



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage

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### Abstract:

Despite the great variety of theories of strategic management and competitive advantage, experts have supported this fundamental hypothesis that the only way for an organization to succeed and achieve excellent performance is to create a strategy and gain a competitive advantage. Researchers in the field of strategy have formed a definite and unbreakable link between the three components including creating a strategy, creating a competitive advantage and achieving superior performance, and this logic has spread among users of strategy science who are senior managers of organizations. But in recent years, different critical thoughts that have challenged the logic of strategy science and the relationship between the three components of strategy creation, gaining competitive advantage and superior performance have begun to form. The purpose of this research is to typify these critiques and to introduce the damping theory of strategy science through content analysis

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of related articles. In order to select sample for content analysis, the purposeful sampling method of related articles was used until theoretical adequacy was achieved. The findings of this article show that the science of strategy among the researchers of this field and its users is declining due to five types of criticism, including philosophical criticism, post-modern criticism, paradoxical criticism, historical criticism and the Icarus dilemma, and a kind of Pragmatism has replaced scientism. The results of this research create unique insights for strategy researchers and its users from practical, theoretical and methodological perspectives.

**Keywords:** *Damping of the strategy science, philosophical analysis, paradoxical analysis, post-modern analysis, historical analysis, Icarus dilemma*

### **Introduction**

Experts in strategic management studies and competitive advantage theories have supported this basic hypothesis that organizations fail in the absence of creating a strategy and gaining a competitive advantage (Ateljević, Kulović, Đoković&Bavčić, 2023; Johnson, Whittington, Regnér, Angwin, & Scholes, 2020; Mintzberg, & Waters, 1985; Nayak, Bhattacharyya & Krishnamoorthy, 2023; Porter, 2008; Porter & Lee, 2015; Vinardi, 2023). Although completely different paradigms have been introduced in the field of competitive advantage (Ascher, Silva, Polowczyk&Damião da Silva, 2018), including resource-based perspective, industrial organization approach, transaction cost perspective, Entrepreneurship and behavioral approach (Ascher, Silva, Polowczyk&Damião da Silva, 2018) pointed out, but the commonality and main message of all these paradigms are considered clear and definite. The common denominator and the main message is that there is a logical, systematic, rational and ideal relationship between the three components of creating a strategy, creating a competitive advantage and finally achieving a superior performance (Ateljević, Kulović, Đoković&Bavčić, 2023; Johnson, Whittington, Regnér, Angwin, & Scholes, 2020; Mintzberg, & Waters, 1985; Nayak, Bhattacharyya & Krishnamoorthy, 2023; Porter, 2008; Porter & Lee, 2015; Vinardi, 2023; Ascher, Silva, Polowczyk&Damião da Silva, 2023. 2018; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, &Lampel, 2020; McGrath, 2023; Herold, Heller, Rozemeijer&Mahr, 2023). This relationship is considered so undeniable and certain that the biggest figures of strategy science, including Michael Porter (Porter, 2008; Porter & Lee, 2015), Henry Mintzberg (Mintzberg et al., 2020), Igor Ansoff (Ansoff & Sullivan, 1993), Richard Rumelt (Rumelt, 2022), JB Barney (Barney, 1996) and Jack Welch (Slater & Prichard, 1998) have emphasized it. For example, Michael Porter (Porter, 2008; Porter & Lee, 2015) has explained the role of industry structure and its profitability in creating strategy, creating competitive advantage, and ultimately, organization performance. Henry Mintzberg, despite introducing ten schools of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 2020) and supporting the logic of spontaneous strategies (Mintzberg, 1978), as well as likening strategy to five definitions including plan, strategy, pattern, position and vision but (Mintzberg, 1987) has supported the idea of creating a strategy for success (Mintzberg et al., 2020). J. Barney (Barney, 2001) considers the main source of competitive advantage to be valuable, rare, inimitable and usable organizational resources. Jack Welch also emphasized that an organization cannot succeed if it lacks competitive advantage (Slater & Prichard, 1998).

## **The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

Therefore, experts have focused on identifying what strategy is (Porter & Lee, 2015; Rumelt, 2020; Mintzberg et al., 2020; Davies, 2000) and the results of various surveys are also on the importance of creating a strategy to achieve superior performance. have emphasized For example, the McKinsey consulting group (Lovallo&Sibony, 2010) has claimed that 53% of the performance of organizations is related to the quality of strategy, and other survey findings have shown that more than 80% of CEOs focus on Creation and development of strategy is for the success of the organization (Eskandrinia, 2023). But in recent years, some experts have challenged the essence of strategy science, including Powell (Powell, 2001; Powell, 2002; Powell, 2003; Powell &Arregle, 2007; Powell &Puccinelli, 2012), Jarzabkowski (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022), Miller (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2021), Cunha (Cunha & Putnam, 2019; Cunha et al., 2017) and Eskandarinia (2023) pointed out . In addition to criticizing the science of strategy, these scholars have also questioned the undeniable rationale of the link between strategy creation, competitive advantage, and superior performance. In addition, research results have also shown that large companies with strategic and competitive advantage, such as Global Blue Chip (Grandy & Mills, 2004), I.T.T., IBM, P&G, Chrysler, Apple, General Motors, Caterpillar, Eastern Airlines (Miller, 1992), Airbus, Merck, Arthur Anderson (Powell &Arregle, 2007), Enron (Powell, 2004), Kingfisher (Sulphey, 2020), Nokia (Arbiansyah et al., 2023) and Kodak (Mirji et al., 2023) faced crisis, scandal, heavy losses and even bankruptcy. So, on the one hand, it seems that the logic of strategy science has faced a challenge and is not working, and on the other hand, apparently, the reason for success and failure of organizations cannot be attributed to competitive advantage.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to typology of the criticisms on the science of strategy and the logic of competitive advantage and also to introduce the theory of damping of strategy science with the help of the said typology through the method of content analysis of articles (Kuckartz&Rädiker, 2023). The findings of the present article are important because they open a distinct window towards the de-scientification of strategy and instead pay attention to the pragmatism of strategy to the researchers in the field of strategy. In addition to this, the research results are useful and valuable for the CEOs of organizations because they question the absolute science of strategy and inform CEOs about the practice of strategy, which is free from theories. In fact, instead of adding to the number and complexity of strategic management theories, this research intends to specify its incomplete scientific logic and provide more realistic assumptions about the reasons for the success and failure of organizations and their functional differences.

### **Research Background**

In this section, a review of the types of criticisms raised about the science of strategy and the logic of competitive advantage has been done, and through this review, five types of critical currents including 1. Philosophical analysis, 2. Paradox analysis, 3. Icarus dilemma (Competency trap) and 4. Post-modern analysis and 5. genealogical analysis can be distinguished, which are explained below.

Philosophical critique of strategic management and competitive advantage is as follows:

A group of criticisms on the science of strategy with a philosophical approach, epistemology, epistemology and logic have challenged the science of strategy and competitive advantage. For example, Powell (Powell, 2001, 2002, 2003) challenged and concluded the rational logic of competitive advantage in separate researches with the help of Bayesian inference methods, pragmatic philosophy of science, critical analysis and

negative case study that creating a strategy and achieving a competitive advantage is neither a necessary condition nor a sufficient condition to explain the performance and success of companies. Rabinovich et al. (2021) have also described four issues including strategy, organization environment, company and strategist as full of misunderstanding through philosophical analysis. These researchers explain that strategy researchers have four types of misunderstandings: first, they consider strategy as a definite formula and the only way to achieve success, second, they assume that the organization's environment can be analyzed and predicted. Thirdly, they think that the company's behaviors are completely rational and economic, and fourthly, they consider the organization's strategist to be a superhuman person with a brilliant intelligence and free from errors and emotions (Rabinovich et al., 2021).

In another research (Eskandarinia, 2021) through qualitative iterative phenomenological method, epistemology and ontology, the paradigms of resource-based perspective, industrial organization, transaction cost approach and entrepreneurial approach have been criticized and a theory called the theory of neo-strategy, which is based on neo-economic and behavioral assumptions, has been explained. Takagi and Takahashi (Takagi & Takahashi, 2023) criticized the nature and logic of strategy science with the help of conducting semi-structured interviews with company members in a research on the issue of rationality error in strategy theories. The results of this article showed that the members of the organization are not able to define the strategy of the organization and attribute the strategy only to the CEO of the organization. Chia and Holt (Chia & Holt, 2023) through the analysis of the content of the articles, the common logic of strategy science is the means-outcome logic, which assumes that strategic success is linked to intentionality, defining goals, formulating plans, and effective implementation questioned. One of the main assumptions in the science of strategy is the assumption of complete alertness of the decision makers, while these two researchers showed that the members of the organization only follow their habits rather than following conscious behaviors. Another common assumption in strategic management is planning to achieve goals, but improvisation happens in practice, and finally, all strategy theories assume that there is a consensus and the necessary will to formulate and implement the strategy. But usually such understanding and will is not seen in real organizations.

The paradox analysis in strategic management and competitive advantage is as follows:

Paradox means completely contradictory situations that companies face as a result of creating a strategy and creating a competitive advantage. In other words, paradox in strategic management literature means contradictory dilemma (Cunha et al., 2023). For example, Jarzabkowski and his colleagues (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013) found out the paradoxes of differentiation-integration, strategic goals-control, and maintaining the status quo-change through a longitudinal study of a telco company. The telco company was constantly faced with the dilemma of distinguishing its products and markets and facing the problem of integration and coordination of this distinction, or not to differentiate in order to avoid this problem. After setting strategic goals, the telco company faced the problem of permanent control of employees, which led to job stress, lack of motivation, and lack of delegation of authority, and finally faced the stability-change paradox. Cunha and colleagues (Cunha et al., 2017) realized through the case study of Tesla company and applying a critical and post-modern approach that setting strategic goals leads to three paradoxes. First, these goals are constantly becoming more idealistic and stricter, so their realization becomes practically impossible even for the best

## **The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

employees and teams. The second paradox was that the goals are set in the present for an unknown future, and this led to the stress of the employees, and finally, the third paradox was related to the increase of expectations and expectations from the employees. The more the employees achieved the goals, the more the expectations of the organization increased, and this led to a decrease in motivation among the employees.

In the most recent researches, paradoxes such as the ability-will paradox in strategic alliances through multiple case studies of companies (Guenther et al., 2023), the paradox of stability against using opportunities and entering unknown markets with the help of The metasynthesis method (Kocabasoglu-Hillmer et al., 2023), the strategic innovation paradox (Tsakalerou&Abilez, 2023) and the learning paradox have been mentioned as the source of competitive advantage (Cunha et al., 2023). The Icarus dilemma is as follows:

The Icarus dilemma or the competency trap is a topic that was first introduced by Miller (Miller, 1992). The Icarus dilemma shows how large companies through creating a strategy and gaining a competitive advantage due to reasons such as pride, inertia, extreme self-confidence, self-conceit, indifference, high risk-taking, excess and rapid growth, Financial scandals and neglect of technological developments and customer needs fail (Miller, 1992; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2021; Jawahar et al., 2021). On the opposite point, there are small companies that not only lacked a competitive advantage, but also lacked a competitive edge, but achieved excellent performance due to opportunism, creativity, perseverance, high motivation, and persistence (Powell, 2017; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2021).

For example, Kodak Company (Mirji et al., 2023) failed despite achieving a competitive advantage due to reasons such as the disparity of human resource measures and ignoring the process of technological change. Another example is related to the Nokia company (Arbiansyah et al., 2023), which followed a clear strategy of market and product development and had a competitive advantage, but due to ignoring opportunities, resistance to change and lack of the job security of the employees failed. Enron faced bankruptcy due to a financial scandal despite having a competitive advantage and creating a clear strategy (Powell, 2004). Three prominent companies with strategic advantage including Jeep, Fiat and Boeing also faced crisis and failure (Powell & Arregle, 2007). On the contrary, small companies such as Concha Toro (Powell, 2017), Amazon, Tencent and Airbnb have achieved excellent performance despite not creating a clear strategy, lack of competitive advantage and even lack of competition.

The post-modern analysis of strategic management and competitive advantage is as follows:

The post-modern approach in strategic management refers to multiple realities and relativity of concepts (Grandy & Mills, 2004; Cunha & Putnam, 2019). For example, one of the post-modern criticisms on the nature of strategy is that in the conventional literature of strategic management, it is assumed that the topics of competitive advantage, success and performance are absolute and definite, while such concepts are relative in practice and have different dimensions. In other words, when talking about the superior performance of a company, it is possible that the company's financial performance is better than its competitors, but from the perspective of market development or stock value growth, the company's performance is not favorable compared to the industry (Cunha et al., 2017; Cunha & Putnam, 2019; Cunha et al., 2023). Eskandarinia (2022) also showed through post-qualitative methods including deconstruction and de-simulacra that the common patterns of strategic management including strategic analysis and balanced

scorecard not only didn't help to improve the performance of a food production and distribution company, but have led to ambiguity, confusion, increased job stress, and decreased employee motivation. In a new research (Aliexieva et al., 2023) the concept of competitiveness has been criticized with the help of post-modern analysis and it has been explained that competitiveness is a dynamic concept, changing and having multiple meanings, so it is not It can be formulated with the help of economics and strategic management. The historical analysis of strategic management and competitive advantage is as follows:

A group of studies with the help of genealogy and examining the historical background of the theories of competitive advantage as well as the experts who invented these theories have shown that researchers with a background in mathematics or economics such as Igor Ansoff, Michael Porter, Penrose, Schumpeter, Wernerfelt, Mason and Bain (Arbi et al., 2017; Teece 2019; Keyhani 2023; Powell et al., 2010; Rumelt et al., 1991) introduced completely mathematical, economic and rational analyzes into the strategic management literature. that this has caused the science of strategy to distance itself from reality.

For example, Oliver Williamson was one of the founders of the transaction cost theory in the analysis of competitive advantage, Michael Porter, the founder of the industrial organization perspective in strategic management, has an economic academic background, and Edith Penrose, the founder of the resource-based perspective, was also an economist (Arbi et al. al., 2017). Teece (Teece, 2019) has also shown that most researchers of competitive advantage theories were influenced by people like Alfred Marshall, who is the father of economics. Others have followed the economic analysis of Coase, Williamson and Hart. Keyhani (2023) also pointed to the formation of the entrepreneurial paradigm in strategic management by Joseph Schumpeter, who was an economist, and explained that Porter's theories were also influenced by the economic theories of Caves (1984) and Bain (1968) and the resource-based perspective is rooted in the Chicago School of Economics. Powell and colleagues (Powell et al., 2010) have also examined the genealogy and historical background of the three main founders of the theories of competitive advantage, namely Michael Porter, Penrose and Schumpeter, and have shown that these economists based on the theories of their professors who They have also been mainly economists and have provided analyzes based on economics and complete competitiveness in strategic management.

## **Method**

In order to fulfill the purpose of the research, which is the typology of criticisms on the science of strategy and also to introduce the theory of mitigation of strategy science, the method of content analysis (Kuckartz&Rädiker, 2023) has been used. In this method, after extracting the data from the second-hand sources, convergent data are combined with each other and the results and findings of the research are presented during two stages of coding. The main use of this content analysis method is summarizing data and categorizing them. Therefore, through the purposeful sampling method, a collection of English and Farsi articles that criticized the science of strategy, strategic management theories and competitive advantage were extracted, and the analysis and coding operations continued until saturation and theoretical adequacy.

In order to increase the validity of qualitative content analysis research, it is necessary to pay attention to 1. theoretical diversity of articles, 2. novelty of articles, 3. achieving theoretical saturation and 4. accurate coding of data (Kuckartz&Rädiker, 2023).

## **The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

Therefore, in order to comply with theoretical diversity, Persian and English articles of different experts have been cited, most of the references are related to the last five years, and the two-stage process of qualitative data coding has also been used.

### **Findings**

The typology of criticisms on the science of strategy and the theories of competitive advantage are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows the articles used in the content analysis, the data extracted from these articles and the data numbering for use in Table 2. In Table 2, through two stages of data coding, the typology of criticisms and also the theory of strategy science are presented.

**Table 1**

*Sources used in content analysis along with extracted data*

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
Grandy, G., & Mills (2004)	Post-modern analysis of the revelation of simulacra and hyperreality	... the reality of the science of strategy has been simplified over time.... strategic management, models and the concept of strategy have been faced with simulacra or hyperreality.... According to the theories of strategic management, the only way for the success of the organization Turning to strategy. These types of analyzes are completely idealistic and linear.... The literature of strategic management recommends that either you must have a strategy and win, or if you don't have a strategy, you are doomed to failure.... Richard Rumelt mentioned strategy is not a scientific issue that is recognized by pragmatism like medicine, but only pursues academic, teaching and theorizing goals. According to Knights and Morgan, there is a misconception that anyone who has a strategy is wise and intelligent, and anyone who does not have a strategy is definitely imprudent. It has become a matter of strategic management.... The definition of the mission statement in the group of global blue-chip companies not only did not lead to integrity and success, but also caused ambiguity, multiple

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
		conceptions, confusion and challenges... (1)
Eskandarinia (2022)	Post-modern analysis of the deconstruction and de-simulacra	...strategic management theories have a holistic view of the component... they do not pay attention to the level of micro analysis of human and social activities that can affect the success and performance of the organization... the science of strategy has the paradox of macro analysis- It is wisdom... all the common approaches of strategic planning are based on predicting the future, but in the real world full of uncertainty and dynamics, instead of the future, one should pay attention to the present... The science of strategy is caught up in hyperreality and It has been pretended... it is necessary to turn to pragmatic approaches... (2)
Cai-Hillon (2012)	Post-modern analysis of Motorola company	The theories of strategic management are narratives that are quoted side by side, and over time, incomplete statements, idealistic narratives, unsaid and misunderstandings cause the formation of legends. Surreal stories about companies, the success of organizations, and the power of the founders of large companies. ...ideal and one-dimensional interpretations of words such as performance, success and competition have been formed, which are pseudo-real or mythical...strategy has become like Disney land... (3)
Balogun (2014)	Poststructural analysis	... due to the completely rational and economic nature of strategy science, unrealistic and fabricated beliefs about strategic leadership, the success of large companies, perfect strategic alliances and sustainable competitive advantage have been formed... these narratives are



**The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
		incomplete and unsaid There are many... (4)
Aliexsieieva (2023)	A case study of universities in Ukraine	...in the real world, the basis of the success of organizations is not valuable, rare and inimitable resources, nor the structure of the industry has a great impact on performance... What actually causes success is not a competitive advantage, but the management of a set of It is activities that create value... (5)
Powell (2004)	Several case studies of companies that followed a specific strategy and had a competitive advantage but failed.	... IBM destroyed billions of dollars of its stock value due to the negligence and carelessness of its managers... Motel International Company, which was the largest toy manufacturer in America and It also had a competitive advantage, but it went bankrupt due to ignoring the market trend and customer needs. As a manufacturer called Bicycle, which had the largest market share in the mentioned industry, it lost its main market to its competitors. EPPM, the leader of the paper production market in Australia, lost its position due to neglecting technology and competitors...Wordcom and Enron companies, despite creating great strategies and gaining strategic advantage, suffered financial scandals and They were defeated... (6)
Jawahar (2021)	A case study of Yes Bank in India	Yes Bank is a big and international banking name in India... which was approved by all the consultants and praised in the media... Yes Bank had a great strategy that included the development of comprehensive banking services in the field of Investments, commercial banking, loans, facilities and financial consulting... Yes Bank also followed the strategy of branch development

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
		and had a great competitive advantage... Finally, this bank got involved in the Icarus dilemma and due to its obligations Profiteering, giving heavy loans to bankrupt businessmen, poor financial management and failure to estimate the bank's risks were destroyed... (7)
Mirji (2023)	Historical study of Canon and Kodak companies	...Canon and Kodak were caught in the competency trap (Icarus dilemma)...Canon, despite extensive strategic planning, having a competitive advantage and valuable and scarce competitive resources, fell only because of the lack of motivation of employees, the loss of key forces and mismanagement. ... Kodak, which had a competitive advantage and was considered the market leader, failed because of doing useless activities without value, ignoring the technological trend and arrogance... (8)
Arbiansyah (2023)	Historical study of Nokia company	... despite having an innovative strategy in offering products and having a competitive advantage, Nokia became weak over time and failed... the reason for Nokia's failure had nothing to do with competitors and competitive advantage... in fact, Nokia's competitive strategy It was a defect, but inability to adapt to changes, resistance to change, neglect of opportunities and inertia caused failure... (9)
Miller (1992)	Case study and historical analysis of corporate failure	...strategies of innovation, market development, diversity and growth in many companies mentioned in this article, including IBM, ITT, P&G, Chrysler, Apple, General Motors, Caterpillar and Eastern Airlines have led to failure. And management in business control, pride, overconfidence, neglect,

**The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
		bureaucracy and perfectionism became extreme... (10)
Arregle (2007)	Critical analysis	<p>...Famous companies like Airbus, Merck and Arthur Andersen failed despite having a competitive advantage as a result of wrong analysis, arrogance and not using new opportunities...Theories of competitive advantage cannot explain be the drivers of companies' performance... there is no linear and significant relationship between achieving competitive advantage and financial performance, increasing revenue, increasing market share and stock value... companies with competitive advantage failed because of their competitive advantage According to Pfeffer and Sutton's (2006) research, a 300% difference in performance between the worst and the best companies was observed among 42 food manufacturing companies that used almost the same technologies and knowledge and were engaged in the same industry. Therefore, neither industry structure nor internal resources alone can explain the success and performance of companies... Companies like Jeep, Fiat and Boeing faced scandal, financial crisis and failure despite having a strategy and competitive advantage. ...organizations without competitive advantage and even with competitive disadvantage can achieve excellent performance as a result of managing valuable activities and avoiding errors... (11)</p>
Sulphey (2020)	A historical study of the reasons for the failure of	...KingFisher company, which had a competitive advantage and followed the strategy of growth and development, went bankrupt due to

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
	Kingfisher Airlines	not paying attention to the change of competition and ignoring the needs of customers... (12)
Le Briton-Miller (2021)	Critical analysis	...companies that were initially very small, unknown, lacked resources, and had no competitive advantage, such as Amazon, Tencent, and Airbnb, only because of innovation, opportunism, determination, and striving for success. The accepted logic of competitive advantage, which says that strategic strengths lead to superior performance and weaknesses lead to poor performance, has been challenged because strategic strength can turn into pride, confidence Self-centeredness, neglect, indifference, extreme risk-taking and excess growth, and on the opposite point, the lack of competition causes more motivation, effort and creativity... (13)
Jarzabkowski (2004)	Conceptual paper	...Theories of strategic management and competitive advantage are completely economic and it is necessary to use social and sociological theories (such as Anthony Giddens' social structuring, Pierre Bourdieu's habitus and social action theory) to the main reality of the strategy should be determined... (14)
Guenther(2023)	A case study of small companies	...strategic alliances and strategic partnerships face the ability-willingness paradox...in the sense that companies do not have the desire for alliances and partnerships and instead want to dominate and control the other company. .. (15)
Tsakalerou&Abilez (2023)	A study of the industries of Kazakhstan	Companies and manufacturers in Kazakhstan have faced the Kazakhstan paradox... According to this paradox, continuous support for innovation has led to undesirable

**The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
		results... The main causes of this paradox are the huge costs of research and development, related violations. It has been due to the intellectual rights of inventions and the weakness of technical knowledge... (16)
Kocabasoglu(2023)	Review articles and critical analysis	...in the innovation theories of Schumpeter and other experts, the strategy of innovation and even rapid innovation has been supported...but this strategy leads to the paradox of change-stability... (17)
Cunha (2023)	Critical analysis	...the main sources of gaining competitive advantage, including organizational learning, innovation and change, have faced the challenge of paradox...among the most important paradoxes of strategy can be exploration-exploitation, change-stability Globalization-remaining local and self-confidence-humility pointed out... (18)
Cunha, Putnam (2019)	Critical analysis and review	...in the literature of strategic management and competitiveness, the word success has a paradox...strategic success leads to pride, extreme self-confidence and high risk-taking and ultimately failure...performance also has a paradox because the system Performance management practices lead to creating job stress and setting unattainable ambitious goals... (19)
Bidstrup& Hansen(2014)	A case study of a mining company in Denmark	...in the theories of strategic management, the analysis of the organization's environment has a paradox...environmental conditions are so dynamic, ambiguous and rapidly changing that strategic analyzes based on future research and forecasting are practically impossible... (20)
Eskandarinia (2023)	Iterative phronetic qualitative	Creating a strategy leads to the creation of a paradox... Creating a strategy leads to ignoring the strategic

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
	method with data obtained from company survey	weaknesses, and creating the four paradoxes of strategy knowledge, effort-result, following the strategy-pursuing vital activities, and job stress. ... (21)
Powell (2001)	Logic, deduction, analogy, induction and Bayesian analysis	...the philosophy of strategy science is incomplete...the epistemology and ontology of strategic management and the theories of competitive advantage do not explain the reason for the success of organizations and the functional changes of companies...the existence of competitive advantage, the absence Competitive advantage and competitive disadvantage do not describe the difference in the performance of companies... (22)
Powell (2002)	Method of pragmatic philosophy of science, Bayesian analysis and negative case example	...the two common approaches in the theories of competitive advantage, i.e., the resource-based approach and the industrial organization approach, cannot provide a suitable justification for the performance of companies... (23)
Powell (2003)	negative case study, Pareto analysis and Gini correlation analysis in different industries	...creating strategy and using different strategic management models rarely leads to sustainable profitability, success and excellent performance... (24)
Takagi (2023)	Semi-structured interview and showing strategy contradictions	...the error of rationalism is evident in the theories of strategy and competitive advantage...all four paradigms of resource-oriented perspective, industrial organization, entrepreneurship and transaction cost are completely economic and rational-oriented... (25)
Chia, R., & Holt (2023)	Nietzsche's analysis (examination of prejudice in the	...strategic management has a bias and insistence on using the logic of means-results...which means that the use of models and tools will

**The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

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	beliefs of strategy theories)	definitely lead to the achievement of results...but in the practice of strategy in connection with deliberate intention, It is not completely rational decisions, precise definition of goals, logical planning and effective implementation... but rather it is related to ignorance, following habits, improvisation and political will... (26)
Hadjimichael&Tsoukas(2023)	A case study of medical service companies	...the science of strategy and the theories of competitive advantage have incomplete logic, knowledge and existence... because they have neglected the two factors of improvisation and normative values in the process of decision-making and implementation of strategies... (27)
Herold (2023)	Review study	...Strategy science has neglected interdisciplinary theories... The epistemology and ontology of strategy science lacks the definitions of behavioral, political and sociological sciences and has become a one-dimensional and non-applied science. ... (28)
Arbi (2017)	Genealogy and historical analysis of competitive advantage theories	The origin and history of the science of strategy and the theory of competitive advantage can be attributed to Edith Penrose's resource-based approach, Porter's industry-oriented perspective, transaction cost economics, and Schumpeter's entrepreneurial approach... Historical research shows that The founders of these four approaches, as well as their professors, mainly had an academic and research background in economics... Therefore, it seems that the neo-economic, behavioral and political logic has been completely neglected... (29)
Teece (2019)	Investigating the historical	...the formation of a view based on resources and dynamic capabilities

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
	progress of the theory of dynamic and resource-oriented capabilities in strategy	in strategic management is rooted in the economic theories of transaction cost and agency theory...these theories are the result of the rational view of economists such as Coase, Caves, Williamson and Hart have been...these analyzes never meet the real needs of organizations and describe the reason for the success of organizations...in terms of the historical course of this analysis process, it started with Ronald Coase's article in 1937 and then citing In this article, Williamson and Klein continued the economic analysis of competitive advantage, and Jensen and Meckling, under the influence of this literature, proposed agency theories, and neo-economic theories were marginalized in strategy... (30)
Keyhani (2023)	Historical review of the formation of entrepreneurial approach in strategic management	...the ideal and economic logic of an economist named Schumpeter led to the formation of the entrepreneurial perspective in strategic management...Michael Porter also presented his economic theories of strategic management under the influence of his economist professors such as Caves and Bain ...the founders of the source-oriented view were also the economists of the Chicago School and UCLA University economists...the creator of the source-oriented view, that is, Penrose was not only an economist, but he was also influenced by an economist named Schumpeter... (31)
Powell (2010)	Genealogy of the origin of competitive advantage	...the roots of competitive advantage literature can be analyzed through the studies of Porter's industrial organization perspective, Penrose's resource-based perspective and Schumpeter's evolutionary approach...Igor Ansoff, who is



## The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage

References	Methodology and data analysis	The extracted data along with the data number
		known as the father of strategy science, is a He was a mathematician and provided completely logical and rational analyzes about the performance and profitability of companies...Michael Porter and Edith Penrose were also basically influenced by prominent economists such as Caves, Bain and Williamson, who also carried out their studies. Based on the economic analysis, a mathematician named Bertrand and an economist named Edwards did... (32)
Rumelt (1991)	Historical analysis of strategic management	...Economists have had complete dominance over strategy theories...Bruce Henderson was mainly influenced by economics professors...Mason and Bain were two economists who developed strategy theories and were students of another economist named Caves... Porter's theories were formed under the influence of the economic logic of the Chicago school... (33)

**Table 2**  
*Coding process of extracted data*

Data numbers according to Table 1	First stage coding	Second stage coding	Findings and results
1,2,3,4	Due to the rational and economic nature of the science of strategy, the theories of strategy and competition have been simplified over time, predictions of an unknown future, incomplete and exaggerated mythological narratives of successful companies and Their leaders, idealism, unsaid management	Post-modern critique of strategy science and competitive advantage theories	Damping theory of Strategy Science: Based on the theory of damping of strategy science, which emphasizes the degradation and weakening of the foundations and principles of strategy science through five different currents, more realistic assumptions can be made about the reasons for

Data numbers according to Table 1	First stage coding	Second stage coding	Findings and results
	about the success and failure of companies, surreal myth-making about the power of companies and their leaders and providing definitive, absolute and undeniable definitions about advantage. It has become competitive. In simpler words, the science of strategy has moved away from realism and has become similar to pretending (surrealism). Strategy science, unlike medical science, is not practical and resembles Disney land.		the success and failure of organizations. And also the reasons for achieving excellent performance. There is no significant relationship between creating a strategy and gaining a competitive advantage and finally achieving a premium performance. Competitive advantage is neither a necessary nor a necessary condition for strategic success. The main reason for the failure of the companies with a great strategy and competitive advantage that was mentioned in this research was the same strategy and competitive advantage, and on the other hand, companies without a competitive advantage or even with a competitive deficiency were able to achieve optimal performance.
5.6.7.8.9.10.11.13.13	The science of strategy and theories of competitive advantage has faced the Icarus dilemma. To put it more simply, companies fail due to creating a great strategy and gaining a competitive advantage, and on the opposite point, companies with a competitive deficiency achieve success. In the real world, the reason for the success and excellent performance of companies is not the valuable, rare and inimitable resources, nor the structure of the industry, but a set of activities leading to added value at the micro level lead to the performance of companies. For example, companies with strategy and competitive advantage due to reasons such as lack of motivation of employees, loss of key forces, pride and self-conceit, extreme self-confidence, idealism and extreme growth, ignoring	Icarus dilemma (Competency trap)	

**The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

Data numbers according to Table 1	First stage coding	Second stage coding	Findings and results
	competitors and technology, inertia , resistance to change, bureaucracy and mistakes led to scandals, and on the contrary, small and little-known companies that lacked strategy and competitive advantage due to high motivation, flexibility, opportunism, effort and creativity Excellent performance was achieved.		
15,16,17,18,19,20,21	The science of strategy and the theories of competitive advantage are caught in the duality of paradox. Among the most important paradoxes of strategy are the ability-willingness paradox in strategic alliances, the paradox of change (innovation)-stability, the paradox of searching for markets and new opportunities-taking advantage of existing markets, and the paradox of globalization-locality. Persistence, self-confidence-humility, success-pride, knowledge of strategy, effort-result, analysis of the organization's environment, job stress and following the strategy-doing necessary activities.	Critique of strategy science from the perspective of paradoxology	
23, 22, 14, 25, 24, 28, 26, 27	From a philosophical point of view, strategic management and its theories are completely rational and economic. All four common paradigms in strategic management have economic backgrounds and completely rational analyses. Therefore, the philosophy of strategy science is completely one-	Philosophical criticism of strategy science and competitive advantage theories from the perspective of	

Data numbers according to Table 1	First stage coding	Second stage coding	Findings and results
	dimensional and incomplete in terms of epistemology, ontology, and logic because it has neglected the interdisciplinary philosophy of social, sociological, behavioral, and political sciences. Neither competitive advantage provides a suitable description for why organizations succeed, nor competitive deficiency can explain why organizations fail. Strategic management has a means-result bias and it is assumed that a deliberate intention leads to a rational decision and then the precise definition of goals and plans, and finally the strategy is implemented effectively. But in practice ignorance, following habits, improvisation and political will lead to behaviors and actions.	epistemology, ontology and logic	
30, 29 31, 32, 33	All four dominant paradigms in strategy science and competitive advantage theories are genealogically and historically rooted in economics and mathematics. For example, Igor Ansoff, who is called the father of strategic management science, was a mathematician who founded the rational logic of profit maximization in strategy. Edith Penrose, who was the founder of the resource-based view, was not only an economist herself, but she was also influenced by the economists of the Chicago School and UCLA, as well as Schumpeter.	Criticizing the science of strategy and its theories from the perspective of genealogy and investigating the historical roots of the emergence of this science	

## The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage

Data numbers according to Table 1	First stage coding	Second stage coding	Findings and results
	<p>Michael Porter, who himself has an academic background in economics, presented his theories under the influence of economists such as Mason and Bain, who were also students of an economist named Ronald Coase. Economists have played a dominant and dominant role in the production of strategy theories, so sociological, political, behavioral and neo-economic logics have been largely neglected.</p>		

Based on the findings of this research, which was obtained through the analysis of the content of the articles, the criticisms on the science of strategy and the theories of competitive advantage can be divided into five general categories: 1. Post-modern criticisms based on methods such as deconstruction, unsimulacra, post-structural analysis and revealing the pretense, 2. Criticisms related to the Icarus dilemma based on methodologies such as company case study, longitudinal study and critical analysis, 3. Philosophical criticisms that change the epistemology, ontology and logic of strategy science. The help of conceptual methods, logic, deduction, analogy and induction, Bayesian analysis, pragmatic philosophy of science, negative case analysis, Pareto analysis, Gini's correlational analysis, Nietzsche analysis and case study have been challenged. 4. Paradoxical criticisms with the help of the divided the qualitative, review, critical and case study methods and finally 5. genealogical criticisms that have criticized the formation of strategy science by examining the economic roots of it. Based on these five critical currents, the reason for the decline of strategy science can be justified. Not only is there no meaningful relationship between creating a strategy and gaining a competitive advantage with the organization's performance and success, but competitive advantage is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for achieving excellent performance.

Big and famous companies such as Enron, Nokia, Kodak and many other companies that are mentioned in this article are stuck in the Icarus dilemma, which is caused by creating a great strategy and achieving a competitive advantage. Peers have failed because achieving a competitive advantage has led to pride, overconfidence, misplaced growth and mergers, ignoring opportunities, indifference, and mistakes leading to scandal. On the other hand, such companies have suffered many paradoxical contradictions, such as the paradox of stability-change, globalization-remaining local, analysis of the unanalyzable environment, and result-effort, all of which are caused by the creation of strategy. On the contrary, companies like Amazon and Concha Toro do not have any competitive advantage or valuable, rare and inimitable resources due to reasons

such as opportunism, creativity, effort, effective management of value-added activities and high motivation. They have achieved excellent performance.

The rational-economic nature of strategy science has also plagued companies. Companies create strategies under the influence of theories of competitive advantage that have incomplete and idealistic logic and ignore micro-level activities that lead to the creation of added value and success. . Therefore, the evidence and findings of this article show that probably creating a strategy and gaining a competitive advantage due to reasons such as the organization being caught in the Icarus dilemma or the trap of competence, getting involved with the paradoxes resulting from strategic management and conducting analyzes All rationality and economics, derived from the theories of strategy science, have caused companies to distance themselves from pragmatism and leaders' indifference towards the main activities. As a result, such companies have faced crisis, bankruptcy and lack of success.

### **Discussion**

In this article, through the introduction of the typology of five critical currents of strategy science and theories of competitive advantage, the damping theory of strategy science was explained. This theory is able to provide more realistic assumptions about why companies succeed and fail and why organizations differ in performance. The findings of this article show how well-known organizations through the creation of strategy and even gaining a competitive advantage for reasons such as pride, self-conceit, perfectionism, high risk-taking, scandal, and being caught in the paradoxes of the people. Strategy and conducting absolute rational analysis fail, and on the other hand, small companies lack a competitive advantage and even have a competitive deficiency through flexibility, agility in pursuing opportunities, creativity, effort and continuity to a superior performance. They get hands.

The findings of this article are not only useful and valuable for researchers in the field of strategy, but also for CEOs of companies, it contains different and unique insights about why organizations succeed and fail. The present article, which describes the causes of the failure of organizations despite creating a strategy and gaining a competitive advantage, is valuable from a theoretical point of view, and from a practical point of view, it is also valuable for strategists, organization analysts, and consultants.

By comparing the findings of this research with the results of the researches that were reviewed in the background section of the research, it is possible to find convergences and divergences. The commonality of the findings of this article with other articles that were reviewed in the background of the research is related to the criticism of strategy science and its theories. All these findings show that not only there is no significant relationship between competitive advantage and organizational performance, but it is also possible that creating a strategy and creating a competitive advantage can lead to failure. But the main difference between the findings of this article and the results of the aforementioned articles is that in this research, through the aggregation and integration of the findings of various researches, a comprehensive and comprehensive insight into the real causes of failure and success of companies with the help of Five types of philosophical criticism, paradoxology, the riddle of Icarus, postmodern analysis and genealogy were presented, which can open a new and innovative window towards practicality in strategic management and better performance of companies.

## **The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

### **Limitations:**

This article also has limitations. The findings of this article have been obtained through the content analysis of the findings of other articles, and the generalization of the findings to the real conditions of businesses requires caution. Therefore, the external validity as well as the ecological validity of the research has limitations.

### **Suggestions:**

In order to increase the external and ecological validity of the findings of this research, it is suggested to conduct a case study, multi-case study, and longitudinal study in different Iranian companies in order to determine the limitations and points that can be improved in this article. In addition, the use of narrative-research methods, semi-structured interview and survey can help to increase the external and ecological validity of the article. The results of this research also contain suggestions for senior managers and consultants of organizations. CEOs of organizations are advised to be careful when conducting strategic analysis because these analyzes are generally rational, idealistic and economic. At the same time, it is suggested that gaining a competitive advantage should not be considered equivalent to the success of the organization. When providing consulting services to organizations, strategy consultants should consider narratives that violate the theories of strategy and competitive advantage, including the Icarus dilemma and strategy paradoxes, and talk about it with managers because success And the performance of the organization is more related to the management of the necessary and vital activities of the organization than it is related to the strategy and competitive advantage.

### **Authors' Contributions:**

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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## **The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage**

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# The damping theory of strategy science why organizations fail despite creating strategy and gaining competitive advantage

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