# Strategic leadership, strategic performance and core competencies in Lebanon's education

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## ABSTRACT

The study examines the relationship between strategic leadership, strategic performance, and core competence among teachers from Lebanon's educational sector. Using a sample size of 106 observations, with a convenient sampling method (quantitative), the results, which are attained using regression analysis, showed that core competence has a direct effect on strategic performance and strategic leadership. Conversely, strategic leadership has not shown its significant mediation role in effecting strategic performance through core competence. The examination of the data is performed using the mediation regression model. Other implications, limitations, and future works are further discussed.

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## 1.    Introduction

Most management experts and economists worldwide agree that businesses face a variety of challenges like technological, cognitive, changes in market trends, etc. In this volatile and dynamic environment, enterprises and companies seek to establish their existence, maintain their position in the market. To continue and prosper, have found no way to do so except in pursuing competitive advantages to achieve what they are aiming to.

This research is built on the principle of the importance of internal resources as the key sustainability toll, which create a competitive advantage to organizations. This principle indicates that a strong performance depends on managers 'capabilities to manage scarce and unique resources with fewer alternatives [1]. Therefore, they make sure that the key factors of strategy implementation are stable, which lead them to key sources of profitability [2]. It is the driving force for corporate survival, as it plays a crucial role in organizational growth and sustainability in the rapidly changing business environment.

Acquisitions and sustainability of competitive advantages are strongly related to the ability of the organization to identify, improve, and expand its core competencies, as well as the continuous development of new core competencies. Core competencies are important mechanisms that enable the organization to achieve its sustainable-competitive advantage by improving activities related to its products and services [3]. The concept of core competency has strategic implications. Organizations should work systematically in identifying and developing their core competencies for a sustainable competitive advantage [2]. One of the most modern theory regarding the competencies, is the competency-based competition, which considers core competencies as the main catalyst for sustainable advantage [4]. The modern concepts of competencies were firstly used by

researchers in management science in a series of articles published at Harvard University, focusing on concept of competencies as the true resources of competitive advantage [5].

Similar strategies are applied to the education sector, whereas all institutions are trying to accommodate different students' backgrounds, and at the same time to produce the best output (students) to the local, as well as to the global market. Hence, the main objective of the study is to examine the role of strategic leadership in developing strategic performance by developing the core competencies of private education institutions in Lebanon.

## 1.1. Significance of the research

Before further elaboration, it should be noted that the Lebanese government issued Law No. 150 of 2011 amending Decree No. 134 / Article 49, which lifted compulsory education to include the basic education stage. The fact that the official schools in Lebanon suffer from crises that threaten their continuity, competition has emerged to private educational institutions. It has intensified competition among themselves and began to seek excellence and competition in the provision of educational services.

It should be noted that the number of private schools was 1061 (a statistical bulletin issued by the Educational Center for the year 2015-2016). This number includes the total number of students which is 509,229 (Educational Center for the 2015-2016 academic year). Having in mind the data above, we find that the management of educational institutions face a real problem in building the long-term, positive and profitable relationship, in which these institutions will provide satisfaction if not delight to their customers to acquire customers' long-term loyalty. However, for this, each institution needs wise strategic decision making. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of utilizing core competencies and developing strategic performance through strategic leadership to solve the aforementioned problem. On the other hand, one of the obstacles to a competitive advantage in private educational institutions is the lack of consideration and attention to core competencies. Additionally, weak research that will stress the importance of such competencies. Finally, this work contributes not only to business performance, but to the strategic decision-making process that can be applied to education, and which is considered as the necessary input of the strategic decision-making process.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

## 2.1. Core competence

Researchers often agree on the basic and the fundamental concept of core competencies with slightly different perspectives. "Ref. [5]" define competencies as a range of skills, techniques, or technology that are limited in providing a benefit to clients as well as a strong capacity with greater impact. While [6] referring to things that the organization can do in a good way. "Ref. [7]" consider competencies as the basic activities and processes through which resources are employed and optimized for the competitive advantage of the enterprise in a way that other institutions cannot replicate them. "Ref. [8]" consider competencies as a focus related to resources used as a source of competitive advantage. Other definitions of intrinsic competence have been addressed by others [2] who considered competencies as the group of knowledge that characterizes the company and provide an advantage over others The ability of building and deploying core competencies between companies varies drastically, especially for the characteristic which they have. Core competencies can be changed from time to time differently [9]. Also, they should be unique, as well as flexible which could contribute positively to effective strategic decision making [10].

Some researchers argue that the core competencies with a competitive advantage and survival and growth of companies must be clear and constituted of the company's pool of resources. These resources are skills, technology, and operation activities that will enable them to deliver value to its customers by leveraging its resources efficiently and effectively while creating a competitive advantage over its competitors.

"Ref. [11]" identified core competencies in multiple characteristics, they refer to the essential means, which can ensure the survival of the institution in the long term. They described them as the main motive for the development of the final and essential services of the institution, by expressing it as unique resources and capabilities of the organization, produced through the combination of resources and skills of the institution. The results could be greater than the capacity of individuals and human resources in the organization. Additionally, they should be invisible to potential or real competitors, finally, be the basis for strategic options for the institution.

The factors and resources in the organization vary greatly and [7] it is difficult to determine where the core competencies exist. Duly, they have developed some indicators that can be guided, such as the critical competencies in critical success factors (good service, diversity ...), or any organizational level of the institution (senior management, level of operations ...), etc.

In terms of identifying core competencies, some researchers suggest using three strategies:

a) Increase the market scope in terms of accessibility b) create value and usefulness of contribution of final products/service c) genuine towards their competitors.

"Ref. [2]" emphasizes the relation between efficiency and core competencies by identifying some criteria, regarding the customer value (core competency should create significant perceived value for customers). "Ref. [6]" consider resources to be valuable when they have a competitive advantage. Others find that resources increase the organization's ability to exploit opportunities and avoid threats and create value for clients [8].

Regarding the distinction between competitors, companies try to reach an efficiency level, which results in superiority compared with competitors possess. In this context, companies find it hard to imitate valuable competencies [1].

We noted that the human capital diversity and diversity of other resources reflected are strongly related to core competencies.

The table below depicts the different dimensions of core competencies by different authors [12].

Table 1. Core competencies by others

| Source | Dimensions of core competencies |
|---|---|
| Sheikly and Al-Kubaisi, 2011 | Teamwork, Leadership, Empowerment, Communication, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Delivery of Results, Personal Effectiveness. |
| Altaie, 2007 | Leadership, Communication, Outstanding Implementation, Development, Creativity, Self-Management. |
| Armstrong, 2009 | Planning, organization, leadership, customer focus, communication, problem solving, development, creativity. |
| Naif, 2011 | Teamwork, Empowering Workers, Communicating and Influencing, Problem Solving and Decision Making. |
| Shlash & Khafaji, | Manpower, Facilities, Financial Knowledge, Marketing Knowledge, Systems, and Technology. |
| 2014 | Technological Capabilities, Marketing Capabilities, Organizational Capabilities. |

Based on the table above, most agreed on these dimensions (staff empowerment, creativity, user satisfaction, strategic leadership). In this study, though we will address internal factors (empowerment of employees, creativity), and strategic leadership will be a mediator in the development of strategic performance.

## 2.2. Strategic leadership

"Ref. [13]" define strategic leadership as a direction-setting, building, and implementing alternatives, monitoring the changing status of the organization's internal and external environmental factors, long-term planning, and strategic development based on its plans and objectives. It is also seen as "a set of decisions and actions that lead to the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of plans designed to achieve the organization's vision, mission, strategy, and strategic objectives in the management environment in which it operates" [14]. Similarly, [8] define strategic leadership as the ability to predict, control, and create the spirit of others for strategic.

In terms of education, [15] see strategic leadership as interdisciplinary as well as teacher management and helping educational institutions to cope with the rapidly increasing change in a globalized learning environment.

The world is experiencing rapid scientific progress, fierce competition, complex and diverse IT revolution that plays a big role today in the success of the global economy. One of the key milestones for being competitive is education. Its role is very significant in society's development [16]. It is because education is a part of human capital (HC), which is the catalyst and the main source of competitive advantage whose investment should not

be neglected. Along this line, ([17], [18]) argue that quality of education is reflected in human resources quality Therefore, astute leaders are the strategic leaders whose education and professional development can positively transform organisations and institutions ([19], [20], [21], [22], [23]) and make positive change [24] so that designed strategic vision will be more appealing to follow by their peers. In addition to cognitive leadership skills, strategic leaders need to possess the skills necessary to formulate and implement the strategy and the ability to manage change. It is worth mentioning that the leadership in organizations sometimes faces ambiguity in some of the key points of strategic leadership, like the lack of distinction between the theories of strategic leadership and supervisory theories of leadership. The theories of strategic leadership are concerned with the leadership of organizations, while the supervisory theories of leadership focus on leadership in organizations [25].

One of the points we find is the weakness of our current knowledge of strategic leadership because there are no complements between small and large views of leadership, poor communication between leadership scientists in organizational behavior, IQ psychology, and strategic management areas [25]. Therefore, we find some differences in terms and non-interrelated structures. Some scholars have attempted to suggest an integrative model that links the widely used leadership theories (vision, charisma, transformational leadership) and emerging leadership theories (individual differences of leadership, personality, cognitive factors, behavioral complexity) with the effectiveness of the strategy ([26], [27]) so that the model can provide an integrated framework for the responsibilities of strategic leaders, including self-leadership, the leadership of others, and leadership of the organization.

Other studies have highlighted the effectiveness of the role of management in shifting from ineffective or failed organizations to successful and effective organizations ([28], [29], [30]). Recent studies have shown the importance of having a good model of strategic leadership that can promote a strong behavioral environment, a strong motivation, and organizational culture that enhance positive changes [31]. Sometimes, though, they have to reassess the goals and values of the organization and empower staff to contribute to the application of creative thinking methodology [16].

Strategic leaders today have to know the best and most convenient ways to face the problem [16]. From the above, we conclude that the essence of strategic leadership is human and social capital management. Thus, the most important role for strategic leaders is the effective and efficient management of the company's resource portfolio [17]. Because it is necessary to organize them and put them in the right place [32].

*Strategic Leadership Features*

Strategic leadership differs from the concept of leadership from two aspects [33]. While leadership refers to leaders at any level of management in the organization, strategic leadership is related to leaders at the top of the organization. Additionally, there is a difference between leadership research and strategic leadership research. the first one examines the relationship between leaders and personnel while the strategic leadership research examines operational work, not only as an ordinary relationship but also as a strategic activity. In this context, [34] also mentioned a range of differences, such as the broad scope of strategic leadership, which extends beyond the scope of the commander's function. Rather it views the organization as an interconnected system, whereas the long-term goals of long-term strategic thinking are present while short-term goals are pursued. Finally, strategic leadership includes the organizational change in terms of change in roles, structures, public relations plans, and measurement standards in the organization.

*Characteristics of strategic leadership*

Most researchers have identified a set of characteristics of strategic leadership. For instance, [35] points out the personal characteristics of the strategic leader in terms of finding the way because strategic leadership is seeking to link the value system of the organization with its vision, mission, and environment, as well as solidarity between the organizational structure systems and processes to accomplish mission and vision, with personnel who is creative and have disruptive-positive thinking. "Ref. [26]" refer to three main points of the characteristics of strategic leadership: absorptive capacity, adaptability, and managerial wisdom. "Ref. [36]" sets other interesting attributes associated with a successful leader: aspiration, adaptation, attraction, firmness, power of personality, trust, association, efficiency.

*Strategic leadership challenges*

Many researchers believe that the formulation and implementation of the strategy require strategic leaders with certain qualities such as the ability to work efficiently in dynamic environment, dealing with complex

problems and various external and internal threats that affect the organization, processing information quickly and evaluating alternatives to make appropriate decisions. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that these challenges weaken the ability of the strategic leader to achieve the organization's strategic objectives. "Ref. [36]" points out that a range of such challenges may exist in regulatory actions between administrative levels and sometimes centralization that weakens workflow and ease of action. Among these challenges is the absence of a common understanding of the strategy which allows employees to follow their personal vision and develop personal criteria for success without following the leaders of the organizations. as a consequence, this leads to their focus on achieving the short-term goals, instead of the long term goals. This may be the result of the loss of a comprehensive perception that usually helps leaders to move from a job perspective to a broader institutional perspective, and from narrow institutional boundaries to the broaden ones.

### 2.3. Strategic performance

The theme of performance and performance management has been of interest to researchers from different backgrounds like psychologists, sociology, human engineering, economics, management. In general, the concept of strategic performance in companies and organizations played an important role due to the role of competitive advantage. According to [37] it is a difficult task, which takes longer than strategy formulation. "Ref. [38]" defined strategic performance as adaptation, response, and impact between the organization and its environment. Strategic operations are focusing on organizational health and performance to achieve operational standards, while management performance focuses on the performance health of individuals working in an organization. " [39]" noted that the strategic performance is linked to activities of individuals with the strategic objectives of the organization, which provide valuable and useful information top management decision making. On the other hand, [40] have explained that competitive advantage is a strategic goal and the core of the success or failure of the organization.

It is believed that a definition of strategic performance can be defined as enabling employees to understand and integrate into the organization's strategy and to become part of their behavior and performance, which ultimately leads to the flow of strategy to all parts of the organization. It leads to the ease and speed of achieving the strategic objectives and the process of monitoring, evaluation, and evaluation of performance.
"Ref. [39]" presents a model of strategic performance, the first part of which shows the attitudes, skills, and abilities of individuals, which are primary materials for performance. The second part of the model represents the organization's strategy.

We can conclude from this model that performance management and strategic processes are interrelated and complementary, any change, modification, or development on any component of this model is reflected in the rest of the elements and thus affect the final result. "Ref. [41] "states that success carries several faces that change according to time and company activity. "Ref. [42]" proposes a performance model in six dimensions. One dimension of performance is strategic outcomes (competitiveness and financial success), and the remaining four are determinants of the success of this strategy (quality, flexibility, resource use, innovation).
The limited capacity to measure effectiveness and results has led to the development of institutions' input and cost indicators (costs).
This traditional measurement of performance has been criticized for excluding non-financial dimensions [43] to measure the performance of the balanced scorecard (BSC) by measuring performance, a strategy evaluation system, and a communication tool, identified through several aspects [44]. The financial aspect (the tangible results of the strategy using traditional financial terms such as revenue growth, cost, cash flow, net operating income, etc.); the second aspect is the customer and the proposals adopted by the organization to satisfy its customers; and the internal business aspect, the latter is learning and growth as intangible assets such as the internal skills and capabilities necessary to support and create value.
The first step in the face of obstacles and difficulty in performance was to develop guidelines for leadership and support of the performance process, as well as the development and use of the performance model. The challenges and difficulties of strategic performance can be identified by the inability of the Department to manage change, the strategy is weak or ambiguous, the existence of guidelines or a model to guide the performance efforts, weak or insufficient information sharing, lack of accountability, and lack of clarity. Some researchers also added a set of challenges: time to implement, separation of planning and performance, the behavior of managers who prefer planning and development concepts on the analysis of performance-related needs.

*Conceptual framework and hypotheses development*

We assume core competencies as a multidimensional structure consisting of four dimensions: investing strategic capabilities, developing human capital, empowering workers, and creativity. We suggest that core competency is an important factor for strategic performance, that is, more core competency leads to higher levels of strategic performance. We proposed strategic performance as a multidimensional structure consisting of two dimensions: quality of services provided, and beneficiary satisfaction. Similarly, we examined the role of strategic leadership in influencing the relationship of core competence to strategic performance. Taking into consideration the above suggestions in terms of strategic performance, core competence, and strategic leadership, we see them as suitable to be applied and examine a relationship in the education sector. Thus, to understand these relationships, we propose the following hypotheses:

*H1: Core Competence has a positive effect on leadership that can lead to higher strategic performance.*
*H2: Strategic leadership has a significant mediation effect through core competence on strategic performance.*
*H3: Core competence has a direct and significant effect on strategic performance.*
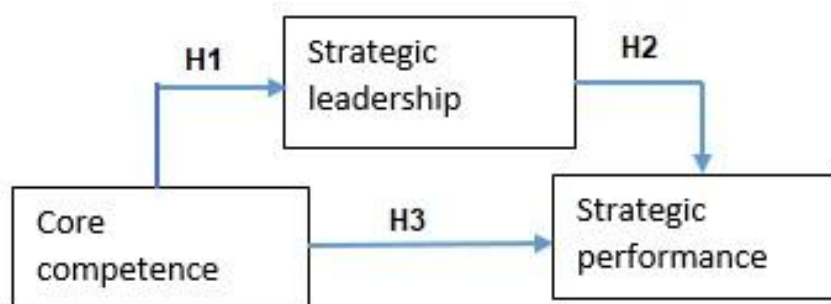
The following figure illustrates research hypotheses:



Figure 1. Hypothesized framework

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Data collection and sample size

For this study, there was a questionnaire used to obtain a sample size to be analyzed. The convenience method is employed. There were 145 questionnaires distributed. Out of this number, only 106 was appropriate (response rate as of 73%) for this analysis, which was the final sample size. The survey was conducted in paper form by sending it to the respondent's email or field delivery. The questionnaire was in Arabic. The proportion was male (60.4%). As for the academic qualification, (75.5%) obtained a university degree and a diploma, (14.2%) had a postgraduate degree, and (10.4%) had secondary education. Most of the participants were between the ages of (30 - 50) years. The largest proportion of participants have work experience of more than (6 years).
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### 3.2. Measurements

This study requires a multidimensional measure of core competence (independent variable), a measure of strategic performance, and a measure of strategic leadership. *Core competence* as a multidimensional structure consisting of four dimensions: (investment of strategic capabilities, human capital development, employee

empowerment, and creativity). Metrics measured in the five-point Likert scale format from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

It was also a *strategic performance variable (dependent variable)*, measured by a two-dimensional scale (the quality of services provided, the satisfaction of beneficiaries). Metrics measured in the five-point Likert scale format from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

As for the intermediate variable, *strategic leadership* (mediation-independent variable) was measured by a multidimensional scale based on four (strategic orientation, staff orientation, strategic oversight, organizational culture). The metrics measured in Likert scale format are from five points from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

## 4.    Results and discussion

### 4.1.  Reliability test

The elements of the scale were pre-tested to ensure their relevance, facial health, interpretation, and readability with academics. As a first step in the analysis of the scale, the internal reliability of the adapted scale was compared with the reliability of the evolutionary literature. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.92, loaded on the core 14 items from the questionnaire, which is acceptable and above 0.7 ([45], [46], [22]).

### 4.2.  Hypotheses testing results

The first hypothesis assumed that *core competence has a positive effect on leadership that can lead to higher strategic performance* (H1). In other words, to perform solidly in strategic academic/educational performance, teachers, in this case, should have solid core competence in the daily job they do.

On the other hand, the study assumed that strategic leadership could have a mediation effect which will be significant regarding the strategic performance of teachers, as the H2 was hypothesized as *strategic leadership has a significant mediation effect through core competence on strategic performance*. Lastly, the work hypothesized that *core competence has a direct and significant effect on strategic performance* (H3). This means that strategic performance can be higher even if strategic leadership is not involved if teachers possess at least one core competence such as creativity.

Hypothesized testing results are shown in the tables below.

Table 2. Model summary of the effect of core competence on strategic leadership

| OUTCOME VARIABLE:   StratLd | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Model Summary**

| R | R-sq | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.9932 | 0.9865 | 0.0061 | 7586.251 | 1 | 104 | 0.0000 |

**Model**

| | coeff | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| constant | 0.8377 | 0.035 | 23.9631 | 0.0000 | 0.7684 | 0.907 |
| CorCo | 0.8237 | 0.0095 | 87.0991 | 0.0000 | 0.805 | 0.8425 |

In overall, the Table 2 showed that the model is significant ($R=0.9932$; $R^2 = 0.9865$ with MSE=0.0061, and $p<0.001$) The path (direct model) represented by the linear regression model where the core competence has a

positive effect to strategic leadership was positive and statistically significant (*CorCo*=0.8237; *s.e.*=0.0095; *p*<0.001). These results *support H1*, confirming the effect of core competence to strategic leadership, which can have a positive relationship with strategic performance.

Table 3. Model summary: Mediation effect of strategic leadership

| OUTCOME VARIABLE: | StratPer | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Model Summary | | | | |
| *R* | *R-sq* | *MSE* | *F* | *df1* | *df2* | *p* | |
| 0.9807 | 0.9618 | 0.0106 | 1296.091 | 2 | 103 | 0.0000 | |

| Model | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *coeff* | | *se* | *t* | *p* | *LLCI* | *ULCI* |
| constant | 1.492 | | 0.1174 | 12.7101 | 0.0000 | 1.2592 | 1.7248 |
| CorCo | 0.4978 | | 0.1069 | 4.6549 | 0.0000 | 0.2857 | 0.7099 |
| StratLd | 0.1641 | | 0.1289 | 1.2727 | 0.206 | -0.0916 | 0.4198 |

Table 3 showed that the direct path (direct effect) from core competence to strategic leadership is positive and significant as showed earlier (*CorCo*=0.4978; *s.e.*=0.1069; *p*=0.0000), suggesting that teachers with higher core competence will strategically perform more than those without a high level of core competences. However, the direct path or direct effect of strategic leadership on strategic performance is not significant (*StratLd*=0.1641; se=1069; *t*=4.6549; *p*=0.0000), alluding that being a part of strategic leadership does not necessarily mean better strategic performance.

Total effect (Table 4) on strategic performance by core competence is positive and significant (H1) (*CorCo*=0.633; *s.e.*=0.1069; *t*=54.746; *p*=0.0000), where overall model is significant too (*R=0.9804; R² = 0.9612 with MSE=0.0107, and p<0.001*). These results suggest rejecting *H1*, because of the mediation effect of strategic leadership, although is positive, it is not significant. It means that strategic leadership is not always a way to perform strategically better. Or, teachers involved in strategic leadership do not necessarily perform better than the ones who are not part of it.

Table 4. Model summary: total effect of core competence on strategic performance

| OUTCOME VARIABLE: | Total effect model StratPer | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model Summary | | | | | | | |
| *R* | *R-sq* | *MSE* | *F* | *df1* | *df2* | *p* | |
| 0.9804 | 0.9612 | 0.0107 | 2575.219 | 1 | 104 | 0.0000 | |

| Model | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *coeff* | *se* | *t* | *p* | *LLCI* | *ULCI* | |
| constant | 1.6294 | 0.0461 | 35.3433 | 0.0000 | 1.538 | 1.7209 | |
| CorCo | 0.633 | 0.0125 | 50.7466 | 0.0000 | 0.6082 | 0.6577 | |

The Table 5 indicated that the total effect model of core competence on strategic performance is significant (*CorCo*=0.633; *se*=0.0125; *t*=50.75; *p*=0.0000) with confidence interval of 95%. Direct effect of core competence to strategic performance is also significant (*CorCo*=0.4978; *se*=0.1069; *t*=4.6549; *p*=0.0000) as shown in mediation effect table (Table2). Based on this, the study *accepts H3*, where the direct effect of core competence is significant regarding strategic performance.

The indirect path (effect) of strategic leadership on strategic performance (H2) is positive but not significant at 95% confidence interval (*e*=0.1352, *BootSE*=0.099; *BootLLCI*=-0.0515; *BootULCI*=0.338). These results suggest that strategic leadership in its aggregate (strategic orientation, staff orientation, strategic oversight, organizational culture) is positive but not significant in determining positive and higher strategic performance. Conversely, core competence with its dimensions (investment of strategic capabilities, human capital development, employee empowerment, and creativity) is the key to perform higher at the strategic level.

Table 5. Model summary: Total effects (direct and indirect)

| **TOTAL effect of X on Y** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Effect* | *se* | *t* | *p* | *LLCI* | *ULCI* | *c_ps* | *c_cs* |
| 0.633 | 0.0125 | 50.7466 | 0.0000 | 0.6082 | 0.6577 | 1.2128 | 0.9804 |

| **Direct effect of X on Y** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Effect* | **se** | **t** | **p** | **LLCI** | **ULCI** | **c'_ps** | **c'_cs** |
| 0.4978 | 0.1069 | 4.6549 | 0.0000 | 0.2857 | 0.7099 | 0.9538 | 0.771 |

| **Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Effect* | *BootSE* | *BootLLCI* | *BootULCI* |
| StratLd | 0.1352 | 0.099 | -0.0515 | 0.338 |

## 4.3. Discussion

Regarding strategic leadership, business performance and core competencies, there were different approaches of examining this relationships, which turned out to be very positive and effective when all these variables were related to education and stressed on entrepreneurial education ([50], [51], [54], [55]).). Others were related to entrepreneurial competencies, which are core for undertaking risk, being proactive and innovative ([52], [53]). Hence, this field of research and application of the set made of strategic leadership, core competencies and business performance is a bit different ([1], [2], [3], [4], [5]) from the current study and thus, the competitive advantage and sustainability [10] supposed to be differently measured, which is one of the future work possible. Therefore, we highlight the following implications of the study.

### 4.3.1. Practical implications

The study's outcome is twofold regarding the practicality that could be implemented in education. *Firstly,* being a member of strategic leadership does not necessarily guarantee an excellent strategic performance. *Strategic leadership dimensions*, such as strategic orientation, staff orientation, strategic oversight, organizational culture, should be benefiting to strategic members' team, however, apparently, they do not play a crucial role in performing better strategically. Given the circumstances that a member of the strategic team is close to much information that others will attain later on, still, it will directly depend on other practical things. *Secondly*, core competence has a direct influence on strategic performance. The education field is not different from the business field in terms of performance, because core competence dimensions play a vital role in creating values to organizations and institutions. Thus, for every educational institution, it is important to invest in people such us *strategic capabilities* that will pave the way to perform better. Employees' *empowerment* is also one of the crucial factors that will create *creativity* and commitment to institutions and

organizations. All of these are subject to investment in *human development*, from the personal to the professional development of each member of the institution.

### 4.3.2. Theoretical implications

From a theoretical point of view, the study contributes to the implementation of strategic leadership and strategic performance ([37], [38], [39]), as well as core competencies ([5], [7], [8]). It has a bit discrepancy regarding the mediation of the leadership, as used to be very important when it is related to business performance ([47], [48], [21], [22]), commitment [24]. However, this component yet to be examined in future works. This suggests that debate will continue to find out how leadership can be the real mediator in the performance of followers in education, as it was in higher education [47].

### 4.4. Limitations and future works

One of the limitations is the sample size attained for this study. Usually, leadership has influence and it influences its peers so that they can perform better ([20], [22], [24]). Thus he *future work* in the first place can be acquiring a bigger sample size that will have better results. Similar future work can be done with all school teachers are included, both from private and state schools, which will give perhaps different results than now. Additionally, it could be done on transformational leadership as the mediator or transactional. It might be a good comparison to see which leadership style is stronger in mediation.

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