



## The Impact of the Strategic Leadership in Strategic Learning Exploratory Research at Anbar University

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### Abstract:

This study aims to know the extent of the impact of Strategic Leadership as an independent variable in Strategic Learning as a dependent variable to help the senior leadership in Anbar University to take the right decisions to develop Strategic Learning programs in light of the circumstances of the Covid-19 and the sudden decisions adopted by the university to switch to E-learning and to blend. The survey was conducted by distributing a questionnaire that was adopted as a primary tool in data collection from the study sample represented by the university's senior leaders, An intentional random sample of (105) was selected from our community of (127), the data were analyzed by (SPSS) Depending on the set of statistical means, including (the weighted arithmetic mean, standard deviation, relative importance, coefficient of variation, coefficient of determination, stability test, ranks correlation coefficient, simple linear regression analysis). The research reached several results, the most important of which is the existence of a strong statistically significant correlation and impact relationship between Strategic Leadership and Strategic Learning in its dimensions at Anbar University, and this means the university leadership was able to find well appropriate solutions to enhance its capabilities in the transformation to strategic learning. Moreover, this study came to complement its ideas brought by previous research on Strategic Leadership and Strategic Learning by proposing a conceptual model that clarifies the interrelationships between the main variables of research and how to adopt them in Iraqi universities in general and Anbar University in particular.

Paper type: Research paper

**Keywords:** Strategic Leadership, Strategic Learning, University Of Anbar.

**Introduction:**

The rapid change that the world has witnessed today due to the spread of the emerging Covid-19 and the critical changes that came with it on the global stage in all areas of life prompted most of the world's organizations to change their pattern of work suddenly, most of the world's organizations chiefly educational institutions were forced overnight to shift from direct education to electronic and Blended Learning. Therefore the attention of its members to its higher levels has become more focused as they have a vision with a strategic dimension to explore the unknown future that surrounds their organizations.

Strategic Learning in universities has become essential for their survival to help them face the doubts and complexities occurring in the global environment surrounding them (Garavan: 2007). if Organizations embedded in Strategic Learning achieve a competitive advantage and outperform their competitors by choosing activities differently from others (Elliot:2018). As a result of having the experience and competence and its ability to find radical and vital solutions to ensure the survival of their organizations in the long term.

The University of Anbar in Iraq was chosen as Being one of the universities in developing countries that seek to keep pace with modernity and development to provide the best educational services to its students in light of the current circumstance and its limited capabilities compared to the level of education obtained in developed countries which posed a significant challenge to its leaders to find the best solutions in order to develop their university to keep pace learning programs accredited by international universities, from here we can say did the leaders of Anbar University were able to employ the leadership skills they have in order to influence and advance the education wheel in the right direction despite the lack of its resources and experience compared to the developed world countries and the sudden changes in the pattern of education that must be provided to its students.

**Theoretical Framework:****Strategic Leadership:****First: The Concept of Strategic Leadership:**

Today Strategic Leadership is an essential concept in the science of strategic management, as it plays a critical role in the success of organizations of all kinds today (Alhyasta & Sharif, 2016:1). In addition to its essential role in the processes of influence and interaction between all individuals within organizations to achieve their goals (Setiawan & Yuniarsih, 2018:63). Before dealing with the concept of Strategic Leadership, we will touch upon the concept of "leadership" in its general sense, as leadership was defined as " The process influence of the leader on his followers and directing their work towards a particular goal" (Meraku, 2017:336). As for strategic leadership, it was defined by (Samimi et al., 2019: 3) as " A set of tasks and functions that are entrusted to the leaders of the higher levels of the organization to bring about important changes on it". On our part, we see that Strategic Leadership is "a set of responsibilities that are given to the leaders of the higher levels of the organization to enable them to make critical decisions through which they work to maintain the long-term effectiveness of the organization".

(Luthra & Dahiya,2015: 44) Moreover, (Mubarak & Yusof, 2019: 34) show that strategic leaders in organizations can build trust and respect among employees, and this helps them develop their organizations faster. Good leaders can diagnose points of weakness from their organizations, and they can overcome them and turn them into points of strength (Abdul Rahman et al., 2018: 1387). The goal of Strategic Leadership in organizations is to create a work environment for the organization in which employees take seriously what their organizations need and how they can work towards achieving their goals through the work they perform (Otwori & Muturi, 2019: 170). The most important thing that distinguishes Strategic Leadership from the concept of leadership is that leadership in its general perspective refers to any level of leadership in the organization. At the same time, Strategic Leadership is concerned with only studying the higher levels of the organization (Abuzaid, 2016: 329). Leaders at higher levels can transform their organizations from failed to successful through better use of plans and resources available to them (Jabbar & Hussein, 2017: 100). (Shoemaker & Krupp:2015) show that the importance of Strategic Leadership lies in its ability to cope with ambiguities and uncertainties occurring in its environment (Saleha & machuki, 2018: 128).

(Norzailan et al., 2016: 66) & (Gaitho et al., 2018: 396) agree that Strategic Leadership is one of the essential elements in organizations because it allows her leaders to anticipate and know the changes that are occurring in their environment in order to adapt to ensure their survival in the long term. In addition, she helps to develop their intellectual characteristics and develops their ability to know the organization's internal and external environment in order to analyze it address its weaknesses, and strengthen them in the future (Palladan et al., 2016: 110). On our part, we can see that Strategic Leadership is reflected in its ability to help the leaders of the organization to recognize the uncertainties and ambiguities it faces in light of the increasing developments occurring in the world today, as well as its ability to adapt to sudden changes that occur in the environment of the organization.

### **Second: Dimensions of Strategic Leadership:**

When talking about strategic leadership, we must make it clear that there is no agreement among researchers on specific dimensions of strategic leadership, as they disagree about its specific dimensions, and this difference in the dimensions reflects the nature of the organization's work and the environment its livein and interacts with her.

For this study, the dimensions of kitonga study (kitonga, 2017) were relied upon, which identified four dimensions of strategic leadership, which are (defining strategic direction, developing human capital, enhancing ethical practices, maintaining stable strategic oversight) because as the most comprehensive dimensions as well as being the closest to the research environment in developing countries, these dimensions are explained below:

**1- Defining the Strategic Direction:** the strategic direction is known as (the strategic goal), which is a short phrase that indicates the future direction of the organization and what it wants to be (Ng'ang'a,2016:21). Determining the strategic direction of any organization has a fundamental role in its continuation, so it cannot be overlooked or left without wise leadership because leaving it will inevitably lead to its failure (Kitonga et al., 2016: 28). In addition to being one of the most important elements of the organization's strategy, because he is Determines the long-term orientations and objectives of the organization, and it is also the basis on which the organization builds its organizational structure for what it wants in the future (Samsudin et al., 2018: 93).

**2- Human Capital Development:** Human capital is defined as the optimal investment of the human resources in the organization in order to increase the level of its capabilities to be able to use it in the distant future (Nojedeh & Pasban, 2016:250). The development of human capital relates to the processes of employee education and training in order to develop their skills, raise their intellectual and cognitive level and increase their capabilities in order to obtain their satisfaction and thus raise the level of the organization (marimuthu et al., 2009: 266). It is a long-term investment through which the organization tries to obtain an efficient and effective resource that it will work to strengthen through training and development to make it more experienced in managing the aspirations of the organization in the future.

**3- Promoting Moral Behaviour:** Ethics has been defined through (daft) as a set of correct principles, values, and rules that an individual or group of people possesses to determine good practices and procedures or not (Abdul, 2016: 323). if the ethics of organizations has become an essential topic in the business world today as a result of the scandals affecting some organizations such as (Enron & World.Com), providing ethical behavior has become a critical issue for leaders in order to save their organizations and provide their employees with good information (Celikdemir & Paker, 2016: 3). Ethical behavior is strengthened through ethical tools that work to make fundamental changes in organizations in order to improve their business and services and to address ethical problems that will be utilized later to move them in the right direction (Purwanto et al., 2019: 150).

**4- Maintaining Stable Strategic Control:** Strategic control has been defined as the set of systems through which the organization's objectives are determined and its measurement tools to indicate whether the organization is achieving the required goals or not (Wanjohi, 2013: 3). Strategic control is not only concerned with evaluating the performance of organizations. On the contrary, it focuses on achieving the long-term goals of the organization (Ondoro, 2017: 363).

## **Strategic Learning:**

### **First: the Concept of Strategic Learning:**

The concept of Strategic Learning was introduced by (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) and then later developed by (Kuwada 1998) as a comparison to the traditional idea of organizational learning, which is seen as "something that is deployed in the service of current strategies as workers learn the skills and competencies needed to achieve the strategy Intended" (Voronov, 2008: 196). Strategic Learning is a specific type of organizational learning related to the ability of the organization to derive knowledge from strategic actions and thus make use of that knowledge to modify its strategies (Anderson et al. 2009: 218). It focuses on teaching the strategies to workers (i.e., metacognition) to enhance their ability to learn (Salonen et al., 2018: 14). Strategic Learning was defined by (Siren et al., 2017: 146) as "the ability of an organization to adapt in the long term that allows it to disconnect from its current strategic path". He also defined Strategic Learning as "reinventing strategy as a process to generate continuous renewal in times of constant change" (Reese,2020:20). On our part, we see that Strategic Learning is the "organization's ability to restructure its current strategies according to the circumstances it is exposed to and rearrange them in order to achieve long-term stability and competition".

In the perspective of organizational behavior, Strategic Learning is highlighted as the ability to create mechanisms for the strategic behavior design process to help organizations perceive and take action to acquire specific knowledge (Dimitriades, 2005:316). Because Strategic Learning is rooted in the strategy development process for a reinvention strategy that allows for the continuous renewal and change of strategic knowledge (Moon & Ruona, 2015: 659). Strategic Learning aims to help workers become lifelong self-learners who can learn effectively in any learning environment (Salonen et al., 2018: 14). In addition, it teaches individuals how to learn, not just what they learn, but also learn strategies that enable them to carry out various tasks in the organization (Beer et al., 2005:448). Strategic Learning helps individuals overcome areas of weakness in their performance to become more efficient and effective learners at the level at which they can think flexibly and transfer their jobs to different tasks and not be restricted to their areas of specialization to encourage them to pursue future learning in order to face challenges (Teng & Zhang, 2016: 127). That is it works to make employees more experienced and efficient in dealing with the changes that the organization is exposed to by enhancing their skills in strategic thinking, which makes them able to make the most difficult decisions even if they are at the lowest levels in the organization.

Strategic Learning helps transform information such as new experiences into knowledge and allows organizations to act on them to enhance knowledge asymmetry that helps on improving its performance (Chillakuri, 2018: 3). In addition, it ensures that organizations acquire strategic knowledge, interpret and implement it as an exploratory process that enables individuals in the organization to gather strategic information from their environment and learn from environmental interactions to expand their current knowledge (Rezaee & Shirazian, 2020: 9). Strategic Learning supports organizations and individuals in developing strategies in light of unexpected situations, and most organizations have begun to develop Strategic Learning as a way to overcome the crises they

face by adopting a strategic approach that identifies the problem and defines the necessary action plan to overcome (Antonacopoulou et al., 2012: 4).

### **Second: Dimensions of Strategic Learning:**

Strategic Learning has many dimensions, and for this research, we will touch upon the dimensions that he identified (Moon et al.,:2017) Being one of the dimensions most accepted by researchers:

1- **External Focus:** The external focus refers to the ability to analyze and learn from the external and internal environmental conditions of the organization, as the continuous environmental conditions and changes of the prevailing traditional reality imposed on the organization's adoption of a proactive approach to environmental practices to help it speed up dealing and adapt its strategy to its environment (Darnall et al., 2010:1072).

2- **People-centered Strategy:** Technologically savvy organizations began using big data to improve decision-making and continuously understand and monitor individuals to create value-added strategies for their organizations (Camilleri, 2020:51).

3- **Strategic Participation:** It means the ability to translate and operate the strategy to involve the organizational system and the workforce towards participating strategically in the organization by proactively increasing the value of human resources in organizations in order to improve the quality of human resource service in them (uen et al., 2012: 5).

4- **Strategic Dialogue:** Strategic dialogue refers to the ability of managers to exchange ideas through collective participation and challenge (when necessary) to prevailing assumptions and beliefs when dealing with complex multifunctional issues how to think about formulating a vision and make better decisions and action strategies to implement it (Bourgoin et al., 2018: 5).

5- **Controlled Imagination:** Controlled imagination refers to exploring new emerging and creative ideas and possibilities, applying structures and rules to create a high-quality strategy that increases the likelihood of successful adaptation, and imagining and evaluating future strategic alternatives for the organization ( Szulanski & Doz, 1995: 5).

6- **Experiential Learning:** It refers to the ability to use past experiences and livelihoods gained from the environment to explain new situations and address new emerging challenges faced by organizations through the workers' belief in their abilities to be confident in achieving work achievement effectively (Distira, 2019:147).

7- **Reflexive Response:** the ability to think effectively in response to unexpected signals of opportunities and threats that loom over the horizon before setting up the strategy and the ability to act faster when the mist of uncertainty clears to understand what those signals mean (Schoemaker & Day, 2020: 1).

**The Methodological Framework:**

#### **A-Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables:**

In this part of the topic, we will deal with a description of the variables that the study dealt with in its model consisting of two variables(Strategic Leadership and strategic learning). Given the many dimensions of the study variables, we will explain the relationship between the two variables mainly when explaining her, With a detailed statement of the figures for the results for all dimensions.

### 1- Presenting the results of the Strategic Leadership dimension:

Table no: (1) shows that the Strategic Leadership achieved at the general level a high arithmetic mean was (4.11) and this is a high value and the standard deviation and coefficient of variation were (0.69) and (17.16%) respectively, and this reflects good harmony in the answers of the sample members and while it achieved relative importance Very high (82.21%), and This is a good result that indicates the sample agreement on how important are the research variables.

Table (1) The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and relative importance for strategic leadership.

Strategic Leadership		Mean	St . dev.	Coefficient of Variation	Relative Importance
1	Defining the Strategic Direction	4.09	0.69	17.17	81.85
2	Human Capital Development	3.93	0.77	19.52	78.56
3	Promoting Moral Behavior	4.46	0.58	12.99	89.19
4	Maintaining Stable Strategic Control	4	0.74	18.42	79.98
Total of dimensions strategic leadership		4.11	0.69	17.16	82.21

### 2- Presentation of the Results of the Strategic Learning Dimension:

Table no: (2) shows that Strategic Learning achieved at the general level a high arithmetic mean was (3.93) and this is a high value while the standard deviation and coefficient of variation were (0.74) and (18.79%) respectively, and they reflect good harmony in the answers of the sample members, and while it achieved high relative importance was (78.57%), This is a good result that reflects the interest of the studied sample in the importance of Strategic Learning for their organization.

Table (2) The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and relative importance for strategic learning.

Strategic Learning		Mean	St . dev.	Coefficient of Variation	Relative Importance
1	External Focus	3.97	0.72	17.17	79.47
2	People-centered Strategy	3.95	0.71	17.88	78.95
3	Strategic Participation	4.03	0.66	16.39	80.58
4	Strategic Dialogue	3.81	0.80	21.09	76.19
5	Controlled Imagination	3.94	0.76	19.3	78.85
6	Experiential Learning	4.01	0.76	18.83	80.19
7	Reflexive Response	3.91	0.68	17.48	78.27
Total of Dimensions Strategic Learning		3.93	0.74	18.8	78.57

**B- Test Research Hypotheses**

The two main hypotheses are:

**The First Hypothesis:** Strategic Leadership is associated with Strategic Learning and its dimensions positively and morally.

**The Second Hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant impact of Strategic Leadership on Strategic Learning and its dimensions.

**1- Testing the Hypotheses of Correlation:**

Table No: (3) showed that the independent variable the Strategic Leadership in its four dimensions mainly achieved positive correlations with the dependent variable Strategic Learning with its dimensions, and all these relationships were significant at a significance level (0.01), if was the correlation coefficient between the Strategic Leadership and Strategic Learning Very high and a ratio of (0.796 \*\*).

Thus we will accept the first major search hypothesis:

(Strategic Leadership is associated with Strategic Learning and its dimensions positively and morally).

**Table (3) testing the hypotheses of correlation for Strategic Leadership and Strategic learning**

Strategic Learning Strategic Leadership	External Focus	People-centered strategy	Strategic participation	Strategic dialogue	Controlled Imagination	Experiential learning	Reflexive response	Strategic Learning
Defining the Strategic Direction	0.580* *	** 0.571	0.585* *	0.506* *	0.591* *	0.515* *	0.475* *	0.622* *
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Human Capital Development	0.604* *	0.657* *	0.654* *	0.679* *	0.626* *	0.604* *	0.492* *	0.709* *
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Promoting Moral Behavior	0.565* *	0.528* *	0.538* *	0.462* *	0.452* *	0.434* *	0.341* *	0.554* *
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Maintaining Stable Strategic Control	0.700* *	0.778* *	0.741* *	0.667* *	0.669* *	0.576* *	0.613* *	0.788* *
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Strategic Leadership	0.723* *	0.741* *	0.760* *	0.697* *	0.795* *	0.625* *	0.571* *	0.796* *
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Correlation Is Significant At The Level ( 0.01) N=105

## 2- Impact Hypothesis Testing:

Table No: (4) shows us the moral and non-moral models between the variables of Strategic Leadership and Strategic Learning as the relationship in general between the independent variable (Strategic Leadership) and the dependent variable (Strategic Learning) mainly showed the presence of a strong moral influence relationship.

As the value of its total determination coefficient reached ( $R^2 = 0.652$ ) and this value indicates that the Strategic Leadership variable explains its value (65.2%) of the Strategic Learning variable. In contrast, the value of ( $\beta = 0.989$ ) indicates that the change that occurs in the independent variable (Strategic Leadership) by one unit, there will be a change in the dependent variable (Strategic Learning) by (98.9% ).

### Thus we will accept the second major search hypothesis:

(There is a statistically significant impact of Strategic Leadership on Strategic Learning and its dimensions).

**(strategic leadership) (Y) = 0.625+ 0.135 strategic learning**

Table (4) :The Value of (B), (F) , ( $R^2$ ) and the Significance of Regression and Influence Models for Strategic Leadership and Strategic learning

Strategic leadership \ Strategic Learning	Strategic Learning			
Defining The Strategic Direction	$\beta$	0.580	F	61.045
	$R^2$	0.368	Sig	0.000
Human Capital Development	$\beta$	0.733	F	123.121
	$R^2$	0.542	Sig	0.000
Promoting Moral Behavior	$\beta$	0.729	F	41.673
	$R^2$	0.283	Sig	0.000
Maintaining Stable Strategic Control	$\beta$	0.740	F	154.417
	$R^2$	0.598	Sig	0.000
Strategic Leadership	$\beta$	0.989	F	194.333
	$R^2$	0.652	Sig	0.000

Impact Is Significant At The Level ( 0.01) n=105

### Conclusions:

It is evident from the results of the research that there is a positive relationship and a moral influence between strategic leadership and strategic learning in its dimensions in the organization in question, and this is a good and logical result that shows that the university leadership was able to use its leadership experiences and skills in order to develop appropriate mechanisms and keep pace with the sudden development and change that occurred in the education sector.

As a result of the shift to e-learning and blended learning in order to reduce the risks resulting from the shift to this type of education, Therefore, university leaders must work to make use of these skills in studying the environment surrounding their organization in order to identify and understand it more deeply in order to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses surrounding the organization.

The results of the statistical analysis also show that must include the leaders of the organization should give the topic of (Maintaining Stable Strategic Control) the most significant importance, as it had a great impact on the strategic learning dimension, and this means working continuously to strengthen the relationship between the dimension of maintaining stable strategic control and strategic learning in order to raise the educational level of university employees and professors from In order to make them more experienced and efficient when facing the changing circumstances that occurred today and that occur in the future.

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## تأثير القيادة الاستراتيجية في التعلم الاستراتيجي بحث استطلاعي في جامعة الانبار

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## المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة الى معرفة مدى تأثير القيادة الاستراتيجية كمتغير مستقل في التعلم الاستراتيجي كمتغير تابع لمساعدة قادة جامعة الانبار في اتخاذ القرارات الصحيحة لتطوير برامج التعلم الاستراتيجي في ظل ظروف تفشي وباء كورونا والقرار المفاجئ الذي اعتمدته الجامعة بالتحول الى التعلم الالكتروني، وتم اجراء المسح من خلال توزيع الاستبانة التي تم اعتمادها كأداة رئيسية في جمع البيانات من عينة الدراسة المتمثلة بالقيادات العليا للجامعة، وتم اختيار عينة قصدية عشوائية بلغت (105) من مجتمعها البالغ (127)، وتم تحليل البيانات باستخدام البرنامج الاحصائي (spss) بالاعتماد على مجموعة من الوسائل الاحصائية منها (الوسط الحسابي الموزون، الانحراف المعياري، الاهمية النسبية، معامل الاختلاف، معامل التحديد، اختبار الثبات، معامل ارتباط الرتب، تحليل الانحدار الخطي البسيط)، وتوصل البحث الى عدة نتائج اهمها وجود علاقة ارتباط وتأثير قوية ذات دلالة احصائية بين القيادة الاستراتيجية والتعلم الاستراتيجي بأبعاده في جامعة الانبار وهذا يبين ان قيادة الجامعة استطاعت وبشكل جيد على ايجاد الحلول المناسبة لتعزيز قدراتها في التحول الى التعلم الاستراتيجي، اذ جاءت هذه الدراسة لتكمل في افكارها ما جاءت به الأبحاث السابقة حول القيادة الاستراتيجية والتعلم الاستراتيجي من خلال اقتراح نموذجاً مفاهيمياً يوضح العلاقات المتبادلة بين المتغيرات الرئيسية للبحث وكيفية اعتمادها في الجامعات العراقية بصورة عامة وجامعة الانبار بصورة خاصة.

عنوان البحث: ورقة بحثية.

المصطلحات الرئيسية للبحث/ القيادة الاستراتيجية، التعلم الاستراتيجي، جامعة الانبار.