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The Impact of Strategic Alignment and Strategic Awareness on Strategic Performance: Evidence from Jordan

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Abstract

The current study's purpose is to measure the impact of strategic alignment and strategic awareness on strategic performance in Jordanian Industrial Companies that are working at the AI –Hussein bin Abdullah II qualified industrial zone (QIZ) in AI-Karak Governorate. The study used a quantitative approach. In addition, the questionnaire was developed to collect the data from the target sample. Besides, the current study consisted of 220 respondents. Two hundred twenty questionnaires were distributed to the top and middle management such as managers, deputies of managers, and heads of departments.

Furthermore, the SPSS software version (25) was used to test the study's hypotheses. The current study found that strategic alignment has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance. Furthermore, strategic awareness has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance. The current study recommends that Jordanian industrial companies should develop and improve their information technology strategy to be aligned and fit with their organizational strategy which leads to exploiting the opportunities effectively and efficiently and thus improving strategic performance.

Keywords: Strategic Alignment, Strategic Awareness, Strategic Performance.

Introduction

Strategic performance management is one of the contemporary issues addressed by scholars and practitioners in recent years. Furthermore, it is considered a strategic tool to measure the outcomes of the functions of the firm in the presence of the organizational interaction with the internal and external environment surrounding the firm (Randeree &Al Youha, 2009). More specifically, performance management is the tool for attaining good results for an organization whether individually or as a group thus, the performance is managed very well and within pre-prepared standards and goals, and capabilities (Striteska, 2012). On the other hand, strategic performance measurement assists the organization to reduce its cost of capital and makes them contend in the markets by also making them contend for industrial subsidies (Tzelepis & Skuras, 2006). In this regard, strategic performance measurement by a balanced scorecard generated by Kaplan and Norton (1992)

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is considered the essential resource and consists of four perspectives namely financial perspectives, customer perspectives, internal business process perspectives, and learning and growth perspectives which are cited from a study of (Abdul Rahman, 2019). Speaking in general, the strategic management process is consisting of four stages that namely planning, formulation, implementation, evaluation, and control, one of the most important stages is evaluation and control which requires getting information regarding strategic performance and comparing this with current standards (Meresa, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2013). Mentioned that Strategic performance is considered an imperative matter to raise the levels of integration and specialization in the operation. Strategic performance is expressed as the final outcome of the organization's activities and its ability to achieve the required goals in the long run term through the optimal use of available materials efficiently and effectively (Yasseen, Saeed & Jumaah, 2020).

In the contrast, strategic awareness is considered a specific system that is adopted by an organization to shape a comprehensive view of its internal and external environment to identify its internal position and forecast its future standing (Al-Fatlawi et al., 2020). Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski (2015) pointed out that strategic awareness and the availability of a high degree of empowerment will help an organization to improve and foster the employee's motivation and commitment toward its strategy and its employees enabled to identify the job opportunities and implement the improvements and thus will enable them to constitute the systems of control management. Furthermore, strategic awareness is considered one of the modern issues and most important in the aspects of strategic and organizational behavior adopted by management in the organization to attain their goals (Kazem et al., 2022). Al-Hadrawi et al (2020) observed that strategic awareness is expressed in the ability of individuals to look further than the physical limits of things in many ways such as the perception, awareness, and thinking about the factors both internally and externally in which may happen in the future and may affect in the organization. On the other hand, the strategic alignment concept was derived from the contingency theory which proposed that there is a balance between the firm's strategy side and its environmental perspective side that has an influence on its performance (Mohamed et al., 2020). Besides, alignment is a critical topic that has gotten more attention at numerous levels of personal and organizational activity; and is considered a core in the research of business strategy and point starting in the aligning of organizational resources with the external environment represented in threats and opportunities (Tourani & Khatibi, 2020). Although there are many previous studies that dealt with the variables of the current study. Nevertheless, there are no studies that dealt with or combined strategic compatibility and strategic awareness in order to measure their impact on strategic performance. From this point of view, the current study will contribute to enriching the theoretical literature by filling the gap in knowledge, and it is hoped that this study will provide a set of results for the decision-makers in the companies surveyed. Based on the preceding, the study aims to answer the following questions:

Q1: Does strategic alignment impact strategic performance?

Q2: Is there any impact of strategic awareness on strategic performance?

Theoretical Background

Strategic Alignment

Generally, strategic alignment is considered an essential requirement for business success (Acur et al., 2012). In the contrast, strategic alignment is a backbone of the literature on strategic management due to being more suitable with the organizational priorities to

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foster a response quick to environmental pressures and transfer toward a high level of performance through incorporating the major orientations of the firms' goals (Huang & George, 2020; Andrews & Beynon, 2011). Bergeron et al (2004) mentioned that the essence of strategic alignment assumption is business performance, the performance may possibly not be increased especially if the business's competitive strategy is not suitable for both internal characteristics and forces of the external environment. In this way, controlling strategic alignment in a decentralized context indicates monitoring the plans and goals, which is limited to administrative controls for instance control of outcomes the as a priority that has more significant (Tourani & Khatibi, 2020). Jaafar & Ahmed (2021) argued that one of the most important factors that push companies to be caring regarding strategic alignment is operating in complex and dynamic environments and which requires addressing all the obstacles and challenges that face their work to attain their required goals, but most of the companies continue in suffering from the threats sides which caused from incompetence to use the strategic alignment which generated from carelessness the managers in determining and analyzing changes which lead to adopted unsuitable strategy. They added, to executing the strategic alignment requires relying on proactive measurements to deal with these challenges and obstacles. Keating et al (2013) defined Strategic alignment as the extent of knowledge of major decision-makers regarding the priorities and investment of information technology outsourcing and the ability to activate this awareness by making successful outsourcing decisions. Strategic alignment is viewed as a mixture of characteristics of the organizational strategy adopted by companies which indicates to test the strategic directions nature and strategies of information technology used in a company (Tawaha, 2015). Conversely, Ghonim et al (2020) listed that strategic alignment consists of four dimensions: information technology, processes, employees, and customers. While Benbya & McCelvey (2006) pointed out that the alignment dimensions involve strategic dimension, Operational dimension, and individual dimension. They defined strategic dimension as the process to align between of information system with the strategy of the business. Furthermore, the operational dimension refers to alignment between the structure of the organization and the structure of the information system and alignment between the connection and the extent of involvement with information system strategy. In addition, an individual dimension indicates the alignment between the infrastructure of the information system and the needs of users. Accordingly, the author defined strategic alignment as the process of aligning between organizational strategy and information systems strategy, and this requires the organization to develop and enhance the information technology strategy to be more consistent with organizational strategy and thus provide an opportunity to enhance the performance.

Strategic Awareness

Strategic awareness plays a critical role in the process of decision-making in small enterprises and it is considered a skill for entrepreneurs that assist them in the strategies formulation stage and determining the best strategies path to execute the strategy (Pencarelli et al., 2009). Strategic awareness can be defined through four dimensions namely external strategic awareness, internal strategic awareness, current strategic awareness, and Prospective strategic awareness (Al-Khatib, 2018), and defined external strategic awareness as the awareness of the companies regarding the alteration in policies and legalizations, income rates, and rate of population growth and thus providing goods whether products or services based on the available opportunities in the marketplace to avoid the threats as

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possible. while internal strategic awareness indicates the company's capacity to satisfy its customers' needs through using its resources, skillfulness, and knowledge to earn a competitive advantage. Whereas, current strategic awareness means that the company has diversity in manpower and keeps products of high quality through conducting market research periodically and getting comments and reactions from its customers, and also described Prospective strategic awareness as the company's capacity to develop and enhance its future scenario strategy and allocate the financial resource to attain its goals in the future. Al Hila & El-massry (2022) argued that strategic awareness refers to the understanding and intellectual perception of the company's internal and external environmental forces and the ability to determine the options and alternatives prospect strategy thus strategic awareness can be considered essential for effective strategic thinking. Strategic awareness is described by the capacity and thus managerial leadership is an essential element strategic awareness required increasing the leaders' perceptions, a bundle of activities, as well as being aware of the strategies and skills that need methods that fit their strategies development and usage (Ibrahim & Al-Nuaimi, 2020). Davis et al (2012) stated that strategic awareness backing or supplies the company with an integrated information system by environmental forces analysis with the existence of a system for strategic information for entire situations through offering information relevant to rivals and determining their procedures and strategies in the marketplace and thus, this information is gathered in a prepared and methodical way to retrieve it and access it easily in the emergency time. Based on the above, the author defined strategic awareness as the ability of organizations to exploit their resources in efficiency based on their available infrastructures such as information systems and strategic information systems, and the organization's ability to make environmental scanning to avoid hypercompetition by taking rational decisions.

Strategic Performance

There is no clear agreement between practitioners and scholars regarding the construct or concept of strategic performance. For instance, it is defined as the end outcomes of the organization's activities which are represented by its ability to attain its long-term goals by exploiting its resources efficiently and effectively manner (Musa & Karji, 2016). Al-Khafaji (2022:98) viewed strategic performance as the current outputs of the company against the company's planned outputs during a particular period of time, it contributes to the company in attaining its target goals by providing information that helps in achieving the development, growth, and survival and creating competitive advantages and it also supports the organization in introducing products and value creation. Therefore, if the levels of strategic performance are good will enhance the whole organization's performance due to the impact of strategic and operational performance may be opposed to each other, and thus the total organization's performance may be not a suitable measure and enough for strategic performance (Mitchell et al., 2013). Furthermore, Wheelen & Hunger (2010) argued that strategic performance is the findings of company activities, and its expressed in how the company used and exploits its financial resources effectively and efficiently to achieve its goals. it can be defined it is a holistic approach that explains how organizations attain their several strategies for instance in terms of marketing, finance, promotion, delivery, and even customer service strategies (Kim et al., 2008). On the other side, giving more attention to the vision of the organization during the Strategy formulation process is a critical and important element in improving strategic performance (Chijioke et al., 2018). Despite the importance of financial performance as a measure of the organization's activities, strategic performance is

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of paramount importance in terms of helping the organization to transform and implement its vision and strategy into a set of integrated strategic goals and scales to evaluate the organization's activities and thus predict future events (Al-Qashash, 2020). Scholars confirm this view by emphasizing that organizations in recent times need to adopt the scale of the balanced customer of strategic performance rather than traditional performance scales or measures due to the incessant alteration in the business environment (Swink et al., 2005). Yasseen et al (2020) listed that the importance of strategic performance stems from three aspects. The first one is a theoretical aspect in this aspect strategic performance is considered the strategic management core and involves all theories and principles of management. While the second aspect called the applied aspect stem from using studies in terms of strategic management of performance in selecting numerous strategies and findings processes. Whereas the third aspect namely the administrative aspect stems from the growing and distinguished interest of the management in organizations, their findings, and the conversions that happen in these organizations in many aspects such as strategic goals, procedures, and programs according to performance. The author concludes from the above that strategic performance is a used commonly measure by organizations in a way that assists them to translate their strategies into measurable objectives and forecast future prospects.

Previous Studies and Hypothesis Development

Khafaji (2022) showed that the quality of oil products mediates the relationship between technology strategy and strategic performance. Kazem et al (2022) indicate in their study that strategic awareness has a positive and significant impact on creative performance. AL-Shammari et al (2021) showed that customer relationship management plays an important role in backing the organization's direction toward attaining strategic awareness and understanding the environment very well and thus arriving at providing services superior for their consumer through an interest in investing in competitive priorities to attain planned goals. Besides, Kolli & Sindi (2021) revealed that strategic awareness influences strategic renewal. Tourani & Khatibi (2020) conducted a study and found that there is a positive and significant effect of strategy alignment on sustainability strategy and performance. Furthermore, Al-Hadrawi et al (2020) showed in their study that strategic awareness dimensions combined impact organizational sustainability. Yasseen et al (2020) found that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on the strategic performance of human resource management. Al-Fatlawi et al (2020) showed that strategic learning and its dimensions play a mediating role in the relationship between dimensions of strategic awareness and strategic sovereignty. Ghonim et al (2020) reached that there is a positive and significant impact of strategic alignment on the dimensions of decision effectiveness. In addition to, Chijioke et al (2018) showed that drivers of the strategic formulation together impact strategic performance. On the other side, Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski (2015) conducted a study and showed that strategic awareness influences management control systems. Amlus, Abdullah & Ibrahim (2014) mentioned that strategic alignment contributes to the performance of an organization. Salih & Alnaji (2014) indicate that strategic agility and strategic thinking simultaneously or sequentially have a positive impact on strategic performance. Based on the prior studies, the author develops the followings hypotheses:

H1: strategic alignment has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance.

H2: strategic awareness has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance.

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Study Model

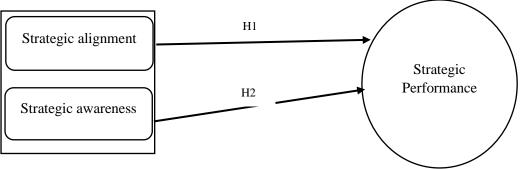


Figure 1. proposed model

Methodology Design

The study used a quantitative approach to measure the impact of strategic alignment and strategic awareness on strategic performance. Spss software version (25) was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Population and Sample

The current study consists of 220 respondents that have been selected randomly from 14 Jordanian Industrial Companies that are working at Al –Hussein bin Abdullah II qualified industrial zone (QIZ) in Al-Karak Governorate. Two hundred twenty questionnaires were distributed to the top and middle management such as managers, deputies of managers, and heads of departments. Most of the respondent's males were (70%) and (30%) were female. Furthermore, most of the respondents were from the age of 40 -45. On the other hand, most of the respondents had a bachelor's (59%) and master's (23%), and Ph.D. (18%). Besides, most of the respondents' experience was from 6 to 12 years which constitutes 50 %. As well most of the respondents were from the heads of departments category constituted (61%), and the managers and their deputies (39%). The number of returned questionnaires was 189 which shapes 85% as a response rate that is valid for analysis purposes.

Study Instrument

The instrument was developed to collect the data from the target sample. To evaluate the strategic alignment variable, the researcher has chosen eleven questions from a study (Sardana et al., 2016; Al Khalifa, 2016). while the strategic awareness variable consists of eleven questions that have been obtained from a study (Davis, Allen, & Dibrell; Kolli & Sindi,2021). whereas strategic performance involves Ten questions that have been obtained from a study (Kaplan & Norton 2004; Santos & Brito,2012). In addition, the Five Likert scale was adopted in this study.

Validity and Reliability

The study tool was presented to a group of specialized experts to ensure the clarity of the language and the paragraphs and the extent to which they belong to the study variables, and based on their views and comments, all modifications were made. To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the author conducted the Cronbach alpha coefficients test to measure the internal consistency among questionnaire paragraphs. Accordingly, the Cronbach alpha value for strategic alignment was (0.796), and the Cronbach alpha value for strategic alignment was extrated the Cronbach alpha value for strategic alignment was (0.796).

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performance was (0.887). all of these values are higher than (70%) which is suitable for analysis purposes (Hair et al.,2010). Table 1. Clarifies the Cronbach alpha values.

Table 1

Study variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Sample size			
Strategic alignment	11	0.796	189			
Strategic awareness	11	0.904	189			
Strategic	10	0.887	189			
performance						

Cronbach alpha values.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

The table below clarifies the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the items of study, as we see that the arithmetic means of strategic alignment was at a moderated level which covered from Q1 to Q11. While the arithmetic means of strategic awareness was at a moderated level, which covered items from Q12 to Q22. In contrast, the arithmetic means of strategic performance was at a moderate level, which is covered from Q 23 to Q 32.

Table 2 Mean and Standard deviations

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Q1	3.06	1.305		
Q2	2.76	1.127		
Q3	2.34	.853		
Q4	2.66	1.007		
Q5	3.08	1.269		
Q6	2.54	.931		
Q7	2.40	.909		
Q8	2.37	.792		
Q9	2.53	.920		
Q10	3.24	1.102		
Q11	2.55	.890		
Q12	2.56	.969		
Q13	2.62	1.007		
Q14	2.47	.943		
Q15	2.40	.861		
Q16	2.59	.922		
Q17	2.52	.965		
Q18	2.92	1.023		
Q19	2.79	.993		
Q20	2.83	.998		
Q21	3.08	1.012		

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Q22	2.51	1.040			
Q23	2.53	1.059			
Q24	2.60	.903			
Q25	2.84	.951			
Q26	2.55	.947			
Q27	2.58	.940			
Q28	2.50	.903			
Q29	2.64	.904			
Q30	2.61	.896			
Q31	3.15	1.086			
Q32	2.69	1.002			

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Pearson Correlation Test

The Pearson correlation test was used before testing the study hypotheses to verify the relationship between the study variables. In this regard, the table below explains the results of the Pearson correlation, which show that the relationship between strategic alignment and strategic awareness is positive with a correlation coefficient of (0.674) and the relationship between strategic alignment and strategic performance is positive with a correlation coefficient equal (0.588) and the relationship between strategic awareness and strategic performance is positive with a correlation coefficient equal (0.702). Accordingly, there is a positive and significant relationship between the study variables.

Table 3

Pearson correlation analysis

Study variables	Strategic alignment	Strategic awareness	Strategic performance
Strategic alignment	1	.674**	.588**
Strategic awareness		1	.702**
Strategic performance			1

Hypotheses Testing

The table below shows the results of the first and second hypotheses, which show that the R2 value (0.346) indicates that strategic alignment interprets 34% of the change in strategic performance with a level of significant (0.000), and the value of R2 (0.493) that refers strategic awareness explains 49.3% from the change in strategic performance. Therefore, both hypotheses were accepted.

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Table 4

Result of test the hypotheses

	Variables		R2	R2	β	SD	T -test	Sig	Decision
				Adjusted					
H1	Strategic alignment strategic performance	->	0.346	0.342	0.588	0.061	9.936	0.000	Accepted
H2	Strategic awareness strategic performance	->	0.493	0.491	0.702	0.045	13.493	0.000	Accepted

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study confirm that strategic alignment has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance, and strategic awareness has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance. Accordingly, the results of the current study are consistent with the findings of previous studies such as Tourani & Khatibi (2020) which mentioned that strategic alignment has a positive impact on sustainability strategy and performance. As well, it is consistent with the findings of the study done by Ghonim et al (2020) which refers to the influence of strategic alignment on decision effectiveness. Also, it is aligned with the findings of the study Amlus et al (2014) stated that strategic alignment contributes to the performance of an organization.

While, our results of the current study agreed with the study of (Kazem et al., 2022) which emphasizes the importance of strategic awareness in creative performance. Moreover, the result of the current study is aligned with a study by Al-Hadrawi et al (2020) which found that strategic awareness influence organizational sustainability. Additionally, it supported the result of the study conducted by Kolli & Sindi (2021) revealed that strategic awareness influences strategic renewal. Besides, Fatlawi et al (2020) presented that strategic learning plays a mediating role in the relationship between strategic awareness and strategic sovereignty.

The results of the study confirm that strategic alignment has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance, and strategic awareness has a positive and significant impact on strategic performance. Accordingly, the results of the current study are consistent with the findings of previous studies such as Tourani & Khatibi (2020) which mentioned that strategic alignment has a positive impact on sustainability strategy and performance. As well, it is consistent with the findings of the study done by Ghonim et al (2020) which refers to the influence of strategic alignment on decision effectiveness. Also, it is aligned with the findings of the study Amlus et al (2014) stated that strategic alignment contributes to the performance of an organization.

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plays a mediating role in the relationship between strategic awareness and strategic sovereignty.

In this regard, Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski (2015) refer that strategic awareness influences management control systems. On the other side, the current study has many implications that are divided into two aspects; the theoretical aspect is focus on strategic alignment which considered is one of the most main engines for strategic management that helps an organization respond quickly to environmental changes and thus attain the high levels of the performance (Chi Huang & George, 2020; Andrews & Beynon, 2011). Accordingly, the current study contributes theoretically by enriching the literature of knowledge related to strategic alignment by linking it with strategic performance since the prior studies conducted were measuring the impact of strategic alignment on performance generally. while the current study examines the impact of strategic alignment on strategic performance. However, the area of the current study still needs to conduct more empirical studies, especially in the Jordan context. Especially since most of the previous studies deal with the impact of emotional intelligence, strategy formulation, strategic agility, and strategic thinking on strategic performance, such as the study of (Yasseen et al., 2020; Chijioke et al., 2018; Salih & Alnaji, 2014). In the practical aspect, Jordanian industrial companies must have the technology infrastructure such as technical information systems and strategic information systems to be able to achieve strategic performance. Thus, Jordanian industrial companies should develop and improve their information technology strategy to be aligned and fit with their organizational strategy which leads to exploiting the opportunities effectively and efficiently and thus improving strategic performance. In a particular, the top and middle management should be aware of the environmental changes by focusing on internal and external awareness to respond at a suitable time and should have alternative strategies to face any challenges or obstacles that might occur in the future. Furthermore, should conduct periodical studies about the internal and external environment through making scanning the environment to know its strength and weaknesses points. Regarding the limitations of the current study, the author summarizes it as follows: the sample was selected randomly from 14 Jordanian Industrial Companies that are working at Al –Hussein bin Abdullah II qualified industrial zone (QIZ) in Al-Karak Governorate. Therefore, the findings of the current study can't be generalized to all the Jordanian Industrial Companies that are working in other governorates in Jordan as well as other sectors such as banks, hospitals, and telecommunications companies. Moreover, a shortage the prior studies that address the current study variables.

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