

THE INTERACTIVE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AMONG STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AND ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE: AN ANALYTICAL RESEARCH ON THE SOUTHERN CEMENT COMPANY

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Abstract: Due to the lack of capabilities among employees, organizational excellence has become a global requirement, and this issue requires the attention of policymakers and contemporary researchers. Consequently, this article investigates the effect of three dimensions of strategic foresight, including environmental scanning capabilities, strategic choice capabilities, and integration capabilities, on the organizational excellence of the Southern Cement Company. In addition, the study examines the mediating effect of organizational flexibility on environmental scanning capabilities, strategic choice capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence. The survey questionnaires were utilized for data collection. The researchers also used smart PLS to examine the items' dependability and the relationship between variables. The results revealed a positive relationship between environmental scanning, strategic decision-making, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence. The findings also revealed that organizational flexibility significantly mediates the relationship between the Southern Cement Company's environmental scanning capabilities, strategic choice capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence. The article instructs policymakers on formulating organizational excellence-related policies using strategic foresight and adaptability.

Keywords: Strategic foresight, environmental scanning capabilities, organizational flexibility, strategic choice capabilities, integration capabilities, organizational excellence

Introduction

With time, commercial competitiveness has accelerated at a tremendous rate. Companies from all around the world are working tirelessly to be the best in their respective industries. The companies are on the verge of achieving perfection, providing them with a competitive advantage. The organization will achieve repeated success in a field with people and rivals by depending on a clear vision, goal-setting, effective planning, continual review, and dedication to this concept. Organizational excellence is described as the achievement of unprecedented results that surpass them (Bernardo et al., 2022; Divya & Udayasuriyan). To achieve greatness among rival companies and maintain a competitive edge, it is a journey of hard work that results in the development of talents and competencies in the execution of work; b) empowering employees, providing them responsibility at all levels, and rewarding them will result in increased employee satisfaction; and c) producing superior goods and services that meet customers' needs (Karimi, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2018). Considering this importance, the present inquiry will additionally focus on organizational excellence.

The Southern Province Cement Company was established in 1978 with a capitalization of SR 700 million. The Southern Province Cement Company began in 1981 with the Jazan Cement Plant, which

had a planned production capacity of 5,000 tons of clinker per day. This capacity climbed to 7,550 tons per day due to continuous improvement (Fhid Algrny et al., 2021). The company is on the path to greatness in many ways, such as commercial expansion. The corporation is focused on the manufacturing of cement, as well as its derivatives and accessories. Southern Region Cement is one of the largest cement manufacturers in the Middle East, with three plants in Jazan, Asir, and Makkah regions. Its daily production capacity is around 30,400 tons, and its daily cement grinding capacity exceeds 40,000 tons.

The present study will address the following gaps in the prior literature: 1) Although organizational excellence has been studied extensively from a variety of perspectives and at various times, it has not yet reached its zenith as a number of its facets remain unexplored; and 2) The relationship between organizational excellence and employee engagement. 2) Abu Amuna, Al Shobaki, and Abu-Naser (2017) worked on environmental scanning in the context of crisis management; however, the current study will also focus on environmental scanning in addition to the addition of strategic choice capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence with a new data set. 3) The model's environmental scanning capabilities, strategic decision capabilities, integration capabilities, organizational flexibilities, and excellence

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have not been tested recently. 4) Nusair et al. (2021) worked on strategic capabilities and firm performance; however, the current study will also focus on strategic capabilities with the addition of environmental scanning, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence using a new data set. 5) Liu et al. (2018) worked on the integration capacities; however, the current study will also work on it by including the mediation effect of organizational flexibility. The significance of the current study is that 1) it will highlight the importance of organizational excellence for the firm, 2) it will be useful for strategy-related professionals to review and comprehend the factors that affect the firm's excellence, and 3) it will allow researchers to investigate additional aspects of firm excellence.

Literature Review

Globalization has escalated the global competition between businesses. Every company continues to investigate further ways to distinguish itself from the competition. Only by their performance can they shine (Liljeblom, Maury, & Hörhammer, 2019). Better performance increases the likelihood of success. The company must comprehend and address its internal and external variables to improve its success. Environmental scanning describes the external stakeholder environment management of a company. Environmental scanning refers to an organization's ability to study and manage its internal and external environments to collect information, use that information as early warning signs of impending environmental changes, and ultimately determine its future course of action (Abu Amuna et al., 2017; Kumar, Subramanian, & Strandholm, 2001). Environmental scanning is associated with company performance. In this context, Yu et al. (2019) examined whether environmental scanning improves a company's performance. The investigation was done in China's manufacturing industry. The investigation sampled information from 329 manufacturing companies. The gathered data were evaluated using SEM. According to the study's findings, environmental scanning considerably increases supply chain integration and supply chain reactions. Integration of the supply chain and responsiveness are both substantially and positively associated. Environmental scanning has a favorable effect on the firm's performance, which ultimately leads to greatness.

Similarly, Lotayif (2018) examined whether environmental scanning influences the performance of a company. In UAE, the investigation was conducted. The data of

292 executives were used as a sample and analyzed using SPSS. According to the investigation's findings, environmental scanning improves a company's performance, fostering excellence. Expansion is one of a company's primary objectives. Through unrelated or related diversification, the companies grow in size. Robinson and Simmons (2018) investigated the relationship between environmental scanning and firm size in this context. In China, the investigation was conducted. The investigation revealed a significant relationship between environmental scanning and a company's performance in terms of size. Thus, the hypothesis derived from the preceding discussion is as follows:

H1: There is an association between environmental scanning capabilities and organizational excellence.

The firms are continually enhancing their skills through a variety of resources to improve their performance. In contrast, enhancing its capabilities is to dominate the competition. Thus, there is a connection between the strategic capabilities of a company and its performance excellence (Hayee et al., 2021; Nusair et al., 2021). According to Huikkola and Kohtamäki (2017), "firm strategic choice capabilities are the business's power to select the alternative that best fits its internal and external circumstances, which includes selecting the future that will support its ambition and assist it in achieving its long-term objectives." The literature demonstrates a considerable relationship between strategic skills and business excellence. In this context, Rajapathirana and Hui (2018) studied if a correlation exists between strategic competencies and firm performance excellence. Investigations were conducted in Sri Lanka. The examination sampled the information of 379 senior managers.

With the aid of SPSS, the acquired data were analyzed. The analysis suggested a considerable correlation between strategic skills and the performance excellence of a company. In addition, these findings may benefit the management of insurance companies by facilitating the effective management of innovation skills, which facilitates the delivery of more successful innovation outcomes to boost performance. Similarly, Ferreira and Fernandes (2017) studied whether competencies influence performance-based corporate excellence. The investigation took place in Portugal. As a sample, data from 298 companies were obtained. The analysis suggested that strategic capabilities have

a substantial impact on the performance excellence of the company.

Similarly, Lotayif (2018) investigated the relationship between strategic capabilities and firm performance. In Turkey, the investigation was conducted. A sample of data from 204 companies was collected and analyzed using SE. The investigation revealed that strategic capabilities significantly impact the firm's excellent performance. In addition, Nusair et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between strategic capabilities and firm performance excellence. In Oman, the investigation was conducted. With the aid of MGR analysis, information from 315 Omani SMEs was gathered and evaluated. According to the study's findings, strategic competencies significantly improve customer satisfaction. However, the effect differs between manufacturing and service SMBs. In addition, organizational capabilities positively affected consumer satisfaction, which is indicative of a more successful business. However, due to the statistical significance of the difference, the impact is greater in manufacturing. Thus, the hypothesis drawn from the preceding discussion is as follows:

H2: There is an association between strategic choice capabilities and organizational excellence.

Companies around the world modify their tactics in response to the competition's needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Typically, companies want integration to improve their performance. This integration positively impacts the performance of the company. Integration capabilities are "the firm's capacity to gather or acquire the necessary knowledge-based resources and coordinate them to accomplish its vision and long-term objectives" (Colla et al., 2020; Puranam, Singh, & Chaudhuri, 2009). There is a relationship between the integration capabilities of a company and its performance. In this regard, Liu et al. (2018) examined whether the firm's integration capabilities influence its performance excellence. In China, the investigation was conducted. A sample of data from 216 persons in the automobile sector was collected and evaluated using the SEM method. The investigation results revealed that the ability to implement a green design approach successfully is strongly correlated with both internal and external supply chain integration skills. In addition, green design has a substantial impact on environmental performance.

Lastly, supply chain integration capabilities have a

favorable effect on the performance of a company. The supply chain is regarded as one of the firm's critical components. The integration of supplies is essential if the company is to be unified as a whole. This cohesiveness will improve the performance of the company. De Vass, Shee, and Miah (2018) explored the relationship between supply chain integration and performance in this setting. In Australia, the investigation was carried out. With the aid of SEM, data from 277 Australian businesses were collected and analyzed. The analysis indicated that supply chain integration capabilities considerably and favorably impact a company's performance. Thus, the hypotheses drawn from the preceding discussion are as follows:

H3: There is an association between integration capabilities and organizational excellence.

Firms worldwide manage their operations based on their fundamentals, with some preferring tight and demanding settings. In such an environment, employees have established routines. However, some businesses desire a flexible atmosphere. The employees have the freedom to communicate and work in such a setting. The literature demonstrates that organizational flexibility influences company excellence positively through performance (Chen et al., 2017). Alolayyan et al. (2022) examined whether organizational flexibility can mediate the relationship between information technology quality and management in this context. The investigation took place in Jordan. The data of 365 physicians were taken as a sample and analyzed using SEM. The analysis found that the quality of health information technology substantially affects management competency and operational flexibility.

Moreover, the flexibility of the structure mediates the link. In addition, Jain, Panda, and Choudhary (2020) studied the role of organizational flexibility as a mediator. In India, the investigation was conducted. According to the investigation's findings, organizational flexibility is a crucial mediator. Thus, the hypothesis drawn from the preceding discussion is as follows:

H4: Organizational flexibility significantly mediates the association between environmental scanning capabilities and organizational excellence.

Organizations adopt various methods and techniques to enhance their performance to achieve excellence.

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This achievement of greatness is strongly influenced by the organizational culture's rigidity or flexibility. Thus, organizational flexibility significantly influences greatness (Dubey et al., 2021). In this context, Anning-Dorson (2020) examined the role of organizational flexibility as a mediator between organizational culture and leadership. The investigation took place in Ghana. With RSR analysis, data from 149 SMEs were collected and evaluated. The investigation revealed that organizational culture and leadership might affect the competitiveness of a service firm. Still, using these firm-level resources to develop market flexibility capabilities and magnify the effect is more practical. In addition, organizations with robust organizational cultures and strong leadership are better equipped to deal with volatile market conditions in terms of both strength and resources. Finally, organizational adaptability serves as a major mediator in the relationship. Likewise, Dubey, Gunasekaran, and Childe (2019) examined the moderating role of organizational flexibility. According to the investigation's findings, organizational flexibility is a crucial mediator. Thus, the hypothesis drawn from the preceding discussion is as follows:

H5: Organizational flexibility significantly mediates the association between strategic choice capabilities and organizational excellence.

With time, commercial affairs are becoming more adaptable. One of the fundamental reasons is to make it easier for stakeholders to improve their performance. Consequently, organizational flexibility results in excellence for both employees and employers. In this context, Ahmadi et al. (2017) also examined the role of organizational flexibility as a mediator in the relationship between strategic planning and organizational effectiveness. In Iran, the investigation was conducted. Using SEM, data from sixty individuals were collected and analyzed. The investigation revealed that structural equation modeling, strategic planning, organizational flexibility, and flexibility have positive and significant effects on organizational effectiveness and that flexibility mediates the relationship between strategic planning and effectiveness. Among the factors that have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness are organizational flexibility, flexibility, technology, and research. However, financial, structural, and educational flexibility had the greatest impact on organizational performance.

Similarly, Alsabawy (2021) investigated the role of

organizational flexibility as a mediator. According to the investigation's findings, organizational adaptability significantly mediates the relationship. Thus, the hypothesis drawn from the preceding discussion is as follows:

H6: Organizational flexibility significantly mediates the association between integration capabilities and organizational excellence.

Research Methods

The article investigates the influence of environmental scanning capabilities, strategic choice capabilities, and integration capabilities on organizational excellence, as well as the moderating effect of organizational flexibility on environmental scanning capabilities, strategic choice capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence at the Southern Cement Company. The survey questions were utilized for data collection. These items were utilized to assess the structures. The environmental scanning capabilities have six items extracted from Liao (2018), the strategic choice capabilities have ten items extracted from Tatoglu et al. (2020), the integration capabilities have six items extracted from Liu et al. (2018), the organizational excellence has six items extracted from Al-azzam, Irtameh, and Khaddam (2018), and the organizational flexibility has five items extracted from Koçyiğit and Akkaya (2020).

Researchers have recruited personnel from the southern cement company. Respondents striving for organizational excellence are employees of the quality assurance department. Thus, these employees are chosen based on a system of systematic sampling. The researchers distributed roughly 677 questionnaires, but only 374 legitimate responses were obtained, giving a response rate of approximately 55.24 percent. The researchers also employed smart PLS to examine the items' dependability and the relationship between variables. This tool delivers the most accurate estimation for huge, small data sets and sophisticated models employed in the analysis (Hair Jr, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). The study employed three independent variables, including environmental scanning capabilities (ESC), strategic choice capabilities (SCC), and integration capabilities (integration capabilities) (INC). In addition, organizational flexibility (OFL) was used as a mediating variable, while organizational excellence was the dependent variable (OEX). These structures are shown in Figure 1.

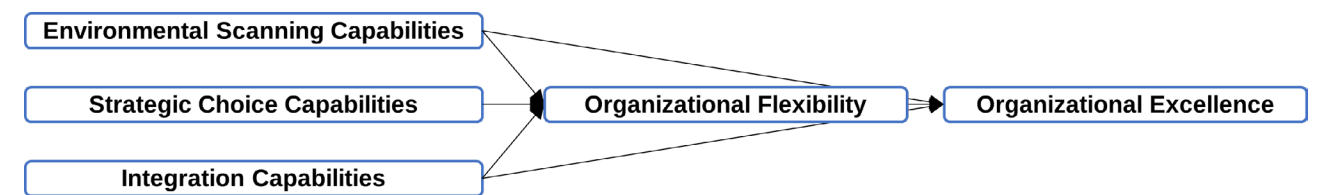


Figure 1: A research framework

Research Findings

The data revealed the association between the items, known as convergent validity. Average variance extracted (AVE) values are greater than 0.50, Alpha values are greater than 0.70, factor loadings are

greater than 0.50, and Alpha values are greater than 0.70. These numbers demonstrated valid convergent validity and excellent inter-item correlation. Table 1 displays these numbers.

Table 1: Convergent validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Environmental Scanning Capabilities	ESC1	0.589	0.873	0.906	0.621
	ESC2	0.685			
	ESC3	0.912			
	ESC4	0.802			
	ESC5	0.799			
	ESC6	0.894			
Integration Capabilities	INC1	0.784	0.863	0.898	0.595
	INC2	0.840			
	INC3	0.740			
	INC4	0.743			
	INC5	0.814			
	INC6	0.698			
Organizational Excellence	OEX1	0.808	0.827	0.879	0.592
	OEX2	0.791			
	OEX3	0.700			
	OEX4	0.776			
	OEX6	0.769			
	OEX5	0.769			
Organizational Flexibility	OFL1	0.879	0.868	0.905	0.658
	OFL2	0.864			
	OFL3	0.672			
	OFL4	0.819			
	OFL5	0.807			
	OFL6	0.807			
Strategic Choice Capabilities	SCC1	0.816	0.907	0.924	0.575
	SCC10	0.711			
	SCC2	0.671			
	SCC3	0.678			
	SCC4	0.764			
	SCC5	0.832			
	SCC6	0.832			
	SCC8	0.742			
	SCC9	0.757			

The results revealed the variables' correlation, also known as discriminant validity. According to the results, the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) values are less than 0.85. These statistics demonstrated discriminant validity and a low correlation between variables. Table 2 displays these numbers.

Table 2: Discriminant validity

	ESC	INC	OEX	OFL	SCC
ESC					
INC	0.503				
OEX	0.736	0.751			
OFL	0.490	0.569	0.692		
SCC	0.644	0.689	0.651	0.524	

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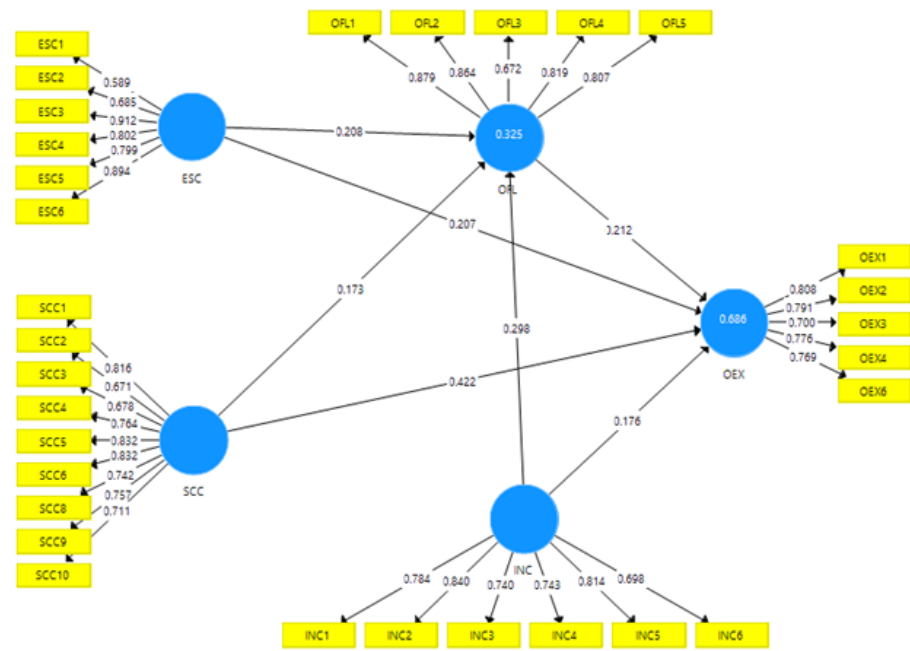


Figure 2: Measurement model assessment

The results demonstrated that environmental scanning, strategic decision, and integration capabilities positively correlate with organizational excellence and support hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. In addition, the findings revealed that organizational flexibility significantly mediates the relationship between the Southern Cement Company's environmental scanning capabilities, strategic choice capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence and accepts hypotheses H4, H5, and H6. Table 3 displays these relationships.

Table 3: Path Analysis

Relationships	Beta	SD.	T Statistics	P Values
ESC -> OEX	0.207	0.038	5.467	0.000
ESC -> OFL	0.208	0.059	3.538	0.000
INC -> OEX	0.176	0.047	3.747	0.000
INC -> OFL	0.298	0.063	4.715	0.000
OFL -> OEX	0.212	0.041	5.122	0.000
SCC -> OEX	0.422	0.045	9.322	0.000
SCC -> OFL	0.173	0.067	2.578	0.010

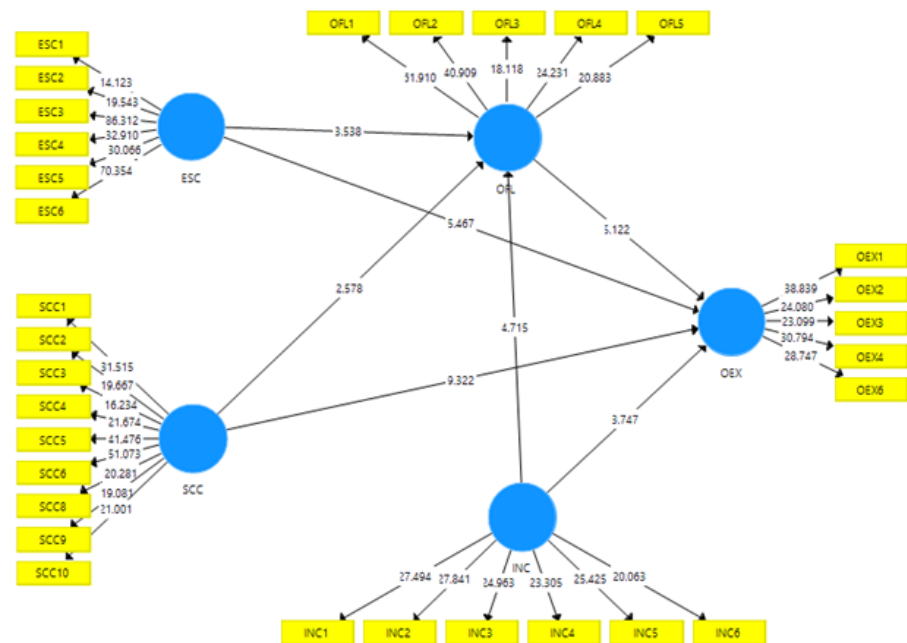


Figure 3: Structural model assessment

Discussions

The findings demonstrated that environmental scanning capabilities are highly associated with organizational excellence. According to Fiest et al. (2021), when organizational management employees have environmental scanning capabilities, they can better assess the business's ecological, regulatory, social, and technological requirements. After an environmental scan, they can better run the organization and contribute to its excellence. These findings concur with Brown and Kline's (2020) assertion that environmental scanning capabilities enable managers to monitor internal and external trends and occurrences to create current and future business strategies accordingly. Therefore, it contributes to the attainment of organizational excellence. The findings demonstrated that strategic decision capabilities are highly associated with organizational excellence. These findings are consistent with Struckell, Ojha, Patel, and Dhir's (2022) assertion that strategic choice capabilities enable managers and executives to select the most effective business strategy and implement it to achieve organizational excellence. Following Dai and Si (2018), managers can identify the most appropriate strategic plan actions if they have strategic choice competencies. Following these procedures, organizational processes can be conducted more effectively, and organizational excellence can be attained.

The results demonstrated a considerable positive relationship between integration capabilities and organizational excellence. These outcomes are consistent with Sony (2019). According to the findings of this prior study, organizational individuals with integration skills can develop and implement company plans more effectively. Thus, risks may be mitigated, and business activities can be conducted efficiently. Thus, organizational greatness is attainable. These results concur with Hou's (2020) assertion that integration competencies assist managers in developing effective company strategies and achieving business excellence. The results demonstrated that organizational adaptability is an important mediator between environmental scanning capabilities and organizational excellence. These findings align with those of Winterbottom et al. (2020). According to the study, managers can alter organizational strategies if they gain environmental scanning skills. Consequently, organizational flexibility facilitates the achievement of organizational excellence by managers. These

outcomes are also consistent with Nagi, Rogers Van Katwyk, and Hoffman's (2020) findings; if organizational individuals possess environmental scanning capabilities, they enhance organizational flexibility, ultimately leading to excellence.

The results indicated that organizational adaptability significantly mediates strategic decision-making capacities and organizational excellence. These findings are consistent with Tatoglu et al.'s (2020) assertion that organizational administrators with strategic decision-making skills never hesitate to modify already implemented policies. The consequent organizational adaptability contributes to the success of the organization. These findings concur with Hitt et al. (2021) in that the organizational flexibility that is more prevalent when strategic decision capabilities are present is advantageous for achieving organizational success. The results demonstrated that organizational adaptability is a crucial mediator between integration skills and organizational excellence. These findings are consistent with those of Liu et al. (2018), who believe that organizational flexibility, fostered by integration capabilities, can contribute to achieving organizational excellence. These results concur with Al-Jedaiah and Albdareen (2021), which suggest that the integration skills of organizational administrators enhance organizational flexibility and make organizational excellence possible.

Implications

The researchers can learn more from the current research for its contribution to the literature. This study aims to explore the effects of strategic foresight, such as environmental scanning capabilities, strategic decision capabilities, and integration capabilities, on organizational excellence in the Iraqi city of Najaf Governorate. The current study has substantial empirical value for Iraq and other similar emerging economies since it may be utilized to boost individual firms. It illuminates the means to achieve corporate excellence. It directs that to attain organizational excellence, policies should be implemented inside an organization to cultivate the environmental scanning skills of its staff. The article also provides a guideline that with acceptable company policies, strategic choice competencies must be fostered in managers and team leaders to have organizational excellence. The paper instructs policymakers on formulating organizational excellence-related policies utilizing strategic foresight and adaptability. To obtain organizational excellence,

the study proposes that policies should be formulated to cultivate staff integration abilities. Similarly, environmental scanning, strategic decision, and integration capabilities must be established to foster flexibility and improve organizational excellence.

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the impact of environmental scanning, strategic decision, and integration competencies on organizational excellence. It was also intended to study the relationship between environmental scanning capabilities, strategic decision capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence about organizational flexibility. The empirical evidence from a southern cement firm in the Iraqi city of Najaf Governorate revealed a favorable correlation between environmental scanning capabilities, strategic decision capabilities, integration capabilities, and organizational excellence. According to the study, environmental scanning enables managers to monitor their surroundings, develop current and future business strategies accordingly, and attain organizational excellence. The findings demonstrated that strategic choice capabilities enable managers and leaders to create strategic plans, select the most effective initiatives, and implement them to achieve organizational excellence. The results demonstrated that Integration capabilities enable managers to build effective business strategies that drive the corporation to achieve outstanding performance. In addition, the study found that environmental scanning, strategic decision, and integration capabilities contribute to the development of organizational flexibility, enhancing organizational excellence. Consequently, organizational adaptability mediates the relationship between these strategic competencies and organizational excellence.

Limitations

There are still several limitations associated with the current research. However, with some care, authors can eliminate these restrictions. The current research examines only strategic insights for organizational excellence, including environmental scanning, strategic decision-making, and integration capabilities. In addition to resources, technologies, human resource management, and social relationships, organizational excellence is also dependent upon these factors. Further research is required to eliminate the study's limitations resulting from the lack of these factors. Similarly, the research findings have limited validity because they are based solely on data from the

southern cement company in Najaf Governorate. Therefore, future authors must expand the scope of their research.

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