



THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF LEADERSHIP UNDER THE CONFLICT OF INTERESTS - AN ANALYTICAL RESEARCH IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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Abstract

Leaders realize that the continuity of the work performed within the organization requires prevention and dealing with conflict situations in a way that serves the interests of all parties and maintains a state of balance between the conflicting interests of the parties working within the organization. Questionnaire is used to collection data by (57), the statistical tools of correlation and regression analysis were used to prove the hypotheses or not. The study population is determined by the leaders working in the institution of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The importance of the study was represented in the fact that it completed the knowledge extension of the strategic leadership and emphasized the role that the leader is supposed to play with the case of multiple visions. The most prominent conclusion was the weakness of the strategic role of the leader in the institutions of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, these resulting from the monotonous routine government work that Not giving a chance for leader to move freely according to the strategic concepts of leadership and the situation is confirmed with the multiplicity of decision-making sources.

Keywords: strategic leadership, organizational conflict



Introduction

The current research seeks to study the strategic leadership from the perspective of multiple visions and interests and the confusion that surrounds the strategic decision-maker as a result of subordination and the issuance of decisions from higher authorities that reflect different points of view and the resulting conflicts between the decision-making authorities on the one hand and the parties Executive, on the other hand, With the existence of a knowledge gap identified by reviewing the knowledge contributions of previous researchers, which focused on the study of the personal characteristics of the leader and the mix between art and science and the ability to implement in the presence of effective work teams and the ability to coordinate the leader between the active departments in the process of strategic management, All of this personifies the knowledge gap with the existence of different wills that force the leader to make decisions that are not necessarily in the interest of the organization, but rather may serve the viewpoints of its makers with the presence of monotony in the work performed within the annual curriculum, Accordingly, the problem was diagnosed with the state of conflict and chaos that the leader is exposed to in light of relying on technical knowledge and working as a leader who bypasses some of the decisions taken by higher authorities, justifying that with his technical knowledge of the details of the work and between working in the traditional job of the manager who implements what is dictated to him by the leaders in light of routine chore, The aim of the research is to identify the characteristics that the leader is supposed to present with such conflicts and how he can overcome the conflicts that occur within the organization.



Literature review

Since 1977 when Abraham Zaleznik presented his article “Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?” Creating a state of controversy about the scientific and technical foundations of management, or rather leadership, and whether they are complementary or separate, (Foss, 2000) discussed the symbolic and behavioral dimension of leaders and how they can contribute to coordinating strategies across levels of the organization by creating a special understanding of leadership by spreading the knowledge that leaders want, and he defines leadership as "leadership as the taking of actions that coordinate the complementary actions of many people through the creation of belief conditions that substitute for common knowledge, and where these actions characteristically consists of some act of communication directed at those being led" (Zaccaro et al., 2001) presented a study of the impact of leadership dynamics and how it can build effective work teams through which the required changes can be made, Within the framework of the coordination process, (Dietrich, 2007) presented the types of coordination strategies, which are central, balanced, and subordinate, and the role of leadership and the important place for successful coordination of any distinguished programmatic implementation, (Bolton, 2012) presented the coordinating role of leaders in large organizations and how the personal qualities of leaders such as persuasion or firmness in dealing can have a positive and negative side, and the researchers concluded the need to use firmness while spreading a culture that firmness is used only for work purposes and not for personal purposes, A study (Mapetere, 2012) confirmed the crucial role of effective leadership in the success of the strategy and that the absence of the leader’s coordinating role in the strategic



implementation process will lead to partial success for the chosen strategy, (Wheeler, 2015) presented the impact of culture, organizational structures, and authority on coordination between the different departments in the organization, given that the strategy is prepared at the level of departments and integrated at the level of the organization, and the researchers found that strategic planners have the ability to create good coordination, provided there are cultures and Structures and authority that help in overcoming conflict situations, (Mohamed, 2017) suggested that any coordination process between the operating departments in the organization and in light of the implementation of the strategy requires intervention from the leadership at all stages of the strategy, and this intervention requires possessing the skills of analysis, participation and monitoring of all the activities shown by the employees , (aJOKIĆ et al., 2019) presented that leadership and management are two coordinated processes needed by the strategic process in order to coordinate resources and different visions between parts of the organization, especially with the turbulent situations it is going through, (Schaedler et al., 2022) studied the effective role of leadership in the event of organizational crises, and resolving these crises requires a strategic role from the leader, and this role is divided according to the type of leader. On the cognitive ability of staff members, while leaders on the board of director's focus on agency theory and discussions that relate to their interests, In light of the foregoing, our contribution will focus on the study of strategic leadership in a state of turmoil and chaos, and the multiplicity of visions in front of the decision-maker.



Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership is very important because it helps achieve the vision of the organization by providing directives and instructions that represent a road map for workers, so it is useless if the organization's resources are not consistent and directed towards achieving the strategic goals of the organization (Varelas et al, 2023:2), In light of the direction of the organization towards achieving competitive advantage, which has become the main concern of all organizations in a world where products are not the only thing capable of providing security for the organization, and to achieve this advantage, there must be a leadership that understands the common values and cultures in the organization to be able to build those The strategy that all stakeholders participate in implementing, and this is what constitutes more complexity and difficulty for the leadership position (Mubarak & Yusoff, 2019:32-33), Strategic leadership is a prerequisite for any process of implementing a successful strategy. Leadership may turn out to be a motive for achieving the strategy, but it may constitute an obstacle. Without a belief in the importance of the goals that the organization desires to achieve, the strategy cannot be achieved (Ogola, 2019:2), It is not possible to easily prepare a successful message by the leadership except after collecting a lot of information and working to integrate it properly, and this can only be achieved by listening carefully to the parties that will have an effective influence in the future in the process of strategic implementation within the various levels of the organization, and the next stage is having a capable team To overcome cultural and behavioral limitations and share knowledge in a way that facilitates the successful implementation of the prepared strategy in the future (Bolton et al, 2011:1) , In



order for the leader to be able to implement the strategy effectively, he must possess four skills (mindset, self-evaluation, supervision, control, and communication) (Mjaku, 2020: 915) , The twentieth century imposed the trend towards collective leadership away from individualism, so that synergies in learning faster, uniting efforts, and overcoming weaknesses, all of which will be reflected in the competitiveness of the organization (DUURSEMA, 2013: 7), The concept of strategic leadership contains four basic concepts, which are the vision and detailed nature of the organization's work, and work to enhance confidence and drive towards creativity and innovation (Jaradat & Mashhour, 2017: 327), The concept of strategic leadership, whether on the experimental or theoretical side, is to see how the performance of these managers affects the performance of working individuals) (Singh et al., 2016: 216), Any process through which the leader seeks to create a sense of purpose and goal, and to enable employees to deal with internal and external stakeholders, contributes to achieving the organization's strategy (Jaleha & Machuki, 2018:126), The psychological dimension of future work has a significant impact on the performance of employees, as a result of the daily pressure from the work they perform, and this cannot be overcome by leaders without training and adapting individuals properly, and most importantly of all, the human dimension of leaders must be included in training programs that must be Its results are tangible by individuals (NUMBER et al., 2010:55), Leaders have the ability to predict future changes and direct individuals in the light of these predictions, which creates a state of confidence among individuals in the ability of their leaders to direct the future (Abbas & Asghar: 2010:10), Leadership is defined as the ability of the leader to influence a group of employees to accomplish the

requirements of the vision and, as a result, the goals, while Daft defined leadership as the ability of the leader to push individuals towards achieving organizational goals. Generally, there is a difference between the leadership and managerial roles. Through the power inherent in their positions while the leader exceeds the achievement of the set goals and maintains their permanence through the qualities of technical leadership (Welch, 2013:9), In addition, strategic leadership is not unilateral (Otieno, 2020:4), Rather, it is a boat consisting of a captain for this boat that sails in light of heavy waves and favorable working conditions at times and a storm at other times. Here, the role of the leader emerges, who can use different skills and has the authority that he uses to overcome difficulties, unlike the manager who adheres to directives the higher leaders cannot maneuver quickly when any changes occur that require speedy decision-making. The other side of the boat are the individuals who make up the boat with its floor and sail, but a boat without a captain who knows what to do. The boat will not sail, and if it sails, it will capsize at the first big waves as Figure (1) .



Figure (1) working waves



Organizational conflicts

Conflict presented many meanings to scholars because of its nature and spread. Conflict is a human nature that is reflected in any field in which the human element has the precedence in establishing and working in it. Any opposition from one party to the other constitutes a conflict as long as there is a difference in viewpoints on the same issue (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014: 118), Conflict arises in the workplace between individuals within the same organization as a result of direct engagement between individuals, whether within the same organizational level or between different levels when there are differences on concepts, convictions, values and goals. The conflict between individuals may be constructive or destructive (Neupane, 2022:145), It is either a positive conflict that can be controlled and transformed in the interest of the organization and the achievement of its goals is conditional on the quality of the conflict towards dialogue about the means through which the goals can be achieved (ABAZEED, 2017:182) ,And conflicts within the organization may arise from the following causes (Mohamed, 2015:548):

- a) Overlapping responsibilities: Conflicts arise as a result of a lack of precise definition of the responsibilities of workers.
- b) Personal problems: the result of previous conflicts between people at the level of personal relationships may be reflected in the organizational conflict.
- c) Scarcity of resources: conflicts arise due to the lack of abundance of resources or their distribution among the members of the organization in a fair or equal manner.



d) Conflict of interests: When the interests of the organization conflict with the individual goals of the workers, the conflict is achieved. Many individuals seek to achieve personal goals with an organizational eye, thinking that it is in the interest of the organization.

As far as the issue of unequal distribution of resources is concerned, the leader or manager giving importance to a specific department or person and ignoring other members generates organizational conflict, and this is what falls under the name of favoritism as a result of friendship or personal relationship.

Despite the fact that strategic leadership is a very important issue in the success of organizations, the conflict between the administrative trends by senior management with the directions of leaders is subject to great difference, and it limits the creative role of the leader and leads him to make inaccurate decisions, (Davies & Davies, 2008:13), In the presence of conflicts in the strategic process, the theory of strategic conflict assumes rationality and maximizing behaviors. The issue of conflict is natural, and at the same time, there are common interests among the conflicting parties that push them to act rationally within the limits of the expected gains from opponents. The process of conflict prevention is not a simple matter, as it needs a broad approach and confirms the need with the transition to globalization, as conflicts take different forms and are of three types. Personal conflict, which results between two individuals because of personal motives, the second between groups due to scarcity of resources, and the third is the horizontal conflict between jobs and the vertical between hierarchical levels (Vahabi, 2009:821), In fact, the organizational conflict is an inevitable result of social interaction due to the lack of compatibility in interests or the nature of the goals

that they wish to achieve, and it seems that these conflicts have behavioral signs emanating from the human psyche (Asante, 2020: 38-39), The organizational conflict has dimensions that differ according to the different points of view that dealt with the conflict, and table (1) presents the different points of view in forming the dimensions (Chaudhry & Asif, 2015: 239-240):

Table (1) dimensions of organizational conflict

dimensions	Viewpoint	researcher
personal conflict conflict between groups Conflict between group members	Individual leaders	(Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Nelson, 1989)
Emotional conflict Thematic conflict	conflict direction)Simons and Peterson, 2000, Pinkley, 1990(
The struggle of enthusiasm Temple Struggle Responsibility struggle	organizational climate	(Apipalakul & Kummoon,2017)
Avoidance Appeasement Strength confrontation	Organization identity	(Hasan et al.,2021)

Dimensions of conflict

First: Avoiding conflict: Conflict may appear to be an unhealthy issue for the future of the organization, while working in teams is a natural issue in which



conflict is a result of competition for supremacy. With the existence of effective methods to resolve conflict, it will transform from an unhealthy issue into an effective tool for the progress of the organization, On the contrary, avoidance of conflict may be an unhealthy state of indifference followed by a state of monotonous work devoid of creativity, and with the presence of low-importance conflict situations, avoiding it is useful for avoiding such conflicts at the present time (Abiodun, 2021:1485) , In general, conflict avoidance works as a remedy for such cases, and avoidance may take various forms such as awarding rewards, directing work, and others. With conflict not being addressed and avoided, it is the result of creativity and healthy change, which will certainly be reflected in the goals of the organization. With the issue of conflict avoidance, there are several The traditional viewpoints that stand by avoiding conflict because not ignoring it will cause destruction and violence, and the view of human relations that conflict is a natural issue, while the viewpoint of interaction, conflict is a positive issue, and managers should manage it and keep it at a minimum level to encourage creativity and change (Aduku et al., 2017: 7).

Second: Confrontation: It represents the situation in which conflict rages between two parties, which is characterized by a negative relationship, and as a result of this conflict there must be a winning party and another loser. It may seem at first glance that this confrontation may lead to negative effects, including the elimination of the spirit of teamwork, but at other times It becomes necessary to get rid of those relationships that are tainted by non-cooperation and cases of negative interaction continuously, which fuels the spirit of conflict between all parties, and may even extend to cases of support from other parties who have



emotional tendencies with the conflicting parties (Abdul Al-Razzaq and Abdul-Hussein, 2021: 148) ,Confrontation arises as a result of an individual's desire to achieve personal gains at the expense of collective gains, and here work will be done individually and personally by that individual to achieve personal benefits for himself, away from the interest of the organization (Al-Aboudi, 2020: 140).

Third: Cooperation and altruism: Cooperation occurs whenever there are common goals between the conflicting or conflicting parties, and the desire of these parties not to lose the current situation, to overcome points of disagreement, and to agree on common ground in order to achieve interests and benefits for both parties. (Emmanuel & Patience, 2019: 3-4) , Conflict between the parties may end in favoring one person with his personal interest in the face of the public interest, which may result either from a high psychological level that transcends the struggle for personal interests that may cause damage to the greater public interest, or as a result of possible fears of the ability to confront that crystallize in the form of self-altruism, or it may be A desire on the part of the conceding person to calm the conflict temporarily and to rearm with the tools that help him win the outcome of the conflict in the future(Abdul Razzaq and Abdul Hussein, 2021: 148)

Fourth: Power: In the presence of conflicts, the manager tries to solve such conflicts by using **Power** of coercion or forcing the conflicting parties to implement orders and instructions, this power does not come from a vacuum, as there must be sources of this power, such as the possession of skill, knowledge, and experience in a specific field, or the possession of resources by a specific party (Al-Shammari et al., 2021: 129), when the managers are able to direct the conflict or use power in a way that serves the interest of the organization by avoiding the



points of disagreement that cause conflict and agreement between the conflicting parties on the points that achieve their benefits and goals, and therefore the use of power may achieve a great benefit for the organization whenever it is able to use it appropriately (Mizal, 2022: 212).

Research methodology

The problem: oscillation between working as a leader who bypasses routine work procedures and working as a manager who implements decisions without having a clear and complete vision of the reality of organizational conflicts and the imbalances they cause in achieving goals, and the issue is confirmed with the strategic dimension of leadership and organizational conflict

Objectives: Achieving the best way for the success of the strategic process in light of conflicts that reflect different points of view, depending on the capabilities inherent in the strategic leaders.

Community and sample: The study population was determined by the formations of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and the sample consisted of workers with leadership positions within the ministry's formations.

Data collection: A questionnaire was designed to collect data from the leaders working in the institution of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, by 60 questionnaires, only 57 were retrieved.

Hypothesis chart

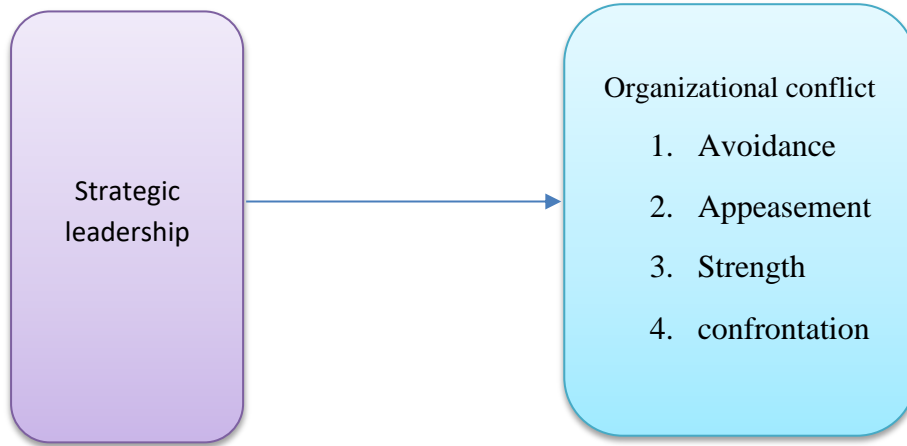


Figure (2) Hypothesis chart

5. Hypothesis testing

The current research seeks to test the hypotheses of the study by relying on the spearman correlation to prove the validity of the hypotheses or not, in addition to determining the agreement of the research sample's answers about the degree of the answer in the seven-point Likert scale.

i. Model Summary

Table (2) Model Summary

Independent variable	Dependent variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Strategic leadership	avoid	.228	.214	1.49891
	cooperation	.412	.402	1.10189
	Power	.205	.190	1.63357
	Confrontation	.062	.045	1.35950



By observing the results presented in the table (2), it becomes clear that the strategic leadership variable is responsible for explaining changes in the conflict avoidance variable by 22%, 41% for explaining what befalls cooperation, 20% for the amount of what befalls strength, 6% for explaining the change in confrontation, and It is the lowest percentage. In general, the strategic leadership variable under the organizational government institutions under the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is responsible in low percentages for the amount of changes that occur in the organizational conflict variable across the dimensions that have been indicated. The government's tendency to avoid conflicts between individuals or groups, which is confirmed by the Ministry's policy with the principle of zeroing out problems, and the value of Adjusted R square indicates that the model, even if it is re-tested in the future, the adjustments that will occur to the value of R square will be slight, and the value of Std. Error of the Estimate respectively (1.49891,1.10189,1.63357,1.35950).

ii. statistical frequencies

Table (3) provides the calculation of the means and standard deviations for the study sample answers.

Table (3): Statistical frequencies

Statistics						
		leadership	avoid	cooperation	Power	Confrontation
N	Valid	57	57	57	57	57
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	3.1439	3.7588	3.5746	3.7982	3.6886



Std. Deviation	1.48709	1.69095	1.42441	1.81538	1.39136
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From the results shown in Table (3), the following is evident:

1. There are no missing data to indicate that there are no losses in the number of questionnaires that were distributed.
2. The average of the responses was within the value 3, which corresponds to the answer with the word (sometime agree).
3. The Heterogeneity of the answers of the study sample, as it did exceed the value of one correct standard deviation, as it reached the highest value within the power dimension, by (1.81538)

iii. Testing the hypotheses of the study by correlation table(4) (There is no correlation between strategic leadership and organizational struggle)

Table 4: Correlations between the main and sub-variables

Correlations		leadership	avoid	cooperation	Power	Confrontation	
Spearman's rho	leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.437**	.603**	.273*	.341**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.000	.040	.009
	avoid	Correlation Coefficient	.437**	1.000	.763**	.484**	.742**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.000	.000	.000
	cooperation	Correlation Coefficient	.603**	.763**	1.000	.368**	.657**
		Sig. (2-tailed)					



		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.005	.000
Power	Correlation		.273*	.484**	.368**	1.000	.185
	Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.000	.005	.	.168
Confrontati on	Correlation		.341**	.742**	.657**	.185	1.000
	Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.000	.000	.168	.
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

It is noted from Table (4) that:

- a) A strong direct correlation between strategic leadership and organizational conflict in their dimensions.
- b) The significance of the correlation between all dimensions reached (0.000) to indicate the strength of the correlation between the dimensions and at a significant level of 0.01 to give test confidence limits of 99%, except for the correlation between the strategic leadership and power as it was significant, but at the level of 0.05 to give confidence in the test by an amount 95%.
- c) The correlation between the variables was positive to indicate the direct movement of the relationship between the dimensions of the study. For example, when strategic leadership is movement at .603**, the level of cooperation moving at the same level.

d) Through the results shown in Table (2), we reject the null and accept the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a correlation between the variables and dimensions of the study, has been proven

iv. .Testing the impact hypotheses related to the main variables and sub-dimensions of the study: (There is no impact of strategic leadership on organizational conflict across its dimensions):

Table (5) the regression of the **strategic leadership** on organizational **conflict**

Independent variable	Strategic leadership	Dependent variable			
		α	β	F	Sig.
		avoid			
		2.051	0.543	16.268	.000 ^b
		cooperation			
		1.641	0.615	38.579	.000 ^b
		Power			
		2.062	0.552	14.159	.000 ^b
		Confrontation			
		2.954	0.234	3.656	.061 ^b

As shown in the table (5) The F value of 16.268 is presented with a significance of 0.000 to negate the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that strategic leadership has an effect on conflict avoidance. The amount of increase in conflict avoidance is by the beta parameter at 0.543 to give an indication of the amount of change that will occur in conflict avoidance when the strategic



leadership changes by one unit. With regard to the cooperation dimension, it is also significant at an F value equal to 38.579. The null hypothesis will also be rejected and the alternative will be accepted that strategic leadership has an impact on cooperation between individuals and that the amount of movement of this dimension will be at the value of the beta parameter of 0.615. The null hypothesis was also rejected for the power dimension, depending on the significant value of F at 0.000, which has a value of 14.159, and that the amount of change that will occur when the strategic leadership changes one unit is 0.552 in the power dimension, and on the same previous explanation, the null hypothesis will be rejected for the confrontation dimension. Depending on the significance of the F value of 3.656 and accepting the alternative hypothesis that if the strategic leadership changes one unit, it will change after the confrontation by 0.234

Conclusion

The research aims to determine the role played by the strategic leadership to control the conflicts that occur between individuals, whether individually or groups. It is assumed that conflicts will not be achieved with such a routine nature of business, but the reality indicates that conflicts are generated in executive departments that suffer from multiplicity of understanding and the conflicts generated by it, and here the role of leadership in dealing with such conflicts emerges, leadership that is able to employ the principles of leadership Towards controlling the conflicts that occur as a result of the multiplicity of decision sources or as a result of conflicting understanding of the issued decisions, and the reality of the researched organization indicates the emergence of the role of strategic leadership with the organizational conflict dimensions of avoidance and



cooperation, and this confirms the role of the researched organization in its constant attempt to zero problems while the dimension of strength The situation takes the middle between avoiding conflict and direct confrontation between individuals, while the role of strategic leadership has not been achieved in the case of confrontation between individuals, as it is a final stage of conflict, in light of the foregoing, the need to give greater importance to strategic leadership to confront conflicts that may occur.

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