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	<p>RESEARCH ARTICLE </p>	
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Determinants of Strategic Behavior in Enhancing SMEs' Performance: The Role of Strategic Awareness</h2>	
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<p>Abstract</p>		
<p>This study investigates the determinants of strategic behavior and their role in enhancing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Algeria, with a particular focus on the mediating role of strategic awareness. In increasingly volatile and competitive business environments, SMEs are required to adopt adaptive and proactive strategic behaviors to ensure sustainability and growth. This research seeks to identify the key internal and external factors shaping strategic behavior and to examine how these factors influence organizational performance through the development of strategic awareness among decision-makers. The study adopts a quantitative approach based on a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 130 SME managers operating in Western Algeria. Data were analyzed using advanced statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through SmartPLS 4, in addition to SPSS for preliminary analysis. The conceptual model integrates several dimensions, including strategic choice, organizational structure, leadership style, communication, and environmental factors, as determinants of strategic behavior, while strategic awareness is examined as a mediating variable influencing performance outcomes. The findings reveal that the determinants of strategic behavior significantly contribute to improving SME performance, with leadership style and strategic awareness emerging as the most influential factors. Organizational structure and environmental dynamics also demonstrate meaningful effects, while communication shows a comparatively smaller yet still relevant contribution. The results further confirm that strategic awareness plays a crucial mediating role, enhancing the effectiveness of strategic behavior by enabling managers to better interpret environmental signals, anticipate changes, and align organizational resources accordingly. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing an integrated framework that links strategic behavior determinants, strategic awareness, and performance in the context of developing economies. It also offers practical implications for SME managers and policymakers by emphasizing the importance of strengthening strategic awareness and leadership capabilities to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.</p>		
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1. Introduction

The evolution of the concept of strategy is closely linked to the transformation of the business environment, which has shifted from relative stability to one characterized by volatility, uncertainty, and rapid change. These developments have compelled organizations to adopt systematic and scientifically grounded approaches to respond effectively to environmental dynamics, ensure continuity, foster sustainable growth, and maintain long-term competitiveness.

Strategic choice represents the most appropriate course of action that organizations adopt to achieve their mission and objectives. It forms the foundation of organizational strategy, supported by key elements such as organizational structure,

leadership style, and communication systems, all of which shape internal relationships and operational effectiveness. Consequently, achieving superior strategic performance largely depends on the ability of managers to adopt and implement appropriate strategic behaviors.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have gained increasing importance globally due to their significant contribution to economic development. Governments and policymakers have increasingly focused on enhancing SME performance, recognizing their role in employment generation, income diversification, and innovation. Strategy, in this context, serves as a critical mechanism for bridging the gap between current performance and desired objectives, while addressing both internal and external environmental challenges.

In Algeria, SMEs represent a fundamental pillar of the national economy. Despite their importance, they face numerous challenges, including limited resources, intense competition, and environmental instability. These challenges often result in suboptimal performance. Within this context, strategic behavior emerges as a critical factor enabling SMEs to adapt to environmental changes and improve performance outcomes.

Strategic behavior encompasses a set of decisions and practices through which organizations manage internal and external environments, including their ability to anticipate change, innovate, and exploit opportunities. However, the effectiveness of such behavior is contingent upon the presence of strategic awareness among managerial leaders. Strategic awareness reflects a comprehensive understanding of future orientations and the capability to build sustainable competitive advantages.

Accordingly, this study investigates the role of strategic behavior in enhancing SMEs' performance through the mediating effect of strategic awareness.

2. Research Problem and Questions

The central research question of this study is formulated as follows:

How do the determinants of strategic behavior influence the improvement of SMEs' performance through strategic awareness?

To address this question, the following sub-questions are proposed:

1. Do SME owners possess sufficient strategic awareness to adopt strategic behaviors that enhance performance?
2. Do managers and decision-makers have a clear understanding of strategic behavior and its determinants in improving performance?
3. What role does strategic behavior play in enhancing SMEs' performance through strategic awareness?

3. Research Hypotheses

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant relationship ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the determinants of strategic behavior and strategic awareness.
- There is a statistically significant relationship ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the determinants of strategic behavior and SMEs' performance in Western Algeria.
- There is a statistically significant relationship ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between strategic awareness and SMEs' performance, mediated by strategic behavior determinants.
- There is a statistically significant correlation ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) among strategic behavior determinants, strategic awareness, and performance within a unified structural model.

4. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Review and synthesize theoretical and empirical literature on strategic behavior and SME performance.
2. Identify key variables influencing SME performance to support strategic decision-making.
3. Develop a conceptual framework linking strategic behavior, strategic awareness, and performance.
4. Provide practical recommendations for SMEs to enhance performance through strategic behavior.
5. Examine the current state and economic contribution of SMEs in Algeria.
6. Test the relationships between variables using empirical data and structural modeling techniques.

5. Research Methodology

To achieve the study objectives, a descriptive-analytical approach was adopted. The theoretical framework was developed through an extensive review of relevant literature on strategic behavior, strategic awareness, and SME performance.

For the empirical analysis, data were collected באמצעות a structured questionnaire distributed to managers of SMEs in Western Algeria. The dataset was analyzed using SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics, while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted SmartPLS 4 to test and validate the proposed relationships among variables with greater precision and reliability.

6. Literature Review

6.1 Strategic Analysis

Strategic analysis enables organizations to identify and evaluate internal and external factors influencing their current and future direction. It plays a crucial role in determining appropriate strategic behavior necessary for ensuring organizational survival, growth, and continuity.

6.2 External Diagnosis

External environmental factors are largely uncontrollable and exert significant influence on organizational performance. Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of the external environment in shaping strategic decisions.

For instance, studies by Thompson and Strickland (1978), Greenley (1989), Harrison (1989), and Kim (1999) highlight the role of environmental factors as key determinants in strategy formulation. Similarly, Kohli and Jaworski (1993), Slater and Narver (1994), and Song and Parry (1997) identify external environmental conditions as critical elements influencing the relationship between strategy and organizational performance.

In the present study, internal analysis is guided by the framework proposed by Schevovt (1998), which emphasizes several critical dimensions, including the speed of environmental change, environmental constraints, and regulatory and legislative restrictions. These dimensions collectively shape the organization's ability to respond strategically and maintain competitive positioning.

6.4 Causal Relationship Analysis

Understanding the causal relationships among variables influencing strategic behavior is essential for explaining how organizations formulate and implement effective strategies. Among the most influential factors identified in the literature is organizational structure, which significantly shapes managerial decision-making and strategic thinking.

A wide range of scholars, including Chandler (1962), Drucker (1974), Khandwalla (1977), Mintzberg (1994), Thompson (1999), Nunes (2007), and Livian (2008), have highlighted the central role of organizational structure in determining strategic outcomes.

According to Drucker (1974), organizational structure can be defined as *"a set of resources and arrangements designed to achieve organizational goals"* (Soutenain & Farcet, 2006). Earlier, Weber (1947) conceptualized structure through key dimensions such as hierarchy of authority, division of labor, and the formalization of rules and procedures (Hach, 2007).

Subsequent studies by Hodge (1991), Jablin (1992), Hach (1997), Miller (1988), Daft (2001), Hwang (2005), and Kerbouche (2015) have expanded this perspective, identifying three core structural dimensions:

- **Formalization:** Refers to the extent to which rules, procedures, and policies govern organizational operations. High levels of formalization may restrict employee autonomy but enhance consistency and control.
- **Centralization:** Describes the distribution of decision-making authority within the organization (Robbins, 1990). The degree of centralization depends on how decisions are made and who holds authority (Forman & Argenti, 2005).
- **Complexity:** Reflects the level of differentiation within the organization, including horizontal differentiation (variety of activities), vertical differentiation (hierarchical levels), and geographical dispersion.

According to Hach (1997), organizational structure can be viewed as a network of relationships through which responsibilities and authority are distributed across different levels, shaping coordination and communication processes.

6.5 Communication as a Strategic Variable

Communication is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing the successful implementation of organizational strategies. Numerous scholars, including Alexander (1985), Rapert and Wren (1998), Litteljohn and Peng (2001), Heide, Grønhaug, and Johannessen (2002), Rapert et al. (2002), Forman and Argenti (2005), and Schaap (2006), have emphasized its importance.

According to Forman and Argenti (2005), communication serves as a strategic function aimed at facilitating the implementation of organizational strategies by ensuring clarity, alignment, and feedback. It also acts as a mechanism through which organizations receive responses from stakeholders, thereby improving strategic effectiveness.

Ineffective communication, or its absence, can lead to significant challenges, including misunderstandings, reduced coordination, and failure in executing strategic initiatives. Therefore, effective communication systems are essential for aligning individual and organizational goals and ensuring successful strategy implementation.

6.6 Leadership and Strategic Implementation

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping and executing organizational strategies. It is often considered one of the primary determinants of successful strategy implementation.

According to Brauer and Schmidt (2008) and subsequent studies, leadership effectiveness ensures coherence between resource allocation, strategic direction, and organizational objectives. Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) identified three key leadership roles:

1. Managing the strategic direction
2. Managing organizational relationships
3. Managing training and development processes

Empirical studies, including those by O'Reilly et al. (2010), demonstrate that leadership effectiveness across hierarchical levels significantly enhances organizational performance during strategy implementation. Leaders play a critical role in motivating employees, facilitating change, and ensuring alignment between strategic objectives and operational activities.

6.7 Strategic Options: The Miles and Snow Typology

The typology developed by Miles and Snow (1978, 1986) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding different patterns of strategic behavior. It identifies four primary strategic orientations:

1. Prospector Strategy

Organizations adopting this strategy focus on innovation, opportunity exploration, and market expansion. They continuously seek new products and markets, adapt rapidly to environmental changes, and emphasize decentralization and flexibility.

2. Defender Strategy

Defender organizations operate in stable environments and focus on maintaining existing markets and products. They prioritize efficiency, cost control, and stability, often exhibiting centralized and bureaucratic structures.

3. Analyzer Strategy

The analyzer strategy combines elements of both prospectors and defenders. Organizations adopting this approach balance innovation with stability by carefully monitoring environmental changes and selectively adopting new opportunities while maintaining core operations.

4. Reactor Strategy

This strategy is characterized by a lack of consistent strategic orientation. Organizations react to environmental changes only when necessary, often resulting in poor performance. As noted by Miles and Snow (1986), this approach lacks coherence and is generally considered ineffective.

6.8 Strategic Behavior

Strategic behavior reflects the actions and decisions undertaken by organizational leaders to manage internal and external environments effectively. It is closely linked to leadership practices and organizational adaptability.

According to the United Nations ESCWA, strategic behavior encompasses all activities undertaken by organizations to influence the competitive environment. It serves as a guiding mechanism that aligns employee actions with organizational objectives while facilitating participation and motivation.

Scholars such as Kazmi et al. (2017) and Sawaleh et al. (2018) emphasize that strategic behavior enables organizations to respond efficiently to environmental challenges and achieve superior performance compared to competitors.

6.9 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance remains a complex and multidimensional concept, with varying definitions across the literature.

- Freeman and Hannan (1987) define performance as the degree of alignment between organizational objectives and achieved outcomes.
- Costa (2005) and Daft (2013) conceptualize performance as the extent to which organizations achieve their goals.

Performance can also be understood as the ability to utilize resources efficiently while achieving predefined objectives.

The Quinn and Cameron (1983) model provides a comprehensive framework for measuring organizational performance, based on multiple life-cycle models, including those proposed by Lippitt (1967), Scott (1971), Greiner (1972), Torbert (1974), Adizes (1979), and others. These models emphasize effectiveness and success indicators at different stages of organizational development.

6.10 Strategic Awareness

Strategic awareness is a critical capability that distinguishes high-performing organizations from their competitors. It reflects the ability of leaders and employees to perceive environmental changes, anticipate future trends, and develop proactive responses.

Strategic awareness enables organizations to interpret environmental signals, identify emerging opportunities, and align resources with long-term objectives, thereby forming the foundation of effective strategic behavior.

Several scholars have contributed to defining this concept:

- Hamel and Prahalad (1994) argue that strategically aware organizations anticipate competitors by identifying opportunities before they become evident.
- Mintzberg (1994) emphasizes that strategic awareness is a cognitive process rooted in the ability to recognize patterns and interpret environmental changes.
- Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington (2008) highlight its role in achieving strategic alignment and sustainable competitive advantage.

7. Conceptual Framework and Research Model

Based on the reviewed literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which:

- Determinants of strategic behavior (internal diagnosis, organizational structure, communication, and leadership) act as independent variables.
- Strategic awareness functions as a mediating variable.
- SMEs' performance represents the dependent variable.

This framework assumes that strategic awareness enhances the impact of strategic behavior determinants on organizational performance, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of how SMEs can achieve sustainable competitiveness.

Applied aspect:

General framework for the study problem:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Algeria face multiple internal and external challenges that affect their performance and sustainability in an environment characterized by intense competition and rapid changes. Strategic behavior of managers and decision-makers is considered a crucial factor in enhancing performance, as it is influenced by internal factors (such as resources, competencies, and organizational structure) and external factors (such as competition, technological change, and economic variables).

In this context, strategic awareness emerges as a key mediating variable. It enables managers to identify opportunities and threats in the surrounding environment and helps them develop effective responses before initiating any plan for change.

Therefore, promoting a culture of strategic awareness within SMEs should constitute an essential part of their strategies, contributing to strengthening competitiveness and achieving improved performance in the long term.

Independent Variable: Determinants of Strategic Behavior

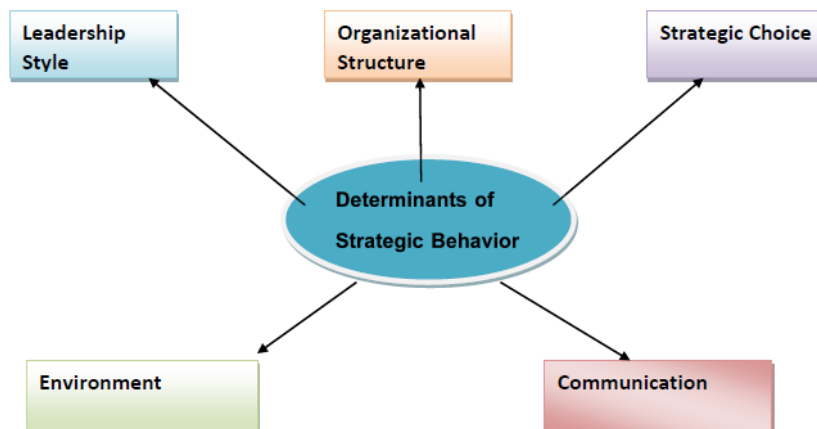
The mediating variable: Strategic Awareness

Strategic awareness represents the state resulting from the process of collecting and utilizing information related to environmental events and changes, as well as the organization's relationship with its external environment, in order to provide managers with the necessary knowledge to design and plan for the future (Pencarelli et al., 2009).

It also enables managers to adopt unconventional approaches in understanding the future and formulating appropriate strategies (Ibrahim & Nuaimi, 2000).

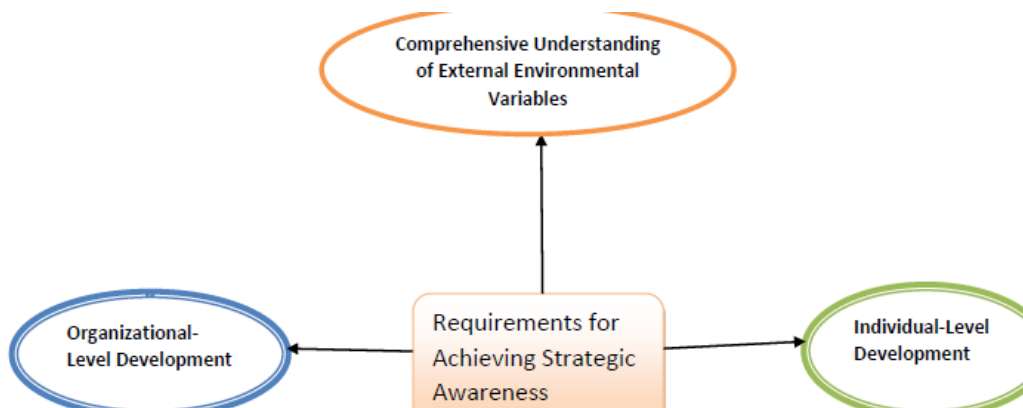
In general, strategic awareness can be defined as a coherent perception of the broader future environmental domain. It constitutes an advanced stage of thinking—beyond conventional reasoning—aimed at enhancing analytical and synthetic capabilities to derive and extract useful and effective knowledge, thereby reducing uncertainty and environmental ambiguity. Ultimately, it supports rational strategic decision-making that ensures the survival, growth, and competitive development of the organization.

Independent Variable :Determinants of Strategic Behavior



By the researcher

Strategic Awareness:



By the researcher

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Dependent Variable: Strategic Performance

The strategic performance of enterprises is measured through several key dimensions, including:

Workforce: efficiency and utilization of human resources.

Planning: quality and accuracy of strategic plans.

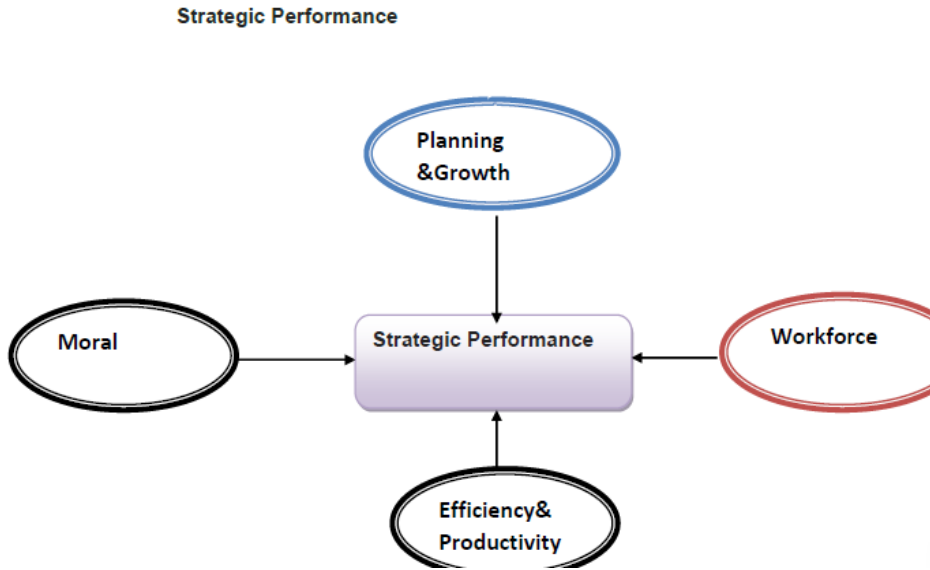
Growth: the organization’s ability to expand and increase its market share.

Morale: the level of employee satisfaction and motivation.

Efficiency: optimal use of resources to achieve objectives.

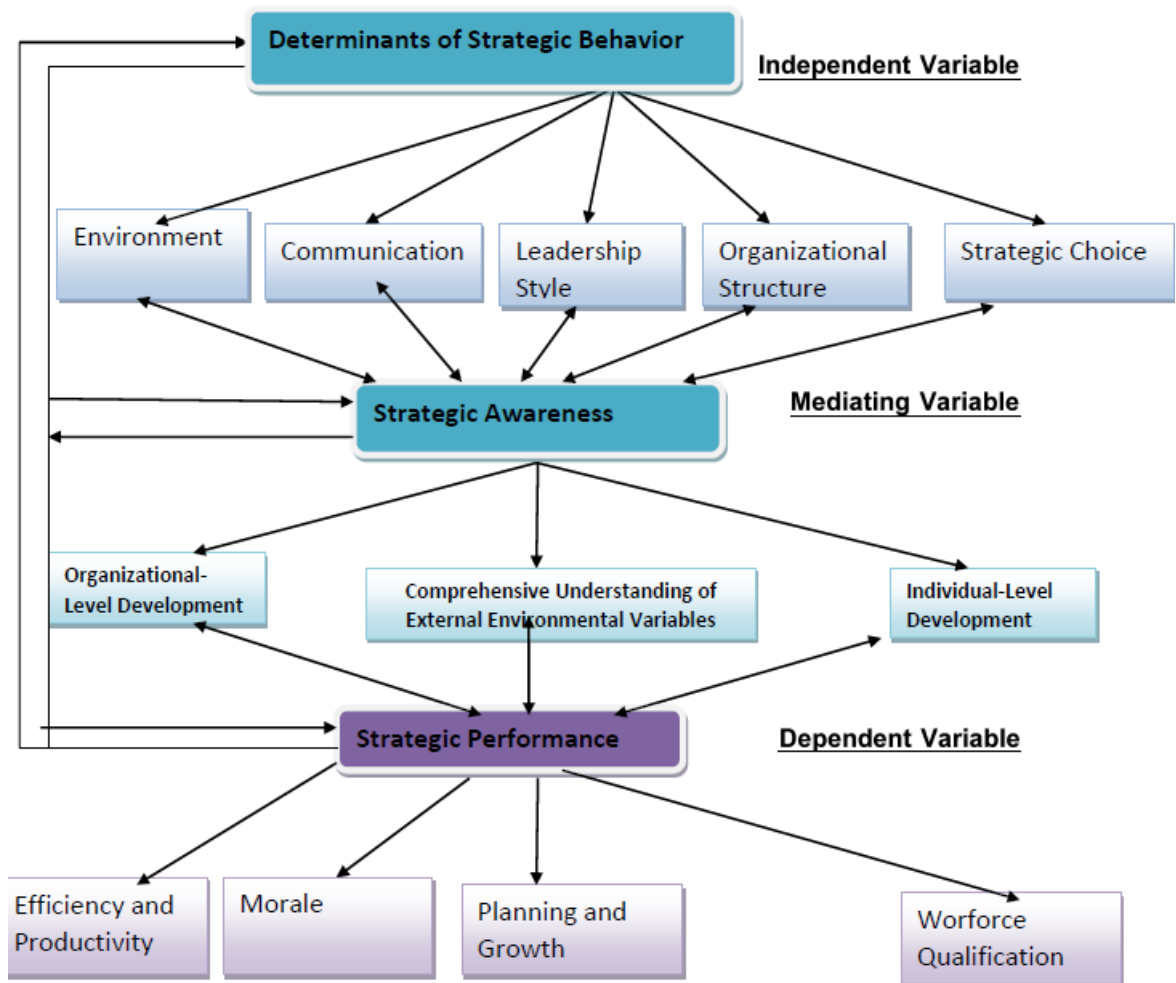
Productivity: the level of outputs relative to inputs.

Strategic Performance



By the researcher

Hypothetical Model of the Study



By the researcher

↔ Impact

Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating across various economic sectors in the western region of Algeria. This region was selected for several scientific and practical reasons, including its diverse economic fabric that encompasses industrial, commercial, and service activities. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in the national economy due to its population density, the volume of trade exchanges, and the presence of dynamic industrial and commercial zones.

The study sample comprised managers and decision-makers from SMEs located in the provinces of Mascara, Oran, Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, Relizane, Mostaganem, and Sidi Bel Abbes. This sample was deliberately chosen based on the professional experience of its members and their ability to provide reliable information regarding strategic behavior, governance practices, and financial planning mechanisms within their enterprises. Such considerations ensure the credibility of the findings and contribute to achieving the objectives of the research.

Research Instruments

For the purpose of collecting the data relevant to this study, a survey method was employed using a questionnaire, which is considered one of the most widely used research instruments in survey-based studies. The questionnaire was carefully designed in light of previous studies related to the topic, ensuring its alignment with the objectives of the present research.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consisted of two main sections: the first section focused on the demographic information of the study sample, while the second section included substantive questions covering the dimensions of the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the mediating variable. All items were formulated in a consistent and positive manner to avoid ambiguity and ensure clarity in responses. Respondents were provided with five options for each statement based on a five-point Likert scale.

For data analysis purposes, the software Smart PLS and PLS were employed to generate and process the results.

Table: Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Behavior Dimensions

N°	Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Rank	Degree of Agreement
1	Strategic Choice	3.2819	0.8412	3	Moderate
2	Organizational Structure	3.6765	0.5951	1	High
3	Leadership Style	2.9056	0.7959	4	Moderate
4	Communication	3.6765	0.8672	2	Moderate
5	Environment	3.5622	0.4808	5	High
—	Strategic Behavior Axis (Overall)	3.3618	0.5079	—	Moderate

Interpretation

The descriptive analysis reveals that the overall level of **strategic behavior** among SMEs in Western Algeria is **moderate** (M = 3.3618). Among the dimensions, **organizational structure** ranked first with a high level of agreement (M = 3.6765), indicating its critical role in shaping strategic behavior.

The **environmental dimension** also demonstrated a high level of agreement (M = 3.5622), reflecting the importance of external factors in influencing strategic decisions. In contrast, **leadership style** recorded the lowest mean (M = 2.9056), suggesting relatively weaker managerial influence in strategic orientation.

8.2 Descriptive Analysis of Strategic Awareness

Table: Strategic Awareness Dimension

Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Degree of Agreement
Strategic Awareness	4.2582	0.6497	High

Interpretation

The results indicate a **high level of strategic awareness** among SME managers (M = 4.2582), suggesting that decision-makers possess a strong understanding of environmental changes and strategic directions. This highlights the importance of cognitive and perceptual capabilities in enhancing strategic effectiveness.

8.3 Descriptive Analysis of SMEs Performance

Table: Performance Dimension

Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Degree of Agreement
SMEs Performance	3.5126	0.8211	High

Interpretation

The findings reveal a **high level of performance** among SMEs ($M = 3.5126$), indicating that enterprises demonstrate relatively strong efficiency, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. This supports the argument that strategic behavior and awareness contribute positively to performance outcomes.

9. Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Table: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Results

Dependent Variable	Communication	Leadership Style	Organizational Structure	Strategic Choice	Environment
Performance	2.001	1.466	1.877	1.352	1.346
Strategic Awareness	1.996	1.365	1.873	1.350	1.333

Interpretation

The VIF values range between **1.333 and 2.001**, which are well below the critical threshold of 10. This indicates the **absence of multicollinearity issues** among the independent variables. Therefore, the model demonstrates strong reliability and validity in estimating the relationships between variables.

10. Effect Size (F^2) Analysis

Table: Effect Size (F^2) Results

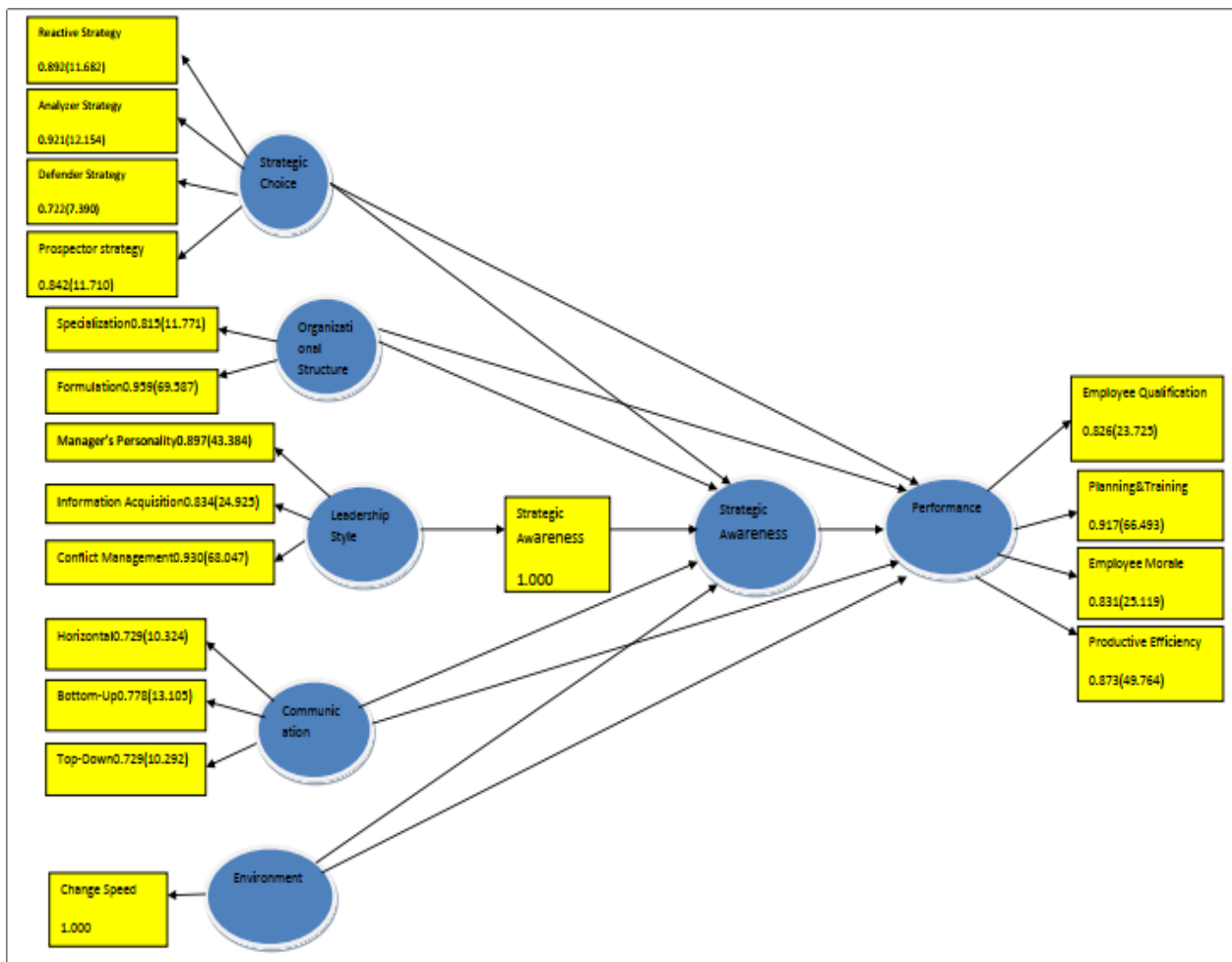
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F^2 Value	Effect Size Interpretation
Strategic Awareness	Performance	0.301	Medium
Leadership Style	Performance	0.531	Large
Communication	Performance	0.020	Small
Environment	Performance	0.101	Small to Medium
Organizational Structure	Performance	0.020	Small

Interpretation

The effect size analysis indicates varying levels of influence of independent variables on SMEs' performance:

- Leadership style demonstrates a large effect size ($F^2 = 0.531$), highlighting its dominant role in improving performance.
- Strategic awareness shows a moderate effect ($F^2 = 0.301$), confirming its importance as a mediating variable.
- Environment has a small to moderate effect ($F^2 = 0.101$), reflecting its indirect influence.
- Communication and organizational structure exhibit small effect sizes ($F^2 = 0.020$), suggesting limited direct impact despite their structural importance.

Analysis of Path Coefficients Level and Effect Size:



Main Hypothesis Test:

H0: There is no statistically significant effect at the 0.05 significance level of strategic awareness on the choice of strategic behaviors that enhance the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Western Algeria.

H1: There is a statistically significant effect at the 0.05 significance level of strategic awareness on the choice of strategic behaviors that enhance the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Western Algeria.

The main hypothesis is statistically supported

Table: Coefficient of Determination (R²) Results

Variables	R ² (Coefficient of Determination)	Result
Performance	0.535	High
Strategic Awareness	0.113	Acceptable

Sub-hypothesis:

H0: There is no statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 significance level between the three dimensions (determinants of strategic behavior, strategic awareness, and performance) forming a single construct.

H1: There is a statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 significance level between the three dimensions (determinants of strategic behavior, strategic awareness, and performance) forming a single construct.

Table: Correlation Results of the Three Dimensions

Variables	Sub-Variables	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T Value	P Value	Decision
Strategic Choice	Prospector Strategy	0.842	0.072	11.710	0.000	Supported**
	Defender Strategy	0.722	0.098	7.390	0.000	Supported**
	Analyzer Strategy	0.921	0.076	12.154	0.000	Supported**

	Reactor Strategy	0.892	0.076	11.682	0.000	Supported**
Organizational Structure	Specialization	0.815	0.069	11.771	0.000	Supported**
	Formalization	0.959	0.014	69.578	0.000	Supported**
Leadership Style	Conflict Management	0.930	0.014	68.047	0.000	Supported**
	Information Acquisition	0.834	0.033	24.925	0.000	Supported**
	Manager's Personality	0.897	0.021	43.384	0.000	Supported**
Communication	Horizontal Communication	0.729	0.071	10.324	0.000	Supported**
	Upward Communication	0.778	0.059	13.105	0.000	Supported**
	Downward Communication	0.729	0.071	10.292	0.000	Supported**
Environment	Rate of Change	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a	Supported**
Strategic Awareness	Strategic Awareness	1.000	0.000	n/a	n/a	Supported**
Performance	Morale	0.831	0.033	25.119	0.000	Supported**
	Productivity Efficiency	0.873	0.018	49.764	0.000	Supported**
	Workforce Structure	0.826	0.035	23.725	0.000	Supported**
	Planning and Growth	0.917	0.014	66.493	0.000	Supported

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the findings highlight that strategic behavior and strategic awareness constitute two essential pillars for enhancing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly under the accelerating transformations imposed by the external environment. Enterprises that demonstrate a clear understanding of their environment are better equipped to formulate effective strategies and to leverage their internal resources in ways that ensure a sustainable competitive advantage.

Furthermore, the development of strategic awareness should not be confined to top decision-makers; rather, it must permeate all organizational levels, thereby fostering internal cohesion, strengthening adaptability, and ultimately improving both efficiency and effectiveness in overall performance.

Study Results

Strategic behavior constitutes a pivotal concept within the field of strategic management, as it directs organizations toward the identification of market opportunities and the effective mobilization of existing resources. Managers exhibit diverse strategic behaviors while simultaneously confronting a wide range of internal and external factors. Achieving superior performance therefore requires that managers carefully consider the behavioral dimension in the process of strategy implementation.

Strategic awareness, in turn, empowers decision-makers with a forward-looking perspective, enabling them to anticipate potential developments and prepare adequate responses in advance.

The determinants of strategic behavior are structured around five core dimensions: strategic choice, organizational structure, leadership style, communication, and the external environment, each operationalized through measurable indicators.

Organizational performance improvement is reflected in the ability of firms to optimize the use of available resources and maintain equilibrium with internal and external dynamics in pursuit of strategic objectives.

The empirical findings indicate a statistically significant effect, at the 0.05 level, for both the determinants of strategic behavior and strategic awareness.

Specifically, the determinants of strategic behavior exert a statistically significant influence, at the 0.05 level, on enhancing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Western Algeria.

Moreover, the results confirm a statistically significant relationship, at the 0.05 level, between strategic awareness and organizational performance in SMEs in Western Algeria, mediated through the determinants of strategic behavior.

There is a statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 level between the three dimensions of the determinants of strategic behavior, strategic awareness, and performance, forming an integrated structural construct.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Enhancing Strategic Awareness:

Promote the participation of managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in administrative and strategic conferences, as a means of strengthening their understanding of strategic behavior and its impact on organizational performance.

2. Capacity-Building Programs:

Design and implement structured training programs and workshops aimed at equipping SME managers with the necessary skills to effectively translate strategic awareness into practice.

3. Organizational Streamlining:

Simplify and reform complex routine procedures that may hinder the flexibility of SMEs, thereby creating an enabling environment for the adoption of innovative strategic behaviors.

4. Continuous Environmental Scanning:

Institutionalize systematic field surveys and monitoring mechanisms to detect and anticipate changes in the external and internal environment, enabling SMEs to select and adopt the most appropriate strategic behaviors.

Reference:

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they had the right to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences.

All responses were treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity. No personal or identifiable information was collected or disclosed. The data were used exclusively for academic and research purposes and were stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

The research design did not involve any form of deception, harm, or psychological risk to participants. Furthermore, the study adheres to internationally recognized ethical guidelines, including those recommended by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently, and the results presented in this study are free from any commercial or financial influence that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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