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Factors Affecting the Performance of Golf Course Organizations in Thailand: The Mediating Role of Competitive Advantage

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Abstract

This research article aims to study (1) the influence of seven dimensions of dynamic capability, including human capital, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, sensing capability, learning capability, integrating capability, and coordinating capability, which directly affect the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand; (2) the competitive advantage that directly affects organizational performance; (3) the indirect effects of dynamic capability on organizational performance through competitive advantage; and (4) to validate the consistency of the causal relationship model with empirical data. This quantitative research employed questionnaires to collect data from representatives of 184 golf courses in Thailand. Data analysis included frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and structural equation modeling analysis.

Findings are as follows: (1) all seven dimensions of dynamic capability had a direct positive effect on competitive advantage; (2) competitive advantage had a direct positive effect on organizational performance; (3) all seven dimensions of dynamic capability had an indirect positive effect on organizational performance through competitive advantage; and (4) the causal relationship model was consistent with the empirical data.

Keywords: Golf Course Business in Thailand; Dynamic Capability; Competitive Advantage; Organizational Performance

Type of Article: Research Article

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ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อผลการดำเนินงานขององค์กรสนามกอล์ฟในประเทศไทย: บทบาทของตัวแปรคั่นกลางความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขัน

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) ศึกษาอิทธิพลของความสามารถเชิงพลวัต 7 มิติ ได้แก่ ทุนมนุษย์ ความรู้เชิงประจักษ์ ความรู้เชิงกระบวนการ ความสามารถในการรับรู้ เรียนรู้ บูรณาการ และประสานงาน ที่ส่งผลทางตรงต่อความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขันขององค์กรสนามกอล์ฟในไทย (2) ศึกษาความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขันที่ส่งผลทางตรงต่อผลการดำเนินงาน (3) ศึกษาผลทางอ้อมของความสามารถเชิงพลวัตต่อผลการดำเนินงานผ่านความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขัน และ (4) ตรวจสอบความสอดคล้องของโมเดลความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ใช้แบบสอบถามเก็บข้อมูลจากตัวแทนสนามกอล์ฟในประเทศไทยจำนวน 184 สนาม วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยการแจกแจงความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการวิเคราะห์โมเดลสมการโครงสร้าง

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า (1) ความสามารถเชิงพลวัตทั้ง 7 มิติส่งผลทางตรงเชิงบวกต่อความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขัน (2) ความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขันส่งผลทางตรงเชิงบวกต่อผลการดำเนินงาน (3) ความสามารถเชิงพลวัตทั้ง 7 มิติส่งผลทางอ้อมเชิงบวกต่อผลการดำเนินงานผ่านความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขัน และ (4) โมเดลความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุมีความสอดคล้องกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์

คำสำคัญ: ธุรกิจสนามกอล์ฟในประเทศไทย; ความสามารถเชิงพลวัต; ความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขัน;

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Introduction

Thailand's golf tourism sector constitutes a vital component of its sports tourism industry, with the country established as a premier Asia-Pacific golf destination, attracting 2 million players annually (60% domestic, 40% international) (Golf Meets Thailand, 2021). Within the global golf tourism market, valued at \$22.74 billion in 2022 and projected to reach \$41.87 billion by 2030 with a 7.4% compound annual growth rate (Grand View Research, 2023)—Thailand has demonstrated a remarkable post-pandemic recovery, regaining 80% of pre-COVID international golf tourist levels. This resurgence, particularly from Korean, Japanese, and European markets, generates approximately 4 billion Baht during peak season, with economic benefits extending beyond course fees to accommodation, transportation, and hospitality sectors, aligning with Thailand's premium tourism development strategy (Michael, 2023).

This study examines the determinants of organizational performance in Thailand's golf courses through the Resource-Based View theory (Barney, 1991). Despite Thailand's emergence as a leading golf destination with over 315 courses (Hotgolf, 2024, March 24), a significant research gap exists regarding how organizational resources translate to performance outcomes in this context. The conceptual framework posits that dynamic capability components—human capital, declarative and procedural knowledge, and sensing, learning, integrating, and coordinating capabilities—indirectly influence organizational performance through competitive advantage as a mediating variable (Wang & Gao, 2021). Dynamic capability enables organizations to navigate rapidly changing business environments, particularly in the highly competitive tourism and sports industries. It serves as a crucial factor leading to competitive advantage, which directly impacts organizational performance. Studying the relationships between these variables helps understand the mechanisms through which Thai golf courses can achieve business sustainability. This research fills an academic gap by examining the specific context of Thailand's golf industry, which possesses unique characteristics distinct from other regions. This research extends beyond Western-centric studies by investigating these relationships within Thailand's distinctive business environment, where unique cultural dimensions and tourism dynamics create specific operational contexts.

Research Objectives

1. To study the influence of seven dimensions of dynamic capability, including human capital, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, sensing capability, learning capability, integrating capability, and coordinating capability, which directly affect the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand

2. To study the competitive advantage that directly affects organizational performance
3. To study the indirect effects of dynamic capability on organizational performance through competitive advantage
4. To validate the consistency of the causal relationship model with empirical data.

Scope of Study

1. Scope of Content and Variables: Examining the relationship between dynamic capability (comprising seven dimensions: human capital, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, sensing capability, learning capability, integrating capability, and coordinating capability) as independent variables, organizational competitive advantage as the mediating variable, and organizational performance as the dependent variable.

2. Scope of Population and Sample: Focusing on representatives from golf course businesses in Thailand, with a total of 315 golf courses for the population (Hotgolf, 2024, March 24) and 231 golf courses for the sample size.

3. Scope of Areas: Covering golf courses throughout Thailand

4. Scope of Timeframe: Data collection and analysis conducted between October 2024 and November 2024, spanning approximately two months.

Research Benefits

Academic Benefits:

1. Contributes to empirical knowledge by integrating dynamic capability, competitive advantage, and organizational performance into a cohesive Resource-Based View theoretical framework.

2. Provides empirical evidence that the seven dimensions of dynamic capability exert direct influence on competitive advantage.

3. Reveals that the seven dimensions indirectly affect organizational performance through competitive advantage as a mediating variable.

4. Develops a comprehensive and holistic Resource-Based View theoretical framework.

5. Extends domain-specific knowledge related to golf course businesses within the Thai context.

Practical Benefits:

1. Offers concrete strategic guidelines for golf course executives in Thailand.

2. Applicable to organizations with similar operational structures, such as football clubs and other sports facilities.

3. Provides a framework for strategically implementing the seven dimensions of dynamic capability.
4. Presents approaches for building sustainable competitive advantages for organizations.
5. Illuminates the linkage between organizational capability development and overall performance enhancement.

Concepts, Theories, and Related Literatures

1. Resource-Based View Theory

Resource-Based View theory examines how organizations leverage their unique, valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). These resources include both tangible assets, like facilities and financial resources, and intangible assets, such as capabilities and intellectual capital (Ali et al., 2023). In dynamic environments, organizations must develop capabilities to integrate and reconfigure competencies to address changing conditions (Kiprop & Mutuku, 2024). This theory has been applied across various sectors, including golf course management, where competitive advantage can be achieved through analyzing customer needs, developing effective resource management, and implementing strategies that emphasize human resource development (Bari et al., 2024), ultimately improving organizational performance in an evolving business landscape.

2. Organizational Performance

Organizational performance reflects an organization's ability to achieve goals efficiently using available resources, delivering quality products or services within set timeframes. It serves as a key indicator of organizational success or failure and encompasses financial performance, market performance, supply chain management, customer satisfaction, stakeholder satisfaction, and innovation (Zhou & He, 2023). Effective organizational performance requires strategic decision-making, good management practices, strong structural management, organizational learning capabilities, clear role definitions, and human resource management. In Thailand's golf course industry, performance is crucial for economic and tourism growth, especially post-COVID-19 recovery, with strategic management being essential for competitive advantage (Ekkaphol & Wichitsathian, 2024). Successful golf courses invest in staff development, implement digital technologies, adapt to market changes, and practice sustainable management that benefits the environment and local communities (Makprang, 2024).

3. Competitive Advantage

Porter (1985)'s competitive advantage theory represents a fundamental framework in strategic management, comprising the five forces model for analyzing competitive environments

and generic strategies (Cost leadership, differentiation, and focus) for creating competitive advantage. As applied to golf courses in Thailand, these strategies enable organizations to develop sustainable advantages through cost-reduction methods like precision irrigation, service differentiation through unique customer experiences, and focused approaches targeting specific market segments (Wang et al., 2023). Competitive advantage emerges when organizations implement strategic capabilities that competitors cannot easily replicate, supported by dynamic capability that fosters adaptability (Muneeb et al., 2023). Thai golf courses specifically strengthen their competitive position through service quality enhancement, brand reinforcement, technology integration, creating shared value with stakeholders, implementing appropriate marketing strategies, embracing digital technologies, innovation development, and fostering an organizational culture that effectively integrates business strategy with information technology (Waktola et al., 2024).

4. Dynamic Capability

Dynamic capability refers to an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). It encompasses the capacity to sense changes, seize opportunities, recognize risks, and adapt strategies (Michaelis et al., 2021). These capabilities help organizations integrate operations with changing environments by improving both tangible and intangible resources that create value, competitors cannot easily imitate (Khan et al., 2021). Dynamic capability determines how organizations adjust knowledge and management styles to align with changing customer needs (Teece, 2018). They identify potential risks and opportunities (Garrido et al., 2020), strengthening management and resource allocation. Contemporary entrepreneurs implement dynamic capability to face uncertainties, supply chain disruptions, and achieve competitive advantages (Liboni et al., 2023). Dynamic capability comprises seven dimensions according to Nieves and Haller (2014): (1) human capital, (2) declarative knowledge, (3) procedural knowledge, (4) sensing capability, (5) learning capability, (6) integrating capability, and (7) coordinating capability. These elements work together to help organizations adapt to changing environments and maintain a competitive advantage.

Conceptual Framework

From the literature review, the authors developed and summarized a conceptual framework for this research, as shown in Figure 1.

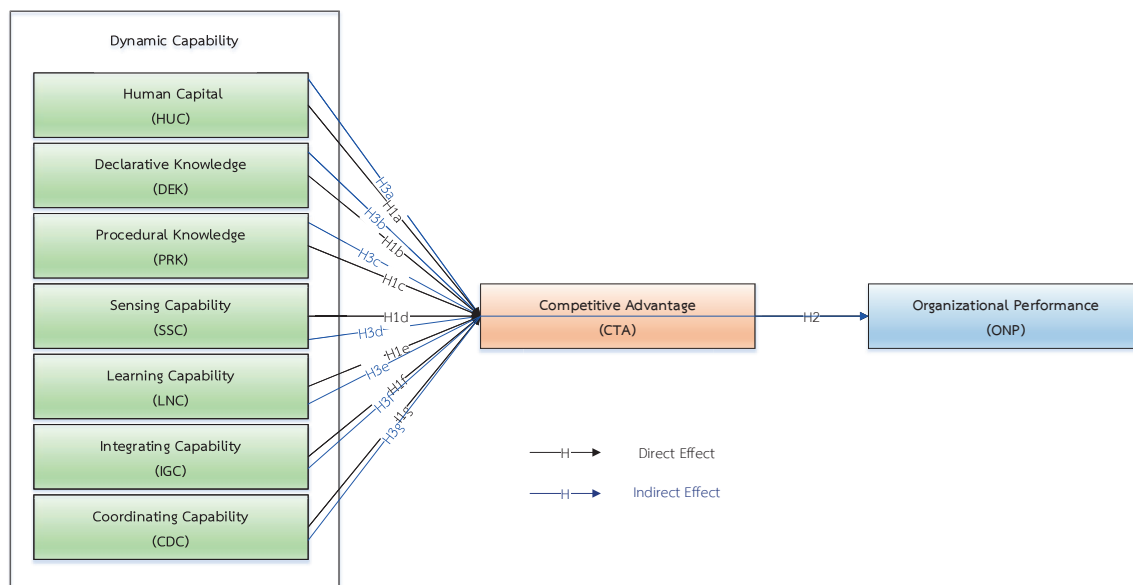


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researchers.

Research Hypothesis

H1a: Dynamic capability in the dimension of human capital has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H1b: Dynamic capability in the dimension of declarative knowledge has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H1c: Dynamic capability in the dimension of procedural knowledge has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H1d: Dynamic capability in the dimension of sensing ability has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H1e: Dynamic capability in the dimension of learning ability has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H1f: Dynamic capability in the dimension of integrating ability has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H1g: Dynamic capability in the dimension of coordinating ability has a direct positive influence on the competitive advantage of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H2: Competitive advantage has a direct positive influence on the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3a: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of human capital and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3b: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of declarative knowledge and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3c: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of procedural knowledge and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3d: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of sensing ability and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3e: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of learning ability and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3f: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of integrating ability and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

H3g: Competitive advantage mediates the relationship between dynamic capability in the dimension of coordinating ability and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand.

Research Methodology

This research employs a quantitative approach through empirical investigation using structural equation modeling (SEM) to test and confirm hypotheses regarding factors affecting the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand, with competitive advantage serving as a mediating variable.

The population in this research consists of representatives from 315 golf courses in Thailand (Hotgolf, 2024, March 24). The sample size determination was calculated based on Soper (2024)'s recommendations, with the following related statistical parameters: anticipated effect size of 0.3, desired statistical power level of 0.8, number of latent variables of 9, number of observed variables of 40, and probability level of .05. The minimum sample size to detect the effect is 184, the minimum sample size for model structure is 88, and the recommended minimum sample size is 184. Therefore, the researchers determined that the sample size for this study must include at least 184 golf courses. The sampling was conducted using proportional stratified random sampling, with golf courses divided into three groups based on their size: 89 courses in the population and 52 in the sample with 9 or fewer holes, 192 courses in the population and 112 in the sample with 18 holes, and 34 courses in the population and 20 in the sample with more than 18 holes. This stratification reflects the proportional distribution from a total population of 231 courses, resulting in a sample of 184 courses.

The research instrument used in this study is a questionnaire consisting of 4 parts:

Part 1 comprises 6 questions on organizational factors; Part 2 comprises 31 questions on the dynamic capability variable across 7 dimensions; Part 3 comprises 5 questions on the competitive advantage variable; and part 4 comprises 4 questions on organizational performance variable. The questionnaires in parts 2-4 are designed as Likert scale measurements with five-point rating scale responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

To ensure methodological rigor, the questionnaire underwent a thorough validation process. Content validity was established through expert review by 5 business administration specialists in the golf industry, yielding an index of item-objective congruence (IOC) values between 0.80 and 1.00 (Jareontonyakorn et al., 2022). A pilot test with 40 participants was conducted to assess item discrimination power (corrected item-total correlation > 0.30) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient $> .70$) (Hair et al. (2019)). After successful pilot validation, the instrument was administered to 231 participants for the main study, maintaining reliability standards throughout the data collection process.

The preliminary assumption testing was conducted, including checks for normality, homoscedasticity, and linearity. The results indicated that all data met the specified criteria. Subsequently, construct validity was examined using confirmatory factor analysis, followed by an assessment of convergent validity. Multicollinearity testing was then performed. Finally, structural equation modeling analysis was conducted to test the research hypotheses.

Result

Thailand's golf industry is dominated by 18-hole courses (61.04%), with the highest concentration in the central region (32.90%). Most establishments are managed by golf course managers (74.03%), operate with purchased golf carts (45.89%), employ 51-100 staff members (31.60%), generate annual revenue below 50 million baht (51.95%), and have been operational for 21-30 years (31.71%). Survey respondents reported strong performance across all dynamic capability dimensions, which corresponded with high levels of competitive advantage and organizational performance.

The study assessed construct validity through confirmatory factor analysis, emphasizing convergent validity based on Hair et al. (2019)'s criteria. All variables demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity with standardized factor loadings (λ_i) > 0.5 , average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.5 , and construct reliability (CR) > 0.7 , with λ values ranging between 0.692-0.944, AVE values ranging between 0.633 - 0.794, and CR values ranging between 0.872-0.939.

Objective 1: All seven dimensions of dynamic capability have positive direct influences on the competitive advantage of Thai golf course organizations, with human capital showing

the strongest impact (path coefficient (γ) = .210), followed by sensing and coordinating (γ = both .179), learning (γ = .169), integrating (γ = .152), procedural knowledge (γ = .144), and declarative knowledge (γ = .124).

Objective 2: The hypothesis testing results through structural equation modeling analysis found that competitive advantage has a positive direct influence on the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand, with a path coefficient (β) of .766.

Objective 3: Based on the structural equation modeling analysis, competitive advantage serves as a significant mediator between the seven dimensions of dynamic capability and the performance of golf course organizations in Thailand. The strongest mediating effects were found in the human capital dimension (path coefficient = .161), followed by sensing and coordinating dimensions (path coefficient = both .137), learning dimension (path coefficient = .130), integrating dimension (path coefficient = .116), procedural knowledge dimension (path coefficient = .110), and declarative knowledge dimension (path coefficient = .095).

Objective 4: The structural equation modeling analysis confirms the modified model fits the empirical data excellently, as demonstrated by optimal fit indices: $\chi^2 = 663.988$ ($df = 659$, $p = .438$), $\chi^2/df = 1.008$, RMSEA = 0.006, CFI = .999, TLI = .999, and SRMR = .047.

The results of the research hypothesis testing through structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis are clearly illustrated in Figure 2.

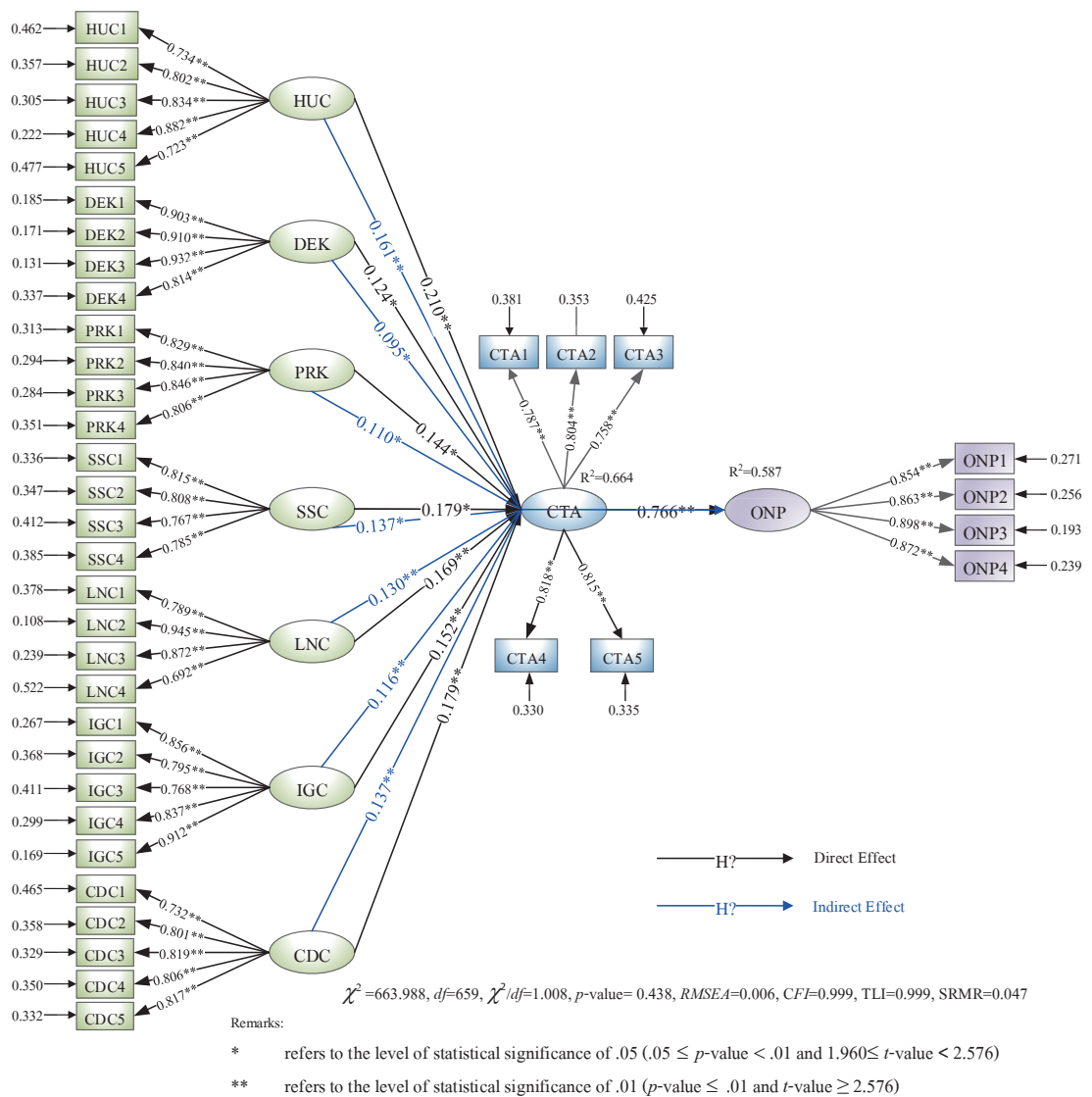


Figure 2 Structural Equation Modeling Analysis Results

Source: Researchers.

Based on the R^2 values, it was found that (1) the latent variable of competitive advantage can be explained by the latent variables of dynamic capability in various dimensions, including human capital, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, sensing capability, learning capability, integrating capability, and coordinating capability, accounting for 66.40%, and the latent variable of organizational performance can be explained by the latent variable of competitive advantage, accounting for 58.70%.

Table 1
Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, and Total Effect

Outcome Variables		CTA			ONP		
Causal Variables		DE	IE	TE	DE	IE	TE
	HUC	.210**		.210**		.161**	.161**
		(.058)		(.058)		(.045)	(.045)
	DEK	.124*		.124*		.095*	.095*
		(.060)		(.060)		(.046)	(.046)
	PRK	.144*		.144*		.110*	.110*
		(.064)		(.064)		(.049)	(.049)
	SSC	.179*		.179*		.137*	.137*
		(.078)		(.078)		(.060)	(.060)
	LNC	.169**		.169**		.130**	.130**
		(.063)		(.063)		(.048)	(.048)
	IGC	.152**		.152**		.116**	.116**
		(.056)		(.056)		(.044)	(.044)
	CDC	.179**		.179**		.137**	.137**
		(.061)		(.061)		(.047)	(.047)
	CTA				.766**		.766**
					(.034)		(.034)
R^2			.664			.587	

$\chi^2 = 663.988$, $df = 659$, $\chi^2/df = 1.008$, $p\text{-value} = .438$, $RMSEA = .006$, $CFI = .999$, $TLI = .999$, $SRMR = .047$

Discussion

Objective 1: The study found that all dimensions of dynamic capability positively influence the competitive advantage of Thai golf courses: human capital (path coefficient .210, $p < .01$; Pahuja et al. (2024)), where specialized staff like course managers and golf pros directly enhance course quality and customer experience; declarative knowledge (path coefficient .124, $p < .05$; Vidic (2022)), enabling systematic collection and utilization of member data and satisfaction metrics to tailor services; procedural knowledge (path coefficient .144, $p < .05$; Vidic (2022)), encompassing deep understanding of Thai golf culture and tropical course maintenance techniques that competitors cannot easily replicate; sensing capability (path coefficient .179, $p < .05$; Zehir and Vural Allaham (2024), allowing courses to monitor industry trends like online booking technology and golf tourism to adapt promptly; learning capability (path coefficient .169, $p < .01$; Jabo et al. (2024)), facilitating customer data analysis and knowledge sharing among staff to develop innovative services; integrating capability (path coefficient .152, $p < .01$; Serrano-Gómez et al. (2023), combining expertise from various departments to create comprehensive experiences that impress customers; and coordinating capability (path coefficient .179, $p < .01$; Xinyu (2023), enabling efficient interdepartmental coordination and appropriate resource allocation during peak periods. These findings align with Resource-Based View theory, suggesting that organizations create sustainable competitive advantages through developing resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, resulting in superior service quality, customer retention, and financial performance compared to competitors.

Objective 2: Competitive advantage significantly impacts Thai golf course organizational performance (path coefficient = .766, $p < .01$), as superior facilities and services directly enhance sales, market share, and profits (Wongsansukcharoen & Thaweepaiboonwong, 2023). This confirms Resource-Based View theory, where organizations leveraging valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources achieve sustainable competitive advantages and superior performance against industry rivals.

Objective 3: The research findings demonstrate significant indirect effects of dynamic capability on organizational performance through competitive advantage in Thai golf courses. Dynamic capability, influence organizational performance through the mediating mechanism of competitive advantage. Among the specific dimensions, human capital capabilities exhibit the strongest indirect effect (path coefficient = .161, $p < .01$; Harahap et al. (2024)), followed by sensing and coordinating capabilities (both with path coefficient = .137, $p < .05$ and $p < .01$ respectively; Zehir and Vural Allaham (2024); Tleuberdinova et al. (2022)), learning capability (path coefficient = .130, $p < .01$; Zameer et al. (2024)), integrating capability (path coefficient

= 0.116, $p < .01$; Zehir and Vural Allaham (2024)), procedural knowledge (path coefficient = .110, $p < .05$; Jabo et al. (2024)), and declarative knowledge (path coefficient = .095, $p < .05$; Jabo et al. (2024)). These indirect effect patterns reveal that dynamic capability doesn't directly enhance organizational performance but first establishes competitive advantages through superior service quality, course maintenance, and operational efficiencies, which then drive improved organizational performance via increased sales growth, market share expansion, and higher repeat patronage rates. This mediation relationship supports Resource-Based View theory, where organizations develop valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources through their dynamic capability, creating competitive advantages that ultimately generate superior performance outcomes compared to competitors.

Recommendation

Theoretical implications: This research extends the Resource-Based View theory to Thai golf courses, demonstrating that sustainable competitive advantage requires developing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources through seven dynamic capability dimensions. It illuminates the sequential relationships between knowledge and process dimensions, highlighting human capital as fundamental in service industries. The study confirms that competitive advantage completely mediates between dynamic capability and performance, emphasizing the dynamic capability framework as a crucial Resource-Based View extension for service businesses in rapidly changing environments.

Practical implications: Golf courses should enhance organizational capabilities through comprehensive development across multiple dimensions: establishing systematic personnel development with specialized training, mentorship, and clear career paths; implementing integrated data collection systems with quarterly environmental scanning and customer journey mapping; creating knowledge management systems with clear workflows and cross-departmental information exchange; fostering continuous learning through cross-functional innovation teams and collaborative networks with industry experts; developing employee skill databases and monthly knowledge exchange activities; creating comprehensive operational standard manuals with regular practical training and technology to record best practices; and establishing competitor analysis databases, customer relationship management systems for customer behavior analysis, and evaluation systems that reward knowledge contributions—all while leveraging modern technologies to connect data across departments and enhance overall organizational performance.

Future research:

Future research should add issues, such as continuing studies in areas where limitations are found in this research. For instance, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine how the relationship between organizational resources, competitive advantage, and performance of Thai golf courses evolves, particularly as the industry continues to develop and respond to changing market conditions. Additionally, future studies should consider expanding the scope of the study to other contexts to enhance understanding of the topic studied and incorporate qualitative research methodologies. This could involve comparative studies between Thailand and other golf tourism destinations in Southeast Asia, as well as in-depth interviews with golf course managers or case studies of successful golf courses to reveal nuanced aspects of resource management that quantitative approaches might not capture.

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