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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Explaining factors of the adoption of strategic management by the Tunisian SMEs involved in the program upgrade

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Abstract

This paper aims to deepen the understanding of factors behind the adoption of strategic management by companies. We assume that the adoption of strategic management depends on three factors: the skills of the entrepreneur, organizational structure, and the nature of the environment. These factors were tested - using the method of structural equation modeling - on a representative sample of 276 Tunisian SMEs involved in the upgrade. The results confirm a central role of the nature of the environment, a partial role of skills of the entrepreneur, and no significant role of the organizational structure on the adoption of strategic management.

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Introduction

Strategic management is not a new concept. According to Seth and Thomas (1994), the term first appeared in the 50s in corporate America with the arrival of former soldiers of World War II. Among the numerous early contributors, the most influential contributions were started by Alfred Chandler, Philip Selznick, Igor Ansoff, and Peter Drucker, and since the business context has changed in the 70s, the first published works of strategic management were developed (Ansoff et al, 1976; Fahey et al, 1981; Martinet 1984, Gluck and Jauch, 1984, Hussey 1984, Baum and Dobbin, 2000)

The evolution of the concept can be explained through the fact that the role of strategic management in helping both large companies, and SMEs, to develop a competitive advantage is undeniable according to several authors (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1990; Hart and Banbury, 1994, Powell, 1992). Strategic management should facilitate the company's growth and enable it to improve its performance and competitiveness (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2005 Porter, 1996)

The dominant logic of strategic management raises questions about factors that explain its adoption. Why particular companies adopt strategic management while others don't. This question pulls the trigger for businesses and more specifically Tunisian companies to consider this in facing the growing competition. Since Tunisia became a member in the WTO and with the signing of the free trade agreement with the European Union in 1995, the challenges of international competition and survival seemed to be serious. Within this Tunisian companies have started operating in a context of profound and radical changes that require breaking with the culture of protectionism and moving towards market culture. (Said, 2000; Chaker 2002; Sraïri 2003; Lassoued, 2003).

In this perspective, the objective of this research is to highlight the factors that explain the adoption of strategic management by Tunisian SMEs. Our main motivation is summed up in our willingness to analyze the level of adoption of strategic management in Tunisian firms. In addition to identifying factors involved in the choice of the level of adoption.

2. Definition of strategic management

Since its introduction in the 50s, the concept of strategic management played a vital role in companies. It is essential to describe development and survival of businesses through this concept. Introducing a definition of strategic management is not straight forward since researchers do not agree on a universally accepted definition due to the interchangeability of related concepts such as strategy, strategic management, business policy, strategic decisions, strategic processes, and many other concepts more or less close to the first of this series (Martinet, 1992). This interchangeability may cause negative consequences to the extent that it becomes a generator of misunderstandings and conflicting results Koenig (1993), which translates into reproducibility and generalization. Many books and researches consider the strategic management as a field of research representing multiple realities. Contrary to this general sense, experts in the field provide considerable details, considering the strategic management as a field of application that integrates specific dimensions .

According to Ansoff (1972), the founder of this concept, strategic management is to develop strategies, organize skills of the company and organize the implementation of these strategies and skills. It explores how major decisions of entrepreneurs or more generally the leaders of organizations affect the long- term structure of the organization, competitive market behavior, and adaptation to legal and regulatory constraints. Thietart (1984) sees strategic management as a state of balance between economic, political and organizational situations of business dimensions. It describes the different possible combinations of these three dimensions and accommodates one that best suits the environment of the organization. The ideal combination is called strategic management. It binds strategic management in the search for coherence between the internal capabilities of the organization and its environment.

As for Jauch and Glueck (1990), strategic management is a set of decisions and actions that lead to the development of an effective strategy or strategies that help achieve business goals. The strategic management process is the way in which policy makers determine the objectives and make strategic decisions "(Jauch and Glueck, 1990, p.9). In the same line Mahé Boislandelle (1998) states that strategic management is to define strategic direction and implementation. Strategic management is also concerned with the adaptability potential of the company in the development of skills and the capacity for innovation. .

On the other hand strategic management is also perceived as a process through which an organization or its collective action system attempts to find a satisfactory balance between the different requirements of competitiveness, security and legitimacy (Koenig, 2004, p. 516)

These various contributions highlight a significant dimension of strategic management . They show that the latter is concerned with designing, preparing and leading collective actions by developing strategies to guide the development of the company. The management then determines the success of the implementation of strategic choices. The two concepts are inseparable, and the strategy appears both as the result of strategic management and the object of conduct. Strategic management is a formulation case for strategies implementation. It is a process by which strategists formulate, implement and monitor corporate strategies (Coulter, 2002; Hill and Jones, 2001)

In conclusion, much like Avenier (1988), we define strategic management as a decentralized strategy development process of the company, marking the link between strategy formulation and implementation which is the participation of different hierarchical levels of organizational actors in strategic thinking.

3. The factors explaining the adoption of strategic management

The literature identifies three main factors behind the adoption of strategic management; the skills of the entrepreneur, organizational structure, and the nature of the environment

3.1. The skills of the entrepreneur

The entrepreneur was treated in abundance in the literature describing it as the builder organizing the company and giving it the means to achieve the strategy it has defined. However, it plays a central role in occupying a prominent place in the development of strategy and its implementation. Due to its hierarchical position (the top of the hierarchy), the entrepreneur's work is extremely complex, varied because the different elements are multiple, overlapping and influencing each other. It is the entrepreneur who decides on policy activities involving the future of business , necessary ways for structuring success, modifications along the way and satisfactory levels of

performance (Bamberger , 1985; Bernoux 1985 , Martinet , 1993, 1994 , Bourgeois 1984, Hambrick and Mason , 1984; Ginsberg and Venkatraman , 1985; Venkatraman et al , 1984).

Many researchers such as Mintzberg (1973), Sweeney (1987), Yukl (1990), Hart and Quinn (1993) and Russel (1990), in their typology of the roles of a leader, confirm the importance of classifying strategic activity in the foreground by managers. It is identified inside and outside the organization that the company will be liable for its survival.

These factors lead to the following hypothesis:

H 1: The adoption of strategic management depends on the skills of the entrepreneur
 H 1.1: The greater the entrepreneur mastery of technical and management skills in the sector, the greater will be the use of strategic management

H 1.2: The greater the entrepreneur control of managerial skills, the greater will be the use of strategic management

H 1.3: The greater the entrepreneur control of entrepreneurial skills, the greater will be the use of strategic management

3.2. The organizational structure

Based on investigations aimed toward business structures and knowledge strategy that is deepened by the inclusion of a dependency relationship between strategy and structure which is confirmed by many other studies (Channon , 1973; Pavan , 1972; Louitri 1984, Rumelt 1974; Bouchikhi , 1990) , this study refers to strategy as a major explanatory factor in the evolution of the observed structures within three main phases: business structure , functional structure and divisional structure . Other researchers have developed a kind of antithesis highlighting feedback on structural elements of the content of the strategy and the policy process (Bower, 1972; Mussche 1974, Hall and Saias 1979; Laporta 1974, Ansoff, 1974). They suggest different arrangements based on the assumption that the structure also affects the strategy. The choice of strategies is not free, but highly predetermined internal structures. In the same vein Strategor (1997) highlight four types of influence of the structure on the strategy. First, the structure determines the perceptions of strategists acting as a filter in the perception of an organization changing its environment. Second, it affects the strategic choices by the transmission of quality information to decision makers (delay, distortion, retention ...). Third, it limits the scope of strategic moves by its adaptability. Fourth, the structure facilitates or impedes the development of strategic business benefits through the development of skills within organizational units. Thus, taking into account its multiple functions, the structure appears as a set of resources in the service of the strategy. These resources relate to the following three major characteristics: formalization, standardization, and centralization. These structural attributes were selected from various empirical studies (Kalika , 1988, 1995 ; Desreumaux , 1992, Chandler, 1989, Mintzberg, 1982; Brisson, 1992).

These factors lead to the following hypothesis:

H 2: The adoption of strategic management depends on the organizational structure

H 2.1: Highly formalized organizational structure result in less use of strategic management

H 2.2: Highly standardized organizational structures result in less use of strategic management

H 2.3: Highly centralized organizational structures result in less use of strategic management

3.3. The nature of the environment

The environment is a powerful contextual variable in theories of organizations. The central concern of business leaders is the management of change and increasing complexity from the interaction between the company and its environment. The future of the company is largely dependent on what happens, and especially what will happen in the environment (Oréal, 1993). The literature distinguishes between two models to study the relationship between the company and its environment: the deterministic model and the proactive model (Saias and Metais, 2000). The deterministic model emphasizes on the importance of environmental constraints in shaping organizational forms as well as management systems. The proactive model is non-deterministic par excellence. It assumes that organizations not only respond to the demands of the environment but can also shape them, mold it in order to draw new benefits; they can develop a proactive behavior aimed to act on their environment (Weik 1969, Bourgeois, 1980, 1984, Perez 1982, Martinet 1984, Venkatraman et al, 1984; Marchesnay et al, 1992).

The literature on the environment suggests that the business environment remained for a long time in a stable condition and it is only in recent decades it has become subject to change. The internationalization of markets,

technological developments, changing audience tastes, increased competition from firms in a sector of economic instability. In fact, the environment is not an abstract concept, not a static object. It is characterized by many changes that may arise at an accelerated pace, which creates the multifaceted environment (Emery and Trist, 1965; Stoffels, 1982; Yasai - Ardekabi and Nystrom, 1996). Thus, many studies on the relationship between the environment, strategy and performance (Porter, 1982; Mintzberg, 1994; Pearson, 1986; Bracker et al., 1988; Luthans and Stewart, 1977) show several states of environment: stable uncertain, hostile, turbulent, continuous, discontinuous... These statements are often confused in the literature and they can be grouped into four categories: complexity, uncertainty, dynamism and turbulence (Gueguen, 2002).

These factors lead to the following hypothesis:

H 3: The adoption of strategic management depends on the nature of the environment

H 3.1: Complex environments tend to use strategic management

H 3.2: Dynamic environments tend to resort to strategic management

H 3.3: Uncertain environments tend to use strategic management

H 3.4: Turbulent environments tend to use strategic management

4. Methodological framework

To empirically test the hypotheses presented above, it is important to pay attention to the choice of the population, sample, data collection, and the operationalization of the concepts used.

4.1. Sample of research

To test the research hypotheses, a quantitative data collection was conducted among a representative¹ sample of 276 Tunisian companies involved in the upgrade. The sample is stratified by industry (Table 1). The choice of this population is motivated by four reasons. First, Tunisian companies involved in the program upgrade (PMN) should correspond to the required profile for the program which requires any company wishing to participate, to formulate strategies. Second, these companies belong to different sectors where the states of the environments are different, allowing to understand various aspects of such environments. Third, the population covered by our research is easily identifiable because of the originality of the concept of strategy in at least the majority of Tunisian companies, and the lack of research examining the practices of Tunisian companies in the formulation of strategy. Fourth, the study of the strategic process, and the factors influencing its evaluation, is a particularly sensitive issue for businesses.

Table 1: Research sample²

	AFI	VI	MEI	TCI	Total
Population	300	329	326	1143	2098
(SME) ³	n ₁	n ₂	n ₃	n ₄	N
Percentage n _i / N	14,30%	15,68%	15,53%	54,48%	100%
Sample	40	43	43	150	276
(n / N = 13,16 %)	n ₁	n ₄	n ₆	n ₇	n
Percentage n _i / n	14,49%	15,60%	15,60%	54,35%	100%

The abbreviations in the table are as follows:

AFI : Agro-Food Industry

VI : Varied Industry

MEI : Mechanical Industry

TCI : Textile and Clothing Industry

4.2. Methods and techniques of data collection

¹ We applied the law of Bernoulli $n = (1.96)^2 \times N / (1.96)^2 + L^2 \times (N-1)$ with $L=10\%$

² Because of the absolute refusal or incomplete or unsuccessful promises of questionnaires, we excluded from the sample companies from the following sectors: Leather and Footwear Industry (LFI), Chemical Industry (CHI), and Materials Construction Ceramics and Glass Industry (MCCGI).

³ According to the classification adopted by the PMN, the SME is a company with a total investment of less than 3 million TD

The model of this research, and the hypotheses developed to test the relations were empirically tested in a survey research, a pre-test questionnaire was performed to validate its content. Following the suggestions and comments received from participants, we were asked to make changes and adjustments. The final questionnaire contained 22 questions. It was addressed to directors of companies.

4.3. Measurement of variables

4.3.1. Measurement of strategic management

With reference to the definition of strategic management that was adopted in this research, two key variables were used that constituted its essence: the existence of strategy and strategic thinking shared between individuals of non-equivalent hierarchical status.

Based on this classification, we asked respondents to indicate the existence of an overall strategy and functional strategies in 4 terms [Yes (written) Yes (unwritten), No, No (but planned)]. In the case of the existence of a comprehensive strategy, respondents were asked to specify the nature of the actors by category (functional managers, executives, middle managers, administrative staff, workers, external experts) in relation to the three dimensions of participation (information, consultation, initiation). The nature of the elements of interest is specified in the questions.

4.3.2. Measurement skills of the entrepreneur

To measure the skills of the entrepreneur, we relied on the conceptual framework of Bayad et al (2006). Table 2 presents skills of the entrepreneur for each class, as well as the corresponding assertions of measurement indicators. With respect to these statements, respondents had to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The codings on the proposals were: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somehow Agree, (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly Disagree (see table 2).

Table 2: Measurement skills of the entrepreneur

Dimensions	Indicators to measure	Measurement items
	Ability to manage operations	I am currently very happy with my ability to manage operations in my business
	Ability of financial management	I am qualified to manage the financial operations of my business
Technical and management skills sector	Ability of human resource management	I am adept at managing human resources of my company
	Ability of a marketing and sales management	I am qualified to manage business operations and marketing of my business
	Ability to manage laws and government regulations	I am qualified to manage the laws and government regulations
	Ability to develop a business strategies	I am adept at developing a strategy for my business
	Ability to coordinate and organize the activities of the business	I see myself as a person with the ability to coordinate and organize the activities of my company
Managerial skills	Ability to lead staff	I am currently very happy with my ability to lead the staff of my company
	Ability to solve problems	I always manage to solve the problems in my business
	Ability to control the activities of the company	I see myself as a person with the ability to control the activities of my company
	Ability to negotiate	I have a talent for negotiation
Entrepreneurial skills	Ability to identify business opportunities	I admit it is very difficult for me to identify business opportunities
	Ability to develop a business vision	I am able to give me a clear vision of my business

	Ability to create and manage its business network	I am always ready to create and manage my business network
	Ability to manage work	I always get to manage my work

4.3.3. Measurement of organizational structure

To assess the structural attributes, we relied heavily on the empirical work of Brisson (1992), Kalika (1988, 1995), Desreumaux (1992), Chandler (1989) and Mintzberg (1982) devoted to business structures. We asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The coding on the proposals is as follows: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somehow Agree, (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly Disagree (see tables 3, 4 and 5).

Table 3: Measurement of formalization

Structural variables	Indicators to measure	Measurement items
Formalization	Existence of the use of written procedures	In our company, there is a job description for all positions held
	Importance of the use of written procedures	- In our company, most of the time employees can do pretty much what they like - In our company, employees have a lot of freedom in the choice of working methods to use

Table 4: Measurement Standardization

Structural Variables	Indicators to measure	Measurement items
Standardization	Existence of rules and procedures in the company	- In our company, there are formal channels of communication to disseminate information - In our business, no matter when a problem occurs, employees are always assumed to refer to the same people for a response - In our company, there is a manual of policies and procedures
	Importance of rules and procedures in the company	- In our company, leaders constantly insist on the use of procedures and rules to ensure the work - In our company, employees are under constant surveillance to verify compliance with policies, procedures and / or regulations - In our business, regardless of the situations where a problem arises, employees should refer to a policy or procedure for solutions

Table 5: Measure of centralization

Structural Variables	Indicators to measure	Measurement items
	Degree of sharing of power between management and unit managers	- In our company, all decisions to be taken by responsible units, must obtain final approval of management

Centralization	Extent of flexibility of hierarchical levels in each of the business units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In our company, subordinates are only decisions that affect their duties - In our business, if a subject wanted to take his decision alone, it would be quickly called to order - In our business, when a work situation has minor problems, it is impossible for subordinates to take action without permission of their superiors
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4.3.4. Measuring the nature of the environment

To measure the four dimensions of the environment, we relied on the conceptual framework of Gueguen (2001). Table 6 shows for each dimension, as well as the corresponding assertions measurement indicators. With respect to these statements, respondents had to indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The coding on the proposals is as follows: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somehow Agree, (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly Disagree. The items used to measure the complexity, uncertainty; dynamism and turbulence are presented successively in Table 6.

Table 6: Indicators to measure the dimensions of the environment

Dimensions of the environment	Indicators to measure	Measurement items
Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiplicity of Environmental factors - Heterogeneity of environmental factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The external environment of our business is difficult to include 2. Our business is related to many other companies for the production and distribution of its products 3. It is not always easy to identify the origin of a change in the environment of our business 4. Our company produces various goods and services 5. The expertise of our company can be formalized 6. The environment of our business is complex
Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of information from the environment - Lack of knowledge about the outcome of a decision - The ability to give a probability of occurrence of events for a given factor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Our company does not always have the right information to make a decision 8. Our company has the ability to predict the behavior of environmental actors 9. Our company has the ability to predict the result of the actions of environmental actors 10. Our company has struggled to find the best response to changing environmental actors 11. Our company often incorrect in its forecasts on environmental actors 12. The environment of our business is uncertain
Dynamism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of change - Power change - Speed of change 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. New competitors in our industry often appears 14. The life cycle of the products or services of our company often changes 15. The knowledge required to operate our business often evolves 16. Our company frequently changes its marketing practices 17. Our company uses a technology or know-how that is changing very often 18. The environment of our business is dynamic

Turbulence	- The speed of change in the speed corresponding to the sequence of changes	19. The sales volume of our business fluctuates greatly from year to year
	- The unpredictability of the change relating to the impossibility of predicting changes	20. Changes in our business environment can be threatening
	- Renewal of the corresponding change in the probability of a single change	21. Changes in our business environment occur at short intervals
	- The significance of the change relating to the importance of the impact of change	22. Changes in the environment of our company are sometimes new
		23. Changes in our business environment is unpredictable
		24. The environment of our company is turbulent

5. Presentation of results of the preparatory phase

Before discussing the results of the preparatory work of the database, we will conduct a cluster analysis to classify the firms in our sample according to the degree of adoption of strategic management. In a second step, we will discuss the results of the validation phase of our measuring instruments. Thus, we present the results of the analysis in two stages (exploratory and confirmatory), performed in SPSS 18.0 and AMOS 8.0 software. The first exploratory is without a priori specification of the relationship between latent variables and their indicators, in order to test a predetermined structure. These analyses will test the psychometric properties of the scales related variables in our research model.

5.1. Cluster analysis

To measure the degree of adoption of strategic management by the companies surveyed, we conducted a hierarchical cluster analysis using the method "Two-Step Cluster SPSS 18.0. We used the likelihood distance and the optimization criterion BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) as criteria groupings. The results identified two classes which characteristics are shown in Table 7. Class 1 named "strong adoption of strategic management" is the largest (170 companies) representing 61.6 % of the sample. The other one named the "low adoption of strategic management" class 2 is smaller (106 companies) which represents 38.4% of the sample. These two classes are distinguished by 10 criteria in order of importance.

Table 7: Results of the cluster analysis method "Two-Step Cluster"

Criteria in order of importance	Class 1 (n= 170)	Class 2 (n= 106)
1. Existence of financial strategy	100%	77,4%
2. Participation middle managers	100%	15,3%
3. Participation executives	31,2%	100%
4. Form of involvement of senior Consultation / Introduction	18,2%	84%
5. Form of participation of middle managers Consultation	73,6%	12,8%
6. Availability of personnel strategy	100%	36,8%
7. Existence of business strategy	100%	36,8%
8. Form of participation of middle managers Information	26,4%	87,2%
9. Existence of production strategy	100%	22,6%
10. Existence of supply strategy	31,2%	61,3%

In Class 1, all companies have strategies (financial, personal, business, and production) and only 31.2% of companies have procurement strategy. The formulation of strategies that senior managers use existed in 31.2% of companies, and middle managers for all businesses. These companies are therefore using more middle managers than executives. Participation was higher for 18.2% of business executives who focus on both the consultation and initiation. While the participation of middle managers on consultation was of 73.6 % of the companies, and the information for 26.4 % of companies. They are therefore opened to the integration of middle managers in strategy formulation. These are associated with strategic choices, being consulted. Their role is not limited to providing their superiors the information needed to design strategies .

In Class 2, the companies have strategies in different proportions (77.4% for the financial strategy, 61.3 % for the procurement strategy, 36.8 % for the personnel strategy, 36.8% business strategy, and 22.6% for the production strategy. This shows the lack of strategies for most of these companies. Formulation of strategies is used for all senior business executives, middle managers and 15 3% of companies. These companies therefore use the upper and intermediate frames. Participation executives for 84 % of companies focus on both the consultation and initiation. While the participation of middle managers on consultation for 12.8 % of the companies, and the information for 87.2 % of the companies. In these companies, the strategy is primarily a senior with a low willingness to involve middle managers. Indeed, executives have their sayings in the strategic choices, while middle managers play primarily as a source of information, and they are less consulted in the formulation of strategies.

5.2. Test and reliability of the measurement model

Validation of measuring instruments includes studying the dimensionality of scales and the mobilized internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity.

A / Exploratory Factor Analysis

Examination of the dimensionality of the scales is performed by an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) carried out in SPSS 18.0 software. It is performed on the final sample of research (276 companies). The reliability of the scales, which is to study their internal consistency, was assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Rho Jöreskog.

Table 8 summarizes the results obtained following the procedures to purify our scales. Only seven scales measuring technical and management skills in the sector, entrepreneurial skills, complexity, dynamism, turbulence, formalization, and centralization proved to be sufficiently homogeneous to match our initial wishes. However, the three scales measuring managerial skills, uncertainty, and standardization have been eliminations two items each.

Table 8: Summary of results for the validation of scales

Symbol	Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha	Rh� de J�reskog
COMPTGS	technical skills management and industry	5	0,903	0,923
COMPMAN	managerial skills	6 ; (4)	0,683 ; 0,863	0,857
COMPENT	entrepreneurial skills	4	0,908	0,927
SOFORMA	formalization	3	0,862	0,897
SOSTAND	standardization	6 ; (4)	0,673 ; 0,845	0,859
SOCENTR	centralization	4	0,916	0,928
EVTCOMP	complexity	6	0,900	0,905
EVTINCT	uncertainty	6 ; (4)	0,880 ; 0,901	0,911
EVTDYNA	dynamism	6	0,901	0,914
EVTTURB	turbulence	6	0,899	0,936

B / Confirmatory factor analysis

Thus, examination of the dimensionality of the scales is also done by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which has been dealt with through AMOS 8.0 software. It is made from 170 companies that highly adopt strategic management. The criteria for convergent and discriminant validity are applied to mobilized scales.

The results show that for each construct, all absolute index, incremental and parsimony meet the standards of good fit and show an acceptable fit of the model (Table 9).

Table 9: Fit indices of the measurement model constructed on mobilized

	χ^2/ddl	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	χ^2/df
COMPTGS	2,87	0,95	0,89	0,039	0,062	0,97	0,98	0,708
COMPMAN	2,24	0,97	0,93	0,038	0,073	0,97	0,99	0,608
COMPENT	2,17	0,99	0,98	0,049	0,024	0,99	0,99	0,763
SOFORMA	2,74	0,98	0,97	0,011	0,078	0,98	0,98	0,745

SOSTAND	3,41	0,95	0,93	0,012	0,082	0,96	0,97	0,607
SOCENTR	3,71	0,96	0,91	0,019	0,088	0,97	0,98	0,766
EVTCOMP	2,52	0,98	0,95	0,050	0,074	0,96	0,98	0,619
EVTINCT	2,51	0,95	0,90	0,048	0,064	0,89	0,92	0,726
EVTDYNA	2,26	0,97	0,96	0,041	0,030	0,97	0,98	0,644
EVTTURB	2,58	0,97	0,92	0,052	0,076	0,96	0,97	0,711
Thresholds (Roussel et al, 2002)								
	<2 see <5	>0.9	>0.8	→ 0	<0.08	>0.9	>0.9	>0.5

C / Discriminant validity

The study of discriminant validity is the last stage of testing validity and reliability of measurement instruments. The result of comparison between the two models is summarized in Table 10. The difference test of chi-square is significant. Indeed, the difference between the two values is NMIC 931.741 for a difference of degree of freedom of 91. This difference is significant according to the table of Chi-square test. Also, it was noticed that the fit of the model (Mu) is significantly better than the model (Mc). We conclude that the discriminant validity of the different latent variables included in the overall model is established.

Table 10: Difference test of Chi-square for discriminant validity

Unconstrained model (Mu)		
$\chi^2 = 2197,508$	ddl = 1339	RMSEA = 0,048
Constrained model (Mc)		
$\chi^2 = 3129,249$	ddl = 1430	RMSEA = 0,065
Comparison Mc-Mu		
$\Delta\chi^2 = 931,741$	$\Delta\text{ddl} = 91$	P < 0,001

The internal construct validity (convergent and discriminant) and reliability have been established, it is possible to approach the test of the research model (Roussel et al, 2002) .

6. Presentation, interpretation and discussion of the survey results

We present the results of testing the fit of our conceptual assumptions and different research model using structural equation methods. In this explanatory analysis, strategic management is chosen as the dependent variable, with the independent variables of the skills of the entrepreneur, organizational structure, and the nature of the environment. This analysis is performed on the group of companies that highly adopt strategic management (170 companies).

6.1. Adjustment of the structural model

Analysis of adjustment shown in Table 11 shows that the structural index model fits very well with the empirical data. Furthermore, the model explains a significant part of the variance of most endogenous variables (Table 11). This share even reaches 84% for the centralization dimension, and above 70% for the rest of the variables in the model. This allows accepting the model in its initial specification and we turn to the interpretation of the estimated parameters to check its consistency with the assumptions of the research.

Table 11: Adjustment of the structural model

Proportion of variance explained								
COMPTGS	70%	EVTCOMP	71%	EVTTURB	70%	SOCENTR	84%	
COMPAN	76%	EVTINCT	80%	SOFORMA	83%			
COMPENT	82%	EVTDYNA	71%	SOSTAND	72%			
Fit indices								
χ^2	ddl	χ^2/ddl	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	CFI
88			0,98	0,83	0,068	0,059	0,89	0,91

Thresholds								
-	-	<2 voir <5	>0,9	>0,8	→ 0	<0,08	>0,9	>0,9

6.2. Test assumptions and Discussion

6.2.1. The direct effect of the skills of the entrepreneur on the adoption of strategic management (H1):

The results of the causal analysis shows that H1 is partially confirmed since two of the three sub-hypotheses are confirmed. Indeed, managerial skills have a significant direct effect (5%) that is positive and strong on the adoption of strategic management. Similarly, entrepreneurial skills have a direct positive significant effect (5%), but less strong on the adoption of strategic management. However, the effect of technical and management skills in the sector in the adoption of strategic management is not significant. The standardized regression coefficients and confidence intervals at 95% and level of significance are reported in Table 12 .

Table 12: Testing the direct effect of the skills of the entrepreneur on the adoption of strategic management

			standardized coefficient	S.E	C.R	P	significance
MS	←	COMPTGS	0,034	0,097	0,347	0,729	NS
MS	←	COMPAN	0,900	0,165	8,979	0,001	S
MS	←	COMPENT	0,329	0,048	4,167	0,002	S

Examination of the results generated from the regression on the variable "technical and management skills sector" shows that the causal relationship from "technical management skills and industry "to" strategic management" is estimated at 0,034, with a Student's t below 1.96 (CR = 0.347), and the probability of error in admitting H1.1 72.9% (p = 0.729). This threshold is much higher than 5%; therefore the hypothesis H1.1 is rejected. Thus, the explanatory variable "technical management skills and industry" has no significant effect on the dependent variable "strategic management.

Hypothesis testing for the variable "management skills" shows that the causal relationship from the "management skills "to" strategic management " is estimated at 0.900 with a T greater than 1.96 Student (CR = 8.979) and the probability of error in admitting H1.2 is below 5 % (p = 0.001). H1.2 The hypothesis is accepted and the explanatory variable "management skills "has a strong positive effect on the dependent variable "strategic management." As expected, the greater the entrepreneur controls the managerial skills; the greater will be the use of strategic management.

Hypothesis testing for the variable " entrepreneurial skills " shows that the causal relationship from the " entrepreneurial skills " to " strategic management " is estimated at 0,329 , with a T greater than 1.96 Student (CR = 4.167) and the probability of error in admitting H1.3 is below 5 % (p = 0.002). H1.3 The hypothesis is accepted and the explanatory variable "entrepreneurial skills "has a strong positive effect on the dependent variable "strategic management." As expected, the more control the entrepreneur has on entrepreneurial skills, the more it adopts strategic management.

Table 13 presents the results of the validation of the research hypotheses related to the relationship between strategic management and technical skills and management of the sector, managerial skills, and entrepreneurial skills.

Table 13: Validation of assumptions about the skills of the entrepreneur

Hypothesis	Wording	Result
Skills of the entrepreneur		
H 1	The adoption of strategic management depends on the skills of the entrepreneur	Partially confirmed
H 1.1	Over the entrepreneur mastery of technical and management skills in the sector, there will be more likely to use the strategic management	Reversed
H 1.2	Over the entrepreneur control managerial skills, there will be more likely to use the strategic management	Confirmed
H 1.3	Over the entrepreneur entrepreneurial management skills, there will be more likely to use the strategic management	Confirmed

These results could be explained by the fact that the professional and technical experience of the entrepreneur dictate the priorities and the allocation of tasks and determine their level of involvement in various tasks related to the management and operation of the business, except tasks structuring strategic direction of the company. Indeed, technical and management skills in the sector that has the entrepreneur solve operational issues, practical and often complex in nature, related to the design, realization and implementation of products without permit the design of solutions to the problems of conducting its business in the long term. Many authors share this explanation (Bayad et al, 2006; Chandler and Jansen, 1992; Gravel et al, 2003). Indeed, by definition, technical skills involve interventions particularly involving methods, procedures, processes or techniques. They serve to prevent, identify or solve operational problems within the business, including the broad determinants and specific procedures related to the implementation and operation of the business (Gravel et al, 2003). Bayad et al (2006) explains that because of the multiplicity of business activities of the entrepreneur, technical and management skills in the sector are not sufficient to ensure business continuity. In other words, they attach technical and management skills of the entrepreneur sector in the current issue of the operation of the business and not on development issues and survival. Chandler and Jansen (1992) share the same opinion considering that the job of the entrepreneur is composed of several types of activities that depend on the technological, social and legal framework of the developed project and business life. So, to do his job, the entrepreneur must mobilize its expertise between its various functions. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills are needed to determine the strategy of the business and technical skills are required to lead its implementation.

6.2.2. The direct effect of organizational structure on the adoption of strategic management (H2):

The results of the causal analysis show that H2 is rejected as the three sub-hypotheses were overturned. Indeed, formalization and standardization or centralization, had no significant effect on the adoption of strategic management. The standardized regression coefficients and confidence intervals at 95% and level of significance are reported in Table 14.

Table 14: Testing the direct effect of organizational structure on the adoption of strategic management

			Standardized coefficient	S.E	C.R	P	Significance
MS	←	SOFORMA	-0,013	0,030	-0,429	0,668	NS
MS	←	SOSTAND	-0,069	0,070	-0,992	0,321	NS
MS	←	SOCENTR	-0,148	0,062	-0,867	0,081	NS

Examination of the results generated from the regression on the "formalization" variable indicates that the causal relationship from the "formalization" to "strategic management" is estimated at -0.013 with a t -statistic below 1.96 (CR = -0.429), with the probability of error in admitting H2.1 was 66.8% (p = 0.668). This threshold is much higher than 5%; therefore the hypothesis H2.1 is rejected. Thus, the explanatory variable "formalization" has no significant effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Examination of the results generated from the regression on the "standardization" variable indicates that the causal relationship from the "standardization" to "strategic management" is estimated at -0.069 with a t less than 1.96 Student (CR = -0.992), and the probability of error in admitting H2.2 was 32.1% (p = 0.321). This threshold is much higher than 5%; therefore the hypothesis H2.2 is rejected. Thus, the explanatory variable "standardization" has no significant effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Hypothesis testing for the variable "centralization" shows that the causal relationship from the "centralization" to "strategic management" is estimated at -0.148 with a t -statistic well below 1.96 (CR = -0.867), and the probability of error in admitting H2.3 was 8.1% (p = 0.081). This threshold is higher than 5%; therefore the hypothesis H2.3 is rejected. Thus, the explanatory variable "centralization" has no significant effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Table 15 presents the results of the validation of the research hypotheses related to the relationship between strategic management and formalization, standardization, and centralization.

Table 15: Validation of assumptions about the organizational structure

Hypotheses	Wording	Result
Organizational Structure		
H 2	The adoption of strategic management depends on the organizational structure	Rejected
H 2.1	Highly formalized organizational structure result in less use of strategic management	Rejected
H 2.2	Highly standardized organizational structures result in less use of strategic management	Rejected
H 2.3	Highly centralized organizational structures result in less use of strategic management	Rejected

These results are not expected and deserve special attention because they are opposed to the direction in which the "structure follows strategy" is to say that the structure is the framework within which the strategy takes shape. Instead, the structure has no effect on the process of strategic decision. This is in contrast to the great authors who have shown that management decision-making processes are dependent on the organizational structure (Cohen et al, 1972, Galbraith, 1973, 1977, Mintzberg, 1979 Nutt, 2000). The strategies are the result of decisions. The process of strategic decisions takes place in the context of existing structures. These have an influence on the perception of problems, information and development of alternatives. They limit the freedom of action and the implementation of decisions. Many authors have attempted to cross the structural variables with the decision process; they have established that certain characteristics of strategic decision-making are concomitant with certain structures. For example, Shrivastava and Grant (1985) concluded that: entrepreneurial firms are more likely to have an autocratic model of managerial decision making, functional companies often use a model of adaptive planning, divisionalized firms are more likely to make use of systemic bureaucratic model and the adaptive planning and finally, use the conglomerates, in identical proportions, opportunistic political model, systemic bureaucratic model, and the model of adaptive planning.

6.2.3. The direct effect of the nature of the environment on the adoption of strategic management (H3):

The results of the causal analysis shows that H3 is confirmed as the four sub-hypotheses are all confirmed. Indeed, turbulence and complexity have a significant direct effect (5%), positive and strong on the adoption of strategic management. Similarly, uncertainty and dynamism have a direct positive significant effect (5%), but less strong on the adoption of strategic management. The standardized regression coefficients and confidence intervals at 95% and level of significance are reported in Table 16.

Table 16: Testing the direct effect of the nature of the environment on the adoption of strategic management

			Standardized coefficient	S.E	C.R	P	Significance
MS	←	EVTCOMP	0,974	0,071	13,677	0,001	S
MS	←	EVTDYNA	0,880	0,135	6,503	0,001	S
MS	←	EVTINCT	0,938	0,122	7,677	0,001	S
MS	←	EVTTURB	0,998	0,069	14,524	0,001	S

Hypothesis testing for the variable "complexity" shows that the causal relationship from the "complexity" to "strategic management" is estimated at 0,974, with a Student's t much higher than 1.96 (CR = 13,677) and the probability of error in admitting H3.1 was below 5% (p = 0.001). H3.1 The hypothesis is accepted and the explanatory variable "complexity" has a strong positive effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Hypothesis testing for the variable "dynamism" shows that the causal relationship from the "uncertainty " to " strategic management " is estimated at 0,880 , with a T greater than 1.96 Student (CR = 6.503) and the probability of error in admitting H3.2 was less than 5 % (p = 0.001). H3.2 The hypothesis is accepted and the explanatory variable "dynamism" has a strong positive effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Hypothesis testing for the variable "uncertainty" shows that the causal relationship from the "dynamism " to " strategic management " is estimated at 0.938 with T greater than 1.96 (CR = 7.677) Student, and the probability of error in admitting H3.3 was less than 5 % (p = 0.001). H3.3 The hypothesis is accepted and the explanatory variable "uncertainty" has a strong positive effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Hypothesis testing for the variable "turbulence" shows that the causal relationship from the " turbulence " to " strategic management " is estimated at 0,998 , with a Student's t much higher than 1.96 (CR = 14,524) and the probability of error in admitting H3.4 was less than 5 % (p = 0.001). H3.4 The hypothesis is accepted and the explanatory variable "turbulence" has a strong positive effect on the dependent variable "strategic management."

Table 17 presents the results of the validation of the research hypotheses related to the relationship between strategic management and the complexity, uncertainty, dynamism and turbulence.

Table17: Validation of assumptions about the nature of the environment

Hypotheses	Wording	Result
Nature of the environment		
H 3	The adoption of strategic management depends on the nature of the environment	Confirmed
H 3.1	Complex environments tend to use strategic management	Confirmed
H 3.2	Dynamic environments tend to resort to strategic management	Confirmed
H 3.3	Uncertain environments tend to use strategic management	Confirmed
H 3.4	Turbulent environments tend to use strategic management	Confirmed

These results are not surprising in that they confirm all what was reported in literature, considering the strategic business processes as determined by its external environment (Dean and Sharfman , 1996; Keck, 1997, Papadakis et al 1998; Burgelman , 1991; Noda and Bower , 1996; Hart and Banbury , 1994). Thus, Papadakis et al (1990) suggest that in the turmoil, the company has more interest in adopting the strategic management if it was in a stable environment. Strategic management can cope with different problems of adaptability for activities located in areas of uncertainty or turbulence. In the same vein, Lant et al (1992) showed how strategic planning is related to the business environment. Indeed, in the face of turbulent environments, managers do not know if they should persist in their initial strategic direction or change. These guidelines are the product of a dominant strategic planning in the company. Moreover, if there is change, the future environment is new and more uncertain. However structural, political or psychological pressures will make the leaders persist in past strategies. Therefore, leaders continue to adopt strategic planning. In the same vein, Barringer and Bluedorn (1999), based on empirical results demonstrate the influence of the nature of the environment in the process of formulating a strategic decision. They believe that the outcome of the strategic planning single leader or a process of ' top - down' is a futile exercise in a stable environment, while the strategic planning process that results from a rather "bottom -up " reveals a better approach in turbulent environments .

Reviewing what was reported in the literature confirms the importance of environmental variables in determining the process of strategy formulation. Our results also support that strategic management is needed in situations of complexity, uncertainty, dynamic and turbulent environments. Therefore, we certify that the complexity, uncertainty, dynamism and turbulence of the environment will lead companies to opt for the adoption of strategic management.

7. Conclusion

Nearly 70 years after the emergence of strategic management in American firms, the purpose of this paper is to examine the factors that explain its adoption in Tunisia in SMEs involved in the program upgrade. The literature suggests three main factors namely the skills of the entrepreneur, organizational structure, and the nature of the environment. Therefore, we considered a quantitative survey by questionnaire among a representative sample of 276 Tunisian companies involved in the upgrade. After isolated 170 companies that adopt strong strategic management, our first result shows that the skills of the entrepreneur and the nature of the environment are directly and positively related to the adoption of strategic management. On the one hand, more managerial and entrepreneurial skills of the entrepreneur are stronger; the degree of adoption of strategic management is strong. On the other hand, the environment is more complex, uncertain, dynamic and turbulent, the greater the degree of adoption of strategic management is strong. This does not hold true, however, for the organizational structure. The second result shows no significantly valid relationship between strategic management and organizational structure. Thus, these results confirm and extend the existing empirical knowledge concerning relations considered.

Moreover, these results provide some avenues of research towards a better understanding of the adoption of strategic management. The first line of research is to enrich our validation by integrating other causal variables, including the value of the entrepreneur who, according to several researchers, determine the behavior and development of the company (Bamberger, 1985, Miller and al, 1982, 1986, Gupta, 1984; Marchesnay et al, 1992). The second line of research is considering re-test our model in different contexts, to check whether our results can be generalized or not. Thus, the use of research as a field of international companies operating in Tunisia or public agencies or foreign companies, would conclude on the generalizability of our results. The third line of research is a comparative approach between firms that adopt strategic management and those that do not. This approach would deepen the understanding of the adoption of the practice of strategic management, and to identify other explanatory factors. The fourth line of research concerns the participatory approach in the formulation of the strategy. Indeed, the validated model does not specify the process or processes adopted by companies for the participation of hierarchical levels in the formulation of corporate strategy. Issues such as the skills of participants, number of participants, the selection of participants, the conditions of participation can be of value.

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