Article

Functional Maturity as an Approach to Enhancing Strategic Flexibility in Government Institutions: An Applied Study in the Control and Audit Department of the General Directorate of Education in Al-Qadisiyah Governorate

Sahar Jabbar Rahman
College of Open Education, Al-Qadisiyah Study Center
saharjabark55@gmail.com

Abstract: The research aims to demonstrate the impact of Functional maturity in enhancing strategic flexibility in government institutions, through its application in the Department of Control and Auditing at the Directorate of Education in Al-Qadisiyyah. The problem stems from the hypothesis that Functional maturity, in its dimensions (interest, curiosity, confidence, consultation), represents a fundamental input for raising the level of strategic flexibility, and that a lack of attention to its development limits the institutions' ability to face environmental and organisational challenges. The importance of the research lies in describing the practical reality and addressing the obstacles that hinder adaptation to changes, thereby enhancing the efficiency of government institutions in achieving their objectives. The research relied on a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of (50) employees, which was analysed using (SPSS V.29) and (AMOS V.29) programmes. The results showed a significant correlation and impact of Functional maturity on strategic flexibility, confirming the necessity of developing its dimensions to enhance the ability of government institutions to respond and adapt to the changing work environment.

Keywords: Functional maturity, strategic flexibility, government institutions.

1. Introduction

Functional maturity represents the ability to maintain or improve performance to ensure the continued satisfaction of an organization's stakeholders over time [1]. Functional maturity cannot be achieved unless an organization can identify and leverage environmental changes to update its strategic goals and plans. To achieve the desired maturity, an organization must continuously monitor changes in environmental issues and other relevant developments [2].

Functional maturity models thus provide a simple yet effective way to study and improve processes [3]. Although maturity model approaches originated in software engineering, they have rapidly spread to other fields. In particular, over the past two decades, the adoption of maturity models has been considered in most organizational settings [4].

Generally, a maturity model is an explanation of the processes that must be implemented to achieve the highest level of maturity [5]. Maturity models are deeply rooted in the field of quality management, with Philip Crosby's Quality Management Maturity Network being a key component [6].

2. Part One: Research Methodology

2.1 Research Problem

The research problem lies in the low level of Functional maturity among employees in governmental institutions, which limits their ability to achieve strategic flexibility in an organisational environment characterised by change and uncertainty. It is observed that the lack of adequate attention to the dimensions of Functional maturity (interest, curiosity, trust, consultation) has negatively affected the ability of governmental institutions to respond quickly to changes and adapt to them. Hence, the main question arises: Does Functional maturity, with its dimensions, contribute to enhancing strategic flexibility within governmental institutions? From this question, a set of sub-questions emerges:

1. What is the level of Functional maturity among employees in the Control and Audit Department at the Qadisiyah Directorate of Education?.
2. What is the level of strategic flexibility available in the researched institution?.
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between Functional maturity and strategic flexibility?.
4. What is the nature of the impact of Functional maturity on strategic flexibility?

2.2 The Importance of the Research

The importance of the research is evident in two main dimensions: theoretical and applied, as follows:

1. Theoretical Importance

a. This research contributes to enriching the Arabic literature in the field of public administration by addressing a relatively recent variable, Functional maturity, and linking it to the concept of strategic flexibility.

b. The study fills a knowledge gap represented by the scarcity of studies that have examined the relationship between Functional maturity and strategic flexibility in the governmental environment.

c. It offers a theoretical framework that can be used in subsequent studies addressing employee behaviours and their impact on organisational capabilities.

2. Applied Importance

a. The administrative leadership in government institutions is focusing on the importance of developing functional maturity as an approach to enhancing strategic flexibility.

b. The research findings help decision-makers adopt training and development policies based on scientific principles.

c. They offer practical recommendations that can be utilised to improve the performance of oversight and audit units.

d. They support administrative reform efforts in government institutions.

2.3 The Objectives of the Research

1. Identifying the level of availability of Functional maturity dimensions (engagement, curiosity, confidence, consultation) in the control and audit department.
2. Determining the level of strategic flexibility in its dimensions (proactivity, reactivity) within governmental institutions.
3. Testing the nature of the relationship between Functional maturity and strategic flexibility.
4. Demonstrating the impact of Functional maturity on enhancing strategic flexibility within governmental institutions.

2.4 Study Hypothesis

Independent variable: Functional maturity with its dimensions (care, curiosity, confidence, consultation) using the scale [7].

Dependent variable: Strategic flexibility with its dimensions (proactiveness, reactivity) using the scale [8].

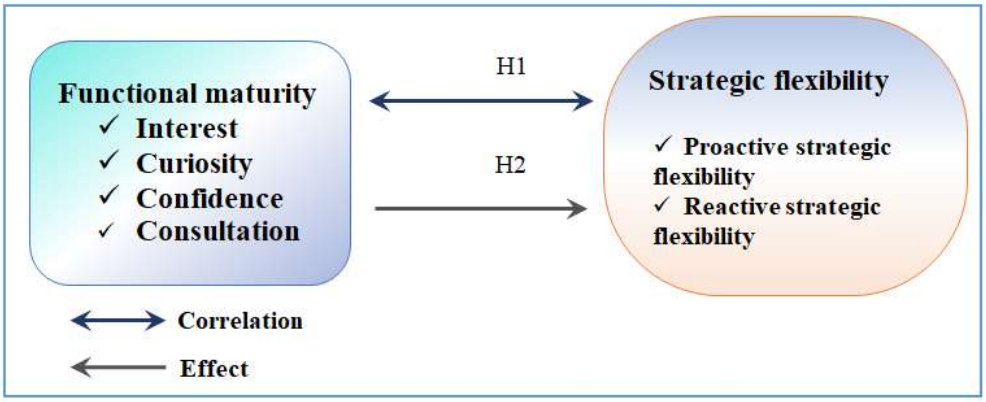

Figure 1. Hypothetical Plan of the Study.

2.5 Research Hypotheses

1. Main Hypothesis One: There is a statistically significant correlation between functional maturity and strategic flexibility. Several sub-hypotheses arise from this as follows:

a. Sub-hypothesis One: There is a correlation between attention and strategic flexibility.
b. Sub-hypothesis Two: There is a correlation between curiosity and strategic flexibility.
c. Sub-hypothesis Three: There is a correlation between trust and strategic flexibility.
d. Sub-hypothesis Four: There is a correlation between consultation and strategic flexibility.

2. Main Hypothesis Two: There is a statistically significant direct effect of functional maturity on strategic flexibility. Several sub-hypotheses arise from this as follows:

a. Sub-hypothesis One: There is a statistically significant direct effect of the attention dimension on strategic flexibility.
b. Sub-hypothesis Two: There is a statistically significant direct effect of the curiosity dimension on strategic flexibility.
c. Sub-hypothesis Three: There is a statistically significant direct effect of the trust dimension on strategic flexibility.
d. Sub-hypothesis Four: There is a statistically significant direct effect of the consultation dimension on strategic flexibility.

2.6 Research Justifications

1. The need to develop modern administrative tools that enhance the ability of government institutions to adapt to changes.
2. The scarcity of applied studies addressing the relationship between functional maturity and strategic flexibility in the Iraqi governmental context.
3. The importance of the expected results in supporting decision-makers within government institutions.

3. Theoretical Aspect

3.1 The Concept of Functional Maturity

The concept of Functional Maturity consists of readiness, attitude, and competence to effectively deal with professional development tasks appropriate to an individual's life stage. Herbst (1996) highlighted the following aspects of professional maturity [9]:

1. Obtaining self-information and transforming it into self-knowledge.
2. Acquiring decision-making skills and applying them to making effective decisions.
3. Gathering professional information and converting it into knowledge about the world of professions.
4. Integrating self-knowledge with knowledge about the world of professions.
5. Applying the acquired knowledge in career planning.

Functional maturity is an important field of study, and measuring it is crucial for determining the developmental tasks an individual should focus on. Langley (1989) designed a scale called the Functional Maturity Scale, which measures the following [9]:

1. Self-knowledge.
2. Decision-making.
3. Professional information.

4. Integration of knowledge about oneself and one's profession.
5. Career planning.

Langley's (1989) integrated approach indicates that an individual needs to successfully complete certain professional development tasks. If the individual is able to successfully complete the tasks (Coertse & Schepers, 2004:60). The concept of Functional maturity was first proposed by Super (1953) and initially addressed in Super's "life span-life space" theory. This theory was a combination of several career development theories and resulted in a cross-sectional theory describing three main aspects of career development: a) life span, b) life space, c) self-concept [10]. Functional maturity refers to the readiness to make age-appropriate, well-considered career decisions when dealing with specific tasks in career development. Therefore, Functional maturity represents an individual's readiness to make a considered decision about a particular career. According to Super (1957) and Crites (1971), such an individual has the ability to [11]:

1. Gathering self-information to gain an understanding of careers.
2. Acquiring the necessary skills for making an informed career decision.
3. Integrating self-knowledge and career knowledge.
4. Applying this knowledge when planning a career. Individuals with high levels of functional maturity will be able to complete career development tasks more successfully compared to individuals with lower levels of functional maturity

High functional maturity is associated with self-esteem, an internal locus of control, and personal work value. High self-esteem in individuals affects their professional identity [12]. High functional maturity also indicates strong career planning skills and advanced professional ability. Career planning for employees represents guiding an individual's career by weighing their interests, hobbies, abilities, and characteristics, and aligning the individual with the organisation [13]. The theory of functional maturity was developed by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey in 1969 in the field of leadership. Blanchard is considered the world's most renowned author and speaker, while Hersey was one of Ken's former teachers and a mentor to many in the field of leadership skill development. Hersey and Blanchard concluded that the most successful leader is one who can adapt their style according to the requirements of differing situations based on the maturity level of the employees. Subordinates can be classified according to willingness and ability into unwilling and incapable, followed by unwilling but capable, then willing but incapable, with the highest level of maturity being willing and capable [14]. According to Hersey and Blanchard, there are four main leadership styles [14].

1. Telling style: leaders tell their members exactly what to do and how to do it.
2. Selling style: leaders provide information and guidance, but there is more communication with followers.
3. Participating style: the leader works with the team and focuses more on the relationship rather than the task.
4. Delegating style: leaders transfer most of the responsibility to the follower or group of followers, monitor progress but are less involved in decision-making.

explained how [15]. Hersey and Blanchard linked each leadership style according to the maturity level of followers [14]:

1. Low maturity in relationships and skills, the telling style is used.
2. Moderate maturity in skills and relationships (limited skills), the second leadership style of directing and guiding is used.
3. Moderate maturity with higher skills and relationships, but lacking confidence, the leader adopts the participating style.
4. High maturity in knowledge, skills, and relationships, with sufficient confidence to make decisions, the leader uses the delegating style of leadership. Table 1 shows the views of a number of researchers on the definition of functional maturity.

Table 1. illustrates the viewpoints of several researchers on the definition of Functional Maturity.

NO.	The researcher and the year	Definition

1	[11]	An individual's readiness to make sound and well-considered professional decisions. This concept involves cognitive and emotional aspects and has physical, psychological and social characteristics.
2	[16]	A psychological state resulting from a growth process that an individual can achieve; it is reflected in their ability to make realistic academic and career choices with self-awareness, understanding of educational and career pathways, and knowledge of the requirements for making appropriate academic and career decisions.
3	[23]	A strategy involving initiatives in training and delegation, decision-making, facing challenges, seizing opportunities, and continuous improvement to achieve overall competence and effectiveness.
4	[11]	The set of events that constitute life; the sequence of occupations and other life roles that integrate to express an individual's commitment to work in their full pattern of self-development.
5	[12]	An individual's ability to perform career development tasks according to the stages of career development, where employees must be able to plan and make professional decisions.
6	[18]	The attainment of a high level of cognitive ability enabling an individual to choose their job accurately and realistically, resulting in alignment with the functional requirements of the position they occupy and with their own self.
7	[19]	It is the ability of kindergarten directors to plan and conduct professional training, and to establish human relations, in order to facilitate appropriate and correct decision-making, and achieve the kindergarten's objectives in light of the challenges of the digital age.

3.2 The Importance of Functional Maturity

Seligman emphasises the importance of functional maturity [20]:

1. Increased competence.
2. Achieving career goals.
3. Attaining professions related to independence.
4. Careful planning.
5. Commitment, motivation, and self-efficacy.

He believes that employees should begin gathering information about themselves and the world of work through an exploration process aimed at clarifying and making wise career choices. Employees should be able to guide their goals and learn to achieve career aspirations based on their interests and abilities.

3.3 Factors Affecting Functional Maturity

Studies have cited numerous factors affecting functional maturity, and most agree with Super's assertion of the direct correlation of the following factors with functional maturity [21].

1. Biopsychosocial factors: such as intelligence and age, where it has been shown that a more intelligent person is better able to plan their career, and it has been found that functional maturity is strongly related to intelligence.

2. Personal factors: such as self-concept, clarity of psychological identity, and level of ambition, with Super indicating a positive correlation between these factors and functional maturity.

3. Achievement: it has been found that there is a close correlation between functional maturity and achievement, whether this achievement is academic or otherwise. 4. Family factors: including parents' attitudes or their style of raising their children, such as involving them in decisions or imposing them, and parents' educational level and financial income.

3.4 Characteristics of Functional Maturity

Studying the self and the nature of work requires an understanding of the fact that working individuals differ in abilities, interests and traits, as well as in the demands of jobs and professions according to the standards of attributes and abilities. An individual's decisions regarding their job and behavioural attitudes at work are influenced by their knowledge of self-reality and the world of work. Since every individual has

a minimum set of specifications required for a job, some classifications have identified characteristics of the functionally mature individual, including [22]:
1. The ability to support and encourage others.
2. A high degree of harmony with others, motivating them to interact positively.
3. Maintaining commitment and behaving in accordance with rules and regulations.
4. Contributing to the work group as a teacher or advisor and achieving outstanding performance.

3.5 Stages of Functional Maturity:

Functional maturity has four stages [19]:
There are four stages of professional maturity, according to [19]:
1. The first stage: At this stage, the individual has no sufficient knowledge or understanding to achieve the goals and objectives of their organisation, and is unable to perform the assigned tasks. Their ability to bear responsibility is very limited.
2. The second stage: The individual gains experience through interaction with colleagues at work, resulting in a low degree of ability to perform their job and assume responsibility.
3. The third stage: This stage is associated with the individual's ability to carry out assigned tasks effectively, increasing their self-confidence and sense of responsibility towards work, as well as their ability to form human relationships with colleagues.
4. The fourth stage: The individual's capabilities are fully developed at this stage, with increased self-confidence, loyalty to the organisation, and a greater capacity to bear responsibility.

3.6 Elements of Functional Maturity:

The elements of Functional Maturity can be summarized as follows [23].
1. **Freedom of choice**: The degree of freedom granted to an individual to act in performing tasks.
2. **Self-sufficiency**: The individual's ability to successfully perform tasks according to their abilities, skills and experiences through learning and training.
3. **Value of the work itself**: The perception of employees' mindset and their level of awareness of the importance of the tasks they perform and their role in achieving objectives.
4. **Effectiveness**: The individual's awareness of the significance of their impact on decisions made and understanding the obstacles that prevent achieving objectives.

Motivation is also considered a fundamental element of functional maturity; it is the individual's energy that drives behaviour and determines its strength and direction, in order to achieve the desired need satisfaction, reduce tension, and restore balance.

3.7 Dimensions of Maturity

The four global dimensions of professional maturity, according to [7], include:
1. **Interest**: Measures the extent of an individual's focus and involvement in the career decision-making process [7]. Interest is "the extent of an individual's direction and engagement in the career decision-making process." It includes assessing employees' ability to anticipate the decisions they will need to make, their ability to imagine themselves in the work world, and their participation in preparing for future career choices [24].”
2. **Curiosity**: Measures the extent to which an individual explores the world of work and seeks information about professions and their requirements [7]. Curiosity is "the extent to which an individual explores the work world and seeks information about occupations and their requirements." Exploring abilities, interests, and occupations that align with these capacities is an important part of career exploration. An individual's desire and interest are expressed through the pursuit of identifying professions that will suit their future [24].
3. **Confidence**: It measures the extent to which an individual believes in their ability to make wise career decisions and choose realistic careers [7]. Confidence produces outcomes that can indicate the degree of an individual's concern for their future and their level of engagement in exploring curiosity and consulting others to provide a level of confidence. This subscale is defined as "the extent to which an individual trusts their ability to make wise career decisions and realistic career choices" [24].
4. **Consultation**: It measures the extent to which an individual seeks help in making career decisions by requesting information or advice from others [7]. Consultation refers to the degree to which an individual

seeks advice from others when making career decisions and choosing occupations. This subscale highlights the importance of seeking guidance from others and balancing making career decisions independently with assistance from others, such as parents or important people in their lives who are well-informed and knowledgeable about the path they may wish to pursue. This level of consultation with others and self-advocacy to access information from people beyond their immediate network is particularly important for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds who have limited resources at home [24].

3.8 The Concept of Strategic Flexibility

Strategic flexibility is organisational flexibility and adaptability, and dynamic capabilities [25]. Strategic flexibility enables organisations to respond agilely to complex, global, and dynamic environments. However, achieving strategic flexibility presents a challenge, partly due to inherent contradictions [26]. It has been suggested that strategic flexibility emerges from a combination of capabilities - strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity - which enable organisations to make strategic commitments while maintaining their intelligence and agility [27].

defined strategic flexibility as an organisation's ability to renew itself and remain adaptable without sacrificing efficiency [28]. Furthermore, they described three descriptive capabilities required for strategic flexibility. Firstly, for an organisation to be strategically flexible, it needs strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and collective commitment. The term 'strategic flexibility' first appeared in the business literature in connection with flexible manufacturing systems, where agility and flexibility are often used interchangeably. The relationship between agility and strategic flexibility is similar to the relationship between capability and efficiency [29]. Strategic flexibility requires us to look both inside and outside the organisation [30].

Strategic agility represents the ability of organisations to make strong strategic commitments while simultaneously maintaining sufficient capacity to manage and adapt to continuous change arising from interruptions and increasing strategic disturbances [31]. Strategic agility involves a set of actions taken by an organisation operating in a volatile environment [32]. An agile organisation adapts its organisational culture to market changes, learns quickly about market shifts, capitalises on these changes, and shapes its products according to individual preferences. Strategic agility is interpreted as an organisation's ability to identify and respond rapidly to environmental changes in business through the opportunities and threats present in the business environment, providing a swift response by reorganising resources, processes, and strategies [33]. distinguish between three types of strategic agility patterns with varying degrees of change [34]:

1. Resilience patterns aimed at stability in scenarios where a crisis or disruption may be harmful involve a low degree of change.
2. Agility patterns for variety aim to vary the degrees of change, offering a fluctuating pattern of change.
3. Transformational resilience patterns aim to maintain or increase organisational resilience for continuous transformation and involve high degrees of change. Figure (2) illustrates these patterns.

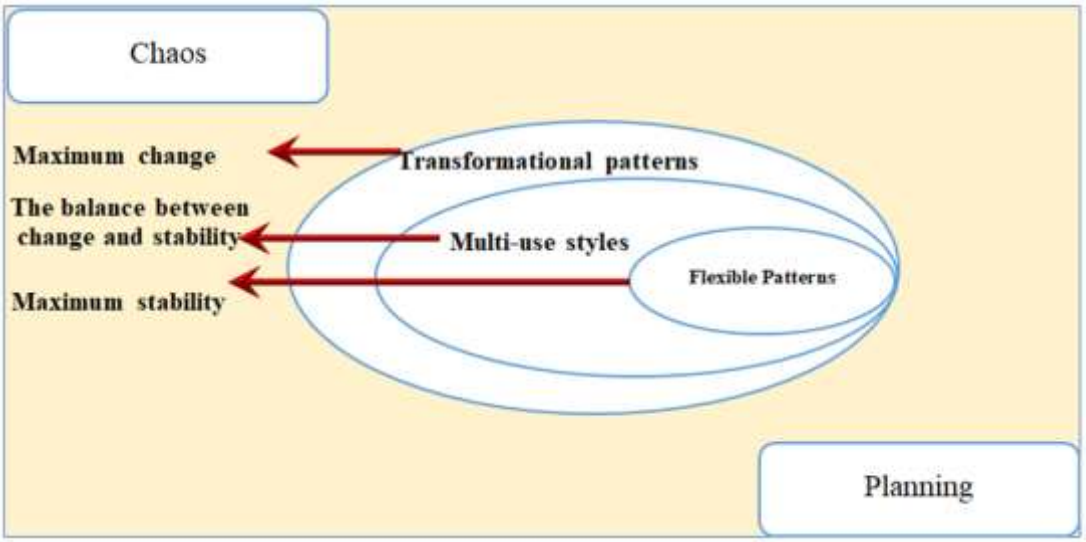

Figure 2. Slimming Patterns.

Source: From strategic planning to strategic agility patterns. Journal of creating value, 5(2), 111-123 [34].

3.9 Defining strategic flexibility

A comprehensive review of the literature on the concept of strategic resilience has been conducted, allowing for an integrated view of the development of this concept. A summary of the evolution of strategic resilience can be seen in the timeline shown below (2)

Table 2. Researchers' views on strategic flexibility.

NO.	The researcher and the year	Definition
1	[28]	The organisation's ability to continuously adapt to changing and uncertain environments, where competitive advantage is often temporary and requires repeated strategic moves.
2	[35]	The sensitive and continuous maintenance of management flexibility, awareness, anticipation, and strategic sensitivity related to its internal and external environments.
3	[36]	The ability to exploit or create changing patterns to deploy resources for a single advantage in a deliberate and purposeful yet fast and smart manner, rather than being hostage to predefined plans and existing business models.
4	[37]	The organisation's ability to respond quickly to changing environmental conditions.
5	[38]	Not only maintaining flexibility to respond rapidly to changing conditions and emerging opportunities but also focusing on a clear strategic goal.

Based on the review of the literature related to strategic agility above and the different perspectives of researchers, the operational definition of strategic agility can be formulated as follows: Strategic agility is the organisation's ability to continuously adapt to changing and uncertain environments and to manage them.

3.10 Characteristics of Strategic Flexibility

Some characteristics have emerged over the past two decades [39].

1. Strategic flexibility involves a set of actions taken by an organisation operating in an environment characterised by rapid and unexpected change.

2. Strategic flexibility requires changes that differ from ordinary and routine types of change.

3. Speed is essential for sensing environmental changes and responding appropriately. Therefore, strategic flexibility demands significant resource investment to maintain high levels of agility and speed.

4. The adoption of modular structures, which are at the core of strategic flexibility, leads to changes not only in the nature of technological work performed in the organisation, but also in the types of knowledge assets the organisation creates, the way learning occurs at both the individual and organisational levels, and the characteristics of the organisation's human resources.

3.11 Determinants of Strategic Flexibility

Agility is measured by a set of determinants (planning, organisation, individuals, and technology) (Ata: 200, 2021):

1. Strategic sensitivity: openness and inquiry, which entails acquiring significant information through maintaining relationships with a diverse range of individuals and organisations.

2. Core capabilities: a person's knowledge of their abilities is considered the most important factor in successfully achieving their goals and aspirations.

3. Clarity of vision: having a clear organisational vision is the first step in successful strategic planning.

4. Shared responsibility: entails decision-making in the organisation being carried out by the entire team.

5. Swift response: reflects the extent to which the organisation can take immediate action.

6. Selection of strategic goals: which is the responsibility of senior authorities.

7. Taking action: represents the degree of action-oriented focus, demonstrating the organisation's ability to take specific actions in available opportunities.

3.12 Importance of Strategic Flexibility

The importance of strategic flexibility can be highlighted as follows [40].

a. Strategic flexibility represents the key to success in a dynamic business environment, as it enables the organisation to control and adapt to sudden changes.

b. It allows for benefiting from a turbulent market, which does not imply the absence of a strategy but rather serves as an alternative.

c. Strategic planning.

d. It emphasises strategic thinking and a clear vision.

e. It focuses on having a shared understanding between strategies and their implementation.

3.13 Dimensions of Strategic Flexibility

1. Proactive Strategic Flexibility

Proactive strategic resilience is defined as the ability, efficiency, and speed of organisations in leveraging their available resources, capabilities, and competencies to achieve rapid responses or introduce innovations at various levels, enabling them to handle uncertainties in the external environment [41]. the same context, proactive resilience contributes to shaping long-term customer trends by developing distinctive products and services, and by entering and effectively competing in markets to achieve a competitive advantage, which enhances the organisation's ability to maintain its competitive position and ensure its survival in the market [42]. Proactive resilience also consists of a variety of managerial capabilities that align with potential opportunities and threats in the organisation's markets and technological environments, which gives management a pivotal role in coordinating and deploying resources and skills to achieve organisational objectives. Thus, this resilience is characterised by a dynamic nature reflecting its ability to renew its competencies to continuously adapt to the changing business environment [43].

2. Reactive Strategic Flexibility

Reactive strategic flexibility refers to the ability of organizations to sense changes in the external environment and respond to them after they occur, by focusing on defensive moves, conducting precise assessments of the speed of change perception, and then determining the appropriate type of response, as well as reshaping organizational resources and capabilities to achieve adaptation to unexpected conditions and a quick and effective response to environmental shifts [41]. Reactive response flexibility is considered a pivotal tool in enhancing organisational performance and has contributed to the development of strategic management as an independent business management system, driven by increasing competition, the advancement of information technology, and the need to reorganise processes to leverage opportunities and address threats [44]. In this context, reactive strategic flexibility is considered a long-term framework for achieving competitive advantage in changing environments, as it enables the organisation to reorganise its resources to serve its objectives through a set of strategic decisions taken at the organisational level [45]. In addition to helping it leverage its tangible and intangible assets to maintain its strategies in rapidly changing environments, reflecting its ability to influence its environment [46].

4. The Practical Aspect of the Research

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

a. Functional Maturity Variable: - The Functional Maturity variable consists of five dimensions: -

1- Interest: - Table (3) includes the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and importance of each item for the interest dimension:

Table 3. Distribution of descriptive statistics for the interest dimension.

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%
There's no point in deciding on a career when the future is so uncertain.	4.15	0.88	83%
I don't seem very interested in my career future.	3.96	0.91	79%
I rarely think about what kind of job I want.	4.22	0.85	84%
I won't worry about choosing a career until I finish my studies.	3.81	0.94	76%
As for choosing a career, something will happen sooner or later.	4.05	0.89	81%
I really can't find any work that interests me.	3.92	0.90	78%

Total Interest Dimension	**4.02**	**0.90**	**80%**

The results indicate that the level of attention, as one dimension of functional maturity in government institutions in the research sample, was relatively high, with an overall mean score of 4.02 and a relative significance of 80%. This reflects employees' awareness of the importance of attention in the work environment, particularly in areas supporting performance and providing information. The limited variation in standard deviations (0.90) indicates a relative convergence in the respondents' opinions, reflecting stability in their assessment of attention practices within the audit and control department. These results highlight that attention is a key input for enhancing strategic flexibility, contributing to the institution's ability to adapt to environmental changes and achieve its goals more efficiently.

2- Curiosity: - Table (4) includes the mean values, standard deviation, and the significance of each item for the curiosity dimension:

Table 4. Distribution of descriptive statistics for the dimension of curiosity.

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%
I know very little about job requirements.	4.08	0.87	82%
I don't know how to begin to get into the kind of work I want to do.	3.91	0.92	79%
I'm having trouble preparing myself for the work I want to do.	4.15	0.84	83%
I don't know which subjects I should study in school.	3.76	0.95	75%
I don't know if my career plans are realistic.	4.02	0.89	81%
I keep wondering how I can reconcile the kind of person I am with the kind of person I want to be in my work.	3.88	0.90	78%
Total Dimension of Curiosity	**3.97**	**0.89**	**80%**

The results indicate that the level of curiosity, as one dimension of functional maturity in government institutions in the research sample, was relatively high, with an overall mean of 3.97 and a relative significance of 80%. This reflects a positive orientation among employees towards seeking knowledge and exploring new ideas, which enhances their ability to adapt to environmental changes. The limited standard deviation (0.89) also indicates a relative convergence in respondents' views, reflecting stability in their assessment of curiosity practices within the inspection and audit department. These results highlight that curiosity is a fundamental element in enhancing strategic flexibility, as it contributes to the development of critical thinking and innovation, providing government institutions with greater capacity to face future challenges.

3- Confidence: - Table (5) includes the values of the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and the significance of each item for the confidence dimension:

Table 5. Distribution of descriptive statistics for the confidence dimension.

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%
I have so many interests that it's difficult to choose just one career.	4.25	0.84	85%
Everyone seems to tell me something different; as a result, I don't know what kind of work I should choose.	3.82	0.93	76%
I keep changing my career choice.	3.71	0.96	74%
I often daydream about what I want to be, but I haven't really chosen a job yet.	3.88	0.92	78%
There are so many things to consider when choosing a career; it's hard to decide.	3.76	0.95	75%
I can't understand how some people can be so sure of what they want to do.	3.69	0.97	74%
I have so many interests that it's difficult to choose just one career.	**3.85**	**0.93**	**77%**

The table shows that the level of job confidence among participants was relatively high, with an overall average of 3.85 and a relative importance of 77%, with a moderate variation in opinions (standard deviation 0.93). The item related to diverse professional interests recorded the highest average (4.25), reflecting strong

self-awareness and appreciation for choices.

4- Consultation: - Table (6) includes the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and the significance of each item for the consultation dimension:

Table 6. Distribution of descriptive statistics for the consultation dimension.

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%
Choosing a career is something you do on your own.	4.08	0.87	82%
If you have doubts about what you want to do, ask your parents or friends for advice.	3.92	0.91	79%
When it comes to choosing a career, I will ask others for help.	4.15	0.84	83%
I will choose my career without paying attention to the feelings of others.	3.76	0.95	75%
It is important to consult close friends and get their opinions before making a career decision.	4.22	0.82	84%
When making career decisions, you should pay attention to the thoughts and feelings of family members.	3.81	0.93	77%
Total consultation dimension	**3.99**	**0.89**	**80%**

The results of the consultation dimension indicate that the level of vocational consultation among the participants was relatively high, with an overall mean of 3.99 and a relative significance of 80%. This reflects employees' recognition of the importance of seeking others' opinions when making professional decisions, especially in a government work environment that requires collective participation and continuous coordination. The limited standard deviation (0.89) also indicates a relative convergence in the respondents' opinions, reflecting stability in their evaluation of consultation practices within the Control and Audit Department.

b- The Strategic Flexibility Variable: The strategic flexibility variable has two dimensions: -

Proactive Strategic Flexibility: - Table (7) includes the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and significance of each item for the proactive strategic flexibility dimension:

Table 7. Distribution of Descriptive Statistics for the Proactive Strategic Flexibility Dimension.

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%
Sometimes we act as key agents of change in our industry.	4.05	0.88	81%
We often develop unpredictable strategies based on past actions.	3.89	0.92	78%
We continuously create growth opportunities across multiple technological areas.	4.18	0.84	83%
We strive to use technology to set new standards.	3.76	0.95	75%
Overall dimension of proactive strategic agility	**3.94**	**0.90**	**79%**

The results of the proactive strategic flexibility dimension indicate that the participants' level of flexibility was relatively high, with an overall mean of 3.94 and a relative significance of 79%. This reflects employees' ability to proactively consider their career options, despite some variation in opinions as shown by the standard deviation values (0.90). It is thus evident that proactive strategic flexibility represents a fundamental pillar of professional maturity, and enhancing it contributes to supporting the ability of government institutions to adapt to environmental changes by enabling employees to make more realistic and proactive decisions.

5- Reactive Strategic Flexibility: - Table (8) includes the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and significance of each item for the reactive strategic flexibility dimension:

Table 8. Distribution of descriptive statistics for the reactive strategic flexibility dimension.

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%
Our strategic plans emphasize having the flexibility to address unforeseen circumstances.	4.08	0.87	82%
We consider a range of contingencies when developing strategies.	3.92	0.91	79%

We are able to capitalize on opportunities arising from environmental changes.	4.15	0.84	83%
We engage in planning that is typically characterized by a "wait-and-see" approach.	3.76	0.95	75%
Overall, we demonstrate proactive strategic flexibility.	**4.00**	**0.88**	**80%**

The table shows that the overall arithmetic mean of the interactive strategic flexibility dimension reached (4.00), which is higher than the hypothetical mean, reflecting a relatively high agreement among respondents on the availability of this dimension. Additionally, the standard deviation value (0.88) indicates relative homogeneity in opinions, while the relative importance (80%) confirms that interactive flexibility is an important element in enhancing the ability of government institutions to respond to environmental and organisational changes.

4.2 Testing the research hypotheses

1. Correlation hypotheses

Main Hypothesis One: This hypothesis (the existence of a statistically significant correlation between Functional Maturity and Strategic Agility) is indicated by Table (9), showing a strong positive statistically significant correlation of 0.529, from which the following sub-hypotheses arise:

First Sub-Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant correlation between Attention and Strategic Agility. The results showed a strong positive correlation of 0.512, which is statistically significant at (Sig = 0.000).

Second Sub-Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant correlation between Curiosity and Strategic Agility. The correlation value reached 0.468, indicating a moderately strong positive correlation, which is statistically significant at (Sig = 0.001).

Third Sub-Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant correlation between Confidence and Strategic Agility. The results showed a strong positive correlation of 0.537, which is statistically significant at (Sig = 0.000).

Sub-hypothesis four: There is a statistically significant correlation between consultation and strategic flexibility. The correlation value reached 0.481, which is a strong positive relationship and statistically significant at the level (Sig = 0.002).

Table 9. Correlation values between Functional maturity and Strategic flexibility.

	Functional maturity	Functional maturity dimensions			
		Attention	Curiosity	Trust	Consultation
Strategic flexibility	0.529**	0.512**	0.468**	0.537**	0.481**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.002

2. Impact Hypotheses

Second Main Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect of Functional maturity on strategic flexibility.

Table 10 shows that enhancing the principles of Functional maturity directly contributes to increasing levels of strategic flexibility, meaning that an increase in Functional maturity by one standard unit leads to an improvement in strategic flexibility by 0.482 with a standard error of 0.071.

Table 10. Final results of the impact of Functional Maturity on Strategic Flexibility.

Path			**Standard Estimation**	**Standard Error**	**Critical Value**	**R^2**	**Sig.**
Functional maturity	---->	Strategic Flexibility	0.481	0.071	6.694	0.392	0.000

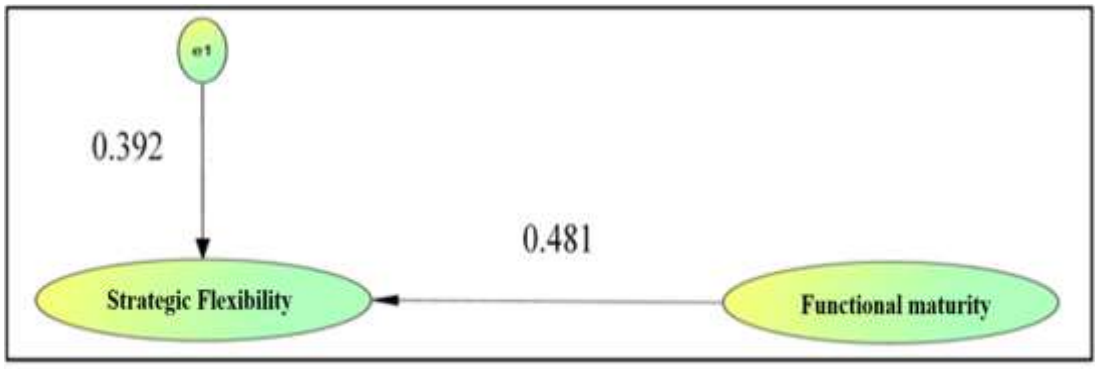

Figure 3. The structural model of the impact of Functional Maturity on Strategic Flexibility.

The table shows that Functional maturity has a direct and significant effect on strategic flexibility, with an impact coefficient of 0.482, which is statistically significant at the level (Sig ≤ 0.01). The model also demonstrated that Functional maturity explains 39.1% of the variance in strategic flexibility, while the remaining percentage is attributed to other variables beyond the scope of the study. This result confirms that developing the dimensions of Functional maturity is a key approach to enhancing the ability of government institutions to adapt to environmental and organisational changes and achieve higher levels of strategic flexibility. From the main hypothesis, the following sub-hypotheses emerge:

1. The first sub-hypothesis: there is a statistically significant impact of attention on strategic flexibility. Table (11) shows that an increase in the attention dimension by one standardised unit leads to an improvement in strategic flexibility by 0.374 with a standard error of 0.062, which is a statistically significant direct effect.

2. Sub-hypothesis two: There is a statistically significant effect of curiosity on strategic flexibility. The table shows that an increase of one standardised unit in the curiosity dimension contributes to an improvement in strategic flexibility by 0.421 with a standard error of 0.065, which is a strong significant effect.

3. Sub-hypothesis three: There is a statistically significant effect of trust on strategic flexibility. The results showed that an increase of one standardised unit in the trust dimension leads to an improvement in strategic flexibility by 0.396 with a standard error of 0.059, which is a statistically significant direct effect.

4. Sub-hypothesis four: There is a statistically significant effect of consultation on strategic flexibility. The table shows that an increase of one standardised unit in the consultation dimension leads to an improvement in strategic flexibility by 0.382 with a standard error of 0.057, which is a clear significant effect.

Table 11. Results of the direct impact of Functional maturity dimensions on strategic flexibility.

Path			Standard Estimation	Standard Error	Critical Value	R^2	Sig.
Attention	---->	Strategic flexibility	0.372	0.061	6.031	0.317	0.000
Curiosity	---->		0.420	0.066	6.477		0.000
Trust	---->		0.397	0.058	6.713		0.000
Consultation	---->		0.381	0.056	6.492		0.000

Based on the above results, the third main hypothesis can be accepted as true, which is (the existence of a direct and statistically significant relationship of Functional maturity to strategic flexibility), which means that the employees being researched realized the need to pay attention to these variables.

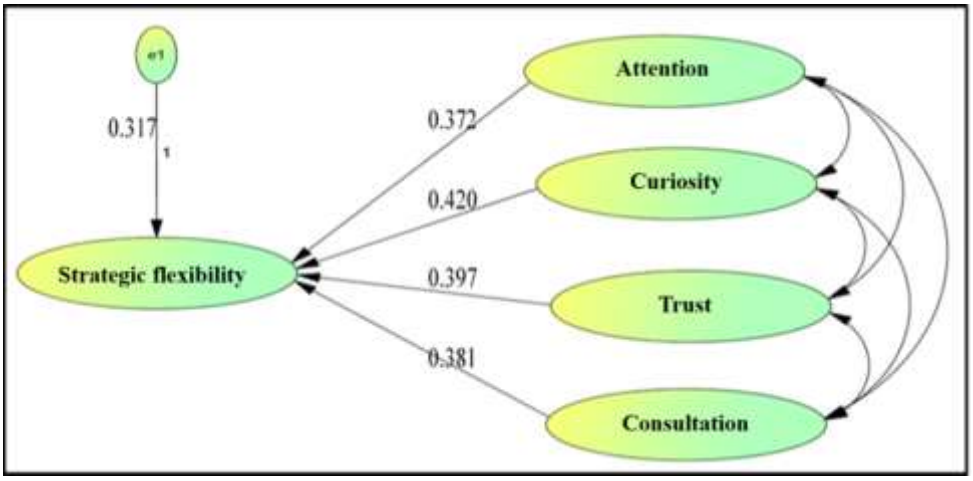

Figure 4. The structural model of the impact of functional maturity dimensions on strategic flexibility

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

1. The statistical results showed that functional maturity is a key factor in enhancing strategic resilience in government institutions, as the relationship between them was found to be strong and statistically significant.
2. The research demonstrated that the dimensions of functional maturity (interest, curiosity, trust, and consultation) directly contribute to raising the level of strategic resilience. Therefore, enhancing these dimensions positively impacts the ability of government institutions to respond quickly to environmental and organizational changes.
3. The results showed that the curiosity dimension had the highest impact on enhancing strategic resilience, indicating the importance of encouraging exploratory thinking and the search for innovative solutions within the government work environment.
4. The results showed that trust and consultation play a pivotal role in supporting decision-making processes, as they contribute to creating a collaborative work environment that increases the institution's ability to adapt to challenges.
5. The research indicated that functional maturity explains a significant percentage of the variance in strategic resilience, while the remaining percentage is attributed to other variables outside the scope of the research. This suggests the need to consider additional organizational factors such as transformational leadership, organizational culture, and employee motivation. 6. The results confirmed that government institutions with higher levels of functional maturity are better able to balance proactive resilience (anticipating changes) with reactive resilience (responding quickly to them).
7. The results reflect the need to develop clear management policies that promote functional maturity among employees, ensuring the sustainability of strategic resilience in the face of environmental challenges and organizational pressures.

5.2 Recommendations

1. It is necessary to adopt management policies that focus on raising employee awareness through training and awareness programs, thereby increasing their understanding of the importance of their role in achieving strategic resilience within government institutions.
2. Employees should be encouraged to seek innovative solutions and adopt exploratory thinking by providing a work environment that fosters creativity, thus enhancing the institution's ability to adapt to environmental and organizational changes.
3. An organizational culture based on mutual trust between management and employees should be cultivated through transparency in decision-making and delegation of authority, thereby enhancing the institution's ability to respond quickly to challenges.
4. Employees should be involved in decision-making processes through clear consultation mechanisms, creating a participatory work environment that supports strategic resilience and increases the effectiveness

of institutional performance. 5. Design training programs aimed at raising functional maturity levels among employees in supervisory departments, ensuring the sustainability of strategic resilience in the face of organizational and environmental pressures.
6. Encourage administrative leaders to adopt transformational leadership styles that support functional maturity and enhance the organization's ability to adapt to change.
7. It is recommended that further studies be conducted addressing other variables, such as organizational culture and job motivation, to measure their impact on enhancing strategic resilience alongside functional maturity.

REFERENCES

[1] E. Bougoulia and M. Glykas, "Knowledge management maturity assessment frameworks: A proposed holistic approach," Knowledge and Process Management, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 355–386, 2023.
[2] J. Bernacka, I. Ponnuswamy, and M. Gołembski, "The impact of organizational maturity on sustainable management capabilities," Economics and Environment, vol. 94, no. 3, 2025.
[3] E. Gökalp and V. Martinez, "Digital transformation maturity assessment: Development of the digital transformation capability maturity model," International Journal of Production Research, vol. 60, no. 20, pp. 6282–6302, 2022.
[4] T. Thordsen and M. Bick, "A decade of digital maturity models: Much ado about nothing?," Information Systems and e-Business Management, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 947–976, 2023.
[5] D. A. Rossit and B. Bidanda, "A Frugal Engineering Approach to Foster Digital Transformation in Emerging Countries: A Digital Inventory Management Case Study," International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management, in press, 2026.
[6] M. Cheshmberah and S. Beheshtikia, "Supply chain management maturity: An all-encompassing literature review on models, dimensions and approaches," LogForum, vol. 16, no. 1, 2020.
[7] M. L. Savickas and E. J. Porfeli, "Revision of the Career Maturity Inventory: The Adaptability Form," Journal of Career Assessment, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 355–374, 2011.
[8] X. Fan et al., "Strategic Flexibility Scale," 2013.
[9] S. Coertse and J. M. Schepers, "Some personality and cognitive correlates of career maturity," SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 56–73, 2004.
[10] J. N. Sneva, Exploring Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy, Career Maturity Attitudes, and Racial Identity Attitudes of College Students of Color. Buffalo, NY, USA: State University of New York at Buffalo, 2011.
[11] S. R. A. Hamzah, I. A. Ismail, and N. H. M. Zainal, "Does Influence Career Maturity?," International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, vol. 10, no. 16, pp. 120–133, 2020.
[12] N. Qonitatin and E. R. Kustanti, "Models of career maturity in adolescents," in Proc. International Conference on Psychological Studies (ICPSYCHE 2020), 2021, pp. 95–102.
[13] R. Zhang and Y. Song, "Relationship between employees' career maturity and career planning of edge computing and cloud collaboration from the perspective of organizational behavior," PLoS ONE, vol. 16, no. 10, Art. no. e0257582, 2021.
[14] A. M. K. Shanan, "Organizational Health in the Palestinian Ministry of Education According to Hersey and Blanchard's Functional Maturity Theory and Ways to Enhance It," Wasit Journal for Human Sciences, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 181–208, 2024.
[15] M. A. Paludi, Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior. 2013.
[16] S. Mashri and A. Lashhab, "Functional Maturity of the Employee and its Relationship to the Strategies Adopted to Cope with Occupational Stress," 2023.
[17] N. Qonitatin and E. R. Kustanti, "Models of career maturity in adolescents," in Proc. International Conference on Psychological Studies (ICPSYCHE 2020), 2021, pp. 95–102.
[18] N. Ajila, S. Nasreen, S. Sireen, and R. Ruwaiji, The Availability of Functional Maturity Dimensions: A Case Study of Professors Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, University of Ghardaia. Doctoral Dissertation, 2024.

[19] H. S. Salem, "Functional maturity and its relationship to the effectiveness of decision-making among kindergarten directors in light of the challenges of the digital age from the teachers' perspective," Journal of Childhood, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 293–352, 2024.
[20] Y. Srianturi and M. Supriatna, "Analysis of career maturity on high school students," in Proc. 2nd International Seminar on Guidance and Counseling 2019 (ISGC 2019), 2020, pp. 128–134.
[21] S. Mashri and A. Lashhab, "Functional Maturity of the Employee and its Relationship to the Strategies Adopted to Cope with Occupational Stress," 2023.
[22] N. Ajila, S. Nasreen, S. Sireen, and R. Ruwaiji, The Availability of Functional Maturity Dimensions: A Case Study of Professors Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, University of Ghardaia. Doctoral Dissertation, 2024.
[23] M. M. Obaid, "Self-Efficacy and its Relationship to Functional Maturity, Mental Maturity, and Emotional Maturity among a Sample of University Students," Journal of the Faculty of Education in Psychological Sciences, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 251–352, 2020.
[24] U. Reyes, A Close Look at a STEM-Themed Magnet and its Experiential Program on the Occupational Identities, Career Maturity, and Access Provided to Low Socioeconomic Minority Students. Los Angeles, CA, USA: Loyola Marymount University, 2013.
[25] S. Ananthram and A. Nankervis, "Strategic agility and the role of HR as a strategic business partner: An Indian perspective," Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 454–470, 2013.
[26] M. W. Lewis, C. Andriopoulos, and W. K. Smith, "Paradoxical leadership to enable strategic agility," California Management Review, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 58–77, 2014.
[27] S. P. Fourné, J. J. Jansen, and T. J. Mom, "Strategic agility in MNEs: Managing tensions to capture opportunities across emerging and established markets," California Management Review, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 13–38, 2014.
[28] P. Junni, R. M. Sarala, S. Y. Tarba, and Y. Weber, "The role of strategic agility in acquisitions," British Journal of Management, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 596–616, 2015.
[29] H. Shin, J. N. Lee, D. Kim, and H. Rhim, "Strategic agility of Korean small and medium enterprises and its influence on operational and firm performance," International Journal of Production Economics, vol. 168, pp. 181–196, 2015.
[30] E. Vagnoni and S. Khoddami, "Designing competitivity activity model through the strategic agility approach in a turbulent environment," Foresight, 2016.
[31] S. B. Ivory and S. B. Brooks, "Managing corporate sustainability with a paradoxical lens: Lessons from strategic agility," Journal of Business Ethics, vol. 148, pp. 347–361, 2018.
[32] M. Nejatian, M. H. Zarei, A. Rajabzadeh, A. Azar, and A. Khadivar, "Paving the path toward strategic agility: A methodological perspective and an empirical investigation," Journal of Enterprise Information Management, 2019.
[33] M. A. Arokodare, O. U. Asikhia, and G. O. Makinde, "Strategic agility and firm performance: The moderating role of organisational culture," Business Management Dynamics, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 1–12, 2019.
[34] C. Prange and A. Hennig, "From strategic planning to strategic agility patterns," Journal of Creating Value, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 111–123, 2019.
[35] E. Kale, A. Aknar, and Ö. Başar, "Absorptive capacity and firm performance: The mediating role of strategic agility," International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 78, pp. 276–283, 2019.
[36] Y. Doz, "Fostering strategic agility: How individual executives and human resource practices contribute," Human Resource Management Review, vol. 30, no. 1, Art. no. 100693, 2020.
[37] E. Gerald, A. Obianuju, and N. Chukwunonso, "Strategic agility and performance of small and medium enterprises in the phase of COVID-19 pandemic," International Journal of Financial, Accounting, and Management, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 41–50, 2020.
[38] J. Reed, "Strategic agility in the SME: Use it before you lose it," Journal of Small Business Strategy, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 33–46, 2021.
[39] Y. Weber and S. Y. Tarba, "Strategic agility: A state of the art introduction to the special section on strategic agility," California Management Review, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 5–12, 2014.

[40] M. Hamdi, Strategic Agility and its Impact on Enhancing Competitive Advantage: A Field Study on Palestinian Pharmaceutical Organizations. Ph.D. dissertation, Al-Aqsa Univ., 2020.
[41] Z. O. Abu-Nahel, W. H. Alagha, M. J. Al Shobaki, S. S. Abu-Naser, and S. A. El Talla, "Human resource flexibility and its relationship to improving the quality of services," International Journal of Information Systems Research, vol. 4, no. 8, pp. 23–44, 2020.
[42] D. Kandemir and N. Acur, "Examining proactive strategic decision-making flexibility in new product development," Journal of Product Innovation Management, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 608–622, 2012.
[43] H. Haggi, W. Sun, J. M. Fenton, and P. Brooker, "Proactive rolling-horizon-based scheduling of hydrogen systems for resilient power grids," IEEE Transactions on Industry Applications, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 1737–1746, 2022.
[44] S. Alaydi, T. Buck, and Y. K. Tang, "Strategic responses to extreme institutional challenges: An MNE case study in the Palestinian mobile phone sector," International Business Review, vol. 30, no. 3, Art. no. 101806, 2021.
[45] J. Brinkerink, E. Rondi, C. Benedetti, and U. Arzubiaga, "Family business or business family? Organizational identity elasticity and strategic responses to disruptive innovation," Journal of Family Business Strategy, vol. 11, no. 4, Art. no. 100360, 2020.
[46] Á. L. Dias, R. Silva, M. Patuleia, J. Estêvão, and M. R. González-Rodríguez, "Selecting lifestyle entrepreneurship recovery strategies: A response to the COVID-19 pandemic," Tourism and Hospitality Research, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 115–121, 2022.