SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS FROM A STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE: A SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

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ABSTRACT: *The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the conceptual connections between innovation and competitiveness from the perspective of the main theoretical paradigms of innovation and strategic management. Thus, the study examines how classical and contemporary theories, such as the resource-based view (RBV), the knowledge paradigm, or dynamic capabilities explain the role of innovation in achieving and maintaining competitive advantage. The comparative analysis highlights the convergences between these theoretical frameworks, emphasizing the importance of integrating them into a coherent strategic vision. The results are aligned with recent literature, which highlights the dynamic and temporary nature of competitive advantage and the role of innovation as a central mechanism for strategic renewal in an economic environment characterized by uncertainty and rapid change.*

KEY WORDS: *innovation, competitiveness, strategic management, theoretical paradigms, dynamic capabilities, competitive advantage.*

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS: *M2, O1, O3, O4.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In a contemporary economy characterized by globalization, digitization, and high volatility, innovation has become increasingly indispensable, being considered the main catalyst for organizational competitiveness. In contemporary literature, the relationship between innovation and competitiveness is increasingly conceptualized as a circular and dynamic process. It has been scientifically proven that the relationship between innovation and competitiveness is no longer unidirectional, but symbiotic; in other words, innovation generates competitiveness, and competitiveness in turn stimulates innovation. Authors such as Schumpeter (1934), Porter (1980, 1985), Barney

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(1991), Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have highlighted this bidirectional link between the two. While Schumpeter (1934) and Porter (1985) considered innovation to be an essential factor in differentiation and overcoming competition, Barney (1991) and Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) highlighted the role of competitive advantage gained through the continuous stimulation and development of creativity and knowledge generation processes within organizations. In this context, the ability of firms to strategically transform ideas into improved products, services, or processes becomes a determining factor in securing and maintaining a superior competitive position in dynamic environments (Teece et al., 1997).

In the context of strategic management, this interdependence is essential to understanding how organizations can build and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in an ever-changing environment.

As described, innovation is an essential driver for businesses that need to survive and thrive in dynamic, highly competitive environments. Companies are forced to wage a constant and difficult battle to successfully navigate global competition. The multitude and diversity of current tools that organizations can use to ensure their long-term success are not always visible or accessible to everyone. In this sense, actions such as leveraging artificial intelligence, adopting emerging technologies, digitization, product and process innovation, or developing and implementing strategies tailored to such situations become essential for the survival and development of organizations in increasingly dynamic industries, precisely because of their ability to anticipate market changes and initiate rapid and effective responses to meet customer demands.

The literature emphasizes that innovation must be integrated not only at the level of products and services, but also in the organizational processes of the company, in the way it manages and capitalizes on its internal resources, and, last but not least, in its organizational culture (Schein, 2010; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Starting from the perspective of the company's resources and capabilities, Barney (1991) and Grant (1996) demonstrated that sustainable competitive advantage is determined by the ability of organizations to strategically use internal skills and knowledge to support continuous innovation processes. Studies have shown that competitive advantage becomes evident and sustainable when a company differentiates itself through unique resources, competencies, or strategies that are difficult for competitors to replicate (Penrose, 1959, Porter, 1985, Prahalad & Hamel, 1990, Barney, 1991, Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997).

Subsequent research reinforces the fact that a holistic and strategic approach to innovation is essential for organizations to adapt and achieve long-term performance in dynamic and competitive environments (Leonard-Barton, 1998; Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

From the first revolutionary inventions such as the printing press or the steam engine to modern technologies such as the internet or artificial intelligence, innovation has always been the first step towards competitive success. But, as the authors mentioned above have pointed out, this success involves adopting visionary strategies, leveraging resources, knowledge, and adaptability so that companies can respond effectively to customer needs and take full advantage of market opportunities.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS - FROM SCHUMPETER TO MODERN PARADIGMS

2.1. Schumpeter's vision of innovation

One of the greatest economists of the last century, Joseph Alois Schumpeter, played a decisive role in conceptualizing the term innovation, defining it as a "new combination" of economic factors, which can take the form of introducing a new or improved product, an innovative production method, the opening of a new market, the access to new sources of raw materials, or the reorganization of an industry, including through the creation or breakup of monopolies (Schumpeter, 1934).

In Schumpeter's view, the economic system is seen as dynamic, capable of continuous change and reconfiguration, with innovation as the engine of economic development. This transformation manifests itself through the process of "creative destruction," a metaphor that reflects the essential role of the entrepreneur and his ability to generate innovations that replace old economic structures**.**

His theoretical approach to the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in economic growth remains the foundation of contemporary analyses in this field, a perspective that continues to inspire many contemporary economists (Croitoru, 2012, Śledzik, 2013). Today's specialists believe that Schumpeter's perspective on economic phenomena has endured over time due to its distinctive character and emphasis on endogenous factors that determine the dynamics of the global economy.

2.2. The competitive forces approach

In Porter's view (1990), innovation is essential for increasing productivity and differentiation, forming the foundation of competitiveness for firms and nations. In his seminal work *"The Competitive Advantage of Nations"* (1990), Porter describes the "competitive diamond," a model that explains why some countries or regions are more innovative and competitive than others. At the same time, Porter emphasizes that competitive advantage is not permanent, as firms must constantly innovate in order to maintain their market position. He believes that a nation's competitive advantage derives from the competitive advantage of its firms, and that the performance of firms depends on the national context in which they operate. In his theory, Porter considers that innovation is the mechanism by which competitive advantage is built at all levels (micro and macroeconomic):

- at the activity level, processes are optimized, and new, improved products and technologies are introduced;
- at the company level, generic strategies are outlined: cost leadership, differentiation, or focus, and innovation becomes a strategic tool, integrated into the value chain;
- at the sector level, high-performance industries are developed (clusters that stimulate innovation based on collaboration, knowledge exchange, and healthy local competition);

- At the national level, economies based on knowledge and innovation are taking shape.

As such, competitiveness, whether at the micro or macroeconomic level, is thus conditioned by the ability of economic actors to innovate constantly, to use resources efficiently, and to adapt to change.

2.3. Resource-based perspective

Against the backdrop of intensifying competition and accelerating technological change, the topic of the link between innovation and competitive advantage has attracted considerable interest recently, featuring on the research agenda of several specialists and theorists in the field of strategic management. They have shown a growing interest in understanding how innovation can be leveraged as a source of differentiation and long-term performance. Thus, concepts such as organizational resources and capabilities, core competencies, and dynamic capabilities, all geared toward achieving and maintaining sustainable performance, have taken shape and begun to gravitate around this issue. And so, another paradigm of innovation emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, offering an internal strategic perspective on competitive advantage, namely the Resource-Based View (RBV). Unlike Porter's view, RBV argues that it is not only market position that determines success, but what the firm has and knows how to do—that is, its distinctive resources and capabilities and the firm's ability to continuously integrate, develop, and reconfigure them through innovation. Research conducted over time has highlighted a number of company attributes that can generate the development and implementation of competitive strategies. (Penrose, 1959; Rumelt, 1984; Teece, 95; Hitt & Ireland, 1986; Thompson & Strickland, 1987, Barney, 1991).

While Penrose (1959) considered the firm to be a set of continuously expanding productive resources, Richard Rumelt is considered one of the first authors to consciously apply the resource perspective to firm strategy. He considered the strategic firm to be a "set of interconnected resources... and activities for converting them" (Rumelt, 1984). Similarly, Teece (1984) emphasized that the success of firms is ensured by the possession of intangible assets such as technological know-how or managerial skills, and the need to develop and protect these unique resources in order to maintain profitability and competitive advantage.

Jay Barney (1986, 1991) also emphasizes that sustainable competitive advantage derives from unique resources and competencies. He defines sustainable competitive advantage as a firm's ability to implement a strategy that generates value creation in conditions where no other competing firm (current or potential) is able to replicate the benefits of this strategy. In Barney's view, innovation is a strategic capability, while competitiveness is a result of how this capability is exploited. When these capabilities become integrated and difficult to imitate, they turn into core competencies—a concept introduced by *Prahalad & Hamel (1990)*. This means that each company has a unique combination of resources and processes that give it a distinctive character and can be a source of competitive advantage. Dierickx and Cool (1989) argue that innovations implemented within companies contribute to the generation of "flows" that create

"stocks" of specific assets that are difficult for competitors to reproduce, with direct consequences for the creation and maintenance of a competitive advantage.

The idea put forward by Schumpeter (1950) that change stimulated by innovation brings major benefits to the firm if it is based on superior combinations of resources that can disrupt existing structures is taken up and refined by McGrath et al. (1996), who demonstrate that a firm cannot derive real benefits from innovation without first building a distinct competitive advantage that ensures substantial gains. For an innovative project to generate such advantages, it must demonstrate the effective and reliable achievement of business objectives, indicating the development of new competencies within the company.

2.4. The dynamic capabilities perspective

But as the current economic environment is increasingly dynamic, resources are not considered static either. Starting from the observation that the RBV approach does not explain how these resources are developed and maintained, theorists such as Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997) developed the concept of "dynamic capabilities." They argue that in rapidly changing environments, firms need to develop dynamic capabilities that allow them to continuously reconfigure their internal resources and competencies, a process in which innovation plays a central role. In this case, sustainable competitive advantage no longer depends only on what the firm has, but also on how quickly it can adapt to environmental uncertainties and changes.

Inspired by the work of Schumpeter, Penrose, Nelson & Winter, Prahalad & Hamel, Teece, and others, this vision emphasizes the role of managerial capabilities and combinations that are difficult to imitate, based on the organizational, technological, or functional competencies of firms. The dynamic capabilities paradigm thus integrates research from several fields such as innovation management, new product development, technology transfer, intellectual property, and organizational learning—areas often ignored in traditional economic theories of strategy. Consequently, dynamic capabilities represent an emerging and integrative approach to explaining new sources of competitive advantage.

2.5. Knowledge-based view (KBV)

A complementary view to that of Michael Porter belongs to Peter Drucker. While Porter approaches competitiveness from an economic and structural perspective, Drucker (1985) explains it from a managerial and entrepreneurial point of view, stating that innovation is the specific tool of the entrepreneur and the source through which organizations create value and maintain their relevance in a dynamic competitive environment. Peter Drucker defines innovation as "a change that creates a new dimension of performance." Drucker believes that sustainable competitive advantage does not come from low costs or resource ownership, but from the continuous ability to innovate and create value for the customer. Thus, in Drucker's view, innovation is the strategic mechanism by which a company differentiates itself from its competitors, adapts more effectively to customer needs, and strengthens its market position, being

relevant only to the extent that it translates into real added value, i.e., an economic benefit that generates revenue. (Popescu et al., 2021).

Like Drucker, other researchers have contributed to the foundation of this approach through their research, showing that innovation is the practical expression of applied knowledge. (Grant (1996), Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995)). They have argued and demonstrated that innovative organizations develop continuous learning processes and knowledge management systems, which is why both competitiveness and innovation derive from the ability to generate and use the knowledge they possess.

According to the Knowledge-Based View, knowledge is the fundamental strategic resource of a firm. Grant (1996) and Spender (1996) consider that the competitive performance of a firm is determined by the organization's ability to create, integrate, and leverage specialized knowledge, and innovation is considered a direct result of organizational learning and knowledge conversion processes. The dynamic model of knowledge creation proposed by Nonaka (1994) and developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) highlights the fact that the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge generates new ideas, solutions, and innovative routines through the processes of socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization.

Kogut, B., & Zander emphasize that competitive advantage derives from a firm's ability to learn new skills by recombining existing capabilities.Winter & Nelson (1982) believe that organizational learning facilitates the transformation of individual knowledge into collective skills and organizational routines, which are difficult to imitate and transfer, and which can be transformed into sustainable competitive advantages if they can be stabilized and refined appropriately. In fact, these routines, considered "crystallized forms of knowledge," essentially reflect the experience accumulated over time or the company's ability to adapt.

3. ELEMENTS OF CONVERGENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN PARADIGMS

A comparative analysis of the main theoretical paradigms (summarized in Table 1) highlights the fact that the relationship between innovation and competitive advantage cannot be explained exhaustively from a single perspective, but requires an integrative approach capable of capturing both the sources and the dynamics of competitive performance. The first paradigm (Schumpeterian) provides the conceptual foundation for innovation-based competition, emphasizing the role of "creative destruction" and the inherently temporary nature of competitive advantage, generated by the introduction of new combinations that disrupt existing structures. This macroeconomic view, essential for understanding the evolutionary nature of competition, has the limitation of not including or explaining the internal mechanisms of the firm, which is why there is a need to complement it with other perspectives focused on the firm.

In this sense, the Resource-Based View contributes to broadening the spectrum of knowledge by identifying internal resources and competencies as sources of competitive advantage, explaining why firms differ in their ability to innovate and perform. However, its relatively static nature limits the RBV's ability to fully explain strategic renewal processes in an environment marked by rapid change. The

organizational knowledge and learning paradigm extends this perspective by placing knowledge and learning processes at the center of innovation, while also providing an explanation of how resources are developed, combined, and transformed into organizational competencies that are difficult to imitate.

Table 1. Synoptic table of paradigms: main characteristics

Paradigm Theoretical	Representative authors	Central concepts	Role of innovation	Mechanisms for generating competitive advantage
The Schumpeterian paradigm	Schumpeter (1934, 1942, 1950)	Innovation, creative destruction, entrepreneurship, new combinations	Innovation is the fundamental driver of economic change and competition	Competitive advantage comes from introducing new products, processes, or models that disrupt existing structures and create temporary monopolies
Resource-Based View (RBV)	Penrose (1959); Prahalad & Hamel (1990) Barney (1991)	Resources, competencies, Core competencies VRIN,	Innovation capitalizes on valuable and rare internal resources	Competitive advantage derives from the ownership and strategic use of distinctive internal resources
The paradigm of organizational knowledge and learning	Nonaka (1994); Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995); Grant (1996); Spender (1996); Winter & Nelson (1982)	Tacit/explicit knowledge, organizational learning, routines	Innovation results from the processes of creating, transferring, and combining knowledge	Competitive advantage is based on routines and collective competencies that are difficult to imitate
Dynamic capabilities paradigm	Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997); Teece (2007, 2018)	Sensing, seizing, transforming, reconfiguring	Innovation is the central mechanism of strategic adaptation	Competitive advantage is temporary and can be renewed through continuous reconfiguration of resources and capabilities

Source: created by the author

The dynamic capabilities paradigm integrates and energizes these contributions, explaining how firms can systematically reconfigure resources and knowledge to cope with uncertainty and sustain competitive advantage through continuous innovation. Through the concepts of sensing, seizing, and transforming, this approach provides a conceptual bridge between innovation and strategic management, highlighting the active role of managerial decisions in guiding change.

4. THE RELEVANCE OF INTEGRATING PARADIGMS INTO A COHERENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As can be seen from Table 1, although different in terms of level of analysis, there are several fundamental ideas towards which all the aforementioned paradigms converge:

- Innovation is seen as a major source of competitive advantage, regardless of the theoretical perspective adopted;
- The company's internal resources and competencies are at the core of the sustainability of competitive advantage, whether tangible (technologies, patents) or intangible (knowledge, routines, relationships);
- The organizational learning process is essential for transforming innovation into a sustainable advantage;
- All paradigms recognize the dynamic role of the environment and the need for continuous strategic adaptation.

Together, these approaches provide a comprehensive picture of how innovation becomes both a cause and a consequence of competitiveness.

Integrating these paradigms into a coherent strategic framework is essential for building a holistic view of strategic innovation management. Such a framework would allow:

- Overcoming the static limitations of RBV by including the dynamic and cognitive dimensions of innovation;
- Correlate the micro level (resources, competencies) with the macro level (ecosystem, industry, institutions/organizations);
- Explaining the processes through which companies transform knowledge into performance, through mechanisms of learning, adaptation, and reconfiguration;
- Formulating integrated strategies that combine the exploitation of existing competencies with the exploration of new innovative opportunities.

Thus, the integrative framework presented supports the idea of innovation-competitiveness symbiosis, in which innovation becomes not only a result of strategy, but also a driver of strategic evolution, consolidating long-term competitive advantage.

5. INNOVATION-COMPETITIVENESS SYMBIOSIS: STRATEGIC MECHANISMS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

5.1. Review of recent literature

Recent contributions from specialists in the fields of innovation and strategic management can be seen as extensions and refinements of the main established theoretical paradigms, adapted to the new realities of the contemporary economic environment. Current research revisits Schumpeterian insights into the disruptive and temporary nature of competitive advantage, but integrates them into a firm-oriented perspective, highlighting the role of innovation strategies in generating performance in a context of intensified competition (Aghion et al., 2005; Agazu & Kero, 2024). At the same time, recent developments in the Resource-Based View and the knowledge

paradigm emphasize intangible resources, cognitive capabilities, and organizational learning processes as essential sources of innovation and competitiveness (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Grant, 2019). The dynamic capabilities paradigm provides the integrative framework through which these contributions are linked, explaining how firms can strategically reconfigure resources and knowledge to respond to uncertainty and rapid change, transforming innovation into a continuous process of competitive renewal (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016, Teece, 2018; Teece, 2020).

The temporary nature of competitive advantage is also supported by empirical research highlighting the reduction in the average duration of superior performance in industries characterized by rapid change. Wiggins and Ruefli (2005) demonstrate that, in conditions of hypercompetition, windows of strategic opportunity are considerably shortened, requiring firms to maintain a sustained pace of innovation in order to maintain their competitive position. In this context, competitiveness is no longer seen as a stable outcome, but rather as a dynamic equilibrium that is constantly subject to erosion.

Following the same logic, O'Reilly and Tushman (2016) emphasize that high-performing organizations are those capable of combining the exploitation of existing competencies with the exploration of new innovative opportunities, a process described as "organizational ambidexterity." This capacity for strategic renewal through innovation is essential for companies to protect and maintain their long-term competitiveness, given that advantages based on technologies, products, or market positions can be easily eroded and quickly imitated or surpassed.

Another description of the link between innovation and competitiveness is significantly expanded upon by Aghion et al. (2005), who propose a model of the relationship in the form of an inverted U, a model in which the relationship between the intensity of competition and innovative activity is analyzed. The authors argue that moderate competition would stimulate the innovation process, because lower competitive pressure encourages firms to invest in innovative activities in order to improve their relative position in the market ("escape competition effect"). Conversely, when competition becomes excessively intense, incentives for innovation diminish because the potential profits associated with success as a result of innovation are eroded, reducing the ability of firms to recoup their investments in research and development. This theoretical and empirical framework thus suggests that innovation is largely conditioned by the competitive structure of the market and that the competitive advantage generated by innovation is inherently temporary. Consequently, competitiveness and innovation are in a dynamic and interdependent relationship, in which competitive pressure acts simultaneously as a trigger and a constraint on innovative processes, reinforcing the idea that innovation is an essential mechanism for strategic renewal in an environment characterized by continuous change. The same conclusion is reinforced by Teece (2018) and O'Reilly & Tushman (2016), who emphasize that competitive advantage can no longer be conceived as a stable state, but as the result of an organizational capacity for permanent adaptation and transformation, in which innovation plays a central role.

According to the systematic analysis conducted by Agazu and Kero (2024) on the literature on innovation strategies and firm competitiveness, most studies published between 2015 and 2023 consistently indicate a positive relationship between innovation

strategy and organizational competitiveness. The authors highlight those innovative strategies - whether product, process, marketing, or business model oriented - contribute significantly to increasing the competitiveness of firms by improving performance, differentiating the offer, or adapting to changes in the external environment. This relationship supports the idea that innovation is not just an operational tool, but an essential strategic component for sustainable competitiveness in a context of intensifying competition and globalization. In addition, the recurrence of positive conclusions in the literature review highlights the fact that the implementation of a well-articulated innovation strategy can be a determining factor in a company's ability to maintain its competitive advantage in the long term.

Thus, we can reasonably argue that recent literature does not replace classical paradigms, but rather consolidates and articulates them into a unified approach, a vision that reflects the complexity of the relationship between innovation and competitive advantage in the contemporary economy in the most accurate and realistic way possible.

5.2. The role of strategic management in supporting the symbiosis between innovation and competitiveness

Strategic management plays a decisive role in supporting and strengthening the symbiosis between innovation and competitiveness, acting as a central mechanism for integrating resources, skills, and organizational processes. In an economic context characterized by uncertainty, technological dynamism, and intensified competition, strategic management goes beyond the traditional function of planning, becoming a continuous process of orchestrating strategic renewal through innovation (Teece, 2018; Teece, 2020).

A first essential role of strategic management is to define the strategic direction and innovative orientation of the firm. By articulating a clear vision of priority areas for innovation and aligning them with long-term competitive objectives, strategic management reduces investment uncertainty and ensures the consistency of organizational decisions (Porter, 1996; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2016). This orientation is particularly important because innovation involves the allocation of significant resources and the assumption of high risks, which must be managed within a well-defined strategic framework.

Second, strategic management is responsible for allocating, combining, and reconfiguring resources in support of innovative processes. Recent literature on dynamic capabilities emphasizes that competitive advantage does not derive from the mere possession of valuable resources, but from the firm's ability to continuously reconfigure them in response to changes in the environment (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Helfat et al., 2007; Li & Liu, 2014), and the process that facilitates the transformation of resources into innovative competencies that are difficult to imitate through strategic decisions regarding investments in research and development, human capital, and organizational infrastructure is precisely the process of strategic management.

Another central role of strategic management is to develop and support an organizational culture oriented towards innovation and learning. Innovation is a deeply social and cognitive process, and strategic leadership directly influences organizational

behaviors through governance, motivation, stimulation, or assumed leadership models (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Schein, 2010).

Strategic management also plays an essential role in integrating innovation into the competitive architecture of the firm by managing the balance between exploiting existing competencies and exploring new opportunities. The concept of organizational ambidexterity highlights the fact that successful firms are those capable of simultaneously supporting operational efficiency and strategic innovation (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2016; Raisch & Zimmermann, 2017). Strategic management thus has the role of achieving this balance by building flexible structures and coordination mechanisms that allow for continuous adaptation of the competitive strategy.

In addition, strategic management takes credit for contributing to competitive renewal and organizational resilience precisely through its ability to correctly interpret changes in the environment and quickly adapt the company's strategic trajectories. Recent research shows that the differentiated response of firms to the integration of innovations, especially disruptive ones, is largely explained by the quality of strategic decisions and the managerial capacity to integrate innovation into competitive strategy (Kammerlander et al., 2018). This reinforces the conclusion that innovation is becoming a tool for strategic reconfiguration, not just a defensive reaction to competitive pressures.

Finally, strategic management ensures the monitoring of innovative performance and the integration of feedback into the decision-making process, supporting a continuous cycle of organizational learning. By evaluating innovation outcomes and adjusting competitive strategies, firms can maintain their competitive advantage in a context where it tends to be temporary (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Teece, 2020).

5.3. Implications for long-term performance

Integrating innovation into competitive strategy has significant implications for a firm's long-term performance. Firms that develop strong innovative capabilities are better positioned to generate sustainable competitive advantages based on specific assets and skills that are difficult to replicate (Teece et al., 1997; Barney, 2001). These firms demonstrate a superior ability to adapt to technological and market changes, which gives them strategic resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

In addition, the symbiosis between innovation and competitiveness facilitates a balance between exploiting existing competencies and exploring new opportunities, contributing to long-term performance and sustainable value creation (March, 1991; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Therefore, sustainable performance is not the result of static advantages, but of a continuous process of strategic renewal, in which innovation plays a central role.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From a strategic management perspective, the symbiosis between innovation and competitiveness is based on the co-evolution of resources, capabilities, and strategies. Innovation is not just a component of competitiveness, but its essence.

Companies that manage to create a symbiotic relationship between innovation and competitiveness confirm the relevance and validity of classical theoretical paradigms.

Innovation is seen as a process of change that generates competitive advantages by discovering and exploiting superior combinations of resources. When these combinations include routines that are difficult to imitate, they become sustainable sources of advantage. Through innovation, companies gain superior insight and access to resources, enabling them to make more efficient investments and create specific assets that are difficult to replicate. In this way, innovation contributes directly to the formation and maintenance of competitive advantage by developing unique and valuable resources.

Consequently, strategic management supports the symbiosis of innovation and competitiveness through strategic orientation, resource orchestration, dynamic capacity development, and the promotion of an organizational culture conducive to innovation. Through all these mechanisms, innovation is transformed into a structural factor of long-term performance and competitive advantage.

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