

The Role of Strategic Awareness in Promoting Strategic Agility

Dr. Hadi Maran Ahmed Al-Essawi

*Al-dour Technical Institute, Northern Technical University/ IRAQ
hadi.mt@ntu.edu.iq*

Abstract: The research aims to determine the role of strategic awareness as an independent variable in enhancing strategic agility as a responding variable among a selected sample of employees of the Oil Products Distribution Company's Salah Al-Din Branch. The researcher used the descriptive analytical method in order to reach the results, as the oil products distribution company's Salah Al-Din branch was chosen as a field for research, and the hypotheses were tested through a court questionnaire prepared for this purpose. 108 questionnaires were distributed, and 100 questionnaires valid for statistical analysis were retrieved from the research community of 150 employees.

The research focused on a major problem: "What is the role of the strategic awareness of the administrative leaders in enhancing the strategic agility of the company?" The research reached a set of conclusions, the most important of which was the existence of a correlation and a significant effect between strategic awareness and strategic agility.

Keywords: strategic awareness, strategic agility, oil products distribution company.

INTRODUCTION:

The corporate environment is characterized by rapid change. What is relevant today will be moribund and obsolete tomorrow. This signifies a dynamic, complicated, and uncertain business climate. As a result, businesses and their operations are constantly changing. Those who are submissive in the future corporate climate will find it easy to exit the work market.

As a result of the increased complexity and differentiation between companies, their departments are adopting new concepts that have the ability to face these challenges, including strategic awareness, which is the decisive factor in moving the company's resources and decision-making processes, which leads to a rapid response to customer requirements in an environment characterized by ambiguity and complexity, as well as the availability of strategic agility that enables companies to transform external threats into fruitful success opportunities that enhance the company's performance and meet customer needs.

Based on what was presented, our current research included four topics: the first was the research methodology; the second was to cover the theoretical side; the third dealt with the practical side; and the fourth dealt with the most important conclusions and recommendations.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Problem:

The knowledge gap of the current research indicates that the lack of interest in strategic agility results from the lack of interest in strategic awareness among the employees of the research sample company. As a result, asking the following questions can help to explain the elements of the research problem:

1. What are the intellectual capabilities possessed by the administrative leaders in the research sample company, which translate with their strategic awareness into successful action plans?
2. Is the behavior of employees in the research sample company characterized by strategic agility when carrying out their work?
3. What is the nature of the correlation and influence relationship between the research sample company's strategic awareness and strategic agility dimensions?

The Importance of Research:

The significance of the current research is embodied in the importance of the researched variables represented by (strategic awareness, strategic agility), as it is one of the modern topics that has attracted the attention of most organizations, as strategic awareness contributes to the formulation of the organization's strategic goals, and makes the strengths capable of seizing the greatest number of available opportunities, and thus be a positive factor in enhancing the organization's performance.

Research objectives:

Given the relevance of the research subject, the major purpose of the study may be expressed by diagnosing and defining the function of strategic awareness in developing strategic agility, as well as attaining the following goals:

1. Building a knowledge framework for research topics (strategic awareness, strategic agility) and their sub-dimensions by following the intellectual paths of the specialized literature
2. Determine the level of possession by the company's staff in the research sample of strategic awareness and strategic agility.
3. Measuring the level of importance of the main and sub-variables statistically at the level of the researched organization
4. Testing the correlation and effect between strategic awareness and Strategic Agility

Research Hypothetical plan:

A hypothetical model reflecting logical relationships between researched variables is necessary for solving a search problem, considering two types of variables.

1. The independent variable: strategic awareness, represented by (reformulation, systemic thinking, learning orientation, meditation).
2. The dependent variable: strategic agility, consisting of (unity of command, flow of resources).

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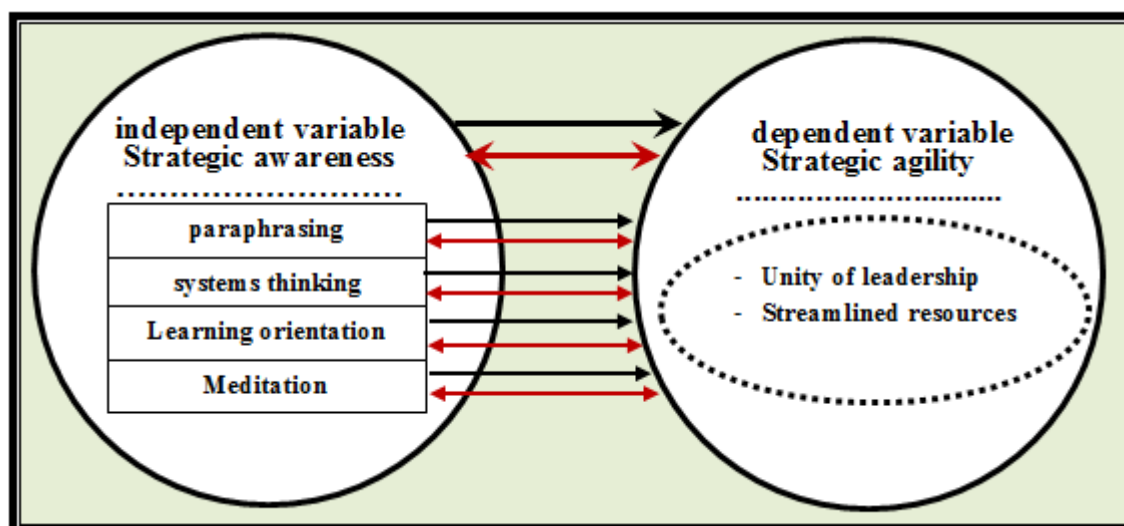


Figure (1) The default search scheme
Source: prepared by the researcher

Research Hypotheses:

In order to test the relationships contained in the hypothetical research scheme, the following hypotheses have been identified:

The first main hypothesis, Ha1, is that there is a significant correlation between strategic awareness in terms of its dimensions and strategic agility in the researched company at the macro level and at the sub-dimensions level.

The second main hypothesis, Ha2, is that there is a significant effect between strategic awareness and strategic impetus at the macro level and at the sub-dimension level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First: What is strategic awareness?

1-The concept of strategic awareness: Before identifying the concept of strategic awareness, awareness must be known first, as Webster's online Dictionary Dictionary (2010) referred to awareness as the feeling of knowing oneself and the environment and added (Halis *et al.*, 2010:161) that this concept was described in various forms and methods, including that it represents the ability to know things without using logical thinking processes or direct perception, as well as refers to knowledge without dialogue or realizing the truth without justification or clarification, and gives management the ability to synthesize ideas quickly.

As for strategic awareness, it has emerged as a new field of knowledge that has begun to increase interest in it by contemporary scholars of strategic management in the eighties of the last century as a result of the increase in complexity and differentiation between organizations, as it indicates how strategic changes affect the activities of the organization, and this matter requires strong insight, correct thinking, and knowledge of conscious actions, as well as finding a balance between opportunities in the short and long term (Pencarelli *et al.*, 2009:126).

Based on what was presented, the researcher defined strategic awareness as the extent to which managers are aware of the strategies pursued by the organization and competitors, as well as how to develop these strategies so that the organization can keep up with changes and events in the environment.

2-The Importance of Strategic Awareness:

Strategic awareness is considered one of the most valuable intellectual assets that has the greatest merit in improving the reality of organizations and their development, despite the variation in their perceptions and differences across individuals and societies. You can invest in strengths and avoid weaknesses, and this measure contributes to the sustainability of the organization and its survival in work for as long as possible, while (Abu Zaid,2019:331) indicated that strategic awareness contributes to the development of an organizational culture that supports the process of strategic thinking and adopts a clear vision that pushes towards the process of creativity and innovation.

As for (Salih & Khatib,2018:81), it was confirmed that Strategic awareness is crucial for organizations to achieve strategic goals by linking vision and intuition with decision-making. It helps organizations formulate goals, reshape the internal and external environment, and enhance strengths to seize opportunities. Strategic awareness helps organizations respond quickly to environmental variables, enhance strengths, avoid weaknesses, and provide double value to customers by offering high-quality products that meet their needs and desires.

3-Dimensions of Strategic Awareness

In line with the field and requirements of the study, the dimensions adopted by the research were relied upon in their studies, which are:

a. Paraphrasing: Reframing has been defined as a cognitive skill that enables an individual to look at events from multiple perspectives and emphasizes the importance of patience and flexibility in facing complexity by allocating some time to find out what is really going on and then using this information to reach the appropriate action (Joan *et al.*,2013:11).

He added (Bolman & Deal,2008:357) that reformulation gives the individual the ability to think about situations in more than one way and that the essence of reformulation lies in that it examines the same situation from multiple perspectives. Choose the most appropriate alternative.

b. Systems thinking: It is a cognitive method centered on identifying and modeling multiple systems as entities rather than isolated phenomena, and this procedure is necessary for many actors at the global level, such as policy makers, governments, researchers, and companies, as well as the individual level (Mambrey *et al.*,2020:1633), while (Sun-Keung & Pisapia,2020:17), indicated that systems thinking represents an advanced level of thinking, through which it is The individual is able to see the future in a comprehensive manner and for any subject without losing its particles, i.e., in the sense of moving the individual from thinking abstractly to thinking in a comprehensive manner, and this matter makes the individual look at many things that he used to see as divergent and see them as common in many aspects, meaning that he sees things from a systemic perspective.

Based on the foregoing, the researcher may see that systemic thinking is a successful method of work and an urgent necessity that enables the individual to think holistically in defining the problem instead of dividing it into parts, and this shift in thinking enables the organization to adapt to the environment and perform its work in the best way.

c. Learning orientation: The orientation towards learning refers to how to find and use knowledge to enhance competitive advantages, and it includes all activities of the organization, whether they are production or service. Organizations that follow this method find it difficult for competitors to imitate them because the exchange of knowledge takes place within the walls of the organization. Experiments have shown that the orientation towards learning affects directly or indirectly the performance of organizations, which is an internal state that stimulates the mind of the learner and directs his behavior

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towards solving problems that he encounters using higher mental processes (Hoang,2013:39). As for (Gong *et al.*,2009:765), he defined it as referring to the extent of interest and dedication of employees in the organization in order to develop and develop their personal skills and abilities, and this method is more effective when the individuals are self-directed.

And promote a new vision that enables the organization to provide new products that can meet the requirements and desires of renewed customers.

d. Meditation: Reflection is defined as a cognitive talent that entails a rigorous examination of any belief or habit that improves comprehension of situations and then applying newly obtained information to them. He does not have all of the necessary facts, but reasoning will give him the greatest options for action and prediction. (Pisapia *et al.*,2005:53), and he adds (Kovalik,2010:4) that the tendency of the individual to reflective thinking is an invaluable option, as it improves learning, reduces stress, enhances performance, helps in decision-making, and allows individuals to move from what is in it to how can I use it in the present and the future, and these things are among the urgent necessities for developing the organization by proposing appropriate solutions.

While the researcher believes that meditation is a methodical, renewed, and disciplined method of thinking that enhances understanding of situations and finding appropriate solutions to them.

Second: What Is Strategic Agility?

1- The Concept of Strategic Agility: The concept of strategic agility is one of the modern and contemporary concepts that have a great importance in highlighting the identity of the organization and its acquisition of the ability to respond quickly to environmental changes by creating new ways that enable the organization to provide distinct value to customers compared to competitors. Through strategic agility, the organization has become the real life and leads it towards survival and prosperity in a complex and ever-changing environment.

As agility is used in many directions in multiple forms according to the sciences that use it, it is necessary to know its true meaning and what organizations can achieve in a complex and highly changing environment. The Oxford dictionary describes agility in its general sense as being able to move rapidly and easily (Audran,2010:21).

This word initially arose in the United States of America and was officially presented to everyone in 1991 by the Research Institute (Lacocca) at the University of The Hague (Dehaghi & Navabakhsh,2014:314), and in order to shed light on this concept, it will be clarified from the point of view of some researchers, as defined (Oyedijo,2012:1) as the ability to achieve success in a competitive environment continuously and unexpectedly and give greater opportunities to customers, while (Todorov & smallbone,2014:55) It has been characterized as the ability to make continual decisions in the face of changing external circumstances in order to increase the organization's value and competitiveness.

2- The Importance of Strategic Agility: The term strategic agility emerged as a response to environmental changes before waiting for them to occur, allowing organizations to accept change relentlessly by generating a set of strategic alternatives, developing skills, reorienting, and mobilizing resources. In addition to that, strategic agility enables the organization to provide products of high quality, which contributes to increasing the competitiveness of the organization and enables it to obtain the desired results in the present and future (Santala,2009:37), and he added (Doz,2007:1) that an organization that cannot maintain agility The strategic movement will become, over time, a rigid organization, and its survival is no longer guaranteed, so it turns from strategic agility to strategic paralysis and becomes unable to adapt to environmental developments.

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As for (Pesonen,2010:13), he may see that its importance enables the organization to provide accurate interpretations of the current changing environment that allow the organization to reallocate strategic resources quickly and appropriately to enable it to achieve its goals and future directions, while (Wiraeus & Creelma,2019:13) underlined that strategic agility builds customer-interest operations and digitally connected value chains, as well as taking use of data analysis and translates it into actionable information, allowing the firm to make proactive decisions in the face of environmental changes and emergency occurrences.

Based on the foregoing, the researcher believes that the importance of strategic agility can be viewed from several directions, including making the company fully aware of the changes taking place around it, whether in its business environment or outside it, as well as enabling the organization to respond quickly and effectively to various environmental fluctuations, as well as being an appropriate means to seize the opportunity and perform business creatively and innovatively in accordance with environmental changes.

3- Motives For Adopting Strategic Agility: In the recent past, traditional systems were appropriate to face situations of change, but today this is no longer the case in the context of the availability of a huge amount of information and the rapid changes that occur in the markets, which require organizations to search for other non-traditional options, including strategic agility, which is an effective option to confront these changes.

(Kosonen & Milkko,2007:33) confirmed that organizations resort to adopting agility in order to deal with the difficult and rapid change that requires them agility and flexibility in movement to make them adapt to their environment in order to achieve their survival and ensure their stability, while (Rigby *et al.*2020:2) may see it as the best option to compete, survive, face risks and adjust fast to unanticipated developments through innovation and technology. The researcher believes that the adoption of strategic agility by organizations guarantees sustainability despite the rapid changes that occur in the business environment (environmental disturbances).

4- Dimensions Of Strategic Agility: In line with the field and variables of the study, the dimensions addressed by the model (Arbussa *et al.*, 2017: 271-293) were relied upon, which are (unity of leadership, and Streamlined resources), and the following is an explanation for each of them.

a. Unity of leadership (Collective Commitment): Unity of leadership represents a statement of the organization's ability to make bold and decisive decisions in a complex and rapidly changing environment, and this requires several factors, including clarity of vision, leadership style, capabilities of the CEO, and joint responsibility that contribute to the success of the work team (Abu-Radi, 2013:22).

As for (Pesonen,2010:10) he may see that the unity of leadership enhances the desire for collective commitment, prevents divisions and tensions between co-workers, promotes constructive and effective dialogue, and thus achieves the maximum positive results for the organization, while (Santala, 2009:50) confirmed that the unity of leadership enables team management to make more confident decisions than individual decisions, giving the organization the ability to face changes in a more balanced manner and increasing the cohesion of individuals within the team. For contemporary organizations, as it enables them to successfully manage their projects and ensure their sustainability in a risky and rapidly changing environment.

b. Streamlined resources: It means the ability to move resources with high flexibility from one place to another and according to demand (Doz & Kosonen,2008:96). As for (Debellis *et al.*2020:6), he believes that it is the ability to implement the agreed-upon strategic changes through the flexible redistribution of resources to modify and adapt the business model in line with new market opportunities, while (Doz , 2007:1) stressed that in order for the organization to ensure the smooth and flexible flow of its resources,

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three basic requirements must be met (re-allocation and use of resources). Finance, ease of movement of personnel, exchange of knowledge, and modular structure He added (Ofoegbu & Akanbi,2012:155) that to meet the challenges when allocating resources, the management must build its decisions on rational criteria, not emotional or political ones, and intensify investment in promising opportunities and basic businesses. Based on the foregoing, the researcher may see that the flow of resources refers to the ability of the organization's ability to adapt swiftly to external changes by maintaining flexible control over its resources and simply shifting them to the appropriate location, at the right time, and according to necessity.

PRACTICAL RESUTS

Firstly :Analyzing Correlations Between Research Variables:

This paragraph examines the validity of the first main hypothesis, which states that there is a substantial association between the dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic acumen at both the macro and sub-dimension levels. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis, and the findings were as follows:

1. The correlation between strategic awareness and strategic acumen at the macro level

The content of this relationship represents the verification of the validity of the first main hypothesis, as the data in Table (4) indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between strategic awareness and the strategic momentum of the research sample company at the macro level and with a correlation coefficient of (0.655) at a significant level (0.05), and this indicates the strength of the relationship between the two main variables.

Table (4) Results of the correlation between strategic awareness and strategic agility at the macro level at a significant level of (0.05). N=100

| explanatory variable responding variable | strategic awareness |
|---|---------------------|
| strategic agility | **0.655 |

Source: prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

2. The correlation between the dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic acumen at the level of sub-dimension

Through Table (5), and from following up the correlation coefficients between the dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic acumen, the following becomes clear:

- There is a substantial positive link between reformulation and strategic agility, as measured by the correlation value (0.472**) at the 0.05 level of significance.
- There is a substantial positive link between systemic thinking and strategic agility, as measured by the correlation value (0.483**) at the 0.05 level of significance.
- There is a significant positive correlation between learning orientation and strategic agility, as the correlation value was (0.514**) at a significant level (0.05).
- There is a significant positive correlation between meditation and strategic agility, as the correlation value was (0.486**) at a significant level (0.05).

Table (5) results of the correlation between the dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic agility at the micro level

| <div> <div>explanatory variable</div> <div>responding variable</div> </div> | dimensions of strategic awareness | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | paraphrasing | systems thinking | Learning orientation | Meditation |
| strategic agility | 0.472 | 0.483 | 0.514 | 0.486 |

at a significant level of (0.05). N=100

Source: prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

These relationships indicate that the more dimensions of strategic awareness that are available in the same research, the more it contributes to enhancing strategic agility, and through (reformulation, systemic thinking, learning orientation, meditation) because of the prominent role of these dimensions in enhancing strategic agility, and based on the results of the correlation relations at the macro and micro level, we come to prove the validity of the first.

Second: Analyzing the influence relationships between the research variables:

The test findings were as follows, based on the content of the second major hypothesis, which demonstrates the existence of a substantial influence between the dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic acumen at the macro and sub-dimension levels:

Table (6) Results of the impact of strategic awareness in enhancing strategic agility at the macro level

| <div> <div>Explanatory variable</div> <div>responding variable</div> </div> | strategic agility | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| strategic awareness | B ₀ | B ₁ | R ² | F calculated | T calculated |
| combined dimensions | 0.287 | 0.655 | 0.429 | 22.886* | *8.734 |

*P≤ 0.05 df(1, 99) N =100

Source: prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

1- Testing the effect relationship at the macro level: Table (6) above shows that strategic awareness has a significant effect in enhancing strategic agility, and this effect is supported by the value of (F) amounting to (22.886) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05), and it is inferred from the coupon coefficient of determination (R²) which amounts to (0.429), and this indicates that strategic awareness explains its value (42.9%) of the variable used. It will respond, which is represented by strategic agility, and this is supported by the value of the regression coefficient (0.655), and this was reinforced by the (T) value of (8.734) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05). These results show the importance of strategic awareness in enhancing strategic agility in the research sample company, and this confirms the acceptance of the second main hypothesis.

2- Testing influence relationships at the micro level:

a. The effect of after reformulation in enhancing strategic agility: The results of Table (7) indicate that there is a significant effect of the reformulation dimension in enhancing strategic agility. This is supported by the value of (F) amounting to (22.536) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05), and it is inferred from the value of the determination coefficient (R²) which amounts to (0.222), and this

indicates that after reformulation explains its value (22.2%) of the responsive variable represented by agility. The strategy is supported by the value of the regression coefficient (0.472), and this was reinforced by the value of (T) of (2.504) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05). This means that the second main hypothesis has been achieved at the level of the first dimension.

b. The effect of the systemic thinking dimension in enhancing strategic agility: The results of Table (7) indicate that there is a significant effect of the systemic thinking dimension in enhancing strategic agility. This is supported by the value of (F) amounting to (28.332) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05). It is inferred from the value of the determination coefficient (R^2) of (0.233), and this indicates that the dimension of systemic thinking explains its value (23.3%) of the responsive variable represented by agility. The strategy is supported by the value of the regression coefficient (0.483), and this was reinforced by the value of (T) of (3.148) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05). This means that the second main hypothesis has been achieved at the level of the second dimension.

c. The influence of the learning orientation dimension on strategic agility: The results of Table (7) show that the learning orientation dimension has a substantial effect on strategic agility. It is deduced from the value of the determination coefficient (R^2), which is (0.246), that the dimension of learning orientation explains its value (24.6%) of the responsive variable represented by strategic agility, and this is supported by the value of the regression coefficient (0.514), which was reinforced by the value of (T), which was (2.335) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a level of significance (0.05). This signifies that the second primary hypothesis has been met at the third-dimension level.

d. The effect of the meditation dimension on strategic agility: The results of Table (7) show that the meditation dimension has a significant effect on strategic agility, which is supported by a value of (F) of (19.026) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05). It can be deduced from the value of the determination coefficient (R^2), which is (0.236), that meditation explains what value (23.6%) of the response variable represented by strategic agility and supports That is the regression coefficient (0.486), which confirmed the (T) value of (2.114) at two degrees of freedom (1.99) and a significant level (0.05), indicating that the second major hypothesis is correct.

e. Table (7) Impact results at the micro level

| explanatory variable responding variable | strategic agility | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| dimensions of strategic awareness | B ₀ | B ₁ | R ² | F calculated | T calculated |
| Paraphrasing | 0.228 | 0.472 | 0.222 | *22.536 | *2.504 |
| systems thinking | 0.249 | 0.483 | 0.233 | *28.332 | *3.148 |
| Learning orientation | 0.213 | 0.514 | 0.264 | *21.015 | *2.335 |
| Meditation | 0.211 | 0.486 | 0.236 | *19.026 | *2.114 |

*P ≤ 0.05 df.(1,99) N =100

Source: prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section was devoted to reviewing the most important findings and recommendations presented by the research, and through the following:

Conclusions:

1. The descriptive statistical analysis of the strategic awareness variable at the macro and sub-dimension levels revealed a high degree of relevance.
2. The descriptive statistical analysis of the strategic agility variable at the macro and sub-dimension levels revealed a high level of importance, which explains why the departments of the research sample company are doubling their efforts to mobilize their energies in order to provide the best services to their customers.
3. The correlation results revealed a significant correlation between the dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic agility, as these findings explain that achieving strategic agility in the company, the research sample, is largely dependent on the presence of strategic awareness, as the more the company tends to adopt the dimensions of strategic awareness, the more it contributes to enhancing strategic agility when carrying out its activities.
4. The effect results showed that the company's use of the research sample dimensions of strategic awareness significantly affects the enhancement of its strategic agility, and the interpretation of this result is that the administrative leaders' keenness to pay attention to strategic awareness enhances the company's ability to respond quickly to environmental changes through flexible control of its resources and easily transferring them to the appropriate place and as needed.

Recommendations:

1. The necessity of supporting the Petroleum Products Distribution Company, Salahuddin Branch, for the foundations of strategic awareness and strategic agility, with intensive training programs aimed at enhancing the role of employees in carrying out work similar to the work they perform with the aim of implementing flexibility in work and changing jobs if necessary.
2. The need for the research sample company's management to take the initiative in applying the concept of strategic awareness in its field of work, and to do so in accordance with a mature vision and organized strategies that support its competitive position, by developing programs that ensure its correct application.
3. Ensure the inevitability of using strategic agility in its dimensions as a method for dealing with crises, not only because it achieves positive results, but also because its use adds to the company having the ability to identify environmental changes and understand them through the data available to them.
4. The need to adopt scientific expertise and higher degrees in the leadership positions of the research sample company, in order to advance it to a better reality than it is now.

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