

The Mediating role Of strategic flexsiblte In relationship Between Patterns of strategic thinking And Institutional performance: A Study on Iraqi private university

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Abstract : In light of the significant and rapid developments and the increasing intensity of competition among institutions to gain a competitive advantage, and knowing how to manage their institutions in a sound strategic manner, to keep pace with major institutions, exploit the opportunities available to them, avoid risks, and achieve excellence and superiority in their performance, this study aimed to identify the impact of strategic thinking patterns on institutional performance through the mediating role of capability flexibility in that relationship in Iraqi private universities. The relationship was built, the study model and its hypotheses were based on the literature of the study, as well as utilizing previous studies in developing the study measures. A questionnaire was designed to collect data, and (237) questionnaires were distributed, of which (231) were returned, with a response rate of (97.46%). To ensure the degree of reliability of the data, Cronbach's alpha test was used, and the path analysis method and structural equation modeling were used to test the hypotheses. The study reached a number of results, the most important of which is: the existence of a significant positive relationship with an impact between strategic thinking patterns and financial performance, and that capability flexibility mediates the relationship between strategic thinking patterns and financial performance.

Keywords: Strategic thinking styles, organizational performance, capacity flexibility

Introduction: The fundamental characteristic of contemporary society is the intensity and speed of the transformation from stable, familiar conditions to new conditions. The core idea for all institutions has become that what was suitable for yesterday's world is not suitable for the reality we live in today, and therefore is not suitable for tomorrow and the world of the future. This necessitates the continuity of strategic thinking that builds a vision for the future of the institution before the process of developing the strategic plan. (New F, 2011 : 3), institutions of all kinds strive to improve and develop their performance in order to raise their performance levels and be able to achieve their goals, vision and mission, considering that the concept of performance is one of the important and positive developments in recent years (Al-Mutairi, 2016: 37). Furthermore, relying on traditional management approaches is extremely risky at present, which has led to the emergence of new trends and applications that focus on strategic flexibility to ensure that the organization responds more easily and quickly to unexpected changes that usually occur in the competitive environment. Therefore, flexibility is of particular importance in environments characterized by intense competition in the context of globalization and openness. Through strategic flexibility, the organization can adapt or change its strategies in a way that enables it to maintain a distinguished position. (Al-Yassiri et al., 2014 : 11)

Study problem:

Educational institutions are undergoing a radical transformation due to the ongoing changes in their operating environment. With the proliferation of international universities in the Arab world, it is essential to adopt and utilize the best possible methods and approaches to keep pace with modern developments. This places a greater responsibility on the administrations of these institutions to ensure their continuity and meet their evolving needs. This reflects the efficiency and effectiveness of their educational systems and policies. A study by Nagham Najib (2008: 17) concluded that educational institutions need to hold specialized courses in strategic thinking for educational supervisors. Similarly, a study by Al-Saada (2006 : 14) emphasized the necessity of using strategic thinking level and decision-making patterns measures at the highest administrative leadership levels. It also stressed the importance of involving middle management and staff in planning and organizational processes to collectively improve performance and organization across various institutions. It's important to clarify whether the institutional performance of the universities studied is good or bad, as there is a degree of complexity in defining clear performance indicators and assessing the extent to which these institutions contribute to achieving performance. Furthermore, the study explores whether strategic thinking patterns lead to good performance. This led the researcher to add a mediating variable: strategic flexibility. Based on the above, the study's problem is formulated in the following main question.

- Maldor plays the mediating role of strategic flexibility in strategic thinking patterns and financial performance in Iraqi private universities.
- Is there a Selin application for strategic thinking patterns in Iraqi private universities?

Study objectives:

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

Identifying institutional performance in Iraqi private universities.

Testing the relationship between the dimensions of strategic thinking patterns and institutional performance in Iraqi private universities.

Identifying the relationship of each dimension of strategic thinking patterns to strategic flexibility.

To identify the role that strategic flexibility plays in the relationship between strategic thinking patterns and institutional performance in Iraqi private universities.

Importance of the study:

The importance of this study lies in the following:

First: Scientific importance

The importance of the study stems from its focus on the role that strategic thinking plays in The institutional performance of Iraqi private universities , according to the perspective of strategic flexibility, enriching the scientific and research aspect in Iraqi private universities, due to the role of these universities in the development and prosperity of the educational sector, paying attention to the educational sector and finding the right path that private universities can take in providing an educational environment and providing high-quality educational services and making optimal use of the available capabilities.

Second: Practical importance

In practice, the results and recommendations of this study are expected to help decision-makers in senior management in institutions understand the importance of strategic thinking and its direct impact on institutional performance. It attempts to advise university management on renewal, innovation, and adopting new methods in strategic flexibility. To achieve these goals, this study addresses (study concepts, developing hypotheses and the relationship between variables, study methodology, and discussion of results).

Study concepts:

First: Strategic thinking: It is the identification, envisioning, and understanding of the future situations of the organization, and the use of acquired knowledge to strengthen decisions made about potential situations in the external environment and to make stronger and more realistic decisions to reach the set goals (Canway, 2017: 3). Strategic thinking is defined as the strategic poster that shows the direction of the organization towards its environment, which is reflected in a way that ensures the good use of resources within a given time. Before talking about strategic thinking and the mind, they are related as they are used to explore and analyze organizations and their environment (Qabdoun, 2014: 46). It was indicated by (Mahmoud and Na`ma, 2018: 159) that strategic thinking is a special way of thinking that is concerned with processing insight and results in an integrated perspective of the organization through a synthetic process resulting from the good use of intuition and creativity in drawing the future directions of the organization. Among the most important dimensions of strategic thinking.

– Diagnostic thinking style: This style of strategic thinking works on analyzing the details of the problem accurately and reducing it to precise parts, as the process of accurately analyzing the causes of the problem puts the strategic thinker in a clear position to make strategic decisions that address the problem (Tarman, 2005: 20).

– Comprehensive thinking style: This style is considered one of the most important strategic thinking styles, as it defines the general framework of problems and relies on the skills and accumulated experiences of managers in identifying the factors affecting the emergence of the problem and trying to find solutions based on the personal experience of the decision-maker to deal with situations (Al-Tamimi, 2018: 277).

Second: Institutional performance: It is the results of the institution's activities and investments during a specific period of time and monitoring the institution's performance by examining, analyzing and evaluating the overall performance of this department. Institutional performance has been defined as a set of production and service processes that interact with each other and were placed within departments to facilitate their management and development. Any defect in the process or in its interaction leads to a defect in the products and services of the institution as a whole (Abdul Rahman, 2018: 84). Al-Siddiq, 2018: 43, indicated that institutional performance is the degree to which the development activity or the development partner reaches in the work according to specific standards, conditions and guiding principles or in achieving the results to be reached and the path announced by the institution. From another point of view, institutional performance has been defined as the ability of the institution to achieve its financial goals based on indicators of market share, sales growth and profit margin (Li et al., 2006: 107). Among the most important dimensions of institutional performance.

Financial performance: Financial performance is one of the essential concepts in business institutions in general, through which a complete and comprehensive picture can be given of the progress of the institution's activities and work at the level of the internal and external environment. Financial performance means the outputs or goals that the institution seeks to achieve, or the reflection of the institution's ability and capacity to achieve the goals (Hussein, 2014: 83). Financial performance is considered one of the most important pillars of the institution's internal performance, and its importance lies in the mobilization and use of the financial means available to the institution, which seeks financial balance, which is considered a goal for the stability of the institution. This

balance is represented by the balance between fixed capital and permanent funds that allow for retention over the financial period (Ashi, 2002: 37).

Third: Strategic flexibility: The ability of the organization to respond to all developments related to its social responsibility towards all parties involved in its activities (Combe & Greenney, 2003: 1)

The ability to dynamically reformulate strategies leads to responding to and adapting to changes (Fan et al., 2013: 187), and is one of the dimensions of strategic flexibility.

1. Flexibility of capabilities: Capability flexibility is an important dimension of strategic flexibility, as it indicates that the individuals working in the organization possess the capabilities and skills that enable them to respond quickly to the needs and desires of customers, and the future practices and requirements of the organization that it needs to implement plans and strategies as quickly as possible and in a timely manner (Yassin and Danouk, 2018: 222).

2. Developing hypotheses and the relationship between variables: Based on the study variables and previous literature, a number of hypotheses were formulated to measure the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and the effect of the mediating variable on the relationship between them.

- The relationship between strategic thinking styles and organizational performance: The study by (Jelenc & Pisapia) aimed to identify individual entrepreneurial behavior in Croatian IT companies and the contribution of strategic thinking skills, this study proved the existence of a positive relationship in it, while (Hamedani and Zare,) indicated the importance of the impact of strategic thinking skills on the effectiveness of the strategic performance team of organizations , and the study of (Hamedani, 2018) proved that strategic thinking skills partially affect institutional performance and that creative abilities partially mediate the relationship between strategic thinking and institutional performance. Through the relationships reached by previous studies, the first hypothesis can be concluded as follows.

- H1 - There is a relationship between strategic thinking patterns and institutional performance in Iraqi private universities, and the following sub-hypotheses branch out from it:

- There is a relationship between overall thinking style and financial performance.

- There is a relationship between diagnostic thinking style and financial performance.

3. **The relationship between strategic thinking patterns and strategic flexibility:** Several studies, such as Al-Sharif's (2015) study, which addressed the relationship between strategic learning and strategic flexibility, concluded that there is an impact on the relationship between strategic learning and strategic flexibility in its dimensions (residential and capability flexibility). Al-Hadla's (2013) study addressed the impact of organizational learning on strategic flexibility and concluded that organizational learning significantly affects strategic flexibility. Maria's (2011) study addressed how organizational commitment affects the company's competitive strategic flexibility and performance. Based on these results, the study's hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

- H2 - There is a relationship between strategic thinking patterns and strategic flexibility in Iraqi private universities, and the following sub-hypotheses branch out from it:

- There is a relationship between the overall thinking style and the flexibility of abilities.

- There is a relationship between diagnostic thinking style and flexibility of abilities.

4. The relationship between strategic flexibility and organizational performance: A study by (Hussein, 2016) indicated that the statistical tools yielded a number of results, most of which confirmed this. on presence relationship correlation and the effect The Semantic significance For strategic flexibility in rationalizing strategic decisions , the study (Hammadi and Muhammad Li, 2014) concluded that the strategic flexibility variable enhanced the responding variable, the health of the organization . The study (Lan Combe, 2012) concluded that the decision-makers' adherence to one level of flexibility is one of the methods of flexibility, which is the cognitive field and its continuous development through culture and accumulated experience. From the above, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows.

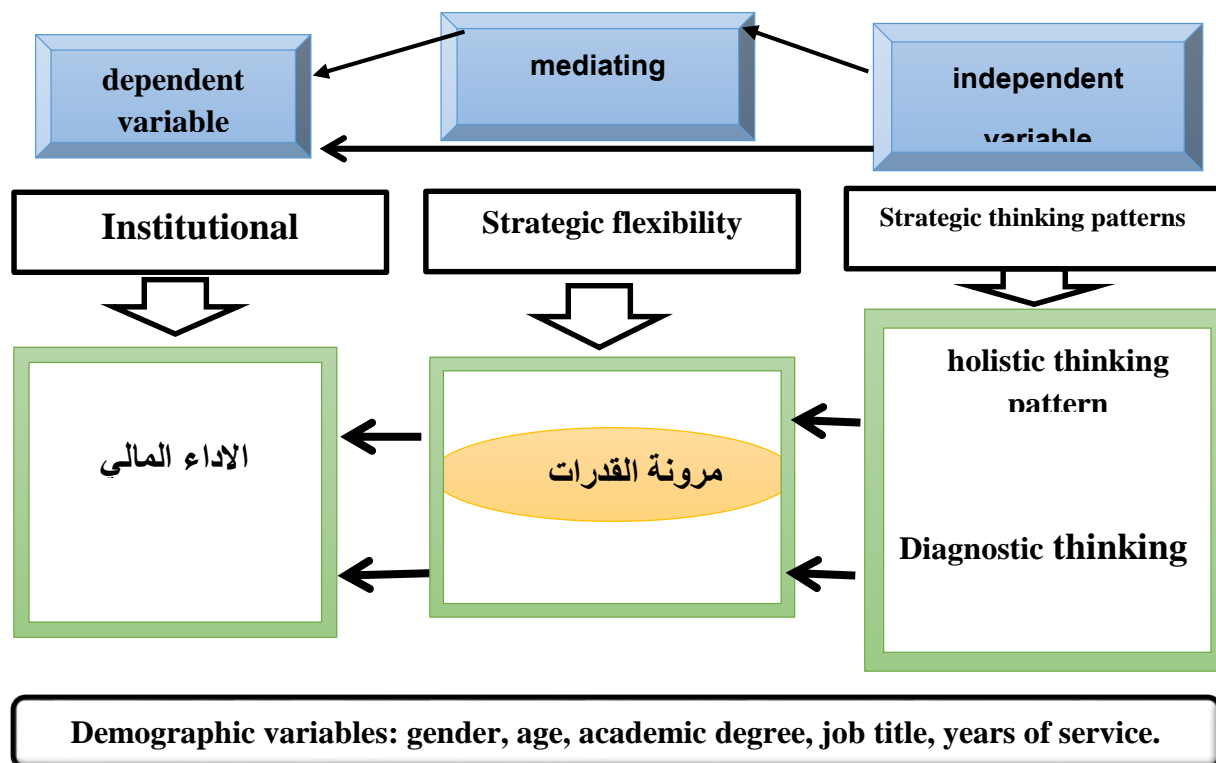
- H3 There is a relationship between strategic flexibility and institutional performance in Iraqi private universities, and from this the following hypothesis branches out.

- There is a relationship between the flexibility of capabilities and financial performance in Iraqi private universities.

- The mediating role of strategic flexibility in the relationship between strategic thinking patterns and financial performance: The study by (Schoch, 2016) demonstrated the significant impact of the mediating variable strategic flexibility on the relationship between learning and achieving competitive advantage. The results of the study by (Idris and Al-Ghalibi, 2013) showed the impact of environmental uncertainty variables on strategic decision-making, with strategic flexibility as the mediating variable. The study by (Yassin and Danouk, 2018) indicated that knowledge creators play an important and fundamental role in enhancing strategic success indicators through strategic flexibility. The results of the study by (Al-Ghazali et al., 2017) showed the role played by strategic streamlining in shaping the strategic approach to the administrative reform process through the mediating role of strategic flexibility. The study by (Qaddouri and Al-Alousi, 2018) showed that strategic foresight has a significant correlation and impact on both organizational excellence and strategic flexibility, as well as a significant correlation and impact between strategic flexibility and organizational excellence. From the results of the previous studies, we conclude the following hypothesis:

- H4 - Strategic flexibility mediates the relationship between strategic thinking patterns and institutional performance in Jordanian private universities.

Figure (4-1): Hypothetical Study Plan



Source: Prepared by the researcher

Study methodology:

This study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach and relied on two types of data: primary and secondary. A questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale, consisting of five levels: (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neutral, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree, for the dependent and independent variables. For the mediating variable, a five-point quality scale was used, consisting of five levels: (1) Very High, (2) High, (3) Moderate, (4) Low, and (5) Very Low. To verify the content validity of the research instrument and ensure its effectiveness in achieving the study's objectives, it was reviewed by a panel of nine expert reviewers in the field of management. After the questionnaires were collected from all the experts, their responses were analyzed, and their feedback was incorporated into the revised version. The researcher considered the incorporation of the reviewers' feedback and the implementation of the revised version as proof of face validity. The content of the instrument was valid, and therefore the instrument became valid for measuring what it was intended to measure. The study population consisted of (9) private Iraqi universities in Iraq, and the researcher adopted the comprehensive enumeration method (deans of colleges, assistant deans, heads of departments). (237) questionnaires were distributed and (231) were returned, with a return rate of (97.46%). To ensure the validity of the model, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25) was used. And in addition to (AMOS 25)

Analysis and Results

Descriptive analysis of the study's primary data:

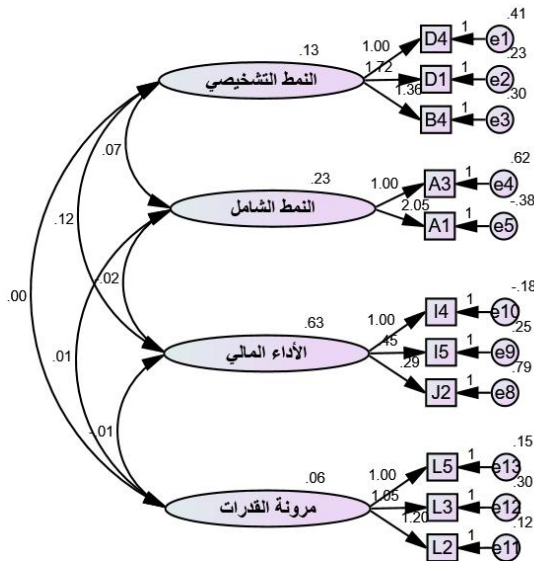
The demographic data of the respondents consisted of five elements: gender, age, educational level, job title, and years of experience. The sample was distributed according to personal and professional information, with males

comprising 75.8 % of the sample and females 24.2 %, reflecting a higher percentage of males . The distribution of the sample by age group showed that the 30-and- under age group was the most represented. out of 40 The largest percentage was (36.6 %), while the smallest category was The percentage of those aged 30 and over was 5.1% , and this category constituted Those aged 50 and above constituted 23.1 % , while those aged 40 and under made up the remaining 40- Those aged 50 and over constituted 35.2 % . The distribution of the sample according to educational level shows that the teacher category ... They constitute (27.3 %), while the professor category Participant / Assistant constitutes 41.2 % of the sample , the largest percentage , while Professors represent 31.5%. Regarding the distribution of the sample by job title, we find the Head category. The largest percentage was divided into two categories: Assistant (63.5%) The dean category comprised 17.6 % , and the deanship category comprised 18.9% . As for the distribution by years of service, it shows that the 5-10 years category constitutes the largest percentage at 40.7 % , while the lowest category... Those aged 5 years constitute (5.2 %) of the sample , while the 15- year-old category The percentage for those aged 10-15 and above was (39.3%). The percentage for the 10-15 age group was (14.8 %).

Factor analysis of study variables

To verify the validity of the model, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25) was used. In addition to (AMOS 25) In conducting exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis The study model consists of three variables: strategic thinking patterns as an independent variable, financial performance as a dependent variable, and ability flexibility as a mediating variable. Principal component analysis and factor rotation were used to determine saturation coefficients, and statements with values less than 0.6 were deleted (James Gaskin 2014). To test validity, the factor structure of the study variables was verified by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) , which is an application of the Structural Equation Model (SEM). Unlike exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis allows for the identification and testing of the validity of certain measurement models that are built on the basis of previous theoretical foundations. The research relied on the maximum likelihood method in applying confirmatory factor analysis to the barometer estimations .

Figure (1) shows the confirmatory factor analysis of the study variables.



قيم مؤشرات تطابق النموذج مع البيانات	
مربيع كاي	236.402
درجات الحرية	38
مستوى الدلالة	.000
مربيع كاي المعياري	6.221
مؤشر المطابقة المقارن	.746
مؤشر نوكس- لويس	.632
مؤشر رمسي	.156

Source: Prepared by the researcher from the data of the field study (2019 AD)

Table No. (1) Conformity Quality Indicators for all Study Variables

Structural Model Model structure	Acceptable Level Acceptance level	Goodness-of-fit Measures Conformity quality indicators
392.572	Not statistically significant At a significance level of 0.05	$\chi^2 = Chi - square$ $chi - squared$ df = degree of freedom
55		
0.000	$1 < \chi^2/df < 5$	χ^2/df
804	≥ 90 greater From 90	(Goodness of fit index (GFI) Standard Conformity Index
0.169	< 0.08 Less than 0.08	Root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) root mean squared deviations
663	≥ 90 greater From 90	Normal fit index (NFI) Standard Conformity Index
689	≥ 90 greater From 90	Comparative fit index (CFI) Conformity Index Comparative
675	≥ 90 greater From 90	index (AGFI)
0.560	≥ 90 greater From 90	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI (
000	$0.05 <$ Greater than 0.05	P Close

Source: Prepared by researchers from field study data (2019)

Reliability and validity analysis

Consistency analysis is used to find the internal consistency of the data and ranges from (0 to 1). The value of (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated to find the internal consistency of the data. If it Values of Cronbach's alpha closer to (1) indicate high internal consistency of the variables, and the decision regarding the required Cronbach's alpha value depends on the purpose of the research, particularly in the early stages of basic research. (Nunnally, 1967) A reliability coefficient of 0.50–0.60 is sufficient, and anything above 0.80 is considered excessive. Hair et al. (2010) suggested that Cronbach's alpha should be greater than 0.70. However, Cronbach's alpha of 0.50 and above is also considered acceptable in the literature (Bowling, 2009). The table also shows the means and standard deviations for each study variable.

Table No. (2)

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for questionnaire items

Cronbach's alpha	Number of phrases	Variable dimensions	Variable type
697	3	Diagnostic pattern	independent
791	2	The overall style	
6.73	3	Financial performance	continued
66 1	2	Flexibility of capabilities	The mediator

Source: Prepared by the researcher from the data of the field study (2019 AD)

Person Correlation Analysis:

Correlation analysis was used between the study variables to identify the correlation between the independent variables, the dependent variable, and the mediating variable. The closer the degree of correlation is to one, the stronger the correlation between the two variables. The lower the degree of correlation than one, the weaker the relationship between the two variables. The relationship may be direct or inverse. In general, the relationship is considered weak if the value of the correlation coefficient is less than (0.30). It can be considered moderate if the value of the correlation coefficient ranges between (0.30 - 0.70). If the value of the correlation is greater than (0.70), the relationship between the two variables is considered strong.

Table (2) Correlation Analysis between Study Variables

Study variables			
Diagnostic pattern	<-->	Flexibility of capabilities	000
Diagnostic pattern	<-->	Financial performance	159
Diagnostic pattern	<-->	The overall style	127
Flexibility of capabilities	<-->	The overall style	051
Financial performance	<-->	The overall style	092

Source: Prepared by the researcher from the data of the field study (2019 AD)

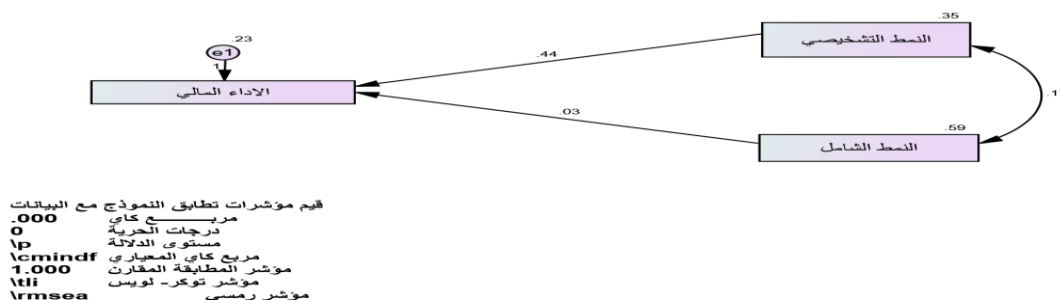
It is noted from Table (2) above that all relationships between the study variables are weakly correlated.

Testing the study hypotheses

To test the study hypotheses, I relied researcher in practical Analysis statistician For data on style Modeling it The equation Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is pattern supposed For relationships linear Live and other Direct between group from Variables latent And watching, specifically Use style analysis The path, When he enjoys With him this style from several Advantages, It fits with nature The study. (Barbara G. Fidell, 1996) uses analysis The path In the Similar Purposes that Used In it analysis decline Multiple, where that Path analysis It is considered Extension To analyze decline Multiple, But analysis The path, more effectiveness where that it places Take into account Modeling it Interactions between Variables, Modeling of Interactions, Nonlinearities , and Errors Measurement, and connection linear Multicollinearity between variables Independent (Jeonghoon, 2002. _

To test the study hypotheses, path analysis was used. The AMOS 25 program's analysis of moment structure aims to identify the impact of strategic thinking patterns on organizational performance. The Estimate coefficient was used to determine the expected change in the dependent variable due to a change in one unit of the independent variable, and the R -value was also used . To determine the model's ability to explain the relationship between independent variables, dependent variables, and the mediating variable. The significance level of 0.05 was used to judge the significance of the effect, where the calculated significance level was compared with the value of the adopted significance level. Effects are considered statistically significant if the value of the calculated significance level is less than the adopted significance level (0.05). Significance is determined through the path that moves from one variable to another, and the following table shows the path analysis values after ensuring the quality of the fit.

Figure (2) First hypothesis: There is a relationship between strategic thinking styles (diagnostic style, comprehensive style) and financial performance.



(Source: Number of researchers from the field study data (2019 AD)

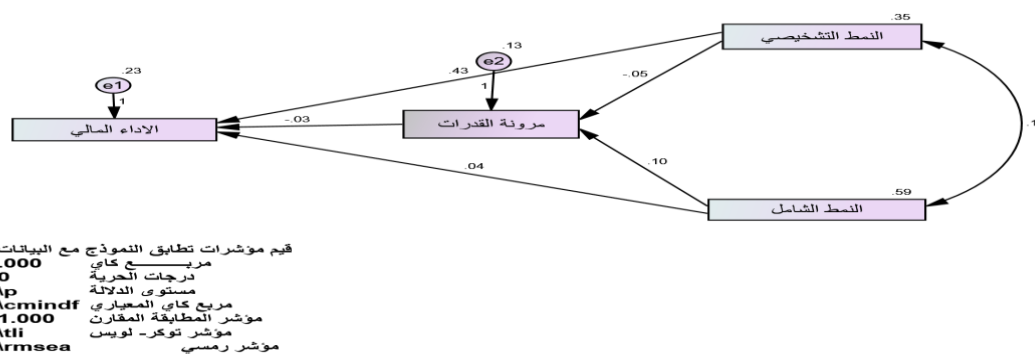
Table (3) Path Analysis between Strategic Thinking Patterns and Institutional Performance

Assumptions				Estimate	SE	CR	P
Diagnostic pattern <--- Financial performance				436	059	7.414	***
Financial performance <--- Overall pattern				032	046	699	485
Index	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	PClose
ratio	0.000	0	0.000	1,000	1,000	0.096	0.000
Interpretation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Source: Number of researchers from the field study data (2019 AD)

It is observed from Figure (2) and Table (3) above that the path from the diagnostic pattern to financial performance is statistically significant at a significance level of (0.000), and that the path from the comprehensive pattern to financial performance is not statistically significant at a significance level of (0.485), which indicates that there is a relationship between strategic thinking patterns and financial performance.

Figure (3) Second hypothesis: The flexibility of abilities mediates the relationship between strategic thinking styles (diagnostic style, holistic style) and performance Financial.



Source: Number of researchers from the field study data (2019 AD)

Figure (3) illustrates the path analysis between strategic thinking patterns and capability resilience, and the path between capability resilience and financial performance. Table (4) shows the values of the direct impact path analysis, while Table (5) shows the values of the non-impact path analysis between strategic thinking patterns and financial performance.

Table No. (4) Path Analysis Direct Impact

Label	Significance P	Critical value CR	Standard error SE	Estimates Estimates	Relations		
A1	832	-213	044	-0.009	Flexibility of capabilities	<---	Diagnostic pattern
A2	004	2.894	035	102	Flexibility of capabilities	<---	The overall style
B	752	-315	079	-0.025	Financial performance	<---	and flexibility of abilities

Source: Prepared by the researcher from the data of the field study (2019 AD)

Table No. (5) Indirect Effect

Parameter	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
A1*B	0.625	199	354	.001
A2*B	0.003	-083	081	951

Source: Prepared by the researcher from the data of the field study (2019 AD)

Analysis of this hypothesis, as shown in Table (4) above, reveals the direct effect: the path from diagnostic style to capability flexibility equals (-0.009), which is not statistically significant at the significance level of (0.832), and the path from capability flexibility to strategic performance equals (-0.025), which is also not statistically significant at the significance level of (0.752). Table (5) shows the indirect effect equals (0.625), which is statistically significant at the significance level of (0.001). Therefore, it is clear that capability flexibility mediates the overall relationship between diagnostic style and financial performance.

Table (4) above shows the direct effect: the path from holistic to capability flexibility equals (0.102), which is statistically significant at a significance level of (0.004), while the path from capability flexibility to strategic performance equals (-0.025), which is not statistically significant at a significance level of (0.752). Table (5) shows the indirect effect equals (0.003), which is not statistically significant. Statistically significant at a significance level of (0.951), and from the above it is clear that there is an overall mediation of ability flexibility in the relationship between overall pattern and financial performance.

Study results: There is a significant positive relationship between the diagnostic pattern and financial performance.

There is a significant positive relationship between overall pattern and financial performance.

There is an overall mediation of capacity flexibility in the relationship between diagnostic style and financial performance.

There is an overall mediation of capability flexibility in the relationship between overall pattern and financial performance.

Discussion of the results:

The study results indicated a positive relationship between strategic thinking styles (comprehensive thinking and diagnostic thinking) and financial performance. These results are consistent with a study by Ashi (2002), which demonstrated that institutions offering products, whether services or goods, develop their assets year after year, and that institutions achieving a satisfactory profit margin can grow their financial standing. This study also indicated that not distributing profits helps institutions expand and enter larger projects. Furthermore, the study's findings are consistent with those of Al-Jubouri (2014), which showed that defining a strategic position supports a set of important indicators based on the institution's overall objectives, namely profitability, liquidity, and risk aversion. This study differs from that of Sa'adah (2006). Which concluded that there is a weakness in the levels of strategic thinking among Jordanian sports leaders, and that there is no statistically significant relationship between the level of strategic thinking or decision-making and each of the variables of experience, qualification and position. The study of (Al-Shudaifat and Al-Harabsheh, 2005) came to the conclusion that the degree of practice of strategic thinking patterns came at a low level attributed to the variable of job position. The study of (Al-Azzawi, 2013) showed that strategic thinking, despite the existence of components that contribute to the success of work, these components were not exploited or invested in a sound scientific manner and were not planned in a way that makes their functional and organizational views in achieving tourism development as required.

The results of this study showed that strategic flexibility (capability flexibility) mediates the relationship between strategic thinking patterns and institutional performance in Iraqi private universities. This finding is consistent with Al-Ghalibi's (2013) study, which indicated the impact of environmental uncertainty variables on strategic decision-making, with strategic flexibility acting as a mediating variable. Al-Sharif's (2015) study also found a statistically significant effect of strategic flexibility, in its dimensions (resource flexibility and capability flexibility), on achieving competitive advantage. Schoch's (2016) study demonstrated a significant effect of the mediating variable strategic flexibility on the relationship between organizational learning and achieving competitive advantage. Similarly, Srour et al. (2016) demonstrated that strategic flexibility mediates the relationship between strategic control systems and strategic choice. Li et al. (2016) confirmed that strategic flexibility mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and company performance. Finally, Danouk and Yassin's (2018) study concluded that knowledge creators play a crucial role in enhancing strategic success indicators through strategic flexibility. In Asiacecell, this study differed from the study by (Al-Buainain, 2018), which proved that strategic flexibility does not mediate the relationship between employee empowerment and strategic performance

Recommendations the study:

1. Increased attention to strategic thinking and spreading awareness of its importance among middle and lower management to keep pace with developments in other institutions.
2. Developing policies and organizational procedures followed during performance, and ensuring the implementation and delivery of services with high quality and at the required speed.

3. Utilizing the capabilities, skills, and experiences of individuals and involving them in the strategic decision-making process to achieve the organization's goals and thus ensure survival and continuity.

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