000
ISA5 <- ISA Strategic Awareness Internal	0.677	6.635	0.000

“Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program.”

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Dependent Variable: Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The dependent variable, sustainable competitive advantage, was measured using four sub-dimensions: quality, superior efficiency, responsiveness, and innovation. These sub-dimensions consisted of 20 items, with 5 items per dimension. Figure 2 shows that the standardized ratings for all items exceed 0.50, indicating the acceptance of all items that reflect the structure of the sustainable competitive advantage variable. The extracted quality of conformity indicators, which met the required criteria for accepting the sustainable competitive advantage variable model used in this study, are also shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Quality Assessment of the Dependent Variable: Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Dimensions of the dependent variable Sustainable competitive advantage	Cronbach's standard alpha	Non-standard Cronbach's alpha	Compound stability (rho_c)	Mean Variance Extracted (AVE)
IN_Innovation	0.884	0.883	0.884	0.606
Q_Quality	0.901	0.902	0.905	0.655
R_Responsiveness	0.905	0.904	0.906	0.659
SE_High Efficiency	0.873	0.873	0.876	0.584
Standard	0.70≤	0.70≤	0.70≤	0.50≤

"Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program."

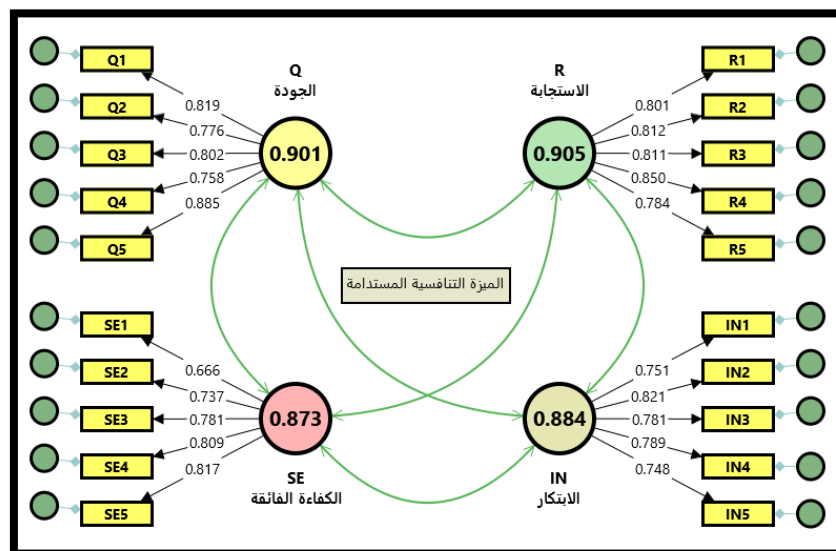


Figure 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of the dependent variable: Sustainable competitive advantage

"Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program."

Note: The values within the circles represent the standardized Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the dimensions, while the values on the arrows represent the standardized ratings for each item.

Table (4) presents the details regarding the standardized and significant ratings for the items of the dependent variable, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, in the structural model. It is evident that the ratings for the items of the Sustainable Competitive Advantage variable range between (0.666-0.885), which is a good range, indicating that all

items are significant. Furthermore, the T-values for the items of the Sustainable Competitive Advantage variable range between (7.076-11.612), which is greater than the critical T-value of (1.984). This indicates that all items of the Sustainable Competitive Advantage variable are significant, providing a good and sufficient indicator for adopting this variable in its final form in subsequent analyses.

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Indicators for the Dependent Variable, Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Paragraphs of the dimensions of sustainable competitive advantage	Standardized estimates	T value	Level of significance
IN1 <- IN_Innovation	0.751	---	---
IN2 <- IN_Innovation	0.821	9.016	0.000
IN3 <- IN_Innovation	0.781	8.432	0.000
IN4 <- IN_Innovation	0.789	8.484	0.000
IN5 <- IN_Innovation	0.748	7.925	0.000
Q1 <- Q_Quality	0.819	---	---
Q2 <- Q_Quality	0.776	9.588	0.000
Q3 <- Q_Quality	0.802	9.915	0.000
Q4 <- Q_Quality	0.758	9.164	0.000
Q5 <- Q_Quality	0.885	11.612	0.000
R1 <- R_Responsiveness	0.801	---	---
R2 <- R_Responsiveness	0.812	9.945	0.000
R3 <- R_Responsiveness	0.811	9.864	0.000
R4 <- R_Responsiveness	0.850	10.532	0.000
R5 <- R_Responsiveness	0.784	9.334	0.000
SE1 <- SE_Super Efficiency	0.666	---	---
SE2 <- SE_Super Efficiency	0.737	7.076	0.000
SE3 <- SE_Super Efficiency	0.781	7.339	0.000
SE4 <- SE_Super Efficiency	0.809	7.572	0.000
SE5 <- SE_Super Efficiency	0.817	7.698	0.000

“Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program.”

3. Result and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

The Strategic Awareness Variable

The results shown in Table (5) indicate that the strategic awareness variable achieved a mean value of (3.490), a good level, with a standard deviation of (0.711) and a coefficient of variation of (20.37). This demonstrates that the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities possesses a comprehensive vision and unique capabilities among its senior managers, who guide their employees according to this vision. This vision focuses primarily on the organization's future and sustainability, in addition to protecting the organization from risks, transforming challenges into opportunities, and investing available resources of all kinds for the benefit of the tourism organization. This is achieved through reliance on a set of mechanisms and programs that accurately diagnose the internal and external situations of the organization, in addition to evaluating the current situation and anticipating all future aspects. The aim is to enhance the Ministry's position and ensure a leading competitive position in the tourism business environment, both now and in the future. Table (5) summarizes the dimensions of the strategic awareness

variable. These results indicate that the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities' primary focus is on enhancing internal strategic awareness, meaning it gives great importance to related aspects. With its own capabilities, resources, and potential. In contrast, external strategic awareness comes in second place, indicating a considerable interest in the external environment and surrounding factors, but to a lesser degree than in the internal situation. Current strategic awareness came in third place, reflecting a moderate focus on understanding the ministry's present reality, while future strategic awareness ranked last, indicating that forward-looking thinking and anticipating future developments do not receive the same priority compared to the other dimensions. These results highlight the need to strengthen attention to the future strategic awareness dimension to achieve greater balance and ensure the ministry's ability to confront the challenges and changes in the culture, tourism, and antiquities sector in the future.

This is especially important given the uncertainty that characterizes the Iraqi reality, which inevitably affects the context and content of tourism activity.

Table 5. Summary of the Dimensions of the strategic awareness variable

ت	Dimensions of the strategic awareness variable:	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Dimensional arrangement	Trend
1	External strategic awareness	3.558	0.779	21.89	Second	Good
2	Internal strategic awareness	3.474	0.751	21.62	First	Good
3	Current strategic awareness	3.556	0.803	22.58	Third	Good
4	Future strategic awareness	3.374	0.818	24.24	Fourth	Average
	strategic awareness variable	3.490	0.711	20.37		

“Source: SPSS V.28 output.”

Sustainable Competitive Advantage Variable

The results shown in Table (6) indicate that the sustainable competitive advantage variable achieved a mean value of (3.335), with a medium level, a standard deviation of (0.740), and a coefficient of variation of (22.19). The Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities faces numerous challenges and difficulties in its efforts to establish a distinguished competitive position for the tourism sector within a constantly changing and increasingly complex work environment. Despite the Ministry's adoption of plans and strategies aimed at enhancing the quality of tourism events and activities and keeping pace with international standards, the process of innovation and the development of modern solutions does not proceed at an equal pace across all functional levels. The spread and actual application of the culture of innovation remains limited in some areas. The Ministry also faces difficulty in building an integrated system of alternative and rapid ideas and solutions that can be relied upon when facing emergencies, which may affect the speed of response and the ability to maintain efficient performance. In addition, other challenges arise in the ability to invest available resources and effectively market unique tourism potential at both the local and international levels. While adopting modern work mechanisms and employing digital technologies in managing work programs is important, it remains fraught with obstacles related to the readiness and ability to adapt these technologies to the actual needs of the tourism sector. All of this necessitates that the Ministry develop more flexible and innovative policies and programs, while enhancing the efficiency of work teams and motivating them to adopt new methods that keep pace

with rapid developments and ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector's competitive position in Iraq. As shown in Table (6), which summarizes the dimensions of the sustainable competitive advantage variable, these results indicate that the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities focuses primarily on enhancing rapid response to market demands and environmental changes. This dimension topped the list of dimensions comprising sustainable competitive advantage, reflecting the Ministry's commitment to flexibility and readiness to meet the needs of the tourism sector and effectively address evolving challenges. The innovation dimension comes in second place, demonstrating the Ministry's interest in adopting new ideas and creative solutions as a means of enhancing its competitiveness, although this interest does not reach the level of focus directed towards rapid response. As for high efficiency, it ranked third, indicating that achieving high levels of operational efficiency is not a top priority for the Ministry compared to other dimensions. Finally, the quality dimension came in last place, revealing that while improving quality levels is important, it has not received the same level of attention as responsiveness and innovation. These results highlight the need to reconsider policies and practices related to quality and efficiency to achieve a better balance among all components of competitive advantage, which would support the sustainability of the tourism sector and enhance its competitive position in the future.

Table 6. Summary of the Dimensions of the Sustainable Competitive Advantage Variable

ت	Dimensions of the Sustainable Competitive Advantage Variable:	arithme tic mean	standar d deviatio n	Coefficie nt of variation	Dimen sional arrang ement	Trend
1	Quality	3.391	0.790	23.30	Fourth	middle
2	High Efficiency	3.383	0.784	23.17	Third	middle
3	Responsiveness	3.321	0.832	25.05	First	middle
4	Innovation	3.246	0.814	25.08	Second	middle
	Sustainable Competitive Advantage Variable	3.335	0.740	22.19		

"Source: SPSS V.28 output."

Hypothesis testing

Main Hypothesis 1:
There is a statistically significant effect of the strategic awareness variable on the sustainable competitive advantage variable. Sustainable Competitive
Sustainable Competitive Advantage = 0.263 + 0.880 (Strategic Awareness)

The data in Table (7) and Figure (3) indicate the results of the hypothesis testing related to the impact of strategic awareness on sustainable competitive advantage. The calculated value of the (F) statistic reached an amount of (280.301), which is higher than the tabulated value of (3.94) at a significance level of (0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that (there is a statistically significant impact of the strategic awareness variable on the sustainable competitive advantage variable). The statistically significant result reveals the impact of strategic awareness on enhancing the sustainable competitive advantage of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities. The fact that the statistical value exceeded the critical limits and the low significance level indicates that the high level of strategic awareness among leaders and departments is directly reflected in the Ministry's ability to establish advantages that are difficult to imitate. A clear future vision, accurate analysis of the tourism work environment, and directing resources towards high-value

opportunities enable the Ministry to invest in elements of uniqueness and scarcity and respond quickly to market demands, while efficiency and quality still need more focus to achieve a more comprehensive balance. From this standpoint, developing strategic leadership preparation programs, linking planning to competitive performance indicators, expanding the scope of environmental studies, and introducing future simulation models become practical necessities to ensure the sustainability of excellence in the Iraqi tourism sector and enhance the Ministry's ability to face dynamic changes efficiently and innovatively. In addition, the results of the (t) test for the regression coefficient (β) for the strategic awareness variable showed a value of (16.742), which is higher than the tabulated value of (1.984) at the significance level of (0.05). This confirms that the strategic awareness variable has a significant effect in explaining the change in the level of sustainable competitive advantage. The value of the marginal slope coefficient (β) also reflects a positive effect, as every one-unit increase in the level of strategic awareness leads to an increase in sustainable competitive advantage by (88%). It is also evident from the coefficient of determination (R^2) that the analysis model explains (71%) of the changes occurring in the level of sustainable competitive advantage.

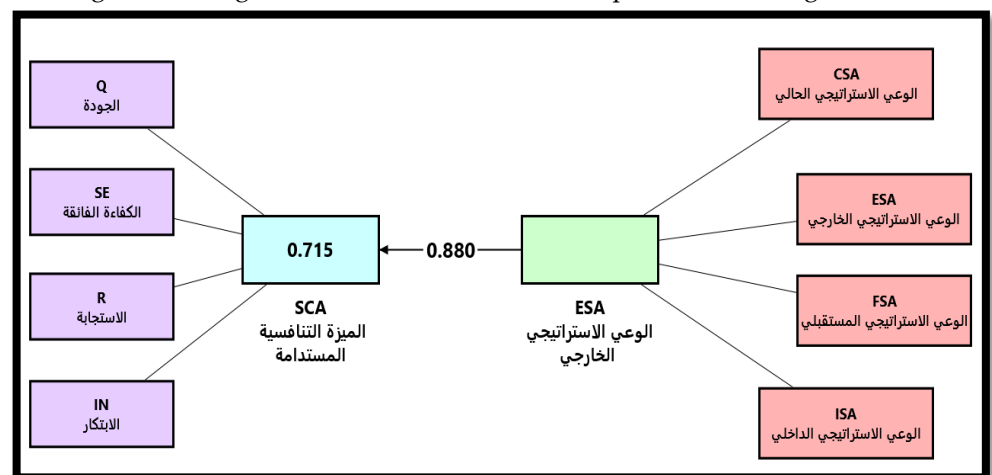


Figure 3. The structural model of the impact of strategic awareness on sustainable competitive advantage

“Source: Outputs of the (Smart PIs4) program.”

Sub-hypothesis 1:
There is a statistically significant effect of the external strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage.
$\text{Sustainable competitive advantage} = 0.816 + 0.708 (\text{external strategic awareness})$

The data in Table (7) shows the results of the hypothesis testing related to the impact of the external strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage. The calculated value of the (F) statistic reached an amount of (139.756), which is higher than the tabulated value of (3.94) at a significance level of (0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that (there is a significant impact of the external strategic awareness dimension on the sustainable competitive advantage variable). The statistical result indicates that there is a significant impact of the external strategic awareness dimension in enhancing sustainable competitive advantage. This means that the ministry's continuous awareness of the economic, political, social, and technological factors in the overall surrounding external environment, and its translation into practical decisions and policies, directly reflects on its ability to establish advantages that are difficult for competitors to imitate. The more it

expands its monitoring of external opportunities and threats and invests that data in designing unique tourism products and services, the greater its ability to respond quickly and achieve superiority. It should be noted that consolidating this awareness requires an effective market intelligence system, ongoing research partnerships, and performance indicators linked to external shifts to ensure the sustainability of this advantage in a constantly changing business environment. Furthermore, the results of the t-test for the regression coefficient (β) of the external strategic awareness dimension showed a value of (11.822), which is higher than the critical value of (1.984) at a significance level of (0.05). This confirms that the external strategic awareness dimension has a significant effect in explaining changes in the level of sustainable competitive advantage. The marginal slope (β) value also reflects a positive effect, as every one-unit increase in the level of the external strategic awareness dimension leads to a 70% increase in sustainable competitive advantage. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that the analysis model explains approximately (55%) of the changes in the level of the advantage. Sustainable competitiveness.

Second sub-hypothesis: .
There is a statistically significant effect of the internal strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage
Sustainable competitive advantage = 0.795 + 0.731 (internal strategic awareness)

The data in Table (7) presents the results of the hypothesis testing regarding the impact of the internal strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage. The calculated F-statistic value reached (137.148), which is higher than the tabulated value of (3.94) at a significance level of (0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that (there is a statistically significant impact of the internal strategic awareness dimension on the sustainable competitive advantage variable). The results show that the internal strategic awareness dimension significantly impacts sustainable competitive advantage. This result reflects the Ministry's deep understanding of its capabilities, resources, strengths, and weaknesses, from the quality of its human capital and work systems to its digital infrastructure and databases. This understanding provides a solid foundation for adopting strategic decisions that translate into advantages that are difficult to imitate. The broader the scope of examining and utilizing internal capabilities in a flexible and innovative manner, the greater the Ministry's ability to provide unique tourism services, enhance operational efficiency, and develop a faster response to challenges, thus prolonging its competitive advantage. To consolidate this impact, it becomes necessary to unify the tools for diagnosing capabilities, link internal performance indicators to competitive advantage indicators, develop capacity-building programs that ensure the sustainability of excellence in the changing tourism work environment, and design services that suit their personalities and psychological and mental tendencies. In addition, the results of the (t) test for the regression coefficient (β) for the dimension of internal strategic awareness showed a value of (11.711), which is higher than the tabulated value of (1.984) at the significance level of (0.05). This confirms that the dimension of internal strategic awareness has a significant effect in explaining the change in the level of sustainable competitive advantage. The value of the marginal slope coefficient (β) also indicates a positive effect of the dimension of internal strategic awareness, as every increase in the dimension by one unit will lead to an increase in sustainable competitive advantage by (73%). It is also evident from the coefficient of determination (R^2) that the analysis model explains (55%) of the changes occurring in the level of sustainable competitive advantage.

Third Sub-Hypothesis
There is a statistically significant effect of the current strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage.
Sustainable Competitive Advantage = 0.788 + 0.716 (Current Strategic Awareness)

The data in Table (7) shows the results of the hypothesis testing regarding the impact of the current strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage. The calculated F-statistic value reached (170.944), which is higher than the tabulated value of (3.94) at a significance level of (0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that (there is a statistically significant impact of the current strategic awareness dimension on the sustainable competitive advantage variable). The results indicate a statistically significant impact of the current strategic awareness dimension on the sustainable competitive advantage variable. This means that the Ministry's accurate understanding of the current reality of the tourism environment and its ability to objectively assess its current situation effectively contribute to enhancing its competitiveness. A clear understanding of current conditions, including available resources, existing opportunities, and real challenges, enables the Ministry to make informed decisions and develop flexible strategies that sustainably meet market demands. Hence, strengthening the current measurement and monitoring tools becomes necessary to deepen this awareness, which supports more accurate decision-making and helps maintain the continuity of the competitive advantage in light of the continuous changes in the tourism sector. In addition, the results of the (t) test for the regression coefficient (β) for the dimension of current strategic awareness showed a value of (13.075), which is higher than the tabulated value of (1.984) at the significance level of (0.05). This confirms that the dimension of current strategic awareness has a significant effect in explaining the change in the level of sustainable competitive advantage. The value of the marginal slope coefficient (β) also indicates a positive effect of the dimension of current strategic awareness, as every increase in the dimension by one unit will lead to an increase in sustainable competitive advantage by (71%). It is also evident from the coefficient of determination (R^2) that the analysis model explains (60%) of the changes occurring in the level of sustainable competitive advantage.

Fourth Sub-Hypothesis
There is a statistically significant effect of the future strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage.
Sustainable Competitive Advantage = 0.940 + 0.710 (Future Strategic Awareness)

The data in Table (7) indicates the results of the hypothesis testing regarding the impact of the future strategic awareness dimension on sustainable competitive advantage. The calculated value of the F-statistic was (179.027), which is higher than the tabulated value of (3.94) at a significance level of (0.05). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that (there is a statistically significant impact of the future strategic awareness dimension on the sustainable competitive advantage variable). The results show that the impact of the future strategic awareness dimension is statistically significant in establishing sustainable competitive advantage. This indicates that the Ministry's ability to anticipate future trends in the general framework, specifically in the tourism sector, and to build long-term scenarios is a fundamental pillar for enhancing its competitive advantage. The broader the scope of the future vision, whether through analyzing technological changes, demographic shifts, or emerging tourism patterns, the more prepared the Ministry is to direct its resources towards promising opportunities and develop innovative initiatives

whose impact is difficult for competitors to match. This reflects a continuous need to consolidate forward-looking monitoring mechanisms, intensify investment in future studies, and translate forecasts into actionable plans and policies that ensure the sustainability of excellence in a highly dynamic tourism environment, thereby enhancing their satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, the results of the (t) test for the regression coefficient (β) for the future strategic awareness dimension showed a value of (13.380), which is higher than the tabulated value of (1.984) at the significance level of (0.05). This confirms that the future strategic awareness dimension has a significant effect in explaining the change in the level of sustainable competitive advantage. The value of the marginal slope coefficient (β) also indicates a positive effect of the future strategic awareness dimension, as every increase in the dimension by one unit will lead to an increase in sustainable competitive advantage by (71%). It is also evident from the coefficient of determination (R^2) that the analysis model explains (61%) of the changes occurring in the level of sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 7. Statistical indicators for analyzing the impact of strategic awareness dimensions on sustainable competitive advantage

Dependent variable	Dimensions of the strategic awareness variable		(t)	(R)	(R ²)	Adju (R ²)	(F)	Sig	
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	External Strategic Awareness	(α)	0.816	3.740	0.745	0.555	0.551	139.756	0.000
		(β)	0.708	11.822					
	Internal Strategic Awareness	(α)	0.795	3.582	0.742	0.550	0.546	137.148	0.000
		(β)	0.731	11.711					
	Current Strategic Awareness	(α)	0.788	3.944	0.777	0.604	0.601	170.944	0.000
		(β)	0.716	13.075					
	Future Strategic Awareness	(α)	0.940	5.107	0.784	0.615	0.612	179.027	0.000
		(β)	0.710	13.380					
	Strategic Awareness	(α)	0.263	1.402	0.845	0.715	0.712	280.301	0.000
		(β)	0.880	16.742					
	(N) = 114) ////((F) Tabular = 3.94)////((t) Tabular = 1.984)								

"Source: SPSS V.28 output."

Testing the second main hypothesis using multiple linear regression

Testing the fifth sub-hypothesis: "There is a statistically significant effect of the dimensions of strategic awareness together on the overall sustainable competitive advantage."

$$Y = 0.313 + 0.177X_1 + 0.057X_2 + 0.290X_3 + 0.344X_4$$

The results from Table (8) and Figure (4) show that the calculated F-value was (71.816), which was greater than its critical value of (2.46) at a significance level of (0.05) and a confidence level of (95%). This indicates that the model is valid for analysis. It is also evident that the coefficient of determination (R^2) was (72%). The variance in (sustainable competitive advantage) is explained by the combined dimensions of (strategic awareness) included in the model. This indicates that the dimensions of the variable (strategic awareness) together have an effect on the dependent variable (sustainable competitive

advantage). Regression analysis shows that the three dimensions of strategic awareness – external, present, and future—have a significant combined effect on sustainable competitive advantage, as the extracted (t) values (2.145, 3.394, 4.415) exceeded the critical significance threshold of (1.984). The regression coefficients (β) showed that each one-unit increase in external strategic awareness is associated with an increase in The competitive advantage is (17%), while the current awareness is reflected at a rate of (29%), and future awareness at a rate of (34%). On the other hand, the dimension of internal strategic awareness showed a value of (t=0.602), which is smaller than the tabulated value of (1.984), indicating its lack of a significant effect when calculated within the same model. These results reflect that focusing on monitoring external environmental variables, understanding the current reality, and anticipating the future represents the actual nerve to enhance the ministry's ability to innovate, respond quickly, and maintain a competitive advantage that is difficult to match, while attention to the internal self remains less important when all dimensions are combined in one strategic framework.

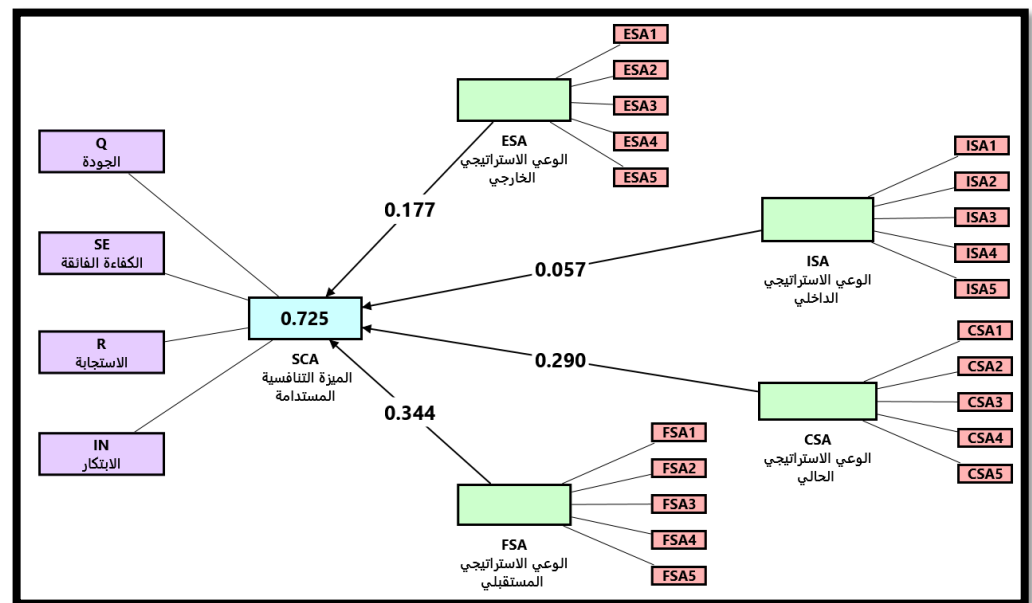


Figure 4. The structural model of impact: Dimensions of strategic awareness together in sustainable competitive advantage
 “Source: Outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program.”

Table 8. Statistical indicators for the dimensions of strategic awareness together in sustainable competitive advantage

Dimensions of Strategic Awareness	(α)	(β)	(t)	Sig.	Decision	(R) Multiple	(R ²)	(R ²) Adj	(F)	Sig
External Strategic Awareness	0.313	0.177	2.145	0.034	Impactful	0.851	0.725	0.715	71.816	0.000
Internal Strategic Awareness		0.057	0.602	0.548	Not impactful					
Current Strategic Awareness		0.290	3.394	0.001	Impactful					
Future Strategic Awareness		0.344	4.415	0.000	Impactful					

(F) Tabular	2.46
(t) Tabular	1.984
Number of acceptable (influential) dimensions = 3: (external strategic awareness, current strategic awareness, future strategic awareness)	
Number of unacceptable (non-influential) dimensions = 1: (internal strategic awareness)	
Tabular F-value = 2.46 // Tabular t-value = 1.984	

"Source: SPSS V.28 output."

4. Conclusions

Conclusions

1. The results showed that the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities places great importance on monitoring changes in the external environment in all its dimensions and seeks to utilize this data in formulating effective strategies.
2. The results indicated that the Ministry possesses a vision, albeit at a preliminary or general level, regarding the internal environment of tourism activity, along with a reasonable understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
3. The results confirmed the Ministry's commitment to raising tourism awareness among stakeholders through research partnerships and training programs.
4. The results demonstrate that the Ministry is making efforts to enhance its preparedness to face future challenges by adopting proactive strategies.
5. The results showed that the ability to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage still faces difficulties stemming from limited innovation and response time, indicating the need to focus on building an integrated system of alternative solutions.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen environmental monitoring and analysis centers by expanding partnerships with national and international research centers to enhance the Ministry's ability to adapt to environmental developments. 2) Developing programs to train administrative leaders at all levels to ensure the continuity of the strategic vision and achieve internal integration.
2. Launching comprehensive awareness campaigns targeting the tourism community, companies, and related organizations to raise tourism awareness and strengthen community partnerships.
3. Building unique and difficult-to-replicate resources: high-quality tourism services, strong networks, and organizational knowledge of the local market.
4. Establishing an integrated innovation system encompassing all departments to accelerate response to emerging developments and achieve competitive sustainability.

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