



THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIC DECISIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN ASIACELL COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

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Abstract: The current research aims to demonstrate the impact of strategic alignment in achieving the effectiveness of the strategic decision through an exploratory study in AsiaCell Mobile Communications Company in Iraq and to diagnose the extent to which the researched company applies the dimensions of strategic alignment in order to raise the level of decision effectiveness. The research sample consisted of (108) employees from senior leadership in AsiaCell Mobile Communications Company. The researchers concluded that the company's management has a clear interest in strategic alignment as a modern administrative approach that contributes to raising the level of quality and effectiveness of its strategic decisions, which is reflected in its achievement of excellence in performance and achieving a distinguished strategic position. The researchers also concluded that there is a significant impact and correlation between strategic alignment and the effectiveness of the strategic decision. In AsiaCell Communications Company.

Keywords: Strategic alignment; Effectiveness of strategic decision; AsiaCell Company.

1. Introduction:

The environmental data surrounding contemporary business organizations, especially service organizations, is characterized by its extreme complexity, continuous and rapid change, and high rates of competition, which makes its success or failure depend on its ability to respond quickly to these changes by making appropriate and effective strategic decisions with the aim of providing its services in a way that qualifies it to occupy a leading position in the sector. Its business, and its superiority over its competitors, as the service sector is one of the most important sectors for any country, and the study derives its importance from the importance of strategic alignment, which plays a fundamental role in enabling organizations to coordinate and integrate their activities and operations, and to conduct a continuous review of the environment in which they operate and align with it by reconsidering its components and elements. Its strength, and diagnosing its weaknesses, enabling it to respond to environmental movements to explore and invest in opportunities, and reduce the threats that hinder its work and progress by making effective strategic decisions, as the speed of responding to these changes that organizations face and striving to achieve excellence has become a basic requirement for today's organizations aspiring to maintain their position. Competitiveness and developing it for the better. Strategic alignment also works to crystallize a new social reality capable of overcoming conflicts and contradictions by achieving a balance between employees, accessing new capabilities and skills, and investing in existing capabilities. Hence, the idea of studying the topic of strategic alignment and its role in the effectiveness of adopting the appropriate strategy was

crystallized and its impact Choose Asiacell Mobile Communications Company in Iraq because it is one of the leading companies in the telecommunications sector that covers all Iraqi governorates.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research problem:

Most business organizations today are looking towards making effective and rapid decisions to confront rapid environmental fluctuations with the aim of achieving success and excellence in all their operations and activities, and they compete to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their performance, which leads them to achieve their goals and objectives, and build a distinguished strategic center that achieves their growth and survival and ensures the development and improvement of their operations. In light of the dynamic environment in which it operates, hence the trend towards adopting strategic alignment as one of the strategic directions as a modern approach that provides the organization with flexibility and continuous adaptation to environmental developments, which contributes to achieving balance in the work environment, which in turn is reflected in the extent of the ability of these organizations to achieve excellence in Its performance, and through the preliminary field survey carried out by the researchers, the research problem was identified, and in order to determine the contents of this problem, the current study raised the current questions:

- Diagnosing the level of study variables (strategic alignment, effectiveness of strategic decision) in the company under study?
- What is the level and direction of the correlations between the strategic alignment and the effectiveness of the strategic decision in the company under study?
- What is the level of influence of strategic alignment on the effectiveness of the strategic decision in the company under study?

2.2 Research objectives

Guided by the research problem and questions and in line with the concerns expressed in the literature regarding the impact of strategic alignment on the effectiveness of strategic decisions in organizations, the research mainly aims to achieve a number of objectives, which are as follows:

- Spreading awareness of the importance of strategic alignment and the effectiveness of strategic decision in the field under study.
- Describing the research variables (strategic alignment and effectiveness of strategic decision) and diagnosing them in the researched organization.
- Analyzing the correlation between the two variables of the study according to the vision of the research sample.
- Analyzing the relationship of influence between the two variables of the study according to the vision of the research sample.
- Providing a set of proposals based on the research results that would develop current research variables in the field under investigation.

2.3 Research assumes

- There is a significant, statistically significant correlation between strategic alignment and the effectiveness of the strategic decision in terms of its dimensions combined in the organization under investigation.
- The strategic alignment affects the effectiveness of the strategic decision positively and morally in the organization under investigation.

3. Strategic alignment

3.1 The concept of strategic alignment:

Strategic alignment has its roots in the School of Design in strategic management as part of Michael Scott Morton's project at the Center for Information Systems Research (GIRS), which refers to the extent to which an organization's internal structure matches and is consistent with its external environment. Strategic alignment emerged from the idea that

Organizations must strive towards conformity, harmonization, and rearrange the resources, competencies, capabilities, and knowledge they possess and use them in operations to support this alignment in a way that is compatible with the competitive environment.

The dynamism surrounding the organization (Al-Husseinawi, 2019, 56), and (Ates, et al., 2018, 5) defines strategic alignment as “the degree of correlation between the strategic priorities of the executive director and the department managers’ awareness of the relative importance of those priorities,” while (Al-Mu’baqi, 2020, 98) as “a dynamic process that includes a set of mechanisms and methods necessary to help the organization sustain and create a strategic system that regulates and controls actions and activities at various organizational levels, and helps avoid falling into conflict between the organization’s goals and its strategic directions for the information technology investment project.”

3.2 The importance of strategic alignment:

Mazumder (2015, 32) indicated that strategic alignment supports business strategy and provides strategists with the opportunity to develop their analytical skills and abilities, and thus become more capable of facing the future and the changes that may occur by providing the required data, programs, and applications. The ideal alignment also works to maintain The approved business strategy and good management of the infrastructure of databases, information and various processes, and based on the strategic alignment, the managers of the upper levels formulate the strategy and implement it through the managers of the executive levels within the organizations and manage the information and employ it to invest in the available opportunities and avoid or reduce the threats.

3.3 Characteristics of strategic alignment:

To ensure the effectiveness and success of the strategic alignment, it must have certain characteristics, and (Almohamadi, 2011, 48) believes that the effective strategic alignment is characterized by the following characteristics:

- Ensuring the organization’s adaptation to its internal and external environment.
- The organization adapts to changes and conditions in the competitive market.
- Harmony between the organization’s resources and available opportunities.
- Directing the organization’s focus towards the long term and future visions.
- Directing internal operations and determining the overall direction of the organization.
- Achieving efficiency and effectiveness through harmony and balance of the organization with its two environments.

3.4 Types of strategic alignment:

The study (Baker et. al, 2009) indicated that there are five types of alignment within the organization, which are as follows: (Helan, 2021, 36)

- Strategic alignment: This type focuses on studying the alignment between information technology strategy and business strategy, and is characterized by applying information technology in the appropriate manner and time in line with business strategies to improve the organization’s performance level.
- Business alignment: This type is based on the principle of developing resources and business structure with the aim of supporting the strategic mission. Organizations that have an appropriate and long-term strategy must not allow individual functions to work independently in the organization. When this alignment occurs, the organization is prepared to implement its strategy, which reflects positively on the business. Her performance.
- Structural alignment: This type includes the alignment between the business structure and the information technology structure.
- Information technology alignment: This type of alignment is based on the principle of alignment between the information technology structure and the information technology strategy.
- Environmental alignment: Organizations of this type seek to align their strategy with the environment in which they operate, which is characterized by intense competition and continuous change.

3.5 Dimensions of strategic alignment:

Many studies agreed in precisely defining the dimensions of strategic alignment, such as (Lilja & Tarland, 2016, 13) (Barnes, 2017, 123) (Wahlin, Karlsson 2017, 26), and studies (Al-Husseinawi, 2019, 86) and (Al-Shami, 2020, 105) also agreed with them.) and (Al-Sabaawi, 2020, 66) and identified six main dimensions, which are (communications, value, governance, partnership, infrastructure, and skills).

- **Communications:** The communication process is considered one of the vital and essential means effective in the success of organizations, and is the main pillar for exchanging ideas, information and knowledge between the organization and the external environment, meaning that it reflects the common understanding between the organization's plans and goals (Al-Shammari, 58, 2017). The communication process is one of the most important and vital means for the success of strategic and critical decisions related to projects in various organizations. The processes of establishing communication channels and transferring information have become among the basic processes upon which organizations rely in their work, as any communication system determines the goal and main topic of the communication process (Al-Abadi and Al-Ardhi, 2012). , 68).

- **Governance:** The term "governance" is derived from the Latin verb "gubernare" or from the Greek term "kubernaein," which means "the direction and control of a number of individuals or groups." The concept of governance is depicted in the literature related to governance, and this concept refers to two directions, the first refers to experimental images to adapt the organization to the external environment. As for the second direction, governance refers to the theoretical concept of the nature of coordination between social systems, which reflects the prominent role of the government in this process. Both trends are used equally by researchers. Governance means "the organization's ability to provide the products required by customers in a transparent, fair, effective and accountable manner" (Katsamunsk, 2016, 134). Over the past decades, governance has become one of the most prominent concerns of senior management seeking to achieve strategic alignment, and as a result Therefore, the level of maturity and alignment of an organization is determined by the effectiveness of governance of reporting structures and hierarchy (Alghazi et al, 2017,5).

- **Partnership:** Partnership in organizations is defined as "the reciprocal relationship between two or more organizations and is based on achieving benefit and reducing the level of risks that organizations may face as a result of various environmental variables, and these risks are overcome through the knowledge, experience, skills and capital that each party possesses." Human capital and solid information technology to confront external threats and survive and expand in the market" (Khader, 2021, 84).

- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure is the basic pillar and backbone of any organization and is defined as "the main capabilities necessary for the organization's work, which are represented by the effective organizational structure, the culture of the organization, human capital, machinery, equipment and advanced technology, which match the needs of the work" (Youssef et al., 2020 872), while (Al-Abadi et al., 2016, 218) see that infrastructure represents one of the most important basic elements for generating value, which includes the organizational structure, the organization's culture, and control systems, which allows senior management to exercise its authority to shape those important aspects of the organization.

- **Skills:** The term skills refers to providing personal capabilities among working individuals so that they can do some work well. Therefore, skills are a basic requirement for the effective performance of most human activities, and are represented by the ingenuity that enables managers to perform the tasks assigned to them in a distinguished manner (Al-Shammari et al., 146, 2017). The study (Al-Wafi, 5, 2018) finds it to be "a set of knowledge and behaviors acquired or required to be available among individuals working in the organization, the purpose of which lies in achieving optimal performance to accomplish tasks and achieve planned goals."

4. Effectiveness of strategic decision:

4.1 The concept of strategic decision effectiveness:

The strategic decision is one of the topics of great importance that has occupied the minds of scholars and researchers in all economic, social, psychological and political disciplines. Because the decision has an importance inherent in the essence of the work and its needs. In the strategic field, the topic of decision has become one of the methodological topics in this administration, and dealing with the decision has become a matter that requires an effort parallel to the type and nature of the decision in the organization's decision structure, and it has become absolutely necessary Communicating and analyzing the results behind decision-making. Strategic decision is defined as "a cognitive process that leads rationally to choosing a course of action among many available alternatives to reach rational decision-making" (Elayyan, 2015, 12) or "the decisions taken by the organization." In response to problems and events that the organization has not encountered

before, these decisions generally deal with many variables, most of which are characterized by change and complexity, and thus are high-risk decisions that are taken at higher levels” (Al-Rubaie and Ahmed, 2020, 9).

4.2 The importance of strategic decisions:

The importance of the strategic decision lies in the importance of the alternative chosen from among the available alternatives. The importance of strategic decisions is evident in their interest in distributing the various organizational resources (tangible and intangible) that affect their composition and legal status and drawing up plans that take into account all the risks to which the organization is exposed (Mahdi, 2008). , 17), especially those that deal with certain conditions within the external environment so that the organization is able to excel in achieving its goals (Seth & Tripathi, 2005, 257). The importance of strategic decisions lies in that they help the organization formulate real goals and draw the boundaries within which the organization operates. , determining the nature of the resources that the project should obtain and the patterns of their distribution, as well as determining the effectiveness of the project (Al-Naimi, 2003, 50) (Martinsons & Davison, 2007, 285).

4.3 Characteristics of strategic decision:

It is necessary for the strategic decision to have some characteristics in order for it to be strategic, which are (Johnson & Scholes, 2002, 4), (Al-Douri, 2004, 66):

- It is concerned with the overall activities of the organization to form a clear vision through which the decision maker can approximate the picture of the future and set the general direction of the organization on the basis of strategic decisions.
- The strategic decision is affected by the values and expectations of stakeholders, and is also affected by the type and nature of pressures generated by them.
- It has future trends, and the effects of the decision often appear within the long term, which requires careful strategic analysis of events in an effort to reduce surprises and ambiguous crises.
- It requires spending a lot of money and therefore affects the success or failure of the organization.
- It is highly complex, especially when the decision maker does not have complete information due to the state of uncertainty that accompanies it.

Indicators of strategic decision effectiveness:

There are many indicators that are relied upon to measure the effectiveness of strategic decisions, including: (Al-Rubaie and Ahmed, 2017, 272)

- **Decision suitability:** It achieves more effective decisions in organizations, as suitability helps adapt the strategy to its environment in order to formulate it successfully, and thus matches situations and events with the changing environment, and thus the leader arrives at satisfactory and appropriate options, participating in decision-making and listening to the views Different perspectives achieve the effectiveness of decisions, because they make it possible to benefit from the multiple knowledge of decision makers, and because the leader’s confidence is closely related to the successful use of decisions, because it helps to implement them quickly, and suitability is effective to the extent that leaders achieve the desired results, which includes an extensive analysis of environmental conditions. To determine the effectiveness of the decision that affects the organization’s performance (Garbuio et al, 2015, 361).

- **Acceptance of the decision:** Acceptance of the decision refers to the extent to which the decision can be accepted among the members of the organization who will be affected by the implementation of this decision. Acceptance is achieved through the serious participation of these members in the strategic decision-making process. Participation in the strategic decision-making process also leads to the protection of responsible parties. Regarding decision-making, especially when there is an error in its decisions, shortcomings, or error in implementation, this participation confirms that this decision was not made in vain, provided that the successful opposition is organized in the strategic decision-making process to reach more effective decisions (Ali, 2022). ,155).

- **Decision quality:** (Ghasemaghaei, 2019, 14) explained that decision quality is the ability of organizations to make decisions accurately and correctly, and is described as a stable, vital ability that achieves successful results. Decisions in the organization are a cognitive-intensive activity, and are the raw material for decision-making, and that providing Various data and analyzes generate knowledge analysis and are a decisive factor for decision-making, and thus help leaders improve the quality of decisions in the organization. The quality of the decision is measured by providing

alternatives and new ideas and the time needed to reach the desired goals. This is determined by the capabilities and skills possessed by the decision-maker and the extent of availability Accurate information to make a decision that suits the organization’s aspirations and goals (Shermerhorn, 2008, 172).

5. Field side:

5.1 Descriptive results for strategic alignment: The results shown in Table (1) indicate that the arithmetic mean of the sample members’ answers about strategic alignment ranged between (4.529-44.33), with a total arithmetic mean of (4.478) with relative importance (0.89.5) at a high evaluation level. Very, at a standard deviation level of (0.319), which indicates a low percentage of dispersion in the answers of the sample studied, meaning that there is convergence and homogeneity in their views towards the strategic alignment adopted by the management of the company under study. At the level of sub-dimensions, the (partnership) dimension came in first place. The arithmetic mean for this dimension reached (4.529), the standard deviation (0.294), and the relative importance index (90.5%). This indicates the company’s management’s interest in sharing information that enhances the organizational work environment, while the dimension Governance is ranked last. The arithmetic mean for this dimension was (4.433), the standard deviation was (0.319), and the relative importance index was (88.6%). This confirms and indicates that the researched organization adheres to the laws and standards that govern the work environment, which achieves quality and excellence in performance.

Table No. 01: General average of the dimensions of strategic alignment (N=108)

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

5.2 Descriptive analysis of the strategic decision effectiveness variable: The results shown in Table (2) indicate that

No	Variables	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Level of importance	Level of practice
1	Communications	4.477	0.344	%89.5	3	Very high
2	Governance	4.433	0.319	%88.6	5	Very high
3	Partnership	4.529	0.294	%90.5	1	Very high
4	Infrastructure	4.463	0.331	%89.2	4	Very high
5	Skills	4.490	0.308	%89.8	2	Very high
	Strategic alignment as a whole	4.478	0.319	%89.5	-	Very high

the arithmetic mean of the sample members’ answers to the dimensions of strategic decision effectiveness ranged between (4.488-4.542), with an overall arithmetic mean of (4.513) with relative importance (90.2%) when The evaluation level is high, with a standard deviation of (0.262), which indicates a low percentage of dispersion in the answers of the sample studied, meaning that there is convergence and homogeneity in their views regarding the effectiveness of the strategic decision in the company under study. At the level of sub-dimensions, the dimension (appropriateness of the decision) came in first place, followed in second place by the dimension (quality of the decision), and finally the dimension (acceptance of the decision). These results indicate that the company's management uses decision support systems in order to adapt to the surrounding environment in its strategic decisions taken, and members of the company's administrative organization are affected by these decisions, in addition to relying on modern scientific and practical methods used to evaluate the available alternatives when making effective strategic decisions in the company.

Table No. 02: Results of the sample members’ opinions on the dimensions of the effectiveness of the strategic decision

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

5.3 Testing the correlation hypotheses: Table (3) shows the results of testing the first main hypothesis represented by the correlation hypothesis, as its results indicate the existence of a correlation between the strategic alignment and the

No	The Variable and its effects	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Level of importance	Level of practice
1	Suitability of decision	4.542	0.255	%90.8	1	Very high
2	Accept the decision	4.488	0.249	%89.7	3	Very high
3	Decision quality	4.511	0.283	%90.2	2	Very high
The Strategic alignment as a whole		4.513	0.262	%90.2	-	Very high

effectiveness of the strategic decision, as the value of the correlation coefficient reached (0.615**) at a significance level (0.05). It is a strong positive value that indicates the strength of the relationship between the two variables to confirm what the study highlighted in its theoretical aspect, and supports this result that the more the company's management pays attention to strategic alignment, the more this leads to activating and strengthening its strategic decisions, and thus accepting the first hypothesis in the form of proof.

Table No. 03: Correlation between strategic alignment and strategic decision effectiveness

Dependent variable Independent variable	Effectiveness of strategic decision	
	0.615**	
Strategic alignment	Significance level	Sample size
	0,05	108

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

5.4 Testing the impact hypotheses: Through the results of Table (4), which shows the values of the standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients, the confidence limits, and the (P) value, it is noted that all the values of the regression coefficients related to the dimensions of the strategic alignment variable had a positive sign, with the exception of the (partnership) dimension, which was greater than (0.05); Regarding the dimensions that appeared to be significant, it indicates that there is a direct relationship between these dimensions and the effectiveness of the strategic decision. Also, the (P) values for these dimensions appeared to be less than (0.05), which indicates the significance of the relationship between these dimensions and the dependent variable represented by the effectiveness of the strategic decision. That is, the more any of these dimensions increases by one unit, the more the strategic decision effectiveness variable is strengthened by the value of the regression coefficient attributed to that dimension. Therefore, and based on the previous results, the second hypothesis is accepted, which states: There is a significant effect of strategic alignment on the effectiveness of Strategic decision.

Table No. 04: Impact analysis values of the dimensions of the strategic alignment variable on the strategic decision effectiveness variable

P	Effective Variables	Influencing variables	Confidence Interval 95%		Standard error of the regression coefficient (S.E.)	(Estimates)	Impact path
			Upper Bound	Lower Bound			
0.034	Communications		0.217	0.009	0.053	0.184	< ----

0.002	Governance	Effectiveness of strategic decision	0.297	0.067	0.058	0.275	< -----
0.308	Partnership		0.192	0.061-	0.064	0.091	< -----
0.003	Infrastructure		0.221	0.003	0.055	0.176	< -----
0.013	Skills		0.266	0.013	0.064	0.203	< -----

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of the SPSS program.

6. Conclusion:

Strategic alignment is one of the important topics in contemporary strategic thought for organizations, as organizations can have the ability to achieve their strategic goals, as it has an integrated strategic performance that works to ensure that the organization's departments and individuals work together to achieve a unified organizational goal, and to rehabilitate many... of organizations in order to keep pace with technological changes, as well as providing these organizations with ideas, visions, and horizons that contribute to developing and updating their strategy and reviving them from a state of inactivity, sluggishness, and obsolescence to raising the level of alignment and modernization, which is reflected in the quality of the strategic decisions taken, and in order to increase the strength of the impact of strategic alignment on quality. Strategic decisions and their effectiveness, and this is proven by the results reached by the researchers.

6.2 Main Conclusions:

It was built on the basis of the research results that were reached, in order to answer the questions emerging from the problem of the study and its objectives, and it is presented in order according to what was mentioned, as follows:

- The perception of the study sample members about the strategic alignment in the Asia Cell Telecommunications Company under study came at a very high level of importance for the variable as a whole, as well as for the sub-dimensions. The researcher interprets this result to mean that the administrative leaders in the surveyed company are clearly interested in practicing the characteristics of the strategic alignment that enhances perception Leaders anticipate and envision openness at work and contribute to creating a future-ready company with the ability to set priorities, trust, effective communication, and a comprehensive understanding of business and environmental changes.
- The surveyed company is committed to holding training courses to increase experiences and knowledge and exchange them among themselves, but this commitment did not comprehensively motivate it to exert its utmost efforts in seeking to appoint highly skilled employees in a manner consistent with the work assigned to the employee, with the aim of outperforming competing companies.
- The perception of the study sample members regarding the effectiveness of the strategic decision came at a very high level of importance for the variable as a whole, as well as for the sub-dimensions that make up the dependent variable. The researcher interprets this result by saying that the management of the researched company has the effectiveness in obtaining results from an expected point of view and what is actually achieved and seeks More broadly, it refers to the consistency of the strategic decision in terms of its suitability, acceptance, and quality with the surrounding environmental changes and its quality with competing companies.
- There is a significant correlation between strategic alignment and the effectiveness of the strategic decision in the surveyed company. The correlation was strong positive, and at the level of the sub-dimensions, the highest correlation was between (governance, skills, and the effectiveness of the strategic decision). These results are interpreted to mean that the more the management of the researched company is interested in practicing strategic alignment, the more It is represented by the openness of the company's management, acceptance of the knowledge and experiences of others, and focusing it on a specific person with the aim of being ready to complete a specific job continuously and efficiently through the clear role defined for the employee.
- The results of the study showed that there is a significant impact of the strategic alignment in its dimensions on the effectiveness of the strategic decision in the researched company. Accordingly, the study adopts the conclusion that the administrative leaders in the researched company who are keen to follow the procedures, practices and policies in an efficient manner in accordance with the company's basic capabilities of advanced technology and equipment give the company's management The ability to solve problems through the personal experiences and abilities of employees, which contribute to exchanging them with others through communication and communication according to the basic activities of the company under investigation.

7. Proposals:

This axis includes presenting a set of proposals that the researchers hope will benefit the researched organization and other organizations in the same field of work to address weaknesses and enhance strengths, as revealed by the results of the current research. The proposals were as follows:

- Addressing the shortcomings that occur as a result of weak opportunities for team members working in the researched company to participate in organizational decision-making through the opinions presented by the employee.
- Urging the company's management to give sufficient time to workers to adhere to the external environment represented by customers and to exert their utmost efforts in clarifying work methods and procedures during the implementation of activities.
- The company's managements must take into account balanced plans for partnership in order to exchange constructive ideas between employees that contribute directly to achieving the company's goals.
- Interest in knowing the main motivations of employees and supporting them by holding courses that contribute to the exchange of experiences and new ideas among employees to enhance non-traditional strategic skills in a way that supports the company's strategic alignment.
- The need for the company's management to pay attention to expanding customers' demands for new products and services in a proactive manner, competing with similar companies in the telecommunications market.
- The company's management is keen to employ its human resources and encourage them to submit their proposals to find solutions to existing problems in the work environment and achieve what is expected for the future.
- Supporting opportunities to involve employees in strategic decision-making with the substance and substance of the decisions related to their work and seeking their opinions on the importance of accepting the decision in order to achieve its acceptance in the market.

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