

## The joint effect of the leader's strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation on strategic ambidexterity: an analytical study of the opinions of a sample of employees in government banks in Al-Diwaniyah Governorate

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**Abstract :** The current study aims to explore strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity. The study attempts to provide an integrated theoretical framework for the most important issues raised by writers and researchers regarding their variables, in addition to an analytical framework for the opinions of a sample of employees in government banks in Diwaniyah Governorate. The sample size was (180) employees out of (250) employees in government banks in Diwaniyah Governorate.

The questionnaire was used as a tool for collecting data, and a number of statistical methods were used to analyze the data with the help of the (Smart PLS) program. The study concluded that its hypothesis was correct regarding the relationship of influence between its variables. The study presented a number of recommendations related to its topic, including the need for leaders, represented by government banks, Paying attention to the issue of strategic awareness and the correct orientation to help achieve the desired strategic goals.

**Keywords:** Strategic awareness , Entrepreneurial orientation , Strategic ambidexterity employees in government banks in Diwaniyah.

### Introduction

With increasing competition in the business environment, companies inevitably have to adapt to ensure their survival and competitive advantage (Gupta et al., 2019). Some companies have succeeded in conquering emerging business challenges, others may become trapped in a paradox of success or organizational inertia (Audia et al., 2000). The successful adoption and execution of new strategies in responding to the business challenges reflects how companies consistently apply entrepreneurial values, and small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are no exception (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). In contrast to large companies with abundant resources, SMEs have limited resources, which makes them think of new ways to face the fierce business competition (Boohene et al., 2020). Strategic awareness represents one of the contemporary strategic concepts for its important role in helping the organization in understanding its internal and external environment to explore opportunities and exploit them, avoid threats posed by external environment factors, and reduce their negative effects on the organization within the framework of the competitive environment in which it operates to ensure its continuity, and achieve competitive advantage (Al-Badayneh , 2021 : 47).

### 1. Review of Literature and theoretical background

#### 1.1 Strategic awareness

The concept of strategic awareness has become of critical importance in the successful management of the development process. Strategic awareness is the senior management's understanding of the organizations' strategy, or what organizations should be and the level of managers' agreement on the organizations' strategy, goals, and how they perform (Lukkarinen , 2018 : 13). (GIBB & COTT , 1985 : 615) indicates that strategic awareness is the most important internal characteristic that affects the success of the change and development process because it does not embody elements such

as the characteristics of time, resources, and environmental awareness, as it represents the umbrella under which the basic potential factors are organized to assist the process. (Thompson & Martin , 2010 : 10) explained that the term strategic awareness is usually used to include analyzing the current situation and evaluating the available directions within the general goal of the organization . According to (Al-Badayneh , 2021) strategic awareness consists of three types of behaviors as follow:

**1- Strategic Awareness of the External Environment**

Organizations are highly dependent on the surrounding environment, as no organization operates in a vacuum, so the External strategic awareness competitive, social, political and economic characteristics of the context, which have consequences for the strategic work of the organization (environmental awareness) (Pencarelli, 2008), in the external environment, there are many different environments in which organizations operate, and business organizations participate in the same basic activity.

The external environment of the organization consists of a set of external factors that fall outside the scope and control of the organization, such as: customers, competitors, government agencies, suppliers, workers, and financial companies related to the operations of the institutions, it also includes the elements outside the borders of the organization such as political, economic, social and technological factors that have the ability to influence the organization (Johnson, 2021).

**2- Strategic Awareness of the Internal Environment**

It includes a set of elements and factors that represent the overall internal activity of the organization, which mainly relate to organizational objectives, financial resources, administrative skills, strengths and weaknesses, and includes all functions and activities of the organization's marketing, production, financial, and human resources (Read, 2009).

The elements of the internal environment include the human factors, which are represented by the experiences, qualifications, capabilities, trends and the level of qualification of workers, especially since the human element is one of the important and decisive factors in achieving the goals of the organization (Al-Badayneh , 2021).

**3- Strategic Awareness of Strategic Goals**

Strategic objectives are the levels of performance and results that the organization seeks to achieve, they serve as a tool for measuring the final results as the outputs that contribute to strengthening the competitive position of the organization (Posen, 2018).

The strategic objective is the one that is directly related to the mission of the organization and its elements, to be aware of the organization's strategic goal, the question must be answered what the organization seeks to accomplish in the long, medium and short term. Defining strategic objectives is the pillar through which the decision-maker expands and develops the organization's activities in a better way than competitors (Trigeorgis, 2017).

**1.2 Entrepreneurial orientation**

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has been defined as a process that enhances an individual's capacity to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, raising awareness and understanding and providing an overall mental picture of entrepreneurship (Ikpesu, 2016). The concept of entrepreneurial orientation was developed by (Miller 1983) with reference to three dimensions: risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness. redefined entrepreneurial orientation with the addition of two new dimensions – autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. For some years, entrepreneurial orientation was considered as a firm-level construct that helped to characterize a firm (Gupta , 2015). However, recent studies have recommended that it should also be considered as an individual-level construct (Robinson and Stubberud, 2014). Such recommendations have paved the way for researchers to explore entrepreneurial orientation from a new perspective (Koe, 2016) . According to (Karimi & Walter , 2016) entrepreneurial orientation consists of four dimensions as follow:

**1) Autonomy**

Autonomy refers to freedom of action and decision-making that are often necessary for an organizational member to bring a new venture or business concept forward and carry it to completion (Lumpkin et al., 2009). It is a driving force for entrepreneurial value creation and entrepreneurial initiatives enactment. Autonomy is especially important when the new venture is creating new growth using a new business model that may disrupt the established core business (Markides & Oyon, 2010).

**2) Innovativeness**

Innovativeness is defined as the predisposition and willingness to engage in creative behaviors, in experimentation through the introduction of new products or services, or in technological leadership via R&D in new processes (Dess & Lumpkin, 2005). It is said to be present when firms pursue active implementations of new ideas, products, or processes (Hurley & Hult, 1998). Innovativeness is suggested to be one of the most critical factors in accomplishing CE activities (Lassen & Nielsen, 2009) and corporate venture performance (Kandemir & Hult, 2005). It equally refers to both a firm's ability to

create new to the world products, processes and services and its openness to new ideas and new-to-the-firm product launches (Pérez-Luño et al., 2011).

### 3) Risk-taking

Risk-taking is defined as making decisions and taking actions without certain knowledge of probable outcomes, borrowing heavily, or committing significant resources to ventures in uncertain environments (Rauch et al., 2009). Without a degree of risk-taking, firms delay or refrain from introducing innovations and from undertaking exploitative CE activities. This can result in reacting conservatively to changing market conditions and in weak performance due to missed market opportunities. Timely risk-taking has been associated with strategic decision speed and it has subsequently been linked to improved business performance (Eisenhardt, 1989).

### 4) Proactiveness

Proactiveness is defined as opportunity-seeking, forward-looking behavior for introducing new products, services, or technological capabilities ahead of the competition in anticipation of future demand, which can lead to new venture opportunities (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Receptiveness to market signals, awareness of customers' needs, careful monitoring and scanning of the environment, and extensive feasibility research are often associated with a firm's successful proactive strategy (Wright et al., 1995). By actively anticipating and preparing for change and mobilizing resources far in advance of rivals, proactive firms are a step ahead of not so responsive competitors in accomplishing CE activities (Karimi & Walter, 2016).

## 1.2 Strategic ambidexterity

Strategic ambidexterity refers to the simultaneous exploration and pursuit of new market opportunities and the effective exploitation of existing markets (Judge and Blocker, 2008). According to (O'Reilly and Tushman 2013), strategic ambidexterity enables organizations to sense and seize existing and new opportunities by allocating the capabilities and resources of organizational assets. O'Reilly and (Tushman 2004) argue that ambidextrous organizations are able to deliver innovative products without destroying existing products. (March 1991) suggests that organizations operating in a dynamic marketing environment must align the type of support provided to employees with the needs of existing and new markets, if they are to improve their performance. (Atuahene et al., 2001) state that exploitative and exploratory strategies help organizations increase their sales performance in both existing and new markets, respectively (Ocasio, 2011). According to (Wu et al., 2020) strategic ambidexterity consists of two dimensions as follow:

### 1 - Exploration

Exploration refers to the discovery of new products, resources, and knowledge. In the context of start-ups, exploration ingenuity is associated with radical change and learning through experimentation (Sinha, 2015:313). Exploration thus involves a consistent behavior that is defined by a number of terms such as research, experimentation, implementation, creativity, diversity, risk-taking, flexibility, and innovation (Chou, 2018:4).

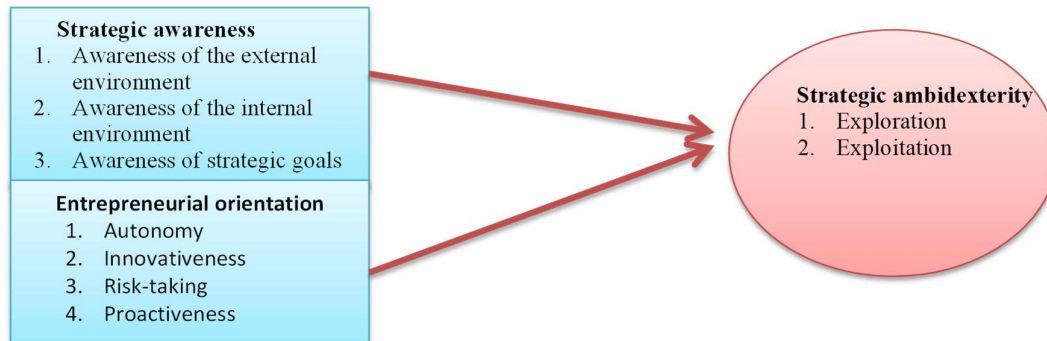
### 2- Exploitation

Exploitation versatility refers to leveraging existing resources, improving, standardizing, and increasing the efficiency of knowledge use while exploring the way organizations look for new opportunities and stepping out of their comfort zone by pursuing change, risk-taking, and experimentation (Gastaldi, et al 2022:3). Organizations that use exploitative activities apply existing knowledge and refine their capabilities in existing departments, and ultimately generate documented exploitative activities (Schnellbacher, 2021, 386) through the re-exploitation of knowledge. (Shina, 2015:316) views exploitative dexterity as those current capabilities and resources to manage short-term strategic goals and stay ahead of the current competition. Exploitation dexterity also includes activities closely related to current areas of expertise in the short term. (Abed, et al 2020:14934) define exploitative dexterity according to the organizational learning framework as the organization's ability to improve activities that can add value in the short term.

## 2. The hypothetical scheme of the study

The hypothetical diagram of the study represents a simplified, brief, and hypothetical diagram of the phenomenon under study, and identifies the effect relationships expressed by hypothetical arrows that have not yet been tested. This diagram reflects a set of hypotheses that were built primarily on the possibility of measuring each variable of the study, and the extent of the diagram's comprehensiveness and possibility. Figure(1) depicts the hypothetical plan of the study.

Figure (1) shows the hypothetical scheme of the study:



### 1.5 Hypotheses of the study

**1.5.1 The main hypothesis of the study is that : There is a significant effect relationship for strategic awareness in strategic ambidexterity , from which a number of sub-hypotheses are derived, as follows:**

**1st hypothesis :** There is a significant effect relationship for Awareness of the external environment in strategic ambidexterity.

**2nd hypothesis:** There is a significant effect relationship for Awareness of the internal environment in strategic ambidexterity.

**3rd hypothesis:** There is a significant effect relationship for awareness of strategic goals in strategic ambidexterity.

**1.5.2 The main hypothesis of the study is that : There is a significant effect relationship for entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity , from which a number of sub-hypotheses are derived, as follows:**

**1st hypothesis :** There is a significant effect relationship for autonomy in strategic ambidexterity.

**2nd hypothesis:** There is a significant effect relationship for innovativeness in strategic ambidexterity.

**3rd hypothesis:** There is a significant effect relationship for risk-taking strategic ambidexterity.

**4th hypothesis:** There is a significant effect relationship for proactiveness in strategic ambidexterity.

**1.5.3 The main hypothesis of the study is that : There is a significant effect relationship for strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity .**

### 2.1 The sample of the study

The study population consisted of (250) employees working in government banks in the city of Diwaniyah / Iraq , and the sample size was (180) employees.

#### The tool of the study

The study used the questionnaire as a tool to collect data. It consists of three sections . The first one is devoted to strategic awareness which paragraphs are adapted from (TAI-Badayneh , 2021) and the second section is devoted to entrepreneurial orientation which paragraphs are adapted from (Karimi & Walter , 2016) , and the third section is devoted to strategic ambidexterity which paragraphs are adapted from (Wu et al . , 2020) . In order to carry out the test, the cronbach alpha coefficient was adopted, which studies indicate its acceptance with values greater than 0.70 (Chen & Huang, 2007) Carrying out the application of the test, it became clear that the axis of strategic awareness recorder an acceptable reliability coefficient of (0.887) , and that the axis of entrepreneurial orientation has an acceptable reliability coefficient of (0.855), and that the axis of strategic ambidexterity has an acceptable reliability coefficient of (0.882) and the axes together recorded (0.937) which indicated that all axes reflect acceptable results . And the axes together recorded (0.971) which indicated that all axes reflect acceptable results .

### 3. Hypotheses testing

**1.5.1 The main hypothesis of the study is that : There is a significant effect relationship for strategic awareness in strategic ambidexterity.**

In order to test the hypothesis, we test its sub-hypotheses. The results of table (1) indicate the followings:

**Table (1)**

**Analyzing the impact of strategic awareness in strategic ambidexterity**

The explanatory variable and its dimensions	Regression coefficient		R2	F value	P	Responsive variable
	$\alpha$	$\beta$				
Awareness of the external environment	1.685	0.622	0.231	233.564	0.000	Strategic ambidexterity
Awareness of the internal environment	1.537	0.541	0.344	130.611	0.000	
Awareness of strategic goals	1.732	0.473	0.372	178.554	0.000	
Strategic awareness	0.631	0.742	0.575	458.868	0.000	
The value of (F) tabulated at a level of significance (0.05) = 3.841 The value of (F) tabulated at a level of significance (0.01) = 6.635						

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a positive effect relationship for the variable defining the awareness of the internal environment in strategic ambidexterity. The value of the alpha regression constant reached (1.537) and the beta effect factor (0.541), and that the independent variable is able to explain (0.344) of the variance occurring in strategic ambidexterity, which is reflected by the value of the interpretation coefficient (R2), and the significance of the model was confirmed by relying on the value of the (F) statistic, which is greater than its tabulated value. In addition, the significance is within the acceptance zone, which is required to be smaller than (0.05). This supports acceptance of the hypothesis.

Following up on the results of the analysis, it is clear that there is a positive effect of strategic awareness in strategic ambidexterity. The value of the regression constant alpha reached (0.631) and the effect factor beta (0.742) and this mean strategic leadership for managers in schools is able to explain (0.575) of the variance occurring in the dependent variable that it reflects. The value of the interpretation coefficient (R2) and the significance of the model was confirmed based on the value of the (F) statistic, which is greater than its tabulated value, in addition to the significance being within the acceptance zone, which is required to be smaller than (0.05). This supports acceptance of the main hypothesis.

### 1.5.2 The main hypothesis of the study is that : There is a significant effect relationship for entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity.

In order to test the hypothesis, we test its sub-hypotheses. The results of table (2) indicate the followings:

**Table (2)**

#### Analyzing the impact of entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity

The explanatory variable and its dimensions	Regression coefficient		R2	F value	P	Responsive variable
	$\alpha$	$\beta$				
Autonomy	1.732	0.473	0.372	178.554	0.000	Strategic ambidexterity
Innovativeness	1.649	0.451	0.467	212.624	0.000	
Risk-taking	1.521	0.589	0.452	243.673	0.000	
Proactiveness	1.537	0.541	0.344	130.611	0.000	
Entrepreneurial orientation	1.633	0.651	0.247	233.564	0.000	
The value of (F) tabulated at a level of significance (0.05) = 3.841 The value of (F) tabulated at a level of significance (0.01) = 6.635						

The results of the analysis indicate that there is a positive effect relationship for the variable defining the Innovativeness in strategic ambidexterity . The value of the alpha regression constant reached (1.649) and the beta effect factor (0.451), and that the independent variable is able to explain (0.467) of the variance occurring on strategic ambidexterity, which is reflected by the value of the interpretation coefficient (R2), and the significance of the model was confirmed by relying on the value of the (F) statistic, which is greater than its tabulated value. In addition, the significance is within the acceptance zone, which is required to be smaller than (0.05). This supports acceptance of the hypothesis.

Following up on the results of the analysis, it is clear that there is a positive effect of entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity . The value of the regression constant alpha reached (1.633) and the effect factor beta (0.651) and this mean managers in schools is able to explain (0.247) of the variance occurring in the dependent variable that it reflects. The value of the interpretation coefficient (R2) and the significance of the model was confirmed based on the value of the (F) statistic, which is greater than its tabulated value, in addition to the significance being within the acceptance zone, which is required to be smaller than (0.05). This supports acceptance of the main hypothesis.

### 1.5.3 The main hypothesis of the study is that : There is a significant effect relationship for strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity .

In order to test the hypothesis, we test its sub-hypotheses. The results of table (3) indicate the followings:

**Table (4)**

#### Analyzing the impact of strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity

The first explanatory variable	The second explanatory variable	Regression coefficient		R2	F value	P	Responsive variable
		$\alpha$	$\beta$				
Strategic awareness	Entrepreneurial orientation	1.709	0.535	0.385	229.640	0.000	Exploration
		1.815	0.545	0.337	186.466	0.000	Exploitation
		0.539	0.897	0.623	462.976	0.000	Strategic ambidexterity
The value of (F) tabulated at a level of significance (0.05) = 3.841 The value of (F) tabulated at a level of significance (0.01) = 6.635							

Following up on the results of the analysis, it is clear that there is a positive effect of strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation in strategic ambidexterity. The value of the regression constant alpha reached (0.539) and the effect factor beta (0.897) and this mean strategic leadership at schools managers is able to explain (0.623) of the variance occurring in the dependent variable that it reflects. The value of the interpretation coefficient (R2) and the significance of the model was confirmed based on the value of the (F) statistic, which is greater than its tabulated value, in addition to the significance being within the acceptance zone, which is required to be smaller than (0.05). This supports acceptance of the main hypothesis.

#### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

##### 4.1 Conclusions

The study showed that the dimension of awareness of the external environment is the least important in influencing the strategic ambidexterity of government banks in the city of Diwaniyah.

It also indicates that if strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation are unable to achieve the appropriate balance for employees in Iraqi government banks, this may reflect negatively on strategic prowess. If there is a great deal between strategic awareness and entrepreneurial orientation, this may make achieving goals possible and dealing with environmental changes.

The results of the study showed a high level of creativity within the entrepreneurial orientation variable, which means the ability of employees to face emergency environmental conditions, and this requires managers to work to encourage employees and give them part of the authority to deal with changes well.

##### 4.2 Recommendations

- 1) Managers must set a clear entrepreneurial orientation for government banks in the city of Diwaniyah a work environment that supports creativity, innovation, and adaptation to environmental changes.
- 2) Enhancing the culture of innovation among employees by empowering them with some authority to increase their understanding of the environment and raise the level of ability to deal with variables.
- 3) Investing in the strategic capabilities possessed by banks administrations and working to improve and develop strategic awareness in a way that supports the balance between stability and innovation and expands the base of confidence in new ideas and learning from others.
- 4) Supporting the ability and control over important work issues while giving more freedom to employees through the use of modern technological means to deal with customers.

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