

Examining the Structural Relationships among Components of Strategic Thinking and Their Consequences for Creating Competitive Advantage in Primary Schools (Modeling Using a Mixed-Methods Approach)

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1. Round 1

1.1 Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement “Meta-analytical and grounded theory research indicates that strategic thinking is shaped by a combination of individual, organizational, and environmental factors” would be strengthened by a brief synthetic table or conceptual figure summarizing these categories and showing how your model extends prior classifications.

The manuscript states that prior Iranian studies have treated strategic thinking as unidimensional. Please cite at least one specific scale or model used in those studies and explicitly state which dimensions were missing, to more clearly justify the novelty of your multidimensional approach.

The strong effect of “needs and motivation” is highlighted. However, it remains unclear whether motivation is intrinsic, extrinsic, or institutional. Clarifying this distinction would improve theoretical precision.

While CR and AVE are reported, discriminant validity (e.g., Fornell–Larcker or HTMT) is not discussed. Please include this analysis or justify its omission.

Author revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

1.2 Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The aim is clearly stated; however, it would benefit from explicitly identifying the methodological contribution, for example, whether the novelty lies in second-order SEM modeling, contextualization, or construct integration.

The study is described as “quantitative in terms of implementation,” yet the title refers to a mixed-methods approach. Please clarify where and how qualitative elements were used, or revise the title to avoid methodological inconsistency.

The cluster sampling procedure is described clearly, but the rationale for selecting three out of five clusters is not theoretically justified. Please explain why these clusters sufficiently represent the province’s diversity, or acknowledge this as a sampling limitation.

The manuscript states that the questionnaire was developed through a review of theoretical foundations. Please add a brief mapping (e.g., table or paragraph) showing how each construct (causal, contextual, etc.) was derived from specific theoretical sources.

Although face, content, and construct validity are mentioned, the procedures for content validity (e.g., number of experts, CVR/CVI thresholds) are not reported. This information is essential for methodological transparency.

The demographic description is adequate, but the manuscript would benefit from a short interpretive comment explaining how participants’ experience and education levels may influence strategic thinking capacity.

Table 1 is extensive and informative; however, it may overwhelm readers. Consider grouping indicators under higher-order headings or moving detailed paths to an appendix while keeping key structural paths in the main text.

The interpretation emphasizes strong loadings but does not explain why cultural space management shows the highest coefficient. Please provide a brief contextual explanation grounded in Khuzestan’s socio-cultural characteristics.

Author revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.