
STRATEGIC AWARENESS AND ITS ROLE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL AMBIDEXTERITY

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Abstract

Banks operate in complex, rapidly changing, dynamic environments, so they need a strategic manager or leader who has strategic awareness that enables him to make the right decision at the right time. Organizational ambidexterity is also known as being able to achieve excellence for organizations by exploring and exploiting opportunities, exploring risks, and working to confront them and perhaps benefit from them at times. Organizational ambidexterity also enables one to know the weak points in organizations and work to reduce them and to know the strengths and work to exploit them. Therefore, the idea of this study came from the point of view that strategic awareness will enhance organizational ambidexterity. The problem of this study is the answer to the question: Do organizations have strategic awareness that allows them to enhance their organizational ambidexterity? Is there a relationship between strategic awareness and organizational ambidexterity, this study also aims to know the role of strategic awareness in enhancing the organizational prowess of the bank sample of the study. The importance of the study comes from the fact that it deals with the banking sector, as it is considered the main artery of the financial sector. This study assumes that there is a relationship and influence between strategic awareness and organizational prowess, and it has been adopted. This study was based on a questionnaire form and (100) valid for the study were distributed and were analyzed through (SPSS.V.26) program. Therefore, this study reached many conclusions, the most important of which is that there is a correlation and influence between strategic awareness and organizational ambidexterity, as strategic awareness enhances organizational ambidexterity. The study also suggested working to enhance and sustain strategic awareness among employees so that they can achieve organizational ambidexterity that enables them to achieve status and competitive advantage.

Keywords: strategic awareness, organizational ambidexterity.

Introduction

Banks are considered the main artery of the financial sector, through which monetary policies are implemented by governments. The strategic awareness of banks has a special importance and status, as a bank that has management and employees who enjoy strategic awareness will be able to face rapid changes, eliminate their risks, and benefit from them. Organizational prowess also enables banks to explore and exploit opportunities that enable them to achieve a competitive edge, as well as explore threats and work to confront them and reduce their risks. Strategic awareness makes the organization flexible and quick to change its

organizational structures. It also makes it depend on rapid strategic movements that enable it to achieve goals. Fast speed enhances the long-term strategy. Hence, the researcher believes that strategic awareness enhances organizational prowess, which in turn will enable banks to excel and achieve the goals they seek to achieve, so this study was conducted to confirm this.

The Study Problem

Organizations today operate in difficult, dynamic environments. These organizations must be distinguished by strategic awareness and organizational dexterity, which facilitates them in exploring opportunities and working to exploit them, as well as exploring threats and working as much as possible to avoid them. At the same time, the organization must be ingenious and fully aware of how to exploit resources. Current needs, current markets, and current customers in order to achieve the organization's goals, as well as how to explore new markets and new customers (future needs and work to satisfy them). From this standpoint, the problem of the current study lies in answering the following question:

Do organizations have strategic awareness that allows them to enhance their organizational prowess, and is there a relationship between strategic awareness and organizational prowess?

The Importance of Studying

- 1- The importance of the current study lies in the fact that it is a scientific attempt to employ strategic awareness in banking work in order to achieve organizational ambidexterity, which is one of the most important modern administrative concepts.
- 2- The importance of this study comes from the fact that it addresses strategic awareness and organizational prowess in the banking sector, which is considered one of the most important basic pillars for achieving economic development.

Objectives of the study

- 1- Knowing the role of strategic awareness in enhancing the organizational prowess of the bank sample of the study.
- 2- Knowing the type of relationship between strategic awareness in its dimensions (strategic awareness of the external environment, strategic awareness of the internal environment, strategic awareness of strategic goals) and organizational ambidexterity in its dimensions (exploration, exploitation))

Study hypothesis:

This study is based on the following main hypotheses:

- 1- There is a statistically significant correlation between strategic awareness and organizational ambidexterity.
- 2- Strategic awareness affects organizational ambidexterity.

Data collection methods:

- 1- The theoretical aspect: The researcher in this study relied on the theoretical aspect on Arab and foreign references, as well as on magazines and periodic research.

2- The field aspect: Information about the variables for this study was collected through a questionnaire, which is used as a main tool in collecting information, and this information was confirmed through field visits to the bank that is the study's sample.

Study population and sample:

Banks have a major role in the process of economic development. Therefore, banks are considered the main backbone of the economy in any country, including government banks. Therefore, the study dealt with Al-Rafidain Bank in Al-Muthanna Governorate. The study population, the study sample (manager, assistant director, department head, other employees who hold a preparatory certificate) and above).

The limits of the study:

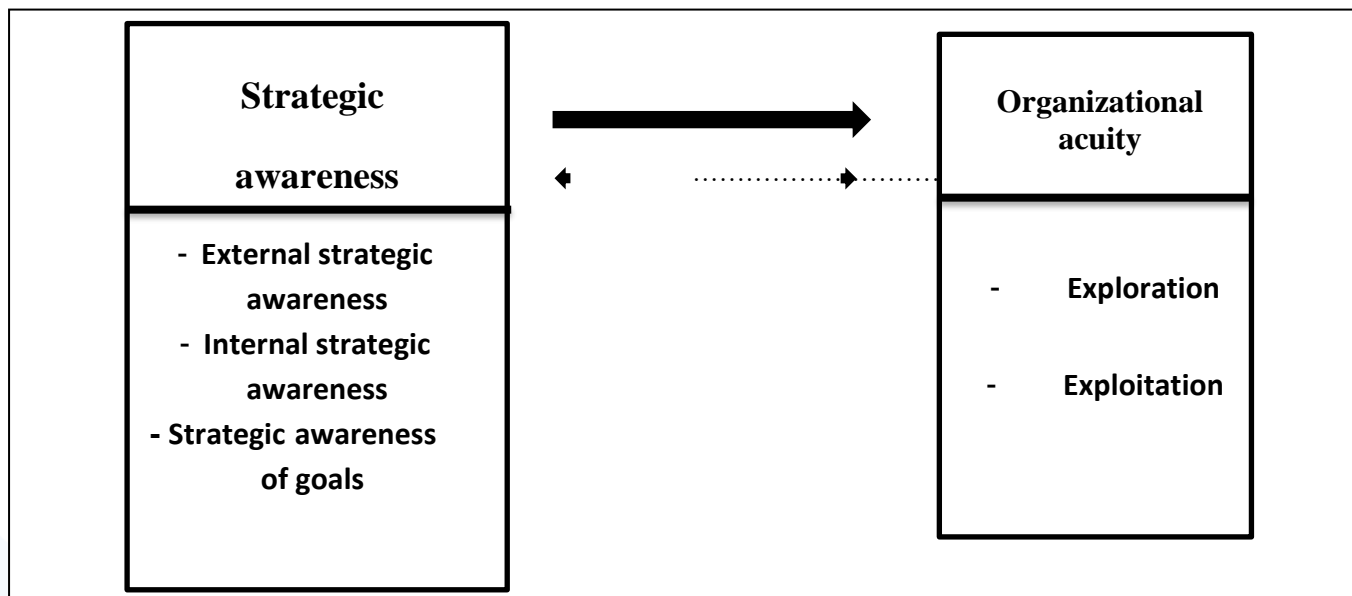
Spatial boundaries: The study dealt with Al-Rafidain Bank in Al-Muthanna Governorate.

Time limits: This study lasted from 8/5/2023 - 2/20/2024.

Human limits: Addressing employees at Rafidain Bank (manager, assistant director, department head, those with a middle school diploma or above)

Hypothetical model for the study

Chapter one



The first topic

First: The concept of strategic awareness:

Strategic awareness appeared as a concept in the eighties of the last century and developed until it included all members of organizations in addition to taking into account internal and external factors and their importance. Strategic awareness was presented as being based on the individual level and indicating the degree of awareness that individuals possess of

strategic priorities (Alabdaly et al. al ;2021:488). Strategic awareness allows people to shed old identities and the need for control as an alternative to making choices that contribute to progress. Strategic awareness also allowed employees to take in a wide range of information and perceive things in a broader context. In order to lead a successful organization, the strategy must work together, in addition to awareness of how various factors in the broader environment and the organization fit together. However, pure awareness alone does not lead to business success. In order for strategic planning processes to be more effective, they must support awareness and develop mutual interaction between them (Halis, previous source : 162). There are those who see strategic awareness as “the ability to conduct an assessment of the overall impact of any change or specific change,” and this requires administrative leadership, while Others see it as “the way in which managers become strategically aware of the organization’s position and opportunities for change and the extent of their awareness of all internal and external environmental factors,” and this requires expanding the awareness of these leaders (Ibrahim et al; 2020:108). Strategic awareness is defined as the result of integrating awareness of strategy, as well as integrating global trends and potential futures with realistic knowledge of the industry (Al-Mousawi, 2022: p. 1759).

The way in which managers strategically perceive the organization’s position as well as possible opportunities for change. Therefore, managers must be aware of all factors of the internal and external environment (Turkay et al, 2012: 9189).

Second: The importance of strategic awareness

Strategic awareness is of great importance in organizations, but it helps them to know their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to identify opportunities and seize them, and to identify threats and work to avoid them. The importance of strategic awareness becomes clear through its role in rationalizing decisions and providing all information to decision makers that helps them make the right decision. The appropriate time in order to achieve the goals that the organization seeks. Strategic awareness also provides the organization with an information system through analyzing the internal and external environment, as well as a strategic information system for all environmental events by collecting information related to competitors, especially determining the policies and strategies of competitors in the markets, and this information It is easy to access because it was collected in an organized and systematic way (Al-Badayneh, 2021: 49). The importance of strategic awareness within banks constitutes an incentive for employees because they will participate in setting goals. Strategic awareness also helps in developing supervision and control systems to make them more comprehensive. In addition, awareness will help employees provide added value to customers because they are on the front lines and are aware of the needs of customers and markets (Khattab. et al., 2021;166).

Third: Dimensions of strategic awareness:

He believes (Al-Badayneh , previous source : 50) that the dimensions of strategic awareness (strategic awareness of the external environment, strategic awareness of the internal environment, strategic awareness of strategic goals):

1- Strategic awareness of the external environment:

It means employees in banks' awareness and knowledge of all developments that occur in variables in the surrounding environment, with the aim of employing them in the products and services provided by their banks and then studying their impact on their wages (Bashar et al., 2021: 116).

2- Strategic awareness of the external environment:

It means awareness of the organization's ability to meet all the needs and requirements of customers through the use of resources and expertise, as well as its knowledge to achieve competitive advantage, and strategic awareness shows the diversity of banks in terms of their employees and maintaining the quality of the products they provide, and this is through studying the market continuously and obtaining... On data and information from its clients (Al-Fatlawi et al., 2020: 29).

3: Strategic awareness of strategic objectives:

It can be said that strategic awareness of the organization's strategic goals represents the ability of employees or workers in the organization to understand the strategic goals that the organization seeks to achieve, their connection and interconnection with each other, and the importance of achieving them. Therefore, strategic awareness of the strategic goals that the organization seeks to achieve is important for the organization for a number of reasons, including: The most important of which is ensuring the keenness and commitment of all employees to the strategic goals. Strategic awareness of the organization's strategic goals also improves coordination and integration between the organization's activities, and this is what makes the organization more effective and efficient. In addition, strategic awareness enhances the sense of the organization's goals, and this is what leads to increasing their productivity and achieving satisfaction. Functional (Ismail, 2007: 107).

Chapter one

The second topic

First: The concept of organizational ambidexterity

Organizational ambidexterity has received great attention from various research fields. It can be said that organizational ambidexterity means coordinating activities between exploration and exploitation, and an organizational ambidextrous organization is one that is able to reallocate the capabilities and assets it has for the purpose of confronting threats and taking advantage of new opportunities, and this is not done. Except when there are leaders within this organization who are able to make difficult choices (O'Reilly and Michael, 2011: 17). Ambidexterity means the organization's ability to achieve a potential balance (using both hands equally) for exploration and exploitation in the organization. Organizational ambidexterity can be achieved through strategic methods and ideas that can help organizations compete, and achieve harmony in the structural and contextual framework of organizations. Since the scientist (March 1991) proposed the mechanism of organizational ingenuity based on a balance between exploration and exploitation, this concept has gained great importance (Hussein, 2021: 47), as seen by (Pagliarini and Lapuente, 2023: p. 218)

Exploration includes aspects such as search, variety, risk-taking, experimentation, flexibility, discovery, and innovation, with uncertain and often negative returns, while exploitation sees improvement, productivity, efficiency, selection, implementation, improvement and expansion of existing skills with positive and predictable returns. Organizational ambidexterity is the organization's ability to invest its current activities in existing investment fields, and to explore new investment activities for the organization in a way that leads to a balance between investment and exploration and reconciles the organization's resources with its competitive conditions (Mahmoud, 2015: 270). According to (March, 1996: 89) Organizational ambidexterity means that organizations are able to achieve a balance between the activities of exploration and exploitation effectively. The researcher believes that organizational ambidexterity means the organization's ability to achieve a balance between exploitation and exploration, work to avoid threats, exploit opportunities effectively, and achieve competitive advantage.

Second: The importance of organizational ambidexterity:

He believes (Hussein, previous source:50) that the importance of organizational ambidexterity applies to all fields, such as organizational behavior, strategic management, and others, because organizational ambidexterity, through exploitation, works to improve performance in the short term, while it also works to improve performance in the long term, through Explore and respond to environmental changes appropriately. Organizational ambidexterity also works to achieve competitive advantage by better meeting customer needs, entering new markets, and maintaining existing customers. At the same time, organizational ambidexterity works to enhance job satisfaction by creating a positive work environment that motivates employees and encourages them to do their best. Organizational ambidexterity works to develop employees' skills through a culture of continuous learning, and this enables employees to achieve opportunities for advancement in their jobs (Abdel Aziz, 2021: 234).

Third: Dimensions of organizational ambidexterity:

Organizational flexibility has been dealt with in many studies, and each study has specific dimensions. The most important things that researchers agree on are two dimensions: exploration and exploitation, as follows:

Exploration:

Exploration strategies have gained their importance as a result of difficult, dynamic competitive environments. Organizations always work on research and development, exploring opportunities and risks, then taking advantage of the opportunities and working to avoid risks. Therefore, we find organizations focusing a lot on new ideas, experimentation, innovation, and flexibility. Exploration strategies include exploration. New services or complementary to a specific product. Hence, we confirm that the company can benefit from changing market dynamics by taking advantage of new growth opportunities. This is done by offering new products, especially those designed in response to changing market needs,

and exploration strategies enable the distancing of current resources from current needs. This could reduce short-term profits (Bahadir and Sunder, 2015: 4) .

Exploration strategies can generate new knowledge through experimental and exploratory procedures, and this new knowledge is generated through existing strategies and knowledge. Strategic learning enables the discovered knowledge to be evaluated, distributed, and implemented in ways and means that allow banks to use it and achieve organizational goals. Also, Exploration strategies seek to create new opportunities outside the scope of current strategies. These strategies focus on the current product, technology, market, and current customers by increasing diversification. In addition, exploratory activities enable the identification of opportunities and capabilities necessary for survival and prosperity in the long term, and show These strategies include new products, processes, and markets (Kuckertz et al., 2012:21).

Exploration is experimenting with or creating new assets and capabilities. Exploration is also defined as the strategy or vision of organizations through which they seek to produce new products and services in order to improve their competitive position. In addition, it is defined as the ability and speed of organizations to discover new opportunities and adapt. With dynamic markets in order to discover new markets and customers. (Mahmoud, 2016: 235).

Exploitation:

Exploitation strategies mean that organizations focus on current activities and markets instead of searching for new markets and customers, perhaps to avoid research and development costs or to avoid risk. Exploitation strategies can also respond to changes in the market and achieve short-term profits, but following exploitation strategies hinders the ability to The company is determined to grow in the future and achieve long-term profits. Therefore, we find that traditional concepts focus on fears and negative results, and this leads to making a decision with low risk and at the same time low returns (reward). Therefore, exploitation leads to achieving safe and guaranteed results for the company at the same time. It enables the company to achieve knowledge that helps it rationalize decisions (Goff et al, 2015:2).

(Al-Jubouri, 2011: 65) believes that exploitation is the ability of organizations to develop their current activities to create value in the short term in order to satisfy the needs and desires of current customers and markets in addition to developing current knowledge and skills and developing current products. Exploitation is also a strategic goal process. Including taking advantage of existing organizations' resources by developing them, improving their use, or producing enhanced services that complement current products.

Chapter one

The third section : the practical aspect of the study

1: Stability of the scale: It is necessary to verify the stability of the scale tool. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is calculated, to ensure that the questionnaire is capable of measuring what it was designed to measure, as well as ensuring its validity through the reliability coefficient (internal consistency), despite the lack of a basic rule for values. Alpha However, (Mezher, 2017: 91) believes that applied research is almost unanimously agreed

that the Alpha coefficient should be equal to or greater than (0.60), so we find Table (1) indicating the Alpha values:

Table (1) Coding search variables

Variable	dimension	Source of scale	Number of items	Alpha value
Strategic awareness	3	Al-Badayneh ,2021 AL Khattab ,2021	12	0.89
Organizational ambidexterity	2	Al-Jubouri, 2011	15	0.94

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS. V. 26

2- Hypothesis testing:

First: the correlation hypothesis:

The researcher relied on the simple correlation coefficient (Pearson) in order to test the research hypothesis (correlation hypothesis) in order to test the correlational relationships between the variables of the study. Therefore, we can see from Table (2) the matrix of simple correlation coefficients, where (sig) indicates the test of significance. This is done by comparing the calculated (t) with the tabular (t). When (* or **) appears on the correlation coefficient, this means that the calculated (t) is greater than the tabular (t).

Table (2) Correlation between the two variables

	Strategic awareness	Organizational acuity
Pearson correlation	1	0.960**
Sig (2-tailed)		0.00
N	100	100
Strategic awareness		
Pearson correlation	0.925**	1
Sig (2-tailed)	0.00	
N	100	100
Organizational acuity		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the SPSS program. V.26

Table (2) indicates that there is a strong correlation between the study variables (strategic awareness, organizational ambidexterity) because the correlation coefficient between the study variables reached (0.925), and if it indicates something, it indicates acceptance of the first research hypothesis (correlation).

Table (3) indicates the arithmetic means and standard deviation for the study variables, as shown below

Table (3) The arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the study variables

المتغير	Mean	Std . Deviation	N
Strategic awareness	4	0.64	100
Organizational acuity	3.81	0.86	100

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the SPSS program. V.26

Second: The influence hypothesis:

Here, the hypothesis of the second study is tested, which states that strategic awareness has a direct effect on organizational ambidexterity, as Table (4) indicates shows the positive direct effect of strategic awareness on organizational ambidexterity.

Table (4) Testing the effect between study variables

model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.925**	0.855	0.854	2.00

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the SPSS program. V.26

Table (5) ANOVA analysis test between study variables

ANOVA						
model		Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	f	sig
1	Regression	2337	1	2337	579	0.00
	Residual	395	98	4.036		
	Total	2733	99			

Source: SPSS output. V.26

Table (4) and Table (5) show a set of results that indicate the validity of the second hypothesis of the study that there is a direct effect of strategic awareness on organizational ambidexterity, as the influence factor for strategic awareness on organizational ambidexterity reached (0.925) and at the level of (0.001). This means that awareness The strategy increases 92% of organizational ambidexterity, and the remaining percentage is due to other variables outside the study model. Also, the calculated (F) value was greater than the tabulated (F), and this indicates acceptance of the second hypothesis of the study.

Chapter one

The fourth section

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- 1- There is a correlation and influence of strategic awareness on organizational ambidexterity, and this relationship is direct. This means that the presence of strategic awareness in the organization has a role in enabling the organization to achieve organizational ambidexterity.
- 2- The employees' interest and clear and accurate knowledge of the organization's internal strategy and its external strategy, as well as the goals of their organization, enables them to achieve the organization's strategic awareness.
- 3- There is an interest by the organization in strategic awareness in order to achieve organizational prowess.
- 4- Organizational ingenuity is what enables organizations to explore and exploit opportunities, as well as to discover risks and work to avoid them.

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- 5- Organizational ambidexterity enables employees to recognize strengths and work to enhance them, explore weaknesses and work to reduce them.
 - 6- Strategic awareness and organizational ingenuity enable the organization to overcome the rapid changes occurring because they possess the necessary flexibility in making appropriate decisions at the right time.

Recommendations:

- 1) The organization (the subject of the study) must work to maintain employees' strategic awareness by involving them in the decision-making process and formulating the strategy for the organization.
- 2) Work to enhance strategic awareness among employees by involving them in educational courses and seminars, especially held by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in order to increase their awareness, which enables them to make the appropriate decision at the appropriate time.
- 3) Paying attention to organizational ingenuity, especially in the exploration process in order to explore opportunities and threats, then work to benefit from them, and then explore weaknesses and strengths and exploit them or limit them.
- 4) Organizational ingenuity must be exploited in the organization because it is able to achieve a competitive advantage for organizations over their competitors in the same industry and the same market.

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