

Organizational Constructs Influencing SME Performance: The Mediating Role of Supply Chain Resilience

Constructos organizacionais que influenciam o desempenho das PMEs: o papel mediador da resiliência da cadeia de suprimentos

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Resumo

Este estudo investiga os principais fatores organizacionais que influenciam o desempenho de pequenas e médias empresas (PMEs) no Iraque, enfatizando o papel mediador da resiliência da cadeia de suprimentos. As PMEs são cruciais para o crescimento econômico, mas enfrentam restrições internas e externas significativas. Utilizando dados de pesquisa de 279 funcionários, supervisores e gerentes de 20 PMEs em cinco municípios iraquianos, o estudo aplica a análise SEM-PLS para examinar os efeitos da gestão de riscos, da gestão do conhecimento, da gestão de suporte e da cultura organizacional. Os resultados mostram que a resiliência da cadeia de suprimentos medeia as relações entre a gestão do conhecimento, a gestão de suporte, a cultura organizacional e o desempenho das PMEs. No entanto, a gestão de riscos não influencia significativamente a resiliência ou o desempenho da cadeia de suprimentos. As descobertas destacam a importância de fortalecer a resiliência da cadeia de suprimentos para melhorar o desempenho das PMEs em condições de incerteza e disrupção.

Palavras-chave: gestão de riscos, gestão do conhecimento, cultura organizacional, resiliência da cadeia de suprimentos, pequenas e médias empresas

Abstract

This study investigates key organizational factors influencing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Iraq, emphasizing the mediating role of supply chain resilience. SMEs are critical to economic growth but face significant internal and external constraints. Using survey data from 279 employees, supervisors, and managers across 20 SMEs in five Iraqi municipalities, the study applies SEM-PLS analysis to examine the effects of risk management, knowledge management, support management, and organizational culture. The results show that supply chain resilience mediates the relationships between knowledge management, support management, organizational culture, and SME performance. However, risk management does not significantly influence supply chain resilience or performance. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening supply chain resilience to enhance SME performance under conditions of uncertainty and disruption.

Keywords: risk management, knowledge management, organizational culture, supply chain resilience, small and medium enterprises

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Introduction

Micro and small businesses are a key to growing and diversifying the economy in Iraq's rapidly evolving, often unpredictable business climate. Despite their importance, Iraqi SMEs often face internal and external obstacles that hinder their performance and expansion. Risk management, knowledge management, organizational culture, and support management are effective management practices that help SME managers overcome these challenges and improve their performance (Anning-Dorson, 2021).

The objective of this research is to evaluate how critical management practices affect the Iraqi SMEs' performance, with a special focus on the mediating role of supply chain resilience SCR. Risk management (RM) refers to the tasks of identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that could impede business operations (Abbas, 2023). Knowledge management (KM) relates to the formal treatment of information and knowledge in a firm (Massoudi & Birdawod, 2023). Organizational culture (OC) comprises the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape life within an organization (Williams, 2022). Support management (SM) is the external assistance and resources available to SMEs from stakeholders outside the firm, including, but not limited to, professional service providers. In combination, these variables are believed to have played an important role in ensuring the resilience and survival of SMEs (Seyal et al, 2021; Fok et al, 2020). Thus, supply chain resilience is the ability of a supply chain to withstand, recover from, and adapt to unforeseen disruptions. (Ivanov, 2024). SCR is much needed in Iraqi SMEs, which lack sound political stability and economic prosperity and have many infrastructural issues.

This study aims to investigate thoroughly how these management practices influence SME performance in Iraq, with SCR as a mediator. This study will provide valuable insights for SME managers and decision-makers in the government and business sectors on building resilience into supply chains as part of overall improved business performance. This introduction provides a broader scope for an in-depth investigation into the significance of risk management, knowledge management, organizational culture, and support management practices in exploring factors that can contribute positively to resilient, capable, high-performance SMEs in Iraq.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Risk Management and Supply Chain Resilience

Related literature points to a close interdependence between RM and SCR, with the former instrumental in improving the latter (Manners-Bell, 2023). As discussed earlier, Abbas (2023) describes risk management as the systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and mitigating risks to business operations. By managing risks proactively, companies can anticipate and prepare for a range of challenges, including natural disasters, geopolitical uncertainty, market changes, and internal disruptions. The importance of effective risk management strategies, such as risk assessment, risk mitigation planning, and continuous monitoring, is underscored by the fact that they together provide a sound framework for developing SCR (Manners-Bell, 2023). By preparing for this, supply chains can remain functional and get back up

and running quickly when disruptions occur, reducing the impact on overall business performance.

On the other hand, sophisticated risk-control practices significantly affect SCR (El Baz & Ruel, 2021). SCR, according to Ivanov (2024), is defined by its ability to buffer shocks, adjust to variations, and rapidly recover operations after disruptions. Embedding risk management into their operations may help companies better adapt their supply chains. Risk management has also been found to significantly impact SCR, as reported by Al-Ayed & Al-Tit (2023) and El Baz & Ruel (2021). Finally, RM and SCR are intertwined in a way that serves as a protective barrier against disruptions individually while also offering a sustainable competitive advantage through stable, reliable service (Bø et al., 2023). Based on the above information, the researchers postulate the following hypothesis:

H1: Risk management has a positive effect on supply chain resilience.

Knowledge Management and Supply Chain Resilience

KM is a key contributor to improving SCR by enabling the effective capture, sharing, and utilization of organizational assets, such as experiences and knowledge (Jameel et al., 2022). Applied to SCR, KM enables organizations to develop a deep understanding of their supply chain operations, identify potential weak points, and develop plans to address them (Piprani et al., 2020). KM enables information exchange across different tiers of the supply chain, keeping all stakeholders informed and collaborative in anticipation of and in response to disruptions (Massoudi & Birdawod, 2023).

In addition, KM adds value to SCR by fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Previous research (Rana & Ha-Brookshire, 2023; Rana, 2022) suggests that KM positively affects SCR. A KM-focused organization will encourage its people to share knowledge and best practices across various perspectives on a solution or strategy; ultimately sparking innovative solutions or adaptive strategies. Therefore, KM allies with SCM practices to help organizations build resilience, enabling them to sustain and recover quickly from unexpected disruptions, preserving business continuity and competitive edge. Considering the above, we hypothesize that:

H2: Knowledge management positively affects supply chain resilience.

Organizational Culture and Supply Chain Resilience

OC plays an imperative role in SCR at the employee-staff level, as it fosters management's attitudes, behaviors, and practices towards risk preparedness and adaptability (Zanon et al., 2021). An OC that values collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness will positively influence overall supply chain resilience (Agha & Massoudi, 2021). Thoughts of proactive problem-solving and a growth-oriented mindset make employees more open to identifying potential disruptions early and developing practical solutions, thereby strengthening the resilience of its supply chain.

In addition, a culture of open communication and knowledge sharing within the organization is needed to harness the potential of SCR. Such a culture encourages employees from all departments and levels to speak up with information, problems, and

opportunities without fear of retaliation. A study by Chunsheng et al. (2020) found that SCR was enhanced by organizational culture. A culture that encourages cross-functional collaboration, also known as virtual teams or business integration, means embracing diverse perspectives and expertise, which can provide critical insight into cutting-edge supply chain strategies. Building an engaged workforce aligned with the organization's resilience objectives will foster more vibrant and agile supply chains that can absorb stressors from diverse sources of disruption. Based on the preceding, the authors suggested this hypothesis:

H3: Organizational culture positively impacts supply chain resilience.

Support management and Supply Chain Resilience

SM is also crucial for SCR, as it provides firms with the resources and infrastructure to manage disturbances (Mandal, 2021) adequately. This includes internal support from leaders, financing and training programs, and external help from suppliers, clients, and other stakeholders, including the government. Great support management lays an organizational and staffing foundation for not just ensuring, but also running supply chain operations during peak demand, while establishing a framework for emergency response. Moreover, effective support management fosters strong interactions and cooperation with external organizations, which are critical for SCR (Xu et al., 2024). Identifying reliable suppliers and logistical providers can be a make-or-break moment in the long run, which is why forming these partnerships involves a substantial human element. This network is important during disruptions because it enables timely coordination and resource sharing among interested parties, minimizing downtime and facilitating a more adaptable response (Ivanov, 2024). Partnerships with suppliers to develop better risk-sharing or alternative-sourcing options will continue in emerging markets. Local engagement with government agencies can also help connect people to emergency resources and boost the needed regulatory support. Integrating support management with resilience strategies enables organizations to anticipate shocks and disruptions more effectively, absorb them, and bounce back. Thus, maintaining operational stability and enabling a competitive edge in the marketplace. The authors then proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: Support management has a positive impact on supply chain resilience.

Supply Chain Resilience and SMEs Performance

For Iraqi SMEs, SCR is an essential performance factor operating in a realm afflicted by political upheaval, economic turbulence, and infrastructural decay (Massoudi & Fatah, 2021). Resilient supply chains enable these SMEs to absorb and recover from disruptions with minimal loss, resulting in business continuity and smooth operations (Wilujeng et al., 2021). Incorporating resilience into supply chains will allow Iraqi SMEs to produce and deliver goods on time even in the face of external shocks and enable them to build a loyal customer base that entrusts them with their business. Ongoing continuity is especially critical in Iraq, where interruptions may stem from multiple sources, including security challenges, supply shortages, and

regulatory shifts. SCR thus plays an important role in enhancing the general resilience and functionality of Iraqi SMEs by protecting them from unanticipated shocks and ensuring operational continuity (Alghababsheh, 2023).

In addition, Massoudi (2019) noted that SCR enhances the competitive edge of Iraqi SMEs by enabling them to be more agile and responsive. In an ever-changing business landscape, the ability to respond less swiftly to and bounce back from disruptions can distinguish resilient SMEs from their more prepared rivals. Resilient SMEs, for example, can change suppliers or logistical routes much more quickly when there is a disruption, thereby minimizing potential long-lead operational downtime (Brown et al., 2022). Such flexibility not only minimizes disruption from external events but also enables SMEs to capitalize on novel market opportunities arising from shifts in their environment. Moreover, smooth supply chains sustain strategic pursuits that SMEs can build on and scale (Iborra et al., 2020). Consequently, by focusing on SCR, Iraqi SMEs can enhance their performance and continue to progress, which will ultimately play an important role in the country's overall economic development. With the established literature, the author hypothesizes the following:

H5: SCR has a positive impact on Iraqi SMEs' performance.

Supply chain resilience as a mediator

SCR acts as an essential link between risk management, knowledge management, supportive management, organizational culture, and the performance of Iraqi SMEs. All such factors play a vital role in developing a resilient supply chain which improves SMEs performance. For instance, sound risk management enables SMEs to identify potential risks and prepare mitigation strategies beforehand, resulting in a resilient supply chain that can withstand disruptions. Knowledge management encompasses the dissemination of information and practices within the organization to support decision-making and enable rapid evolution when needed. Supportive management ensures that resilience strategies have the resources and support in place to enable the supply chain to absorb shocks and recover. An organizational culture with a strong foundation in collaboration, brainstorming, responsiveness, and innovation enhances the supply chain's resilience by creating more opportunities for proactive issue resolution and continuous improvement.

SCR acts as a mediator, transforming the capability of these organizations into functional performance values for Iraqi SMEs (Alghababsheh, 2023). Resilient supply chains can continue to drive productivity and customer service during periods of disruption (Tarigan et al., 2021). However, this resilience allows SMEs to adapt more successfully to vindictive nature, converting potentially threatening situations into challenges and growth opportunities. Previous studies (Zhao et al., 2023; Salam & Bajaba, 2023; Wilujeng et al., 2021) supported the mediating effect of SCR between intrapreneurial resilience and digitalization in SMEs. On the other hand, no study tested the mediation of SCR on risk, knowledge, support management, and organization culture combined. SCR may play an essential role in improving

performance for SMEs operating in Iraq. The authors built on the prior discussion and postulate the following hypothesis:

H6: Supply chain resilience mediates the relation between risk management, knowledge management, organizational culture, and support management with Iraqi SMEs' performance

Methodology

Data Collection and Sample

This study examines organizational constructs that influence SME performance in the Iraqi manufacturing sector. A quantitative investigation was employed in which researchers created a questionnaire to gather data. The analyses were based on data obtained from workers, supervisors, and managers in 20 SMEs located in 5 municipalities of Iraq. The population of the study comprises manufacturing firms across sectors, including but not limited to apparel, petroleum, plastics, and beverages.

A cover letter explaining the research's purposes was included with the survey and informed participants that their responses would remain anonymous. Three hundred questionnaires were randomly distributed and completed during person-to-person interactions and via WhatsApp. A total of 279 valid questionnaires were collected for data analysis. Considering that the respondents are Kurdish and Arabic, the authors translated the questionnaire into Kurdish and Arabic to ensure they understand the concepts correctly.

Measure

All questionnaire items were developed by the authors based on relevant prior studies related to the research area. In addition, they conducted in-depth interviews with managers at five firms to ensure the items were understandable and applicable to the Iraqi business context. They were then modified to fit the purpose of the study.

The survey comprises 25 items, including 5 for risk management, adapted from Gurtu & Johny (2021), and 4 for knowledge management, adapted from Massoudi & Birdawod (2023). Also, four items related to organizational culture, adapted and modified from Aldriweesh et al. (2022); 4 items for support management, adapted from Mandal (2021). 3 items of a resilient supply chain updated from Wilujeng et al. (2021). Lastly, five items on SMEs' performance were derived from Jadhav et al. (2023). In addition, the questionnaire included demographic variables such as age, gender, education, position, and job experience. These variables are illustrated in Table 1 below.

A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the questionnaire items. As a social science study, participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured to keep all information confidential. The study does not involve any human experimentation and therefore does not require ethical approval. Consequently, no ethical approval was necessary for this research. Table 1 illustrates the measurement model.

Table 1

Respondents Demographic Profiles

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	203	72.6
	Female	59	21.2
	Prefer not to say	17	6.3
	Total	279	100.0
Age	below 25 years	58	20.9
	26-30 years	74	26.4
	31-35 years	99	35.6
	36-40 years	22	7.9
	Above 40 years	26	9.2
	Total	279	100.0
Education	High School	55	19.8
	Bachelor Degree	169	60.4
	Master's Degree	29	10.3
	PhD	27	9.5
	Total	279	100.0
Job Type	Worker	111	39.7
	Supervisor	81	29.1
	Manager	43	15.5
	Senior management	44	15.8
	Total	279	100.0
Working Experience	Below 5 years	131	47.0
	5-10 years	148	53.0
	Total	279	100.0

Source: the authors.

Analysis and Discussion

Measurement model

According to Purwanto (2021), the assessment of outer loadings, internal reliability, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha is commonly used. According to Cheung et al. (2023), a previous study by Stevens (2002) suggested that a factor loading should exceed 0.4 to be interpretable. Conversely, Hair et al. (2021) argued that factor loadings should exceed 0.5, with a preferred threshold of 0.7 or higher. Table 2, which outlines reliability and validity measures, indicates that all items have loadings exceeding the threshold of 0.7. A value of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable for both measures if the outer loading values are significant (Baistaman et al., 2020). Table 2 displays reliability and validity metrics, demonstrating that all constructs demonstrate composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the threshold. This confirms that the data meets the reliability criteria and is suitable for further analysis.

In terms of validity, it encompasses two dimensions: convergent and discriminant validity (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022). Convergent validity is assessed using Average Variance Extracts (AVE), with a threshold value of 0.5 or higher considered acceptable. Table 2 illustrates reliability and validity metrics, indicating that all constructs have AVE values exceeding 0.5, thereby confirming convergent validity across all constructs.

Table 2

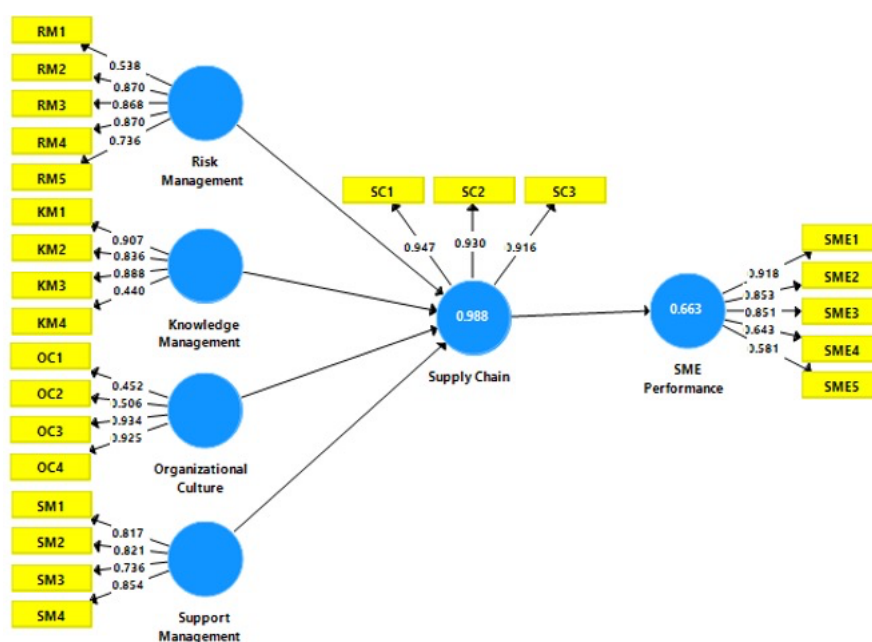
Reliability and Validity Metrics for Constructs

Construct	Code	Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Knowledge Management (KM)	KM1	0.907	0.769	0.863	0.626
	KM2	0.836			
	KM3	0.888			
	KM4	0.440			
Organizational Culture (OC)	OC1	0.452	0.738	0.814	0.547
	OC2	0.506			
	OC3	0.934			
	OC4	0.935			
Risk Management (RM)	RM1	0.538	0.845	0.888	0.620
	RM2	0.870			
	RM3	0.868			
	RM4	0.870			
SME Performance (SMEP)	RM5	0.736	0.837	0.883	0.609
	SMEP1	0.918			
	SMEP2	0.852			
	SMPE3	0.851			
	SMPE4	0.643			
Supply Chain Resilience (SCR)	SMPE5	0.581	0.923	0.951	0.867
	SCR1	0.947			
	SCR2	0.930			
	SCR3	0.916			
Support Management (SM)	SM1	0.817	0.849	0.883	0.654
	SM2	0.821			
	SM3	0.736			
	SM4	0.854			

Source: the authors.

Figure 1

Measurement Model



Source: the authors.

Result of Measurement Model

An additional method for assessing discriminant validity is the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). As noted by Cheung et al. (2023), discriminant validity between pairs of variables is effectively established if the correlation value is below 0.90. Table 3 presents the HTMT values for the latent constructs, all of which are below this threshold. By utilizing the HTMT approach, this study confirms that the examined constructs are distinct and exhibit minimal overlap.

Table 3

HTMT Ratio Matrix of Constructs

Construct	SCR	SME	RM	OC	KM	SM
SCR						
SME	0.702					
RM	0.251	0.429				
OC	0.667	0.930	0.521			
KM	0.604	0.801	0.445	0.801		
SM	0.859	0.619	0.310	0.640	0.720	

Source: the authors.

Structure Model

According to Sarstedt et al. (2021), the bootstrapping procedure is used to assess the significance of several PLS-SEM outcomes, including path coefficients and R^2 values. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was examined. R^2 measures the variance of endogenous variables explained by exogenous variables. Hair and Almar (2022) indicated that R^2 values below 0.19 should be rejected; values ranging from 0.19 to 0.33 are deemed weak; those from 0.33 to 0.67 are considered moderate; and those exceeding 0.67 are categorized as high. As indicated in Table 4, the R^2 value for the supply chain is 0.988, indicating that it accounts for 98.8% of the variance. Also, SME performance was valued at 0.663, indicating that it explains 66.3% of the variance. Consequently, R^2 is considered high in explaining the variance.

Subsequently, the Q^2 criterion is used to evaluate the predictive capability of the projected model. In Smart-PLS, the blindfolding step is used to calculate Q^2 . According to the guidelines of Hair and Alamer (2022), this criterion must have a value greater than zero. As shown in Table 4, the Q^2 values are 0.149 and 0.315, both of which exceed zero. Henceforth, this measure has been fulfilled without any reservations.

Table 4

Coefficient of determination

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q^2
Supply chain resilience	0.988	0.988	0.149
SME performance	0.663	0.662	0.315

Source: the authors.

Hypothesis Testing

SEM was used to test the hypotheses discussed above. The examination of the elements influencing the supply chain and SMEs' performance uncovers noteworthy discoveries. Based on Table 5 and Figure 2. The results indicated that risk management has an adverse effect on the supply chain, with a p-value of $0.339 > 0.05$ and a t-value of $0.956 < 1.96$. Thus, H₁ is rejected. Knowledge management has a positive effect on the supply chain, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a t-value of $7.476 > 1.96$. Thus, H₂ is supported. Organizational culture has a positive impact on the supply chain, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a t-value of $30.519 > 1.96$. Thus, H₃ is supported. Support management has a positive impact on the supply chain, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a t-value of $9.819 > 1.96$. Thus, H₄ is supported. Supply chain has a positive impact on SMEs' performance, with a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a t-value of $32.405 > 1.96$. Thus, H₅ is supported.

Table 5

Total Effect

Proposed Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Std. Dev	t Statistics	p Values	Results
Risk Management -> Supply Chain	-0.008	-0.008	0.009	0.956	0.339	H ₁ rejected
Knowledge Management -> Supply Chain	-0.487	-0.490	0.065	7.476	0.000	H ₂ supported
Organizational Culture -> Supply Chain	0.733	0.733	0.024	30.519	0.000	H ₃ supported
Support Management -> Supply Chain	0.701	0.703	0.071	9.819	0.000	H ₄ supported
Supply Chain -> SME Performance	0.814	0.817	0.025	32.405	0.000	H ₅ supported

Source: the authors.

Table 6

Indirect Effect

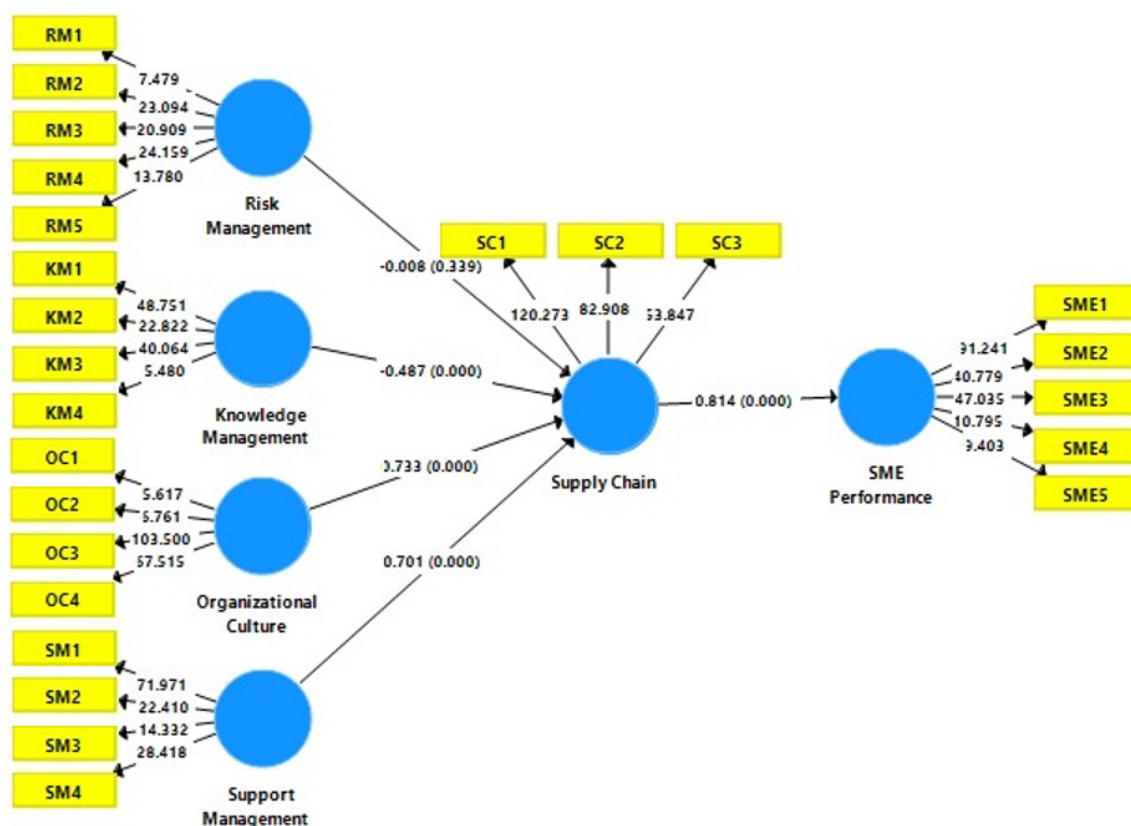
Proposed Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Std. Dev	t Statistics	p Values
Organizational Culture -> Supply Chain -> SME Performance	0.597	0.599	0.03	19.906	0.000
Support Management -> Supply Chain -> SME Performance	0.57	0.574	0.059	9.669	0.000
Knowledge Management -> Supply Chain -> SME Performance	-0.397	-0.4	0.055	7.272	0.000
Risk Management -> Supply Chain -> SME Performance	-0.007	-0.007	0.007	0.946	0.345

Source: the authors.

The result in Table 6 illustrates the mediation role of the supply chain between knowledge management, organizational culture, and support management with SMEs' performance in Iraq. The p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and t-values of $9.255 > 1.96$. Thus, H₆ is supported. The authors need to mention that SCR does not mediate the relation between risk management and SME performance.

Figure 2

Structural Model



Source: the authors.

Discussion

This study examines the relationships among RM, Km, OC, and SM and SMEs' performance in Iraq. Questionnaires were sent to SMEs across various areas of Iraq, and, using structural equation modeling to analyze the data in a prescriptive manner, the study reveals that risk management has an adverse effect on SCR. The negative result was due to challenges faced by Iraqis, including political instability, government corruption, weak governance, and ongoing political conflicts. Also, the presence of insurgent groups, terrorism, and ongoing military conflicts disrupts the supply chain infrastructure. Previous studies contradict this outcome, including Saglam et al. (2020) and Kumar & Anbanandam (2020), which show that SCR can be strengthened through effective risk management and that an effective method to improve SCR is to apply risk mitigation strategies.

This result showed that KM brought a positive impact on SCR. This result is consistent with that of Umar et al. (2021). There are several actors along the supply chains in Iraq, including local businesses, international suppliers, and government departments. This exchange of information enables various stakeholders to align their operations, minimize redundancies, and optimize supply chain functionality as a whole. Because this is where supply chains encounter notable uncertainty owing to political and security issues, gaining access to accurate data becomes key. It helps supply chain

managers make wise choices in procurement, logistics, and risk mitigation; as a result, its operations become smoother and more agile, thanks to KM.

The third result reveals that OC positively affects SCR. A culture that drives proactivity and adaptability is key to overcoming such obstacles, especially in a country like Iraq, where political instability, security challenges, and infrastructure issues derail supply chains time after time. A culture of resilience prompts these organizations and their employees to be proactive in preparing for an impending disruption, innovate to stay safe, and plan adaptable strategies that make the supply chain more resilient overall. This finding aligned with Chunsheng et al. (2020) and Whiteside & Dani (2020). The studies concluded that OC has an important influence on preserving SCR.

SM also has a positive and significant effect on SCR (the fourth outcome). The finding aligns with the outcome of Mandal (2021). In Iraq, where supply chains are frequently challenged by inadequate infrastructure and limited resources, effective support management ensures that available resources are used optimally. This strategic allocation helps organizations to quickly adapt to disruptions and maintain continuity in their supply chain operations.

The fifth result demonstrates that SCR positively affects SME performance. Several studies support this result, as Wilujengab et al. (2021), Juan et al. (2022), and Qader et al. (2022). In Iraq, where political instability and security issues are unavoidable alongside infrastructure challenges, resilient supply chains help SMEs avoid significant operational downtime that deters service delivery wherever it is needed, as well as continuous production. Furthermore, on-time delivery and product availability can significantly improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, which are essential for the growth and reputation of any SME.

Lastly, SCR is mediating the relationships among RM, KM, SM, OC, SME performance, and SME performance in Iraq. Faced with risks in Iraq, resilient supply chains enable SMEs to remain stable and maintain continuity, thereby translating risk management efforts into meaningful performance outcomes. In addition, by enabling SMEs to adapt to and respond to supply chain disruptions more quickly and effectively, knowledge management can optimize performance. Furthermore, proper support management ensures SMEs have the tools and infrastructure needed to weather disruptions, thereby improving performance. Finally, SMEs that have developed a strong organizational culture are able to endure and recover quickly from disruptions to their supply chains. These characteristics are exhibited in their supply chains, which is why SME success rests on these resilient supply chain traits to help navigate external volatility.

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusion

This paper aims to examine the organizational constructs influencing SME performance in Iraq with supply chain resilience as a mediator. The study concludes that effective risk management, efficient knowledge management practices, strong managerial support, and a positive organizational culture play a crucial role in

significantly improving SME performance. Furthermore, supply chain resilience serves as a key mediator, indicating that SMEs with robust supply chains are better equipped to harness management practices and cultural elements to enhance performance. The results emphasize the critical role of developing resilient supply chains to maximize the advantages of effective risk management, knowledge management, and support systems, while promoting a supportive organizational culture to thrive in challenging conditions.

Theoretical and practical Implications

The study combines theories of risk management, knowledge management, support management, and organizational culture to illustrate their combined influence on SME performance. It also emphasizes the critical role of supply chain resilience (SCR) as a mediator, contributing to the theoretical understanding of how resilience mechanisms can strengthen the impact of management practices. By examining SMEs in Iraq, the research provides valuable insights into the relevance and effectiveness of these management theories in a volatile and challenging context.

Practical Implications: SME owners and managers should adopt holistic risk management strategies to address uncertainties and improve overall performance. Implementing robust knowledge management systems is essential for effectively capturing, sharing, and utilizing knowledge to foster innovation and operational efficiency. Establishing strong support management frameworks, including stakeholder and internal system backing, is vital for driving SME growth. Additionally, fostering a positive organizational culture that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and resilience is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge. Lastly, SMEs should prioritize building resilient supply chains to mitigate disruptions and maximize the effectiveness of risk, knowledge, and support management practices.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study's focus on SMEs in Iraq may restrict the generalizability of its findings to SMEs in regions or countries with different economic and political conditions. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data from SMEs could introduce bias, as respondents' perceptions and attitudes may shape responses. The study also does not consider industry-specific factors that might differently impact SME performance across various sectors. Furthermore, other potentially significant factors, such as technological advancements, market dynamics, and regulatory environments, are not addressed in this research.

To enhance the generalizability of the findings and facilitate broader comparisons, future research could include SMEs from a more diverse set of countries and regions. Additionally, future research could examine the impact of these management practices across various industries to uncover sector-specific dynamics and best practices. Lastly, exploring targeted supply chain strategies and practices that enhance resilience and tailoring these approaches to the unique contexts of different SMEs would provide deeper insights.

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