

## Expanding Competitive Advantage Through Knowledge Sharing, Collaboration, and Organizational Innovation (Case Study: Mojan Food Industries Company)

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### Article Info

#### Article type:

Original Research

#### How to cite this article:

Sardashti, S. (2025). Expanding Competitive Advantage Through Knowledge Sharing, Collaboration, and Organizational Innovation (Case Study: Mojan Food Industries Company). *International Journal of Innovation Management and Organizational Behavior*, 5(6), 1-9.  
<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijimob.3671>



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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to examine the impact of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and organizational innovation on achieving a sustainable competitive advantage in the Mojan Food Industries Company.

**Methodology:** The research employed a quantitative approach using structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the relationships between key variables. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees of Mojan Food Industries, with a total sample size of 295 respondents. The study measured knowledge sharing, collaboration, organizational innovation, and competitive advantage using validated scales. Data analysis was conducted using Smart PLS software to assess reliability, validity, and path coefficients.

**Findings:** The results indicate a significant positive relationship between knowledge sharing and competitive advantage ( $\beta = 0.347$ ,  $t = 8.273$ ), knowledge sharing and organizational innovation ( $\beta = 0.571$ ,  $t = 13.324$ ), and knowledge sharing and collaboration ( $\beta = 0.769$ ,  $t = 20.469$ ). Additionally, organizational innovation positively influences competitive advantage ( $\beta = 0.292$ ,  $t = 7.669$ ), and collaboration enhances competitive advantage ( $\beta = 0.311$ ,  $t = 7.116$ ). These findings suggest that organizations can strengthen their competitive position by fostering a knowledge-sharing culture, encouraging collaborative practices, and prioritizing innovation. The model's  $R^2$  values (0.763 for competitive advantage, 0.667 for innovation, and 0.592 for collaboration) confirm its strong explanatory power.

**Conclusion:** The study confirms that knowledge sharing, collaboration, and organizational innovation are essential drivers of competitive advantage. Organizations that invest in structured knowledge-sharing mechanisms, collaborative environments, and innovation initiatives are better positioned to sustain market leadership. The findings underscore the need for companies to integrate these factors into their strategic frameworks to achieve long-term success in competitive markets.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Sharing, Collaboration, Organizational Innovation, Competitive Advantage, Structural Equation Modeling, Mojan Food Industries.

## 1 Introduction

Gaining a competitive advantage does not occur randomly or without planning; rather, organizations must move in this direction by thinking strategically and designing scientific frameworks (Renalwin, 2025; Shao, 2025). Outstanding products, advanced technology, and similar factors will have no impact on a company's success unless they effectively contribute to the creation of a competitive advantage (Shokarriz & Khadem Pour, 2024). Based on this perspective, the concept of competitive advantage refers to a company's ability to attract customers over its competitors by leveraging organizational innovation and capacities in such a way that rivals cannot simultaneously achieve these values or create substitutes for them (Bahmani Rad, 2024). This advantage can be present in any of the elements of the marketing mix (Pasaribu et al., 2025; Shao, 2025).

On the other hand, the current era is incomparable to any previous era. The dominant characteristic of this period is knowledge-centeredness, which includes information-driven dynamics and a high rate of change across various fields. This reality has shaped the business environment, reflecting the increasing complexity of global markets and the dynamic conditions that companies and production and service institutions face (Gheyarani, 2020). Organizations have no choice but to acquire and utilize competitive advantages to shield themselves from environmental forces and adapt to competitive requirements. Therefore, competitive advantage is an issue that all organizations operating in market environments must consider (Kayanan, 2022).

Competitive advantage is a factor that enables an organization to establish either a defensive or offensive position against its competitors and includes organizational innovation, which allows an organization to differentiate itself from its rivals. Examining the situation of Iranian companies reveals that their low level of competitive advantage has caused them to lag in competitive environments, and this issue continues to grow daily. Given the competitive structure in various industries, companies must strengthen their competitive position by designing strategies that generate competitive advantages for them (Asheqi Oskouei, 2020; Bahmani Rad, 2024).

Until the early 1950s, the primary factor contributing to the underdevelopment and lack of competitive advantage in developing countries was mainly attributed to the shortage of financial and physical capital. However, in the modern

economy, wealth creation and economic growth primarily stem from intangible assets, particularly knowledge sharing (Solis et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2023).

The idea of sustainable competitive advantage emerged in 1984 when it was demonstrated that various strategies contribute to its development. The comprehensive explanation of competitive advantage was introduced by Porter in 1985, where he argued that different types of competitive strategies, including focus, differentiation, and cost leadership, lead to the creation of sustainable competitive advantage. While traditional sources of competitive advantage, such as production capacities, laboratories, access to financial resources, distribution channels, or economies of scale, remain essential, they are no longer sufficient for success in today's business world (Asheqi Oskouei, 2020). For example, knowledge sharing has become one of the fundamental and central topics in modern organizations. To enhance productivity, sustain their operations, and ensure their survival, organizations must identify and assess these intellectual assets (Zandiatashbar & Hamidi, 2022).

Prior research has extensively explored the relationship between knowledge sharing, collaboration, innovation, and competitive advantage. Shokarriz and Khadempour (2024) examined the impact of knowledge management and organizational innovation dynamics on innovation, highlighting the mediating role of digital leadership capabilities in technology-driven firms. Their findings revealed that knowledge management significantly enhances organizational innovation, reinforcing the idea that companies must foster a knowledge-sharing culture to drive innovation (Shokarriz & Khadem Pour, 2024). Similarly, Bahmani Rad (2024) investigated the effect of strategic business orientation on organizational performance, with innovation as a mediating variable. Their study confirmed that strategic orientation significantly influences both innovation and performance, emphasizing that firms must align their strategies with innovation initiatives to sustain competitive advantage (Bahmani Rad, 2024).

Another perspective was provided by Gheyarani (2020), who developed a conceptual model explaining how human resources facilitate the transformation of strategic capabilities into dynamic organizational innovation and competitive advantage. This study demonstrated that an organization's ability to integrate human capital into its innovation strategies plays a crucial role in sustaining market leadership (Gheyarani, 2020). Moreover, Oskouei (2020) proposed a model for achieving sustainable competitive

advantage in the cement industry, emphasizing the role of environmental management systems, knowledge management, and risk mitigation. Their findings suggested that companies with structured knowledge management frameworks are better equipped to maintain a competitive edge while addressing environmental concerns (Asheqi Oskouei, 2020).

Accordingly, this article focuses on expanding competitive advantage through knowledge sharing, collaboration, and organizational innovation in Mojan Food Industries Company.

## 2 Methods and Materials

This study is applied research in terms of its objective and field research in terms of data collection. The statistical population of this research consists of Mojan Company during the summer of 2023. A probabilistic and random sampling method was used for sample selection.

To collect data and assess the perceptions and viewpoints of managers and employees at Mojan Company, a field

survey using a structured questionnaire was conducted. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all constructs exceeded 0.7, indicating acceptable reliability of the model.

Additionally, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed for data analysis and hypothesis testing. The Smart PLS software was used to implement the structural equation model.

## 3 Findings and Results

The examination of the research model is conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the external model of the research is assessed, and in the second stage, the internal model is examined.

In the first stage, the factor loadings of the measured indicators for each variable were evaluated. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are considered desirable. The model, in terms of path coefficients and initial factor loadings, is presented in Table 1.

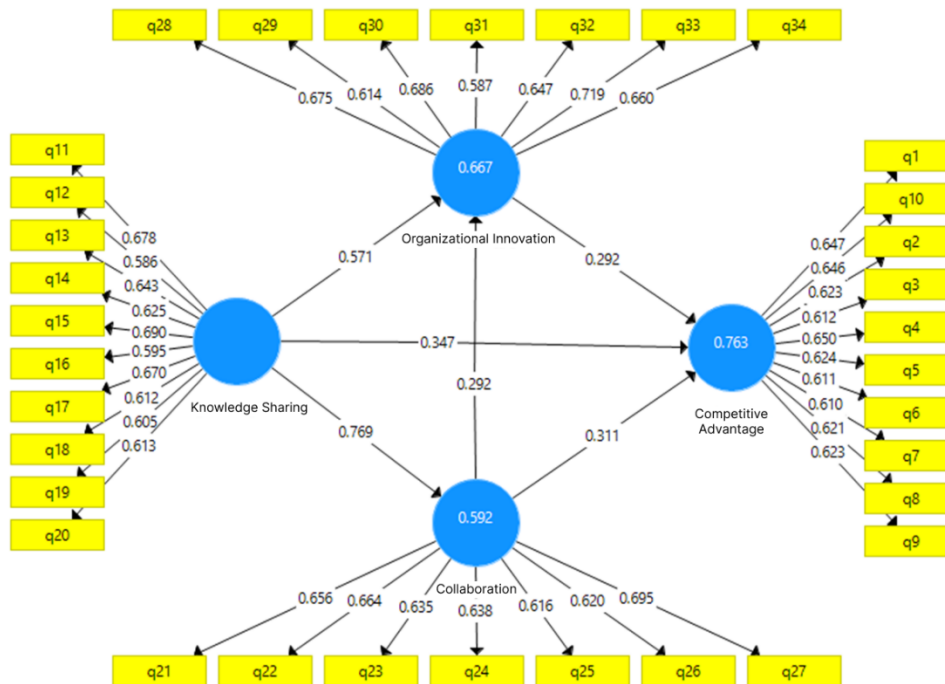
**Table 1**

*Factor Loadings*

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading	Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading
Competitive Advantage	q1	0.647	Knowledge Sharing	q18	0.612
	q2	0.623		q19	0.605
	q3	0.612		q20	0.613
	q4	0.650	Collaboration	q21	0.656
	q5	0.624		q22	0.664
	q6	0.611		q23	0.635
	q7	0.610		q24	0.638
	q8	0.621		q25	0.616
	q9	0.623		q26	0.620
	q10	0.646		q27	0.695
Knowledge Sharing	q11	0.678	Organizational Innovation	q28	0.675
	q12	0.586		q29	0.614
	q13	0.643		q30	0.686
	q14	0.625		q31	0.587
	q15	0.690		q32	0.647
	q16	0.595		q33	0.719
	q17	0.670		q34	0.660

Figure 1

Structural Equation Model - Standardized Coefficients (Factor Loadings)



In Smart PLS software, model fit is assessed based on the reliability of factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted

(AVE) criterion, and discriminant validity through the Fornell and Larcker criterion.

Table 2 presents the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, composite reliability, and AVE for each construct.

Table 2

Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Knowledge Sharing	0.833	0.869	0.400
Competitive Advantage	0.828	0.866	0.411
Organizational Innovation	0.779	0.841	0.431
Collaboration	0.767	0.834	0.418

According to Table 2, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for all constructs exceeds 0.7, indicating acceptable reliability of the model. Similarly, the composite reliability values for all constructs are above 0.7, further confirming the reliability of the model. Additionally, all AVE values exceed 0.4, suggesting a good model fit.

As seen in Table 3, the square root of the AVE values for the latent variables in this study (located in the diagonal cells of the matrix) is higher than the correlation values between them (in the lower and right cells), indicating a good model fit in terms of discriminant validity.

Table 3

Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	Knowledge Sharing	Competitive Advantage	Organizational Innovation	Collaboration
Knowledge Sharing	0.633			
Competitive Advantage	0.619	0.641		
Organizational Innovation	0.605	0.595	0.657	
Collaboration	0.629	0.592	0.631	0.647

According to Table 3, all diagonal values are greater than the correlation values in their respective rows and columns, confirming the model's discriminant validity.

To evaluate the structural model fit, several criteria are considered, with the most fundamental one being the significance coefficients (Z-values). Structural model fit

using t-values is assessed as follows: these coefficients must exceed 1.96 to confirm statistical significance at a 95% confidence level. If the t-value exceeds 1.96, the path coefficient is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, and if it exceeds 2.58, it is significant at the 99% confidence level.

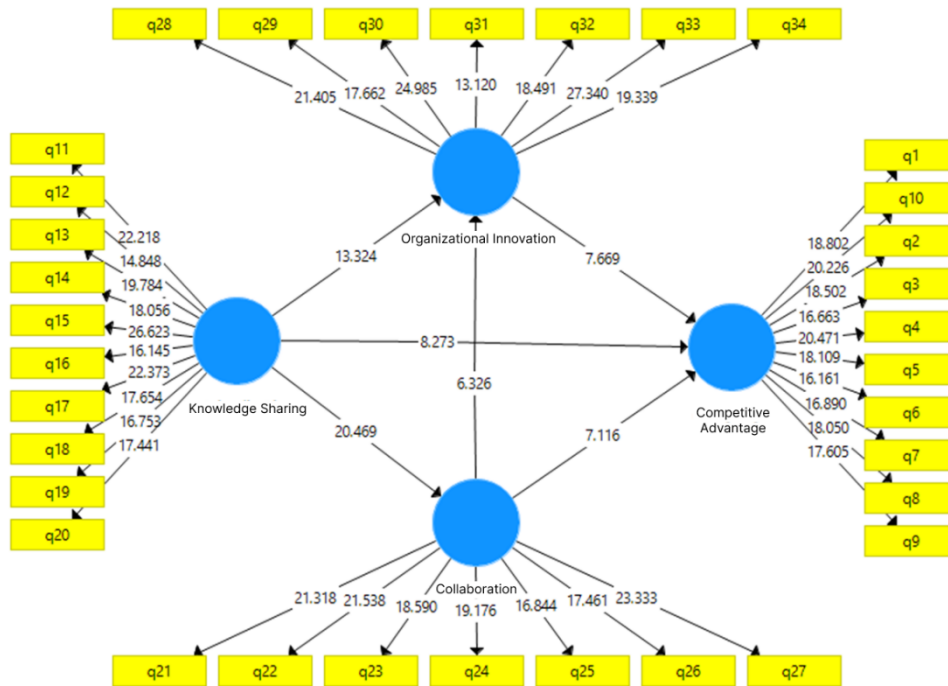
**Table 4**

Z-Statistic for Hypothesis Testing (T-Values)

Path	T-Value
Knowledge Sharing → Competitive Advantage	8.273
Knowledge Sharing → Organizational Innovation	13.324
Knowledge Sharing → Collaboration	20.469
Organizational Innovation → Competitive Advantage	7.669

**Figure 2**

Structural Equation Model - Z-Statistic Coefficients



R<sup>2</sup> (R-Squared) is a criterion used to connect the measurement model with the structural model in structural equation modeling. It indicates the impact of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable. It is important to note that R<sup>2</sup> is calculated only for endogenous constructs in the

model, while for exogenous constructs, this value is zero. Higher R<sup>2</sup> values indicate a better model fit. Chin (1998) proposed three benchmark values for evaluating structural model fit using R<sup>2</sup>: 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.67 (strong).

**Table 5**

R-Squared Values

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>
Competitive Advantage	0.763
Organizational Innovation	0.667
Collaboration	0.592

The R<sup>2</sup> values in Table 5 indicate a strong model fit.

This criterion determines the predictive power of the model. Models with an acceptable structural fit should be able to predict the indicators of their endogenous constructs. Henseler et al. (2009) defined three Q<sup>2</sup> values for assessing

weak, moderate, and strong predictive power: 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively. It is important to note that Q<sup>2</sup> is only calculated for endogenous constructs with reflective indicators.

**Table 6**

*Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)*

Variable	Q <sup>2</sup>
Competitive Advantage	0.281
Organizational Innovation	0.270
Collaboration	0.233

The Q<sup>2</sup> values in Table 6 indicate an acceptable predictive capability.

Based on the hypothesis testing, the structural model fit using t-values requires these values to be above 1.96 for significance at the 95% confidence level. However, it is

essential to note that t-values only confirm the validity of relationships and do not indicate their strength. Path coefficients reveal the positive or negative impact of one variable on another.

**Table 7**

*Hypothesis Testing Results*

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Value	P-Value	Significance Level	Result
Knowledge Sharing → Competitive Advantage	0.347	8.273	0.000	<0.05	Confirmed
Knowledge Sharing → Organizational Innovation	0.571	13.324	0.000	<0.05	Confirmed
Knowledge Sharing → Collaboration	0.769	20.469	0.000	<0.05	Confirmed
Organizational Innovation → Competitive Advantage	0.292	7.669	0.000	<0.05	Confirmed
Collaboration → Competitive Advantage	0.311	7.116	0.000	<0.05	Confirmed

As shown in Table 7, all research hypotheses were confirmed.

#### 4 Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that knowledge sharing, collaboration, and organizational innovation significantly contribute to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations striving for long-term market dominance must prioritize these three components. Knowledge sharing encompasses structural, human, and relational capital, forming an integrated system that sustains an organization's competitive position. Collaboration facilitates the identification of innovative opportunities and mobilizes resources toward entrepreneurial and growth-oriented organizational practices. Innovation, in turn, represents the ability of a company to fully utilize its available resources to create a distinct competitive position. The results of this study align with existing literature that highlights the role of these factors in fostering sustainable competitive advantage.

The first hypothesis confirmed a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and competitive advantage, with a path coefficient of 0.347 and a t-value of 8.273, indicating a significant impact. This means that a 1% increase in knowledge sharing leads to an 8.2% improvement in competitive advantage. Prior research supports this finding, emphasizing that knowledge sharing enhances firms' ability to leverage intellectual resources and improve their strategic positioning (Van Nguyen, 2024). Organizations that effectively manage knowledge-sharing processes are better equipped to develop innovative solutions, strengthen customer relationships, and create unique market offerings (Shafaat Takoldan et al., 2024; Shafiei & Sarmast, 2024).

The second hypothesis demonstrated a strong positive relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational innovation, with a path coefficient of 0.571 and a t-value of 13.324. This result indicates that 57% of organizational innovation is explained by knowledge sharing, and for each unit increase in knowledge sharing, innovation improves by



13.3%. This outcome is consistent with previous studies that highlight knowledge as a primary driver of innovation (Zhang et al., 2024). Organizations that encourage knowledge exchange among employees are more likely to generate creative ideas, develop new products, and enhance their innovation capabilities (Renalwin, 2025; Shao, 2025).

The third hypothesis confirmed a substantial link between knowledge sharing and collaboration, with a path coefficient of 0.769 and a t-value of 20.469. This indicates that 76.9% of collaboration is influenced by knowledge sharing, and a 1% increase in knowledge sharing leads to a 20.46% improvement in collaboration. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the importance of knowledge sharing in building cooperative work environments (Tan et al., 2023). Collaboration thrives when employees and organizational units share expertise, insights, and problem-solving approaches, enabling firms to operate more cohesively and respond more effectively to market changes (Norvadewi & Zaroni, 2024).

The fourth hypothesis validated a positive relationship between organizational innovation and competitive advantage, with a path coefficient of 0.292 and a t-value of 7.669. This means that 29.2% of competitive advantage is explained by organizational innovation, and for each unit increase in innovation, competitive advantage improves by 7.66%. Prior studies have consistently found that organizations that prioritize innovation are more likely to differentiate themselves from competitors and achieve sustained success (Kemp, 2024; Mbaidin, 2024; Moradi et al., 2024; Nazneen, 2024; Norvadewi & Zaroni, 2024; Nosratpanah et al., 2024; Nurcahyo, 2024; Ochuba, 2024). Innovation allows firms to introduce unique products, improve operational efficiencies, and develop superior business models (Hoang et al., 2025).

Finally, the fifth hypothesis confirmed a significant positive relationship between collaboration and competitive advantage, with a path coefficient of 0.311 and a t-value of 7.116. This finding suggests that 31.1% of competitive advantage is influenced by collaboration, and for each unit increase in collaboration, competitive advantage improves by 7.1%. Research supports the notion that collaborative environments enable organizations to leverage diverse skills, share market intelligence, and co-develop new solutions, which ultimately strengthens their market position (Kemp, 2024). Collaboration also enhances agility and adaptability, enabling firms to respond quickly to industry disruptions (Van Nguyen, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

Overall, the study confirms that knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation collectively serve as fundamental pillars of competitive advantage. These findings are supported by extensive literature emphasizing the interconnectivity between these factors. For instance, organizations that encourage cross-functional knowledge exchange tend to foster more collaborative cultures, which in turn enhances their ability to innovate and sustain competitive advantage (Kemp, 2024). Furthermore, firms that integrate knowledge-sharing mechanisms within their collaboration networks are more likely to achieve breakthrough innovations (Nosratpanah et al., 2024).

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted within a single industry—Mojan Food Industries—limiting the generalizability of the findings to other sectors. The nature of competitive advantage may differ across industries, requiring further validation in diverse organizational contexts. Second, the study relied on cross-sectional data, which captures relationships at a single point in time. Future research could use longitudinal designs to assess the long-term impact of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation on competitive advantage. Third, the study primarily used self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. While statistical techniques were applied to mitigate this issue, future research could incorporate objective performance indicators to enhance validity.

Future research should explore the impact of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation across different industries to determine whether similar relationships hold in varied market conditions. Additionally, studies could examine how digital transformation and emerging technologies influence these dynamics. For example, artificial intelligence and machine learning may play a critical role in enhancing knowledge-sharing processes and fostering organizational innovation. Researchers could also investigate the role of leadership styles in moderating the relationship between collaboration and competitive advantage, as leadership practices may significantly impact organizational dynamics. Finally, future studies could adopt mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews to provide a more comprehensive understanding of competitive advantage mechanisms.

Organizations aiming to enhance their competitive advantage should actively invest in knowledge-sharing systems. Implementing structured knowledge management

practices, such as internal knowledge databases, mentorship programs, and cross-functional teams, can facilitate knowledge exchange and improve organizational learning. Additionally, fostering a culture of collaboration is essential for driving innovation. Companies should encourage teamwork, open communication, and joint problem-solving initiatives to maximize collective expertise. Finally, firms must prioritize innovation by allocating resources to research and development, leveraging emerging technologies, and continuously seeking market-driven improvements. By integrating knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation into their strategic framework, organizations can achieve sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success.

### Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

### Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

### Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

### Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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