The Impact of Strategic Agility on Achieving Competitive Advantage

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Abstract

This research explores the impact of strategic agility on achieving a competitive advantage within Egypt's banking sector. To successfully navigate market changes, regulatory challenges, and technological disruptions, banks must foster strategic agility in the rapidly evolving financial landscape. The analysis employs dynamic capabilities theory and the resource-based view (RBV) to examine how these agility factors enhance sustainable competitiveness.

The findings indicate that a bank's ability to reallocate its financial, technological, and human resources effectively is enhanced by resource fluidity, allowing greater flexibility. Strategic sensitivity, which is facilitated by proactive decision-making and real-time market insight, strengthens banks' ability to anticipate new opportunities and risks. Moreover, cohesive leadership fosters coordinated decision-making, ensuring the successful implementation of strategies derived from agility. The report recommends that Egyptian banks focus on investing in data analytics, enhancing financial flexibility, and adopting a collaborative approach to leadership to maintain their competitive advantage. Additionally, regulatory bodies should promote flexible banking practices that safeguard financial stability while fostering innovation.

Future research must explore how digital transformation influences the long-term impact of agility on financial performance through longitudinal studies. This study contributes to the strategic management literature by situating competitive advantage within an emerging market context and offering valuable insights for banking leaders and policymakers.

***Keywords**: Strategic Agility, Resource Fluidity, Strategic Sensitivity, Leadership Unity, Competitive Advantages, Egyptian Banking Sector, Dynamic Capabilities, Resource-Based View.*

Introduction

In today's world, banks operate in an environment defined by uncertainty, rapid change, and complexity (Soltaninezhad et al., 2021). As they expand globally and increasingly rely on international suppliers and clients, they must adopt innovative approaches to managing intricate supply chains, which are subject to heightened scrutiny (Alfalla-Luque, Machuca, & Marin-Garcia, 2018). To adapt to these shifts, banks need strategies that enhance agility and flexibility, enabling them to address challenges such as technological advancements, evolving customer expectations, economic volatility, and changing government regulations. Maintaining a competitive edge requires a strong focus on innovation, service excellence, and reliable delivery while effectively managing environmental uncertainties (Farida & Setiawan, 2022).

As competition intensifies within the Egyptian banking sector, banks are implementing various strategies to expand or, at the very least, sustain their market share. By strengthening their competitive advantage (CA), they can effectively secure their position against rivals. However, achieving strategic agility in today's dynamic

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environment remains a significant challenge, with many organizations struggling to attain or maintain it. Some firms, despite experiencing initial growth or successful acquisitions, may lose agility over time as they prioritize expansion and success while overlooking the need for continuous flexibility. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to consistently monitor and evaluate their strategic agility as a dynamic capability to ensure they remain adaptable and responsive. This approach aligns with resource-based perspectives, emphasizing agility's role in sustaining a competitive edge (Amini & Rahmani, 2023).

Traditionally, banks focused on establishing long-term, defensible competitive advantages. However, in today's landscape-shaped by globalization, technological advancements, shorter product life cycles, and evolving customer expectations-predicting market changes has become increasingly difficult (Amini & Rahmani, 2023). Consequently, strategies must be agile and adaptable to maintain competitiveness (Salih & Alnaji, 2014). Over the past few decades, Egypt's banking sector has transformed in response to growing competition, with banks intensifying efforts to expand or retain their market share. Yet, achieving strategic agility remains a challenge for many organizations, including banks, as it requires continuous monitoring, assessment, and adaptation to ensure flexibility and responsiveness. Organizations often lose agility as they focus excessively on growth and short-term success at the expense of adaptability (Amini & Rahmani, 2023). Recognizing strategic agility as a dynamic capability is essential, aligning with the resource-based view, which underscores constant adaptation as a key driver of CA (Khoshnood & Nematizadeh, 2017).

Agility-the ability to respond swiftly and effectively to changes in the business environment-has become a vital source of competitive advantage (Diete-Spiff & Olori, 2021). Among its various forms, strategic agility has gained significant attention for its role in helping companies shift strategic direction, introduce innovative products and services, and adopt new business models to capitalize on market opportunities (Alhosseiny, 2023). Strategic agility has become an indispensable resource for banks, enabling them to remain competitive by quickly adapting to evolving market conditions. It is defined as a firm's ability to embrace and implement new, innovative ideas to develop products, services, and business models efficiently (Diete-Spiff & Olori, 2021). Achieving strategic agility requires both an internal focus-building essential competencies-and an external focus-seizing emerging opportunities (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020).

The modern business environment is evolving at an unprecedented pace due to globalization, technological advancements, shorter product life cycles, and changing customer demands, making market conditions increasingly unpredictable. Agility, which refers to the ability to respond and adapt swiftly and effectively to unexpected changes, has become a critical source of competitive advantage (Alhosseiny, 2023). This need for agility is more pressing than ever, as environmental shifts now occur at a faster and more complex rate than in the past. Among the different types of agility, strategic agility has emerged as a key focus of recent research. In the 21st century, organizations must proactively monitor and anticipate market shifts to remain competitive (Nkuda, 2017).

To stay ahead, businesses must align their products and services with customer demands while, at times, actively shaping market needs-an approach that heavily relies on strategic agility. Ultimately, strategic agility enables companies to develop an internal perspective for building necessary competencies while simultaneously leveraging external opportunities created by change (Amini & Rahmani, 2023). According to Fouad et al. (2022), the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) launched a reform program in 2004 to enhance the efficiency of the Egyptian banking sector. This initiative aimed to establish a robust infrastructure and create a more resilient and efficient banking system. The reforms were implemented in two phases and played a crucial role in enabling the sector to withstand the 2008 global financial crisis, which had a severe impact on economies worldwide.

- The first phase, introduced in 2004, focused on three key areas: strengthening legal, regulatory, and supervisory frameworks to establish a solid foundation; consolidating the banking sector by increasing private sector participation in banking assets; and restructuring public sector banks to improve their financial, operational, and institutional performance. These foundational reforms led to the creation of stable, well-capitalized banks, significantly enhancing the resilience of Egypt's banking sector.

- The second phase, initiated in 2009, aimed at deepening the banking sector while improving its efficiency and competitiveness. Its primary objectives included expanding financial service accessibility across Egypt, adopting Basel II and III standards to strengthen regulatory frameworks, and promoting international best practices in corporate governance. These reforms were designed to align the banking sector with global standards, ensuring its ability to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Despite ongoing efforts to enhance efficiency and competitiveness in Egypt's banking sector, a deeper understanding of how strategic agility influences competitive advantage is still needed. Given the rapid shifts in the banking environment, investigating the relationship between strategic agility and CA is crucial to ensuring sustained growth and resilience in the sector. This paper aims to examine the impact of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of Egyptian banks, focusing on three key dimensions. Building on existing research, it is argued that all three dimensions-strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity-are essential for achieving strategic agility. This relationship is expressed through the formula: Agility = Sensitivity × Unity × Fluidity (Sigalas et al., 2013; Doz & Kosonen, 2008).

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Competitive Advantage (CA)

Competitive advantage (CA) emerges from a company's strategic decisions aimed at capturing market opportunities (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Business strategy, often referred to as competitive strategy, is typically formulated at the divisional level, focusing on strengthening a division's market position by enhancing its products or services within a specific industry or segment. This strategy may prioritize profitability through the efficient production and sale of goods and services. To achieve divisional goals, business strategies must integrate various functional activities (Addo et al., 2021).

Farida and Setiawan (2022) explain that the concept of CA was established through earlier research on generic strategies, with key indicators including imitability, durability, and ease of replication. CA plays a vital role in a company's performance in competitive markets, as it stems from the unique value or benefits the firm provides to its customers. Companies that excel in any of the three generic strategies gain a sustainable competitive edge. Understanding CA requires analyzing the broad range of activities a company engages in-such as product design, production, marketing, delivery, and customer support. By excelling in these areas, organizations can consistently outperform competitors (Nkuda, 2017).

CA refers to an organization's ability to maintain superior performance relative to both current and potential competitors (Alhosseiny, 2023). According to Arokodare and Asikhia (2020), CA is defined as a company's ability to perform certain functions more efficiently than its rivals. It encompasses any distinctive value that encourages customers to prefer a firm's products or services while simultaneously creating barriers to imitation. As a fundamental driver of superior industry performance, CA represents the advantages that allow businesses to surpass their competitors (Nkuda, 2017).

CA is assessed using various performance metrics, including financial and non-financial indicators or a combination of both. Essentially, it signifies the strengths that enable an organization to outperform competitors in its respective industry (Nkuda, 2017). Traditionally viewed as a management or economic concept, CA extends beyond conventional performance indicators like profitability, productivity, and market share, as these only capture historical data. To deliver greater value and ensure higher customer satisfaction, businesses must prioritize operational efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and quality (Anca, 2012).

Beyond financial and market-based indicators, factors such as innovation, ethical practices, corporate social responsibility, and employee working conditions also contribute to CA. Relying on a single factor to explain firm performance is insufficient for measuring competitiveness comprehensively. Instead, competitiveness is recognized as a multidimensional construct, incorporating multiple indicators to assess this concept effectively (Sigalas et al., 2013). Empirical studies by Farida & Setiawan (2022) and Al-Romeedy (2019) suggest that CA is influenced by three key factors: **service quality, delivery reliability, and innovation.

- ***Innovation*** refers to an organization's ability to develop new services, processes, and operational methods (Al-Romeedy, 2019).
- ***Service quality*** is the ability of an organization to consistently deliver reliable services that meet set standards and ensure customer satisfaction (Al-Romeedy, 2019).
- ***Delivery reliability*** is a firm's capability to supply the right type and quantity of products to customers on time (Sigalas et al., 2013).

Strategic Agility (SA)

The concept of agility was first introduced in 1991 by researchers from the University of Liège to describe a flexible manufacturing system capable of adapting to rapidly changing market demands. A comprehensive review of agility literature highlights the significance of key attributes-responsiveness, competence, flexibility, and speed-which enable organizations to thrive in competitive environments and gain a CA (Arokodare & Asikhia, 2020).

The need for agility emerged as businesses faced increasingly dynamic environments, requiring constant evaluation and realignment of goals and policies. The ability to adapt swiftly fosters strategic agility (SA), which is essential for sustaining success, improving processes, and achieving CA. In today's business landscape, companies strive to deliver superior value to customers faster than their competitors (Alhosseiny, 2023). Agility has become a critical focus, as top-performing organizations are often those that can rapidly respond to external shifts (Harraf et al., 2015). These organizations continuously reengineer, reconfigure, and optimize their operations to achieve strategic objectives (Singh, 2013). Thus, agility is recognized as a multidimensional concept that encompasses both flexibility and adaptability (Nijssen & Paauwe, 2012).

Shin et al. (2015) categorize agility research into two perspectives. The first views agility as a broad organizational capability that enables firms to adjust operations swiftly in response to fluctuating market conditions and evolving customer demands. The second perspective considers agility not merely as a capability but as an integrated strategy, system, or management practice built upon multiple capabilities. From this viewpoint, an agile organization must not only demonstrate operational flexibility but also be quick to reconfigure its strategy, ensuring adaptability to external changes.

Researchers have compiled various definitions of strategic agility from different scholars, which are summarized in Table 1. Following the table, a discussion will highlight the recurring themes and key insights from the literature, providing a deeper understanding of the role of SA in enhancing CA within dynamic business environments.

Table 1 Definitions of Strategic Agility

Author(s), year	Definition
Roth, (1996)	Strategic agility (SA) refers to an organization's ability to provide the right products to the right markets at the most suitable time and cost.
Doz & Kosonen, (2008)	Firms with strategic agility can rapidly adjust their direction by utilizing three essential attributes: increased awareness of strategic shifts (strategic sensitivity), the ability to make decisive and prompt choices (leadership unity), and the flexibility to reallocate resources effectively (resource fluidity). These qualities help organizations successfully navigate complexity and capitalize on new opportunities.

Author(s), year	Definition
Brueller et al. (2014)	SA is the capability of an organization to make well-informed, quick, and accurate strategic decisions and take corresponding actions.
Sherehiy & Karwowski, (2014)	Agility represents an organization's ability to swiftly and flexibly respond to internal and external changes in the business environment while maximizing available opportunities.
Whilst Shin et al. (2015)	SA is the competence to design and launch appropriate products at the right time and cost.
Al-Romeedy, (2019)	SA is the ability of a company to continuously readjust and modify its strategic course in response to evolving goals and changing circumstances. This process involves developing new products, services, and business models while implementing innovative approaches to create additional value.
Soltaninezhad et al. (2021)	SA describes a company's ongoing ability to adapt to dynamic environments. It allows businesses to seize new opportunities, enhance value creation, and meet the high expectations of their customers.
Reed, (2021)	SA functions as a dynamic capability that enables organizations to restructure their resources and expertise to remain responsive in rapidly changing environments.

Resource: By Researcher

The definitions of strategic agility (SA) outlined in Table 1 reveal recurring themes and emphasize various aspects of the concept, as highlighted by multiple scholars. A synthesis of these definitions identifies three core elements of SA: strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource allocation. According to Doz & Kosonen (2008), SA is composed of three essential dimensions: strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity. Below is an analysis of these key themes along with important insights:

Strategic sensitivity	Is essential for maintaining continuous engagement with customers, as their preferences are constantly evolving. This capability enables organizations to stay attuned to shifts in customer tastes and adapt accordingly (al-romeedy, 2019).
Resource fluidity	Entails timely configuration and redeployment of resources, guided by both internal capabilities and external environmental demands. This requires a coordinated strategic response from all partners, enabling informed and consistent transformation to address these evolving environmental needs (shin et al. 2015).
Leadership unity	Refers to a cohesive and harmonious alignment among leaders within an organization or team. When leaders are united, they share common goals, values, and strategies, which helps to create a consistent direction and vision for the organization. This unity strengthens decision-making, improves morale, and enables more effective collaboration and communication (brueller et al. 2014).

Study problem

The banking sector in Egypt is experiencing rapid transformations due to a combination of technological advancements, regulatory changes, economic fluctuations, and shifting customer expectations (Al-Romeedy, 2019). These dynamic factors necessitate that banks develop strategies to remain competitive while navigating a challenging financial landscape. However, many banks still operate with rigid structures, slow decision-making processes, and inefficient resource allocation, making it difficult to adapt to external changes effectively (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Soltaninezhad et al., 2021).

The concept of Competitive Advantage (CA) has traditionally been associated with cost leadership, market positioning, and operational efficiency. However, in a volatile banking environment, maintaining CA requires more than just financial strength; it demands strategic agility (SA), which allows banks to proactively anticipate and respond to market shifts (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Strategic agility comprises three fundamental components:

- Strategic Sensitivity: The ability of an organization to detect early signals of market trends, risks, and opportunities (Doz & Kosonen, 2008).
- Resource Fluidity: The capacity to reallocate financial, technological, and human resources swiftly in response to emerging challenges and opportunities (Khoshnood & Nematizadeh, 2017).
- Leadership Unity: The ability of leaders to make coordinated, informed decisions that align with organizational goals (Brueller et al., 2014).

Despite the significance of SA in dynamic markets, limited empirical studies have explored its direct impact on CA in the Egyptian banking sector. Most prior research has focused on the relationship between CA and traditional performance indicators such as profitability, productivity, and service efficiency (Sigalas et al., 2013). However, these metrics fail to capture how agility-driven capabilities contribute to sustained competitive success in a turbulent environment (Alhosseiny, 2023).

Although SA has been examined in various industries, research specifically analyzing its role in banking, especially in emerging markets like Egypt-is scarce. Previous studies have investigated CA from different perspectives:

- Sigalas et al. (2013) emphasized the role of cost efficiency and service quality in gaining CA.
- Doz & Kosonen (2008) explored SA in multinational firms but did not focus on financial institutions in developing economies.
- Al-Romeedy (2019) examined agility in organizations but did not provide empirical evidence on its impact on banking competitiveness.

Given these gaps, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how SA influences CA in Egyptian banks. By doing so, it will offer valuable insights for banking leaders, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enhance strategic agility in the financial sector.

Research Questions

This Research aims to explore the following questions:

1- To what extent does strategic sensitivity influence the competitive advantage of the Egyptian banks?

2- How does resource fluidity contribute to the competitive advantage of the Egyptian banks?

3- What impact does leadership unity have on the competitive advantage of the Egyptian banks?

Research objectives

Thus, enabling strategic agility is imperative for strengthening competitive advantage. Accordingly, this study focuses on:

- Determining the impact of strategic sensitivity on competitive advantage.
- Investigating the impact of resource fluidity on competitive advantage.
- Examining the impact of leadership unity on competitive advantage.

Hypotheses Building

The fundamental premise of strategic concepts is that CA is central to any strategy. Achieving this advantage requires decision-making, establishing an effective organizational structure, and adopting sound management practices to fulfill strategic goals. Previous studies have shown that cost leadership often enables above-average performance in various industries. Each primary strategy-whether cost leadership, differentiation, or focus represents a distinct path toward achieving competitive performance. Organizations must therefore select the strategy that aligns best with their goals to realize superior industry performance (Abdulwase, R., et al, 2020). SA has become a dynamic and proactive trend in organizational management (Soltaninezhad et al. 2021).

It refers to a company's ability to continuously adapt to changing environments, allowing it to seize opportunities, create value, and meet high customer expectations (Arbussài et al., 2017). This agility serves as a foundation for sustaining a strategic advantage, enabling firms to leverage uncertainties that competitors may not foresee (Soltaninezhad et al., 2021). According to Khoshnood & Nematizadeh (2017), a company's capacity to develop and market new products while maintaining cost efficiency is directly influenced by its agility.

Implementing an agile strategy offers several advantages, including lower production costs, increased customer satisfaction, the elimination of non-value-added processes, and improved competitiveness in the market. Agility enables businesses to respond swiftly to changes, enhancing both efficiency and customer responsiveness. Based on these insights, the researchers propose the main hypothesis of this study:

H1. It is expected that strategic agility has significant positive impact on the competitive advantage of banks in Egypt.

Strategic sensitivity refers to the capability to anticipate future developments and detect changes by gathering extensive information through sustained relationships with key individuals and organizations. This ability contributes to building a CA (Abusalma, A. 2021) Accordingly, the researchers formulate the first hypothesis of this study:

H1.1: Strategic sensitivity is expected to have a significant positive impact on the competitive advantage of banks in Egypt.

Competitive advantage (CA) has evolved from merely having a relative edge over competitors to the ability to deliver unique capabilities or introduce innovations-such as new services, products, methods, or strategies tailored to customers and stakeholders. It enables companies to compete more effectively by fostering both innovation and adaptability in a dynamic environment. A firm's CA is built on a distinctive market position that rivals cannot easily replicate, ensuring long-term benefits. This advantage becomes even more significant when an agile organization effectively integrates its human, relational, and structural capital, along with all available resources (El Nsour, 2021). This leads to the formulation of the second hypothesis.

H1.2: Resource fluidity is expected to have a significant positive impact on the competitive advantage of banks in Egypt.

Doz and Kosonen (2008) propose that the development, renewal, and acceleration of effective business models that drive competitive advantage (CA) largely depend on leadership unity. They emphasize that key behaviors fostering leadership unity include open communication, transparency, integration, alignment of interests, and mutual support among team members. Similarly, Diete-Spiff and Olori (2021) identify leadership unity as a crucial capability in a highly competitive business environment. Leadership unity facilitates the coordination of essential competencies and streamlines the management of organizational processes and resources, ultimately strengthening a firm's CA. While numerous factors contribute to organizational competitiveness, this study focuses on service quality, delivery reliability, and innovation as critical determinants of competitive success (Brannen & Doz, 2012).

H1.3: Leadership unity is expected to have a significant positive influence on the competitive advantage of banks in Egypt.

Research Model

Based on the literature review and the formulated study hypotheses, the researcher has developed the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1. This framework visually represents the relationships between strategic agility, its key dimensions, and competitive advantage, providing a structured basis for the study's analysis.

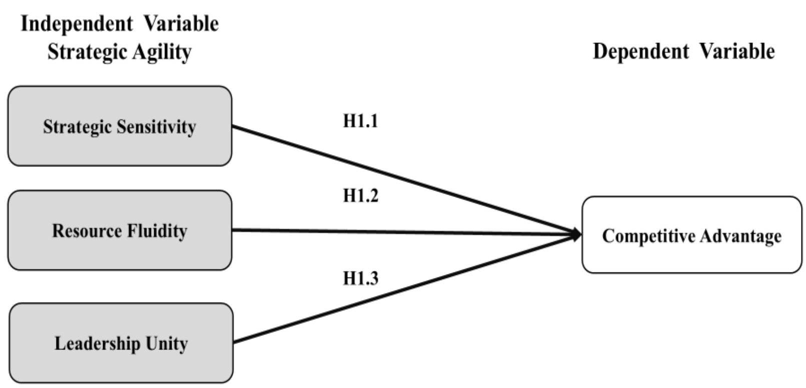


Figure (1) Conceptual Framework

Methodology

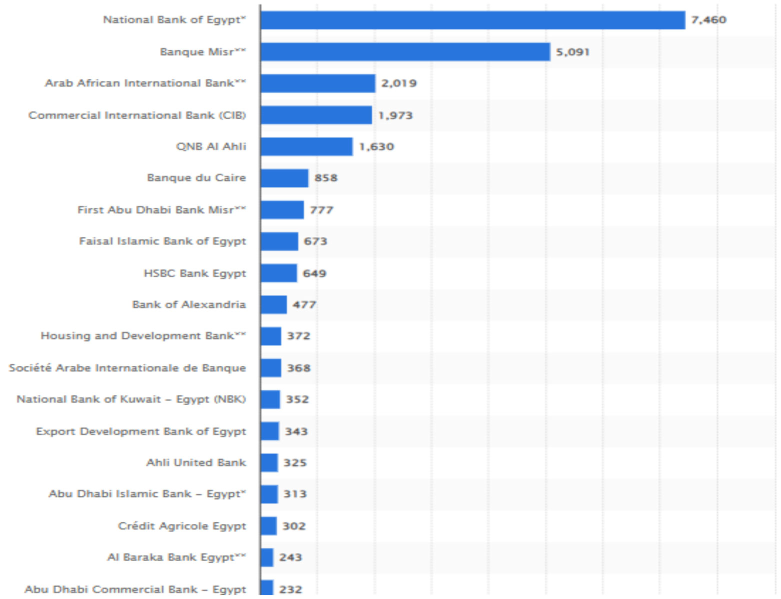
Research Approach

The descriptive approach focuses on examining facts related to phenomena, events, and existing conditions by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to draw conclusions and establish generalizations. This process involves abstraction, which isolates and emphasizes specific aspects of the phenomenon for detailed study. However, this does not mean viewing the phenomenon in isolation from others; rather, it involves distinguishing it quantitatively and qualitatively to better define and clarify its characteristics. This approach allows researchers to assess the phenomenon within the framework of the selected category or sample, ultimately enabling generalizations based on the findings. The descriptive method is particularly well-suited for studies aimed at understanding the inputs and outputs of a research problem, identifying the causes, analyzing the results, and exploring potential solutions. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23.

Population and Sample

Population

In 2022, the National Bank of Egypt emerged as the leading banking service provider in the country based on Tier 1 capital, which amounted to approximately $7.5 billion. Banque Misr secured the second position with a Tier 1 capital of $5 billion, while the Arab African International Bank and Commercial International Bank (CIB) ranked third and fourth, with capital values of around $2.01 billion and $1.9 billion, respectively.



However, other financial indicators, such as return on equity (ROE), presented a different perspective on the top-performing banks. Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank Egypt recorded the highest ROE at 33 percent, followed closely by Crédit Agricole Egypt at 32 percent. ROE is a key metric that assesses a company's profitability in relation to shareholders' equity. According to reports from Global Finance, Egypt's financial sector plays a crucial role in driving the national economy, followed by the Construction and Engineering sector and the Telecommunication Services sector.

Study Sample

Type of Sample: Convenience sampling methods were employed, as they were deemed the most appropriate for the aims of this research.

The sample size : consisted of 245 bank managers from banks in Cairo, Egypt, with 223 managers initially agreeing to participate. After removing 23 incomplete questionnaires, the final sample included 200 usable responses, yielding a high response rate of approximately 81.6 percent. Managers completed the questionnaire during regular working hours, and all participants were assured of voluntary participation and anonymity before distribution.

Sample Profile: The descriptive analysis results revealed that 80% of the sample were men, while 20% were women. Regarding educational qualifications, half of the managers (50%) held a bachelor's degree, followed by 36% with a master's degree, and 14% with a doctoral degree. In terms of age groups, the largest category was the 40-45 age group, comprising 45% of the sample, followed by the 30-35 age group at 30%, and the 45-50 age group at 25%. Finally, the analysis showed that 30% of the managers had 5-10 years of experience, 45% had 10-15 years, and the remaining 25% had over 15 years of experience.

Measurements

Data Collection

The researcher used a questionnaire method to collect data, created using a previous study, and distributed it to various respondents who are managers of banks in Cairo. The questionnaire was structured in seven sections to evaluate the research variables. The first section focused on demographic factors, capturing information such as gender, age, education level, and prior experience. The second section, strategic agility, consists of 10 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), adapted from the scale developed by W. Reed (2021). This section evaluates the organization across three key dimensions of agility as follows:

a- ***Strategic Sensitivity:*** Strategic sensitivity reflects a keen awareness of external trends, combined with a collaborative, open approach to strategy development. This dimension is proactive, emphasizing strategic foresight, alertness to emerging opportunities, and a forward-looking perspective (Reed, 2021). (measured by 3 items).

b- ***Resource Fluidity:*** resource fluidity refers to the organization's internal capacity to quickly adapt and reallocate resources in alignment with new strategic goals. This dimension includes the integration of strategy with organizational structure, adaptable business models, and modular systems that allow for rapid restructuring (Reed, 2021). (measured by 3 items).

c- ***Leadership Unity:*** leadership unity, also known as collective commitment, enables top management to respond swiftly with decisive actions when a new strategic direction emerges. It is characterized by mutual reliance, strong collaboration, and a CEO's integrative leadership style that fosters team cohesion (Reed, 2021). (measured by 4 items).

The third section, which focuses on competitive advantage (CA) elements, consists of nine items measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). These items are adapted from the scale developed by Sigalas et al. (2013) and assess three key components of CA:

a- ***Innovation*** Evaluates the organization's ability to develop new services, processes, and methods (measured by three items).

b- ***Service Quality*** Assesses the organization's capability to provide services that meet set standards, ensure reliability, and enhance customer satisfaction (measured by three items).

c- ***Delivery Reliability*** Measures the organization's ability to consistently deliver services on time (measured by two items).

Measurement Model Analysis

Model Fitness

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the measurement model's fit (unidimensionality) and to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Various fit indices were employed to determine the model's overall fitness, including normed chi-square (CMIN/DF), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), normed-fit index (NFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and

Table 2 Fit Indices of Measurement

Fit Indices	Recommended Value	SA Model	CA Model
CMIN/DF	≤3.000	4.941	5.05
GFI	≥0.90	.862	.883
AGFI	≥0.80	.764	.790
NFI	≥0.90	.862	.875
CFI	≥_0.90	.885	.894
RMSEA	≥0.08	0.041	.051

Resource: By Researcher

root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). These indices collectively ensure an adequate model fit (Byrne, 2010). The results confirmed that the GFI of the measurement model was well-aligned with the observed data, as all indices met their recommended thresholds, as presented in Table 2

Table 3 Cronbach Alpha

Variables	N of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Strategic Sensitivity	3	.779
Resource Fluidity	3	.709
Leadership Unity	4	.837
Innovation	3	.822
Service Quality	4	.878
Delivery Reliability	2	.824

Resource: By Researcher

Construct Reliability and Validity

As shown in Table 3 Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables are above 0.7, which is considered an acceptable threshold in social sciences. This indicates that the items within each scale consistently measure their respective constructs.

As illustrated in Figure 2, all factors exhibit standardized regression weights exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010).

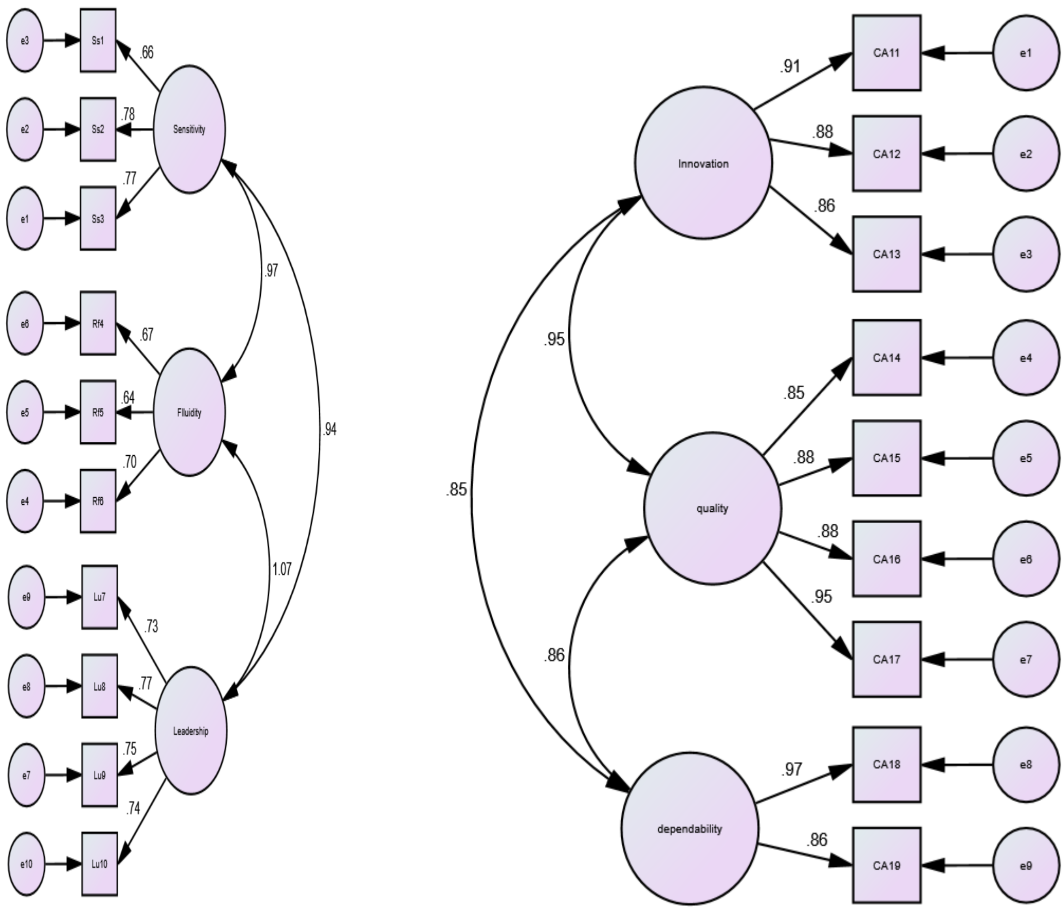


Figure 2 Factors Weights

Data Analyses

Descriptive Analysis and Correlation

The mean represents the average score for each variable, indicating the overall perception or agreement level among participants:

- **Strategic Sensitivity (4.20)**: Participants generally rated this factor the highest, suggesting they perceive it as the most significant aspect of SA in their banks.

- **Resource Fluidity (4.11)**: This factor also received a high score, indicating that respondents see flexibility in managing and reallocating resources as important.
- **Leadership Unity (4.06)**: While slightly lower, this still shows strong agreement among participants about the importance of cohesive leadership.
- **CA (3.88)**: This has the lowest mean, indicating that participants perceive CA as slightly less prominent compared to the dimensions of SA.

The SD reflects the variability or spread of responses around the mean:

- A smaller SD (e.g., 0.527 for Resource Fluidity) indicates that responses were more consistent among participants.
- A larger SD (e.g., 0.597 for CA) suggests greater variability in how participants perceive the bank's CA.

On average, participants believe that all the factors are important, but **Strategic Sensitivity** stands out as the most significant, while **CA** has more variation in responses, possibly reflecting differing experiences or perceptions of competitive performance.

The table () presents Pearson correlation coefficients (R-values) between the variables. The double asterisk (.) indicates that the correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. All dimensions of SA (Strategic Sensitivity, Resource Fluidity, and Leadership Unity) show positive and significant correlations with CA, suggesting that these factors collectively contribute to enhancing CA.

- There is a strong positive correlation between strategic sensitivity and competitive advantage (r = 0.622**).
- There is a moderately positive correlation between resource fluidity and competitive advantage (r = 0.563**).
- There is a moderately positive correlation between leadership unity and competitive advantage (r = 0.498**).

Table 4 Mean, Standard Deviations & Correlations between Main Variables

Variables	M	SD	Strategic Sensitivity	Resource Fluidity	Leadership Unity	CA
Strategic Sensitivity	4.20	.572	1	.725**	.757**	.622**
Resource Fluidity	4.11	.527	.725**	1	.826**	.563**
Leadership Unity	4.06	.555	.757**	.826**	1	.498**
Competitive Advantage	3.88	.597	.498**	.563**	.622**	1

Note N=200, **p<0.01 Resource: By Researcher

Hypotheses Testing

Multiple Linear Regression

Table 5 shows that SA elements affect CA, with an R square value of 0.395, or 39.5%. The remaining 60.5% is influenced by other variables not covered in this study.

Table 5 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.628a	.395	.385	.46877

Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Sensitivity, Resource Fluidity, Leadership Unity

Resource: By Researcher

Table 6 produces the regression equation Y = 10.979 + 0.332X1 + 0.266X2 +0.514. If the constants for the SA elements are considered zero (0), then the competitive advantage is 10.979. If the coefficient value for strategic sensitivity increases by 1 unit, the competitive advantage increases by 0.332 units. Similarly, if the coefficient value for resource fluidity increases by 1 unit, the competitive advantage increases by 0.266 units, finally If the coefficient value for leadership unity increases by 1 unit, the competitive advantage increases by 0.514 units. These coefficients indicate that SA has a positive impact on achieving a competitive advantage.

Table 6 Determination Coefficient Test

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10 .979	.275		3.563	.000
Strategic Sensitivity	.332	.092	.330	3.342	.000
Resource Fluidity	.266	.116	.256	2.431	.001
Leadership Unity	.514	.116	.478	4.428	.000

a Dependent Variable: CA

Research Implications

The results of the study on how leadership unity, strategic awareness, and resource fluidity relate to gaining a competitive edge in the Egyptian banking industry have various important theoretical and practical ramifications.

Theoretical Implications

- ***Developing Theories of Competitive Advantage:*** By showing that banks with high resource fluidity, strategic sensitivity, and leadership unity are better able to maintain competitive advantage in a financial environment that is changing quickly, this study supports the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2018).
- ***Sector-Specific Contributions:*** This study adapts strategic agility to the banking sector, where financial stability, regulatory pressures, and customer expectations necessitate highly adaptive strategies, in contrast to earlier research that primarily focuses on the manufacturing and technology industries (Rotich & Okello, 2019).
- ***Extending the Strategic Agility Framework:*** Although previous studies have examined the role of agility in competitive advantage, this study adds to the body of knowledge by identifying three key enablers of agility as critical success factors in the Egyptian banking industry: resource fluidity, leadership unity, and strategic sensitivity (Al-Qadi, 2023).
- According to Khoshnood & Nematizadeh, (2017) contextualizing Competitive Advantage in Emerging Markets: By emphasizing how macroenvironmental factors, regulatory restrictions, and economic volatility shape strategic agility in Egyptian banks, the study adds to the body of research on competitive advantage and provides guidance for financial institutions operating in comparable emerging economies.

Practical Implications

- ***Improving Decision-Making in Egyptian Banks:*** To stay competitive, banks should put resource flexibility first by implementing digital banking technologies, agile risk management techniques, and real-time financial allocation systems.
- ***Enhancing Strategic Sensitivity:*** Egyptian banks should use big data analytics, AI-powered consumer insights, and competitive intelligence tools to better predict market trends and client demands to increase market awareness.
- ***Promoting Leadership Unity:*** Sustaining strategic agility requires a unified leadership vision. To guarantee alignment at all levels, banks should use adaptive governance models, centralized strategic decision-making, and cross-functional leadership training.
- ***Regulatory and Policy Considerations:*** To allow banks to innovate and test out digital transformation tactics while preserving financial stability, policymakers need to provide flexible banking rules.
- ***Client-Centric Banking Strategies:*** To maintain a competitive edge, Egyptian banks must incorporate client-focused agility into their operations by providing individualized financial solutions, smooth digital banking experiences, and responsive customer service models.

Research Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance strategic agility and competitive advantage in the Egyptian banking sector:

1- ***Enhancing Strategic Sensitivity;*** Banks should improve their ability to detect market trends, anticipate risks, and identify emerging opportunities by:

- Investing in Advanced Data Analytics & AI: Implement predictive analytics to assess market trends and customer behavior in real-time (Soltaninezhad et al., 2021).
- Strengthening Market Intelligence Systems: Establish specialized market research units to monitor competitors and industry developments (Doz & Kosonen, 2008).
- Encouraging a Proactive Decision-Making Culture: Foster an environment where employees at all levels contribute to strategic discussions and provide feedback on potential market shifts (Khoshnood & Nematizadeh, 2017).

2- ***Strengthening Resource Fluidity;*** Efficient resource allocation is critical for responding to market changes and maintaining flexibility. To enhance resource fluidity, banks should:

- Adopt Agile Organizational Structures: Shift from rigid hierarchies to more flexible structures that allow for rapid reallocation of human, financial, and technological resources (Al-Romeedy, 2019).
- Develop Cross-Functional Teams: Establish agile teams that can quickly adapt to changes and execute strategic initiatives without bureaucratic delays (Brueller et al., 2014).
- Implement Digital Banking Solutions: Leverage cloud computing, blockchain, and digital financial services to reduce operational constraints and increase responsiveness (Alhosseiny, 2023).

3- ***Promoting Leadership Unity;*** Effective leadership ensures that strategic agility translates into sustainable competitive advantage. To achieve leadership unity, banks should:

- Encourage Open Dialogue & Transparency: Foster communication and collaboration between executives, middle management, and employees to align organizational goals (Diete-Spiff & Olori, 2021).
- Align Incentives with Strategic Goals: Design reward and recognition programs that encourage teamwork and shared decision-making (Brannen & Doz, 2012).
- Invest in Leadership Development Programs: Provide agility-focused training for executives to enhance their ability to respond to fast-changing business environments (Doz & Kosonen, 2008).

4- ***Enhancing Competitive Advantage Through Service Quality, Innovation, and Reliability;*** Banks must differentiate themselves by offering superior services and innovative financial solutions. To achieve this, they should:

- Prioritize Digital Transformation: Accelerate the adoption of fintech solutions, mobile banking, and AI-driven customer service to enhance user experience (Farida & Setiawan, 2022).
- Improve Customer-Centric Strategies: Develop personalized banking services tailored to different market segments, ensuring higher satisfaction and loyalty (Sigalas et al., 2013).

5- ***Policy and Regulatory Recommendations;*** To foster an environment where banks can implement strategic agility effectively, regulatory bodies should:

- Promote Flexible Banking Regulations: Encourage innovation while maintaining financial stability by introducing policies that support agile financial services (Khoshnood & Nematizadeh, 2017).
- Support Collaboration Between Banks and Fintech Firms: Facilitate partnerships to enhance digital banking capabilities and expand market reach (Alhosseiny, 2023).
- Develop Risk Management Frameworks Aligned with Agility: Establish guidelines that allow banks to manage risks while remaining adaptive to market changes (Doz & Kosonen, 2008).

Distinguishes This Study from Previous Studies

1- ***Focus on the Egyptian Banking Sector*** ; Unlike previous studies that have primarily examined strategic agility in developed markets, this research specifically explores its impact within the Egyptian banking sector, an emerging market with unique economic, regulatory, and technological challenges.

2- ***Integration of Strategic Agility Dimensions;*** While past studies may have examined strategic agility as a broad concept, this study deconstructs it into three key dimensions-strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity-to provide a more detailed analysis of their individual and collective impact on competitive advantage.

3- ***Application of Dynamic Capabilities and Resource-Based View (RBV);*** This research combines dynamic capabilities theory and RBV to explain how banks can leverage their internal resources and agility to sustain competitive advantage. Unlike previous studies that may have relied solely on one theoretical framework, this study integrates both perspectives for a more comprehensive understanding.

4- ***Practical Recommendations for Banking Leaders and Policymakers;*** Many prior studies focus on theoretical discussions without offering actionable insights. This research provides specific recommendations for Egyptian banks, such as investing in data analytics, enhancing financial flexibility, and adopting collaborative leadership approaches, as well as suggesting regulatory adjustments to support agility-driven competitiveness.

5- ***Consideration of Digital Transformation;*** Given the increasing role of technology in banking, this study highlights how digital transformation influences agility and competitive advantage, a factor that earlier studies may not have fully addressed.

6- ***Emerging Market Context;*** Most research on strategic agility and competitive advantage has been conducted in developed economies.

7- ***This study contributes to the literature*** by examining how these concepts function in an emerging market, adding new insights into how banks in such environments navigate challenges and opportunities.

Future Research Directions

- Examining Moderators and Mediators: Future research should look at how the link between resource flexibility, strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and strategic agility is moderated or mediated by elements such as corporate culture, digital transformation, and regulatory policies.
- Comparative Studies Across Industries: The findings' generalizability can be confirmed by extending this research to other sectors, such as healthcare, retail, and fintech.
- Longitudinal Studies on Agility Outcomes: Researching the long-term effects of agility-focused banking policies on profitability and competitiveness can shed light on how sustainable they are.

Study Limitations

Despite its valuable contributions to understanding the relationship between strategic agility and competitive advantage in the Egyptian banking sector, this study is subject to several limitations related to its conceptual scope, methodological approach, and practical constraints. These limitations highlight areas for future research and provide context for interpreting the findings.

Theoretical and Conceptual Limitations

- Narrow Scope of Strategic Agility Dimensions: The study primarily focuses on strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity as the key components of strategic agility (Doz & Kosonen, 2008). However, other potential agility-related factors, such as organizational learning capability or digital transformation, were not explicitly examined.
- Competitive Advantage Measurement Constraints: While the study assesses innovation, service

quality, and delivery reliability as key elements of competitive advantage (Sigalas et al., 2013), other factors such as market share, financial performance, and customer retention were not incorporated into the model, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the findings.

- Theoretical Framework Boundaries: The study integrates the dynamic capabilities theory and the resource-based view (RBV) to explain how strategic agility contributes to competitive advantage. However, alternative theories, such as contingency theory or institutional theory, could offer additional insights into the role of agility in different banking contexts.

Methodological and Analytical Limitations

- Cross-Sectional Nature of the Study: The study employs a cross-sectional research design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach limits the ability to assess how the relationship between strategic agility and competitive advantage evolves over time, which could be explored through longitudinal studies.
- Reliance on Self-Reported Data: The study primarily collects data through surveys and structured questionnaires, which are subject to response bias and social desirability bias. While statistical controls were applied, the accuracy of responses may still be influenced by subjective perceptions rather than actual organizational performance.
- Potential Common Method Bias: Since both independent (strategic agility) and dependent (competitive advantage) variables were measured through the same survey instrument, there is a risk of common method bias. Future research should consider incorporating objective performance indicators or mixed-method approaches to validate findings.

Practical and Contextual Limitations

- Industry-Specific Focus on Banking: The study is confined to the Egyptian banking sector, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other industries. Strategic agility operates differently in sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, or technology, where environmental dynamism and competitive pressures vary.
- Regulatory Constraints and Banking Policies: The banking industry is heavily regulated, which may impact how financial institutions implement agility strategies. The ability of banks to swiftly reallocate resources or introduce innovative services is often restricted by monetary policies and compliance requirements, affecting the full expression of strategic agility.
- Digital Transformation and Technological Limitations: While the study acknowledges the role of technology in enhancing agility, it does not fully explore the impact of fintech innovations, artificial intelligence, or blockchain on strategic decision-making. Given the rapid pace of digital disruption, further research should examine how technological advancements reshape strategic agility in financial institutions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The key premise-that strategic agility significantly improves the competitive advantage of Egyptian banks-is validated by the results of the hypothesis test. This positive correlation suggests that banks' competitive advantage will rise in tandem with their increased strategic flexibility. The degree to which strategic flexibility affected competitive advantage varied, as did the rate of impact. With a 0.514 effect on gaining a competitive edge, leadership unity was the most important variable. This finding is in line with earlier studies that showed leaders frequently have to make difficult and consequential choices when changing business models, necessitating both substantial individual changes and resolute group pledges. As a result, enabling these business model changes requires adaptable leadership and a cohesive leadership team. Essentially, an efficient leadership unit is critical to the success of executing any model or choice (Abusalma, 2021& Doz, & Kosonen, 2008a Diete-Spiff & Olori, 2021).

Followed by the Strategic Sensitivity variable, which the study proved affects the dependent variable (strategic agility) at a rate of 3.3%, and this is consistent with most studies that stated the following: In banks, strategic agility is strongly influenced by strategic sensitivity. The term "strategic sensitivity" describes a bank's capacity to recognize and foresee shifts in the business environment so that it can react quickly and efficiently. Increased awareness is essential for strategic agility, which includes the bank's ability to quickly adjust to changes in the market and new opportunities (Al-Qadi, 2023).

Affirms that a crucial element of strategic agility is strategic sensitivity. According to a study that looked at how strategic agility affected the financial performance of Jordanian commercial banks; strategic sensitivity had the biggest beneficial influence on financial performance out of all the strategic agility aspects. This emphasizes how crucial it is for banks to stay aware of strategic advancements to stay competitive and make money (Al-Qadi, 2023). Additionally, a bank's competitive capabilities are improved by strategic sensitivity, which makes it possible to spot and grab chances faster than rivals. Strategic agility, with strategic sensitivity as its basic feature, has a major impact on competitive capabilities, according to a study on Iranian private banks. This study emphasizes how important strategic awareness is to develop an agile and adaptable organizational culture in the banking industry (Khoshnood, & Nematizadeh, 2017).

Finally, the Resource Fluidity variable, which the study proved affects strategic agility by 26%, and this is consistent with most studies that have been examined. According to Al-Qadi (2023), strategic agility and resource fluidity are positively correlated by research. For example, resource fluidity has a beneficial effect on financial performance, according to a study looking at how strategic agility influences the financial performance of Jordanian commercial banks. The study found that, after strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity had the biggest influence among the strategic agility characteristics.

Resource flexibility also improves performance by allowing banks to quickly adjust to changes in the market, according to research on Kenyan commercial banks. According to the report, banks that have a high degree of resource flexibility are better able to adapt to changes in the environment and enhance overall performance (Rotich & Okello, 2019).

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