

The Role of Organizational Flexibility in Achieving the Strategic Readiness for the Iraqi Ministry of Education

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Abstract:

Purpose: This research has started from a realistic problem embodied by a variety of conceptual and intellectual questions, which aimed to define the conceptual and intellectual framework for the research variables (organizational flexibility and strategic readiness), which are considered important topics that never been subject to research in the Iraqi environment. Moreover, this research aims to investigate the importance of the two variables of this research and their impact on the Iraqi ministry of education.

Research Methodology:The researcher used the descriptive and analytical approach as a method for this research. In order to obtain data and information, the researcher relied on individual interviews and the questionnaire which are directed to these departments (administration, finance, planning & follow-up, and training) to obtain the required responses. The questionnaire consisted of (50) statements distributed on (25) paragraphs for the organizational flexibility variable, and (25) paragraphs for the strategic readiness variable. Sample size table approach of (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) has been used to determine sample size which have to be ($n \geq 140$) for a population of (130). The researcher distributed (111) questionnaires, and a total of (106) questionnaires were retrieved. Then, (3) questionnaires were excluded,

which were not valid for statistical analysis, leaving (103) questionnaires that were actually used in statistical analysis.(SPSS) and (Microsoft Office Excel) were used to analyse data and to ensure the validity of the hypotheses, Correlation, and influence.

Keywords: Organizational flexibility, Strategic readiness, Iraqi ministry of education.

1- Introduction

Different organizations, whether they are public or private, carry out their various activities in unstable dynamic environment as a result of the continuous mobility of all or some of its "social, economic, political, cultural, and technological factors". This will generate increasing difficulties facing these organizations and motivating them to reconsider their internal capabilities to prevent its increasing impacts and to increase their readiness to face them and produce the best possible results.

This is usually not done without organization's endeavour to adopt organizational cultures that encourage its workers to convey ideas between organizational corridors and use them in performing daily tasks and addressing the challenges and errors that may arise because of them,with the importance of adopting an effective leadership style that contributes in influencing employees continuously. Furthermore, it participates in encouraging them to carry on their work and accomplish it according to the guidance of the organization's senior management. As well as seeking to encourage workers to contribute in the completion of work and decision-making in order to ensure that the organization's management implements the decisions accurately and efficiently without any challenges. This is due to the workers who are in charge

of implementing the decisions have been already involved in the process of decision-making and thus they will feel the extent of their importance to the organization, which will push them towards implementing these Decisions, with attention to the significance of sharing organizational information and available knowledge between employees and different departments. As it plays a distinguished role in facilitating tasks and performance without any problems. Side by side with placing the right person in the right place, in other words, workers must be placed in jobs that suit their own capabilities, all of this falls under the name of strategic readiness, which must be based on strengths points provided by organizational flexibility for organizations in general.

Organizational flexibility is considered as one of the variables that takes part in giving the organization the power that enhances its strategic readiness to face various challenges, and this does not happen without adopting administrative standards that the organization can use, for example, employing individuals who have superior capabilities that enable it to address external challenges through getting benefits from its strength. In addition to the availability of smooth management principles that support the organization's internal and external orientation. It is worth mentioning that the importance of using flexible organizational structure can be changed in a shorter period of time to decrease the external pressures which are usually difficult to predict or determine. Organizational flexibility is important for managing professional and organizational differentiation, and it gives employees a privilege to face any consequences of failure. Organizational flexibility makes the system free of biases and prejudices. What is more, it gives more importance to achieve the work in a perfect way. Besides the importance of focusing on the diversity, which reflects the variety of skills owned by the

employees, and their mutual relationships and their expectations, to make them feel that they are participants in the value chain and achieving future goals (Krishna & Manikandan, 2015).

The research started from a realistic problem embodied in a set of sub-questions, the most important question was to identify the extent of the impact of organizational flexibility on strategic readiness. The importance of this research is determined by the study of two variables that were not previously studied. What is more, there was no linkage study between them according to researcher's knowledge. However, the core of the research objectives was to examine the correlation hypotheses between the research two variables and their dimensions, and to come up with conclusions and recommendations that develop and serve the work of the organization of current research.

2. Literature review and hypotheses building

2.1: Organizational flexibility and strategic readiness:

The impact and reflection of organizational flexibility on the organizations are usually large especially in a world which quickly changing. Organizational flexibility had high ability to face urgent situations, in addition to the capability of adaptation with economic, social, political evolutions and its influence. The organization usually strive to achieve high efficiency that secure the surrounding environment which shape the biggest portion of competency environment if measured with those who cannot moving unless in a calm environment (Wuhan, 2006).

Here, personal characteristics of successful administrative leader appears, where work environment is considered as a basic constituent and its ability to understand the whole organization as a thorough system without misunderstanding in its concept. Moreover,

with the logical thinking to face threatens and affective dealing with individuals whatever their differences or variance in their level inside or outside the organization. Strategic decisions must have high level of flexibility in order to adapt with variables. Also leaders have good listening skills and get rid of being stubborn and insisting on incorrect opinions. That may lead to create a model of skilful individuals what their performance reflects on production quality. Furthermore, that leads to achieve the organization's goals which finally lead to create optimum environment built on the basement of respect, mutual trustiness, and accountability (Langley, et al, 2009). The concept of flexibility used for the first time by (Stigler, 1939) who is correlated it with the changes in the price of one unit. Then, this concept has become a thorough concept in various organizations which targets avoiding changes impacts as a result of demand fluctuations that happens in the organization atmosphere (Dastmalehian, 2001). Since the beginning of the 21st century, researches on organizational flexibility have evolved tremendously. Organizational flexibility included many different topics. It can be considered as a comprehensive construction based on a broad idea that is used in a concentrated manner to include a group of diverse phenomena and interpret them to reduce its impact on the organization's survival in competition for the longest possible period and survive against competitors (Hirsch & Levin, 1999)

(Crino, et al., 2013) believed that organizational flexibility is a strategic choice to improve the organization's ability to control a turbulent environment and enable it to deal with various situations. This is because environmental changes usually bring strategic surprises. Thus, plans need to be reviewed continuously because the uncertainty limits the ability of future planning. Further, there are more and more

environmental disruptions, so that organizations need more organizational flexibility because they are complementary to strategic planning, and they are unable to implement expectations, strategies and options. As the economy transforms into the post-industrial era, intangible assets (such as strategic readiness) gain importance over traditional resources (such as land and capital) in various organizations. Besides, strategic readiness is emerging today as one of the most common and important areas of inquiry in academic research and management practices. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, strategic readiness became more specialized in research and development functions. Now, it is rapidly transforming into various majors, including manufacturing, financial services, government and military organizations, and even non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Brush et al., 2012). Increasingly, many researchers consider that organizations are knowledge-based foundations, where strategic readiness is an inevitable necessity. This is because it is related to reformulating strategic objectives. Nowadays, strategic readiness has rapidly become an integrated activity that organizations strive to employ properly. This is because they realize that competitiveness revolves around the effective employment of strategic readiness (Grover & Davenport, 2001).

In order to determine the dimensions of organizational flexibility, the researcher depended on (Uslu's, 2017) study which indicated five main dimensions: (administrative flexibility, organizational approaches flexibility, organizational business flexibility, organizational structure flexibility, organizational communications flexibility) which will be clarified below:

2.2. Administrative flexibility:

Administrative flexibility plays a supportive role for the work of contemporary organizations as it highlights the direction of departments towards adopting administrative norms that are easy to implement and develop. (Fellenz, 2000) believes that administrative flexibility is among the most prevalent concepts at the level of many organizational environments. This is due to its positive effects and reflection on the individual, groups, and organizational levels. That would enhance the ability to confront complex situations in dynamic environments at the global level. According to (Townsend, et.al ,2007), the organizational culture first appeared in the 1970s and 1980s. It quickly became not only one of the most influential concepts, but also the most controversial in management research and practices. The concept has been interpreted very differently and there is a lack of consensus on a common definition of the term. Culture theorists have proposed a variety of definitions, started from accepted behavioral norms concepts and rituals, till shared values, ideologies, and beliefs.

2.3. Organizational approaches flexibility:

It refers to the group of activities through which organizations learn (Dodgson, 1993). Moreover, (Fischer, et al.,1996) have pointed to framework of flexibility of organizational approaches that makes them productive organizations for these Knowledge too, just like many common organizations now in knowledge-based societies. There are many opinions about the concept of leadership whatever its stages and its nature. It is widely recognized that leadership is connected to various aspects of the organization. Therefore, it is difficult to define and give a unified concept of leadership. (Norton, 2004), perceives leadership as one of the most widely studied variables in the field of management, and

it has many different concepts. While, (Park, et al., 2007) highlighted that the researchers used a metaphor of “trees begin to wilt from top to bottom”, indicating the necessity of leadership to transform emerging threats and obstacles into opportunities. What is more, the researchers emphasized that creativity and innovation directly influence the maintenance of organizational competitiveness.

2.4. Organizational business flexibility:

The flexibility of organizational, administrative, and functional businesses is considered as one of the elements of the administrative process. This topic has received increased attention from researchers in various organizations due to their belief in the role of organizing function, and how effective it is. The organizational business is the shape which collective efforts are put in to achieve a certain function or a purpose. It is also a process of determining the works that need to be done, and collect them with determine the necessary authority delegation to perform these businesses. Moreover, focusing on the correlations between these businesses to empower the organization to achieve its goals (Donnell & Koontz, 2000). The organizational business flexibility concerns in building an administrative structure to the individuals through identifying the necessary activities to achieve organization's targets and encourage these activities. (Kaplan & Norton, 2004), believe that strategic readiness contributes in facilitating the work of the human resources that the organization possesses in a way that enables it to enhance the process of creating and presenting value propositions to customers. Consequently, earn the necessary profits to achieve medium and long-term strategic goals.

2.5. Organizational structure flexibility:

The organizational structure is the result of several options that put by the organization in order to control resources and individuals. There are different structures that allow managers to control the resources in different ways (Jones, 1995). (Hellrigel,2004) stated that the organization's structure reflects or can be envisaged in the organizational map that represents an integrated set of activities and basic processes in the organization. Besides that, formal relations are designed and a number of administrative levels are determined. Information exchange is a key component that helps organizations to perform their tasks properly and improve its performance. (Wauchope, et al., 1992) believes that, through the relationships between units, the importance of using knowledge in completing projects might be seen. Even without inquiry, there must be an access to other sub-units which have valuable knowledge or can refer to another sources could do so.

2.6. Organizational communications flexibility:

(Rotation,1992), defined the ability of communicative adaptation as "the ability to perceive interpersonal relationships and adapt one's behaviours and goals accordingly." While (Martin & Robin, 1994) pointed out that "a communicatively flexible person will realize that there are behavioural alternatives to any situation." Consequently, individuals who are flexible in communication must be aware of the need for flexibility and be prepared to adapt their surroundings. Teamwork expresses the work performed by a group of people who possess individual experience. They are in charge of individual decision-making, and they have a common goal. Also, they are those who meet together to communicate, share and unify opinions regarding the work mechanisms in order to make the plans that affect future decisions. (Varela & Mead, 2018)

demonstrated that teamwork refers to a group of two or more people who work together in the pursuit of a common goal. This common concept about the team shows three features that appear at the core of most perceptions of this dynamic variable:

(1) Goals denominators across members.

(2) Cooperation that arise from members' connectedness.

(3) Size, with taking into consideration at least two members. In order to carry out the work properly by the strategic readiness, it must be able to achieve compatibility between its design and: workers' capacities, work nature, and available technologies. (Farmer, et al., 1985) articulated that organizational compatibility consists of four interrelated components: (technology, structure, mission, and individuals). Moreover, many management theorists add the organizational culture as the fifth component which illustrates through the interrelated components that includes culture.

3- Hypotheses:

3.1: Correlation hypotheses test:

This paragraph aims to test the correlation hypotheses between the main and sub-research variables in order to ensure their accuracy. This will be done according to the inclusion of this hypothesis in the research methodology, as follows:

-The first main hypothesis:

This hypothesis assumed that there is a correlation between organizational flexibility and strategic readiness at the thorough level (see table 1). It is obvious that there is a correlation of (0.726**) at the significance level of (0.000). Thus, the level of significance achieved is

less than the proposed level of significance which is (0.05). Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted at the research level. In other words, adopting organizational flexibility will improve the strategic readiness of the organization and enable its management and all the workers to achieve their goals, improve their operations and performance properly.

After testing the main correlation hypothesis, the researcher will test the following sub-hypotheses:

Table (1) values of correlation coefficients between research variables

Stable variables		Administrative flexibility	Organizational Approaches flexibility	Organizational business flexibility	Organizational structure flexibility	Organizational communications flexibility	Organizational Flexibility
Strategic Readiness	Pearson Correlation	0.488**	0.490**	0.605**	0.619**	0.663**	0.726**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	103	103	103	103	103	103

Source: The researcher based on (Spss. V. 23), (n = 103)

- A- There is a statistically significant correlation between managerial flexibility and strategic readiness at the total level. Furthermore, after reviewing the data in Table (1), a positive correlation of (0.488**) is found with a significant level of (0.000). Due to the level of significance achieved is less than the level of proposed level of significance (0.05), therefore, this hypothesis is accepted at research level.
- B- There is a statistically significance correlation between the organizational approach flexibility and strategic readiness at the total level. After reviewing the data of table (1), a clear positive correlation is seen (**0,490) at a level of (0,000). Due to the achieved level of significance is below the suggested level of significance, then this hypothesis is accepted at this research level.

- C- There is a statistically significant correlation between the organizational businesses flexibility and strategic readiness at the total level. Then, after reviewing the data in Table (1), the researcher reported a positive correlation of (0.605 **) and it is significant at the level of (0.000). Therefore, it is clear that the level of achieved significance is less than the proposed level of significance which is (0.05). Consequently, this hypothesis is accepted at research level.
- D- There is a statistically significant correlation between the organizational structure flexibility and strategic readiness at the total level. By looking at the table (1), it is clear that a positive correlation of (0.619 **) with a significant level of (0.000), can be seen regarding the organizational structure flexibility. Therefore, as long as the level of achieved significance is less than the suggested level of significance which is (0.05), this hypothesis will be accepted.
- E- There is a statistically significant correlation between the organizational communications flexibility and strategic readiness at the total level. Table (1) is shown a positive correlation of (0.663 **) at the significant level of (0.000) regarding the organizational communications flexibility. This means that the level of achieved significance is also less than the suggested one which is (0.05). Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted as well.

3.2- Influence hypotheses test:

This next paragraphs aim to test the hypotheses of influence between the main and sub-research variables in order to ensure their accuracy and this will be done according to the inclusion of this hypothesis in the research methodology, as follows:

-The second main hypothesis: The second main hypothesis of the research stated that there is an influence correlation of organizational flexibility variable on strategic readiness at the total level. See table (2):

Table (2) The values of impact factors for organizational flexibility in strategic readiness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	F	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
stable	1.21	0.215		5.601	0.000	112.439	0.000 ^b
Strategic readiness	0.631	0.061	0.726	10.601	0.000		

Source: The researcher based on (SPSS. V. 23) (N = 181)

The table shows that there is a statistically significance correlation of (0.726) and (T=10.601) at the level of (0.000). Due to the achieved level is less than the proposed level which is (0.05) with a value of (T>1.96). Consequently, the second main hypothesis is accepted for this research. Moreover, the value of (F) was (112.439) at the level of (0.000) which means that the research model is correct. In other words, the independent variable of administrative flexibility is impacting on the dependent variable of strategic readiness. Finally, after completing current hypothesis test, sub-hypothesis will be discussed according to its order in this research.

Table (3) coefficients for the influence of organizational flexibility dimensions on strategic readiness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t.	Sig.
	B.	Std. Error	Beta		
Stable	0.935	0.177		5.279	0.000
Administrative flexibility	0.010	0.082	0.011	0.110	0.910
Organizational Approaches flexibility	0.030	0.071	0.047	0.480	0.630
Organizational businesses flexibility	0.140	0.060	0.214	2.240	0.030
Organizational structure flexibility	0.180	0.054	0.285	3.390	0.000
Organizational communications flexibility	0.250	0.061	0.360	4.040	0.000

A- There is a statistically significance correlation for the administrative flexibility in the strategic readiness at the total level. Also, after reviewing the data in table (3), it is clear that there is a positive correlation with a value of (0.011) and (T=0.110) at the level of (0.05) and a value of (T<1.96). Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected for this research level.

B- There is a statistically significance correlation for the organizational approaches flexibility in the strategic readiness at the total level. After reviewing the data in the abovetable, it is obvious that there is an impact correlation of (0.047) and a value of (T=0.480) at the level of (0.630). Due to the achieved level is larger than the proposed level which is (0.05) with a

value of ($T > 1.96$). Consequently, this hypothesis is rejected for this research.

C- Table (3) indicated a statistically significance correlation for the organizational businesses flexibility in the strategic readiness at the total level. After reviewing the data in the abovementioned table, it is obvious that there is an impact correlation of (0.214) and a value of ($T = 2.240$) at the level of (0.030). Due to the achieved level is less than the proposed level which is (0.05) with a value of ($T > 1.96$). Thus, this hypothesis is accepted for this research.

D- There is a statistically significance correlation for the organizational structure flexibility in the strategic readiness at the total level. The above table shows a noticeable impact correlation of (0.285) and a value of ($T = 3.390$) at the level of (0.000). Due to the achieved level is less than the proposed level which is (0.05) with a value of ($T > 1.96$). Consequently, this hypothesis is accepted for this research.

E- There is a statistically significance correlation for the organizational communications flexibility in the strategic readiness at the total level. Also, after reviewing the data in table (3), it is clear that there is a positive correlation of (0.360) with a value of ($T = 4.040$) at the level of (0.05) and a value of ($T > 1.96$). Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted.

4. Conclusion and discussion:

The most important conclusions and discussion that revealed by this research are the following:

1. Organizational flexibility is an important subject that seek to give the organization the ability to face the changes which occur as a

result of the disturbances that represent increasing pressures on the organization.

2. Strategic readiness is a vital approach that helps senior management to prepare earlier. It based on scientific foundations, affected by the disturbances of external environment, in order to confront its instability, in a way that enables it to be more able to face challenges, through the strengths of the organization and its employees as well.
3. Properly employing organizational flexibility and its dimensions, because of its great importance in enhancing the ability of organizations to face external challenges with high efficiency.
4. Taking the advantages of strategic readiness, for its ability to make the organization more prepared to face the disturbances of the external environment, and to transfer it into opportunities that benefit different departments of the organization.

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