



# **THE EFFECT OF STRATEGIC LEARNING IN ENHANCING STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY AN ANALYTICAL STUDY AT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH CENTER**

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<b>Received:</b> October 8 <sup>th</sup> 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> November 8 <sup>th</sup> 2022 <b>Published:</b> December 16 <sup>th</sup> 2022	The research dealt with the impact of strategic learning in its dimensions (knowledge perception, knowledge absorption, knowledge transfer) in achieving strategic flexibility with its dimensions (responsive flexibility, proactive flexibility), at the center of the Iraqi Ministry of Health. In improving its practice and adoption of these variables, and based on the importance of the urgent variables, the research adopted the descriptive analytical approach, and the research sample was intentional, which included (88) managers and their assistants and heads of departments in the Ministry's center. Statistical programs (SPSS) to analyze the primary data, with the adoption of descriptive and inferential statistics methods (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, relative difference coefficient, relative importance, Pearson correlation coefficient, simple linear regression coefficient) to test the research hypotheses, and the results of the statistical analysis were concluded in the most prominent results That all the correlation and influence relationships were good and significant, which indicates the essential role that strategic learning plays. G in strengthening the strategic flexibility of the .Ministry of Health

**Keywords:** Strategic Learning, Strategic Flexibility, Ministry Of Health.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Organizations today stand on the threshold of a new phase dominated by growing challenges of complexity and uncertainty with a decrease in the levels of predictability of the internal and external environments, which contributed to reaching a state of uncertainty and unpredictability in all sectors, as a result of technological and knowledge developments and vulnerability The unstable political and economic conditions, especially in the Iraqi environment. In the context of this, contemporary intellectual developments in the philosophy of modern strategic management have produced terms that urge organizations to break the collar of traditionalism and come up with what is new and distinctive. itself, and activating its relations with its environment, by adapting to its internal and external circumstances and variables to be of strategic flexibility, so that it does not stand watching in front of changing events, but rather be interactive and proactive in anticipating the event before it occurs.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Most organizations are now suffering from environmental complexity, which in turn increases environmental uncertainty and lack of accurate

information, and the strength of these organizations is measured by their ability to learn, and the accumulation and sharing of knowledge that supports the ability of organizations to be of high strategic flexibility that generates the ability to respond quickly to requirements The external environment and adaptation to it, and this will contribute to increasing and sustaining the health of the organization and ensuring that it does not collapse. The research problem can be raised by the following questions:

- 1- What is the nature of strategic learning and strategic flexibility in the Iraqi Ministry of Health, and what are the levels and mechanisms of each of them?
- 2-How can the Iraqi Ministry of Health employ the strategic learning process to achieve the strategic flexibility required to face the accelerating change it is facing?
- 3- What is the impact of strategic learning on strategic resilience in the Iraqi Ministry of Health?

## **RESEARCH IMPORTANCE**

The importance of the research lies in the researcher's expectation of addressing an existing problem in itself, and the disclosure of necessary and urgent concepts for organizations, as the variables under consideration



support the success of the Ministry of Health, through improving work and proactively predicting problems or interacting through scientific research methods.

#### **RESEARCH AIMS**

1- Diagnosing the level of strategic learning and strategic flexibility in the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

2- Analyzing the impact of strategic learning on strategic flexibility, which raises the discussion towards investigating the causes of this effect and drawing logical conclusions that can be generalized to benefit other organizations and researchers in the Iraqi environment.

#### **RESEARCH ASSUMES**

1- There is a statistically significant correlation between strategic learning and strategic flexibility.

2- There is a statistically significant effect of strategic learning on strategic flexibility.

#### **RESEARCH COMMUNITY AND SAMPLE**

The research was applied in the office of the Ministry of Health, and the research used the intended sample, where the directors and their assistants and heads of departments were selected, and their number reached (88) individuals.

#### **Strategic Learning**

Strategic learning is a set of actions aimed at acquiring knowledge, distributing and interpreting information and memory that directly or indirectly affect the positive development of the organization (Gilaninia et al, 2013:46). Huber (1991) pointed out to four structures related to the strategic learning process for processing information, which are: knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory. A direct effect on the emergence of career paths, and an indirect effect through the creation of dynamic capabilities (Antonacopoulou, 2005, 1-19). According to the viewpoint of (Berghman, 2006, 52), the dimensions of strategic learning are: (perception of knowledge, assimilation of knowledge, transfer of knowledge).

1- Perception of knowledge: If the organization does not realize information and knowledge, there is no attempt to understand it, as knowledge structures may change as a function of some change in the information and knowledge environment, and by affecting the organization's ability to perceive, that is, its ability to identify and acquire new external information and knowledge, and thus The ability to perceive would affect the characteristic of extracting the prevailing logic in the organization.

2-Knowledge assimilation: Absorption refers to the organization's procedures and processes that allow it to analyze, process, interpret and understand information obtained from external sources, as knowledge

absorption depends on individuals' ability to understand new external information and link it to the existing knowledge base. The comprehension scale should measure individuals' ability to learn and understand new external knowledge, and assimilation is an external activity, so the items assess individuals' understanding and interpretation of new knowledge based on the confrontation between external and internal actors (Chauvet, 2015:9-10).

3- Knowledge transfer: the organization's ability to deal with the combination between existing knowledge and new knowledge. By integrating external research and internal knowledge with the importance of a restructuring process in which external knowledge is effectively integrated into internal knowledge by breaking functional barriers (Scaringella et al., 2017:3-4).

#### **Strategic flexibility**

Strategic flexibility is one of the important concepts in choosing business strategies, so the key to success in organizations in our time lies in their ability to recognize the need for change, understand how change affects their overall strategies, and respond quickly to the important points that begin to change. The concept of strategic flexibility differs from The concept of flexibility in its general sense, since the concept of strategic flexibility is related to various aspects of strategic importance to the organization, including the concept of environmental uncertainty and the nature of the strategic response, which will be reflected at all levels of the organization. (Samson and Fred, 2014:10) indicated that strategic flexibility represents "the set of strategic options available to the organization and the extent to which it can benefit from those options through the process of environmental analysis." It supports the organization's ability to respond to expected or unexpected changes by adapting strategies and plans With these changes in order to reduce losses and enhance success (Skeibrok and Svensson, 2016:5).

#### **Dimensions of strategic flexibility**

Responsive flexibility: represents the organization's ability to recognize and respond to changes that occur in the external environment after those changes occur. Organizations that rely on response flexibility usually focus on defensive moves after conducting careful tests. He describes it as the organization's ability to allocate its resources and change the pattern of its activities in order to adapt to unforeseen circumstances in the environment (Pratoom & Peommarat, 2015: 77.(( proactive flexibility

It is the ability of organizations to change and adapt according to the surrounding circumstances, whether



technological, political, economic or competitive, one of the most important factors for their success, especially in the contemporary work environment that is characterized by rapid and intense change and continuous competition, as proactive flexibility enables them to seize opportunities before others, and maintain their agility By developing its proactive capability that enables it to respond to dynamic environmental requirements. And in order to achieve this, it is necessary to possess modern technology that is effective in increasing the response of the organization. (FAN et al, 2012:712).

**Testing the search measurement tool, reviewing and analyzing results, and testing research hypotheses.**

**First: the validity of the measuring instrument:**

Consistency of the components of the search scale (Cronbach Alpha): It is clear from Table (1) that all components of the scale are consistent, as the values of the minimum acceptance correlation coefficients were (0.70), and this confirms the consistency of the components of the scale and then the required stability in the event of repetition of the test.

**Table (1) results of consistency between components of the scale**

	Alpha	Crow-Nbacher Dimensions coefficient	lpha Crow-Nbach's coefficient for the variable
strategic learning			<b>0.869</b>
perceive knowledge	0.875		
absorbing knowledge	0.901		
knowledge Transformation	0.900		
Strategic flexibility			<b>0.919</b>
Responsive flexibility		0.915	
proactive flexibility		0.912	

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH VARIABLES**

Strategic learning: This variable scored a general arithmetic mean of (3.58) at a good level, a standard deviation of 0.86, and a coefficient of variation (16.153). At the level of dimensions (strategic learning), the dimension (transfer of knowledge) got the highest arithmetic mean ability (3.68) at a good level, standard deviation (0.83) and coefficient of difference (20.245), and this dimension came in the first level in terms of relative importance.

Strategic flexibility: It is clear from Table (2) that this variable obtained a total arithmetic mean (3.52 with a good level, standard deviation) 0.75), and a coefficient of variation (20.400). It came in second place among the research variables, and achieved the dimension (responsive flexibility) at the level of dimensions of strategic flexibility at the highest arithmetic mean ability (3.62) and a good level and standard deviation (0.70) and a coefficient of variation (14.621), and it was at the first level in terms of relative importance.

Table (2) Arithmetic means, their standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and the relative importance of the main research variables and their sub-dimensions				
The main dimensions and their sub-variables	mean	standard deviation	Variation coefficient	Relative importance
strategic learning	3.58	0.86	16.153	first
perceive knowledge	3.60	0.67	15.810	3
absorbing knowledge	3.53	0.81	19.664	2
knowledge Transformation	3.66	0.83	20.245	1
Strategic flexibility	3.52	0.75	20.400	second
Responsive flexibility	3.60	0.70	14.621	1
proactive flexibility	3.49	0.73	16.708	2

**Hypothesis testing**

1-The first hypothesis: (there is a significant correlation between strategic learning and strategic resilience). The

researcher used the (Pearson) test to clarify the correlation relationship.



Table (3) Correlation relationships between entrepreneurial vigilance and strategic superiority, N=88

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
perceive knowledge						
absorbing knowledge	0.441*					
knowledge Transformation	0.450**	0.321*				
Responsive flexibility	0.482**	0.641*	0.475**			
proactive flexibility	0.601*	0.421**	0.502*	0.288		
Strategic flexibility	0.470**	0.568*	0.192	0.432**	0.439*	0.299**

It is clear from the table (3).

- 1-All values of the correlation coefficient were positive, that is, an increase in the level of strategic learning in its dimensions leads to an increase in the level of strategic flexibility.
- 2-The strength of the correlation relationships varied between weak, medium and strong, and these values ranged between (.992) and (6.41).
- 3- Of the total 16 correlations, there were seven statistically significant correlations at the 1% level of

significance, seven significant relationships at the 5% level, and two non-significant ones.

- 4- Acceptance of the first main hypothesis regarding the existence of a correlation between strategic learning and strategic flexibility.

**Testing the second research hypothesis:** (there is a significant effect of strategic learning on strategic flexibility). In order to test the hypothesis, the joule displays the tabular and calculated values of the statistical parameter F and the coefficient of determination r for the search variables

	perceive knowledge		absorbing knowledge		knowledge Transformation	
	F Calculated	R2	F Calculated	R2	F Calculated	R2
Responsive flexibility	5.218	0.512	6.897	0.261	8.345	0.308
proactive flexibility	7.654	0.317	4.435	0.196	5.598	0.154
	5.318	0.312	5.236	0.247	4.419	0.329
Strategic flexibility	4.564	0.358	5.590	0.269	8.244	0.390

It is clear from Table (4) that:

- 1-All the calculated F values achieved a value higher than the tabulated F value of 3.92 at the 5% (8.244) significance level, which means accepting the second research hypothesis.
- 2- The explanatory power of strategic learning in the components of strategic resilience ranged between (0.196) as a minimum percentage that is explained by knowledge absorption from proactive flexibility, and (0.512) as a maximum percentage that is explained by knowledge perception from responsive flexibility.
- 3- The explanatory power of the dimensions of strategic learning in strategic flexibility ranged between (0.358) for perceiving knowledge, (0.269) for absorbing knowledge and (0.390) for transferring knowledge. That is, the transfer of knowledge was the most capable

of explaining changes in strategic flexibility, followed by the realization of knowledge and then the assimilation of knowledge.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1- The reality of the ministry in question indicates the existence of acceptable applications related to strategic learning, through the efforts of the ministry and its keenness to involve its members in seminars and scientific conferences inside and outside the country.
- 2-The results showed that the Ministry of Health achieved good levels of strategic flexibility. In order to keep pace with the changes.
3. The Ministry's interest in adopting technology in order to advance and keep pace with environmental events, but this is not enough, and the basic elements of



proactiveness are neglected, especially in formulating alternative plans.

#### Recommendations

1-Focusing on acquiring and employing strategic learning in the ministry, the study sample more broadly, in light of the environment of Iraq, which is characterized by environmental uncertainty.

2- Despite the necessity of the dimensions of strategic learning, it can be strengthened to build a knowledge system of a strategic nature, as its construction requires the availability of the (renewable dynamism) feature resulting from the integration of new knowledge with the current knowledge of the research sample companies to form strategic knowledge that serves the formulation and implementation of the targeted strategic plan.

3- Consolidating and strengthening strategic flexibility in the work of the Ministry and its work because of its positive effects on the overall organizational performance, commitment to the strategic approach and building diverse human skills that are flexible and have the ability to adapt to the environment and face the uncertainties that require business organizations to have a special approach and a strategic tactic that fits the requirements of the situation .

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