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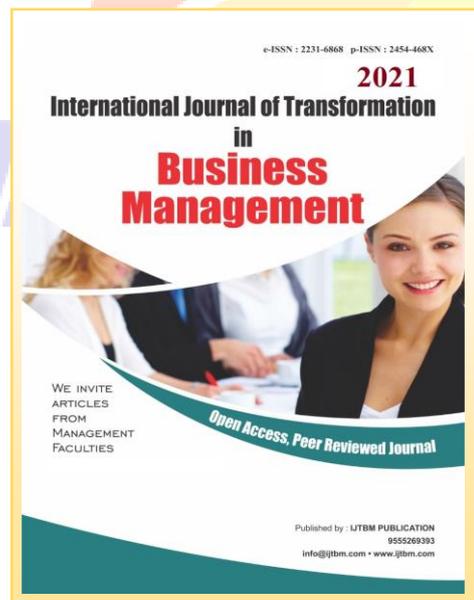
THE EXTENT OF THE STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY IN THE  
IRAQI MINISTRY OF HEALTH: ANALYTICAL  
RESEARCH IN THE CENTER OF THE MINISTRY

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### ABSTRACT

The research aims to indicate the extent of the availability of strategic flexibility in its dimensions (competitive flexibility, productive flexibility, market flexibility), what is the extent of the organization's ability to adapt and respond quickly to the changing dynamic environmental conditions surrounding it?? With the need for the organization to maintain its competitive ability in performing its work with a high quality of creativity and innovation and to achieve the highest stages of benefiting from the new ideas proposed to produce distinguished products and services for its customers, to obtain high revenues and profits, if the Ministry of Health was chosen - the center of the ministry, specifically the administrative, financial and legal department to represent Community of research and application of the practical aspect. The sample included (general managers, assistant general managers, department managers, divisional officials, unit officials and employees) a random sample in the surveyed ministry. The research community was (180) employees and the research sample was (120) employees. The questionnaire was distributed to (125) and (120) were received, valid for statistical analysis. The research problem was the weak strategic flexibility of the middle management in the researched ministry. The researcher relied on the descriptive and analytical approach in completing the research. Used a questionnaire key tool, as well as field visits and personal interviews, conducting and compiling a lot of data through the actual Ministry of the surveyed diagnosis of fact, was used a set of statistical descriptive methods (arithmetic mean, the relative importance, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation) was used software (SPSS) for primary data analysis.

The researcher reached a set of conclusions, the most prominent of which was that there is a lack of interest in the required form in the strategic flexibility variable and its dimensions (market flexibility, productive flexibility, competitive flexibility) in the Ministry of Health, where the interest in them was moderate in general and detail. As a result of the apparent weakness in the correct and modern administrative thought of most of the senior and middle leaders in the Ministry of Health as a result of non-administrative medical specialization.

**Keywords:** *strategic flexibility*

### INTRODUCTION

Strategic resilience is an important topic that is of great importance to writers and researchers at the level of organizations that provide their services to citizens. Before management and how to achieve the strategic flexibility of the middle management in the organization in question, and in order to find

the right and sure ways that lead to providing the best services in order to adapt the rapid changes that our world is witnessing today in light of the information and digital revolution, there must be exploitation of the best opportunities and possibilities that would To make the process of strategic

flexibility in the middle management of the organization good and highly efficient.

Because we know that strategic flexibility is of great importance to the organizations and the organization in question, and the obvious shortcomings that organizations suffer today in the process of marketing their services and products, there must be interest in the process of strategic flexibility in the middle management of the organization in question.

With regard to the role of strategic flexibility and its being a goal sought by everyone in organizations, because of its importance in enhancing the success of the organization, and that the organization is in great need of strategic flexibility in a way that helps it achieve the best results through its marketing outlets.

This is what the current research sought, as the issue of strategic flexibility in middle management is one of the important topics of great importance. Accordingly, the current research confirms the principle of strategic flexibility for its success among the middle departments in the organization in question.

Accordingly, this research came to shed light on the impact of strategic flexibility in the middle departments in the researched ministry and an attempt to show the relationship of strategic flexibility in these departments as well as identify the problem

that the ministry suffers from, and the Iraqi Ministry of Health was chosen as a community to apply the current research because it is extremely important in providing state institutions and public service organizations and private.

## THE THEORETICAL SIDE OF STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY

**1- The concept of strategic flexibility:** It is a dynamic ability that helps the organization to adapt and change during the time that leads to maintaining a state of competitive advantage in the long run. The above stages (Lau 1996: 11-15) On this basis, the most important thing that achieves the competitive advantage of organizations and makes them able to face uncertainties in the internal and external environment is to have strategic flexibility that enables them to analyze the work environment and anticipate and anticipate events and other benefits that guarantee them Staying in the business unit within competitive organizations (Hitt et al., 1998: 22-42) and strategic flexibility has enhanced the positive effects of the technological ability to explore, so that when the strategic flexibility increases, the technological capacity for exploratory innovation increases as shown (Zhou & Wu 2010: 547) It is through strategic flexibility that organizations can achieve competitive advantages, as indicated by Aaker & Mascarenhas 1984: 74). ) And that strategic

flexibility comes from being able to work in an environment that is described as dynamic and changing competitiveness, as shown by (Yonggui & Hing, 2004: 34-59). He also indicated (Zhang, 2005: 166) that through strategic flexibility, it can be determined The importance of possessing the competitive advantage for the different organizational levels and creating value or manufacturing strategies, including comprehensive change, operational perfection, enables the organization to avoid the trade-off between low cost and differentiation and difference, and to provide high quality services or goods at an appropriate price, in addition to the continuous improvements in the organization's organizational processes and techniques, as well as On the continuous learning processes of new organizational knowledge, pathways and capabilities. The strategic flexibility is the organization's ability to manage political and economic risks through rapidly responding to market opportunities and threats in a way of action and reaction (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001: 72).

And defined (Johnson, etal 2003: 77) as the organization's willingness and ability to form real strategic options to generate value proposition for customers by way of formation and reconfiguration, and Greenley, 2004: 1458) referred to it as the organization's ability to respond and adapt successfully to environmental changes.

(Bhandari 2004: 22) The concept of strategic flexibility refers to the ability of organizations to develop new products, enter new markets and new industries. From a competitive environmental perspective, it was stated as the ability of the different organization in changing competitive environments: & Hing-Yonggui (34-59). . It is not far from what was mentioned by (Kstuhiko & Hitt, (2004: 44-58) about the ability of the organization and its ability to identify changes in the external environment, and the speed of response to them.

## **2- Dimensions of strategic flexibility:**

**A- Competitive flexibility:** Competitive flexibility means the organization's ability to compete in a turbulent and unstable environment (Al-Maadidi and Al-Taei, 2011: 122). That is, its ability to compete in local and global markets that are characterized by intense competition, the technological transformation or the strategic move of competitors in a particular market leads to changing the rules of the competitive game and the organization that is able to respond to the new behaviors of the competitor, it is easy for it to deploy important resources and use the various strategies available to compete effectively (Abbott & Banerji, 2003: 3). The flexibility of strategic organization's ability to resist neo-current behavior of competitors, and its ability to rearrange important resources and easily,

dissemination and devoted to the production processes market and respond to the demands of customers, and diversify the options available with the strategy to compete effectively, and confirm to respond to the needs of unique consumers, partners, and technological change, and the process Innovation and Creativity (Abbas and Hassan, 2018: 11).

**B - Production flexibility:** Production flexibility reflects a company's ability to produce/provide services and goods in most major markets around the world, at a competitive price, with a short period of time. In the development of strategic flexibility it is a critical choice, where to determine and coordinate production activities. Dimensions and level change, production of new products, production flexibility also includes: Modification of existing products capabilities. (Abuzaid, 2014: 169).

It is the company's ability to manufacture its products in most major markets around the world and provide them in a short time, at competitive prices. And (Jad, 2010: 127) believes that in many cases, it is necessary to design one of the production processes that are created or to re-design one of the processes provided for the service that already exists, in order to achieve innovation that leads to fundamental and unprecedented improvements. Emphasis must be placed on

the need to take all necessary measures to ensure the survival and continuity of the new design of the production process of the product according to the new performance levels that are required to be maintained.

**C- Market flexibility:** Market flexibility is the ability of organizations or companies to respond to market changes or influence. It is also defined as the ability of companies to re-evaluate and adjust their marketing efforts in a short time in order to respond to the changing conditions of the business environment. Among the dimensions of flexibility in the market are the following: market share, rapid response to customer demands, and entry into new markets. . It is the ability of the organization operating in the international market to re-evaluate its marketing efforts within a short period of time in response to environmental variables. Both (Darren, 2005: 168) and (Al-Atwi, 2011: 138) explained that what expresses the organization's ability to manufacture And modifying its products according to the demands of customers in the different markets in which the organization deals, represents market flexibility.

#### **DIAGNOSING THE STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY RESILIENCE VARIABLE AND ITS DIMENSIONS:**

The strategic flexibility variable was measured through three dimensions (market

flexibility, production flexibility, competitive flexibility), and Table No. (1) refers to the arithmetic means, standard

deviations and coefficients of difference for the viewpoint of the studied sample to the strategic flexibility variable of the Ministry of Health - the center of the ministry, reflecting the mean Arithmetic for the total degree of the strategic flexibility variable, which amounted to (3,261) with a standard deviation of (0.900) and coefficient of variation (0.276), and the degree of importance (moderate), which indicates that strategic flexibility is of high importance to the Ministry of Health - the center of the ministry, in addition to the standard deviation index and the coefficient of The difference where they were of little dispersion, which indicates that

there is moderate agreement on these results.

The dimension of competitive flexibility came first with an arithmetic mean for each of them (3.292), a standard deviation (0.964), a coefficient of variation (0.125) and a very high relative importance, then followed by the dimension of serviceability with an arithmetic mean (3.997), a standard deviation (0.964), a coefficient of variation (0.293) and importance Relative moderate, then followed by the dimensions of market elasticity and production elasticity with an arithmetic mean for both of them (3.246) and a standard deviation (0.884) (0.988) respectively, and a coefficient of variation (0.272) (0,304) respectively, and a moderate relative importance for both.

Table (1) Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the strategic flexibility variable and its dimensions					
appreciation of importance	Variation coefficient	standard deviations	Arithmetic averages Standard	Paragraphs	No
Moderate	0.272	0.884	3.246	market flexibility	1
Moderate	0.304	0.988	3.246	production flexibility	2
Moderate	0.293	0.964	3.292	Competitive flexibility	3
Moderate	0.276	0.900	3.261	Strategic flexibility	

Source: Prepared by the researcher

**1- Measuring the level of importance after-market flexibility:**

The level of paragraphs after-market flexibility was measured for the strategic flexibility variable, and Table (2) shows the

answer scale consisting of five choices for each paragraph, in addition to calculating the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the paragraphs after market flexibility, as follows:

**Table (2)**

**Measuring the level after market flexibility**

Variation coefficient	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	answer scale										ferries
			I don't totally agree		I do not agree		Not sure		agree		Totally agree		
			%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	
0.276	0.939	3.408	4.3	5	8.3	10	40.8	49	35.8	43	10.8	13	1
0.351	1.136	3.233	9.2	11	16.7	20	26.7	32	36.6	44	10.8	13	2
0.320	1.060	3.308	7.5	9	12.5	15	31.7	38	38.3	46	10	12	3
0.328	1.048	3.192	10	12	10.8	13	35	42	38.4	46	5.8	7	4
0.363	1.113	3.067	10.8	13	16.7	20	36.6	44	26.7	32	9.2	11	5
0.314	1.027	3.267	7.5	9	13.3	16	30.8	37	41.7	50	6.7	8	6

Source: Prepared by the researcher

It is clear from the table (2) above that the highest arithmetic mean reached (3.408) and standard deviation (0.939) for the content paragraph (1) (the ministry is heading towards increasing the market share and in proportion to the size of the current requirements in light of the current situation), which indicates a moderate interest By the sample members about the ministry's tendency to increase the market share in

proportion to the size of the current requirements in light of the current situation, and that the lowest arithmetic mean was (3.067) and with a standard deviation of (1.113) for paragraph (5) within the paragraphs after the contented market flexibility (the Ministry shall by offering new services periodically), which indicates a moderate interest in the ministry's periodic offer of new services, with a rejection of the

sample’s opinions of (33) and a percentage (27.5%) of the total sample size.

**2- Measuring the level of importance of the productive flexibility dimension:**

The level of paragraphs after the productive flexibility was measured for the variable

strategic flexibility and Table (3) shows the answer scale consisting of five choices for each paragraph, in addition to calculating the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the paragraphs after the productivity flexibility, and my agencies:

**Table (3) Measurement of the level of productivity flexibility dimension**

Variation coefficient	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	answer scale										ferries
			I don't totally agree		I do not agree		not sure		agree		Totally agree		
			%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
0.371	1.176	3.167	10	12	18.3	22	30	36	28.4	34	13.3	16	7
0.313	1.050	3.350	7.5	9	10.8	13	30.9	37	40.8	49	10	12	8
0.343	1.122	3.275	9.2	11	13.3	16	30	36	35.8	43	11.7	14	9
0.350	1.118	3.192	10.8	13	14.2	17	27.5	33	40	48	7.5	9	10
0.355	1.125	3.167	10	12	15.8	19	31.7	38	32.5	39	10	12	11
0.322	1.070	3.325	8.3	10	10.8	13	30.9	37	40	48	10	12	12

Source: Prepared by the researcher

It is clear from the table (3) above that the highest arithmetic mean was (3.350) and standard deviation (1.050) for paragraph No. (8) of the content (the ministry is interested in the current services and in proportion to the requirements of the current time), which indicates a moderate interest by the sample members about The ministry’s interest in paying attention to the current services and in proportion to the requirements of the current

time, and that the lowest arithmetic mean amounted to (3.167) and with a standard deviation of (1.125) (1.176) for the two paragraphs (8) (11) within the paragraphs after the productivity flexibility that they contained (the ministry is committed to providing various services to its employees (The Ministry, through its various departments, provides services to renewable citizens) respectively, which indicates a

moderate interest in the ministry's commitment to providing various services to its employees and providing them through its various departments with services to renewable citizens, and rejecting the sample opinions of (34) with a percentage of (28.3%). ) of the total sample size for paragraph (7), with a rejection of the sample opinions of (31) and a percentage (25.8%) of the total sample size for paragraph (11).

**3- Measuring the importance level of the competitive flexibility dimension of the dependent variable, strategic flexibility**

The level of paragraphs after competitive flexibility was measured for the variable strategic flexibility and Table (4) shows the answer scale consisting of five choices for each paragraph, in addition to calculating the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the paragraphs after competitive flexibility, and my agencies:

**Table (4) Measuring the level of competitive flexibility dimension**

Variation coefficient	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	answer scale										ferries
			I don't totally agree		I do not agree		not sure		agree		Totally agree		
			%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
0.350	1.141	3.258	7.5	9	20	24	24.2	29	35.8	43	12.5	15	13
0.331	1.101	3.325	9.2	11	10	12	31.6	38	37.5	45	11.7	14	14
0.311	1.041	3.342	7.5	9	10	12	33.3	40	39.2	47	10	12	15
0.365	1.193	3.267	10	12	16.6	20	24.2	29	35	42	14.2	17	16
0.320	1.060	3.308	7.5	9	11.7	14	34.2	41	35.8	43	10.8	13	17
0.362	1.176	3.250	11.7	14	12.5	15	26.6	32	37.5	45	11.7	14	18

Source: Prepared by the researcher

It is clear from the table (4) above that the highest arithmetic mean was (3,342) and standard deviation (1,041) for the content paragraph No. (15) (the Ministry benefits from new environmental information in developing and modifying its strategy), which indicates a moderate interest by the sample members about the benefit The Ministry uses the new environmental information in developing and modifying its strategy, and that the lowest arithmetic mean was (3.250) and with a standard deviation of (1.176) for paragraph (18) within paragraphs after contentious competitive flexibility (the Ministry always works to exploit the opportunities available in its work environment), which indicates that Moderate interest in the ministry's work always to exploit the opportunities available in its work environment, and a rejection of the sample opinions amounting to (28) and a percentage of (24.2%) of the total sample size.

#### **CONCLUSIONS :**

1- There is a lack of interest in the required form in the dependent variable, strategic flexibility and its dimensions (market flexibility, production flexibility, competitive flexibility) in the Ministry of Health, where the interest in them was moderate in general and detail. As a result of the apparent weakness in the correct and modern administrative thought of most of the senior leaders in the Ministry of Health as a result

of non-administrative medical specialization, where there should be a training course for those who hold the position of head of department and above for a period of (6 months) that deals with administrative, financial and legal issues exclusively. Depending on the nature of the position held by the employee.

2- The researcher noticed that the personal interests and considerations of managers and employees close to them have an influential role in making decisions. As these decisions that are taken according to this perspective are wrong decisions that will have a negative impact and a bad impact on the lives of citizens.

3- The results and personal interviews conducted by the researcher showed that they did not follow the job description of most of the employees in the Ministry of Health in general and the administrative, financial and legal departments in particular, because there are employees with a specialization completely different from the job they work in, especially in job positions such as directors of departments and divisions and even general managers who are from Medical staff (doctors) exclusively, and therefore this procedure has negatively affected the implementation process of decisions and the correct conduct of administrative work within the ministry in question.

4- Finally, the researcher finds that the main and real problem that the Ministry of Health suffers from in general is its weakness in adopting the correct and systematic administrative thought. As the problem is not financial, severe centralization, decentralization, or delegation of powers, but rather the interest in the purely formal and routine aspect of management and neglecting the real and realistic aspect of it, this has negatively affected the Ministry of Health and raised the levels and capabilities of individuals working in it in terms of internal marketing of human resources. And not enabling them to delegate powers and strategic flexibility.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1- Conducting training courses, workshops and seminars on strategic flexibility and its dimensions (market flexibility, production flexibility, competitive flexibility) and its importance in the Ministry of Health, where there should be a training course for those who hold the position of department head or above, for a duration of (6 months) concerned with administrative and statistical issues exclusively. . Knowing that this procedure was in place before (2003) and was responsible for it (the National Center for Administrative Development and Information Technology) of the Ministry of

Planning. Where the employee is not promoted or assuming a higher job position unless he successfully passes these courses.

2- Providing new services in the Ministry of Health on a regular basis in order to contribute to serving citizens and increasing market flexibility in them.

3- Paying more attention to the application of the knowledge capabilities and expertise possessed by the researched ministry through the creation of work teams specialized in devising advanced methods to serve the health reality, as well as creating websites that build bridges of communication between these teams and citizens to ensure access to providing excellent service in field of health service.

4- Studying the relationship of strategic resilience with environmental change and the developments and surprising events that occurred in light of the health crisis and the Corona pandemic that Iraq and the whole world is going through, and its impact on achieving internal marketing for human resources and organizational effectiveness of the organization in light of its dimensions and achieving market flexibility, productivity and competitiveness.

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