

INFLUENCE OF SMART BUSINESS NETWORKS ON EFFICIENCY OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The current study adopted an aim which was focused on examining the influence of SBN on the efficiency of organizational strategies including (Concentration, Diversification, Vertical Expansion, Geographical Expansion and Consolidation). Quantitative approach was adopted utilizing the questionnaire as a tool. A sample of (132) responded to the questionnaire for primary data gathering. Results of study indicated that there is an influence of SBN on success of organizational strategies that are attributed to the adopted variables. In addition to that, SBN proved its ability to monitor and steer organizational strategies to success through focusing on sensitive aspects of strategies' application and performance, also, all adopted variables including (Concentration, Diversification, Vertical Expansion, Geographical Expansion and Consolidation) proved that it might be influenced with SBN adoption within an organization. All variables scored a high relationship to the independent variable except for diversification which scored a low relationship to the independent variable. Study recommended that technology isn't only devices, computers, machines and applications, it is also a stream of thinking, and management should be more open to tech approaches in the virtual world

Keywords: SBN, Concentration, Diversification, Vertical Expansion, Geographical Expansion, Consolidation, Organizational Strategy

Introduction

The organizational strategy is an important and essential element in the management of the general system of organizations and institutions because of its great contribution to the functioning of the organization and the group of social actors in it at their different functional levels the organization's goals (Yuan et al, 2020). From that point, many organization adopted strategies in addition different tools and approaches that guarantees the achievement of organizational goals in the best was possible (Aljuhmani et al, 2021). Among such tools are IT and other technological tools which were based on the smartness of tech approaches and its ability to achieve results on precise and well-organized approaches (Dey et al, 2019).

According to Hartnell et al (2019), the main strategy of the organization defines the direction of the organization over the long term and defines the goals that must be achieved for the organization successfully. Therefore – as according to Heo (2019) - the formulation of the main strategy of the organization well requires studying and examining the external and internal environment of the business in which it competes in order to adapt to that environment continuously and for the purpose of staying in an advanced position in the competition by means of environmental examination.

Literature Review

Smart Business Networks Definition

With the technological development and the continuous enhancements of business field, there appeared many technological solutions that aid the process of achieving business strategies aims and goals in a way that matches the organizational needs (Langley et al, 2021). Such solutions were smart business networks (SBN) which was defined as a complex network of a group of companies that came together in order to achieve a set of pre-agreed goals, and these goals are usually adopted in connection with the role of the organizations associated with them in the market and the nature of the field in which they operate.

As for Jovicic (2019), SBN was defined as a type of cooperation and agreement between groups of organizations located in one or several local or international regions, and aspires to achieve certain directions of development and goals, which are usually stipulated in the cooperation agreement between them. On the other hand, La Rocca et al (2019) indicated that SBN is a collaborative model that links organizations together in order to exchange experiences, achieve goals, exploit strengths and overcome weaknesses within the operational, production and administrative processes carried out by the combined organizations.

Zeng et al (2019) says in his study that the principle of SBN usually aims to achieve a kind of synergy between organizations in order to reach a state of increased competitiveness and innovation in both the local and global markets, while maintaining the independence of the organizations linked to the business network. On the other hand, Abbas et al (2019) confirmed that the idea of the SBN is suitable to be established for any type of commercial and industrial activities, including manufacturing, importing, exporting, and external and local suppliers.

As for Häckel et al (2019) , he saw that SBN is considered one of the best smart business networks that can be developed, provided that the organizations gathered in it are compatible in terms of goals, ambitions and values.

The Evolution of (SBN)

Vervest et al (2008) Smart Business Network is a growing web of individuals and organizations connected together in an unpredictable and dynamic way, with the goal of generating economic benefits by fast re-configuring ties between these players via shared communication and logistic networks. Finally, smart business networks rethink the concept of linear routes (or graphs) in business processes, replacing them with asynchronous interaction protocols and transactions between development partners, all of which are embedded inside the underlying communication network (De Dutta and Prasad, 2019).

On the other hand, Vervest et al (2005; 2004) argued before that smart business networks have quick connect and disconnect capabilities; they can select the best capabilities from a variety of business network actors, connect them, and have them play in unison; and they manage, or own, the business logic for multi-actor business process execution.

Pau (2017) also added that all three words "smart business networks" are required in the title. The term "clever" is used in management to describe an action that is fresh and unusual, and hence considered

inventive. Smart decisions lead to extraordinary, “better than usual” company outcomes. Smart has connotations of being stylish and distinct, as well as being transient. While Shih and Aaboen (2019) stated that as a result, the term "smart" in "smart business networks" is a relative rather than an absolute one. Smartness refers to a network's ability to provide "better" results than other, less intelligent business networks or other types of business partnerships.

Smart business Networks – according to Khafaji et al (2020) - grow not only as a result of technological advancements, but also because markets and current corporate competitiveness necessitate the formation of such networks in order to survive and thrive [1]. The focus of management attention then shifts to network management, as well as the processes for joining or leaving a network and selecting suppliers from the network. We can now go a step further and declare that building and managing a smart business network is a core competitive competence (Langley et al, 2021).

Organizational Strategies

According to Hsieh et al (2019), organizational strategy is the organization's general orientation in terms of trends towards growth and methods of managing multiple activities and product lines, and how to achieve balance in its investment portfolio or products. Collingridge et al (2020) argued that the organization's strategy reflects decision models regarding the type of activity that the organization should engage in, the flow of financial and non-financial resources to and from departments, the relationship between the organization and interest groups, and the entrances that the organization can use to increase the return on investment.

As for Vedel and Kokshagina (2021), and organizational strategy is a long-term future plan set by the senior management to plan the future of the organization in the long term, regardless of the type of organization. Vedel and Kokshagina (2021) added that setting an organizational strategy is supposed to achieve a set of primary and essential objectives which are:

- Defining the types of business that the organization is involved in or committed to.
- Identifying new opportunities, threats and challenges in the environment.
- Determining the growth goals that the organization should achieve.
- Developing the necessary plans for the acquisition of resources, and the relative allocation of those resources between the works carried out by the organization. Any allocation or distribution of resources among the strategic business units in the organization, as most large organizations that are complex are divided into strategic business units for planning purposes.

From another perspective, Shanafelt et al (2021) argued that an organizational strategy is mainly adopted in order to determining how the management of synergies between strategic business units is managed and coordinated, while Olson et al (2019) saw that an organizational strategy is meant to guide and direct the business strategy that determines how the organization can distinguish itself from competitors, by defining and developing the distinctive capabilities of the organization. The organization may compete on high quality, low cost, flexibility, or delivery as according to Häckel et al (2019) and Abbas et al (2019) who also added that an organizational strategy is supposed to determine how to measure performance.

Generally speaking, Strategy is a term that expresses the behavior models and business entrances used by management to achieve customer satisfaction, support and improve its market share and position,

and achieve its organizational goals (Shih and Aaboen, 2019). While De Dutta and Prasad (2019) saw it as the management tool to achieve compatibility with its environment, thus ensuring the long-term survival, growth and stability of the organization. Khafaji et al (2020) argued that strategy formulation is the essential stage in the strategic management process. Large organizations have three levels of strategy: organization strategy, business strategy, and function or activity strategy.

Smart Business Networks Positively Influence Success of Organizational Strategies

The organization's strategy is centered on describing the general direction of the organization in terms of trends towards growth and methods of managing multiple activities and product lines, and how to achieve balance in its portfolio of investments or products (Jimoh et al, 2019). The organization's strategy reflects decision models regarding the type of activity that the organization should engage in, the flow of financial and non-financial resources to and from departments, the relationship between the organization and interest groups, and the entrances that the organization can use to increase the return on investment (Kim, 2019).

Ninan et al (2019) believes that the introduction of intelligence in all its forms into the organization's work is enough to increase its competitive level among other organizations and at the same time benefit from the organizations' experiences in the same field, as the idea of SBN is based on the exchange of experiences and interests of organizations in the same field and therefore, if the organization is a medium-sized organization, it can benefit from the experiences of another large organization interested in the field.

As for Vishvakarma et al (2019) he saw that technology is very important for organizations that aspire to horizontal or vertical expansion, this expansion usually depends on the organization's ability to bear a higher effort in view of its experiences and financial and non-financial capabilities to deal with any kind of expansion or increase in Its size and the size of its business, and therefore technology in this field contributes to increasing the organization's ability to absorb new branches or increase the types of its products and services in view of the experience it derives from the rest of the organization and the cooperation based on smart business networks.

On the other hand, it was found - Kabeyi (2019) - that SBN is considered one of the advanced options for organizations that contribute in one way or another to directing the organization towards the most suitable options for it given the field in which it operates. These options provide the organization with the foundations and means available to the organization through business networks because it benefits from a lot of the experiences of other systems, especially the large ones, and helps them achieve the desired goals of the strategies followed in a way that can increase their market share in a fair and competitive manner.

Model and Hypotheses

From hypotheses development above, researcher was able to create the following table, highlight the relationship between variable and extract the following set of study hypotheses:

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Organizational Strategies
➤ Concentration

Main hypothesis:

H: SBN improves results of organizational strategies

Sub-Hypotheses:

H1: SBN improves results of concentration strategies

H2: SBN improves results of diversification strategies

H3: SBN improves results of vertical expansion strategies

H4: SBN improves results of geographical expansion strategies

H5: SBN improves results of consolidation strategies

Methods

Reaching aim of current study was done depending on quantitative approach; the researcher in that sense developed a questionnaire extracted from previous studies including Vervest (2004; 2005; 2008) and Pau (2017). The questionnaire was uploaded online – due to COVID 19 health precautions which prevented actual application - for the gathering of primary data; the questionnaire was left on Google forms for 8 weeks in order to get as many responses as possible.

Population of study consisted of operation managers, production managers and IT managers within electronics organization in Jordan. A sample of (150) was determined to be reached through uploading the questionnaire on Google forms and sending the link to the designated respondents. After application process, researcher was able to reach (132) properly filled questionnaires which indicated a response rate of (88%) as statistically accepted.

SPSS V. 23rd was used in order to screen and process the gathered data, Cronbach's Alpha was used in order to determine the reliability of study scale it was found that alpha value=0.963 was greater than accepted percent 0.60 which reflected the reliability of the scale. Other SPSS tests were used including:

- Frequency and percentages
- Means and standard deviation

- Multiple regression
- Linear regression

Results

Demographics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Sample

		Gender	
		f	%
Valid	Male	97	73.5
	Female	35	26.5
		Age	
Valid	22-27	12	9.1
	28-33	35	26.5
	34-39	40	30.3
	+40	45	34.1
		Educational Level	
Valid	BA	70	53.0
	MA	44	33.3
	PhD	18	13.6
		Experience	
Valid	Less than 2 years	10	7.6
	3-5	21	15.9
	6-8	43	32.6
	9-11	58	43.9
	More than 12 years	132	100.0

According to table 1 above, frequency and percentages were calculated according to respondents answers, it was seen that majority of respondents were males forming 73.5% of total sample compared to females who formed 26.5% of total sample. As for age of respondents, majority of them were above 40 years forming 34.1% followed by respondents who were within age range of 34-39 years forming 30.3% of total sample. In terms of educational level, majority of respondents held BA degree forming 53.0% of the sample and in terms of experience it was found that majority of them had an experience of 9-11 years forming 43.9% of the sample.

Questionnaire Analysis

Table 2. Questionnaire Analysis

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	Mean	Std. Deviation
SBN		
SBN is a large group of operating entities combined together in a dynamic approach	3.80	1.103
It is a business paradigm that has the ability to unite operations and give direct results	3.92	1.126
Connections and harmony is attainable through SBN	3.69	1.127
Being smart business means to adopt a spot in an SBN	3.95	1.118
SBN is able to capture and handle the business operating system in a harmonized way	3.79	1.133
Organizational Strategies		
Concentration		
Involving smart tools in business can improve image of product	4.25	.775
With smart business the focus will be on the product	3.98	.953
Smart marketing an help increase efficiency of concentration	4.17	.743
The organization is known for concentrating on a certain production line with smart tools	4.12	.949
There is always a way to focus more on the production line with smart tools	4.02	.756
Diversification		
With smart tools, new products can be added	4.35	.677
The organization has the power to add new products that are not related to its experience with smart business	4.36	.689
Being smart means being able to diversify the production line	4.21	.642
With smart business networks the organization is more able to diversify its production	4.34	.760
SBN gives the organization more horizon to become more productive	3.87	.992
Vertical Expansion		
SBN gives organization the ability to expand vertically	4.23	.879
With SBN more branches can be opened and connected together	3.95	1.010
SBN can help organization to produce its own raw materials	3.91	1.044
The ability of the organization to expand depends on how smart its operations are	3.86	.854
Vertical expansion is available if smart connection is held between operating branches	4.30	.665
Geographical Expansion		
SBN eases the process of connection between branches within different countries	3.92	.727
SBN opens the gate towards getting more connection with the outside market	4.14	.836
With smart tools in business, the connection process is attainable and easy	4.19	.909

Having a SBN gives a chance to uncover many new operational opportunities	4.23	.730
SBN based expansion can create better image to the organization	3.84	1.118
Consolidation		
SBN can gather different business units at one time	4.02	.766
Many small organizations can be one large organization with SBN	4.19	.848
Consolidation can improve operational efficiency	4.24	.917
SBN has the ability to control large personnel and operations	4.29	.737
SBN can control combining assets, liabilities, and other financial items of two or more entities into one.	3.92	1.146

Above table 2 showed mean and standard deviation of respondents' answers to the questionnaire statements. It appeared that respondents had positive attitudes towards questionnaire statements as all means scored higher than mean of scale 3.00 which is statistically accepted. The most positively answered statement was articulated "The organization has the power to add new products that are not related to its experience with smart business" which scored a mean of 4.36/5.00 compared to the least positively answered statement articulated "Connections and harmony is attainable through SBN" scoring a mean of 3.69/5.00 but also positive as it was higher than mean of scale.

In table 3 below, mean and standard deviation of variables in general were calculated; it appeared that all responses to variables influence came to be positive as all of them scored higher than mean of scale 3.00 which was statistically accepted. The most positively answered variable was "diversification" scoring a mean of 4.22/5.00 compared to the least positively answered variable which was "SBN" scoring a mean of 3.82/5.00 but still statistically acceptable.

Table 3. Variables Mean and Standard Deviation

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<u>SBN</u>	<u>3.8288</u>	.98326
Concentration	4.1076	.70263
<u>Diversification</u>	<u>4.2258</u>	.58761
Vertical Expansion	4.0515	.76032
Geographical Expansion	4.0652	.66654
Consolidation	4.1318	.69626
Organizational Strategies	4.1164	.60995

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4. Testing Main Hypothesis

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Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.678 ^a	.460	.456	.44994

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.419	1	22.419	110.739	.000 ^b
	Residual	26.318	130	.202		
	Total	48.737	131			

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.505	.158		15.856	.000
	SBN	.421	.040	.678	10.523	.000

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis, $r = 0.678$ reflected high relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explained 46% in the variance of the dependent variable, in addition to that, it was found that F value was significant at 0.05 level, that meant SBN improves results of organizational strategies

Table 5. Testing 1st sub-Hypothesis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.603 ^a	.363	.358	.56280

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.496	1	23.496	74.182	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.176	130	.317		
	Total	64.672	131			

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.458	.198		12.439	.000
	SBN	.431	.050	.603	8.613	.000

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis, $r = 0.603$ reflected **high relationship** between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable

explains **36.3%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05 level , that means SBN improves results of concentration strategies

Table 6. Testing 2nd sub-Hypothesis

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.208 ^a	.043	.036	.57697		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.957	1	1.957	5.878	.017 ^b
	Residual	43.276	130	.333		
	Total	45.232	131			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.750	.203		18.507	.000
	SBN	.124	.051	.208	2.424	.017

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis, $r = 0.208$ reflected **low relationship** between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **4.3%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05 level , that means SBN improves results of diversification strategies

Table 7. Testing 3rd sub-Hypothesis

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.728 ^a	.530	.526	.52336		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.122	1	40.122	146.479	.000 ^b
	Residual	35.608	130	.274		
	Total	75.730	131			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.897	.184		10.319	.000
	SBN	.563	.047	.728	12.103	.000

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Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis, $r = 0.728$ reflected **high relationship** between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **53%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05 level, that means SBN improves results of vertical expansion strategies

Table 8. Testing 4th sub-Hypothesis

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.731 ^a	.535	.531	.45630		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.132	1	31.132	149.520	.000 ^b
	Residual	27.068	130	.208		
	Total	58.200	131			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.167	.160		13.522	.000
	SBN	.496	.041	.731	12.228	.000

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis, $r = 0.731$ reflected **high relationship** between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **53.5%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value is significant at 0.05 level, that means SBN improves results of geographical expansion strategies

Table 9. Testing 5th sub-Hypothesis

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.692 ^a	.479	.475	.50457		
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.409	1	30.409	119.441	.000 ^b
	Residual	33.097	130	.255		
	Total	63.506	131			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.256	.177		12.730	.000

SBN	.490	.045	.692	10.929	.000
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Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis, $r = 0.692$ reflected **high relationship** between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **47.9%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05 levels, that means SBN improves results of consolidation strategies

Discussion

Current study aimed at examining the influence of smart business networks on organizational strategies accomplishment and success including variables of (Concentration, Diversification, Vertical Expansion, Geographical Expansion and Consolidation). Through uploading an online questionnaire for the sake of collecting primary data, (132) individuals responded to the questionnaire and SPSS was used in order to screen and analyze the gathered primary data. Main hypothesis of study was totally accepted and there appeared an influence of SBN on success of organizational strategies that are attributed to the adopted variables. Study also was able to reach following findings:

- SBN proved its ability to monitor and steer organizational strategies to success through focusing on sensitive aspects of strategies' application and performance
- All adopted variables including (Concentration, Diversification, Vertical Expansion, Geographical Expansion and Consolidation) proved that it might be influenced with SBN adoption within an organization. All variables scored a high relationship to the independent variable except for diversification which scored a low relationship to the independent variable
- The highest relationship was for the variable of geographical expansion scoring a variance of 53.5% and indicating a high relationship to the independent variable
- The least relationship was scored by the variable of diversification which indicated a low relationship to the variables with a variance of 4.3% but still, it was seen as statistically accepted.

The idea of SBN depends on gathering organizations from the same field of interest in one network in order for them to exchange experience, journeys, indication, strategies and approaches which would help them succeed and present better results. The organization's strategy in general aims to achieve a set of variables that have an impact on the success of the organization and in its favor, and the organization usually adopts a set of steps, tools, or methods in order to ensure the achievement of these goals, which would achieve the organization's strategy. From here, it can be said that any measure taken by the organization is capable of influencing the mechanism of achieving these goals and the ways to reach them, including the SBN. The study indicated that the idea of the SBN has a significant impact on the organization's strategy and its achievement by looking at the variables that have been adopted (Concentration, Diversification, Vertical Expansion, Geographical Expansion and Consolidation).

And here, the SBN is capable of influencing the geographical expansion of organizations in terms of increasing their capacity and experience in the field, and thus their other capabilities increase and is more able to expand geographically and at the same time their ability to manage the results of this geographical expansion also increases. Therefore, and with reference to the results of the study, it can be said that SBN is considered a very positive thing for organizations, and it is the best strategic alternative for a successful organization, operating in a relatively stable industry and in a non-turbulent

external environment. According to this strategy, the organization seeks to continue its current approach and methods by focusing on what it offers with the aim of enhancing and improving its competitive environment.

Results of study was able to meet what previous studies indicated for including Vervest et al (2004; 2005; 2008) who argued that smart business networks are able to present new approaches for organizations that can meet their needs and desires through gathering them with other potentials including organizations, entities and approaches which would facilitate the process of succeeding in reaching the organizational goals that are planned to be met through the strategy.

Results of study also met with what came along with Pau (2017) whoa argued that the evolution of SBN managed to give organizations which are interested in it the opportunity to be more involved in the market, more willing to take action and more experienced in the field which would help in the process of concentration, the idea of concentration was one of the things that resulted from SBN in the field of organizations which is a competitive strategy directed to the target market, or to a specific group of buyers and not others, rather than dealing with the market as a whole. The organization that follows this strategy seeks to take advantage of a competitive advantage in the target market sector by offering products at lower prices than competitors due to the focus on cost reduction, or by providing distinguished products in terms of quality or specifications, or customer service due to the focus on differentiation which were also results met by Ninan et al (2019) Kim (2019) Vishvakarma et al (2019) Kabeyi (2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The exchange of experiences, knowledge and skills was and still is one of the most important strategies that individuals follow in order to ensure success, development and access to a state of achieving goals in all its forms, and SBN has proven its ability to help the organization reach its goals through the meeting of organizations with goals Shared within one business network capable of providing them with a space in which they exchange experiences, knowledge and skills within an atmosphere of fair competition based on work within a unified business environment.

In addition, the entry of organizations into the world of SBN is enough to give a kind of motivation towards adopting foundations and goals for the benefit of the organization within a system of several organizations working in the same field and able to reach a stage where they have experience based on the exchange of information, geographical expansion And diversification in the services and products provided, this ability is usually available as a result of the existence of sound frameworks for working within the business world based on modern and advanced technology.

Based on above discussion and conclusion, current study recommends:

- Technology isn't only devices, computers, machines and applications, it is also a stream of thinking, management should be more open to tech approaches in the virtual world
- Monopoly isn't a part of business environment business, being involved in the SBN won't be accessible for organizations which are known to have monopoly thinking approaches

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