Journal of Management and Economic Sciences Prospects | **Volume: 10 / N°: 01 (2026), p 629-647**

The impact of strategic intelligence on Competitive Advantage: The case of Algerian Foundation for Industrial and Technical Fabrics "EATIT"

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Received: 06/03/2026 *Accepted: 07/07/2026* *Published:30/07/2026*

Abstract: This study aims to highlight the relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage in the EATIT-Msila; by mobilising the descriptive approach to present the theoretical frameworks, the variables of the study and respond to the research problem. To collect the data, we used a questionnaire addressed to a sample of 30 employees of the company, formulated in 5 dimensions to measure strategic intelligence and 3 dimensions to measure competitive advantage. The collected data was analysed using SPSS statistical program used in social sciences and another SMARTPLS program to test and validate the research model. The results obtained confirm that there is a significant relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage in the company studied.

Keywords: Strategic intelligence; competitive advantage; EATIT-M'sila.
Jel Classification Codes : M21; L25; D83.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic intelligence (SI) is establishing itself as a principle of governance, both for public and private organisations, wrote Claude Revel, former interministerial delegate for economic intelligence in France, in 2014. The entire effectiveness of a public policy in strategic intelligence and its system is based on two fundamental points: (1) To be competitive and innovative is to be the best informed, the most influential and the best protected. It is developing a strategic vision to ensure the sustainability and development of what is and what will be; (2) strengthen and coordinate the actions of the different actors who form the "golden triangle"; administration, the academic and research world, business (GRIS G. d., 2015).

Given the important role that small and medium-sized businesses play in development, it is imperative that they strive to achieve excellence in their performance. The most important path to excellence is to have the right information at the right time, in good quality and at a controlled cost. These companies should transform their preventive activities into proactive ones. Especially since the acceleration of economic changes leads to an increase in demand for information, while the lifespan of products is shrinking, modern technologies are developing more and more rapidly and competition is intensifying in the context of a global market.

Strategic intelligence is one of the most important and modern systems that ensures not only companies maintain their position, but also increase their competitiveness, since information and knowledge are the most important resources which the company tries to access and use in order to achieve its goal, this allows it to maintain its position in a competitive market whose constant advantage is distinguished by change.

Despite the growing body of literature on strategic intelligence and competitive advantage, several gaps remain unresolved. First, previous studies have predominantly examined large organizations and multinational corporations, while limited attention has been devoted to small and medium-sized industrial enterprises operating in developing economies.

Second, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage in the Algerian industrial context remains scarce. Third, although strategic intelligence has been conceptualized through several dimensions, few studies have empirically validated its multidimensional effect on competitive advantage using structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Consequently, this study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating the influence of strategic intelligence on competitive advantage within EATIT-M'Sila.

Given the increasing environmental uncertainty and competitive pressures facing Algerian industrial firms, organizations are required to develop strategic capabilities that enable them to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. However, little empirical evidence exists regarding whether strategic intelligence contributes to competitive advantage in Algerian manufacturing companies. Therefore, the main research problem can be formulated as follows: **To what extent does strategic intelligence contribute to enhancing competitive advantage in EATIT-M'Sila?**

We will try to answer the following secondary questions in this paper:

1.Is there an awareness of the importance of implementing strategic intelligence in EATIT - Msila?;

2.Is there an awareness of the importance of achieving competitive advantage in EATIT - Msila?;

3.Is there a significant relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage at EATIT in Msila?;

Hypotheses :

- Strategic monitoring positively affects competitive advantage.
- Strategic participation positively affects competitive advantage.
- Strategic perception positively affects competitive advantage.
- Systematic thinking positively affects competitive advantage.
- Strategic vision positively affects competitive advantage.

The importance of the study: The great interest that small and medium-sized businesses arouse in the Algerian public authorities and their quest to rehabilitate productive systems towards excellence;

The importance of the subject in the face of massive expansion in the field of access to information and means of communication. The scarcity of studies dealing with the subject of strategic intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses.

The objectives of the study: To highlight a certain number of managerial concepts that have become attractive to researchers in the field of business administration, in particular: strategic intelligence, competitive advantages, Also highlight the impact of the above concepts on the performance of small and medium-sized businesses and submit proposals to develop strategic intelligence for managers working in small and medium-sized businesses.

Research methodology: In this research, we use the descriptive approach, and a questionnaire is designed and distributed to employees of the company studied; To answer the questions, concepts on strategic intelligence will be analysed before moving on to the presentation of concepts on competitive advantage. Then we present the chosen methodology and analysis procedures, and finally we present the results and its discussion.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES:

In this section, we will establish a literature review of strategic intelligence and competitive advantage by mobilizing several theoretical frameworks and models.

1. Strategic Intelligence: The analysis of the strategic intelligence literature allowed us to define the concept and identify the axes of the Marshall Plan 4.0 linked to this concept.

A. Strategic Intelligence: Strategic Intelligence is a mode of governance based on the control and protection of strategic and relevant information, on the potential for influence, essential to all economic actors keen to proactively participate in development and innovation, by building a sustainable distinctive advantage in a hyper-competitive and turbulent environment (Press, 2025).

Etymologically, intelligence refers to the ability to make connections to transform information into actionable knowledge for strategic purposes.

The notion of Strategic Intelligence was born in military circles where relevant information is of paramount importance in times of war. Strategic Intelligence is therefore a process of managing information as a strategic source to anticipate changes in the environment and seize the best opportunities in time while measuring risks. It is a multidisciplinary approach based on 3 fundamental pillars: monitoring, protection and influence (Press, 2025):

- **Monitoring**: Organised and recurring process aimed at collecting information, analyzing it then disseminating it to the actors concerned whether they are within the same structure or not;

- **Protection**: Set of methods which make it possible to protect the tangible and intangible assets of an economic actor on a daily basis;

- **Influence**: Long-term actions (lobbying, advertising...), carried out by an economic actor, which aim to seek the support of key players in its environment (public institutions or other stakeholders).

It is about having the tools that make it possible to improve representations of reality, to acquire knowledge and to understand the forces and relationships that condition the environment of an organisation in time and space, in order to design and carry out its strategy, that is to say define and acquire its objectives with the greatest probability of success (strat, 2025);

For any organisation, in addition to acquiring information, processing it and managing – distributing knowledge, it is also about classifying and securing information and being able to manage reputation and influence (strat, 2025).

B. The axes of the Marshall Plan 4.0 and strategic intelligence

The interaction of the three pillars which form the concept of strategic intelligence (monitoring, influence, protection) and the transversal reading of the axes of the Marshall Plan 4.0 shed interesting light on the development of a public policy in IS in the region of Wallonia (Belgium) established in 2006. The policy aims to develop the ability to be informed, to understand one's environment and to decide on one's strategy and to

improve the capacity to define a reason for being, which ensures the sustainability and flourishing of what is and what will be (GRIS G. d., 2015);

Human capital, particularly knowledge and know-how, forms the intangible capital of a company and requires increasing attention in the context of innovation and competitiveness and therefore attention in terms of protection. The organisation of an awareness and orientation information service uses monitoring techniques based, among other things, on the multi-partner network, open to the company. Innovation policy involves renewing the strategy of competitiveness clusters and their industrial development. Interest in this economic, scientific and industrial potential of the region requires the taking of protective measures against economic and industrial espionage and requires the development of influence programs to promote the creation of markets. These measures aim to support business innovation, at national and international level. The development of infrastructures, particularly in the communications sector, raises the question of their criticality and the level of protection that must be ensured. The attractiveness and competitiveness of the Walloon territory are at stake, which must be supported by influence practices (GRIS G. d., 2015);

Supporting the competitiveness of businesses through the energy transition recalls the interest in critical infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector, and the resilience policy attached to it. Support for change in digital innovation will be ensured, among other things, by a managerial approach to controlling and protecting relevant strategic information. The development of "extreme digitalisation of economic and productive exchanges in a global and connected system" cannot take place without a policy of protection of sensitive information... (GRIS G. d., 30 septembre 2015);

The control and protection of relevant strategic information for the benefit of all economic players - strategic intelligence – remains, in our opinion, the appropriate system to evolve in the spirit of the Marshall Plan (GRIS G. d., 2015).

2. Competitive Advantage

After this definition of strategic intelligence, we address the concept of competitive advantage, its context, its links with generic strategies, and the relationship with the Internet and information.

A. The context of competitive advantage

The imperatives of competitive advantage constitute a state of mind that should be present in all companies. Indeed, the actions required to create and maintain a competitive advantage are unnatural acts. Stability is valued in most companies, to the detriment of change. Protecting old ideas and techniques becomes a central concern instead of creating new ones! They (Porter, 1990);

The long-term challenge for any business is to put itself in the position where it is most likely to perceive, and best able to meet the imperatives of competitive advantage. One of the challenges is exposing a business to new markets and technology opportunities that can be difficult to seize. Another prepares for change by improving and developing employee skills and improving the company's scientific and knowledge base. Ultimately, the most important challenge is overcoming inertia to act on new opportunities and circumstances (Porter, 1990);

The challenge of action ultimately falls on the company manager. Much attention has been paid to the importance of visionary leaders in achieving unusual organisational success. But where does a leader develop the vision and how is it delivered in a way that produces organisational accomplishment? Great leaders are influenced by the environment in which they work. Innovation emerges because the family environment stimulates it. Innovation succeeds because the home environment supports it. The right environment not only shapes a leader's own perceptions and priorities, but provides the catalyst that allows the leader to overcome inertia and produce organisational change (Porter, 1990);

Great leaders stand out in different industries and countries, in part because national circumstances attract and encourage them. Consumer electronics visionaries are concentrated in Japan, chemicals and

pharmaceuticals in Germany and Switzerland, and computers in America. Leadership is important to any success story, but is not in itself sufficient to explain such successes. In many industries, the domestic environment provides the affected country with a distinct advantage over their foreign competitors. Leadership often determines which particular business(ies) exploit this advantage (Porter, 1990);

More broadly, a company's ability to innovate depends a lot on the environment to which it is exposed, the sources of information available to it and the types of challenges it faces. The search for comfortable customer relationships only reinforces past behaviors. Maintaining suppliers degrades a source of stimulation, assistance and insight. Lobbying against strict product standards sends the wrong signal to an organisation about standards and aspirations (Porter, 1990).

B. The link with generic strategies

In Competitive Strategy, the concept of generic strategies was introduced: cost dominance, differentiation and concentration to represent strategic positions in an industry. Generic strategies remain useful for characterising strategic positions at the simplest and broadest level. Vanguard, for example, is an example of a cost containment strategy, while Ikea, along with its select group of customers, is an example of cost dominance. Neutrogena is a targeted differentiator. The basics for positioning – varieties, needs and access – take the understanding of these generic strategies to a greater level of specificity. Both Southwest and Ikea's strategies are cost-oriented, but Ikea's objective is based on the needs of a group of customers, and Southwest is based on an individual's offering (Porter, 1996).

C. Internet and Competitive Advantage

If profitability is under pressure in many sectors invented by the Internet, it becomes all the more important for individual companies to stand out to be more profitable than others. The only way to achieve this is to gain a sustainable competitive advantage, by operating at a lower cost, charging a higher price, or doing both. Cost and price benefits can be achieved in two ways. One is operational efficiency by performing the same

actions as competitors but doing them better. Operational efficiency benefits can take a multitude of forms, including through better technologies, superior inputs, better trained people or a more efficient management structure. The other way to gain an advantage is strategic positioning – doing things differently from competitors, in a way that provides a unique type of value to customers. This may mean offering a different set of features, a different range of services or different logistics arrangements. The internet affects operational efficiency and strategic positioning in very different ways. It makes it more difficult for companies to maintain operational advantages, but it opens up new opportunities to achieve or strengthen a distinctive strategic positioning (Porter, 2001).

Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between strategic intelligence and organizational performance.

Maccoby (2020) found that strategic intelligence significantly enhances organizational adaptability and long-term competitiveness.

Calof and Sewdass (2020) demonstrated that strategic intelligence practices improve strategic decision-making and organizational innovation.

Du Toit (2021) confirmed that competitive intelligence contributes directly to sustainable competitive advantage.

Alnoukari (2022) reported that strategic intelligence capabilities positively influence organizational resilience and business performance.

Shujahat et al. (2023) emphasized that knowledge management and strategic intelligence jointly improve firms' competitive capabilities.

Despite these contributions, few studies have examined these relationships in the Algerian industrial sector using PLS-SEM, which justifies the present study.

3. METHOD AND PROCEDURES:

After exposing the research methodology adopted in this paper, we will present in the third section the results of testing hypotheses in the EATIT-M'sila company and their discussion.

1. The research field and data collection procedures

In this section we will present the company studied which is EATIT-M'sila: the location of the Complex, the organisational structure of the

complex, the activities of the complex at the local and international level, and finally the data collection procedures.

A. Presentation of the company studied

The idea of creating the industrial fabrics company Complexe M'sila comes from a strategy followed by the government in order to revive the national economy, after many years of operation due to the economic conditions in which the country lived.

The government's first step to set up this Complex dates back to 1979 by carrying out production stages of 4,500 tonnes per year, or 1,500,500 linear meters. Indeed, the beginning was with the decision of the Minister of Industry and Energy to include a special program for Sétif in 1971. But after the new administrative division of the wilayas 1975/1974 which resulted in the birth of the wilaya of Msila, this project was assigned to this wilaya by a contract dated: 13/11/1975 and a total area of approximately 329,800 square meters, of which 65,561 square meters are built. Work began on 04/11/1977 and ended in 1979. The actual entry of production took place on 01/12/1980, and the company operated according to a continuous work system.

- **The location of the Complex**

The Complex is located in the industrial zone of Msila, on the south side of the city bounded to the north by the National Company for Building, on the side by Sonatrak, on the south side by the National Iron and Cement Corporation, and on the west side by 160 houses. The Complex's working system is based on the following activities: spinning, weaving, supplement.

Table 01: The total number of workers

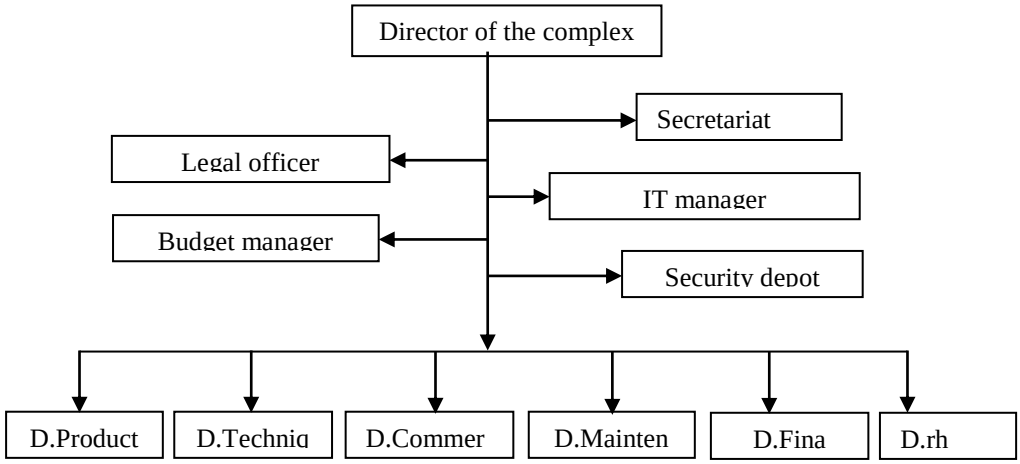
Type Workers	Number
Permanent Permanent	216
Retirees	349
Assisted contract workers	6
Total	**571**

Source: Company Documents

B. The organisational structure of the complex

The main mission of this company is to produce industrial fabrics with the objective of implementing the production program carried out each year with physical, financial and human resources. The organisational structure of the complex can be presented as follows:

Figure number 01: The organisational structure of the complex



Source: Institutional Files

The organisation chart includes several departments:

Administrative department: it takes care of improving the organisation and the well-being of workers. It includes: the personnel and training department (14 workers), the general resources department (30 workers), the social affairs department (6 workers), the accounting and finance department (9 workers), the technical management (14 employees), the Inventory Management and Purchasing Department (44 employees);

The wire department: this department employs: 99 workers, including 16 permanent workers, 80 subcontractors and 3 employees under assisted contracts. The total spindle is 29376 spindles and the spinning department is done in several stages;

The textile department: The textile department employs 128 workers, including 32 permanent workers, 93 subcontractors and 3 under subsidized contracts;

Supplements Department: The Supplements Department has 35 employees, including 16 permanent and 29 contract;

Quality and Control Department: This section specializes in quality control of all products. It employs 29 employees, including 13 permanent and 15 subcontractors and one worker under subsidized contracts;

Retail and sewing department: 52 workers work in this section, including 28 permanent and 30 contract workers and 4 workers under supported contracts. This section specializes in making tents of all kinds, umbrellas, water basins and truck tarpaulins... ;

Maintenance Department: 55 employees work in this section including 30 permanent, 24 contract and 1 under supported contracts. This section takes care of the continuous monitoring and maintenance of machines from mechanical and electrical aspects;

• Complex activities locally and internationally

Since its creation, this company has contributed to dealing with natural disasters in Algeria: the earthquake, the disasters of Skikda, Tamanrasset, Kasbah, Bab El Oued; Beni Werthlan, and finally the Boumerdès earthquake. The company has also worked in solidarity operations carried out by the Algerian state towards brotherly and friendly countries, for example the earthquake in Iran, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Mali...

2. Study Procedures

To test the study's hypotheses, the questionnaire was designed in two axes: the first concerns strategic intelligence and the second is linked to competitive advantage. The measurement scale used is five points, and the questionnaire was distributed to a sample of employees of the company studied, the number of whom reached 30 employees.

In order to measure the presence of the dimensions of strategic intelligence and competitiveness from the point of view of the members of the study sample and after collecting the data, they were processed using SPSS and Smart software -PLS. Firstly, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to check the stability of the measuring tool used. Before carrying out the necessary tests, it was verified that the data follows a normal distribution.

The stability of the study tool was verified, by analysing the nature of the data distribution, before moving on to the parametric hypothesis test: the student test and the Pearson correlation test as follows:

Table 02: stability of strategic intelligence

Dimensions	motiv	Par	per	sys	vis	total
Number of elements	5	5	6	6	5	27
Cronbach's Alpha	0,73	0,73	0,81	0,86	0,86	0,93

Source: SPSS program outputs

Given these results, we find that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (stability coefficient) for all dimensions of strategic intelligence varies between 0.730 and 0.86. We consider that the homogeneity of the measuring tool is satisfactory since the value of the coefficient is less than or equal to 0.70. This leads us to say that there is a strong correlation and stability between the items on the strategic intelligence measurement scale. We also confirm that the overall stability coefficient of the dimensions, which represents the total stability of the variable, is 0.93 which reflects that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is acceptable ($0.6 \leq \alpha \geq 0.93$) .

Table 03: stability of competitive advantage

Dimensions	Quality	cost	Concentration	Total
Number of elements	7	4	3	14
Cronbach's Alpha	0,73	0,78	0,91	0,89

Source: SPSS Program Outputs

According to the results of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test of the dimensions of competitive advantage, it appears that its value varies between 0.73 and 0.91; and it is considered excellent. This leads us to say that there is a strong correlation and stability between all the items of the competitive advantage variable, because we also note that the overall stability coefficient of the dimensions, which represents the total stability of the dependent variable, is 0.890 which reflects that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is acceptable ($0.6 \leq \alpha \geq 0.93$). After the stability test of the measuring tool, we move on to the normality test in the following steps.

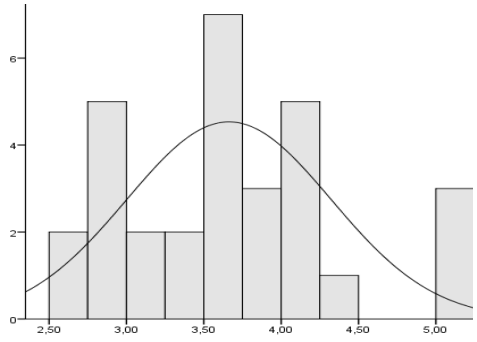
Table 04: Normality tests

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	ddl	Sig	Statistique	ddl	Sig
Strategic Intelligence	0,102	30	0,200*	,937	30	0,076
Competitive Advantage	0,105	30	0,200*	,970	30	0,533

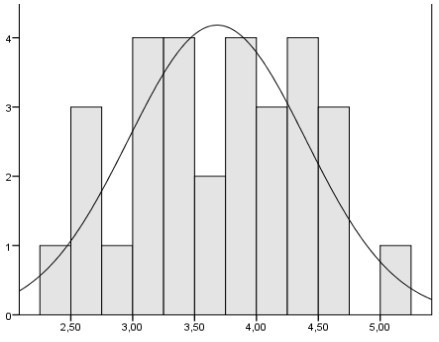
Source: SPSS Program Outputs

Figure 02: Normality tests

Strategic Intelligence



Competitive Advantage



Source: SPSS Program Outputs

Through this series of results, we see that the value of GIS exceeds 5, which confirms that the data follows a normal distribution in relation to the axis of strategic intelligence and competitive advantage. Accordingly, it is possible to rely on parametric tests to confirm the study hypotheses as follows:

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

- **Implementation of Strategic Intelligence :**

Employees apply the concept of strategic intelligence and competitive advantage in EATIT - Msila;

Table 05: student test

Variables	M	Test value= 3					
		T	ddl	Sig.	Mean difference	Confidence interval 95% of the difference	
Strategic int	3,6	5,49	29	0,00	0,66	0,41	0,90
Competitive adv	3,6	5,22	29	0,00	0,68	0,41	0,94

Source: SPSS program outputs

The table above refers to the Student test, which shows that the GIS value in the strategic intelligence and competitiveness axes is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be inferred that strategic intelligence dimensions and competitiveness dimensions are available.

- **Relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage:**

There is a positive correlation between strategic intelligence and advantage in the EATIT in Msila;

Table 06: Summary of models

R	R-two	R-two adjusted	Standard estimation error
0,794[a]	0,631	0,551	0,48693

Source: SPSS program outputs

The table above shows the value of the correlation coefficient between strategic intelligence and competitiveness at the company EATIT – M'sila, which amounts to 0.794, and this indicates a strong direct correlation between the two variables. On the other hand, we find that the coefficient of determination, which represents the square of the correlation coefficient, is estimated at 0.631, that is, 63.1% of the observed variance, which reflects an excellent percentage. Accordingly, it can be said that there is a relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage in the EATIT M'sila company.

- **The relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage:** is statistically significant in the EATIT in Msila.

Table 07: ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	ddl	Average of squares	D	Sig.
Regression	9,319	5	1,864	7,861	0,000[b]
Residue	5,453	23	,237		
Total	14,772	28			

Source: SPSS program outputs

In this table, the results of the ANOVA correlation coefficient show the significance of the correlation. It should be noted that the Sig level was less than 5% with a value of 0.05 and this proves that the correlation shown in table (06) is a statistically significant correlation due to the existence of a

relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage and not other factors.

- **Testing the study model**

The quality of the model is assessed by analysing the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the studied model based on the results of the SMART PLS program, as follows:

A. Reliability and Validity of the model

In order to measure the validity of the model, we relied on the composite reliability coefficient and the average variance extracted, as well as on the saturation coefficients obtained from the outputs of the SMART PLS program as follows:

Table 08: Reliability and Validity of the Built

Variables	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted "AVE"
Competitiveness	0.897	0.894	0.396
motiv	0.880	0.896	0.595
par	0.952	0.875	0.593
per	0.811	0.832	0.509
sys	0.733	0.816	0.477
vis	0.859	0.859	0.509

Source: SMART PLS program outputs

The measurement model was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR), rho_A, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results indicate that all constructs achieved satisfactory Composite Reliability values (>0.70), demonstrating acceptable internal consistency.

Regarding convergent validity, the dimensions of strategic intelligence satisfied the recommended threshold of AVE ≥ 0.50. However, the Competitive Advantage construct recorded an AVE value of 0.396, which is below the recommended threshold proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

This result indicates that convergent validity for the Competitive Advantage construct is not fully established, suggesting that some measurement items do not adequately explain the latent construct. Consequently, additional purification procedures should be conducted by removing indicators with low factor loadings or revising the measurement

scale before confirming the validity of the construct. Therefore, the convergent validity of the measurement model should be interpreted with caution.

B. Discriminatory Validity

The results of Discriminant Validity are as follows:

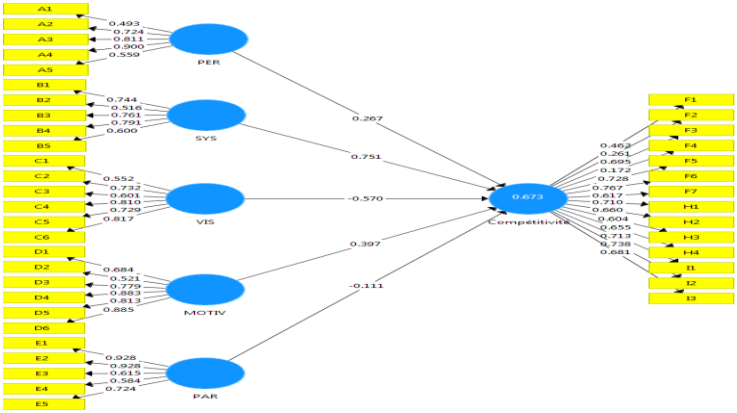
Table 09: Discriminatory Validity

Variables	competitive	Motiv	par	Per	sys	vis
Competitiveness	0.629					
motiv	0.641	0.771				
par	0.413	0.520	0.770			
per	0.720	0.613	0.428	0.714		
sys	0.703	0.728	0.601	0.777	0.691	
vis	0.449	0.718	0.436	0.573	0.838	0.714

Source: SMART PLS program outputs

It appears from the table above that the DV discriminant validity coefficients are significant and statistically acceptable for the variables, because it turns out that each variable is distinct from the other, that is to say that the variable represents itself more than it represents the rest of the variables, which indicates the difference between the latent variables and that there is no interaction between them. Thus, the discriminant validity of the study tool is achieved.

Figure 03: A structural model of the relationship



Source: SMART PLS program outputs

4. CONCLUSION

After presenting the theoretical frameworks of the study, through which we tried to highlight the concepts of strategic intelligence and competitive advantage and their relationship to strategic thinking, a questionnaire with 5 dimensions was developed to measure the concept of strategic intelligence and competitive advantage. The hypothesis testing results based on the data collected by this questionnaire are as follows:

- The EATIT-M'sila company applies the concept of strategic intelligence in its 5 dimensions;
- The EATIT-M'sila company applies the concept of competitive advantage in its 3 dimensions;
- There is a statistically significant relationship between strategic intelligence and competitive advantage in the EATIT-M'sila company;
- The measurement model adopted in the study is of high quality, because the latent variables differ and there is no overlap between them, which actually achieves the discriminative validity of the study tool, and this allows it to be used in subsequent studies.

The assessment of the measurement model demonstrated acceptable reliability and discriminant validity. Nevertheless, convergent validity was not fully achieved for the Competitive Advantage construct because its AVE value (0.396) was below the recommended threshold of 0.50. Accordingly, future research should refine the measurement scale by eliminating weak indicators and reassessing the model using a larger sample.

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