

The Sustainable Competitive Advantage of Suang-Lien Elderly Center: A Resource-Based Perspective

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Abstract: As the demand for care services for the elderly in Taiwan is rapidly increasing, improving the elderly's care service quality and their value of life is becoming a more and more relevant social issue. Based on the resource-based theory, this study aims to investigate how organizations can form long-term and sustainable competitive advantages from the accumulation and cultivation of their resources and capabilities. By using a single-subject design as the research method, in-depth analysis research is conducted. The Suang-Lien Elderly Center is selected as the research object, observing how this organization expands from a single-institutional elderly center to a continuous system with multiple levels such as community care and home care, and further transforms into a consultancy on medical management. The results show that the Suang-Lien Elderly Center has numerous sustainable competitive advantages such as brand advantage, a complete elderly care service system, service and product innovation, and professional service teams. This study offers directional insights and guidance on developing sustained competitive advantages in the long-term elderly industry.

Key words: resource-based theory, sustainable competitive advantage, case study, Suang-Lien Elderly Center

JEL codes: M10

1. Introduction

Taiwan's elderly population ratio has reached 14% in 2018, which becomes an aging society. The National Development Council predicted that the elderly population ratio would exceed 20% in 2026, which means Taiwan will become a super-aged society. When comparing with developed countries, Taiwan has one of the world's most rapid population aging trends. As the demand for elderly care services increases rapidly, industries such as geriatrics, medicine, assistive devices, and care services will thrive in the future. The government encourages corporate organizations to invest in long-term care, and there are domestic consortia invested in institutional elderly care centers, such as Chang Gung and Ruentex group. However, not every elder care center is successful. The data from the Executive Yuan (2020) shows that there were a total of 1,091 institutional nursing centers in Taiwan, with only an occupancy rate of 70% in 2019. Therefore, it is worth to explore the factors of success of the elderly care center.

The Suang-Lien Elderly Center has kept its occupancy rate at 100% since 2000, and there are currently 2,000 people on the waiting list (EMBA Magazine, 2017). In 2014, this elderly center was suggested by the Common

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Health Magazine as the first place in top quality elderly care institutions (Common Health Magazine, 2014) and also being rated as Taiwan's top elderly center by the Common Wealth Magazine (Common Wealth Magazine, 2018). This organization deserves an in-depth study on the reasons behind its development and success. Barney (1991) put forward the "resource-based model", claiming that enterprises can form long-term and sustainable competitive advantages through the accumulation and cultivation of their own resources and capabilities. This study is based on the resource-based theory, exploring the resource heterogeneity and immobility of how the Suang-Lien Elderly Center accumulates and cultivates its resources and capabilities and forms sustainable competitive advantages, and then become the leading position in the long-term care market. This study also explains the historicity and causal relationship between the sources of advantage and successful strategies of this elderly center.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resource-based Theory

Wernerfelt's (1984) introduced the idea of the resource-based view (RBV), proposing to replace the point of view from product-based to resource-based when conducting an enterprise's strategic decision, which transfers from external industrial structure analysis to analysis of internal resources and capabilities. In 1991, Barney's article shaped the structure of the resource-based view, explaining the four criteria to measure a company's sustainable competitive advantage: value, rareness, imitability, and substitutability. A company should analyze its unique resources and capabilities, actively developing, maintaining, and applying these resources and capabilities to exert its advantages. This helps establish a company's resource heterogeneity and immobility, creating profit and forming sustainable competitive advantages. Barney (1991) pointed out that "competitive advantage" refers to the inability of potential competitors to simultaneously implement the value creation strategy currently implemented by the company. "Sustained competitive advantage" refers to potential competitors not only unable to simultaneously implement the value creation strategy currently implemented by the company, but also unable to replicate and obtain the benefits of the company in this strategy. A company with sustained competitive advantage may experience major changes in the competitive structure and may see its competitive advantage offset by these changes. However, sustained competitive advantage will not disappear because competing companies copy the benefits of this competitive advantage. In 1991, Grant introduced the resource-based theory, emphasizing the importance of introspection while the company's internal resources and capabilities guide the corporate strategy and become the source of the company's profit.

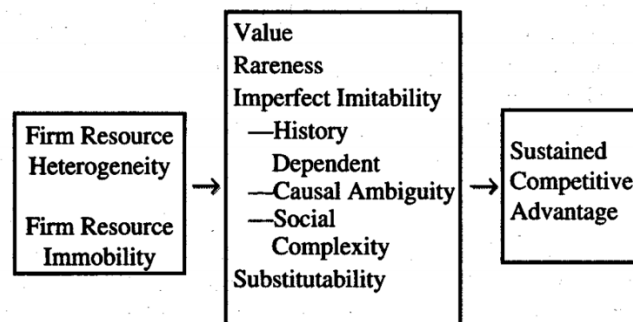


Figure 1 Resource-Based Model — The Relationship Between Resource Heterogeneity and Immobility and Sustained Competitive Advantage

Source: Barney (1991)

2.2 Core Resource

Barney (1991) defined resources as a company's property, capability, organizational processes, attributes, information, and knowledge. Mastery of these resources helps improve a company's efficiency and efficacy by promoting the company's strategy construction and implementation factors. Schoemaker (1992) said a higher return than the average can only come from assets or skills that are hard to imitate. According to this definition, these assets or skills cannot be bought from everywhere. Instead, they can only be obtained by developing a company's human capital, investment, and exchange of information.

To further understand the source of sustainable competitive advantages, Barney created a theoretical model. This model assumes when the enterprise resources are heterogeneous and fixed, a company's resources must possess the following four characteristics to have sustainable competitive advantages.

1) Valuable Resources

Enterprise resources can become a source of competitive advantage or sustained competitive advantage only when they have value. Resources only become valuable when enterprises can establish or implement strategies to increase their efficiency and efficacy.

2) Rare Resources

When other enterprises obtain a unique and valuable resource, everyone will have the ability to develop resources in the same way. Then there will be no competitive advantage. An invaluable resource must be rare so that it can produce potential competitive benefits. Generally speaking, if the number of enterprises with a certain type of unique and valuable resource is lower than an industry's required number of enterprises to reach perfect competition, then that specific resource will potentially produce a competitive advantage.

3) Imperfectly Imitable Resources

Valuable and rare organizations' resources can only become a source of sustained competitive advantage if they are not available to companies without these resources. The researches of Lippman and Rumelt (1982) and Barney (1986) showed enterprise resources are not substitutable due to the following three causes.

- The ability for enterprises to obtain resources are depended on historical conditions. Enterprises are essentially an entity of history and society; furthermore, their ability to acquire and develop specific resources is based on their role and position of time and space. For example, the first-entrants advantage of the enterprise and the historical path of the enterprise's progress (Arthur, Ermoliev & Kaniovsky, 1984).
- The connection between a company's resources and the company's sustainable competitive advantages is vague. This connection is complex, but it also makes the two elements indivisible and interdependent. Therefore, it is difficult to emulate the strategy by imitating the company.
- The resources that generate corporate advantage are socially complex (Dierickx & Cool, 1989). For example, the interpersonal relationship among company managers (Hambrick, 1987), organizational culture (Barney, 1986), the company's reputation among suppliers (Porter, 1980), and its relationship between clients (Klein, Crawford & Alchian, 1978; Klein & Lefler, 1981).

4) Unsubstitutable Resources

Enterprise resources' strategic substitutability may use a similar resource implementation strategy or use a completely different resource to form an alternative strategy. When the strategy of corporate resources is replaced, the company's competitive advantage will not be sustainable.

2.3 Core Competency

Competence is one of the organization's characteristics, enabling the organization to implement planning, selection, and implementation of strategies (Barney, 1997). The source and foundation of a company's sustainable competitiveness lie in its core competence. Schoemaker (1992) proposed that an enterprise is like an onion, composed of layers of functions, services, and production operations. The enterprise should analyze which business activities are the most crucial core and the outer layer. Like some companies, the outer layer is the production design and sales, and the inner core is composed of skills and competencies. The other method to study the core competence is to think of enterprise as a tree. The leaves and fruits are the company's final product and service, while the sticks are formed by SBU (strategic business unit). The SBU assembles and provides the company the related products and services. On the other hand, the trunk represents the core product, which is supplied to SBU and is used to make the final product and service. The root is a company's competence and core competition, which continuously strengthens SBU to develop new businesses.

The core competencies are not separate, salable services or products. Examples of potential core competencies are:

- High-quality production.
- Favorable supply relationships.
- Good services.
- Creativity.
- Short product development period.
- Proactive staff.
- A marketing-oriented culture.
- A good reputation.

Analyzing competitive advantages considers a company's visible end products and its invisible resources and core competence.

3. Methodology

This study uses case descriptions and secondary data analysis. This study intends to use a "resource-based model" to explore "how" Suang-Lien Elderly Center has gradually grown to a leading position in the market. Under the restrictions of "no need to manipulate on behavioral events" and "focus on current events", it is suitable to adopt a "case study method" (Yin, 1994). The reasons for choosing a single case may include that the case is a critical case for testing a well-formulated theory; it is an extreme or unique case; it is a revelatory case that can expose a particular phenomenon; as the opening of further research (multiple cases in the future) (Yin, 1994). This study divides the development history of Suang-Lien Elderly Center into three phases, selects significant decisions that affect the development of Suang-Lien, and analyzes the process of accumulation of core resource capabilities and competitive advantages in each period of Suang-Lien in accordance with the four characteristics of the resource-based model. Form a relationship and explore the historical development trajectory of Suang-Lien from 1989 to 2020.

Wernerfelt has put forward the resource-based view since 1984, and the development and discussion of resource-based theory have gone through a period. It can be said to be a well-formulated theory. From Suang-Lien Elderly Community College, the Suang-Lien Elderly Center has gone through institutional care to community-based

and home-based continuous long-term care services. Today, it can export care and consulting services, which can be used to test a well-formulated theory. This is a critical case, so this study uses the “single case” of Suang-Lien as the actual case to verify the resource-based theory.

This study uses the “single-case design”. It uses the embedded (multiple analysis units) resource-based model with four attributes: value, rareness, imperfect imitability, and substitutability to analyze the development of Suang-Lien. Therefore, this study is a “single case design” and a case type design of “embedded (multiple analysis units)” (Yin, 1994).

In terms of data sources, in addition to reviewing the current state of academic research on resource-based theory, secondary data from the official website of Suang-Lien Elderly Center, periodicals, and professional newspapers and magazines, such as Common Wealth Magazine, Common Health Magazine, EMBA Magazine, Business Today, etc. are used for analysis.

This study also compares the types of ideas through resource-based theories and the conceptual framework established by Suang-Lien cases to increase the inherent validity. The use of “narrative style” and time series analysis to establish an explanation of the development of Suang-Lien from 1989 to 2020 based on resource-based theory, and present it systematically. Finally, in the data collection stage of this study, multiple sources of evidence were adopted. For the case of Suang-Lien, data from all parties were collected, and multiple sources of information were compared and converged to establish a series of evidence chains. Compare multiple data to improve the internal validity. In terms of reliability, the steps of the research and the operating factors in the data collection process will be recorded to ensure that subsequent researchers can follow the same research context to conduct research and obtain the same results (Yung & Hung, 2006).

4. Case Study

This study divides the historical development of Suang-Lien Elderly Center into three phases: the entrepreneurial period (1989~2007), the technological innovation period (2008~2014), and the development of management and consultant service period (2015~2020). In order to explore the major decisions that affect the development of Suang-Lien Elderly Center, analyze the process of accumulation of core resources and capabilities at each stage and the relationship to the formation of competitive advantages.

4.1 Entrepreneurial Period (1989~2007)

4.1.1 Development Path

In 1989, Suang-Lien Church established Suang-Lien Elderly Community College. The courses included health medicine, dietary hygiene, nutrition and disease, social news, financial information, interpersonal relations, language skills, recreational activities, physical fitness, etc. (Suang-Lien Branch of Elderly Community College, 2020). The management of Suang-Lien Elderly Community College has accumulated knowledge, experience, talent cultivation and reputation in elderly care which laying a good foundation for the Suang-Lien Elderly Center.

In 1993, Taiwan entered an aging society. At this time, Suang-Lien Church followed the trend of society and decided to establish a comprehensive social welfare park. It proposed a seven-stage plan for the elderly from health, mild disability, moderate disability, severe disability, intubation, and final hospice palliative care.

In 2000, the “Suang-Lien Elderly Center” which covers an area of 36,360 square meters, was officially established in Tamsui. CEO Mr. Tsai Fangwen led the Suang-Lien Elderly Center to become a benchmark of elderly care in Taiwan (Today Weekly, 2013). In 2001, cooperate with the government’s long-term care policy, Suang-Lien

extended the services to the community, and established community care stations to provide multiple services such as telephone greetings, meal delivery services, caring visits, and health promotion. In 2003, Suang-Lien increased 184 beds. In 2007, a multi-functional chapel with a capacity of 580 people and a special area for dementia care with 66 beds were expanded. The service items consist of 212 beds for self-care, 154 beds for mild, moderate and severe care, and 66 beds for dementia, totaling 432 beds.

4.1.2 Analysis of Resource Characteristics and Competitive Advantages

During the entrepreneurial period, Suang-Lien Elderly Center has been accumulated and cultivated its own resources and capabilities to form a long-term and sustainable competitive advantage, which is described as follows:

The land, buildings, and facilities that hardware planning of the Suang-Lien Elderly Center meets the needs of the elderly are *valuable*. Suang-Lien's landscape and buildings planning includes elegant space, warm color design, and a comfortable dining environment creates a diverse, multi-functional, home-like and comfortable space, while enjoying the convenience of the community. The interior furnishings are tailored to the physical decline of the elderly, such as the size and material of the chairs, as well as details such as easy cleaning, getting up, and cane hooks.

Integrating "body", "mind", and "spirit" in all aspects of care with empathy makes *causal resource ambiguity*. The elderly center is designed with a home-like mindset and provide opportunities for growth and learning in order to make seniors want to stay (Today Weekly, 2013).

Suang-Lien grasped the opportunity of Taiwan's entry into an aging society. Seeing the ardent demand for elderly care services, it immediately established the Suang-Lien. It became an early entrant in Taiwan's elderly care industry and the excellent location near mountains and ocean, making Suang-Lien's resources unique in *history depend*.

No worry about the source of professional human resources is due to resource *social complexity*. Suang-Lien insists on employing local staff who can communicate with the elderly without any language barriers. More than 200 staff members have 41 types of certificates to serve the needs of the elderly in healthcare, rehabilitation, spiritual counseling and faith. The Center has signed industry-academic partnerships with universities and colleges to bring in and nurture talents in disciplines related to geriatric services. Suang-Lien's humanized organizational culture attracts young professional staff.

Suang-Lien's nonprofit and social care business philosophy providing diversified services is *unsubstitutable*. The *rare* resource is that Suang-Lien set up the first elderly community college in Taiwan located in an elderly center. It provided five courses, including painting and calligraphy, music, language, and spirituality, with more than 40 classes. It also held regular achievement exhibitions to give a stage for the elderly to build their achievements. Regardless of cost, Suang-Lien provides a wide range of services, including hospice care, minor care, major care, long-term care, modular care for dementia, short-term care, day care, warm family companionship rooms, and community care stations.

Observing at the development history of Suang-Lien Elderly Center during entrepreneurial period, the characteristics of resources and competitive advantages are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Resource Characteristics and Sustained Competitive Advantages during the Entrepreneurial Period

Year	Events	Resource characteristics	Sustained competitive advantages
1989	E1: Established the Elderly Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value: land, buildings, facilities - Rareness: Elderly Community College - Imitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardware planning meets the needs of the elderly - The caregiver empathy, caring

Year	Events	Resource characteristics	Sustained competitive advantages
1993	E2: Proposed a comprehensive social welfare park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History depend: early enter, the environment with mountains and ocean Causal ambiguity: whole-person care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> service is as warm as home
2000	E3: Suang-Lien Elderly Center was open.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social complexity: organizational culture, industry-university cooperation Substitutability: business philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient source of professional manpower Diversified services

4.2 Technological Innovation Period (2008~2014)

4.2.1 Development Path

In 2008, the Elderly Care Research Center was established to explore the issues related to the service and care model for the elderly, develop customized care service models and barrier-free aids, use smart technology to improve the quality of care, and continue to modify and innovate the service process (Lin & Xu, 2017). Through government subsidies, combined with the guidance of academic research institutions, expert advice and manufacturer assistance, the center has successively developed a number of products to introduce into the silver hair industry. The products cover the fields of daily necessities such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, education, entertainment, and medical care, as well as safe identification and position. Next to the social hall in the park, Suang-Lien set up a “Living Lab” space, which open to domestic and foreign colleges students to interact and study with the elderly, and the elderly can also get together with young students to develop various products and services suitable for aging. This kind of planning of “suitability for aging” is the core value of Suang-Lien, linking every piece of equipment and service (Wealth Magazine, 2015).

In 2008, in order to improve the quality of care and enhance the efficiency of service and management, Suang-Lien used innovative technology to create a long-term care service model. Suang-Lien connects the industry to jointly develop information communication management systems and service connectors to achieve a one-stop service platform. The main projects are as follows: development of a 4G smart community care service platform; development of a smart home service management system (Lin & Xu, 2017); establishment of a integration platform of silver-haired smart life convenience station; mobile nursing vehicle.

In 2011, in line with the government's policy of comprehensively caring for the elderly or the disabled, and based on the experience and resources of institutional care services, Suang-Lien extended the institutional service functions to community care services and home care services. CEO Mr. Tsai Fangwen proposed a multi-level continuous long-term care service system. The internal service cover long-term care, living care, and other elderly welfare, and external services include community elderly care and home care business (Tsai, 2013).

4.2.2 Analysis of Resource Characteristics and Competitive Advantages

During the period of technological innovation, Suang-Lien Elderly Center has continuously improved and refined its own resources and capabilities, thereby maintaining a long-term and sustained competitive advantage. Its competitive advantages are described as follows:

The Elderly Care Research Center developing products suitable for the elderly is *rare* in the elderly care service institutions. The Research Center, according to the needs of the elderly, develops adaptive assistive devices and customized care services to show the considerate services centered on the elderly. Due to a good relationship with the industry, the *social complexity* resource, Suang-Lien can conduct the industrialization of innovative products to diversify business development.

Promoting intelligent efficiency and high-quality care service creates *value*. Suang-Lien uses innovative e-

technology products to strengthen the connection of long-term care service models to meet the needs of the elders being served for social support, leisure, and friendship. Through the concept of information and communication management system and one-stop service. The existing long-term care services and commercial operation models are integrated to form a care and health platform with information and communication, which effectively improves the efficiency and quality of care services.

Multi-level continuous services are *not substitutable*, because Suang-Lien has the operation and management knowledge for all level elderly care, the resources of *causal ambiguity*. Suang-Lien provided multiple (home, community, and institutional services), multi-level continuity care (from health, light to moderate disable, long-term care and dementia care) (Common Wealth Magazine, 2018). Suang-Lien served the elders at every stage and every field, and clearly understood their needs, which build Suang-Lien's core advantages (Lin & Xu, 2017).

Since Suang-Lien Elderly Community College, volunteers have been working for the church. At 114 volunteers assist elderly care service is unique *history depends*. Compared with the "aunt-level" staffs in other elderly care institutions, a large number of young volunteers have joined, further improving Suang-Lien's service quality and receiving the satisfaction and praise from the elderly.

Observing the development process during the technological innovation period, the resource characteristics and competitive advantages of Suang-Lien Elderly Center can be summarized as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Resource Characteristics and Sustained Competitive Advantages in the Technological Innovation Period

Year	Events	Resource characteristics	Sustained competitive advantages
2008	E4: Established the Elderly Research Center	- Value: Technology - Rareness: Elderly Research Center	- Research and Develop products suitable for ageing
2008	E5: Applied technological innovation	- Imitability • History depend: Volunteers • Causal ambiguity: Operation and management knowhow	- Intelligent performance and quality care - Care services for every stage and field
2011	E6: Created multi-level continuous services	• Social complexity: Industry relationship - Substitutability: multi-level continuous services	- Young volunteer services

4.3 Development of Management and Consultant Service Period (2015~2020)

4.3.1 Development Path

In 2014, 367 institutions from domestic and abroad came to visit Suang-Lien Elderly Center, including 109 from Mainland China, 26 from Japan, 7 from Hong Kong, and 4 from Southeast Asia. Suang-Lien therefore added medical management consulting service business. According to more than 20 years elderly care experience and systematically management knowhow, Suang-Lien divided into different types of service modules and provides them to institutions with different needs.

Through the government counseling plan, Suang-Lien's unique high-quality care service model will be constructed into a replicable long-term care service operation modules. From provide institutional elderly care service, Suang-Lien transformed into an exporter of international operation and management service of elderly care. Suang-Lien diffused its effects and assist to improve the quality of care for domestic small institutions and promote the formation and development of related industry alliances.

In 2015, Suang-Lien launched to provide management consulting services of elderly care, which has been systematized divided into six stages:

- Survey and evaluation of market positioning when initially enter the elderly care industry.

- Internal detailed planning for investment and construction
- Development of various aging lifestyle products.
- Human resource training
- All SOPs (standard operating procedures) and information sheets required for operation
- Accompanying operation.

Suang-Lien successfully assisted 3 nursing homes in Taiwan to replicate the experience of Suang-Lien. The customers of overseas are mainly Chinese state-owned enterprises. Suang-Lien has signed MOUs (Memorandum of Cooperation) with 32 Chinese state-owned enterprises and initiated nine cooperation projects (Wealth Magazine, 2015).

Suang-Lien developed toward big health industry in 2015, and completely set up an intelligent long-term care environment for the elderly and develop the big health industry: According to a report in the "Economic Daily" in April 2016, Suang-Lien Elderly Center and Shuoxin cooperated to create the only one highly customized HOCA smart home service management system in Taiwan, which makes technology completely humanize. Lin and Xu (2017) pointed out that Suang-Lien cooperated with the Smart Life Technology Integration and Innovation Research Center of National Taiwan University to jointly develop a series of auxiliary facilities and equipment for the elderly.

4.3.2 Analysis of Resource Characteristics and Competitive Advantage

Suang-Lien Elder Center has accumulated its core competitive advantages in the past, and effectively used its own resources and capabilities during the development of management and consultant service period. It expanded export of management consulting services to overseas, and developed the innovation and commercialization of elderly care services and products. It's long-term and sustained competitive advantage, its competitive advantage is explained as follows:

Unsubstitutable resource brand established Suang-Lien sustained competitive advantages. Recognized by "Health Magazine" and "Common Magazine", Suang-Lien is rated as Taiwan's top elderly center. The occupancy rate is 100%, with 2,000 people on the waiting list and nearly 300 domestic and foreign groups visiting every year. Suang-Lien is a model elderly center in the field of health care (EMBA Magazine, 2017).

Using well the resource of *social complexity*, Suang-Lien integrates external resources such as IT manufacturers, daily necessities manufacturers, and industry-University cooperation. Develops toward a big health industry, Suang-Lien internationalizes the service model, and uses smart technology to provide health-related equipment, researches and develops of furniture specifically for the elderly, whether it is daily necessities, health promotion products, or transportation. Because understanding the elderly, Suang-Lien makes industrial innovative products meet the needs of the elderly.

Electronic forms, intelligent service, and process standardization promoting more efficient operation bring positive *value* to Suang-Lien. Complete modules of elderly care service for institutions, community-based and home care based include the operating system, administration system, and customer service system, form *rare* resource.

Due to twenty-year elderly care service experience, the resource of *history depends*, Suang-Lien successfully gathered 41 multi-professional service teams related to medical care, rehabilitation, counseling, and spiritual support to serve the elderly. Because elderly care needs to take care of the body, mind, and spirit, it employ domestic employees who can communicate with the elderly without language barriers, instead of hiring foreign employees. A large number of elderly care major graduates work here with good salary, benefits, further education channels and corporate culture. Entire service system has 350 employees that 40% are bachelor level or above and 10% are elder care management major. The professional team builds excellent service culture (*social complexity* resource) and

provides touched, trusted, and customized service (*Causal ambiguity* resource) that gains the elderly's satisfaction.

Observe the development process of the development of management and consultant service period from 2015 to 2020. With the management consulting service, Suang-Lien can upgrade or transform from tangible elderly care to an invisible service industry. Suang-Lien Elderly Center's resource characteristics and competitive advantages can be summarized as shown in Table 4.

Table 3 Resource Characteristics and Sustained Competitive Advantages During the Development of Management and Consultant Service Period

Year	Events	Resource characteristics	Sustained competitive advantages
2015	E7: Provide medical management and consulting services/export services and products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value: Operation SOP, Electronic forms - Rareness: Service modules - Imitability • History depend: care experience and multi-professional service team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Branded advantages - Complete elderly care service modules - Service and product innovation - Professional service team
2015	E8: Develop of a big health industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causal ambiguity: Touched, trusted, customized service. • Social complexity: Service culture, resource integration ability - Substitutability: Brand 	

5. Conclusion and Discussion

First of all, Suang-Lien grasped the opportunity of Taiwan's entry into an aging society. Seeing the ardent demand for elderly care services, it immediately decided to establish the Suang-Lien Elderly Center and became an early entrant in Taiwan's elderly care industry, making Suang-Lien's resources unique in history. The soul figure CEO Tsai Fangwen loves to serve the elderly. He studied the graduate school of Medical Institution Management in National Taiwan University. Later, he became a member of the Elderly Welfare Promotion Committee of the Ministry of Interior, assistant professor of Department of Elderly Services Management of Mackay Junior College of Medicine, Nursing, and Management and St. John's University of Technology. He step by step led Suang-Lien from the periods of preparation, construction, establishment, growth, and transformation to become the benchmark for elderly care institutions in Taiwan. Under his leadership, the service concept is deeply embedded in the organizational culture. The causal ambiguity of this resource forms a close trust relationship with customers, which is difficult for other competitors to imitate.

Secondly, Suang-Lien uses technology to set up an intelligent long-term care environment to effectively improve the quality of care and increase work efficiency. Electronic forms, service and process standardization also bring positive value to Suang-Lien. Suang-Lien has set up a research center for the elderly with unique insight, demonstrating the industry's rare research and development capabilities, and has developed age-appropriate aids and even exported to Japan and China. Suang-Lien not only actively uses its own resources to create a competitive advantage, but is also good at linking governments, Universities, communities, technology manufacturers, etc., and integrating external resources into an institutional niche. In particular, by introducing a large number of outstanding talents with expertise through industry-University cooperation, Suang-Lien builds a professional service team. The complex network relationship of this society also forms the heterogeneity of its resources.

Finally, Suang-Lien's unique multi-level continuous service expands its service from institutional to community-based and home-based services. The number one brand of elderly cares brings more than 300 institutions to visit each year which promote transform by triggering business opportunities for management

consulting services. It is worth noting that because Suang-Lien embarked on empathy to create a home-like warm and safe care facility and provide caring services like family, it not only wins the trust of the elderly and their families, but also extends the care services to Community and home-based care, and even developed as a management consultant service exporter. The breadth, length or depth of the service is irreplaceable. Therefore, Suang-Lien actively accumulates and uses core resources and capabilities to develop long-term and sustainable competitive advantages.

This study analyzes the formation of lasting competitive advantage for the case “Suang-Lien Elderly Center”, which is used as confirmation that the actual case and theory are mutually corroborated to better understand the development of resource-based theory in the field of strategic management application, and the full picture of the theory. We believe it will be helpful for follow-up related research which is recommended to use in-depth interviews to further explore the formation factors of Suang-Lien’s organizational culture and its interaction with the internalization of service value.

This study has made in-depth discussions on the connotation of resource-based theory and the current research situation, and will help supplement the analysis of core resources and capabilities of the elderly care industry with a resource-based perspective in academic implications. In management implications, this study specifically describes Suang-Lien’s development path in a historical retrospective way, so that it can better understand its development trajectory, and plan the future direction based on future environmental trends and existing resource conditions. It is provided to other elderly care institutions in Taiwan as a reference of development.

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