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The Role of the Blue Ocean Strategy in Achieving Competitive Advantages

A Study on Traditional Food Shops in the State of M'Sila.

Dr. Somia NASRI*(1)
somia.nasri@cu-barika.dz
University Center of Barika, (Algeria)

Dr. Abdelhalim LACHACHE (2)
abdelhalim.lachache@univ-msila.dz
University of M'sila (Country)

Pr. Ali DEBBI (3)
alidebbi@uni-msila.dz
University of M'sila (Country)

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Abstract

This study aims to highlight the relationship of the Blue Ocean strategy to the competitive advantages of traditional products. To achieve the goal of the study, the theoretical frameworks related to the blue ocean strategy and competitive advantages were presented by Michael Porter;

then data was collected based on the interview with the sample of 7 traditional food shops in M'sila, and then the analysis of data using the NVIVO program. The study concluded that the field of traditional food is one of the fields in which competition is considered low, and therefore this field is considered a blue ocean. The study also concluded that traditional food stores in the state of M'Sila focus on the advantage of high quality.

✓ Keywords: Blue Ocean Strategy, competitive advantage, traditional cuisine.

*Corresponding author: Dr . Somia Nasri

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's institutions face intense competition in a world where their only constant advantage is change. To confront this type of competition, they must establish a difficult to imitate competitive advantage. Among these advantages, according to Michael Porter, are the advantage of lower cost, quality, and focus on a specific market. This type of competitive advantage requires: skilled human resources, quality raw materials, and specialized machinery and equipment.

All these elements will cost the institution a significant amount of money and effort to develop its products, so the institution must devise a low-cost strategy. One of these strategies is the blue ocean strategy. Traditional products present an opportunity in different environments; producing and marketing them in an environment other than their original one reduces competition and creates a difficult to imitate and inexpensive. Hence, the problem of the study arises as follows:

How does the blue ocean strategy contribute to achieving competitive advantage for traditional products? And the following sub-questions fall under this question:

- What are the main products that traditional food shops in the state of M’sila rely on?;
- What are the factors that determine the success of the blue ocean strategy in traditional food shops in M'sila?;
- What are the determinants of competitive advantages in traditional food shops in the M'Sila province?;
- What are the stores that contributed the most to the results of the field study?;
- Is there a relationship between the blue ocean strategy and competitive advantages in traditional food stores in Msila state?.

In order to answer the main question and sub-questions, the study was divided into two parts: In the first part, concepts related to blue ocean strategy and competitive advantage were presented; In the second part, the study procedures were presented, then we moved on to analyzing the interview data, relying on the NVIVO program, after that, we moved on to presenting the most important results.

2. Blue ocean strategy and competitive advantage

2.1. **The concept of blue ocean strategy**: Blue Ocean Strategy The term Blue Ocean Strategy is considered as one of the modern terminologies in the field of business administration in general and marketing management in particular, It refers to the clear blue water color that is not contaminated or infected by the bloody red color of water, defined Blue Ocean Strategy as Unused space in the market, where demand can be created, with a chance for profitable growth (Ali Alghamdi, 2016, pp. 141-160).

2.2. **Dimensions of the blue ocean strategy**: The dimensions of the blue ocean strategy include four dimensions (exclusion, Downsizing, increase, innovation), which we will explain as follows (Nazar & al, 2022, pp. 1488-1503):

Exclusion: The organization should create new value and think carefully about excluding the factors around which organizations have competed in previous periods;

Downsizing: An organization that seeks to create a blue ocean should seriously consider the activities that it overestimated in various areas, such as product design that contributed to the increase in costs;

Increase: The organization is supposed to work on increasing the concentration of some factors more than the rest of the competitors in the field of production processes, services or marketing activities, to reach a state of exclusivity and increase some things that will have the ability to increase and improve the level of quality in the products and services it provides to customers;

Innovation: The organization's implementation of the previous stages allows it to discover entirely new sources of customer value, to create new demand and to modify the strategies followed.

2.3. **The concept of Competitive advantage**: As for ANSOFF, the competitive advantage is defined as a product / market advantage that will give the organization a strong competitive position (Issa & al, 2010, p. 131). Concerning PORTER, who believes that the judgment on the competitive advantage is by the customer, and is related to the value that the customer obtains as a result of consuming the product. Furthermore, there are two basic dimensions to the competitive advantage, namely low cost and differentiation, as this definition is derived from his competitive strategy (Porter, 1990, p. 62).

2.4. **Dimensions of competitive advantage**: Institutions exist in a dynamic and highly changing environment, therefore they must be adapted by choosing the competitive dimension that achieves a competitive advantage in the market. However, there is no doubt that the process of selecting the competitive dimension depends on two main factors: the first is represented by the institution’s resources in building the competitive advantage ; The second is the market and the customers’ needs. The dimensions of competitive advantage are represented in four dimensions, as follows (Mefatih, 2023, pp. 55-70):

Cost dimension: The least cost is the oldest competitive dimension that many institutions have en devoured to adopt, as it means the ability of the institution to provide products at the lowest costs, which allows to achieve the lowest cost advantage and then sell its products at lower prices than competitors’ ones and realize a price competitive advantage, so that it can outperform competitors and new entrants to the industry.

Differentiation dimension : Thinking about the weaknesses of other institutions and innovating a new different feature to attract customers who complain about the defects of other competing products. Besides, it is possible to distinguish the existence of a new or unique service for the institution such as watermarks or increasing the network of distributors. Furthermore, it often entails a high cost for the institution as a result of adopting this dimension, taking into account the cost of the product, which is close to the cost of competitors.

Quality dimension: is considered as one of the most significant dimensions of competitive advantage, given that quality products are those that can be relied upon and trusted to accomplish the functions designed to perform. It also enables quality in its dimensions (design quality, conformity quality, service quality) to provide products that fulfill the customer's aspirations and satisfaction.

Response dimension: it came as a result of the state of technological development, as the cost and quality dimensions became traditional dimensions. It is the ability of the organization to respond and adapt quickly to meet market demands in quantity and quality, and this is according to the needs and desires of the customer, as well as reducing the delivery time.

3. Study procedures

To achieve the study's objectives and answer its questions, data was collected related to the Blue Ocean Strategy and the competitive advantage for a group of traditional food shops in the state of M' Sila. The interview tool, which is considered one of the qualitative research methods, was relied upon. Subsequently, the NVIVO software was used to analyze the study sample's responses to the directed questions The study procedures were as follows:

The interview guide includes three main themes as follows:

- The first axis: General data about the place, which includes 7 direct questions;

- The second axis: Blue Ocean Strategy, which includes 11 open-ended questions;

- The third axis: Competitive advantage, which includes 9 open-ended questions.

The open-ended questions were designed to allow the interviewee to freely express the possibility of relying on traditional dishes to achieve a competitive advantage in new environments; where these traditional products are considered a new idea and can be included as a Blue Ocean Strategy for idea and project holders. Here, the interview guide was directed to 7 traditional food shops in the state of M'sila, namely: Dar Jaddi, Traditional Food Bouzidi, Traditional Food Administrative District, Khaima Amira, Khaima Al-Hajja Lalahom, Sindibad, and Al-Safina. After collecting the data, which altogether included answers to 27 questions in each of the aforementioned shops, a qualitative data analysis program was used.

NVivo qualitative analysis software is developed, supported and distributed by QSR International Pty Ltd (www.qsrinternational.com) (QSR International, 2022). A single commercial license costs US$735 and US$445 for educational use; the job if NVivo creation of mind maps and cause effect networks (Godau, 2005).

This means that it is used for analyzing textual, audio, video, and image data (Statistical & Qualitative Data Analysis Software: About NVivo, 2019); this allows the researcher to classify the data according to the subject of his research (Stecq, 2014).

The software is available for Windows and Macintosh operating systems and works to capture social media data from Facebook, Twitter, ...etc, using the N Capture browser plugin. It also imports citations from bibliographic documentation software such as End Note, Mendeley, Zotero (Statistical & Qualitative Data Analysis

Software: About NVivo, 2019)... Among the advantages of the NVIVO software, we note:

- The software enables the gathering organizing and analysis of information, from sources such as interviews, focus groups, web pages, social media discussions, surveys, notes and documents.

- It supports working with document formats like doc, docx, rtf, txt, odt and more. You can create documents or import existing ones. It allows you to format content and apply adjustments. Additionally it offers the ability to work with PDF files by importing them and encoding the text within.

- Importing spreadsheets is also possible with this software. You can encode. Use automatic encoding to speed up the process. Furthermore it provides the option to import images or other file formats (Mac, 2019, p. 5).

- An interesting feature is its ability to directly use video or audio data as a source of information (Noriah & Ishak, 2012). Furthermore users have the flexibility to import and work with text files in character based languages such, as Chinese or Arabic (Wong, 2008, p. 19).

The Nvivo program is based on four approaches:(شرقي و بريكة، 2016، الصفحات 101-110)

- Lexical Approach: This is based on frequency statistics and the similarity between the words used. This means that similar words and their frequency of occurrence are displayed. The more a word is repeated, the more it indicates its importance in the subject of the study ;

- Linguistic Approach: The aim is to describe how we speak, through text similarity metrics that measure the linguistic resemblance between the data. This allows us to understand how similar the data is based on the words contained in it;

-Thematic Approach: The goal is to interpret the content by dividing it into understandable categories, which can then be coded. This facilitates the interpretation process. Coverage for each source;

-Cognitive maps: serve the purpose of organizing a concept. They are representations that capture perceptions related to one or more subjects. Of presenting data they offer a graphical depiction that brings together a central term with supporting terms. .

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study Results After presenting the study procedures, the importance of relying on the NVIVO program for analyzing the study's interview guide became clear. Therefore, the interviews will be analyzed based on the four approaches of the program as follows:

4.1. Lexical Approach

Through this approach, the frequency of the most commonly used words in the interviews will be displayed, and a word cloud will be presented as follows:

Table 1. General data for the stores under study

interviews	neighborhood	Number of Employees	Number of years of activity
the 01 interview	father's House in 500 Housing Grand neighborhood	07	09
the 02 interview	Bouzidi Traditional foods of neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	04	4
the 03 interview	Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	5	10
the 04 interview	Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	3	10
the 05 interview	Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	4	2
the 06 interview	Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	5	10
the 07 interview	The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	5	10

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

From the table above, it is clear that most of the stores where interviews were conducted have been in operation for 9 to 10 years, including stores like Dar Jaddi, Traditional Foods Khaima Amira, Sindibad and the Ship. As for Bouzidi Store and Lalahom, their years of experience were 4 years and 2 years, respectively; This highlights the importance of the study results, considering that most of the selected stores have good experience and possess ideas that qualify them to understand the importance of these traditional products in an environment different from where they originated. As for the number of workers in the stores under study, it was found that the stores employ between 3 to 7 workers, which explains the nature of these stores as they fall under the category of small enterprises and family entrepreneurial projects.

Table 2. Frequency for the top 10 most recurring words in the general data axis.

Word	word length	Frequency	Word	word length	Frequency
Zefiti*	5	7	the milk†	5	4
Shakhshoukha‡	8	7	the boiled [mefoor]	6	3
The chicken	6	4	Hmisse§	6	2
the broken [kisra]	6	4			

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

From the table and figure, it is clear that the main products of traditional food shops in M'sila are: Mahras and Shakshouka, which is evidenced by their recurrence

* **The Mahras**, also known as Zefiti is a dish that has gained popularity in various regions, like Bou Saâda and Djelfa. This delightful dish is prepared in a wood fired Mahras and comprises of ingredients such, as torn bread, peppers, tomatoes and garlic.

† **The milk**: It is left to curdle, then shaken until the butter is separated. The remaining liquid is served with kisra as a traditional product.

‡ **Shakhshoukha** is prepared in a clay pot. Its ingredients are similar, to 'zufiti'. The key difference lies in the preparation of its special broth. The slices of shakhshoukha, on the hand are thinly cut.

§ **Hmisse**: The green pepper and tomatoes are grilled, then cut into small slices. Garlic and oil are added to them. They can be served either raw or cooked.

7 times. Therefore, Mahras and Shakshouka are the main products, and all the studied shops produce them;

As for the following products: chicken, Ksra, and yogurt, they were mentioned 4 times, which means that 4 shops rely on these products. The meat product was mentioned 3 times, indicating that most shops do not include it in their product range. On the other hand, two shops included the Hmisse product in their product range, providing varied options for customers.

Table 3. Frequency for the top 10 most recurring words in the Blue ocean axis.

Word	word length	Frequency	Word	word length	Frequency
Customer	6	28	Response	9	6
Shop or Store	5	14	Focus	7	6
Traditional	9	10	Treatment	8	6
Dishes or Foods	7	8	Quality	5	6
Reception	7	7			

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

From the table, it is clear that the focus of the shops under study is on the customer, as evidenced by the word being repeated 28 times. This confirms the interest of the shop owners in their current customers, as well as attracting new ones through relying on the appeal of the product (final appearance or taste), service, and customer interaction;

The term "shop" is repeated 14 times, which also confirms its importance. Shop owners rely on the appeal of the product through the shop's appearance, location, and even the name, which carries the idea of tradition like "Dar Jdid", "Khaima Lalahom," etc. The terms "foods" and "traditional" were repeated 8 and 10 times respectively, highlighting the importance of traditional foods and that most shops rely on this type of product as competitive items and a new concept introduced to the market;

The shops also rely on good reception, which is evidenced by the word being repeated 7 times. Most of the traditional food shops in the state under study focus on the advantage of providing good reception to their customers. Good treatment, which was repeated 6 times, is also a focus, as well as responding to customer requests in a timely manner, where the term "response" was repeated 6 times. The shops do not offer new products; they suffice with traditional products, which they provide in good quality. The term "quality" was also repeated 6 times, indicating its importance and the shops' reliance on it.

Table 4. Frequency for the top 10 most recurring words in the Competitive advantages axis.

Word	word length	Frequency	Word	word length	Frequency
For investment	9	6	Facebook	9	3
The shop/store	5	5	Requires	5	3
Suitable/Appropriate	6	5	Obstacles	5	3
Strategy	10	4	Exceptional	9	2
Quality	6	4			

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

Regarding the axis of competitive advantage, it became clear that the word "investment" was repeated 6 times, highlighting its importance. The words "shop" and "suitable" were repeated 5 times, followed by "strategy," "quality," and "investment," each repeated 4 times. This explains the adoption of a quality strategy by this type of establishment. Then, "Facebook" and "obstacles" were each mentioned 3 times, confirming that these types of shops rely on Facebook as a promotional tool for their products. Finally, the word "exceptional" was repeated twice.

4.2. The Linguistic Approach

Through this approach, the correlation coefficients between the interviews conducted will be presented, as well as the correlation coefficients between the axes of the study as follows:

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficient between the Interviews

The first source	The second source	R Pearson
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	0,572946
Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	0,56481
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	0,474206
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	0,46237
Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	0,407209
Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	0,384672
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	0,382151
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	0,376035
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	0,366537
Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	0,346474
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	0,345994
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	0,33933

Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	0,33131
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	0,330208
Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	0,31424
Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	0,312003
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	0,295366
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	0,261923
Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	0,229291
Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	0,209988
Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	0,207972

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

From the table, it is clear that there is a correlation between the answers of the seven shops where we conducted interviews. This confirms the agreement of various respondents on the importance of traditional foods in creating a competitive edge for the shops; however, the level of correlation is acceptable but not strong, ranging from approximately 0.2 to 0.6. The highest level of correlation was between The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood and Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood.

Table 6. Pearson correlation coefficient between the Variables

dependent variable	Independent variable	R Pearson
Competitive advantages	blue ocean strategy	0,444388

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

From the table, it is clear that there is a positive and strong relationship between the variables of the study. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.44, which indicates the importance of relying on traditional products as a strategic activity. This represents a "blue ocean" strategy that creates competitive advantages for the shops under study. Therefore, traditional products can be relied upon to create specific competitive advantages, particularly in quality.

4.3. Thematic Approach

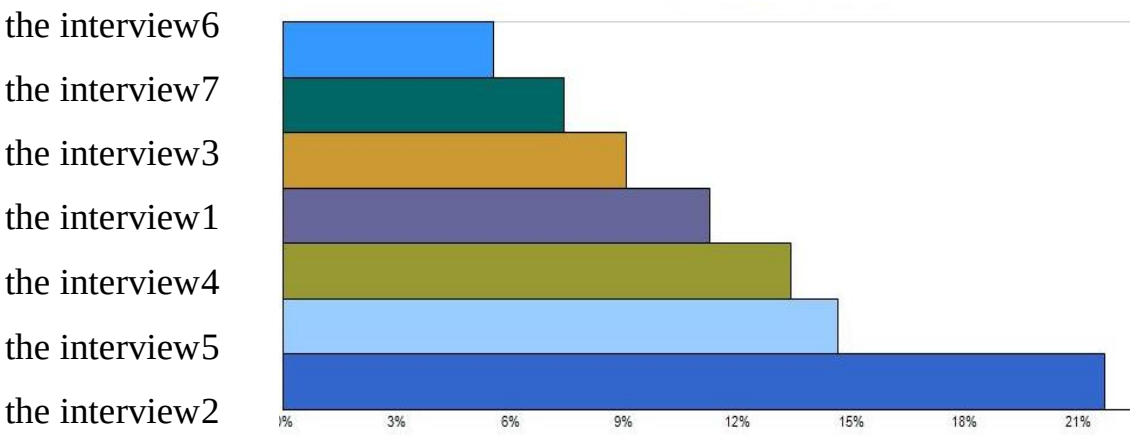
The following will present the contribution of each interview from the interviews in the reached results by addressing the coverage ratio of the general data node, the Blue Ocean Strategy node, as well as the competitive advantages node as follows:

Table 7. Coverage ratio for the general data node

Interviews	Covering ratio
Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	21,70%
Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	9,07%
Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	13,42%
Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	14,66%
Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	5,55%
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	7,41%
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	11,27%

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

Fig 1. Coverage ratio for the general data node



source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

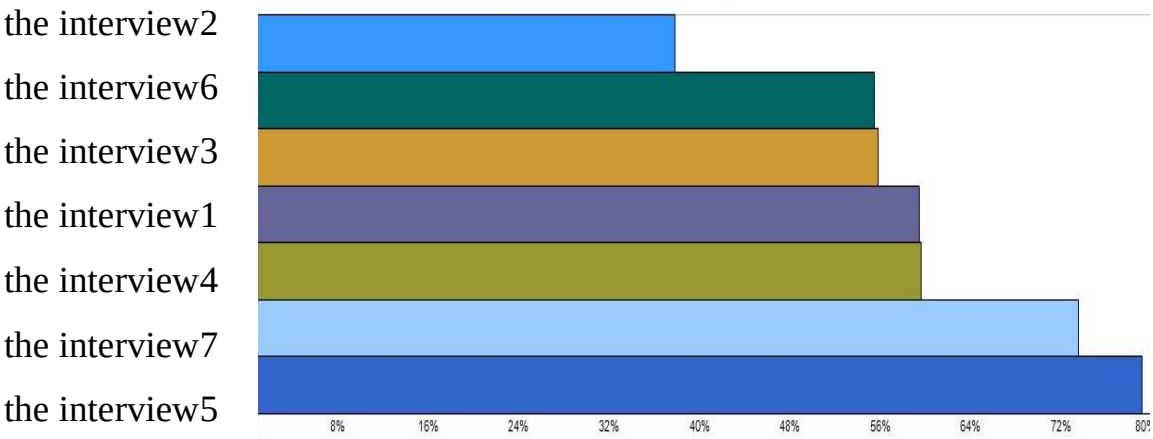
From the table and figure above, it is clear that the highest contribution was from Bouzidi's shop, accounting for 21.70% of the overall data. This is followed by the contribution from Al-Hajjah Lalahom shop at 14.66%, then Amira's shop at 13.42%, and finally Grand father's shop at 11.27%. As for the shops of traditional foods The Ship, and Sindibad, their respective shares in the overall data are as follows: 9.07%, 7.41%, 5.55%. Based on the above, the importance of Bouzidi's shop in its effective contribution to the overall data cluster is evident.

Table 8. Coverage ratio for the Blue ocean node

Interviews	Covering ratio
Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	37,87%
Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	55,80%
Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	59,61%
Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	79,19%
Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	55,52%
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	73,53%
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	59,44%

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

Fig 2. Coverage ratio for the Blue ocean node



source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

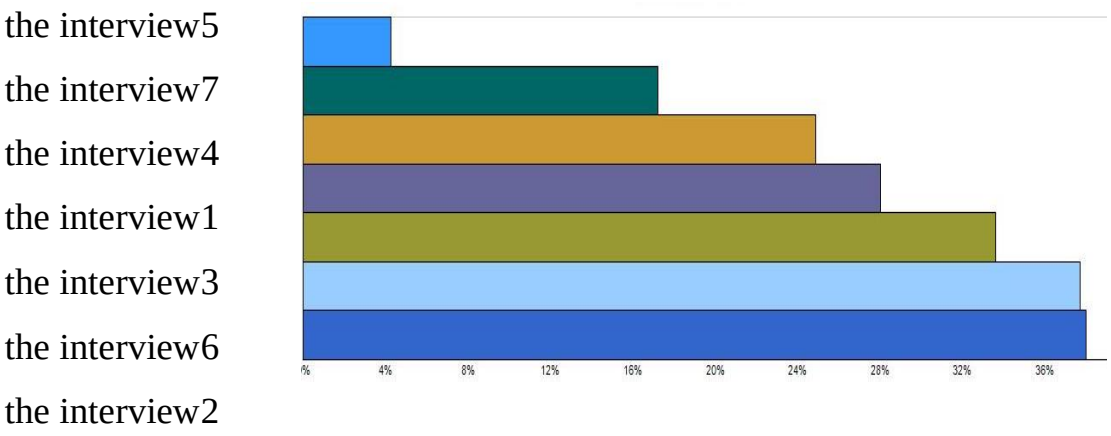
From the table and figure above, it is clear that the highest contribution was from the store Hajjah Lalahom for the Most Important" in the Blue Ocean node at a rate of 79.19%, followed by the contribution of "Ship Store" at a rate of 73.53%, then "Amira Store" at a rate of 59.61%, followed by " Grand father's" at a rate of 59.44%, then the "Traditional Foods Store" at a rate of 55.80%, followed by "Sindibad Store" which contributed to the Blue Ocean node at a rate of 55.52%, and finally the contribution of "Bozidi Store" at a rate of 37.87%. Based on the above, the importance of Hajjah Lalahom for the Most Important store is evident in its effective contribution to the strategic node of the Blue Ocean.

Table 9. Coverage ratio for the competitive advantages node

Interviews	Covering ratio
Traditional foods of Bouzidi neighborhood Wa'wa' Al-Madani	38,01%
Traditional foods in the Administrative neighborhood	33,60%
Amirah Tent in Sheikh Mohammed Al-Taher Foresti neighborhood	24,88%
Hajjah Lalahom Tent in 500 Housing neighborhood	4,25%
Sindibad in the Administrative neighborhood	37,72%
The Ship in the Administrative neighborhood	17,23%
Grand father's House in 500 Housing neighborhood	28,04%

source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

Fig 3. Coverage ratio for the competitive advantages node



source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo program.

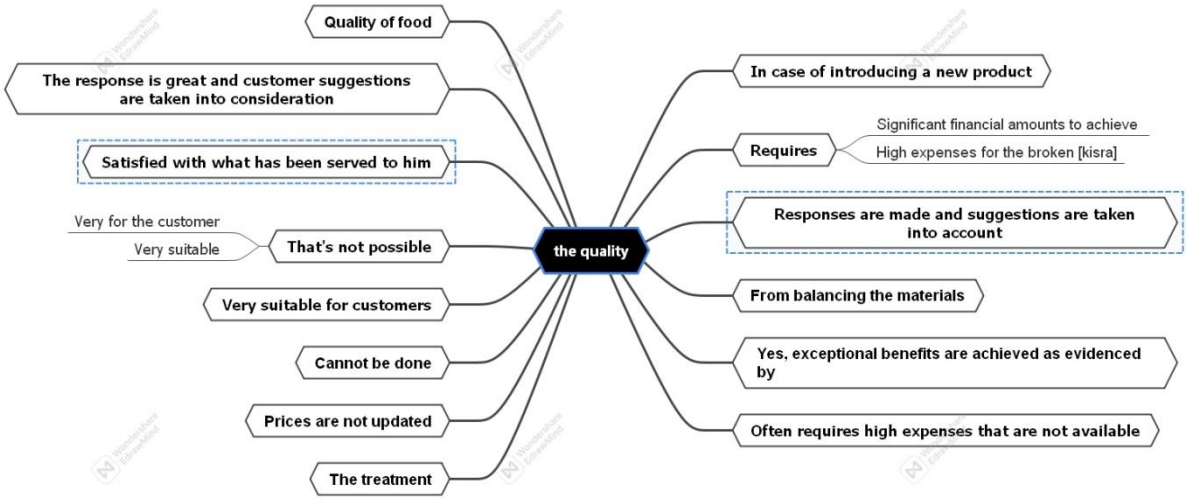
From the table and figure above, it is clear that the highest contribution was from "Bozidi Store" in the competitive advantages node with a rate of 38.01%, followed by the contribution of "Sindibad Store" in the administrative district at a rate of 37.72%, then the "Traditional Foods Store" at a rate of 33.60%, and " Grand father's " at a rate of 28.04%. As for "Amira Tent," "Ship Store," and " Hajjah Lalahom for the Most Important Tent," their respective contributions to the competitive advantages node were as follows: 24.88%, 17.23%, and 4.25%. Here too, the importance of "Bozidi Store" is evident in its effective contribution to the competitive advantages node.

4.4. Cognitive maps

After entering the answers of the seven shop owners into the NVivo program and adopting a mind-mapping approach to determine what competitive strategy these shops adopt, it turns out that traditional food shops in the state of M'sila rely on a quality strategy. They focus on offering traditional dishes of the required quality without concentrating on a lower-cost strategy or targeting a specific market, known as a focus strategy. From this, it is clear that relying on traditional dishes as entrepreneurial projects is one of the most successful ideas, even in their natural environment. Expanding this type of project to states that do not rely on this kind of

traditional food will yield significant returns due to the lack of competition in that new environment. On the other hand, it is also possible to open this type of project in countries outside Algeria, which is also considered a blue ocean strategy.

Fig 4. the competitive advantages node: the quality



source: Based on the outputs of the NVivo and edraw mind program.

5. CONCLUSION

After presenting the theoretical and practical frameworks, the study's questions can be answered as follows:

what are the main products that traditional food shops in the state of Msila rely on? Based on the presentation of the lexical approach using the NVivo program, it was found that the words that were repeated most often by the shops under study are: Zfiti and Shakshouka. Therefore, they can be considered as the main products of traditional food shops in the state of Msila.

What are the factors that determine the success of the blue ocean strategy in traditional food shops in M'sila? A lexical analysis using the NVivo program found that the two most common words are "customers" and "traditional food shop." This

suggests that focusing on customers and traditional products are two key factors that traditional food shops in M'sila use to achieve success with the blue ocean strategy.

What are the determinants of competitive advantages in traditional food shops in the M'Sila province? Through presenting a lexical approach and a cognitive mapping approach, and based on the NVivo program, it was found that the words most frequently mentioned by the studied shops are: investment, suitability, and quality. The term 'quality' was also extracted in the cognitive mapping approach. From this, it is evident that the shops rely on quality as a competitive strategy.

What are the stores that contributed the most to the results of the field study? Based on the linguistic approach, the contribution of Bozide Restaurant in the axis of general data and competitive advantages was evident, while the largest contribution in the axis of blue ocean strategy was for the Hajjah Lalahom store.

Is there a relationship between the blue ocean strategy and competitive advantages in traditional food stores in Msila state? Through the linguistic approach and by calculating the correlation coefficient, it was found that there is a positive relationship between the blue ocean strategy and the competitive advantages of traditional food stores in Msila state.

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