

The Adoption of Strategic Orientation Dimensions in Startups: A Case Study of ‘Redjem Studio’ in Setif Province

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Laboratory Of Partnership and Investment in Small and Medium Enterprises in the Euro-Maghreb Space

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Received: 24-03-2026

Accepted: 09-05-2026

Published 08-06-2026

Abstract:

The study aimed to present the fundamental concepts of strategic orientation and startups, and to examine the reality of adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation within a startup.

The descriptive approach was adopted as the general methodology of the research. To achieve the objectives of the study, the startup “RedjemStudio” in Setif Province was selected as a case study. Data were collected through a direct personal interview conducted with the owner of the startup under study. The study concluded that the startup under investigation adopts the dimensions of strategic orientation, as evidenced by its possession of a clear vision, mission, objectives, and values that help strengthen its competitive advantage, despite the various challenges it faces while adopting these dimensions of strategic orientation.

Keywords: Strategic Orientation, Startups, Vision, Mission, Objectives, Values.

Résumé:

Cette étude vise à présenter les concepts fondamentaux de l’orientation stratégique et des startups, ainsi qu’à examiner la réalité de l’adoption des dimensions de l’orientation stratégique au sein d’une startup.

L’approche descriptive a été adoptée comme méthodologie générale de la recherche. Afin d’atteindre les objectifs de l’étude, la startup **RedjemStudio**, située dans la wilaya de Sétif, a été choisie comme étude de cas. Les données ont été collectées à travers un entretien personnel direct mené avec le propriétaire de la startup étudiée.

Les résultats de l’étude ont montré que la startup étudiée adopte les dimensions de l’orientation stratégique, ce qui se manifeste par l’existence d’une vision, d’une mission, d’objectifs et de valeurs clairement définis, contribuant au renforcement de son



avantage concurrentiel, malgré les différents défis auxquels elle est confrontée lors de l'adoption de ces dimensions de l'orientation stratégique.

Mots-clés : Orientation stratégique, Startups, Vision, Mission, Objectifs, Valeurs.

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I. Introduction

Strategic orientation is considered a modern and crucial variable in the dynamic and challenging world of business, as it represents the path that organizations follow in their journey toward their desired future and achieving the required performance. Strategic orientation is the cornerstone of any organization's success, particularly for startups, which, despite being key drivers of innovation and economic growth, remain the most vulnerable type of enterprise. Most startups fail during their early years due to the absence of a clearly defined strategic orientation that ensures their growth and sustainability. This underscores that adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation in startups is an urgent necessity rather than an optional organizational choice.

Research Problem

In light of the rapid changes taking place in the contemporary business environment, organizations are increasingly required to adopt effective strategies that enable them to face various challenges and ensure continuity in the market. Strategic orientation is considered one of the most important factors contributing to this objective, particularly for startups, which require clear visions and well-structured strategic plans.

Despite the growing importance of this concept, many startups still encounter difficulties in effectively adopting strategic management practices, which may negatively affect their performance and competitiveness.

Accordingly, the main research problem of this study can be formulated as follows:

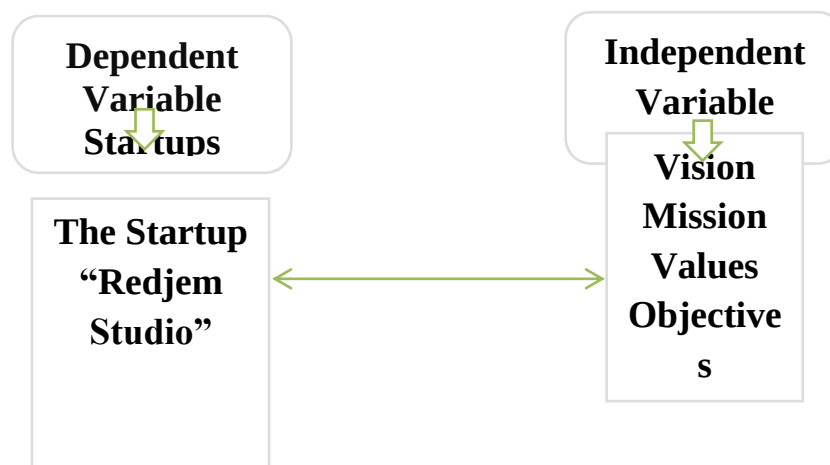
What is the reality of adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation in the startup “Redjem Studio” in Setif Province?

Sub-Research Questions

Several sub-questions emerge from this main research problem:

1. What is the level of the startup’s understanding of the concept of strategic orientation?
2. To what extent are the dimensions of strategic orientation implemented within the startup?
3. What is the impact of adopting strategic orientation on the performance of the startup?
4. What are the main challenges faced by the startup in adopting strategic orientation?

Study Model



Study Hypotheses

- The startup under study has a thorough understanding of the concept of strategic orientation and its dimensions.
- The startup under study places significant importance on strategic orientation.
- The startup under study adopts the dimensions of strategic orientation.
- Adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation has a direct positive impact on the startup under study.
- The startup under study faces several challenges and obstacles in adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation.
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Significance of the Study

This study derives its significance from the importance of its topic, which is examining the extent to which the startup “Redjem Studio” adopts the dimensions of strategic orientation a subject that is both important and rarely addressed. The study contributes by providing a reference for future academic research and bridging the existing research gap regarding strategic orientation in startups. Since this study focuses on the case of the startup “Redjem Studio,” it can also benefit other startup founders by encouraging them to adopt the dimensions of strategic orientation, which can positively influence their performance, sustainability, and growth

Research Methodology and Tools

Given the nature of the topic and the objectives of the study, the **descriptive method** was adopted to describe and clarify the reality of strategic orientation within the startup under study. A **personal interview** with the owner of the startup was used as the primary research tool for data collection

Scope of the Study

- **Spatial Scope:** The study was conducted on the startup “Redjem Studio” in Setif Province.
- **Temporal Scope:** The study period was January 2026.
- **Human Scope:** Data were collected through an interview with the owner and manager of the startup under study.

I. Strategic Orientation

1. Concept of Strategic Orientation

Strategic orientations encompass the broad outlines of strategic work, as well as the philosophy and attitudes that guide organizational behavior. They represent a deeply rooted set of values and beliefs that support the activities and efforts aimed at achieving a competitive advantage. Consequently, strategic orientation determines the type and nature of the strategies adopted by an organization (Ejdys, 2014, p. 347)

The concept of strategic orientation also involves the careful management of limited resources to enhance competitive advantage. It reflects the paths that an organization follows to achieve growth, sustainability, and superior performance (Others, 2024, p. 347)

Strategic orientations are defined as specific approaches implemented by an organization to foster appropriate behavior and achieve superior and sustainable performance (Al-Mouadhia, 2019, p. 336). Strategic orientation has been further defined as a set of general strategies that reflect the organization’s core direction toward defining its mission (Who are we?), providing a vision for the future (What will we become?), and designing these strategies based on an understanding of the organization’s philosophy, values, and a set of benchmarking references to achieve its objectives (Jandub, 2013, p. 16)

Strategic orientation is considered a modern management concept concerned with determining the organization’s fundamental future and the broad objectives it seeks to

achieve. It reflects a realistic understanding of the organization's internal environment, including its strengths and weaknesses, as well as an analysis of the external environment to identify opportunities and risks. This understanding allows the organization to anticipate the future, prepare strategic alternatives, and allocate resources effectively to achieve its objectives, creating conditions that facilitate the successful attainment of these goals.(Ali, 2022, p. 32)

2. Objectives of Strategic Orientation

Adopting a strategic orientation helps an organization to: (Khudair, 2023, p. 27)

- Define and set its future strategic options based on its capabilities, which helps reduce costs.
- Identify the fields and areas in which the organization should operate, ultimately assisting in determining the nature of the activities and processes required to invest in those areas.
- Draw a roadmap that enables the organization to determine its position within the business landscape in the future.
- Enhance the organization's competitiveness and secure a sustainable competitive advantage through creativity and innovation.
- Enable the organization to allocate and optimize its resources to achieve the established objectives.
- Develop the ability for sound, long-term strategic thinking to crystallize visions and achieve strategic goals.
- Make the organization more flexible in responding to conditions and improve its capacity to deal with changes in both the internal and external environments.

3. Dimensions of Strategic Orientation

The process of strategic orientation includes several dimensions, which are as follows:

A. Vision

Strategic vision is the first component of strategic orientation and is defined as “the final mental image that an organization aspires to achieve, representing the desired state it seeks” (Al-Mursi, 2003, p. 93)

A strategic vision outlines the organization's future path, specifying the destination it aims to reach, the market position it intends to achieve, and the types of capabilities and resources it plans to develop. The presence of a clear and distinctive strategic vision serves as the cornerstone for building an effective strategy and working toward its realization (Nasser, 2021, p. 132)

B. Mission

The **mission** is an official and explicit statement that clarifies the reason for an organization's existence(Zabi, 2023, p. 73). It serves as the distinguishing framework that sets the organization apart from others in terms of its field of activity, products,

customers, and markets. The mission aims to define the organization's core purpose, identity, operations, and practices (Al-Sarn, (2018, p. 28)

A mission is characterized by comprehensiveness and generality, containing precise, concise, and easily understood language. Its meaning should be clear to both employees and stakeholders. Organizations typically formulate their mission by addressing key questions such as: What do we produce? For whom do we produce? (customers), How do we develop the product? What differentiates us?(Qantajji, 2022, p. 135)

C. Values

Values are considered one of the fundamental concepts of strategic orientation and represent a core reality in the life of business organizations. They are defined as “a set of principles and standards that govern the behavior of individuals or groups within the organization by determining what is right and wrong in a given situation.”

Organizational values serve as clear and open statements for everyone to adopt in guiding behaviors and actions across various aspects of work. A key point regarding values is that organizational managers determine a set of beliefs and attitudes they consider valid and rely upon in carrying out their work, managing their organizations, and making decisions, independently of other considerations or the perspectives of others regarding these beliefs (Al-Qattan, 2019, p. 97)

D. Objectives

Strategic objectives are the levels of performance, outcomes, and results that an organization seeks to achieve. They serve as measurement tools to assess the organization's performance and its progress toward desired standards and outcomes. Strategic objectives contribute to strengthening and enhancing the organization's competitive position and overall competitiveness.

A strategic objective is directly linked to the organization's mission and closely related to its core elements. To identify a strategic objective, one must answer the question: What does the organization aim to accomplish in the short, medium, and long term? These objectives should reflect growth in organizational assets, development of services, increase in sales or the number of services provided, improvements in profitability, or expansion of market share(Khaled Redjem, 2023, p. 67_68)

To ensure that objectives are well-formulated, they must possess a set of characteristics, including: (Zabi, 2023, p. 74)

- Being closely aligned with the organization's vision and mission.
- Being practical and realistic, achievable according to actual conditions and available resources rather than hypothetical scenarios.
- Being challenging, meaning not easily attainable, so as to maintain its value as a meaningful objective.
- Being quantitative and measurable.
- Having a defined timeline for achievement.

II. Startups

1. Concept of Startups

According to Éric Ries, a startup is “an entity designed to create a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty” (Ries, 2011). A startup is strongly associated with rapid and substantial growth and embodies the confidence and ambition of its founders, who aim to revolutionize a sector or respond to an unmet need in the market (Zineb, 2024, p. 747).

Patrick Fridenson stated that being a startup is not determined by age, size, or sector of activity; rather, it requires addressing the following criteria (Boualshaour, 2018, p. 420)

- Potential for strong growth;
- Use of modern technology;
- Operating in a new market where risk is difficult to assess;
- Need for financing.

Paul Graham, in his well-known article on **growth**, defined a startup as “a company designed to grow rapidly,” considering good growth to be between 5% and 7% weekly, and occasionally exceptionally 10% (Boudali, 2020, p. 293).

Steve Blank defined a startup as “a temporary organization designed to search for a scalable business model, develop it, expand, and achieve significant growth” (DJEKIDEL, Mohammed, & Rais, 2021, p. 419).

Analyzing these various definitions highlights three key dimensions that characterize a startup: **creativity and innovation, uncertainty, which entails a high level of risk, and the pursuit of a specific business model capable of ensuring the startup’s success** (BEKADDOUR & BENHABIB, 2021, p. 147).

2. Concept of Startups in Algerian Law

Referring to **Chapter Four of Executive Decree No. 20/254 dated September 15, 2020**, the Algerian legislator did not provide a formal definition of a startup but instead established a set of criteria. A startup is defined as any newly established enterprise subject to Algerian law that meets the following requirements (Souiki, 2021):

- The age of the startup must not exceed **eight (8) years**.
- The startup’s business model must be based on **innovative products, services, business models, or ideas**.
- The **annual turnover** must not exceed the limit set by the National Committee.
- At least **50% of the company’s capital** must be owned by natural persons, approved investment funds, or other organizations certified as startups.
- The startup must have **sufficient growth potential**.
- The number of employees must not exceed **250 workers**.

Examining these criteria highlights the influence of **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** on the legislator’s definition, particularly in adopting the same employee threshold. Additionally, the law establishes a set of conditions for granting the **startup certification mark**.

3. Characteristics of Startups

All previous definitions of startups are based on a set of characteristics that shape their identity, define their way of working, and distinguish them from other types of organizations. The main characteristics include:

A. Recent Establishment: Startups are newly formed organizations, distinguished by the novelty of what they offer to the market.

B. High Degree of Uncertainty: Startups operate within an ecosystem marked by extreme uncertainty, which creates a high level of risk.

C. Rapid Growth and Development: Startups aim for fast growth and expansion.

D. Pursuit of a Suitable Business Model: Unlike small and medium-sized enterprises, which operate within an established business model with known products, customers, and suppliers, startups seek to discover and develop their own business model (Al-Aouti, 2021, p. 314)

E. Connection to Modern Technology: Startups are based on creativity and innovation (PASSY, 2021, p. 53)

F. Low Initial Costs: Startups generally operate with low costs relative to their potential profits. Examples include companies such as Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft, which began with minimal costs but today achieve record revenues and profits. Therefore, maintaining low costs is a crucial factor in the success of startups (Rahal, 2021, p. 105_106)

4. Importance and Role of Startups

Most developing countries face numerous challenges, including industrial infrastructure, widespread unemployment, poverty, underdeveloped education and training systems, and high living costs, despite significant investments in infrastructure, support, and development. Experts consider **startups** to be an effective solution to these challenges, as they play a key role in advancing national economies by contributing to **GDP** and promoting economic activity.

The importance and role of startups can be summarized as follows (Hussein, 2021, p. 71_72)

- **Providing real employment opportunities and combating unemployment:** Startups are highly capable of creating job opportunities, in addition to their ability to absorb and employ low-experience labor, which particularly benefits job seekers, especially degree holders, idea owners, and university graduates.
- **Innovation in research and development:** Particularly in the field of technology, which is more essential for any country than ever before. The ability to innovate and develop products in startups occurs at a cost 24 times lower than in large enterprises.
- **Increasing productivity and maintaining competitiveness:** Startups play a pivotal role by utilizing modern tools, methods, and production technologies that reduce costs and improve product quality. Their adoption of technology grants them a competitive advantage.

- **Spreading positive values in society:** Startups address numerous economic, social, and cultural issues through the research they conduct, aiming to develop and introduce new values to society and contribute to enhancing consumer culture and encouraging acceptance of change.
- **Investing savings and attracting investors and foreign capital:** Most startups utilize the entrepreneur's savings instead of leaving them idle or invested in areas that create no added value, while also attracting local and foreign investors.
- **Contributing to GDP and economic growth:** Due to the creation of long-term jobs and the growth of their annual income, startups contribute to wealth creation and the gross domestic product, with the potential to penetrate global markets and bring in foreign currency.
- **Reducing costs for large companies:** Through operational flexibility, adaptability, rapid response, and streamlined solutions, startups help solve production problems and reduce costs for major companies.

III. Reality of Adopting Strategic Orientation Dimensions in “Redjem Studio”

1. Introduction to “Redjem Studio”

Redjem Studio (REDJEM STUDIO) is a newly established family-owned enterprise founded on September 4, 2021, with an initial capital of 3,600,000 Algerian Dinars. The company is composed of five partner siblings and employs 18 direct workers and 38 indirect workers.

“Redjem Studio” is classified as a micro-enterprise operating in the **services sector** (multi-service), providing the following:

- Advertising and publicity, including all types of printing.
- Photography services.
- Interior design.
- Development and design of platforms and software.
- Organization of various events.
- Business consultancy services.

2. Study Results

Through the interview conducted with the manager of **Redjem Studio**, and in response to the interview topics, we reached the following results:

A. Clarity of the concept of strategic orientation and its dimensions for the startup under study

- **Question:** What is the concept of strategic orientation according to the owner of **Redjem Studio**?

Answer: According to the owner, the strategic orientation of **Redjem Studio** is represented by "vertical expansion and control," meaning expanding the number

of services offered and broadening the customer segments and target groups in the market. The "horizontal orientation," represented by geographical expansion, is considered a strategic goal for post-2030.

- **Question:** Is there a consensus among the leadership team of **Redjem Studio** regarding the concept of strategic orientation?

Answer: Yes; all branch managers are fully aware of the company's strategic orientation through the annual meeting at the beginning of each year and the monthly meetings.

- **Question:** How did you become familiar with the concept and dimensions of strategic orientation (previous experience, consulting, research, readings...)?

Answer: Given that the manager of **Redjem Studio** is a university professor in Business Administration, he has a solid understanding of the concept of strategic orientation, strategic planning, and related topics.

- **Question:** What sources or tools did the company rely on to establish its strategic orientation?

Answer: The company primarily relied on the SWOT model to identify its strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats. Additionally, the PESTEL and PORTER models were used to understand environmental elements, particularly competitors.

B. Awareness of the startup under study regarding the importance of adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation

- **Question:** Do you believe that having a clear strategic orientation is essential for the success of a startup?

Answer: Yes; having a strategic orientation is very important, especially in the early stages of a startup's life. The company must have a long-term strategy (five years or more), divided into phases due to the high volatility of the environment, particularly in startups. This requires the company to frequently adjust its strategy. Therefore, startups often adopt an "emergent or adaptive strategy," meaning that any environmental change is followed by a strategic adjustment.

A clear strategic orientation positively influences the company's strategic decisions, investment, marketing, and quality decisions. Conversely, the absence of a clear strategic orientation leads to randomness in strategic decision-making.

- **Question:** Are all members of the leadership team at **Redjem Studio** fully aware of the importance of strategic orientation?

Answer: Yes; as previously mentioned, and given that the company's manager is a university professor in strategy and business administration, he has played a major role in explaining and translating the strategic orientation and demonstrating its importance to the team.

- **Question:** In your view, what are the potential consequences for startups in the absence of a clearly defined strategic orientation?
Answer: The consequences are multiple, including the company operating randomly without a clear path or objective, which can lead to shocks, confusion, and wrong decisions (e.g., misaligned investments, misidentified target segments).
- **Question:** How would you compare the performance of a startup that adopts strategic orientation with one that does not?
Answer: I do not have experience with another startup that does not adopt a strategic orientation. However, from my modest experience with some colleagues or competitors in the market, we as a startup adopting a strategic orientation were able, within just five years, to establish a strong market position and surpass competitors because we had a clear strategic orientation (expansion, quality, etc.). In contrast, some competitors struggle across multiple markets and consumer segments without investments and lack a long-term strategic orientation, relying only on short-term annual goals focused on profit and business metrics.

C. The reality of Redjem Studio's adoption of the dimensions of strategic orientation

- **Question:** What is the vision of the startup **Redjem Studio**?
Answer: The vision of **Redjem Studio** was established in 2021, aiming to evolve into the **RJ Groupe** by early 2030. We started from a single company and have now reached six companies operating within the **Redjem Group**. The vision combines expansion and leadership and was formulated according to the ambitions and aspirations of the company's Board of Directors and management.
- **Question:** Does **Redjem Studio** have a written mission statement? What does it entail?
Answer: Yes; **Redjem Studio** has a written mission statement, which focuses on providing various services, including printing, advertising, and marketing, based on four fundamental principles: quality, timelines, communication, and customer treatment.
- **Question:** What are the strategic objectives of the startup **Redjem Studio**?
Answer: The strategic objectives of **Redjem Studio** are derived from its vision. The initial goal was to establish a market position, then expand and invest, ultimately evolving into a higher goal: achieving leadership in the field of advertising and promotion.
- **Question:** What are the core values guiding the decisions of **Redjem Studio**?
Answer: The core values of **Redjem Studio** are derived from its mission statement and primarily include: ease of communication with customers, courteous treatment and reception, quality as a fundamental value in the



company's services, and honesty in work to build a brand that endures in the long term.

D. The positive impact of adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation in Redjem Studio

- **Question:** Has the desired performance and expected results been achieved through adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation?

Answer: Yes; adopting a strategic orientation with a team that fully understands the importance of translating its dimensions into annual and triannual decisions, along with clear vision and leadership, inevitably ensures results. The team is the most important factor.

- **Question:** Do you think adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation has helped the company respond to stakeholder needs?

Answer: Yes; strategic orientation has a significant impact on achieving the strategic goals of stakeholders, who are the owners. In our company, **Redjem Studio**, the owners are the same as the branch managers.

- **Question:** Has adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation contributed to improving resource management (financial, human, time, etc.) and reducing costs?

Answer: The impact of strategic orientation is not directly visible in financial, human, or cost aspects, but rather in major objectives such as expansion and quality, reflected in customer satisfaction and other outcomes.

- **Question:** Has the team become more aligned with the objectives due to the clarity of the company's vision, mission, and values?

Answer: Yes; the clearer the vision, mission, and values of the company, the more the team works cohesively as a single unit to achieve the set objectives.

- **Question:** Has adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation helped you achieve a competitive advantage?

Answer: Yes; adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation has greatly helped the company achieve a competitive advantage, primarily through "quality, flexibility, creativity, and delivery timelines." Low cost is not a primary concern for us.

- **Question:** Do you have examples illustrating the tangible results of adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation?

Answer: One of the most tangible results of adopting strategic orientation is that we started in 2021 with a single company, **Redjem Studio**, and by 2026, we have grown into **Redjem Group**, comprising six companies.

E. Challenges faced by Redjem Studio in adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation

- **Question:** Did you encounter challenges and obstacles while adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation? What were they, and how did you overcome

them?

Answer: Most startups and small companies often face the challenge of limited capital, which prevents them from expanding quickly and effectively. Additionally, competition with large companies forces constant adjustments to the company's strategy every year. However, the greatest strength of startups and small companies lies in their "team."

- **Question:** Did limited resources affect the company's ability to adopt the dimensions of strategic orientation?

Answer: Financial resources, in particular, are the biggest obstacle to adopting strategic orientation. This can be partially mitigated if a strong team exists at both the managerial and strategic levels.

- **Question:** Did rapid changes and intense competition affect the company's ability to adopt the dimensions of strategic orientation?

Answer: Yes; rapid changes and fierce competition have a significant impact on the company's ability to adopt strategic orientation. However, the company must adapt to the situation and find solutions, especially with a strong team in place to face challenges.

- **Question:** Does **Redjem Studio** suffer from a lack of human resources capable of adopting the dimensions of strategic orientation?

Answer: No; we do not suffer from a lack of human resources. We have highly skilled personnel who have greatly helped in translating the strategy into annual and triannual decisions and achieving the set objectives.

- **Question:** As the manager of **Redjem Studio**, what advice would you give to new startup founders?

Answer: My advice is that when establishing a startup, no matter how small, it is crucial to have a strategic orientation and a strategic vision. This makes the path clearer and enables appropriate decision-making to achieve the set objectives.

Conclusion

Through this study conducted on the startup "**RedjemStudio**", it was found that the organization and its team have a thorough understanding of the concept and importance of strategic orientation, as well as its positive role in enhancing the startup's competitive advantage. The study revealed that the startup adopts the dimensions of strategic orientation despite facing various challenges. The main findings of the study include:

- The startup possesses a general awareness of the importance of strategic orientation in achieving success and sustainability.
- The startup relies on certain market-oriented practices by monitoring customer needs and improving the services provided.
- An entrepreneurial orientation is evident in the startup's efforts to develop new services and exploit available market opportunities.

- The startup faces several challenges, the most prominent being limited financial resources and a lack of expertise in strategic planning.

Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Strengthen the strategic culture within startups.
- Develop strategic planning skills among entrepreneurs.
- Organize training programs in strategic management for startups.
- Encourage innovation and the adoption of modern technologies across various organizational activities.
- Support startups through government policies that promote entrepreneurship.
- Ensure that startups adopt the dimensions of strategic orientation.
- Focus on attracting qualified human resources and enhancing the overall capability of startup teams.
- Foster a spirit of creative collaboration and cohesive teamwork among members of startup teams.

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