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THE IMPACT OF COMPETITOR ACCOUNTING ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AS AN INTERMEDIARY OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: RESEARCH AT VIETNAMESE LABOR EXPORT ENTERPRISES

DoanThi QuynhAnh
University of Labour and Social Affairs, Vietnam

VuThuyDuong*
*Corresponding Author, Trade Union University, Vietnam

NguyenThiLinh
University of Labour and Social Affairs, Vietnam

NguyenThiLuong
East Asia University of Technology, Vietnam

Abstract
This study aims to evaluate the impact of competitor accounting on business performance through the intermediate variable of competitive advantage in Vietnamese labor export enterprises. Data was collected by sending questionnaires to business managers or chief accountants of 200 labor export enterprises in Vietnam and the number of votes meeting the requirements for inclusion in analysis was 186. Data were analyzed by applying the PLS-SEM model through SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 software. Research results have shown that there is a significant positive impact of competitor accounting on competitive advantage, the impact of competitive advantage on corporate performance, and a positive impact of competitors' accounting on corporate performance through competitive advantage. Based on the results obtained, we propose some solutions to provide an information basis to help labor export enterprises in Vietnam improve their competitive advantage and achieve business performance. The research results can be a useful reference for managers of Vietnamese labor export enterprises using competitor accounting to provide information to improve business efficiency.
Keywords: Competitor accounting, operational efficiency, competitive advantage, labor export enterprises, Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

According to Simmonds (1981), strategic management accounting is derived from Porter's Strategic Framework (1980) to provide and analyze management accounting data of businesses and competitors, helping businesses develop and monitor business strategy. Bromwich (1990) pointed out that strategic management accounting provides and analyzes financial information about a company's product markets, competitors' costs, cost structure, and strategic oversight. Therefore, strategic management accounting does not simply collect data about a business and its competitors but also seeks to evaluate a business's long-term competitive advantage over its competitors (Bromwich, 1990; Guilding, 2000; Roslender & Hart, 2003).

Competitor accounting techniques have been mentioned in strategic management accounting techniques by Bromwich (1981), Guilding et al (2000), and expanded by Roslender & Hart (2003) to show the relationship between management accounting and marketing management to enhance the competitive aspect of businesses. James W. Hesford and colleagues (2019), in a study in the hotel industry, showed that competitor accounting affects hotel prices, which in turn affects hotel demand and revenue performance. Effective use of SMA techniques will improve organizational performance, and competitors' accounting techniques will help businesses orientate planning and control in operational activities (Ojra and al., 2021). In his study of the manufacturing sector in Nigeria, Babajide (2019) showed that businesses using the competitor technique can consistently outperform their competitors at both the industry and sector levels over the long term, so accounting competitors can create and sustain a competitive advantage.

Many previous studies such as K. Amoako-Gyampah et al. (2008) have suggested that there is a direct relationship between competitive advantage and business performance. Competitive advantage creates superior activities and adds outstanding value to businesses, improves operational performance, and enhances business performance. Crick, J. M. and colleagues (2020) studied wine production enterprises in New Zealand, and the results showed that there is a relationship between competitor orientation and maintaining efficiency operating in these enterprises.

In Vietnam, strategic management accounting and competitor accounting are of interest to many researchers. Dang, L., and colleagues (2021) in a study of a Vietnamese sugar company, showed that there is a positive relationship between strategic management accounting techniques (including competitor techniques) with corporate performance. Son, T. V. (2023) researched 30 Vietnamese banks from 2008 to 2020, the research results showed that, as the level of competition increased, banks had lower profits in terms of ROA and ROE but were more efficient in terms of net profit.

For Vietnamese labor export enterprises, which are assessed for their potential and long-term development in the future, labor export enterprises are always competing to win and dominate the labor export market. After the COVID-19 period, Vietnamese workers' need for income and orientation to work abroad is increasing, so the number of Vietnamese businesses supplying labor abroad is increasing. Faced with this situation, labor export enterprises themselves must create competitive advantages to cope with future uncertainty and the context of continuous world economic integration. Business administrators need to be provided with and analyze information about competitors as a basis for evaluating competitors, an opportunity to learn from competitors, and especially to identify competitors, opportunities, and challenges for your own business. Creating a competitive advantage over other businesses in the industry is a prerequisite for businesses to improve operational efficiency.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that there is a relationship between competitor accounting and operational efficiency. This information is especially useful for highly competitive industries such as the labor export industry, so research on the impact of competitor accounting on the performance of Vietnamese labor export enterprises is necessary. The study includes the following objectives: (1) Measure the impact of using competitor accounting on the competitive advantage of Vietnamese labor export enterprises; (2) Measure the impact of competitive advantage on the performance of Vietnamese labor export enterprise; and (3) Measure the impact of using competitor accounting information on the performance of Vietnamese labor export enterprises through competitive advantage as an intermediary. Besides the introduction, the rest of the article is organized as follows: Part 2 is an overview of the research;Part 3 presents research methods; Part 4 shows the results of data analysis according to the PLS Sem model; and Part 5 is the conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Accounting for competitors

Competitor cost assessment

The technique of evaluating competitors' costs is of interest to many researchers, such as Simmonds (1981); Porter (1985); Bromwich (1990); Heinen (2005)... According to Simmonds (1981), assessing competitors' costs focuses on the structure of competitors, including regularly updated forecasts of competitors' costs on each item given; develop a systematic approach to competitor cost assessment that, in addition to evaluating competitors' production facilities, also takes into account economies of scale, product technology design and relationships with the state.

Competitors' current and future costs must be clearly understood to determine a firm's competitive position and to predict competitors' future strategic behavior (Heinen & Hoffjan, 2005). Collecting data related to competitors, including information from suppliers, information from customers, and information from professional associations, will create data and conditions to estimate the costs of competitors (Hesford, 2008). When businesses have information about competitors' costs, it will help the company estimate competitors' costs, thereby formulating and implementing strategic actions (Souza, Marengo & Jaroseski, 2012). Competitor cost analysis represents part of the strategic application of cost modeling, where a company or a company's products or services can be directly compared with its competitors(Laseter, Heckel & Huang, 2017).

Competitive position monitoring

Monitoring competitor positions, as Simmonds (1986) suggests, represents a more comprehensive approach to competitor assessment. It extends the analysis to evaluate the sales, market share, volume, unit costs, and sales of key competitors. Simmonds sees the breadth of these accounting techniques as providing more insight into competitors than would result from an assessment based on market share alone. However, if this increase is due to advertising devoted to growing brand strength or from investment in new product development, then the changing cost structure may be more suggestive of competitors ensuring a stronger competitive position instead of a weaker one.

According to Simmonds (1986), and Guilding et al. (2000), this technique is formed by providing information about competitors, including sales, market share, volume, and costs. Monitoring competitors' positions requires companies to closely analyze and monitor the strategic intentions and tactical moves of competitors (Noble, Sinha, and Kumar, 2002). Competitor position analysis involves analyzing accounting information related to competitors (Cadez and Guilding, 2008; Heinen and Hoffjan, 2005), thereby identifying and quantifying strengths and relative weaknessesto plan successful competitive strategies (Im & Workman, 2004; Narver & Slater, 1990). Based on the information of this strategic management accounting technique, a business can evaluate its position relative to its main competitors and build models of how it might respond based on business objectives, assumptions, capabilities, and current situation.

Evaluate competitors' performance

Moon and Bates (1993) describe an approach to evaluating competitor performance based on the interpretation of published financial statements. Moon and Bates outline an analytical framework that can be applied to competitors' financial statements as part of the process of evaluating sources of competitive advantage. This analysis may include tracking trends in sales and profit levels as well as asset and liability movements.

Evaluating competitors based on published financial reports is analyzing published information data as part of assessing competitors' competitive advantages (Cadez & Guilding, 2008). This is considered a good source of information to evaluate competitors' performance based on published financial reports, including tracking sales trends, profit levels, assets, and other variables of competitors. Hesford (2008) has shown that monitoring competitors' performance has a positive effect on increasing economic value, return on investment, improving service quality, andmarket share, and enhancing customer satisfaction. Additionally, evaluating competitors' performance is a popular and valuable method to improve competitive advantage as well as company performance (Chen, 2014). By analyzing ratios and trends from financial statement information as well as what this assessment means to competitors, customers, and suppliers, companies will be able to assess the level of implementation of their strategy (Alsoboa & Alalaya, 2015). Companies strive to use performance evaluations of competitors to support their business operations and strategies and achieve competitive advantage and superior performance (Phornlaphatratrakorn, 2017).

Competitive advantage

Competitive advantage is the ability of an organization to perform in one or more ways that are difficult for competitors to imitate now and in the future (Kahreh, et al., 2011). Kahreh et al. (2011), in their research, said that the aspects that create competitive advantage include cost, quality, time, flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness. According to Wang (2014), competitive advantage is the result of using an enterprise's resources and capabilities in production and business activities, thereby creating superiority over competitors. Competitive advantage refers to a superior position compared to competitors in the market (Tsao, 2014). According to Tsao (2014), competitive advantage includes market differentiation, innovation, and cost leadership. Differentiation in the market is about establishing uniqueness in the market, innovation is about creating modern products that are attractive compared to competitors. Cost leadership characteristics are access to cheaper raw materials, achieving economies of scale, and applying recycling processes...

Business performance

Business performance is expressed through financial performance and non-financial performance. Murphy et al. (1996) stated that financial performance is the performance of an enterprise reflected through the implementation of several financial targets of the enterprise. Measuring performance from a financial perspective is still the most popular measurement method in research on corporate governance in general and accounting in particular (Hudson, 2001). Although a complete assessment of a company's financial performance must take into account many different types of measures, the most common performance measures used in the fields of finance and statistical inference are the financial ratios (Farah Naz et Al, 2016). Lau and Sholihin (2005) pointed out that many studies using financial results to reflect business performance stem from certain advantages such as objectivity and convenience. However, the financial aspect only partly reflects a business's performance. In many cases, the long-term survival and development of a business lie in customer satisfaction and the development of employee skillsor the improvement of internal management processes. Therefore, in modern management, measuring performance on non-financial aspects is increasingly focused on both theory and practice. Typically, the birth of the balanced scorecard model by Kaplan and Norton (1996) and the pyramid model by Lynch and Cross (1991). Cash flow, balance sheet, profit and loss, and capital changes can be the information base for business managers to make decisions. It is important to understand fundamental analysis and technical analysis, it is necessary to study finance to understand the financial behavior of companies through economics, financial management, and accounting (Didin Fatihudin, 2018).

RESEARCH MODEL

Research by Alsoboa and Alalaya (2015) showed that competitor accounting techniques significantly affect competitive advantage in Jordanian manufacturing companies. Besides, Usman and Bello (2019) conducted research on food and baking businesses in Kano, Jigawa, and Bauchi states of Nigeria, and the research results showed that all three techniques of accounting techniques Competitor accounting are used in these states, and competitor-focused accounting increases a business's competitiveness. Assessing competitors' costs is the first step of Competitor accounting. According to Phornlaphattrarakorn (2017), information about competitors' costs is important information that affects how a company establishes strategy and operations to gain a competitive advantage. Competitive position includes differentiated position and low-cost position (Li et al., 2009). Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017), in his research, showed that monitoring competitors' positions has a significant influence on marketing effectiveness, marketing capacity, and marketing performance. From there, it can be seen that monitoring the position of competitors contributes significantly to a business's competitive advantage. Hesford (2008) pointed out that evaluating competitor performance aims to estimate the competitor's costs and estimate the competitor's overall position and strength. Evaluate competitors' performance by monitoring competitors' financial statements, thereby increasing economic value, innovating product service quality, and increasing customer satisfaction. This assessment helps companies identify strategic activities to enhance competitive advantage Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017). Previous studies have shown that collecting and using competitor information helps businesses determine their strengths and weaknesses, and at the same time, when businesses have an understanding of their competitors. Competition will increase competitive advantage, so the author proposes the hypothesis:

H1a: Assessing competitors' costs positively affects an organization's competitive advantage.

H1b: Monitoring competitors' positions positively affects an organization's competitive advantage.

H1c: Evaluating competitors' performance positively affects an organization's competitive advantage.

Munizu's (2013) research results have shown that competitive advantage affects organizational performance compared to other factors. If the company has a competitive advantage, it will create conditions for the company to operate better than its current competitors. In addition, in another study, Majeed (2011) supported the positive influence between competitive advantage and organizational performance. Competitive advantage allows companies to differentiate themselves from competitors, improve company performance, and create added value for the company (Wang, 2014). Therefore, a company with a competitive advantage will be more efficient than other companies. Haseeb, M. et al (2019), argued that in the post-modern industrialization era, sustainable business performance is very important for success in a competitive environment and competitive advantage plays a role important for businesses to achieve sustainable performance. Therefore, the author proposes the hypothesis:

H2: Competitive advantage has a positive impact on organizational performance

In a study in Nigeria, Chiekezie (2014) showed that information about competitors is important in strategic decision-making. Knowing information about competitors is a prerequisite for success and achieving better performance compared to other competitors. In other words, it can be concluded that competitor accounting is a fundamental way to gain a competitive advantage that can affect the performance of the organization. Competitor-focused accounting is an essential ability to achieve competitive advantage, and competitive advantage is a reliable factor that creates business performance for businesses. Thapayom (2019) showed that competitor accounting affects the business performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia through competitive advantage. Lawrence et al (2020) examined the relationship between competitor accounting and the profitability of listed financial institutions in Nigeria, and the results showed that there is a positive relationship between competitors' cost assessments. Competitors, monitor competitive position and evaluate the effectiveness of competitors on business profits. ThankGod, I. (2022) found a positive relationship between competitor cost evaluation, competitor performance evaluation, and financial performance of Pabod Brewery in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the author proposes the hypothesis:

H3a: Assessing competitors' costs affects business performance through competitive advantage.

H3b: Monitoring competitors' positions affects business performance through competitive advantage.

H3c: Evaluatingperformanceeffectiveness that affects business performance through competitive advantage.

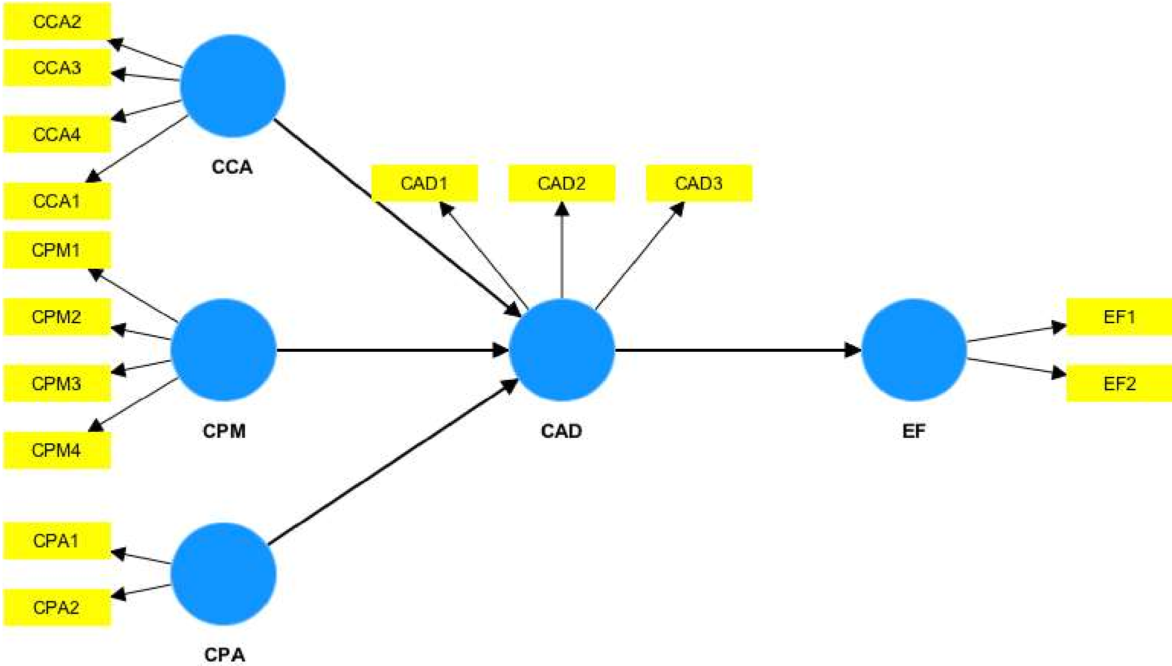

Figure 1. Proposed research model

The measurement scales of this study are inherited from Heinen and Hoffjan (2005), Hesford (2008), Wang (2014), Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017), and Thapayom (2019).

Table 1. Coded scale table

Scale	Code	Sources
Competitor Cost Assessment	**CCA**	Heinen and Hoffjan (2005)
Evaluating competitors' production activities	CCA1	Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017)
Evaluating competitors' production equipment	CCA2	Thapayom (2019)
Evaluating technology product design	CCA3	
Evaluating the relationships between stakeholders that affect costs	CCA4	

Competitor PositionMonitoring Monitoring sales trends Monitoring market share trends Monitoringcost trends Monitoring profit-to-sales ratio trends	**CPM** CPM1 CPM2 CPM3 CPM4	Drury (2018) Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017) Thapayom (2019)
Competitor Performance Appraisal Evaluating competitors' financial statements Analyzing competitors' financial trends	**CPA** CPA1 CPA2	Hesford (2008) Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017) Thapayom (2019)
Competitive Advantage Difference Innovation Cost leadership	**CAD** CAD1 CAD2 CAD3	Wang, 2014 Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017) Thapayom (2019)
Business performance Financial performance Non Financial performance	**EF** EF1 EF2	Hove et al. (2014)

METHODOLOGY

Implementation process

According to statistics from the Department of Overseas Labor Management under the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam, as of June 18, 2023, there were 424 companies licensed to operate in the field of labor export in Vietnam. The authors used the random sampling method to select 200 labor export enterprises in Vietnam and sent out survey questionnaires. Each business was sent 01 survey form and the respondents were business managers or chief accountants. The form of information collection is through Google form and sent to businesses via email and social networking applications. Questions in the survey applied a 5-level Likert scale: 1- Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5- Strongly agree. After screening the answer sheets, the number of votes that met the requirements for inclusion in the analysis was 186.

To research the impact of competitor accounting on business performance through competitive advantage as an intermediary, the author uses quantitative research, specifically applying the PLS–SEMmodel via SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 software. According to Henseler & Chin (2010), when applying PLS-SEM, the research model is evaluated through two steps: evaluating the measurement model and the structural model. First, the measurement model is evaluated by assessing the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement concepts in the model. Next, the structural model is evaluated through the determination coefficient R2, the path coefficient.

Description of the research sample

Of the total 186 businesses surveyed, there are 88 small and medium-sized enterprises with less than 100 employees, 74 large enterprises with 100-200 employees, and 24 enterprises with more than 200 employees. Regarding ownership form, 74 enterprises are private enterprises, 91 enterprises are joint-stock enterprises, and 21 enterprises are state-owned enterprises. Regarding the surveyed geographical area, there are 89 enterprises in the Northern region of Vietnam, 58 enterprises in the Central region of Vietnam, and 39 enterprises in the Southern region of Vietnam. Regarding the labor export market, 55 businesses only send Vietnamese workers to one country to work, and 131 businesses send Vietnamese workers to many countries to work.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Measurement model analysis

Hair and colleagues (2014) believe that the outer loading factor needs to be greater than or equal to 0.708, then the observed variable is evaluated as quality. According to the survey results, 15 observed variables all had loadings of more than 0.708, so all observed variables were considered to be of good quality.

Table 2: Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, Loading Factors, and Average Variance Extracted

Constructs	Item	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Outer loadings	AVE
Competitor Cost Assessment	CCA1	0.851	0.769	0.765	0.589
	CCA2			0.759	
	CCA3			0.779	
	CCA4			0.766	
Competitor PositionMonitoring	CPM1	0.874	0.816	0.877	0.636
	CPM2			0.733	
	CPM3			0.783	
	CPM4			0.789	
Competitor PositionMonitoring	CPA1	0.888	0.750	0.881	0.799
	CPA2			0.907	
Competitive Advantage	CAD1	0.847	0.729	0.870	0.649
	CAD2			0.772	
	CAD3			0.770	
Business performance	EF1	0.881	0.729	0.890	0.787
	EF2			0.884	

After the observed variables are evaluated to ensure quality, the author proceeds to evaluate the reliability of the scale. The reliability of the variables in the measurement model is evaluated through two main indicators: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Many researchers such as Hair et al (2010), and Bagozzi & Yi (1988) agree that 0.7 is an appropriate assessment threshold. The values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability in this study for Competitor Cost Assessment, Competitor Position Monitoring, Competitor Position Monitoring, Competitive Advantage, and Business Performanceare all higher than 0.7. Therefore, the study's measurement scales ensure reliability.

To evaluate convergence, the author relies on the average variance extracted index (AVE). Hock & Ringle (2010) believe that a scale has convergent validity if the AVE is 0.5 or higher. Analysis of the measurement model shows that the AVE values of Competitor Cost Assessment, Competitor Position Monitoring, Competitor Position Monitoring, Competitive Advantage, and Operational Efficiency are all greater than 0.5 (Table 2). Therefore, the convergence of the variables is accepted.

Next, the author used the Fornell-Larcker Criterion to test the discriminant validity of all measurement models. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend that discrimination is assured when the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is higher than all correlations between the latent variables. Table 3 shows that the square roots of the AVE values of all variables Competitor Cost Assessment, Competitor Position Monitoring, Competitor Position Monitoring, Competitive Advantage, and Performance are all higher than the correlation values between other constructs. Therefore, the discrimination between variables in the study is guaranteed.

Table 3.Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	CAD	CCA	CPA	CPM	EF
CAD	0.805				
CCA	0.495	0.767			
CPA	0.349	0.251	0.894		
CPM	0.304	0.291	0.570	0.797	
EF	0.535	0.459	0.333	0.177	0.887

With the HTMT index, Henseler and colleagues (2015) proposed that if this value is below 0.9, discriminant validity will be guaranteed. Table 4 shows that all HTMT indexes are less than 0.9. Therefore, all variables have discriminant values.

Table 4. HTMT index

	CAD	CCA	CPA	CPM	EF
CAD					
CCA	0.644				
CPA	0.465	0.331			
CPM	0.363	0.333	0.701		
EF	0.725	0.605	0.450	0.216	

Analyze structural models

Before conducting structural model analysis, the author checks and evaluates the multicollinearity phenomenon among the latent variables. According to Hair et al. (2019), if the VIF is 3 or more, the model has a very high possibility of multicollinearity. The analysis results show that the resulting VIF coefficients are all less than 3, so multicollinearity does not occur in the model (Table 5).

Table5. Inner VIF Values

	CAD	CCA	CPA	CPM	EF
CAD					1.000
CCA	1.105				

CPA	1.498				
CPM	1.533				
EF					

The results of the structural model analysis show that the P-Values of the effects (CAD -> EF, CCA -> CAD, CPA -> CAD) are all less than 0.05, so these effects are all meaningful statistically. Specifically, the results of PLS-Sem confirm that Competitor Cost Assessment has a positive impact on the competitive advantage of labor export enterprises in Vietnam (β=0.426, P<0.050), supporting hypothesis H1a. The results of PLS-Sem confirm that Competitor Performance Appraisal has a positive impact on the competitive advantage of labor export enterprises in Vietnam (β=0.206, P<0.050), supporting hypothesis H1b. The results of PLS-Sem confirm that competitive advantage has a positive impact on the performance of labor export enterprises in Vietnam (β=0.535, P<0.050), supporting hypothesis H2. Meanwhile, the P-value of the relationship between Competitor Position Monitoring and competitive advantage is 0.331 > 0.05, so this relationship is not statistically significant.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing, R2 and f2

Hypothesis	Beta	SD	T-Value	P-Value	R Square Adjusted	f	Result
CAD -> EF	0.535	0.057	9.366	0.000	0.282	0.401	Supported
CCA -> CAD	0.426	0.056	7.661	0.000	0.290	0.235	Supported
CPA -> CAD	0.206	0.071	2.898	0.004		0.041	Supported
CPM -> CAD	0.063	0.064	0.972	0.331		0.004	Unsupported

To evaluate the impact of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable in the SEM model, the author uses the adjusted R-squared index. The adjusted R-squared of CAD is 0.290, so the independent variables affecting it, including CCA and CPA, explain 29% of the variation (variance) of the CAD variable. The adjusted R-squared of EF was 0.282, meaning that the CAD variable explained 28.2% of the variation (variance) of EF. In addition, to evaluate the importance of the independent variable on the dependent variable, Cohen (1988) proposed the f-squared index. The f-squared index of CPA on CAD is 0.041, so this impact is considered small. The CCA variable has an average impact on CAD due to its f-squared equal to 0.235. Particularly, the importance of the CAD variable on the EF variable is considered to be great because the f-squared is equal to 0.401.

Intermediate variable analysis

The results of the study examined the relationship between Competitor Cost Assessment, Competitor Position Monitoring, and Competitor Performance Appraisal to operational efficiency through the intermediate variable of competitive advantage, these results are shown in Table 7. Results showed that there is a positive indirect effect from CCA to EF through competitive advantage used as an intermediary ((β=0.228, P<0.050), and there is a positive indirect effect The pole from CPA to EF through competitive advantage is used as the mediating role ((β=0.110, P<0.050). Particularly, the relationship between the CPM variable to EF through the mediating role of competitive advantage is not statistically significant (P = 0.341>0.050).

Table 7. Mediation Variable Analysis

Hypothesis	Beta	SD	T-Value	P-Value	Result
CCA -> CAD -> EF	0.228	0.040	5.637	0.000	Supported
CPM -> CAD -> EF	0.033	0.035	0.953	0.341	Unsupported
CPA -> CAD -> EF	0.110	0.041	2.682	0.007	Supported

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study showed that hypothesis H1a is accepted, meaning that evaluating competitors' costs positively affects the organization's competitive advantage. Evaluating competitors' costs will help companies understand their competitors' cost structures to make strategic decisions to increase the business's competitive advantage. This is consistent with the characteristics of the labor export industry, this is a specific industry with costs (market development costs, labor sourcing costs, brokerage costs...) that are regulated in Law 69/2020/QH14 on Vietnamese Workers working abroad under Contracts. This is consistent with the comments of Laseter, Heckel, & Huang (2017), who said that competitors' costs are information to compare businesses with direct competitors. The study conducted by Woodruff (1997) had results consistent with this study. Similarly, Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017) in his research also said that competitors' costs and competitive advantage have a positive relationship.

Hypothesis H1b is rejected, meaning that monitoring competitors' positions does not affect an organization's competitive advantage. For Vietnamese labor export enterprises, monitoring market share, monitoring competitors' revenue... does not affect competitive advantage, this can be explained by the characteristics of the industry. Each labor export market requires its operating license, so businesses often pay little attention to their competitors' market share. This result is consistent with the research results in small and medium enterprises in Indonesia by Riyan Harbi Valdiansyal and colleagues (2021). However contrary to the research results of Alsoboa and Alalaya (2015), who said that monitoring the position of competitors is useful information that creates a business's competitive advantage.The results of the study are also completely opposite to the views on monitoring competitive position of Simmonds (1986), Guilding et al. (2000), and Im & Workman (2004) in previous studies, who said that monitoring competitive position is a more comprehensive approach to evaluating competitors and increasing a business's competitive advantage.

Hypothesis H1c is accepted, meaning that the performance evaluation of competitors positively affects the organization's competitive advantage. Previous studies by Cadez & Guilding (2008), Hesford (2008), and Alsoboa & Alalaya (2015) had similar results to research results at labor export enterprises in Vietnam.This result is consistent with Chen's 2014 study, which said that evaluating competitors' performance prioritizes developing and increasing a business's competitive advantage. Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017) in his research also said that when a company uses information about competitors' performance, the business's activities are supported and the business strategy is achieved, at the same time.

Hypothesis H2 is accepted, meaning that competitive advantage positively impacts organizational performance. Tsao (2014) argued that competitive advantage creates product differentiation in the market and creates cost advantages for businesses. Companies with competitive advantages will improve operational efficiency, create added value, and develop sustainably in the future. Competitive advantage supports businesses to prevent them from being replaced by competitors and helps businesses maintain their operating goals (Chuang and Huang, 2015). This result is similar to K.Amoako – Gyampah et al. (2008),Sinaga's (2018) research on Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises,Crick et al. (2020) research wine production enterprises in New Zealand, and Ferreira's (2020) research results that demonstrated a positive relationship between competitive advantage and operational efficiency through the moderating role of business orientation.Regarding research conducted in Vietnam, the research results on the relationship between competitive advantage and performance of labor export enterprises are similar to the research of Dang, L. et al. (2021) at Vietnamese sugar companies.

Hypotheses H3a and H3c are accepted, meaning that the competitor's cost assessment and competitor's performance assessment positively affect organizational performance through the intermediate variable advantage. Information about competitors' costs and performance is used to predict competitors' actions, which is the basis for creating a business's competitive advantage. Competitive advantage will be one of the factors that help businesses achieve operational efficiency. This result is consistent with the study of Phornlaphatratrakorn (2017).

SOME SUGGESTIONS

The research results provide an information base to help labor export businesses in Vietnam improve their competitive advantage and achieve business performance. Based on the research results, the author offers the following opinions:

First, business administrators need to be aware of the important role of competitor accounting in providing information to help enhance the business's competitive advantage and help the business achieve operational efficiency. Administrators need to build and develop a competitor's accounting system and allocate reasonable resources for this system. Successful implementation of a competitor's accounting system helps administrators come up with useful activities and strategies to increase competitive advantage and achieve superior performance.

Second, competitor cost assessment and competitor performance assessment have been identified to have a positive impact on business performance through the mediating role of competitive advantage. Business administrators need to learn methods to collect information about the costs and performance of current and potential competitors. And use appropriate data analysis methods to obtain useful information to help administrators create competitive advantages for businesses.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted in 186 labor export enterprises in Vietnam, with the participation of managers and chief accountants, examining the impact of competitor accounting on business performance. The results showed that competitor cost assessment and competitor performance assessment were determined to have a positive impact on business performance through the mediating role of competitive advantage. Businesses that analyze competitors' costs and analyze competitors' performance will create conditions for businesses to improve their competitive advantage in the field of labor export. Competing with other businesses will create a premise to improve operational performance.

The limitation of the research is that it was conducted at labor export enterprises. Further research can expand the scope of businesses to have more extensive results. In addition, the research results are based on quantitative analysis with data collected via a Google form, there are no results of direct interviews with survey subjects to get comprehensive results. In addition, the research has not yet compared the level of use of competitor accounting information by business size, and type of business... to see the difference in the level of use of competitor's information and the influence of competitor accounting on operating performance vary between different businesses.

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