

The Impact of Improvisational Capabilities on Smart Organization: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract

Based on conducting a deep literature review, this study aims at identifying and proposing a conceptual model for the concept of Improvisational Capabilities "IC" and its impact on the Smart Organization "SO" represented by (Understanding the Environment "UE", Continuous Learning "CL", Resources Mobilization "RM", and Finding Strategic Alternatives "FSA"). This integrated model argues that IC significantly impact SO with its combined dimensions. The study provides the model and hypotheses development in addition to suggesting future studies.

Keywords: Improvisational Capabilities, Smart Organization.

الملخص

أثر القدرات الارتجالية على المنظمة الذكية : نموذج مفاهيمي

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بناءً على مراجعة معمقة للأدبيات، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد واقتراح نموذج مفاهيمي لمفهوم القدرات الارتجالية "IC" وتأثيرها على المنظمة الذكية "SO" التي يمثلها (فهم البيئة "UE"، والتعلم المستمر "CL"، وحشد الموارد "RM"، وإيجاد البدائل الإستراتيجية "FSA").

يجادل هذا النموذج المتكامل بأن القدرات الارتجالية "IC" تؤثر بشكل كبير على المنظمة الذكية "SO" بأبعادها مجتمعة. توفر الدراسة تطوير النموذج والفرضيات بالإضافة إلى اقتراح الدراسات المستقبلية. الكلمات الدالة: القدرات الارتجالية، المنظمة الذكية.

1. Introduction

The current era (the era of the third millennium) may be the era that will witness an unprecedented momentum of rapid developments and changes, and there is no doubt that any business organization, irrespective of its field of work, is certainly exposed to these developments and changes. Al-Najjar (2015) states that there are multiple factors that cast a shadow over business organizations and force them to keep pace with the change in everything around them. Technology is accelerating remarkably, the surrounding environment is witnessing fierce competition, and the age in which products were characterized by long life cycles is over. Al-Ukosh (2020) considers that organizations are originally smart entities because they are run by the minds that operate all the resources of the organization and therefore the organization that fails to extrapolate its environment and to sense changes in its external environment and that lacks the ability to adapt to these changes are expected to make many serious mistakes thus it is prone to collapse and to backwardness.

In the midst of the rapid developments witnessed by business organizations in addition to the uncertainty they face, it is no longer acceptable at all to rely and resort to traditional planning tools in the organizations' dealing with such unexpected events; thus the role of IC might be activated by the leaders of the SO skillfully and ably, so that spontaneity and speed of response based on experience and knowledge are distinguishing the action to be taken because time does not wait, especially in telecommunications' environment that is characterized by big complexity, high dynamism and continuous changes (Al-Bashqali & Sultan, 2021).

Accordingly, this study suggests an integrated conceptual model for the impact of the IC on SO and finally the study draws conclusions and indicates directions for future research.

2. Previous Studies

The study of Al-Bashqali and Sultan (2021) aims to identify the role of strategic improvisation in achieving strategic sovereignty; the study of Khaddam et al. (2020) aims to study the direct impact of human resource management strategies in smart organizations in a group of pharmacies in Amman; the study of Qandil et al. (2020) aims to analyze the role of smart organization characteristics in promoting entrepreneurial alertness by adopting proactive work behaviors of the application in Asia-Cell for mobile communication. the study of Al-Ukosh (2020) aims to identify the role of technology in building the smart organization; the study of e Cunha et al. (2020) aims to present a holistic analysis of improvisation in HRM by elaborating six HRM domains of action with the potential to enhance strategic agility; the study of Rui and Ma (2020) aims to explore the antecedents and outcomes of the new venture's improvisational capability; the study of XUE and SUN (2019) aims to explore the regulatory role of organizational modularity in the relationship between organizational improvisation and organizational creativity; the study of Gürler and Sağsan (2019) aims to determine the features of smart organizations based on the green innovation strategy; the study of Ladd (2016) aims to identify the characteristics that precede and amplify the impact of customer interaction and experimentation; the study of CĂLIN et al. (2015) aims to present the elements that ensure and guarantee the ability of smart organizations to adapt to the economic and social reality in which they operate and those that actually define what a smart organization is; the study of Tseng et al. (2015) aims to examine the mediation effects of improvisational capabilities, for the fit concept, on performance.

3. Improvisational Capabilities

3.1 Introducing the Concept of Improvisational Theory

The IC is an outstanding managerial concept that has been highlighted recently among researchers. Due to the several contingency situations that face the organizations, the emergency response in the form of unplanned actions is the IC which is a distinguishing ability that immediately and

promptly executes those unplanned actions (Rui & Ma, 2020). Pavlou and El Sawy (2010) confirm that the IC are another substitutional way of properly managing violent environments to create new operational capabilities by reconfiguring the existing capabilities spontaneously. As the Ambidextrous Organizations are characterized by using professionally the two hands well, i.e., the interaction between the planned dynamic capabilities and operational capabilities, the IC are recognized to be the third hand that tackles the unpredictable environmental situations in a way to ease or simplify the change in the violent environment.

3.2 What is "Improvisational Capabilities"?

The researcher defines Improvisational Capabilities as the organizational ability that dominates in highly turbulent environments. It emerges when the organization faces unexpected events such as new products launched in the market, change in the customer's taste and the possibility of natural disaster occurrence that require spontaneous action(s); therefore, it plays a major role in achieving competitive advantage for the organization and thus it is part of the daily life of the organization which builds on the existing knowledge, experience and skills. e Cunha et al. (2020) define Improvisation as creating new production based on elements of previous knowledge and plans with no dependence or reliance on previous planned actions which means that specific content of Improvisation can never be laid down previously. But Pavlou and El Sawy (2010) describe IC as being collective, ad hoc, patterned and repeatable:

- **Collective:** because IC originate at the beginning within individuals and then they are extended to groups, units and organizations, so IC can be regarded as collective actions of individuals who are together engaged in Improvisation.
- **Ad hoc:** that is because Improvisation is dealing with a new situation every time.
- **Repeatedly Process:** which occurs continuously and this action can be improved with repetition and practice; moreover, Improvisational process is a patterned disciplined one but not a random chaotic one.

Ladd (2016) states that Improvisation, from one side, is related to entrepreneurship and its corresponding performance accompanied with the personality type. From the second hand, Improvisation involves simultaneous spontaneous creativity and execution. Rui and Ma (2020) refer to IC as a notable organizational ability that had gained the attention of researchers. IC identifies the ability of the organization to spontaneously reconfigure its available resources to cope with sudden changes, to respond to uncertainties and to deal with unexpected problems or situations. XUE and SUN (2019) consider Organizational Improvisation as a specific kind of real-time, short-term accumulative learning. It occurs when the organization faces unexpected or even unpredicted events. It builds over existing knowledge and integrates the previous experience, knowledge and skills and then adopts a novel innovative production. Improvisation produces creative process in cases of emergencies that face the organization and it effectively integrates the old base of knowledge with the new real-time knowledge. Tseng et al. (2015) indicate that uncertainty of the environment covers uncertainties of tasks, uncertainties related to supply chain and those related to partnership.

Improvisation is defined as the action of constituting and implementing of novel ideas depending on the available existing resources; from one side, Improvisation is related to entrepreneurship and its corresponding performance accompanied with the personality type. From the second hand, Improvisation involves simultaneous spontaneous creativity and execution (Ladd, 2016). The most familiar definition of Improvisation according to Weick, K. E. (1998) is extracted of the “doing of something out of nothing” which refers to its spontaneity and intuition by conducting something on spot. Arshad et al. (2015) declare that Improvisation refers to the action taken on spot which is recognized by spontaneity, intuitive manner and high level of creativity. Al-Abadi et al. (2020) indicate that Strategic Improvisation is the ability of the organization to integrate its resources spontaneously and creatively; in addition, Strategic Improvisation is the organization’s excellence in seizing opportunities in the

face of unexpected strategic threats in the turbulent surrounding environment.

3.3 Components of Improvisational Capabilities

Al-Bashqali and Sultan (2021) highlight that the Strategic Improvisation consists of the following three main components:

1. Ideas.
2. Resources.
3. Timing.

In order for the organization to implement Strategic Improvisation in its procedures, there must be resources available to implement the idea at the appropriate time. In the absence of any of these three elements, the organization and its leaders will not be able to apply Strategic Improvisation; what does it mean to have available resources and innovative ideas that can be developed, but the timing is wrong? Simply there will be no Strategic Improvisation because the speed of response specified in the appropriate timing is in addition to the spontaneity form the spirit of Strategic Improvisation and that this timing depends mainly on the intuition of the leader in his evaluation of the appropriate timing; at the same time, there may be a good idea and the timing is appropriate, but the required resources are not available and therefore the leader and the organization as a whole will not be able to improvise.

4. Smart Organization

4.1 The Concept of Smart Organization

Al-Zoubi and Al-Qaid (2018) refer to the "Intelligence" as a set of mental capabilities that are related to analysis, planning, and the ability and willingness to learn and solve problems. In this regard, Khaddam et al. (2020) indicate that there is no doubt that the organization's good use of the "Intelligence" of its employees enables it in making effective decisions, achieving its goals in an easier manner and overcoming the challenges and difficulties it faces.

Do business organizations possess the "Intelligence" and acumen as a person possesses? At a time when we describe a person as stupid, what can

be matched to that in the midst of our conversation about business organizations? To answer this question, the SO is the organization that improves the extrapolation of opportunities by studying the environment and conducting a deep analytical study that enables the organization to exploit opportunities well in order to achieve the organization's competitive advantages and to ensure its continuity and sustainability. The stupidity of a person is matched by the organization's inability to sense and explore opportunities in its surroundings and thus this causes the organization to make repeated mistakes (Al-Akash, 2018).

4.2 Definitions of Smart Organizations:

The researcher defines Smart Organization as the organization that deploys intelligence in all its day-to-day activities. In other words, it is the organization's inclusion of learning sharing within its administrative units and its ability to acquire, generate and disseminate knowledge. Al-Kasasbeh et al. (2016) state that SO is the ability of the organization to be proactive in sensitizing and discovering the opportunities and making the best use of them rather than conducting a reactive response to the competitors' actions. In this regard, Al-Akash (2018) defines the SO as the organization that is based in its work on knowledge and Internet and is characterized by agility, lightness and speed in understanding environmental variables, dealing with them, finding and exploiting opportunities, sharing and exchanging knowledge among its members and within its various administrative levels and using effective tools while practicing its activities and works. Thus, the SO is the organization that deals with a huge amount of information and improves the conversion of raw data into information that can be used in analyzing its environment, taking into consideration that converting this information into knowledge helps the organization achieve competitive advantage. Pharaon et al. (2015) stress that SO is the organization concerned with investing in the human minds it has and in the information technology available in it through a transparent value system, discarding hierarchical structure and relying on multiple one-person skills. Radi et al. (2018) assert that SO is an organization that is characterized by its agility and speed in generating knowledge and building long-term strategies that include a

comprehensive survey of the environment in which it operates; by building these strategies, the organization aims at achieving competitive advantage and sustainable position in the long term and take advantage of the knowledge it generates in achieving its objectives and capitalizing on the comprehensive survey of the external environment by transforming the challenges into opportunities that can be seized for the benefit of the organization. Salim and Sadiq (2018) define SO as the organization that provides distinguished superior products at attractive prices that achieve value and lead to the organization's distinction.

4.3 Dimensions of Smart Organizations:

A. Understanding the Environment

The researcher states that Understanding the Environment refers to the smart organization's ability to analyze the internal and external environment surrounding it, i.e., the whole variables affecting the decision-making process in a way by which this analysis provides the organization with the deep understanding and full awareness of the complexity and dynamism of the uncertainties (environmental variables) and their root-causes in addition to the proper means to deal with them effectively.

Business environment is often characterized by ambiguity in terms of the degree of complexity and uncertainty, and hence organizations strive hardly to understand the environment in which they operate and this understanding means that these organizations are aware of all the threats, obstacles, complexity and uncertainty and this is done through a comprehensive survey of the environment, which means that the organization monitors and evaluates information from the external and internal environment in order to avoid surprises at the strategic level and to ensure the organization's survival, continuity, distinction, and achievement of its desired goals and expected profits (Al-Qasim, 2010).

One of the most important factors that determine the organization's being smart is the organization's possession of modern technologies and its use of smart information systems that contribute to improving and facilitating its internal operations as well as its adoption of creativity in

relation to the presented products, which gives it a competitive advantage and makes it superior to its competitors (Qarmash & Al Najjar, 2020).

As it is well known, innovations contribute to the advancement and distinction of organizations. Innovations lead to changes in the technology used, so vigilant organizations seek to make technological changes continuously in proportion to the developments that take place. SOs do not wait and are not satisfied with the occurrence of these changes, but rather they seek to monitor the technologies used in the surrounding environment, track new innovations and evaluate these technologies; finally, they decide on the technology that they include in their facilities and activities. There is no doubt that technological intelligence contributes to improving the performance, supporting investment projects and encouraging Research and Development processes (Hassan & Ibrahim, 2019).

B. Continuous Learning

The researcher defines Continuous Learning as follows: on the organizational level, Continuous Learning refers to the individuals' accumulative learning acquisition, learning dissemination, continuous training and development to enable the organization to face the ever-changing surrounding environment. This aims at generating higher value for the organization which essentially provides the needed adequate resources and diagnoses improvements on an ongoing basis.

This necessarily means continuing to learn how to create greater value and how to deliver it. This relates to competitive markets and rapid progress in technology, as the mission of the SO is to always create opportunities and new methods and mechanisms to achieve greater value. Every individual in the organization must realize that it is mandatory for the organization to achieve value, and this in turn constitutes an implicit goal for every worker in the organization (Salim & Sadiq, 2018).

C. Resources Mobilization

The researcher defines Resources Mobilization as the smart organization's actions in empowering, making better use of, maximizing and benefiting from its existing resources in its attempt to face the external troubled environment and to achieve sustainability. This entails exerting all

the efforts and deploying different means by the organization to raise and allocate the resources so as to reach the objectives of the organization and face the dynamic complex environment.

This dimension presents the mobilization of resources, in its two aspects, tangible and intangible. Tangible includes machinery, production, factories, marketing, distribution and financial resources represented in money, stocks and bills. The intangible resources represented in technology, fame, knowledge, culture and finally the human resources with the knowledge, skill and expertise they possess. These resources are organized by the organizational structure and the network of formal and informal relationships that govern the work of the administrative units, and so the mobilization of resources means identifying and taking strategic measures to confront a turbulent, highly changing and rapidly developing environment in order to achieve its goals. RM includes making the right decisions at the right time, choosing alternatives that achieve a higher value, and adopting the principle of partnership among individuals who must be empowered, via participating in decision-making process. One of the aspects of employees' empowerment is that the organization provides information and databases, facilitates the information's flow, enables the employees to share and exchange the information, and facilitates their means of communications with each other (Salim & Sadiq, 2018).

D. Finding Strategic Alternatives

The researcher defines Finding Strategic Alternatives as the possible available options and scenarios that are developed by the organization to establish the basis and direction in which the resources can be optimally applied in a way to attain the organization's goals. Encouraging the innovative novel ideas yields to the provision of several alternatives that support the creation of high-quality decisions.

FSA focuses on the optimal generation of conceptual alternatives and implementable levels, where the ability to make strategic decisions is the origin and source of the executable capacity. In the same context, the ability to take decision relies directly on the organization's ability to find various

solutions against the different optimal standards and under the situations of uncertainty (CĂLIN et al., 2015).

4.4 Characteristics of Smart Organizations:

Al-Ukosh (2020) lists the following characteristics of SO: innovation, which is the ability to find new ideas, these new ideas are adopted by the organization to convert them into new products that bring the organization a lead and a competitive advantage; motivation, which relates to the material and moral incentives that aim to support the employees and encourage them to do more to achieve the desired goals and excel in their work; future vision, which entails that through the organization's conscious and in-depth reading of its external environment and its analysis of all its factors, the organization is in a position to define its future vision, and based on that, it can professionally build its future plans and directions in addition to having high ability to perceive complex information in the outside world. Radi et al. (2018) believe that the characteristics of SO are as follows: sensitivity to the environment, which means the organization's ability to sense external environmental variables and its ability to change and adapt; organization's cohesion, which is the ability of the organization to build a self-identity that expresses its personality and its ability to build a community of individuals who are committed to it; decentralization and tolerance, which is the ability of the organization to build positive, meaningful relationships with various components and entities: internal and external, and this in turn leads to what is called "acceptable experimentation"; the ability of the organization, which means the ability of the organization to control its development and manage the direction in which it is moving; culture, which means the network of relationships' system that organizes the workers within the organization and with individuals from outside the organization equally; capabilities, which simply means the sum of the knowledge, abilities and skills that the organization possesses which enable it to present its products to customers; links or engagements, where the two following types of engagements are essential: one that relates to the internal group created by the organization, which is workers, and a second one that deals with external engagements, and this includes suppliers, partners, and customers.

It is worth noting that SOs, in their endeavor to preserve themselves, must follow a green innovation strategy in the digital age. It is clearly indicated that the correlation is inverse between green informatics and environmental pollution: the more green informatics, it is immediately accompanied by a decrease in environmental pollution because green informatics is essentially interested in reducing the negative impact on the environment as a result of the services provided (Gürler & Sağsan, 2019).

5. Development of Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

This section attempts to investigate the relationships between the variables examined by the current study knowing that there is a lack of researches that have covered the relationships between these variables and this is considered an advantage of this study over previous studies in that there were no previous studies that directly linked the variables dealt with in this study, except for the studies obtained by the researcher within the limits of his knowledge. This study aims at investigating the relationship between the IC and SO. This section presents the Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Model. The researcher can formulate the following proposition:

- **The First Main Hypothesis:**

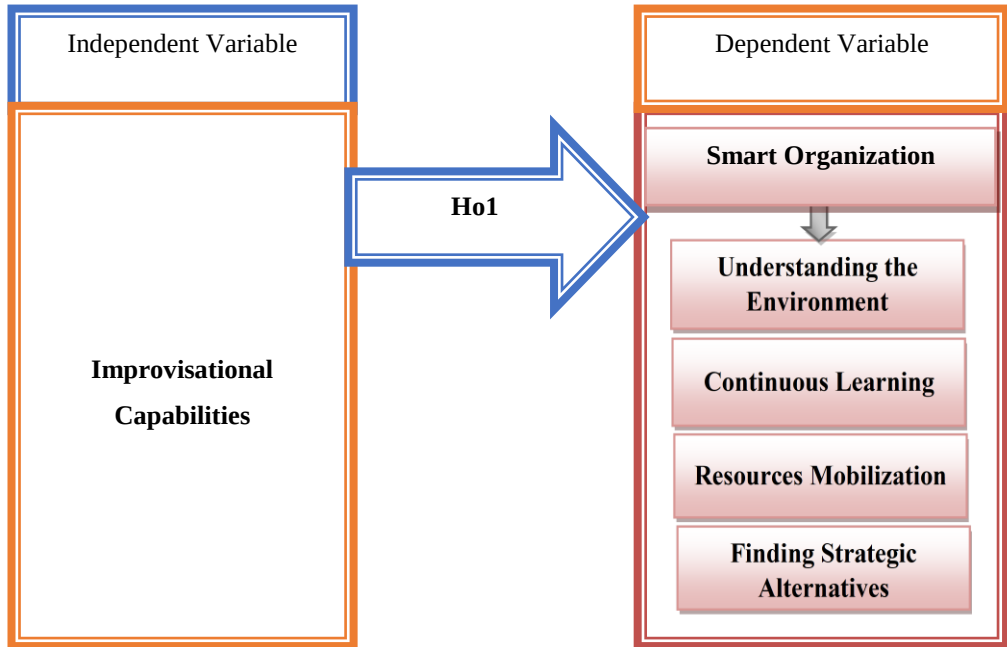
H₀₁: Improvisational Capabilities positively impact the Smart Organization.

6. Model of the Study

The conceptual model presented in Figure (1-1) indicates the study model, and it clarifies the potential relationship between the IC and SO which includes the model's variables, in addition to the references that have been relied upon. More specifically, this model conceptualized the impact of IC on SO (namely, Understanding the Environment, Continuous Learning, Resources Mobilization, and Finding Strategic Alternatives). '

Figure No. (1-1)

The model of the study



Source: developed by the researcher based on the following sources:

- **The independent variable:** The researcher has relied on the following references: (Otaghsara & Hamzehzadeh, 2017; Wang et al., 2020; Ciftci & Erkanli, 2020; Maximo et al., 2019; Khattak et al., 2019; Scheepers & Storm, 2019).
- **The dependent variable:** The researcher has relied on the following references: (Al-Baghdadi & Al-Jobouri, 2015; Alabadi et al., 2018; Abu Zaid, 2019; GÜREL & TAT, 2017; Lapersonne et al., 2015; Musigire et al., 2017; Kar'awy, 2016; Voss & Voss, 2013; Popadiuk et al., 2018; Kusumastuti, 2018; Alänge & Steiber, 2018; Al-Najjar, 2015; Abu Zaid, 2019; Dranev et al., 2020; Tsai & Ren, 2019; Koryaka et al., 2018; Tempelaar & Rosenkranz, 2019; Affum-Osei et al., 2020).

7. Findings and Discussion

1. Improvisational Capabilities positively impact the Smart Organization: this finding is concluded based on the theoretical literature review of the previous corresponding studies that the researcher has reviewed. The researcher can formulate his conclusion as follows:

The researcher believes strongly in the importance of adopting the spontaneous reactions to face the uncertainties, which reflects the resources' Improvisational Capabilities that characterize the resources and their corresponding competencies. This understanding and analysis of the environment enable the Smart Organization to formulate its appropriate options and alternatives;

Also, as the Improvisation entails speedy, quick to respond to the change, team work, trust, and wisdom in reacting to the crises and risk-taking and on top the spontaneity, this necessarily means full compatibility and alignment of the strategies of Improvisation and one of the important dimensions of Smart Organization, that is, Finding Strategic Alternatives which refers to the existence of options and alternative methods that the Smart Organization can adopt.

8. Future Studies

1. The researcher suggests that interested researchers can conduct the same study on Governmental sector.
2. The researcher suggests that interested researchers can conduct a study that measures the impact of Improvisational Capabilities on innovation in the telecom sector, for example.
3. The researcher suggests that interested researchers can conduct the same study on non-for-profit organizations.

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