

Strategic Foresight and Organizational Resilience of Family-owned businesses in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *In the face of escalating economic volatility, infrastructural deficits, and policy instability, family-owned businesses in Rivers State, Nigeria are increasingly exposed to operational and strategic vulnerabilities. This study investigates the role of strategic foresight—operationalized through strategic choice and integration capabilities—in enhancing organizational resilience, specifically response capacity and business continuity. Employing a quantitative research design and analyzing data from 212 family-owned enterprises using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0, the study finds statistically significant relationships across all four hypothesized paths. The results underscore that proactive strategic decision-making and coordinated resource integration are critical levers for sustaining resilience in turbulent business environments. These insights offer actionable implications for family businesses, policymakers, and development agencies seeking to foster adaptive capacity and long-term continuity in Nigeria’s informal enterprise sector. The study recommends that family-owned businesses should implement scenario-based strategic workshops, empowering leadership to simulate diverse crisis situations and make proactive decisions that enhance preparedness.*

Keywords: Strategic Foresight, Organizational Resilience, Strategic Choice, Integration Capabilities, Response Capacity, Business

1.0 Introduction

In today’s volatile and unpredictable business environment, organizations are increasingly challenged by economic disruptions, technological shifts, and sociopolitical uncertainties. For family-owned businesses, which often operate with limited resources and deep-rooted traditions, the ability to anticipate, adapt, and thrive amid such turbulence is not just a competitive advantage, it is a necessity. This has brought the concepts of strategic foresight and organizational resilience to the forefront of contemporary management discourse.

Strategic foresight refers to an organization’s capacity to anticipate future trends, disruptions, and opportunities, and to proactively shape its strategic direction accordingly (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018). It involves scanning the external environment, interpreting weak signals, and making informed strategic choices that position the business for long-term success. In contrast to reactive planning, strategic foresight enables firms to build agility and preparedness into their decision-making processes (Vecchiato, 2015).

Organizational resilience, on the other hand, is the ability of a business to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and sustain operations during and after crises (Duchek, 2020). For family-owned businesses, resilience is particularly critical due to their unique governance structures, emotional ownership, and long-term orientation (Yilmaz et al., 2024). Resilience manifests through capabilities such as response capacity, integration of resources, and business continuity planning, which collectively determine how well a firm can withstand and recover from disruptions.

In the context of Rivers State, Nigeria, family-owned businesses play a vital role in local economic development, employment generation, and wealth creation. However, these businesses often face challenges such as infrastructural deficits, regulatory instability, and market volatility. The COVID-19 pandemic, currency fluctuations, and supply chain disruptions have further exposed the fragility of many such enterprises. As a result, there is a growing need to explore how strategic foresight can enhance the resilience of these businesses, ensuring their survival and sustainability in an increasingly complex environment.

This study investigates the relationship between strategic foresight, operationalized through strategic choice and integration capabilities, and organizational resilience, measured by response capacity and business continuity, in family-owned businesses in Rivers State. By examining these constructs, the research aims to provide empirical insights into how foresight-driven strategies can strengthen the adaptive capacity of family enterprises. The study is timely and significant, as it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on resilience in emerging economies, particularly within the under-researched context of family-owned businesses in sub-Saharan Africa. It also offers practical implications for business owners, policymakers, and development agencies seeking to enhance the sustainability of indigenous enterprises through strategic planning and capacity building.

Statement of the Problem

Family-owned businesses operate in a highly volatile and uncertain environment characterized by infrastructural deficits, regulatory inconsistencies, and economic instability. These enterprises, while vital to local economic development and employment generation, often lack the strategic agility and structural resilience required to withstand external shocks (Yilmaz et al., 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic, currency devaluation, and supply chain disruptions have further exposed the vulnerability of these businesses, underscoring the urgent need for proactive strategic planning and resilience-building mechanisms (Duchek, 2020).

Despite the growing recognition of strategic foresight as a critical capability for navigating uncertainty, many family-owned businesses in Nigeria continue to rely on reactive decision-making rather than forward-looking strategies (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018). Strategic foresight, when operationalized through strategic choice and integration capabilities, enables firms to anticipate change, align internal resources, and respond effectively to emerging threats (Vecchiato, 2015). However, the extent to which these foresight capabilities translate into organizational resilience—measured by response capacity and business continuity—remains underexplored in the context of indigenous family enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa (Cornelisse & van Klink, 2024).

Existing literature has largely focused on large corporations and multinational firms, with limited empirical attention given to small and medium-sized family businesses in emerging economies (Dörr et al., 2024). Moreover, while studies have examined the individual constructs of strategic foresight and resilience, few have investigated the interplay between strategic choice, integration capabilities, and resilience outcomes in a unified framework (Fathi et al., 2021). This gap is particularly pronounced in Rivers State, where family businesses face unique challenges related to informal governance, generational succession, and limited access to institutional support.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the following critical problem: To what extent do strategic foresight capabilities—specifically strategic choice and integration capabilities—enhance the organizational resilience of family-owned businesses in Rivers State, Nigeria, as reflected in their response capacity and business continuity? By empirically examining these relationships, the study aims to provide actionable insights for business owners, policymakers, and development practitioners seeking to build more resilient and future-ready family enterprises in Nigeria's dynamic economic landscape.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the relationship between strategic choice and response capacity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between strategic choice and business continuity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.
3. Investigate the relationship between integration capabilities and response capacity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.
4. Ascertain the relationship between integration capabilities and business continuity family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions served as a guild in this study;

1. What is the relationship between strategic choice and response capacity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria?
2. How does strategic choice relate to business continuity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between integration capabilities and response capacity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria?
4. How does integration capabilities relate to business continuity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses served as a tentative answer to the research questions.

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between strategic choice and response capacity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.

- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between strategic choice and business continuity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between integration capabilities and response capacity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between integration capabilities and business continuity of family-owned businesses in Rivers state, Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

This study is anchored on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory posits that organizations must continuously develop, integrate, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments. In the context of family-owned businesses, strategic foresight—manifested through strategic choice and integration capabilities—serves as a dynamic capability that enables firms to sense opportunities, seize them, and transform operations accordingly (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016). This theory supports the idea that foresight-driven decision-making enhances a firm's response capacity and business continuity in the face of disruption.

Conceptual Framework

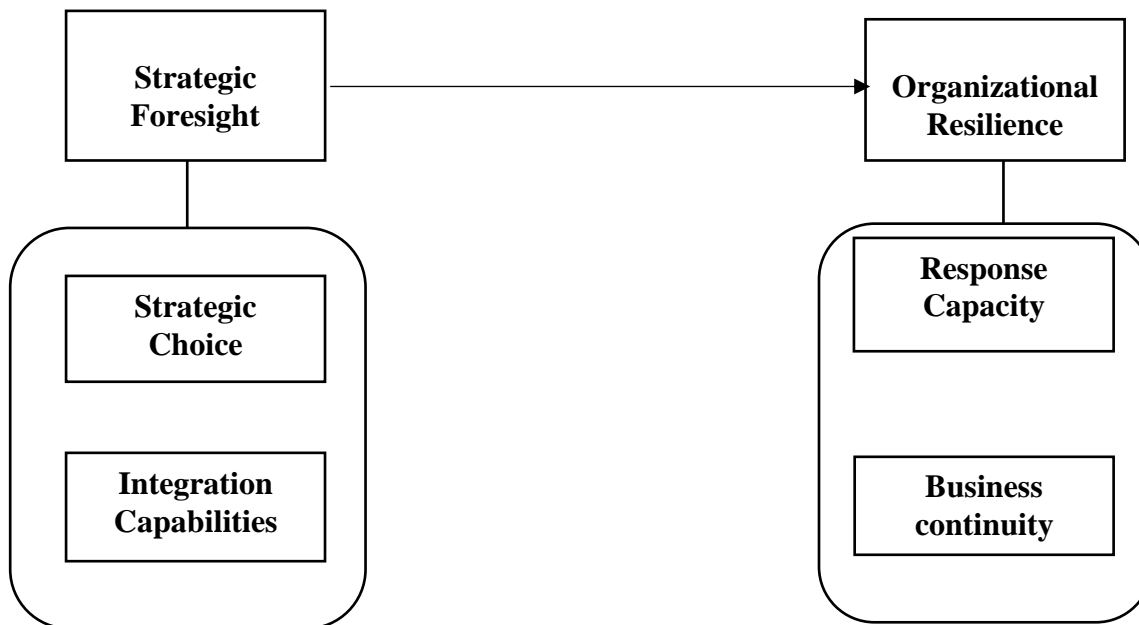


Figure 1: Conceptual model of strategic foresight and organizational resilience

Source: adapted from Duchek(2020); Saukko, Aaltonen and Haapasalo, 2022)

Strategic Foresight

Strategic foresight is the organizational capability to systematically anticipate, interpret, and prepare for future developments that may impact long-term performance. It goes beyond traditional forecasting by embracing uncertainty and exploring multiple plausible futures (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018). In essence, it equips firms with the tools to sense weak signals, envision alternative scenarios, and make proactive strategic choices that enhance adaptability and resilience.

In family-owned businesses, strategic foresight is especially critical due to their long-term orientation, emotional ownership, and intergenerational continuity goals (Yilmaz et al., 2024). These firms often prioritize legacy preservation and community embeddedness, which can either foster or hinder their ability to adapt to change. When properly harnessed, strategic foresight enables family firms to balance tradition with transformation, ensuring continuity while navigating disruption.

Strategic Choice

Strategic Choice is the ability of decision-makers to select future-oriented strategies based on environmental scanning, scenario analysis, and long-term visioning (Vecchiato, 2015). In family businesses, this involves aligning strategic decisions with both

business goals and family values. Strategic choice refers to the deliberate decisions made by organizational leaders to select among alternative courses of action that align with long-term goals and environmental realities. It is a central component of strategic foresight, as it reflects how firms interpret external signals and internal capabilities to shape their future trajectory. In the context of family-owned businesses, strategic choice is influenced not only by market conditions but also by family values, legacy goals, and generational priorities (Schweiger et al., 2024). These businesses often face a tension between preserving tradition and embracing innovation, making strategic choice a balancing act between continuity and change.

Integration Capabilities

Integration Capabilities is the capacity to coordinate and align internal resources, knowledge, and stakeholder relationships in response to anticipated changes (Fathi et al., 2021). This includes leveraging family networks, institutional memory, and cross-generational collaboration to implement foresight-driven strategies. Integration capabilities refer to an organization's ability to coordinate, align, and combine internal resources, processes, and knowledge across functional boundaries to respond effectively to environmental changes (Saukko et al., 2022). These capabilities are essential for translating strategic foresight into operational resilience, especially in complex and uncertain environments. In family-owned businesses, integration capabilities are shaped by unique factors such as informal governance structures, intergenerational knowledge, and relational capital. These firms often rely on tacit knowledge and long-standing relationships, which can either facilitate or hinder integration depending on how well they are managed (Helfat & Campo-Rembado, 2016).

Organizational Resilience

Organizational resilience refers to an enterprise's capacity to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from disruptive events while maintaining core functions and pursuing strategic objectives (Duchek, 2020). It is not merely about survival but about thriving in the face of adversity. In the context of family-owned businesses, resilience is shaped by a unique blend of emotional ownership, long-term orientation, and informal governance structures (Yilmaz et al., 2024). Resilience is increasingly viewed as a strategic capability—one that enables organizations to respond to shocks, learn from crises, and transform operations to remain competitive (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). It encompasses both reactive and proactive dimensions, including the ability to withstand immediate disruptions and to evolve in response to long-term environmental changes.

Response Capacity

Response capacity refers to an organization's ability to mobilize resources, coordinate actions, and implement timely interventions during periods of disruption or crisis (Chen et al., 2025). It reflects the operational readiness of a firm to absorb shocks and maintain critical functions under pressure. In the context of family-owned businesses, response capacity is shaped by both strategic foresight and internal capabilities, including leadership agility, resource flexibility, and decision-making speed. Similarly, Nyamwanza (2012) argued that livelihood resilience—which includes response capacity—is strengthened by adaptive strategies, diversified assets, and community-based support mechanisms. These insights are particularly relevant for family-owned businesses in Rivers State, where environmental volatility demands localized and agile response systems.

Business Continuity

Business continuity refers to an organization's ability to maintain essential operations and services during and after a disruption, ensuring minimal impact on performance, reputation, and stakeholder trust (Charoenthammachoke et al., 2020). It is a proactive planning process that prepares firms to respond to crises, recover quickly, and resume normal operations with minimal downtime. In the context of family-owned businesses, business continuity is particularly vital due to their often limited access to external capital, informal governance structures, and deep-rooted community ties. These firms may lack formal contingency plans, making them more vulnerable to disruptions such as economic shocks, political instability, or natural disasters (Awang Ali et al., 2023).

Empirical Review

A study by Dörr et al. (2024) found that small and medium-sized family enterprises that institutionalize foresight practices—such as environmental scanning and strategic workshops—demonstrate higher levels of resilience and adaptability. Similarly, McKinsey (2023) reported that family-owned businesses that integrate foresight into their strategic planning are more likely to outperform peers in volatile markets. A study by Elbanna et al. (2020) emphasized that strategic decision-making in uncertain environments requires a blend of rational analysis and intuitive judgment, especially in SMEs. Similarly, Ondoro (2017) found that Kenyan firms that adopted structured strategic choice frameworks—such as scenario planning and resource deployment analysis—were better able to sustain performance during economic shocks. A study by Saukko, Aaltonen, and Haapasalo (2022) found that inter-organizational projects with strong integration capabilities were significantly more resilient and adaptive across project phases. Similarly, Helfat

and Campo-Rembado (2016) emphasized that firms with long-term investments in integration mechanisms were better positioned to innovate and sustain performance across technology lifecycles.

Tumidei et al. (2021) provided empirical evidence that strategic-choice-based planning significantly influences organizational performance, especially in environments where managers exercise high levels of discretion and proactive decision-making. Sinnaiah et al. (2023) emphasized that strategic thinking and decision-making styles directly affect organizational responsiveness and performance, especially in uncertain environments. Azadegan et al. (2020) demonstrated that strategic choice frameworks integrated with business continuity management (BCM) significantly improved firms' ability to contain reputational and operational damage during supply chain disruptions. Buzzao & Rizzi (2023) showed that dynamic strategic planning, including improvisation and coordination, enhances business continuity across sectors, especially when aligned with ISO 22301 standards.

A study by Barasa et al. (2017) found that organizations with embedded foresight practices were more likely to demonstrate resilience during systemic shocks. Similarly, Dong (2023) emphasized that resilience is strengthened through leadership, organizational culture, and staff training. Chen et al. (2025) developed a decision-making model to assess emergency response capacity in China, emphasizing the importance of multi-criteria evaluation across prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery phases. Their findings highlight that organizations with integrated planning and flexible resource systems demonstrate higher response capacity. A systematic review by Awang Ali et al. (2023) found that SMEs that embedded continuity planning into their strategic management practices demonstrated higher resilience and performance during crises. Similarly, Charoenthammachoke et al. (2020) emphasized that business continuity management (BCM) is a cornerstone of organizational resilience, especially in disaster-prone regions.

Saukko et al. (2022) developed a self-assessment model for integration capabilities in inter-organizational projects, showing that firms with strong integration mechanisms—structural, relational, and technological—demonstrated higher response capacity during disruptions. Helfat & Campo-Rembado (2016) emphasized that integration capabilities, such as cross-functional coordination and resource alignment, significantly enhance a firm's ability to respond to crises and innovate across technology lifecycles. Sholokwu (2024) highlighted that dynamic capabilities, including integration and reconfiguration, are critical for entrepreneurial success and rapid response in volatile markets.

Roffia & Dabić (2023) found that SMEs with integrated information systems (e.g., ERP) and contingency planning tools demonstrated higher resilience and continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Azadegan et al. (2020) showed that supply chain involvement in business continuity management (BCM) enhances operational damage containment, especially when integration is embedded across departments. Buzzao & Rizzi (2023) confirmed that dynamic integration capabilities—such as improvisation, coordination, and resource orchestration—are strategic levers for business continuity across sectors.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a descriptive approach. The target population comprises family-owned businesses operating in Rivers State, Nigeria, across sectors such as retail, manufacturing, agriculture, and services. A sample size of 250 businesses was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for finite populations. A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation across different business sectors and sizes. This technique allowed for the inclusion of micro, small, and medium-sized family enterprises, reflecting the diversity of the business landscape in Rivers State. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the constructs of strategic foresight (strategic choice and integration capabilities) and organizational resilience (response capacity and business continuity). The questionnaire items were adapted from validated scales in prior studies (e.g., Duchek, 2020; Saukko et al., 2022) and measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS version 4.0. This method is suitable for complex models involving latent constructs and small to medium sample sizes.

Table 1: Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic Choice	0.845
Integration Capabilities	0.756
Response Capacity	0.721
Business Continuity	0.842

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability values for each of the constructs were greater than 0.7. Therefore, our constructs are reliable.

Table 2: Validity Test

	AVE	BUC	INC	REC	STC
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BUC	0.545	0.738			
INC	0.564	0.245	0.751		
REC	0.584	0.258	0.249	0.764	
STC	0.637	0.181	0.172	0.262	0.798

The average variance extracted (AVE) of all the constructs are greater than 0.5 which signifies the presence of convergent validity. The diagonal values (in bold) are greater than the AVEs, thus confirming that each construct is distinct from any other one. Hence, the model endorsed discriminant validity for all the constructs.

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

Out of the 250 questionnaires distributed to family-owned businesses in Rivers State, 212 valid responses were retrieved and analyzed, representing a response rate of 84.8%. The remaining 38 questionnaires were withdrawn due to incomplete or inconsistent responses. This high response rate enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings. The structural model was assessed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS version 4.0. 20 observable variables were used. Each of the 20 observable variables is conceptually linked to one of four latent variables (strategic choice, integration capabilities, response capacity, and business continuity). Figure 2 shows the variable link.

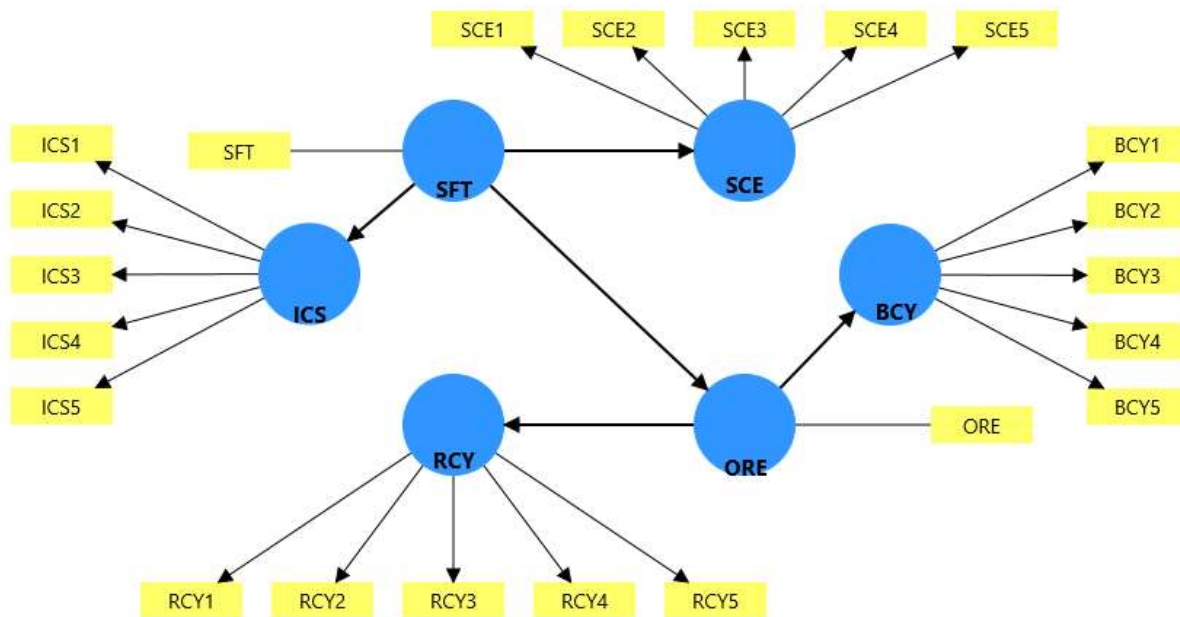


Figure 2: Research Model

Figure 2 shows the research model for the study. Where the independent variable (Strategic Foresight = SFT) has two dimensions (Strategic Choice = SCE, and Integration Capabilities = ICS), and the dependent variable (Organizational Resilience = ORE) has two measures (Response Capacity = RCY, and Business Continuity = BCY).

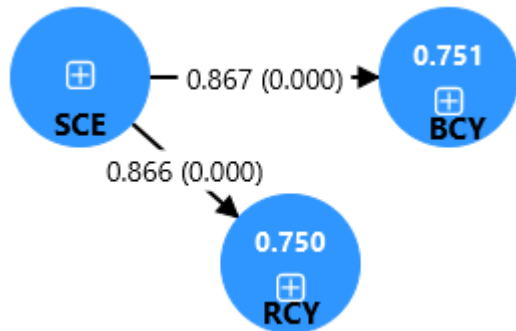


Figure 3: Hypotheses 1 and 2

Strategic Choice and Response Capacity

The study found a statistically significant and positive relationship between strategic choice and response capacity, with a path coefficient (β) of 0.867 and a high predictive accuracy ($R^2 = 0.751$). This suggests that when family-owned businesses engage in deliberate and forward-thinking strategic decisions, they are better equipped to respond swiftly and effectively to disruptions. This supports the view that proactive decision-making enhances operational readiness in family-owned businesses. Strategic choice also fuels information scanning, scenario planning, and internal alignment, thereby boosting the business's preparedness. As Tumidei et al. (2021) observed, strategic discretion enhances organizational agility, especially under volatile conditions—reinforcing the idea that family enterprises must foster strategic deliberation across generations, not just in ownership but in management behavior.

Strategic Choice and Business Continuity

The path coefficient ($\beta = 0.866$) and R^2 value (0.750) indicate a strong and significant link between strategic choice and business continuity. This confirms that strategic foresight rooted in deliberate planning enhances an organization's ability to sustain core operations during and after disruptions. Family-owned businesses that embed continuity planning into their strategic decisions—such as backup sourcing, digitized records, and flexible staffing—are better equipped to weather crises. This is consistent with Azadegan et al. (2020), who demonstrated that strategic alignment within supply chains leads to faster recovery and reduced reputational damage.

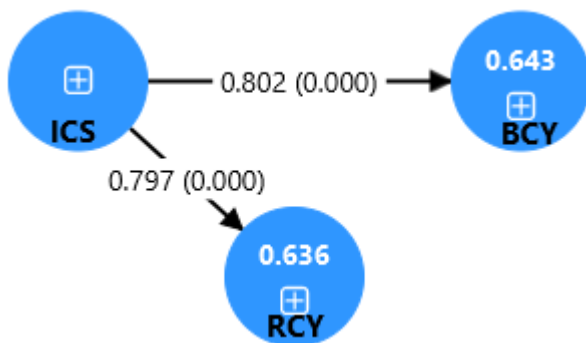


Figure 4: Hypotheses 3 and 4

Integration Capabilities and Response Capacity

The positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.802$, $R^2 = 0.643$) confirms that integration capabilities also enhance business continuity. This relationship yielded a high path coefficient and predictive accuracy, underscoring the central role of integration capabilities in driving response capacity. Firms with well-integrated systems—both technologically and relationally—can mobilize resources rapidly, make informed decisions, and coordinate across departments with speed and precision. For family-owned businesses, where roles often overlap and decision-making may be centralized, integration ensures that knowledge flows across generations, departments, and functions. The study by Saukko et al. (2022) reinforces that structural and relational integration—when paired with digital tools—creates a culture of shared accountability and real-time responsiveness.

Integration Capabilities and Business Continuity

The positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.797$, $R^2 = 0.636$) confirms that integration capabilities also enhance business continuity. Beyond immediate response, integration supports the long-term sustainment of operations through coordinated planning, redundancy systems, and strategic alignment. Roffia & Dabić (2023) showed that SMEs with integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and crisis management protocols rebounded faster during the COVID-19 pandemic. For family businesses, integration capability includes harmonizing family governance with professional management—ensuring continuity across ownership generations and leadership transitions.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between strategic foresight and organizational resilience in family-owned businesses, focusing on the influence of strategic choice and integration capabilities on response capacity and business continuity. Using PLS-SEM analysis via SmartPLS 4.0, the findings revealed that all four hypotheses were statistically significant, confirming that strategic foresight capabilities are critical drivers of resilience. The results underscore that strategic choice empowers family businesses to anticipate disruptions and respond effectively, while integration capabilities enhance coordination and continuity across operational systems. These insights are particularly relevant in the volatile business environment of Rivers State, where infrastructural challenges, regulatory instability, and economic shocks frequently threaten business sustainability. By embedding foresight into decision-making and strengthening integration mechanisms, family-owned enterprises can build adaptive capacity, safeguard continuity, and position themselves for long-term success. The following recommendations are therefore proffered:

- i. Family-owned businesses should implement scenario-based strategic workshops, empowering leadership to simulate diverse crisis situations and make proactive decisions that enhance preparedness.
- ii. Family-owned businesses should integrate formal business continuity planning (BCP) into strategic decision-making, ensuring that every long-term strategic choice explicitly addresses operational sustainability during disruptions.
- iii. Family-owned businesses should invest in digital coordination tools (e.g. shared dashboards, cloud-based communication) to improve cross-functional collaboration and enable fast, unified responses to emergencies.
- iv. Family-owned businesses should establish a centralized process documentation system to standardize critical workflows, ensuring seamless continuity across departments—even in the absence of key personnel.

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