

Residency: Research Paper – List of potential research topics

To complete the Article Research Paper , please select a topic from the list provided below or from the chapter readings.

- The role of strategy in a firm's quest for competitive advantage.
- Competitive advantage, sustainable competitive advantage, competitive disadvantage, and competitive parity.
- Relationship between stakeholder strategy and sustainable competitive advantage.
- Stakeholder impact analysis.
- Analysis, Formulation, Implementation (AFI) Strategy Framework.
- Role of strategic leaders and what they do.
- How you can become a strategic leader.
- The roles of corporate, business, and functional managers in strategy formulation and implementation.
- Roles of vision, mission, and values in a firm's strategy.
- The strategic implications of product-oriented and customer-oriented vision statements.
- Justify why anchoring a firm in ethical core values is essential for long-term success.
- Top-down strategic planning, scenario planning, and strategy as planned emergence.
- Devil's advocacy and dialectic inquiry as frameworks to improve strategic decision making.
- PESTEL analysis to evaluate the impact of external factors on the firm.
- The roles of firm effects and industry effects in determining firm performance.
- Porter's five competitive forces.
- Competitive industry structure shapes rivalry among competitors.
- Strategic role of complements in creating positive-sum co-opetition.
- The five choices required for market entry.
- The role of industry dynamics and industry convergence in shaping the firm's external environment.
- Strategic group model
- Shifting from an external to internal analysis of a firm can reveal why and how internal firm differences are the root of competitive advantage.
- Firm's core competencies, resources, capabilities, and activities.
- Tangible and intangible resources.
- The nature of resources in the resource-based view.
- The VRIO framework to assess the competitive implications of a firm's resources.
- Different conditions that allow a firm to sustain a competitive advantage.
- Dynamic capabilities can enable a firm to sustain a competitive advantage.
- Value chain analysis
- Firm profitability analysis and competitive advantage.
- Shareholder value creation and competitive advantage.
- Economic value creation and different sources of competitive advantage.
- Balanced scorecard and competitive advantage.
- Triple bottom and competitive advantage.

- Use the why, what, who, and how of business models framework to put strategy into action.
- Business-level strategy and how it determines a firm's strategic position.
- The relationship between value drivers and differentiation strategy.
- The relationship between cost drivers and cost-leadership strategy.
- The benefits and risks of differentiation and cost-leadership strategies vis-vis the five forces that shape competition.
- Assess the risks of a blue ocean strategy and explain why it is difficult to succeed at value innovation.
- The four-step innovation process from idea to imitation.
- Strategic management concepts to entrepreneurship and innovation.
- The competitive implications of different stages in the industry life cycle.
- Strategic implications of the crossing-the-chasm framework.
- Innovations in the markets-and-technology framework.
- Why firms need to grow, and different growth motives.
- Different options firms have to organize economic activity.
- Vertical integration along the industry value chain: backward and forward vertical integration.
- Benefits and risks of vertical integration.
- Alternatives to vertical integration.
- Types of corporate diversification.
- Core competence-market matrix and diversification strategies.
- Diversification strategy creates a competitive advantage.
- Build-borrow-or-buy framework to guide corporate strategy.
- Strategic alliances and corporate strategy.
- Alliance governance mechanisms.
- Alliance management, management capability and competitive advantage.
- Mergers and acquisitions, and corporate strategy.
- Horizontal integration and corporate-level strategy.
- Globalization, multinational enterprise (MNE), foreign direct investment (FDI), and global strategy.
- Apply the CAGE distance framework to guide MNE decisions on which countries to enter.
- Integration-responsiveness framework
- Porter's diamond framework
- Organizational design and components.
- Organizational inertia can lead established firms to failure.
- Organizational structure and elements.
- Mechanistic versus organic organizations.
- Organizational structures and appropriate strategies.
- Closed and open innovation, and organizational structure.
- Organizational culture.
- Strategic control-and-reward systems.
- Shared value creation framework and competitive advantage.

- Corporate governance.
- Agency theory and governance mechanisms.
- Board of directors as the central governance mechanism for public stock companies.
- Other governance mechanisms.
- Relationship between strategy and business ethics.

Research Paper: This is a graduate course and students will be expected to research and write papers summarizing in their own words what they have found on current topics from the weekly readings. Research is a theoretical review of relevant literature and application of findings in the literature to a topic related to a specific industry, field, or business problem.

The **research must be conducted using peer-reviewed trade or academic journals**. While Blogs, Wikipedia, encyclopedias, course textbooks, popular magazines, newspaper articles, online websites, etc. are helpful for providing background information, these resources are **NOT** suitable resources for this research assignment.

Please Note: The UC Library staff are very helpful with assisting students in using the UC Online Library journal database. Please contact them if you have issues. In addition, the instructor has provided additional resources, including a research tutorial, in the “Course Resources” folder in the “Content” area of the course.

Assignment Requirements:

- i. Choose a research topic from the chapter readings or from the list provided by your professor.
- ii. Research/find a minimum at least ten (10), preferably fifteen (15) or more, different peer-reviewed articles on your topic from the University of the Cumberlands Library online business database. The article(s) must be relevant and from a peer-reviewed source. While you may use relevant articles from any time frame, current/published within the last five (5) years are preferred. Using literature that is irrelevant or unrelated to the chosen topic will result in a point reduction.
- iii. Write a four (4) to five (5) page double spaced paper in APA format discussing the findings on your specific topic in your own words. **Note** - paper length does not include cover page, abstract, or references page(s).
- iv. Structure your paper as follows:
 - a. **Cover page**
 - b. **Overview** describing the importance of the research topic to current business and professional practice in your own words.
 - c. **Purpose of Research** should reflect the potential benefit of the topic to the current business and professional practice and the larger body of research.

- d. **Review of the Literature** summarized in your own words. Note that this should not be a “copy and paste” of literature content, nor should this section be substantially filled with direct quotes from the article. A literature review is a summary of the major points and findings of each of the selected articles (with appropriate citations). Direct quotations should be used sparingly. Normally, this will be the largest section of your paper (this is not a requirement; just a general observation).
- e. **Practical Application** of the literature. Describe how your findings from the relevant research literature can shape, inform, and improve current business and professional practice related to your chosen topic.
- f. **Conclusion** in your own words
- g. **References** formatted according to APA style requirements

Grading Criteria:

- Content Knowledge & Structure: All of the requested components are completed as assigned; content is on topic and related to Strategic Thinking, Decision- Making, and Innovation, critical thinking is clearly demonstrated (few, if any, direct quotations from the source in the paper); scholarly research is demonstrated; topics and concepts gained from the assigned reading and/or from research is evident.
- Critical Thinking: Demonstrates substantial critical thinking about topics and solid interpretation of materials and reflection.
- Clarity & Effective Communication: Communication is clear, concise, and well presented; scholarly writing is demonstrated; grammar, sentence structure, writing in third person, and word choice is used correctly.
- Integration of Knowledge & Articles: Articles used are current and relevant (preferably published within last five (5) years and MUST be from peer-reviewed journal article publications. At least four (4) peer-reviewed journal articles are examined and analyzed in the paper.
- Presentation & Writing Mechanics: Cover page, headings, in-text citations, page citations (page number citations required for specific information such as dates, years, list of items from article, names, numbers, statistics, and other specific information), and references are properly formatted.

Please Note: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The paper must be written in your own words.