

The Role of Strategic Flexibility in Supporting Marketing Performance: An Applied Study on Construction Companies in Egypt

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الملخص:

اهتمت الدراسة الحالية بتحليل العلاقة بين المرونة الاستراتيجية والأداء التسويقي في شركات المقاولات في مصر ، وتمثلت مشكلة الدراسة في وجود قصور في إدراك القيادات العليا في شركات المقاولات في مصر لأهمية تطبيق المرونة الاستراتيجية ، ولدورها في تحقيق مستويات مرتفعة من الأداء التسويقي لهذه الشركات ، و في ضوء ذلك فإن هذه الدراسة تسعى إلى وضع خطة عمل تنفيذية لدعم قدرة شركات المقاولات في مصر لتحقيق معدلات أعلى للأداء التسويقي من خلال تطبيق أبعاد المرونة الاستراتيجية .

وتم تطبيق الدراسة على ٣٧٦ من القيادات العليا ممن يشغلون منصب عضو مجلس إدارة، ومنصب رئيس قطاع، في شركات المقاولات في مصر، وذلك باستخدام قائمة استقصاء لجمع البيانات الأولية اللازمة لذلك . واعتمدت الباحثة على أسلوب الحصر الشامل لجميع مفردات المجتمع.

توصلت النتائج الي وجود اختلاف بين شركات المقاولات التابعة للقطاع العام والشركات التابعة للقطاع الخاص من حيث تطبيق أبعاد المرونة الاستراتيجية ، وهذا الاختلاف تم تفسيره لصالح شركات القطاع الخاص ، كما أسفرت النتائج عن وجود اختلاف بين الشركات الكبيرة والمتوسطة والصغيرة الحجم من حيث تطبيق أبعاد المرونة الاستراتيجية ، وهذا الاختلاف تم تفسيره لصالح الشركات الصغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم .

في حين أكدت النتائج على وجود اختلاف بين شركات القطاع العام والخاص من حيث تحديات تطبيق المرونة الاستراتيجية ، وهذا الاختلاف تم تفسيره لصالح شركات القطاع العام ، كما يوجد اختلاف بين الشركات الكبيرة والمتوسطة والصغيرة الحجم من حيث تحديات تطبيق المرونة الاستراتيجية وتم تفسير هذا الاختلاف لصالح الشركات الكبيرة الحجم .

كما أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة معنوية بين المرونة الاستراتيجية وأبعادها المختلفة (مرونة التخطيط ، ومرونة عناصر وعمليات المنظمة ، ومرونة التنسيق) و الأداء التسويقي لشركات المقاولات الخاضعة للدراسة ، مأخوذة بصورة إجمالية ولكل بُعد من أبعاد المرونة الاستراتيجية على حدة.

Abstract:

This study is an attempt to analyze the relationship between strategic flexibility and marketing performance in construction companies in Egypt in order to overcome the lack of top managers awareness of the importance of implementing strategic flexibility, and its role in achieving high levels of marketing performance in these companies .Therefore, this study aims at developing an operational plan to increase the ability of construction

companies in Egypt to achieve higher levels of marketing performance through implementation strategic flexibility dimensions.

The study data has been gathered from 376 senior people holding positions as members of Board of Directors, and heads of sectors in Egyptian construction companies using the survey method to collect all needed preliminary data depending on the census technique.

The results indicate that there is a difference between public and private sector of Egyptian construction companies towards the implementation of strategic flexibility dimensions. This difference was interpreted in favor of the private sector companies. The results revealed that there is a difference among the large, medium, and small companies concerning the implementation of strategic flexibility dimensions, and this difference was in favor of small and medium companies. Additionally, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between strategic flexibility dimensions (planning flexibility, flexibility of organization elements and processes, coordination flexibility) and marketing performance of construction companies in Egypt.

Introduction

The success of organizations in the contemporary work environment has been linked to their ability to cope with the changing market conditions. Strategic flexibility is one of the modern approaches that include the organization's ability to mobilize its resources in different directions through their strategic plans in order to achieve rapid response to environmental changes, it is important to increase the capacity of organizations to cope with significant and rapid environmental changes, and enable them to manage their activities (Shimizn & Hitt, 2004).

Also, being oriented towards strategic flexibility includes procedures leading to conscious study for environment and determining all changes to ensure the permanent response to the environmental changes which allow organizations to exploit opportunities and avoid threats, all these procedures in their content support the organization's marketing performance.

Organizations seek to achieve high levels of marketing performance as an important gateway to excellence and development of competitive capabilities, as well as achieving the requirements of survival and continuity in contemporary environments characterized by complexity, uncertainty, instability and high risk.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this research is to contribute to the strategic flexibility dimensions theory building. In particular, the major objectives of this research are to:

- Identify the differences or similarities between top management perception in construction companies towards strategic flexibility dimensions (planning Flexibility, organization elements and processes flexibility, and coordination Flexibility) according to the type of company ownership and the its size;
- Identify the constructs of strategic flexibility implementation and marketing performance and develop scales of measuring these constructs in the Egyptian construction companies, and empirically validate these scales and;
- Carry out an initial investigation of the relationship, if any, among strategic flexibility dimensions and marketing performance in the Egyptian construction companies.

2. Literature Review

Many scholars started to realize the importance of flexibility in management for organizations, and its role in gaining a lot of advantages, especially the positive impact on the performance of organizations and its various indicators. In this line, this paper argues that strategic flexibility has a basic role in supporting marketing performance through supporting its indicators.

2.1 Strategic flexibility

Defining Strategic flexibility is not an easy task. There is no consensus among scholars on a unified definition of this term, Because of the complexity of its dimensions (Dreyer & Grqnhau,2004; Evans, 1991). However, there are definitions of flexibility derived from general definitions, which have been introduced and applied in other sciences, such as biological and anthropological, and after that applied in managerial sciences as organizational, economic and strategic approaches, which emphasize that flexibility is an organization characteristic that reflects its ability to change (DeToni & Tonchia,2005).

It should be noted that by reviewing previous studies in this field, some studies considered strategic flexibility as one of the sources or types of organizational flexibility (Das,2001; Najmaei & Sadeghinejad,2009). However, most studies defined organizational flexibility as similar as

strategic flexibility (Sanchez,1997; Abbott & Banerji,2003; Shimizu & Hitt,2004; Raynor,2007; Tena et al.,2011;Asikhia,2009; Ionescu et al.,2012). The present study agrees with the latter, because the organizational flexibility and strategic flexibility concepts are similar in their characteristics, importance, elements and dimensions, as well as the framework and implementation obstacles.

By reviewing the previous studies (Evans,1991; Das & Elengo,1995; Baker,1996; lau ,1996; Sanchez,1997; Beach et al.,2000;Abbott&Banerji,2003; Bhandari et al.,2004; Bock et al.,2012; Radomska,2015) the researchers found that:

- Strategic flexibility is a Permanent orientation for managing the organization.
- Strategic flexibility depends on having diverse strategic alternatives.
- Moving between strategic alternatives choices should have a speed proportional to environmental changes.
- Strategic flexibility implementation should have many critical success factors in order to achieve the best results.
- Organization should devote its all activities, goals, and resources in order to achieve the orientation towards strategic flexibility.
- Strategic flexibility does not mean poor control, and at the same time does not mean having unclear goals.
- When the organization has the ability to diversify and move flexibly, the risk it faces will be reduced.
- The implementation of strategic flexibility carries with it the greatest chance of success, while at the same time bearing the greatest potential for failure.

The current study defines strategic flexibility as "a long-term management perspective that refer to the organization's ability to create real options which have permanent responses to environmental changes through achieving the planning flexibility, the flexibility of the organization's elements and processes, and coordination flexibility between these elements and processes seeking to increase organization market share and profitability.

2.2 Strategic flexibility dimensions:

There is no consensus between scholars about determining unified dimensions for strategic flexibility concept. The present study shed the light on three main dimensions of strategic flexibility which are: planning

flexibility, flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization, coordination flexibility. These dimensions have been identified based on reviewing a number of previous studies (Sanchez,1997; Abbott&Banerji,2003; Friedli et al.,2004; Shimizn&Hitt,2004;Tse & Gu,2006; Awwad,2009; Najmaei & Sadeghinejad,2009; Yuan li et al.,2010; Abuzaid,2014).

2.2.1 Planning flexibility

Planning flexibility is considered the most important dimension of strategic flexibility (Tse & Gu, 2006), The study defines planning flexibility as the ability to make the necessary adjustments in strategic plans designed to meet unexpected changes, and better utilization of opportunities and facing strong threats (Barringer & Bluedorn,1999; Tse & Gu,2006). Planning flexibility also includes diverse strategic alternatives, understanding changes in the customers' needs of organization services, and making the necessary plans adjustments to meet them, As well as the Organization ability to adjust its plans according to competition requirements (Tse & Gu, 2006).

Planning flexibility is achieved by moving between various strategic alternatives with a speed commensurate with environmental changes (Hitt et al., 1998; DeToni & Tonchia,2005). So, this study articulates that plans adaptability to be modified and changed is considered a unique characteristic for plans. Planning flexibility depends on providing mechanisms that guarantee a realistic and objective study of the organization's environment continuously, as well as the availability of unique, managerial experience, skills, and high efficient information systems.

2.2.2 Flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization

Flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization means the ability of making changes and adjustments in the Organization's elements and processes without losing its capacity , it includes the flexibility of : Production, marketing, human resources, structure, culture, supply chains, finance, procedures and laws (Beach etal,2000; Bhattacharya & Doty,2005; Sarantinos,2007; Najmaei & Sadeghinejad,2009; Tena et al.,2011; Srouf et al.,2014), these concepts can be illustrated as follows:

2.2.2.1 Production flexibility: Production flexibility is the organization's ability for adaption to any changes in product and production volume. It is considering a competitive tool used by business organizations to produce a

wide variety of goods, as it is a rapid response to customers' needs (Beach et al.,2000). It can also be defined as the capacity of the production system within the organization to produce new products (Das,2001). Also, it can be defined as the organization's ability to modify production capacity, manufacture new products, modify existing products and offer them at competitive prices in major markets around the world in a short time (Abbott & Banerji,2003). So, Production flexibility is the production of new products in a short planning period, in order to activate it, there must be a capacity to produce products at the lowest cost and in the shortest time (Fellenz,2000). Production flexibility is the flexibility of the following elements: the inventory tracking flexibility, inventory renewal flexibility, loading costs flexibility, and flexibility of information sharing with suppliers and distributors (Ogunmokun & Ling,2012).

2.2.2.2 Marketing flexibility: Marketing flexibility is the ability of the organization to reevaluate its marketing efforts in short time as a response to environmental changes, customer demands, and entering into new markets which are the most important dimensions of marketing flexibility (Abbott & Banerji,2003). Marketing flexibility implementation is related to the flexibility of marketing management structures, and the flexibility of marketing processes such as customer participation flexibility, flexibility of dealing, and implementation flexibility (Călin,2007). One of the most important tools of marketing flexibility is the provision of after-sale services. Marketing flexibility implantation requires achieving the organization's competitive flexibility, that means continuous adjustment of competitive objectives according to the changes in customer desires, which in turn reflects on the organization's operations and activities such as finance, human resources management and productive processes... etc (Peeks,2008). Marketing flexibility encompasses many aspects as it articulates the organization's ability to move among markets to deal with risks based on the wide spread in multiple markets. It also involves seeking to increase sales in order to achieve higher profitability ratios and increased market share which help Companies to gain market power and the ability to overcome competition (Abbott & Banerji,2003)

2.2.2.3 Human resources Flexibility: Human resources flexibility reflects the ability of the organization to make the necessary adjustments in the human resources management system, which is consisted of numerical flexibility and functional flexibility. The numerical flexibility is ability for

modifying the number of employees. The functional flexibility is the ability of the employees to perform different tasks and the ability to conduct change in human resources management functions or its standards such as selection and recruitment criteria, transfer, promotion etc. (Beach et al.,2000). Human resources flexibility includes the flexibility of the employee's basic characteristics such as: skills, behaviors and knowledge (Bhattacharya & Doty,2005).

2.2.2.4 Organizational Structure Flexibility: The flexibility of the organizational structure reflects the ability of making adjustments in organizational structure resulting from the change in the organization's objectives or overall strategic plans to meet internal and external environmental changes through creating or eliminating jobs, changing lines of communication, authority redistribution and the change of supervision scope or change in policies or procedures (Elsalmi,1988), The horizontal organizational structure is the most capable of keeping pace with changes. It is the fastest in developing decisions and implementing them. Organizational structures are accepted among successful firms (Hitt et al.,1989).

2.2.2.5 Culture Flexibility: Organizational flexibility is related with the organization's culture. One of the most important aspects of the flexibility of an organization's culture is the ability to adapt through the flexibility of management, the belief in the inevitability of change, the willingness of employees to bring about change, open communication and internal information. The environment is also one of the determinants of organizational culture. Their internal and external environment will influence how their resources and activities are organized and their culture is formed (El morsy,2006). A flexible culture that fosters innovation can provide sufficient support to apply strategic flexibility by supporting ways of changing processes, activities and organizational structures and reallocating resources more effectively (Bock et al.,2012).

The researchers believe that a flexible organizational culture can be achieved through management's pursuit of specific educational mechanisms to ensure rapid response by the organization to environmental changes, such as: sharing knowledge, comprehensive job training, non-traditional work procedures, clarity of culture, bringing in new directors with new cognitive perspectives, and creating task forces whose members have the confidence of staff to promote renewable cultural values.

2.2.2.6 Supply Chains Flexibility: Supply chain flexibility can be defined as "the ability of supply chains to restructure their operations, adapt to changes in strategic plans, and respond rapidly to customer requests in each chain to produce a variety of products, in different quantities, costs and attributes that meet customer expectations while maintaining the level of high performance (Borhanazad,2012). Flexible supply chains can also be built by ensuring the flexibility of three main elements: flexibility of supply chain structure, flexibility of their processes, as well as flexibility of product design, (Kumar& Ashish, 2007).

2.2.2.7 Finance Flexibility: The flexibility of finance is defined as the ability of the organization to diversify funding sources according to the variety of strategic alternatives that ensure its implementation and modification without losing its financial capacity or entering into liquidity problems (Antikarov,2012). Also, it can be defined as the organization's ability to access and redirect financial resources, including the avoidance of inefficient, non-flexible financial allocations (Rudd et al.,2008). Whereas, Sarantinos (2007) defined it as the ability to adjust the costs items according to changes in the strategic plans, such as the ability of the company to adjust the structure of various wages and expenses.

2.2.2.8 Procedures and laws flexibility: Procedures and laws flexibility mean the organization's ability to modify and change in laws and administrative procedures according to changes in strategic plans such as the adjustment of laws relating to working hours and rewards (Sarantinos,2007). This study articulates that the flexibility of procedures and laws must include the flexibility of law implementation and its various enactments, which supports the flexibility of the rest of the organization's elements and processes.

2.2.3. Coordination Flexibility:

Coordination flexibility is defined as the ability of the organization to control, adjust its elements and processes guide it towards achieving organization's objectives and the ability to incorporate changes in activities and processes according to the changes in the strategic plans (Dagang & Youmin,2004). In order to fully utilize the concept of strategic flexibility, it is necessary to adopt the concept of coordination flexibility among the organization's operations. The effective coordination of activities and processes is considered the procedures which ensure that the competencies

do not overlap and perform the work simultaneously with each other at the least possible time. It also includes incorporating changes arising in activities and processes accordance with the changes in strategic plans (Friedli et al.,2004; Zhang,2005).

2.2 Market performance

2.2.1 Definition of marketing performance: Marketing performance is widely known as the efforts of the entire organization to achieve customer preferences, via achieving organization's goals (Ambler et al.,2001). Marketing performance is a term used by marketing professionals to describe and analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of the marketing process, it is the alignment of the outputs of marketing activities and strategies with the objectives required for those activities and strategies (O'Sullivan & Abela,2007). It can also be identified as the contribution of marketing function to achieve the organizations goals (Asiegbu et al.,2011). Besides, it is known as the relationship between marketing activities and commercial business performance(Clark & Ambler, 2006).

Simply, marketing performance is the degree to which the organization succeeds in the market that is achieve via product (Ambler et al.,2001).The current study defines marketing performance as an expression of the organization success extent at achieving adaptation with environmental variables and existence goals via its ability continuity in supporting its market share and profitability achievement.

2.2.2 Marketing performance dimensions: The early scholars, who were interested in marketing performance measurement, commonly used a single criterion or a small set of financial criteria or measurements based on quantities to follow marketing activity outputs in the organization. After the subsequent evolution, various criteria were used then the measurements were designed based on market and consumer. With the continual development and diversity of market performance measurements there was difficulty in depending on using only single measurement. This diversity of measurements leads managers to face difficulties in determining the ideal group (Clark, 1999).Some scholars illustrated dimensions of marketing performance, such as Morgan et al.,(2002) who emphasizes that these dimensions are marketing effectiveness, marketing efficiency, and adaptation. on the other hand, Kaplan & Norton,(1996) view these dimensions as: profitability, market share, sales, and sales growth. Also,

O'Sullivan & Abela (2007) summarized marketing performance measures in six groups: financial metrics, competitive metrics, measures concerning consumer behavior, measures concerning distributors, direct sales, and measurements of innovation in new products. The same study used profitability and market share as main measures for organizations marketing performance.

The current study adopted both profitability and market share as dimensions for organizations marketing performance (Kaplan & Norton,1996; Ambler et al.,2001; O'Sullivan & Abela,2007). These two dimensions can be explained as follows:

2.2.2.1 Profitability: is one of the financial ratios that represents the net results of a large number of policies and decisions (Chandra, 1997). Companies should not only be able to create high absolute value, but creating high value concerning competitors with sufficient low cost (Kotler, 2000). There are many measurements for profitability including: gross profit margin, net profit margin, return on investment (ROI) , return on equity (ROE), operating profit margin (Wheelen & Hunger, 2006).

2.2.2.2 Market Share: Despite the diversity and multiple marketing performance measures, market share remains one of the most important measures of marketing performance and one of its basic dimensions. It reflects the organization competitive position as increasing sales does not mean an increase in the company's market share. Successful departments must pay great attention to the company's market share, not just the sales volume (Kotler, 2000). Market share is "the percentage of organization sales compared to total market sales", reflecting to what extent the organization is skilled in order to penetrate the target market, It can be measured by the number of customers or the value achieved via the organization's sales for each product or service compared to the cash value achieved from total sales in the market(Kaplan & Norton 1996). Organization's share of market sales is considered one of the good indicators for its competitive performance and the extent of achieving growth and sustainability objectives, as confirmed by 12 studies on market share (Armstrong & Green ,2007).

The market share of a company is measured by determining its market share which should be covered and served compared to the competitors in the same sector .(Al Tamimi & Hussein,2010).

3. Research Model and Hypotheses:

There are two characteristics of companies that are most affected by the concept of strategic flexibility: the type of the company ownership, and its size Markus (2009). Analyzing flexibility according to some companies size reveals that the small size of the organization has many advantages such as; the absence of complex and formal processes and procedures for strategic flexibility implementation which lead to the rapid decision-making, quick control of the organization's competitive position, and the possibility of rapid change and development. Also, having the availability of moving rapidly helps the organization exploiting marketing opportunities and gaining competitive advantages (Zweig&Hatch,2001). Strategic flexibility is considered a unique feature for small organizations. Although the large size of the organization means a large amount of resources, more variety of alternatives and a greater ability to utilize opportunities, this factor is an obstacle that hinder implementing strategic flexibility effectively due to the difficulty of acquiring the rapid mobility advantage for large organizations (Radomska,2015). Based on the above, the first hypothesis of the study can be tested as follows:

H1: There is a significant difference between top management perceptions in construction companies towards strategic flexibility dimensions (planning Flexibility, Flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization, and coordination Flexibility) according to the type of company ownership and the company size.in companies under investigation

The successful implementation of strategic flexibility contributes significantly in supporting the organization's marketing performance directly which enhances the organization's ability to increase its market share, profitability, competitive capabilities and marketing efficiency (Asikhia, 2011). In addition, the primary goal of strategic flexibility which is one of the organization's marketing performance indicators is increasing its market share (Hayes & Pisano,1994) as the strategic flexibility is defined the ability of the organization to adjust its market share, adapt rapidly to market trends, and make a dynamic adjustment that focus on their strategies. Implementing strategic flexibility achieves high profitability rates for organizations, especially when new products are innovated (Yuan et al., 2010). In the same vein, Cardin et al. (2010) believes that strategic flexibility contributes significantly to increasing the company's profitability through reducing costs, as it helps to accurately review all costs elements

practically and realistically, as well as contribute to increasing growth in sales and its returns (Zhang, 2005). Also, strategic flexibility contributes to reducing costs, increasing product quality Lei et al. (1996). and helping drive cost (Bavarsad et al, 2014).

On the other hand, successful implementation of production flexibility affects positively organizations profitability, by affecting sales revenue, costs and assets (Olhager, 1993), and reducing costs and production cycle time (Das, 2001). Strategic flexibility dimensions (process flexibility, financing flexibility, and organizational structure flexibility) contribute to high financial and non-financial performance (Rudd et al., 2008), as well as the flexibility of employee skills and behavior, and the flexibility of human resources practices raise the organization financial performance (Doty, 2005 & Bhattacharya).

Finance Flexibility also plays an important role in supporting organizations' performance in term of profitability, sales rate and market share (Nejad et al., 2013). In addition, reliance on flexible planning reinforces organizational performance by enhancing its indicators (profitability, market share, sales growth, and sales returns)(Dibrell et al., 2014).

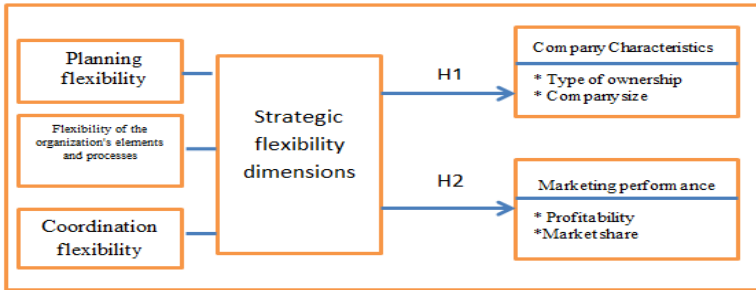
While (Morgan et al ,2002) considered that the ability of the organization to respond to environmental variables is one of the dimensions of marketing performance in organizations besides marketing efficiency and marketing effectiveness.

Based on the above, the second hypothesis of the study can be formulated as follows:

H2: There is a significant relationship between the strategic flexibility dimensions (planning flexibility, Flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization, coordination flexibility) and marketing performance.in companies under investigation.

We have developed a research model (Figure 1) based upon the previous literature review, to demonstrate the variables underlying the field study: strategic flexibility dimensions variables (Planning flexibility, flexibility of the organization's elements and processes, and coordination flexibility), marketing performance variables (profitability, market share), and company characteristics variables (type of ownership - company size).

Figure (1): Descriptive study model



4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research population and sample

This research focused on construction sector in Egypt for two reasons. First, the Egyptian construction sector has recently faced severe several crises which forced nearly 27,000 contracting companies to face bankruptcy and get out of market. The number of construction companies has decreased from 41,000 at the beginning of 2011 to almost 14,000 in September 2012 and the indicators concerning the vast majority of construction companies in Egypt have declined as well.

Table (1) presents some financial indicators for a number of public and private sector of construction companies in Egypt from 2010 to 2014, which shows a decrease in the indicators concerning the vast majority of construction companies in 2010/2011, 2011/2012 as a result of the wide change in these companies working environment which was followed by a negative impact on their profitability rates and market share, especially the public sector of construction companies and this may lead to face huge losses. So, there are weakness in these companies response to environmental changes and the lack of strategic flexibility.

Second, Despite many scholars showed interest towards the concept of strategic flexibility and its prominent role in achieving many advantages for organizations in many aspects, in the Arabian countries we find that this concept needs more research and study with a view to reach a more comprehensive framework, as well as highlighting its role in supporting the marketing performance for different types of organizations, especially service organizations, Such as construction sector, which is one of the most sensitive sectors of environmental variables with a high degree of dynamism, in which the organizations seek to obtain the largest number of projects where increasing attention to the level of marketing performance in this sector, especially the high cost of marketing in these industries (Abu Taha, 2012). Also the relationship between strategic flexibility and

marketing performance on the construction companies has not been studied in the Egyptian environment as a whole

This study has been conducting a field study using a survey method via the personal interviews to collect the primary data from 17 employees working as head of the sector in the construction companies in Egypt. The target respondents were selected based upon the consensus because of the size of the population under investigation was small. The survey is designed to examine some aspects concerning the population under investigation perception of the importance of implementing strategic flexibility dimensions, as well as the role of strategic flexibility in supporting and improving marketing performance in those companies.

Based on the results of the Exploratory study, The current study revealed that the Egyptian construction companies have insufficiency concerning their perception towards the importance of strategic flexibility dimensions implementation, which may help those target companies to achieve high levels of marketing performance.

Table 1. Some indicators for some construction companies in Egypt

Company	Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1 Arab Contractors Co. Othman Ahmed Othman (public sector)	The size of new contracts	101501	13855	11206	11027	13162
	The size of the port work	22792	9426	5350	8788	12831
Subsidiaries of National Holding Company for Construction and Development-public Business Sector(Value in thousand LE)						
2 Nasr General contracting - Hassan Allam		173513	101705	70559	34476	16359
3 Company Egyptian Contracting Co. Al		29426	30017	13518	15942	16500
4 El Nasr Building & Construction (EGCO)	Annual net profit	42091	38010	29450	38010	35656
5 Egyptian Company - Mokhtar Ibrahim		196515	81669	24993	27308	(814831)
6 Cairo public Contracting		4217	1017	(7576)	361	272
7 Egyptian public Building		16439	16204	7026	9566	7577
contracting companies Listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange (Private Sector) (Value in thousand LE)						
8 6th of October Development SODIC		135.295	-----	257.392	(447138)	142443
9 Talaat Mostafa TMGH		940.008	577.509	545.731	577509	94000837
10 El obour for Contracting and Real Estate Investment		2.707	1573	15025	(3568)	(2137)
11 Orascom Construction Industries OCIC		-----	4.480	(6.533)	(945.4)	-----
12 El Giza General for Contracting and Real Estate Investment	Annual net profit	11227	16574	20677	27354	40319
13 EL-Sayeid for Contracting and Real Estate Investment		68226	68232	71957	66637	74592
14 -Nasr for civil works EL		13517	12855	14938	22635	21893
15 EL-Fanar General for Contracting and Construction		167	549	130	71	10

Source :Prepared by researchers based on data published through the official websites of companies, and the Egyptian Stock Exchange (1)

(1) -<http://www.egx.com.eg>

4.2 Measurement items

All research variables were measured with multi-item scales that were developed to be appropriate to Egyptian construction companies. The research survey was developed based on relevant literature review of Strategic Flexibility and marketing performance. Items measuring the survey's constructs were adapted from previous studies. The survey included four pages; the first page was allocated to provide the study and its objectives and requested cooperation in completing the survey. The other pages included three main parts. The first part concerns the measurement of strategic flexibility dimensions (46 items), it has three dimensions; Planning flexibility are measured via six items adapted from (Barringer & Bluedorn,1999; Tse & Gu,2006); Flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization are captured with thirty-three items scale from (Beach et al.,2000 ;Abbott & Banerji,2003; Friedli et al.,2004; Bhattacharya & Doty,2005; Kumar & Ashih,2007; Awwad,2009; Tena et al.,2011; Borhanazad,2012; LiYuqiong et al.,2013 ; Abuzaid,2014; Srour et al.,2014); Coordination flexibility measured with seven items adapted from (Friedli et al.,2004; Kanovska & Tomaskova,2012) . The respondent responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from)1(strongly disagree to)5(strongly agree).The second part of the survey relate to measure the marketing performance (8items); which includes profitability four items, market share five items adapted from (Ambler et al.,2001; O'Sullivan &Abela, 2007; Fernando & Karunanith,2015; Wali et al.,2015) .The study relied on direct personal recognition, where the respondent asses the current situation of his company compared to the largest competitor in the industry, and was based on five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

While the third part of the survey focuses on identifying some company characteristics: ownership type of the sector (public, private) using closed-ended question. And, the size of the company based on previous studies (San & Heng,2011; Elomari & Sweden,2007) using an ordinal scale of three degrees, where the number (1) refers to a small company size (500 million and less), number (2) reflects the medium company size (higher than 500 million to one billion), number (3) indicates the large company size (higher than one billion).

4.3 Survey administration and data collection

The research instrument was piloted using personal interviews with senior people holding positions as Board of Directors members, and heads of sectors in Egyptian construction companies to disclose their ability to understand it and to test its suitability for the research objectives. Our survey was originally constructed in English and then translated into Arabic. The Arabic version was offered to the respondents. Confidentiality was assured to the respondents using two methods; first, confidentiality issue was assured at the beginning of the survey. Second, the data collection process was carried out personally by the researchers and they assured the confidentiality issue during the process of delivering and returning the surveys. The primary data collection process was carried out using a highly structured survey that was adapted from relevant literature as mentioned earlier.

The researchers delivered 376 surveys to senior people holding positions as members of Board of Directors, and heads of sectors in construction companies in Egyptian construction companies. After follow-up phone calls and reminder visits, 240 usable and valid surveys were collected for data analysis (a response rate of 63.8%). 27 surveys were excluded due to their extreme bias or incompleteness so the number of valid surveys were 213. The low rates of responses were due to the following reasons: the nature of the job: the high frequency of preoccupation, and the nature of activity: where the implementation sites are separated from the administrative sites, while the work of most of these leaders is to oversee the various implementation sites, making it difficult to communicate with them to complete surveys distributed through their administrative sites.

4.4 Measurement Model

The measurement model is used to evaluate individual, construct reliability, convergent and discriminant validity to discover the extent to which the measures have adequate internal consistency (Table 2). Factor loadings of strategic flexibility dimension scale were used to assess individual reliability. We followed Carmines and Zeller (1979) recommendation that factor loadings should be equal to or above 0.70. All the factor loadings were above the minimum value required except some items were omitted. These loadings are significant ($p < 0.001$). The table showed that Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability (CR) are higher than the approved limit (0.70). The average variance extracted (AVE) is over the

tolerance threshold of 0.50 indicating sufficient convergent validity. Also, The results showed that the alpha coefficient for the whole scale was 98% indicating a high degree of reliability.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to identify Strategic Flexibility dimensions, CFA was applied to the strategic flexibility scale, which consists of (46) items were divided into 9 factors. Also ‘some items are didn’t meet the loading condition (0.5). The number of factors constituting the strategic flexibility is 31 factors rather than 46 factors .Also ‘two factors were combined: organizational structure flexibility and culture flexibility to overcome the ratio of Contrast in-between (90%).

Table 2. CFA Results

Items	SLF	Alpha	CR	AVE
Planning Flexibility		0.84	0.84	0.57
1.The Organization's response to environmental changes	0.72			
2.The organization's ability to make adjustments in its strategic plans to adapted with environmental changes	0.763			
3.A variety of strategic alternatives to face environmental changes	0.737			
4. The organization's ability to understand the changes in the needs of its beneficiaries and make adjustments to achieve them	0.808			
Production Flexibility		0.88	0.88	0.65
5. Provide timely services and products	0.774			
6. Change the volume of production capacity according to market conditions	0.844			
7. Modify existing services and products	0.847			
8. Continuous development of the product and service delivery system	0.76			
Marketing Flexibility		0.90	0.91	0.66
9. Moving to world markets	0.756			
10. Fast response to customer requests	0.825			
11. Modern and advanced communication methods	0.878			
12. Moving towards increasing market share	0.716			
13. Develop methods to face competitors.	0.863			
Human resources Flexibility		0.89	0.89	0.66
14. Ability to easily convert employees from job to job.	0.81			
15. The HR system is flexible enough to adapt to dynamic business requirements	0.874			
16. Multiple skills of employees to use in different jobs..	0.793			
17. Ability to modify the behavior of employees	0.776			
Structure and culture Flexibility		0.86	0.89	0.61
18. The design of the company's organizational structure allows easy modification	0.887			
19. The change in the organizational structure is to respond to environmental changes	0.766			
20. Ability to change work habits easily	0.655			
21. Organizational culture in the organization is flexible enough to meet environmental changes	0.789			

Items	SLF	Alpha	CR	AVE
Supply chains Flexibility		0.76	0.80	0.67
22. Ability to modify the suppliers network in addition or exclusion	0.628			
23. Variation in strategic supply alternatives	0.976			
Finance Flexibility		0.83	0.85	0.74
24. The Company is able to adjust the cost items	0.784			
25. The Company has diversified funding sources	0.933			
procedures and laws Flexibility		0.86	0.86	0.75
26. Laws and procedures are flexible	0.826			
27. Modification of laws and procedures is in response to environmental changes	0.905			
Coordination Flexibility		0.82	0.82	0.52
28. Combined activities work in full alignment to achieve the Organization objectives	0.761			
29. The work of departments is clear and there is no conflict between them.	0.739			
30. The activities of the Organization are carried out in the right time	0.719			
31. Activities work with each other under essential procedures that require this	0.675			
Model fit: $\chi^2 (395) = 573.04$; GFI = .85; RMSEA = .46; CFI = .97				

Note: 15 items were deleted after convergent validity test from the original survey consisted of 46 items. All standardized factor loadings are significant at $p < .001$. SFL = standardized factor loading; AVE = average variance extracted; (α) Cronbach’s alpha; CR = composite reliability; GFI = goodness of fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index.

The alpha correlation coefficient was applied to marketing performance scale. The results showed that the alpha coefficient was 80% Indicating a high degree of reliability .

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of statistical analysis and hypothesis testing:

5.1 Strategic Flexibility Dimensions of the construction companies:

This section is concerned about the difference between top management perceptions of the construction companies under investigation to the dimensions of strategic flexibility according to the different characteristics of these companies (type of ownership – company size). This hypothesis was divided into two sub-hypotheses:

H^{1a}: There is a significant difference between top management perceptions in construction companies towards strategic flexibility dimensions (planning Flexibility, flexibility of the organization's elements and

processes, and coordination Flexibility) according to the type of company ownership (Public sector - private sector).

H^{1b}: There is a significant difference between top management perceptions in construction companies towards strategic flexibility dimensions (planning Flexibility, flexibility of the organization's elements and processes, and coordination Flexibility) according to the company size (small - medium- large).

5.1.1 Strategic flexibility dimensions according to the different types of ownership of the company (public sector - private sector):

To test the first sub-hypothesis (H^{1a}) the two-group discriminate analysis method was applied to a model that included two groups of senior leaders in two types of construction companies (public- private). The results are summarized in table (3).

Table (3): MDA functions and classification matrix between public and private construction companies according to the strategic flexibility dimensions

Discriminant Function							
Sig.	DF	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Canonical Correlation	% of Variance	Eigenvalue	Function Number
*0.00	7	.202	332.360	0.894	100	3.962 ^a	1
Discriminant Matrix							
Ownership type	members Number	Predicted Group Membership		Total			
		Public	Private				
Public	111	111 (100%)	0 (0.00%)	111			
Private	102	4 (3.9%)	98 (%96.1)	102			
	113	115 54%	98 46%	213			
98.1% of original grouped cases correctly classified.							

* Statistical significance at the level of 0.001

The results of the discriminate analysis showed that there is a strong relationship (correlation coefficient of 0.89) between the type of ownership of the company (public-private) and the top leader's perceptions towards strategic flexibility. There is also a difference between the leader's perceptions towards strategic flexibility dimensions (the variance ratio that was explained in the model 100%).The percentage of original grouped cases correctly classified (98.1%). this percentage is considered high and sufficient to distinguish between these companies. This means that only 1.9% of the total of these leaders their perceptions are similar to those of strategic flexibility dimensions. The precise division of the top leaders in public and private construction companies subject to analysis according to

the application of the strategic flexibility dimensions has become (54%) and (46%) respectively of the total population.

According to perceptions analysis of the of the top leaders of the construction companies under investigation, the value of the arithmetical mean of their responses to the strategic flexibility dimensions is 3.15 and 3.99 for the public and private sector companies, respectively. Thus, it's clear that the private sector construction companies are adopting the most flexible Strategy.

5.1.2 The strategic flexibility dimensions according to the size of the company (small - medium -large):

To test sub-hypothesis (H\`a) The method of multiple discriminate analysis (MDA) was applied to a model that included three groups of senior leaders in three type of companies construction (small, medium -large). The results are summarized in table (4).

Table (4): MDA functions and classification matrix between small, medium and large construction companies according to the strategic flexibility dimensions

Discriminant Function							
Sig.	Df	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Canonical Correlation	% of Variance	Eigenvalue	Function Number
*0.00	12	0.613	101.4	0.505	61.6	0.343	1
*. . .	5	0.824	40.2	0.420	38.4	0.214	2
Discriminant Matrix							
Size	members Number	Predicted Group Membership			Total		
		Small	Medium	Large			
Small	63	35 (%55.6)	15 (%23)	13 (20.6%)	63		
Medium	52	10 (%19.2)	34 (%52)	8 (%15.4)	52		
Large	98	27 (%27.6)	17 (%26)	54 (%55.1)	98		
Total	213	72 (%34)	66 (%31)	75 (%35)	213		
57.7% of original grouped cases correctly classified.							

* Statistical significance at the level of 0.001.

The results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the size of the company (small - medium - large) and the perceptions leader to the dimensions of strategic flexibility, and this relationship is not strong (correlation coefficient 0.505, 0.420 in the first function and the second function respectively).There is also a slight difference between the perceptions of these leaders towards the dimensions of strategic flexibility (The contrast ratio that could be explained in the model 38.4% in the second function in the multivariate analysis).The

percentage of accurate classification of leaders in small, medium and large construction companies according to their perception towards the strategic flexibility dimensions is 57.7%. It doesn't consider high to distinguish between these companies and this means that 42.3% of the total of these leaders perception are similar to those of strategic flexibility dimensions. As well as the exact division of the top leaders in the small, medium and large construction companies has become (34%), (31%) and (35%) respectively according to their perception of the strategic flexibility dimensions of the total population.

According to the analysis of top leaders trends in the construction companies under investigation, the value of the arithmetic mean of their responses to strategic flexibility for small, medium and large companies are 3.39, 3.83 and 3.12 respectively. Thus, small and medium are the most applicable to the dimensions of strategic flexibility.

5.2 Relationship between the strategic flexibility dimensions and marketing performance:

This section seeks to validate the second main hypothesis (H2), which deals with the relationship between the strategic flexibility dimensions (planning flexibility, flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization, coordination flexibility) (as an independent variable) and marketing performance (as a dependent variable), the previous hypothesis was divided into four sub-hypotheses as the following:

H2a: There is a statistically significant relationship between the planning flexibility and the marketing performance of construction companies.

H2b: There is a statistically significant relationship between the flexibility of the elements and operations of the organization and the marketing performance of construction companies.

H2c: There is a statistically significant relationship between the coordination flexibility and the marketing performance of construction companies.

H2d: There is a statistically significant relationship between the strategic flexibility dimensions taken overall and the marketing performance of construction companies.

The multiple regression analysis method (MRA) was used to test the previous hypothesis, and illustrate the type and strength of the relationship as follows:

5.2.1 The relationship between planning flexibility and marketing performance

Table (5) illustrates that there is a linear and statistically significant relationship between the planning flexibility and marketing performance of the construction companies, this relationship is strong, representing 77% according to the multiple correlation coefficient (R), also Practicing the planning flexibility in the construction companies under investigation can explains 59% of the total change in the level of marketing performance according to The coefficient of determination (R²) whereas, the residual 41% is due to other factors not included in this research, F value is 75.82 with significance equal 0.000 (which is less than 0.05).

Table (5) : MRA results illustrating relationships between planning flexibility and marketing performance

Model	R	R ²	DF	F	Sig*.
1	.770a	.593	4-208	75.82	0.000

5.2.2 The relationship between flexibility of elements and process of the organization and the marketing performance of the construction companies under investigation.

Table (6) represents a linear and statistical significant relationship between the flexibility of elements and process of the organization and marketing performance of the construction companies. This relationship is strong since representing 82.3% (according to the multiple correlation coefficient (R)), also Practicing the dimensions flexibility of elements and process of the organization in the construction companies under study can explains about 68% of the total change in the level of marketing performance (according to The coefficient of determination (R²) whereas, the residual 32% is due to other factors not included in this research. F value is 17.2 with significance equal 0.000 (which is less than 0.05).

Table (6): MRA results illustrating relationships between Flexibility of the elements and processes of the organization and marketing performance

Model	R	R ²	DF	F	Sig*.
1	.823a	.68	23-189	17.2	0.000

5.2.3 The relationship between coordination flexibility and marketing performance.

Table (7) shows that there is a linear and statistically significant relationship between the coordination flexibility and marketing performance of the construction companies, this relationship is strong since representing 68%

(according to the multiple correlation coefficient (R)), also Practicing the coordination flexibility in these companies can explain about 46% of the total change in the level of marketing performance (according to The coefficient of determination (R²) whereas, the residual 44% is due to other factors not included in this research. F value is 29.074 with significance equal 0.000 (which is less than 0.05).

Table (7): MRA results illustrating relationships between coordination flexibility and marketing performance

Model	R	R²	DF	F	Sig*.
1	.677a	.459	4-208	29.11	0.000

5.2.4 The relationship between strategic flexibility and marketing performance

Table (8) demonstrates a linear and statistical significant relationship between strategic flexibility dimensions and marketing performance of construction companies under investigation, this relationship is strong since representing 84% (according to the multiple correlation coefficient (R)). also, Practicing the strategic flexibility dimension in these ion companies can explain about 70% of the total change in the level of marketing performance (according to the coefficient of determination (R²)). whereas, the residual 30% is due to other factors not included in this research. F value is 13.827 with significance equal 0.000 (which is less than 0.05).

Table (8): MRA results illustrating the relationship between strategic flexibility Dimensions and marketing performance.

Model	R	R²	DF	F	Sig*
1	0.839	0.703	31-181	13.827	0.000

6. Conclusion

The results of current research demonstrated that construction companies subject to the study differ in their degree of application to strategic flexibility dimensions depending on the type of ownership (public and private). The private sector construction companies were the most applied to strategic flexibility dimensions compared to public sector construction companies. The researchers believe that the obvious progress made by private sector contractors on public sector companies in implementing strategic flexibility dimensions is due to the absence of the required

components of strategic flexibility in public companies, such as the availability of specialized management expertise, modern management methods, advanced production tools, And other factors, in addition to the public sector is bound by a lot of restrictions that limit the freedom when applying the dimensions of strategic flexibility.

The companies involved in the study also differ in their degree of application to the dimensions of strategic flexibility according to the size of the company (large, medium, and small), where it is found that small and medium size companies are the most applied to the dimensions of strategic flexibility compared to large companies (Hatch & Zweig,2001; Raynor, Najmaei & Sadeghinejad,2009; Arief et al.,2013; Radomska,2015).

This study shows that small companies are more successful in practicing strategic flexibility dimensions comparing to large companies because small size has many advantages, such as the absence of complex processes and formalities, thus providing the speed of decision making and the speed of adjusting the competitive position of the company, With the possibility of rapid change and development, and with the availability of speed of movement, the company can exploit marketing opportunities and gain competitive advantages, but strategic flexibility is a characteristic of the small institution.

There is a significant positive relationship between the planning flexibility and the marketing performance of the construction companies under study. This finding is consistent with the study by (Debrell et al.,2014).

There is a significant positive relationship between the flexibility of the elements and process of the organization and the marketing performance of the construction companies in Egypt, and this result is consistent with the results of several studies (Bhattacharya & Doty,2005; Das,2001; Olhager,1993; Nejad et al.,2013; Rud et al., 2008; Atwi,2011).

There is a significant positive relationship between the coordination flexibility and the marketing performance of the construction companies in Egypt. This result is consistent with the results of the study (Kanovska & Tomaskova,2012)

There is a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of strategic flexibility (planning flexibility, flexibility of the organization's elements and processes, and coordination flexibility) taken overall and marketing performance in the construction companies under investigation. All dimensions of strategic flexibility have an explanatory capacity for variation in marketing performance, which is at the forefront of the

flexibility of the organization's elements and processes. This result is consistent with the results of (Hayes & Pisano,1994; Asikhia,2011; Yuan et al.,2010 ; Cardin et al.,2010; Lei et al.,1996 ;Bavarsad et al.,2014).

7. Managerial Contribution

The paper has several implications for Egyptian construction companies' managers. In fact, it was found that Egyptian construction companies could support their marketing performance through adopting strategic planning as a basis for planning process. As well as, developing a flexible plan according to environmental changes and competition conditions. Also, developing numerous strategic alternatives, and provide a mechanism for mobility between them easily, considering the speed of movement between these alternatives consistent with the speed of environmental changes. As well as, examining customers' needs and expectations and developing the necessary plans to achieve it. In addition to that, ensuring the provision of effective information systems, that is capable of communicating update information on environmental events to decision makers.

The construction companies in Egypt should ensure that their services are provided in a timely manner and overcome obstacles that prevent this. Emphasize the ability of the company to change the volume of production capacity according to market conditions, conditions of supply and demand. As well as rely on flexible production systems including modern and advanced machines and materials. Also, increasing the market share via entering new markets or providing additional services such as maintenance service for facilities or engineering consultancy, or the establishment of industrial workshops for the production of machines and equipment for production operations, or converting these workshops to factories to serve the market, or production of raw materials for industry ,or the addition of new activities such as real estate investment and the various activities involved in the purchase of land and the establishment of different projects and marketing.

The researchers believe that to support the marketing performance of public sector contracting companies, these companies must be managed by the management of private sector companies, so that senior leaders of public sector companies should be empowered in everything related to their companies such as planning and developing laws ,and not restrict them to policies that limit the ability of these companies to adapt to environmental

variables, with their accountability on the results using predetermined criteria.

8. Limitations and future research

There are some Limitations for this study. First, it only studied construction companies in Egyptian context. Thus, findings cannot be generalized to other service industries without further examination. So, other researchers could replicate research model on other service industries and the research model in different samples in other industries or countries. This would provide the basis for generalization. Second, the study was limited to companies belonging to the public and private sector, excluding foreign constructing companies in Egypt, since inability to obtain accurate data from foreign constructing companies. Finally, the study was limited to the members of the Board of Directors and the heads of sectors without the other senior management positions in these companies .

The scope, methods and findings of this study suggest further work required to establish these include: First, replication of the current study in different contexts (in other organizations such as service organizations such as health and educational organizations, banks, hotels, telecommunications, security organizations and the stock exchange, as well as productive organizations such as pharmaceuticals, iron and steel, electronic industries) using the measures used in this study of strategic flexibility and marketing performance for the generalizability of our results to other cultural context. Second, its preferable doing In-depth research on the relationship between each dimension of strategic flexibility and marketing performance or one of its dimensions. Finally, Conducting comparative studies between the performance of Egyptian construction companies and Arab or foreign construction companies in terms of marketing performance or in terms of the degree of adoption of strategic flexibility.

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