



The Impact of Strategic Leadership on Crisis Management Stages A Field Study of Several Industrial Companies Registered in the Iraq Stock Exchange

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ABSTRACT: This field study examines the critical role of strategic leadership in influencing the various stages of crisis management within the industrial companies listed on the Iraq Stock Exchange. In an increasingly volatile and uncertain business environment, effective crisis management is essential for the survival and growth of an organization. Strategic leadership, characterized by prudent decision-making, proactive planning, and rapid adaptation, plays a pivotal role in guiding companies through crises and ensuring their resilience.

The main objectives of this research are to assess the impact of strategic leadership on crisis identification, preparedness, response and recovery, and to analyze the strategies used by industrial companies in Iraq to mitigate and deal with crises successfully. To achieve these goals, a multi-method approach was adopted, which includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

KEYWORDS: Strategic, Management Stages, Iraq Stock Exchange

General Introduction

Iraq, like many other countries worldwide, has been profoundly affected by the challenges of global warfare, in addition to international and local economic crises and their ramifications on various economic sectors. Furthermore, Iraq faces a multitude of recurring and diverse crises at all levels, making crisis management one of the most critical topics to address these constant changes, developments, diversifications, and renewals in crises.

These crises pose significant threats to business organizations, endangering their goals and sustainability. This, in turn, presents multiple challenges, resulting in different types of managerial crises in terms of their causes, severity, impact, and recurrence. Such crises endanger the continuity of these organizations, and it's important to note that individual efforts alone cannot manage these changes; they require effective leadership. As a result, strategic leadership becomes the fundamental element capable of reducing doubt, increasing confidence in specific stances or decisions to tackle crises, and mitigating their effects, even preventing them from occurring before or during their onset (Abu Raman: 2016: 713).

1. Research Problem:

The global economy has recently witnessed numerous crises that have affected economies worldwide, including the Iraqi economy. In light of this, the research problem revolves around the challenges faced by Iraqi industrial companies under current circumstances. Given the size, comprehensiveness, and diversity of this sector, global economic crises, regional implications, technological changes, developments, globalization, and intense competition force Iraqi industrial companies to seek solutions to confront these challenges. Failure to address these challenges may result in crises that could lead to the complete collapse of a company and potentially even the entire sector.

In general, and based on the background, the following questions can be posed:

1. What is the level of adoption of strategic leadership dimensions by industrial organizations in Iraq?
2. To what extent do industrial organizations in Iraq adopt crisis management stages?
3. Is there an impact of strategic leadership on crisis management stages?

2. Research Significance:

- The research contributes to enhancing the intellectual foundations of strategic leadership and the importance of crisis management.
- This study comes in the context of global and local problems and crises that threaten the global and local supply chain (such as energy, climate change, the Ukrainian war, and others).
- The research can contribute to providing the necessary foundations for enhancing the capabilities of Iraqi industrial organizations in confronting crises at both strategic and operational levels.

3. Study Hypotheses

After reviewing similar theoretical and empirical research related to the research topic, the following main hypothesis was formulated:

H1: There is no statistically significant impact (at $\alpha \leq 0.05$) of strategic leadership dimensions (vision, human capital, ethical practices, organizational culture) on crisis management stages (pre-crisis stage, crisis response stage, post-crisis stage) in Iraqi industrial organizations.

The theoretical framework of the research

Section 1: Strategic Leadership

1.2 Conceptual Introduction to Strategic Leadership

There have been numerous attempts to define the skills and abilities of effective strategic leaders. Given that strategic leadership, for any organization, revolves around creating a viable environment, an

effective strategic leader significantly advances forward, actively seeks, and possesses superior abilities to anticipate or envision the future (Wang: 2018:).

Table 1: Some Concepts of Strategic Leadership

Concept	the researcher's name, year, and page numbers	ت
Strategic leadership is the foundation for the success of strategic management in business organizations. It can help in setting priorities and objectives for subordinates and provide guidance towards achieving the organization's overarching vision	)Gacharia: 2015: 3(	1
Strategic leadership is concerned with the ability to create a sense of vision and mission, as well as the enabling factors that allow for interaction with internal resources and external stakeholders in the pursuit of high performance	)Jaleha & Machuki: 2018: 129(	5
An important factor in management that significantly enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of work is leadership. Leadership is about the ability to use or provide motivation to persuade individuals and workgroups to collaborate towards achieving goals	)Chanpoom & Intrawong: 2019: 309(	6
Strategic leadership is tied to the organization's future, its positioning in the future, and how it leverages its resources and capabilities to successfully reach that future	(الألمعي: 2020 : 3)	7
It is the ability to lead a group of individuals towards achieving the organization's goals in a highly dynamic, turbulent, and complex environment based on a comprehensive future vision of events	(على، و الشهيبي: 2020 : 182)	8
It is the ability of leaders to articulate the strategic vision throughout the entire organization or a part of it and to motivate and guide others to work towards realizing this vision	)Calabro et al.: 2020: 6(	9
The influence and interaction through others by means of discussion, dialogue, and collaboration in order to formulate future strategic plans to achieve objectives and satisfy common needs, by providing qualified competencies and appropriate resources to accomplish them	(أبو جمعة، الحامد: 2021 : 390)	10
An approach based on a set of acquired traits and personal characteristics, in addition to experience and knowledge, to influence others and lead change and innovation processes to achieve the organization's strategy and vision through balancing short-term and long-term perspectives	)Al-Awamleh: 2021: 9(	11
A set of competencies, processes, and activities across all levels of the organization that enable the making of daily decisions leading to the long-term growth of the organization while simultaneously maintaining its financial health in the short term	)Evgenyeva: 2021: 18(	12

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the mentioned literature.

2.1.1 The Importance of Strategic Leadership

Effective strategic leadership is a critical factor for the success of any organization operating in a dynamic and highly complex environment with uncertainty and resource scarcity. In such contexts, strategic leadership is required to address environmental disruptions and the continuous need for organizational change to achieve objectives (Jaleha & Machuki: 2018: 125).

In general, the importance of strategic leadership for business organizations can be summarized in the following points (Thalami Ndebele, 2019: 42):

1. Encouraging teamwork, especially when the strategic leader can create shared acceptance among employees for the vision they possess, leading to their collective efforts to achieve it.
2. Facilitating rapid responses to consecutive changes occurring in the competitive work environment, especially in the face of globalization and continuous fluctuations in the working environment.

In summary, the importance of strategic leadership in organizations lies in restructuring the current situation in a way that makes current and future problems solvable and eliminates traditional roles. Strategic leadership is the key to organizations outperforming others, as the current environment is characterized by high dynamism.

2.1.2 The Dimensions of Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership regulates the strategic behavior of the organization through a series of roles, tasks, and responsibilities. It provides the organization with a vision to determine its future goals, areas of development, expansion, and the importance of addressing changes that occur. Additionally, it focuses on attracting creative individuals, developing their capabilities to address problems in various circumstances, and emphasizes creative thinking to overcome all challenges (Bilgin et al., 2017: 843).

The dimensions of strategic leadership are embodied in (vision, human capital, ethical practices, organizational culture) based on the opinions of some authors and researchers.

2.1.2.1 Vision

Vision, as defined by Helen et al. (2018: 158), is an abstract idea with a philosophical content and a future perspective for management. If a strategic leader can articulate their vision to the members of the organization and involve them in it, they are likely to gain their support and endorsement. Vision, according to Kitong (2017: 7), consists of two parts: Core Ideology and Envisioned Future. Therefore, a vision is a future view or image that the organization aspires to achieve.

Abualoush et al. (2018: 1) emphasize the crucial role of a leader's vision in obtaining effective results aligned with the future vision. This plays a significant role in employee commitment within the organization to achieve valuable outcomes.

2.1.2.2 Human Capital:

The success of any organization depends on the leader's ability to enhance human resources. Today, organizations heavily rely on human capital, considering it one of the most valuable and expensive resources. This is because human capital cannot be imported or manufactured. Achieving success and international competitiveness relies on developing and effectively utilizing human capital (Aziz, 2021: 34).

2.1.2.3 Organizational Culture:

The relationship between strategic leadership and organizational culture is strong. A strategic leader strives to create a distinctive organizational culture by fostering an environment conducive to creativity and productivity. Additionally, organizational culture is a product of strategic leadership, as the cultural pattern of the organization is established through strategic leadership

Crisis Management Theoretical Framework

2.2 Crisis Management Concept:

The concept of crisis management emerged in 1986 when NATO organized its first conference on software engineering in Garmisch, Germany, with the aim of finding a solution to what was then known as a crisis in the software industry. Software had been in a crisis for more than 50 years at that time (Zykov, 2021: 7). The differences among researchers in crisis management can be attributed to various factors, including the field of activity affected by the crisis, the types of crises, and the magnitude of the damage resulting from them.

Table Number (2) Some Crisis Management Concepts

Concept	the researcher's name, year, and page numbers	N
From a strategic perspective, it can be defined as the crisis strategies, processes, and measures that have been planned and implemented to prevent and manage crises.	(Cronin,2016:17)	2
Practices that should be applied when emergency situations or situations threatening the organization's stability arise. These practices are formulated according to a well-planned strategy based on accurate information obtained by a dedicated team. The team starts by analyzing the crisis, diagnosing its causes, and delving into its components and expected outcomes.	(Gottschalk ,2016:257)	3
Crisis management refers to the processes through which an organization deals with a crisis before, during, or after it occurs. These processes involve identifying, assessing, understanding, and handling the crisis.	Muku,2017:2-3	5
It involves a series of specific steps that must be followed, starting with risk assessment and threat identification, then implementing necessary preparations to deal with incidents and recover from them.	Koronis&ponis,2018:32	6
A natural state that arises from instability, affecting stakeholders and compelling them to work towards preventing the crisis and managing it, either wholly or partially, to minimize its consequences.	(Bhaduri,2019:12)	8
A series of measures aimed at controlling and mitigating crises before they spiral out of control, potentially leading to conflicts.	Abo Naila&Hasan,2021:3423	10

Effective crisis management is the one that safeguards the critical and vital interests of the organization.		
Crisis management is defined as the application of designed strategies to assist an organization when a sudden negative event occurs due to an unexpected event or as a result of some unforeseen circumstances that pose a potential threat. It requires making rapid decisions to minimize the damage to the organization and appointing a crisis manager in case it occurs.	(Al-Jameel,2022:46)	11

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the mentioned literature.

Based on these components, crisis management can be defined as a process that involves predicting potential problems and crises, identifying possible actions to take if they occur, with the aim of controlling and dealing with sudden or emergency situations that cause significant harm or disruption to the organization's general system and hinder its normal functioning. This process seeks to restore balance by implementing changes and finding quick solutions.

2.2.1 The importance of crisis management

cannot be overstated. Without crisis management and a plan to achieve necessary objectives, crises can escalate, and relationships can be damaged, both in the short and long term. For profit-oriented private sector companies, crises can lead to the loss of customers, while non-profit organizations can lose credibility and members. When an organization faces a specific crisis, it's essential to take appropriate actions to steer things in the right direction.

Engaging in crisis management remains an increasingly important part of management responsibility in the 21st century. Crises often give rise to heroes who effectively manage them. When crises and disasters occur, organizations often need to improvise because widespread, complex disasters can be highly destructive. Well-executed crisis management policies can save lives and mitigate damage.(Fleming et al,2017:51)

2.2.2 Crisis Management

Approaches Organizations can adopt one or more approaches to manage a specific crisis they are facing, after diagnosing the crisis according to a specific scientific methodology based on analyzing and describing its aspects, causes, consequences, and implications. It becomes easy to identify the approach that suits the nature of the crisis, as outlined below (Zech, 2016: 23)

- A. Escape Approach:
- B. Solution Approach:
- C. Proactive Approach:
- D. Interactive Approach:
- E. Integrated Approach:"

2.2.3 Crisis Management Stages Researchers

generally agree that there are several stages in the crisis management process, although they may differ in defining the nature of these stages. (Kuzmanova, 2016: 25) divided the crisis management stages based on a chronological basis into:

1. Pre-crisis Stage: This is the stage that signals the impending crisis, often characterized by the emergence and escalation of a problem leading to a crisis. It requires a significant number of actions and preparations to confront the crisis. It includes:

- Setting up early warning systems.
- Analyzing previous crisis types and preparing future plans and scenarios.
- Creating a general concept of how to deal with expected crises.
- Identifying measures for threat prevention and reestablishing order and stability (Mohammed, 2017: 527-528).

2. Crisis Handling Stage: (Kuzmanova, 2016: 25) specifies a set of requirements for successfully managing this stage, including:

- Identifying available resources within the organization that can be utilized in crisis management.
- Defining interim objectives that enable the organization's management to determine the necessary tasks and activities for crisis management.
- Documenting everything related to the crisis, from its appearance and how it is dealt with to its resolution, to provide valuable lessons for the future (Medina et al., 2017: 20).

3. Crisis Response Stage: This stage involves attempts to address the consequences of the crisis, rebuilding what has been destroyed, and implementing controls to prevent its recurrence. It also involves learning from the crisis for future events (Andrianopoulos, A. 2016: 2).

The practical aspect of the study

Table (1) illustrates Pearson correlation coefficients between the correlation coefficients of the strategic leadership domain with the overall axis and with the overall degree of the tool, and the correlation coefficients of the crisis management domain with the overall axis and with the overall degree of the tool.

Crisis Management Domains			Strategic Leadership Areas		
The Relationship of the Paragraph to the Tool as a Whole	The Relationship between the Domain and the Axis	Domains	The Relationship of the Paragraph to the Tool as a Whole	The Relationship between the Domain and the Axis	Domains
.668**	.789**	Pre-Crisis Stage	.635**	.752**	Vision
.530**	.896**	Crisis Response Stage	.725**	.811**	Human Capital
.490**	.862**	Post-Crisis Stage	.703**	.841**	Ethical Practices

			.746**	.803**	Organizational Culture
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the statistical analysis of the field study data.

The results in Table 1 show a significant correlation between each field within the leadership axis and the overall score of the axis, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.752 to 0.841. These correlation coefficients indicate a significant correlation between each field within the axis and the overall score of the axis.

The table also reveals a significant correlation between each field within the leadership axis and the overall survey score, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.635 to 0.746. These correlation coefficients suggest a significant correlation between each field within the axis and the overall survey score.

Furthermore, the results in Table 5 demonstrate a significant correlation between each field within the crisis management axis and the overall score of the axis, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.789 to 0.896. These correlation coefficients indicate a significant correlation between each field within the crisis management axis and the overall score of the axis.

Similarly, there appears to be a significant correlation between each field within the crisis management axis and the overall survey score, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.530 to 0.668. These correlation coefficients suggest a significant correlation between each field within the crisis management axis and the overall survey score.

-Instrument Reliability

Table (6): Reliability Coefficients

Reliability coefficient	Number of paragraphs	The domains	Reliability coefficient	Number of paragraphs	The domains
0.842	15	Crisis Management Axis	0.884	20	Strategic Leadership Axis
0.651	5	Pre-Crisis Stage	0.637	5	Vision
0.672	5	Crisis Response Stage	0.697	5	Human Capital
0.714	5	Post-Crisis Stage	0.701	5	Ethical Practices
			0.704	5	Organizational Culture
			0.946	35	Survey as a whole

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical analysis of the field study's data

The table above, number (6), shows a high reliability of the scale using the Alpha Kuder-Richardson method, with a value of (0.946). The dimensions of the instrument obtained very high reliability coefficients, with the reliability coefficient of the Strategic Leadership axis being (0.884), and the reliability coefficient of the Crisis Management axis being (0.842). These are high reliability coefficients. Therefore, it can be said that the measures used in the study to measure the dimensions of the instrument demonstrate internal consistency in their statements. This allows for relying on these responses in achieving the study's objectives and analyzing its results.

-The study scale

Table number (7) estimates the alternative measurement weights

Category	Approval Level
1.79 - 1	Very Low Approval
2.59 -1.80	Low Approval
3.39 -2.60	Moderate Approval
4.19 -3.40	High Approval
5 -4.20	Very High Approval

-The characteristics of the study sample

Table No. (8) Characteristics of the Study Sample

The ratio	the number	Gender	
76.3	132	Male	Gender
23.7	41	Female	
100.0	173	Total	
11.6	20	Age	Age
30.1	52	Less than 25 years	
30.6	53	25to less than 35 years	
19.1	33	35to less than 45 years	
8.7	15	45to 55 years	
100.0	173	More than 55 years	
13.3	23	Total	Qualificat ion
71.1	123	Education	
9.8	17	Diploma	

4.6	8	Bachelor's degree	
1.2	2	Higher diploma	
100.0	173	Master's degree	
11.0	19	Doctorate	of Years Experience
24.3	42	Total	
34.7	60	Years of Experience	
30.1	52	Less than five years	
100.0	173	5to less than 10 years	
17.9	31	10to less than 20 years	Job Position
30.6	53	More than 20 years	
34.7	60	Total	
16.8	29	Position	
100.0	173	General Manager and Deputies or Assistants	

Source: Prepared by the researcher from the field study.

The results in Table 8 indicate that the majority of the study sample is male, accounting for 76.3%, while females make up 23.7% of the sample.

Regarding the age variable, the highest age categories are those aged 35 to less than 45 years and those aged 25 to less than 35 years, each accounting for 30.6% and 30.1%, respectively. The age group from 45 to 55 years represents 19.1%, and those over 55 years old make up 8.7% of the sample.

In terms of educational qualifications, the majority of the sample holds university-level qualifications or higher, with 71.7% having a bachelor's degree, 13.3% having a diploma, and 15.6% having postgraduate qualifications (higher diploma, master's, or doctoral degrees). This indicates that the study sample possesses the necessary educational qualifications to understand and respond effectively to the questionnaire items, enhancing the accuracy and validity of the study's results.

Regarding years of experience, 34.7% of the sample falls into the category of having 10 to less than 20 years of experience, while 30.1% have less than 25 years of work experience. Additionally, 25.1% belong to the category with less than 10 years of experience. This suggests that the majority of the study sample is experienced and highly qualified, which reflects positively on the accuracy and validity of the study's findings.

Furthermore, in terms of job positions, most of the study sample holds the position of department head and their deputies, accounting for 34.7%. This is followed by the category of department managers and their deputies or assistants at 30.8%, general managers and their deputies or assistants at 17.9%, and finally, section heads and their deputies at 16.8%.

-Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables:

- Testing the Study Hypotheses:

The Main Hypothesis: H1: There is no statistically significant effect (at $\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the areas of strategic leadership (vision, human capital, ethical practices, organizational culture) on crisis management stages (pre-crisis stage, crisis response stage, post-crisis stage) in Iraqi industrial organizations.

This main hypothesis gives rise to the following sub-hypotheses, each of which will be tested using multiple linear regression analysis:

H1.1: There is no statistically significant effect (at $\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the areas of strategic leadership (vision, human capital, ethical practices, organizational culture) on the pre-crisis stage.

Table No. (18) Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis using the Enter Method for the Areas of Strategic Leadership (Vision, Human Capital, Ethical Practices, Organizational Culture) on the Pre-Crisis Stage:

Sig.	F	R Square	R	Sig.	t	Beta	Independent Variables:	
0.000	284.499	0.871	0.933	0.000	26.960	0.928	Vision	
				0.411	0.825	-0.036	Human Capital	
				0.152	1.438	-0.056	Ethical Practices	
				0.109	1.609	0.064	Organizational Culture	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical analysis of the field study data.

The results of the regression analysis presented in Table 18 demonstrate the impact of the independent variables (Vision, Human Capital, Ethical Practices, Organizational Culture) on the Pre-Crisis stage as the dependent variable. The computed F-value indicates the significance of the model, with a value of 284.499 at a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the model is statistically significant. The adjusted coefficient of determination R² (0.871) suggests that the independent variables represented by the domains of strategic leadership explain 87.1% of the variance in the Pre-Crisis stage. This implies that the regression curve is well-suited to describe the relationship between this variable and the independent variables.

The multiple correlation coefficient R (0.933) indicates the strength of the relationship between the explanatory variables and the value of the dependent variable. It also signifies that there is no perfect correlation between the independent variables, supporting the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which suggests a statistically significant positive impact of the Vision domain of strategic leadership on the Pre-Crisis stage.

The regression model revealed the significance of the impact of a single variable, which is Vision, on the Pre-Crisis stage. The regression coefficients for Vision are positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. However, there was no significant impact of the variables (Human Capital, Ethical Practices, Organizational Culture) on the Pre-Crisis stage at the mentioned significance level.

These statistical analysis results indicate that the Vision domain of strategic leadership has a statistically significant impact on the Pre-Crisis stage, while the other domains (Human Capital, Ethical Practices, Organizational Culture) do not have a statistically significant impact at the specified significance level.

Results and Recommendations

First: Results:

Based on the statistical analysis of the study's data, the researcher has drawn several conclusions, which are as follows:

1. Iraqi industrial organizations practice strategic leadership dimensions at a high level (with the lowest average scores for the Culture, Ethics, Human Capital, and Vision dimensions).
2. Iraqi industrial organizations implement crisis management stages at a high level (with the lowest average scores for the Pre-Crisis stage, which was at a moderate level).
3. There is a statistically significant positive impact of the Vision domain of strategic leadership on the Pre-Crisis stage in Iraqi industrial organizations. However, there is no statistically significant impact of the Human Capital, Ethics, and Organizational Culture domains on the Pre-Crisis stage.
4. There is a statistically significant positive impact of the Vision and Human Capital domains of strategic leadership on the Crisis Response stage in Iraqi industrial organizations. However, there is no statistically significant impact of the Ethics and Organizational Culture domains on the Crisis Response stage.
5. There is a statistically significant positive impact of the Vision, Human Capital, and Ethics domains of strategic leadership on the Post-Crisis stage in Iraqi industrial organizations. However, there is no statistically significant impact of the Organizational Culture domain on the Post-Crisis stage.

Second: Recommendations:

Based on the study's results, the researcher recommends the following to Iraqi industrial organizations:

1. Raise awareness among leaders about the complexities of crises, emergencies, and disasters, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning to effectively handle crises.
2. Increase the focus on retaining highly experienced human resources within the organization to leverage their knowledge and skills effectively.
3. Develop a strategic vision that embodies the company's direction and expected future under uncertain conditions, ensuring flexibility and adaptability.
4. Motivate individuals to voluntarily work and implement the vision, especially during times of crises.
5. Implement crisis-related training programs targeting employees and managers, carefully selecting the appropriate programs for the right individuals, and activate an effective evaluation system for these training programs.
6. Encourage leaders to seek diverse perspectives and allocate resources and authority wisely, striking a balance between monitoring and empowering others.

7. Emphasize ethics and the importance of adhering to ethical standards in completing work tasks.
8. Conduct a thorough analysis of the internal environment to identify strengths and weaknesses and potential crisis indicators. Take appropriate measures to address weaknesses and prevent crises, reducing their negative impacts.
9. Provide the necessary preparations, methods, and preparatory plans to protect organizations from crises through training on how to deal with crises.

These recommendations aim to enhance the preparedness and crisis management capabilities of Iraqi industrial organizations and ensure effective leadership during challenging times.

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