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Business Strategy and Competitive Advantage Nexus Among Landscape Business in Beijing, China

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to determine the effectiveness of business strategy and its effect to competitive advantage of landscape business in Beijing, China. The objectives of the study seek to determine the extent of the competitive advantage of the landscape firms in terms of cost, flexibility, delivery, and quality. This also determine the effectiveness of the business strategies of the companies with regards to arenas, differentiators, vehicles, staging, and economic logic. The study proposed a strategic business toolkit guide for landscape business. The study utilized descriptive research method. This study conducted a survey among 139 general managers of landscape design companies in Beijing. To ensure sample representativeness, the study employed simple random sampling, selecting every general manager, through the wheel of names application, from the 237 companies, resulting in 139 valid responses. Frequency, percentage, mean and multiple regression, quantile regression analyses, Kruskal wallis, and ANOVA were finally used in this study. The study revealed that most of the landscape firms are corporation, with 1-10 employees, and with 1-3 years in business while majority have non-EPC contract. Landscape firms have highly competitive advantage with regards to flexibility, delivery, and quality while average competitive advantage in terms of cost. Landscape firms have effective business strategies in terms of arenas, differentiators, vehicles, staging, and economic logic. Business strategy has significant effect to competitive advantage of landscape firms in terms of cost, delivery, and quality but no effect on flexibility. There is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to profile. The study proposed a strategic business toolkit guide for landscape firms in Beijing, China.

KEYWORDS

Business Strategy; Competitive Advantage; Landscape Business

1. INTRODUCTION

In a rising vigorous economic environment, China's landscape design sector is currently confronted with both opportunities and major obstacles. Businesses that do not have the necessary procedures are being slowly driven out of the landscape design industry. Many landscape design businesses are actively looking for business strategies to strengthen their competitive edge in order to thrive in the current environment. However, there are still significant concerns about what makes a good business plan and whether or not these plans can actually increase competitive advantage. Landscape design firms should not only concentrate on technical services but also strengthen their competitive advantage in the bigger picture and opportunities of urban regeneration and rural revitalization in China. This will help them attain sustainable, future growth and enhance their contribution to society.

Cost, flexibility, delivery, and quality are the main differentiators for landscape design firms in the market. In order to save operating and project costs, cost advantage is attained through streamlining

resource allocation and management procedures. Being flexible means having the capacity to quickly adapt and provide tailored solutions in response to changes in the market and consumer needs. The delivery advantage focuses on meeting or exceeding timetables and maintaining quality control to gain the trust of clients. In order to meet or surpass customer standards, quality advantage is maintained through stringent quality control and efficient management. Furthermore, effective execution of business plans is essential. These strategies encompass the market domain, differentiation factors, tools and carriers, staging, and economic logic. Market domain pertains to the identification of target markets and customer groups, whereas differentiation factors are associated with the establishment of competitive advantages via distinctive design and inventive services. Promotional platforms, management software, and digital design tools are examples of tools and carriers. Economic logic maximizes costs and returns in project operations for equitable growth, whereas staging strategy establishes both short- and long-term objectives following various development stages.

Several landscape design businesses in Beijing have started implementing different business strategies in order to become more competitive. These businesses seek to acquire information from successful experiences, research international business techniques, and build tactics that are appropriate for their stage of growth. This study encourages the sustained development of the overall industry and offers Beijing's landscape design firms practical business strategy input.

Beijing is home to a large number of international businesses as well as exceptional local firms with significant competitive advantages. These businesses have used effective business strategies to attain significant success. This study focuses on Beijing-based landscape design companies' business strategies and how they affect their ability to gain a competitive edge. Beijing businesses are accustomed to using efficient business strategies to increase their competitive advantage in such a market. The goal of every business leader is to increase their competitive advantage by developing and executing effective business strategies.

This study will assess the business strategies and competitive advantage of landscape firms in Beijing, China. According to (Farida & Setiawan, 2022), business strategies have a positive impact on competitive advantage. Better business strategies improve the competitive advantage of SMEs.

A competitive advantage is anything that gives a company an edge over its competitors, helping it attract more customers and grow its market share. In service industry, the dimension of competitive advantage is simpler which consists of cost, flexibility, delivery, and quality.

A strategy diamond is a collection of the five elements forming a coherent business strategy. These five elements of strategy include Arenas, Differentiators, Vehicles, Staging, and Economic Logic. This model was developed by strategy researchers, Donald Hambrick and James Fredrickson. An effective strategy contains these key elements. It is important to consider each of the five elements in the Strategy Diamond Model because they are all interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

The objective of this study is to investigate the efficient business strategies that Beijing-based landscape design firms might implement to strengthen their competitive advantage. This study examines methods used by both local and international businesses that achieved success in order to offer insightful analysis and suggestions for Beijing's landscape design sector. As a result, businesses will be able to create and implement strategies that are easier for workers to comprehend and carry out, which will eventually boost output and provide them a competitive advantage in the industry.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to determine the effectiveness of business strategy and its effect to competitive advantage of landscape business in Beijing, China. Specifically, this study aims to:

(1) What is the profile of the companies in terms of:

a. form of organization;

b. number of employees;

c. type of contract; and

d. years in business?

(2) To what extent do the competitive advantage of the landscape firms manifest with regards to:

a. cost;

b. flexibility;

c. delivery; and

d. quality?

(3) How effective are the business strategies of the companies in terms of the following elements:

a. arenas;

b. differentiators;

c. vehicles;

d. staging; and

e. economic Logic?

(5) Does business strategy significantly affect the competitive advantage?

(6) Is there a significant difference on the assessment of the respondents based on profile?

The study tested the hypotheses below:

H_{o1}: Business strategy does not significantly affect competitive advantage.

H_{o2}: There is no significant difference on the assessment of respondents when grouped according to profile.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive correlational research design is a type of non-experimental research used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon and examine the relationships between variables. This design does not involve manipulating variables but instead focuses on observing and measuring them as they naturally occur.

The researcher chose a descriptive study as it aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2023). Descriptive methods help determine circumstances and causes based on study requirements. Document analysis using interpretive data was conducted to enhance information accuracy.

This study conducted a survey among 139 general managers of landscape design companies in Beijing. These managers are mostly young, married, with undergraduate or graduate degrees, and have been making decisions in their respective companies for 5 to 15 years. They possess comprehensive experience and understanding of company operations and business strategies, along with profound insights into industry trends and market competition. To ensure sample representativeness, the study employed simple random sampling, selecting every general manager, through the wheel of names application, from the 237 companies, resulting in 139 valid responses, through the Raosoft Online Calculator with 5.4% margin of error. The questionnaire was distributed via email and WeChat, with assistance from the China Landscape Architecture Industry Association, covering aspects of company operations, strategies, and competitive advantages. Through detailed

investigation, the research aims to uncover how business strategies of landscape design companies in Beijing translate into substantial competitive advantages in a fiercely competitive market, offering valuable insights and guidance for relevant enterprises and researchers. Frequency, percentage, mean and multiple regression, quantile regression analyses, Kruskal wallis, and ANOVA were finally used in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Profile of the Respondents

4.1.1. Form of Organization

As shown in Table 2, this table represents the frequency and percentage of different forms of organizations. The sample contains 139 organizations, of which 64 (about 46.0%) are corporation, 47 (about 33.8%) are partnerships, and 28 (about 20.1%) are sole proprietorships. These numbers can be used to understand the relative proportions of different forms of business organizations in this particular sample.

Table 2
Form of Organization

Form of Organization	Frequency	Percent
Sole Proprietorship	28	20.1 %
Partnership	47	33.8 %
Corporation	64	46.0 %
Total	139	100%

Comprehensive analysis shows that the companies in this sample have the highest proportion of corporate forms, followed by partnerships, and sole proprietorships have the lowest proportion. The survey found that the organizational forms of landscape design companies in Beijing, China mainly include individual companies, sole proprietorships and comprehensive joint-stock companies. Individual companies and sole proprietorships are usually founded by design technicians or people with relevant professional skills, and their characteristics include lack of business strategy capabilities, weak core competitiveness and the risk of bankruptcy. In contrast, comprehensive joint-stock companies have business strategy application skills, are good at full industry chain business, and have strong financial strength. When comprehensive joint-stock companies decide to expand their business scale, they often invest in brand new landscape design companies and develop them into comprehensive landscape service companies.

4.1.2. Number of Employees

Table 3 shows the distribution of the number of employees in the sample companies. The sample contains 139 companies, of which 37.4% have 1-10 employees, 29.5% have 11-30 employees, 23.0% have 31-50 employees, and 10.1% have more than 50 employees. These data can be used to understand the relative proportion of companies of different sizes in this sample.

Table 3
Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percent
1-10 Person	52	37.4 %
11-30 Person	41	29.5 %
31-50 Person	32	23.0 %
More than 50	14	10.1 %
Total	139	100%

4.1.3. Type of Contract

Table 4 shows the distribution of contract types or content services in the 139 samples in the form of frequency and percentage. In this sample, 64 samples have EPC contracts, accounting for 46.0% of the total. Non-EPC represents non-EPC contracts, which means that the design, procurement and construction may be undertaken by different companies. In this sample, 75 samples are of the Non-EPC type, accounting for 54.0% of the total. Therefore, this table shows that in this sample, there are slightly more non-EPC type contracts than EPC type contracts.

That is, in Beijing's landscape design industry, more and more companies, driven by market demand, have begun to implement a large proportion of engineering, design and construction (EPC) contracts. This shift is seen as a natural evolution of market demand. EPC projects provide companies with a framework to provide design, procurement and construction services under a single contract, thereby providing customers with a full range of solutions. This model simplifies the project management process and ensures smooth coordination between all stages of the project. Especially for customers in the construction and real estate industries, they prefer to work with a single entity to simplify communication, reduce risks and ensure clear responsibilities. Landscape design companies provide EPC services, which can not only meet this demand, but also enhance their market competitiveness.

Table 4
Type of Contract

Type of Contract	Frequency	Percent
EPC	64	46.0 %
Non-EPC	75	54.0 %
Total	139	100%

4.1.4. Years in business

The table shows the number of years the surveyed companies have been in operation. Companies with less than 1 year have the smallest proportion, with a frequency of 18 and a proportion of 12.9%. Companies with 1-3 years have the largest proportion, with a frequency and proportion of 46 and 33.1%, respectively. Companies with 4-5 years have a frequency of 35 and a proportion of 25.2%. Companies with more than 5 years are relatively more numerous, with a frequency of 40 and a proportion of 28.8 %.

Table 5
Years in Business

Number of years in business	Frequency	Percent
less than 1 year	18	12.9 %
1-3 years	46	33.1 %
4-5 years	35	25.2 %
More than 5 years	40	28.8 %
Total	139	100%

4.2. Extent of Competitiveness Advantage of the Landscape Firms

4.2.1. Cost

The landscape firms assessed an average competitive advantage with regards to cost with a composite mean of 4.49. This suggests that the majority of the firms believe they are able to manage their costs effectively, offering competitive pricing in the market. The standard deviation of 0.593 reflects that the respondents have almost same level of assessment. Most firms have a similar perception of their competitive advantage in cost, indicating consensus among the firms about their cost management capabilities. This consensus among firms highlights effective cost management practices and provides a solid foundation for pursuing a cost leadership strategy. By maintaining stringent cost controls, leveraging technology, and focusing on efficient operations, these firms can sustain their competitive edge in the market.

Table 6
Competitiveness Advantage of the Landscape Firms in terms of Cost

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Operates at lower cost relative to competitors	3.65	1.731	Average
2. Is able to differentiate and command a premium price that exceeds the extra cost of doing so	4.98	1.626	High
3. has competitive prices and payment terms due to long term cooperative relationship with reliable suppliers	4.87	1.61	High
4. manages project costs well with detailed cost budgets and monitoring	4.16	1.75	Average
5. refines project management and ensures projects are delivered on time and avoid exceeding budget through reasonable stage evaluation, precise cost control and real-time monitoring	4.37	1.665	Average
6. conducts detailed accounting of all aspects of the project for accurate budgeting	4.68	1.471	High
7. establish incentive mechanisms to encourage cost savings and improve work efficiency to control costs	4.65	1.564	High
8. Conducts in-depth assessments of potential risks in projects and clarify responsibilities and provisions in contracts to reduce the risk of additional costs and delays	4.45	1.673	Average
9. continuously evaluate existing cost control strategies and learn from customer feedback, market changes and industry trends and adapt accordingly	4.63	1.598	High
Composite Mean	**4.49**	**0.593**	**Average**

4.2.2. Flexibility

The table below shows the level of flexibility of the interviewed Beijing landscape design companies.

The landscape firms are perceived to have a high competitive advantage in terms of flexibility, with a composite mean of 4.59. The low standard deviation of 0.525 indicates a high level of agreement among the respondents regarding this assessment. This consistency suggests that the landscape firms are effectively demonstrating flexibility in their operations, perhaps adapting well to changing market conditions, customer needs, or operational challenges. Flexibility can be a significant asset in the competitive landscape, enabling firms to innovate, respond swiftly to opportunities, and mitigate risks effectively. Similar to the study of Agha, Alrubaiee, & Jamhour (2012), the knowledge base that sets a business apart and gives it a competitive edge over rivals is known as the core competency, and it involves cooperation, empowerment, and shared vision. Moreover, responsiveness and flexibility are the two main components of competitive advantage. It is the ability and desire of the company to create firm-specific possibilities for the setup and reconfiguration of noticeably better client value proposition.

Table 7
Competitiveness Advantage of the Landscape Firms in terms of Flexibility

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Is able to add or substitute easily new services	4.42	1.556	Average
2. Can vary the total output economically	4.54	1.585	High
3. Can offer different combinations of services effectively	4.81	1.601	High
4. Has a workforce who can perform a broad range of tasks	4.63	1.625	High
5. Can adapt to a changing market environment easily	4.81	1.513	High
6. Can increase capacity and capability easily when needed	4.71	1.4	High
7. responds to different customer needs and has diverse design styles	4.75	1.588	High
8. continues to innovate in technology and material applications to provide more creative and sustainable solutions	4.37	1.638	Average
9. Has fast project execution and respond quickly to adjustments	4.42	1.513	Average
10. provides customized services and can flexibly design and construct according to customers' specific requirements and preferences to meet individual needs	4.57	1.642	High
11. cooperates with companies or professionals in other fields, integrates resources from different fields, and provides more comprehensive and comprehensive solutions	4.52	1.515	High
Composite Mean	**4.59**	**0.525**	**High**

4.2.3. Delivery

The table shows the level of delivery of the Beijing landscape design companies interviewed.

A composite mean score of 4.67 indicates that the surveyed landscape design companies in Beijing are highly rated in terms of their work completion delivery. This high score reflects a strong perception of the firms' ability to complete projects as planned and deliver quality work. The standard deviation of 0.609 suggests that there is relatively low variability in responses regarding work completion. This indicates that most respondents share a similar view on the high level of delivery completion among the firms, reinforcing the consistency in their performance. A high score in work completion often reflects the firms' ability to meet project deadlines and deliver results on time. Timeliness is crucial for client satisfaction and project success. Completing work to a high standard is essential for achieving a high evaluation score. This includes meeting project specifications, maintaining quality throughout the project, and delivering the final product as expected. To sustain and enhance this positive evaluation, firms should focus on maintaining quality standards, optimizing project management processes, investing in staff training, and continuously seeking client feedback. By doing so, they can ensure continued success and high client satisfaction. In the study by Esper et al. (2010), effective delivery strategies are said to not only increase operational efficiency but also help to achieve greater market performance by delivering customer value and distinction. Moreover, entities that have excellent delivery operations can quickly adjust to market changes and consumer needs, bolstering their competitive edge.

Table 8
Competitiveness Advantage of the Landscape Firms in terms of Delivery

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Can finish a particular project at the agreed time	4.7	1.563	High
2. Is able to meet the customer's specification s with the right materials	4.74	1.543	High
3. Can finish reliable projects	4.48	1.496	Average
4. Can cater to improvements in products and services	4.78	1.507	High
5. provides high-quality design solutions and construction execution to ensure that projects meet or exceed customer expectations	4.85	1.469	High
6. pays attention to communication with customers, able to understand customer needs, and win more projects and reputation for the company	4.52	1.524	High
7. pays attention to sustainable development and integrates environmentally friendly design concepts and practices into the project so that the design and the natural environment can coexist harmoniously	4.49	1.635	Average
8. provides comprehensive after-sales service and win repeat customers and word-of-mouth publicity for the company	4.76	1.497	High
Composite Mean	**4.67**	**0.609**	**High**

4.2.4. Quality

The table below shows the level of project completion quality of the interviewed Beijing landscape design companies.

It can be seen that the composite mean of the respondents' evaluation of competitive advantage of quality is 4.63, which is verbally interpreted as high. This indicates that the firms are widely recognized for delivering high-quality projects that meet or exceed client expectations. The standard deviation of 0.717 is relatively low, suggesting that there is minimal variability in responses regarding project completion quality. Most respondents' evaluations are close to the mean, indicating a consensus on the high quality of project completion. High project completion quality means that projects are completed with attention to detail, meeting all specified requirements and standards.

Table 9
Competitiveness Advantage of the Landscape Firms in terms of Quality

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. creates unique value for customers	4.55	1.415	High
2. conforms to specifications and applies strict quality management processes, from the design stage to the end of construction	4.6	1.54	High
3. has an experienced professional team and works with high-quality partners to ensure that construction materials and technologies meet or exceed industry standards	4.65	1.536	High
4. Conducts quality monitoring and evaluation to ensure projects meet design standards and meet client expectations	4.52	1.476	High
5. strictly follows industry standards and specifications, including sustainable design principles, safety regulations and environmental protection requirements, to ensure that design and construction comply with the latest industry standards	4.85	1.484	High
Composite Mean	**4.63**	**0.717**	**High**

4.3. Effectiveness of the Business Strategies of Landscape Companies

4.3.1. Arenas

Arenas refers to the specific areas where the business will compete, such as market segments, geographical locations, and types of services offered. The table below shows the distribution of arenas of the interviewed Beijing landscape design companies.

The composite mean effectiveness score for the arena in the landscape industry is 4.66. This score is verbally interpreted as "effective," suggesting that Beijing landscape design companies perceive their arena strategies as successful in achieving their strategic goals. The standard deviation of 0.664 indicates that responses from respondents are relatively consistent and clustered closely around the mean. The effective recognition of the arena by Beijing landscape design companies underscores its importance for their survival and development. The composite mean score of 4.66 reflects a positive perception among Beijing landscape design companies regarding their arena strategies. This indicates that firms are strategically targeting appropriate market segments, geographic locations, and service offerings to meet customer needs effectively. The relatively low standard deviation (0.664) suggests a high degree of consensus among respondents regarding the effectiveness of their arena strategies. This uniformity in responses indicates a shared understanding and agreement among companies in the industry about the importance and impact of their chosen arenas. Choosing the right arenas ensures alignment with customer preferences and market demands, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Gulati and Puranam (2017), arenas offer businesses a place to collaborate on value creation, share risks, and take advantage of complementary skills in order to gain a long-term competitive edge. Companies can increase their market reach, have access to new resources, and better capitalize on emerging trends by taking part in arenas.

Table 10
Effectiveness of the Business Strategies in terms of Arenas

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Conducts market research and in-depth understanding of customer needs, thereby gaining more market share	4.62	1.375	Effective
2. maintains the leading position in the Beijing market by cooperating with the government and industry, and actively participating in international design exchange activities, and plans to expand into the international market	4.49	1.525	Somewhat Effective
3. Improves work efficiency and reduces project cycle time	4.7	1.623	Effective
4. Evaluates in-depth potential project risks to reduce unforeseen costs	4.73	1.506	Effective
5. Continuously optimize and update the existing cost control strategy	4.76	1.512	Effective
Composite Mean	**4.66**	**0.664**	**Effective**

4.3.2. Differentiators

Differentiators refer to the unique attributes or capabilities that set a company apart from its competitors in the marketplace. These can include various aspects of a company's products, services, or overall business approach that distinguish it and create a competitive advantage. The table below shows the differentiating factors of the interviewed Beijing landscape design companies.

The composite mean of differentiation factors is 4.61, indicating that respondents perceive differentiation strategies as effective in their business context. The verbal interpretation of a mean score of 4.61 as "effective" suggests strong agreement among respondents regarding the impact of differentiation factors on their competitive positioning. The standard deviation of 0.605 indicates that responses are tightly clustered around the mean, suggesting a high level of consistency in how respondents perceive the effectiveness of differentiation strategies. The high mean score suggests that respondents believe differentiation strategies are effective in distinguishing their company from competitors. This effectiveness likely stems from unique product features, superior service offerings, or other distinctive attributes that attract and retain customers. Effective differentiation strategies allow companies to stand out in crowded markets, attract target customers, and command premium pricing. The differentiation level of the interviewed companies was evaluated, and the results showed that all differentiations have an impact on the competitiveness of the interviewed companies, and it was found that differentiated operations are an important part of the competitiveness of the interviewed companies. This shows that the respondents will attach importance to differentiation and have the desire to continue to enhance differentiated services. The study of (Dirisu, 2013) indicates that identifying meaningful product-driven differentiation can be particularly fruitful in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage. Differentiation occurs when a company or brand outperforms rival brands in offering one (or more) features, while it faces reduced sensitivity to other features.

Table 11
Effectiveness of the Business Strategies in terms of Differentiators

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Offers innovative design, unique style and personalized solutions	4.4	1.468	Somewhat Effective
2. Has new landscape products with special shapes according to customers' specific requirements and preferences	4.58	1.579	Effective
3. Establish a good brand reputation and professional reputation	4.68	1.451	Effective
4. Pays attention to sustainability and environmental protection factors in design and provides unique environmentally friendly design solutions to give the company a competitive advantage in the field of sustainable design	4.88	1.435	Effective
5. Develops different pricing strategies based on differentiated services provided	4.54	1.416	Effective
6. Consider added value and price elasticity, and formulate pricing strategies accordingly	4.51	1.491	Effective
7. Provides service plans at different prices for customers at different levels	4.66	1.577	Effective
Composite Mean	**4.61**	**0.605**	**Effective**

4.3.3. Vehicles

The table below shows the sales levels of the Beijing landscape design companies interviewed.

The composite mean score for the evaluation of vehicles by respondents regarding Beijing landscape design companies is 4.65. This composite mean is verbally interpreted as indicating an effective evaluation of vehicle performance. The total standard deviation is 0.539, indicating a relatively low variability in responses around the mean. The composite mean suggests that respondents generally perceive the vehicle performance of Beijing landscape design companies as strong and effective. This indicates positive feedback regarding the companies' ability to generate sales and revenue. Efficient cost structures contribute to competitive pricing and profitability. Similar to the study of Burgelman and Grove (2019), vehicles serve as crucial instruments that enable businesses to get access to new

markets, technology, and competencies. Businesses can boost competitiveness, reduce risks related to unstable markets, and expedite expansion by carefully selecting and handling these vehicles. This strategic approach helps businesses expand their market reach and innovate while remaining adaptable to changing industry dynamics.

Table 12
Effectiveness of the Business Strategies in terms of Vehicles

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Achieves the lowest cost and gain profits through scale advantages	4.74	1.451	Effective
2. Reduces costs within the existing scope and replicate advantages to obtain corresponding profits	4.72	1.646	Effective
3. Generates premium prices through unparalleled service	4.5	1.557	Effective
4. Bring high prices through exclusive customized services or product features	4.58	1.494	Effective
5. Invest in research and development, brand building and marketing to enhance competitiveness	4.63	1.538	Effective
6. Ensure the competitive advantage of its profit model through high-quality design, good customer relations and continuous innovation	4.72	1.509	Effective
7. Increases automation of the design process, optimizes the supply chain to reduce material costs, and improves employee efficiency through training	4.58	1.464	Effective
8. Generates sustained or long-term shareholder returns with profits above the cost of investment in the company	4.71	1.524	Effective
Composite Mean	**4.65**	**0.539**	**Effective**

4.3.4. Staging

Staging refers to the sequence and speed of strategic moves that a company plans to implement. It involves making decisions about the timing, pace, and order of strategic initiatives, and is crucial for managing resources effectively, minimizing risks, and achieving competitive advantage. The table below shows the level of phased execution of the Beijing landscape design companies interviewed.

Table 13
Effectiveness of the Business Strategies in terms of Staging

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Conducts market research to understand customer needs and gain more market share	4.58	1.459	Effective
2. Actively participates in international design exchange activities, maintains a leading position in the Beijing market, and plans to expand the national market through cooperation with the government and industry associations,	4.7	1.487	Effective
3. Strengthens brand building and publicity, uses the service characteristics and experience of the whole process of the project to record publicity on the new media network platform, provides services according to demand, and obtains the market.	4.39	1.599	Somewhat Effective
4. Provides personalized customized services, innovative technologies and service models to gain market share.	4.74	1.491	Effective
5. Establish upstream and downstream partnerships to expand business scope and market share	4.65	1.493	Effective
Composite Mean	**4.61**	**0.677**	**Effective**

It can be seen that the composite mean of the evaluation of the staging business strategy of landscape firms in Beijing is 4.61, which is verbally interpreted as effective. The standard deviation is 0.677. This suggests that the respondents consistently view the staging strategy as an effective approach for their firms. The relatively low standard deviation indicates a high level of agreement among respondents, reinforcing the importance of this strategy in achieving competitive advantage. The results show that the respondents of Beijing Landscape Design Company are recognized for the performance of phased and phased improvement of competitiveness. The respondents are willing to put phased and phased execution into a certain meaning for them. In this study, the phased business strategy is a necessary manifestation of the business strategy to a certain extent.

4.3.5. Economic Logic

Economic logic is a crucial element in the strategic framework of landscape firms in Beijing, as it directly impacts cost management and overall competitive advantage. The table below shows the level of economic logic of the interviewed Beijing landscape design companies.

The composite means of 4.63 with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.673 underscores the landscape design companies' strong belief in the effectiveness of economic logic in their strategic frameworks. The variability in standard deviations across items reflects varying levels of consensus among respondents.

Table 14
Effectiveness of the Business Strategies in terms of Economic logi

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Implements staging strategy to gradually complete the work at each stage to ensure that the project advances in an orderly manner	4.63	1.446	Effective
2. Develops a tranche plan as they expand their business, expand into markets, or launch new services	4.45	1.669	Somewhat Effective
3. Adopts phased technological updates and innovation promotions	4.65	1.512	Effective
4. Implements phased talent development plans to cultivate employees' professional skills and innovation capabilities to ensure that employee growth is consistent with the company's strategic goals	4.62	1.612	Effective
5. Plans phased strategy to reduce risk, increase execution efficiency, and enable companies to respond more nimbly to market changes and challenges	4.78	1.569	Effective
Composite Mean	**4.63**	**0.673**	**Effective**

4.4. Effect of Business Strategy to the Competitive Advantage of Landscape Firms

In the highly competitive landscape industry in Beijing, the application of effective business strategies may significantly impact the competitive advantage of firms. By carefully selecting arenas, differentiating through unique attributes, choosing the right vehicles for growth, staging strategic initiatives effectively, and ensuring sound economic logic, firms can build and sustain a strong market position. This study assesses the effect of business strategy to competitive advantage of landscape firms.

Table 15 shows the effect of business strategy to competitive advantage in terms of cost.

Based on findings, the differentiation strategy has effect to competitive advantage in terms of cost based on the p-value of 0.0011 which is less than .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis, which posits no effect between differentiation strategy and cost advantage, is rejected. This means there is a proven relationship indicating that implementing a differentiation strategy can lead to cost advantages for landscape firms. Differentiation involves offering unique products or services that stand out from competitors. In the context of landscape firms, this could mean innovative design solutions, high-quality materials, sustainable practices, or exceptional customer service. Despite the initial perception that differentiation might increase costs (e.g., through higher quality materials or advanced technologies), the study suggests that these strategies can lead to overall cost advantages. Landscape firms should continue to invest in strategies that differentiate their offerings, such as unique designs, sustainable practices, and superior customer service. Similar to the study of Opdam & Steingröver (2018), companies, especially large companies, could become involved in landscape governance in the area by internalizing the services provided by the landscape, given their influence as major players in supply chains and the economy as a whole. Biodiversity is increasingly linked to products, raw materials, and sources of new technology; thus, businesses are growing more interested in what nature has to offer.

Table 15
Effect of Business Strategy to Competitive Advantage in terms of Cost

Variable	Coefficient	SE	t-stat	p-value	Decision to Ho	Interpretation	VIF
Intercept	0.643610	0.447	1.440	0.1523	Failed to Reject	Not Significant	1.383
Arena	.021806	0.073	0.300	0.7643	Failed to Reject	Not Significant	1.341
Differentiation	0.261338	0.078	3.333	0.0011	Reject	Significant	1.309
Vehicle	0.072972	0.069	1.054	0.2940	Failed to Reject	Not Significant	1.193
Staging	0.204781	0.066	3.079	0.0025	Reject	Significant	1.141
Economic Logic	0.270876	0.090	2.998	0.0032	Reject	Significant	1.383
F-statistics = 15.306		*p-value = <.001*		*Adjusted R2 = 0.341395*		*Std. Error = 0.481566*	
Jarque-Bera (p-value) = 0.117		*Durbin-Watson = 1.340651 LL = 1.64432 UL = 1.79716*				*Breush-Pagan (p-value) = 0.5756*	

Table 16 shows the effect of business strategy in terms of flexibility of landscape firms.

The results of quantile regression analysis are presented, where the researchers used the 25th, 50th, and 75th quantiles. When the p-values for the 25th, 50th, and 75th quantiles were checked, they were found to be <0.0001 respectively. This indicates that the independent variable has a significant relationship with business strategy and competitive advantage at the 25th, 50th, and 75th quantiles.

Referring to the pseudo R-squared values for quantiles 25, 50, and 75, it can be observed that they are 0.201951, 0.175182, and 0.118901, respectively. This observation indicates that as the quantile increases, the pseudo R-squared increases first and then decreases. In other words, as the quantile increases, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable increases first and then decreases, and this relationship is strongest at the 25th quantile.

Table 16
Effect of Business Strategy in terms of Flexibility

Variables	25th				50th				75th			
	β	p	μ	Int.	β	p	μ	Int.	β	p	μ	Int.
Intercept	0.816	0.3116	F	NS	0.935	0.2791	F	NS	1.816	0.0763	F	NS
Arena	0.082	0.3109	F	NS	0.093	0.2892	F	NS	0.156	0.3267	F	NS
Differentiation	0.271	0.0021	R	S	0.270	0.0084	R	S	0.181	0.3815	F	NS
Vehicle	0.058	0.5313	F	NS	0.012	0.8753	F	NS	-0.002	0.9836	F	NS
Staging	-0.018	0.8468	F	NS	0.064	0.4657	F	NS	0.007	0.9228	F	NS
Economic Logic	0.369	0.0005	R	S	0.343	0.0106	R	S	0.302	0.0705	F	NS
p-value	*<.0001*				*<.0001*				*0.001972*			
Pseudo R-squared	*0.201951*				*0.175182*				*0.118901*			

Legend: μ = Decision to Ho R = Reject F = Failed to Reject S = Significant NS = Not Significant

Table 17 shows the effect of business strategy to competitive advantage in terms of delivery.

From the results, business strategy affects the level of competitive advantage. Since the p-value of 0.0256 is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, it can be concluded that the arena factor in business strategy has a significant impact on the delivery time in competitive advantage. The study rejects the null hypothesis, confirming that the arena factor significantly affects delivery time in competitive advantage. This shows that the role of the arena in improving the delivery time is statistically significant, supporting our research hypothesis. Focusing on the right market segments can streamline operations, reduce bottlenecks, and improve delivery times. Selecting optimal geographic locations for operations can minimize delivery distances and times. Proximity to suppliers and customers can significantly reduce logistical delays. The landscape firms may identify and prioritize market segments where delivery time can be a competitive differentiator. They can invest in markets that allow for efficient delivery processes. Similar to the study of Bhalla et al. (2023), businesses that use advanced methods like machine learning for delivery time estimation are better able to manage their resources, engage in productive negotiations, and regularly satisfy their customers. This competence increases client trust and loyalty, which not only boosts operational efficiency but also provides a strategic advantage.

Table 17
Effect of Business Strategy to competitive advantage in terms of delivery

Variable	Coefficient	SE	t-stat	p-value	Decision to Ho	Interpretation	VIF
Intercept	0.541590	0.444	1.220	0.2246	Failed to Reject	Not Significant	1.383
Arena	0.162643	0.072	2.257	0.0256	Reject	Significant	1.341
Differentiation	0.100501	0.078	1.291	0.1990	Failed to Reject	Not Significant	1.309
Vehicle	0.194854	0.069	2.833	0.0053	Reject	Significant	1.193
Staging	0.119325	0.066	1.807	0.0730	Failed to Reject	Not Significant	1.141
Economic Logic	0.312600	0.089	3.484	0.0007	Reject	Significant	1.383
F-statistics = 18.16624		*p-value = <.001*		*Adjusted R2 " 0.383464*		*Std. Error = 0.478245*	
Jarque-Bera (p-value) = 0.370933		*Durbin-Watson = 1.813 LL = 1.64432 UL = 1.79716*				*Breush-Pagan (p-value) = 0.1232*	

Table 18 shows the effect of business strategy to competitive advantage in terms of quality.

Since the p-value is 0.0112, which is significantly lower than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that the arena in the business strategy has a significant impact on the quality of competitive advantage. This shows that in the process of formulating and implementing business strategies, clarifying and optimizing the arena in which the enterprise is located can effectively improve the quality of products or services, thereby enhancing the competitive advantage of the enterprise. The selection and management of the arena is directly related to resource allocation, market positioning and the competitive position of the enterprise in the market, so its impact on quality cannot be ignored. Enterprises need to fully consider the arena factors in strategic planning to ensure that their products or services can stand out in the target market and maintain high quality standards. In general, the scientific and reasonable selection and management of the arena can not only enhance the quality advantage of the enterprise, but also enhance its overall market competitiveness. Because P = 0.0112 < 0.05, the differentiation factors in the business strategy have a significant impact on the quality of competitive advantage. In the study of Kim, Kumar, and Kumar (2012), strong quality management methods perform better financially and in the market. In addition, better quality can be an essential differentiation factor in competitive marketplaces, providing a substantial competitive advantage that rivals find difficult to imitate.

Table 18
Effect of Business Strategy to competitive advantage in terms of quality

Variables	25th				50th				75th			
	β	p	μ	Int.	β	p	μ	Int.	β	p	μ	Int.
Intercept	-0.401	0.5101	F	NS	-0.338	0.5993	F	NS	-0.117	0.8491	F	NS
Arena	0.169	0.1481	F	NS	0.255	0.0112	R	S	0.261	0.0223	R	S
Differentiation	0.278	0.0178	R	S	0.464	0.0112	R	S	0.550	<.001	R	S
Vehicle	0.115	0.3976	F	NS	-0.106	0.2910	F	NS	0.059	0.6789	F	NS
Staging	0.235	0.0067	R	S	0.254	0.0082	R	S	0.195	0.1907	F	NS
Economic Logic	0.219	0.1529	F	NS	0.203	0.1941	F	NS	0.045	0.6808	F	NS
p-value	*<.0001*				*<.0001*				*<.0001*			
Pseudo R-squared	*0.203544*				*0.240573*				*0.264310*			

Legend: μ = Decision to Ho R = Reject F = Failed to Reject S = Significant NS = Not Significant

4.5. Significant Difference on the Assessment of the Respondents when Grouped According to Profile

Beijing, as the capital city of China, is a hub for various industries, including landscape architecture and design. The landscape firms in Beijing play a crucial role in shaping the city's aesthetic and environmental landscape. These firms cater to a wide range of clients, including residential, commercial, and governmental sectors. This study discussed the difference on the assessment of the landscape firms when grouped according to their profile. Table 19 presents the significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to form of organization.

According to the analysis results in Table 19, the p- values of all variables are greater than 0.05, so the study failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the evaluation of each indicator when the respondents are grouped by form of organization. This means that under different organizational forms, there is no statistically significant difference in their cost, flexibility, delivery, quality, arena, differentiation factors, economic logic, sales channels, and staging and rhythm on competitive advantage. Specifically, cost (χ^2 =4.94, p=0.085), flexibility (χ^2 =0.618, p=0.734), delivery (χ^2 =1.765, p=0.414), quality (χ^2 =0.343, p=0.842), arena (χ^2 =4.948, p=0.084),

differentiator (χ^2 =1.777, p=0.411), economic logic (χ^2 =1.083, p=0.582), vehicle (χ^2 =1.325, p=0.516), and staging and pacing (χ^2 =4.551, p=0.103) all failed to reach the significance level. Therefore, it can be inferred that there are no significant statistical differences in the assessment of these key strategic factors among enterprises with different organizational forms. This finding suggests that although companies may have different organizational forms, they tend to have similar views on the key drivers of competitive advantage, providing a basis for further cross-organizational research.

Table 19
Significant Difference on the Assessment of the Respondents when Grouped According to Form of Organization

Variable	χ^2	p	Decision to Ho	Interpretation
Cost	4.94	0.085	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Flexibility	0.618	0.734	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Delivery	1.765	0.414	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Quality	0.343	0.842	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Arena	4.948	0.084	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Differentiator	1.777	0.411	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Economic Logic	1.083	0.582	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Vehicle	1.325	0.516	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Staging and Pacing	4.551	0.103	Failed to Reject	Not Significant

Table 20 presents the significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to number of employees.

In the analysis results in Table 20, the p- values of all variables are greater than 0.05, so the findings failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the respondents' evaluation of each indicator when grouped by the number of employees in the company. This shows that among companies with different numbers of employees, the difference of factors such as cost (χ^2 =1.6748, p=0.643), flexibility (χ^2 =3.9272, p=0.269), delivery (χ^2 =5.8966, p=0.117), quality (χ^2 =0.2194, p=0.974), arena (χ^2 =1.1207, p=0.350), differentiator (χ^2 =0.6453, p=0.886), economic logic (χ^2 =0.0762, p=0.995), vehicle (χ^2 =6.3248, p=0.097), and staging and pacing (χ^2 =4.0554, p=0.256) on competitive advantage did not reach a statistically significant level. Therefore, it can be inferred that there are no significant statistical differences in the assessment of these key strategic factors between companies of different sizes, and this finding provides a basis for further research on the impact of company size on strategic decision-making.

Table 20
Significant Difference on the Assessment of the Respondents when Grouped According to Number of Employees

Variable	χ^2	p	Decision to Ho	Interpretation
Cost	1.6748	0.643	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Flexibility	3.9272	0.269	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Delivery	5.8966	0.117	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Quality	0.2194	0.974	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Arena	1.1207*	0.350	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Differentiator	0.6453	0.886	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Economic Logic	0.0762	0.995	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Vehicle	6.3248	0.097	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Staging and Pacing	4.0554	0.256	Failed to Reject	Not Significant

* *F-Statistics*

Table 21 presents the significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to type of contract.

According to the statistical analysis results, the p- values of all variables are greater than 0.05, which means that we failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the respondents' evaluation of each indicator when grouped by contract type. This shows that regardless of the contract type, the respondents' evaluation of factors such as cost, flexibility, delivery, quality, arena, differentiator, economic logic, vehicle, and staging and pacing do not show statistically significant differences. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is no significant statistical difference in the evaluation of the impact of different contract types on these key strategic factors. This finding provides empirical support for further research on the impact of contract type on strategic decision-making and competitive advantage.

Table 21
Significant Difference on the Assessment of the Respondents when Grouped According to Type of Contract

Variable	MU	p	Decision to Ho	Interpretation
Cost	2081	0.177	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Flexibility	2347	0.822	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Delivery	2064	0.155	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Quality	2168	0.325	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Arena	2287	0.633	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Differentiator	2233	0.480	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Economic Logic	1836	0.017	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Vehicle	2334	0.781	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Staging and Pacing	0.5402*	0.590	Failed to Reject	Not Significant

** t-Statistics*

Table 22 presents the significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to number of years in business.

According to the results of variance analysis, the p-values of all variables are greater than 0.05, indicating that when the respondents are grouped by the number of years of business operation, there is no statistically significant difference in their evaluation. This shows that the length of corporate experience does not have a significant difference on its business strategy evaluation, suggesting that the evaluation results are consistent across different corporate experience backgrounds.

Table 22
Significant Difference on the Assessment of the Respondents when Grouped According to Number of Years in Business

Variable	χ^2	p	Decision to Ho	Interpretation
Cost	3.276	0.351	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Flexibility	2.142	0.544	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Delivery	1.679	0.642	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Quality	3.356	0.34	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Arena	0.214	0.975	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Differentiator	2.605	0.457	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Economic Logic	1.854	0.603	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Vehicle	1.475	0.688	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Staging and Pacing	3.994	0.262	Failed to Reject	Not Significant

5. CONCLUSIONS

Upon completion, the researchers concluded:

(1) Most of the landscape firms are corporation, with 1-10 employees, and with 1-3 years in business while majority have non-EPC contract.

(2) Landscape firms have highly competitive advantage with regards to flexibility, delivery, and quality while average competitive advantage in terms of cost.

(3) Landscape firms have effective business strategies in terms of arenas, differentiators, vehicles, staging, and economic logic.

(4) Business strategy has significant effect to competitive advantage of landscape firms in terms of cost, delivery, and quality but no effect on flexibility.

(5) There is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to profile.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers make the following recommendations based on their findings:

(1) Landscape design companies in Beijing, China should understand that failure means the possibility of improvement and learning. Leaders should also have the ability to find the root cause of problems and ensure that they do not recur. Leaders should challenge current processes to improve them. The interviewed company should help the interviewee when they encounter challenges and learn by solving real problems through the execution and adjustment of optimization strategies. The interviewee should observe the strategy execution process for a few hours until the process and the possibility of improvement are understood. The interviewee should personally go to the site to improve the process. The interviewee should obtain first-hand information from the project site and

find the root cause instead of being misled by inaccurate data collection or interpretation. The interviewee company should combine the company's strategy with its own competitive advantages. The two should also be aligned. The interviewed company can improve the behavior of the interviewed company team in executing projects mentioned above, which can improve the comprehensive competitive advantage of the interviewed company enterprise.

(2) Landscape design companies should give priority to establishing long-term cooperative relationships with suppliers with good reputation and stable supply capabilities. This will ensure that the company can obtain competitive prices and high-quality building materials, thereby reducing costs and improving the overall quality of the project and customer satisfaction. In addition, a stable supply chain can reduce the risk of project delays and enhance the company's market competitiveness.

(3) Given the expected beneficial effects of the proposed business strategy plan, Beijing landscape design companies may be attracted to participate in the business strategy leadership program. Beijing landscape design companies may consider participating in this business strategy plan to further promote the competitive advantages of the company's leadership and enable the company to develop healthily in the long term.

(4) The researcher can consider adopting the findings and proposing organizational improvement activities as this will greatly help the landscape design companies to understand the importance of their business strategies.

(5) After conducting business strategy planning, landscape design companies can adjust their strategies based on the feedback collected from participants.

(6) Other factors that may contribute to competitiveness in other companies or other types of industries in other cities. Future researchers may build on this and conduct another study suggesting examining other areas where landscape architecture companies can significantly improve their competitive advantage by adopting the strategies mentioned above.

(7) It is recommended that enterprises focus on the application of economic logic in strategic planning to enhance their market competitiveness.

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