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# **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ISLAM AND ITS ROLE IN MANAGING CORONA CRISES: AN APPLIED STUDY IN THE DIRECTORATE OF MUNICIPALITIES OF DHI QAR**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims primarily to answer the questions that the authors raised previously. The study also seeks to achieve a basic goal represented in trying to identify the role of strategic leadership in the elements of social capital for workers in the special directorate, the obstacles that prevent reaching the distinguished strategic position of business organizations by employing available capabilities and resources, and the existing obstacles and crises, as well as adopting both strategic leadership and the elements of social capital as supportive methods for solving the crises in the Directorate of Municipalities of Dhi Qar. This research reached a set of results that the strategic leadership is one of the contemporary and vital topics in the strategic thought that is still in the process of framing and conceptual rooting. It is subject to different interpretations in terms of concept and measurement, and therefore it needs to explain the intellectual contents and philosophical dimensions, especially since the strategic leadership is a moving goal that cannot be fixed in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Understanding and realizing the social capital as a vital topic in formulating a human resources management strategy require a research into its topic as a network of useful relationships in developing the experience of diverse employees towards the building knowledge and expertise that contribute to building a model for the crisis management directorates. The crises on a large scale are faced, and in the case of man-made crises, the organizations do not only prepare to confront them if they occur, but they seek to prevent their occurrence by using crisis management and sensing as one of the important aspects of this management. Finally, the researchers recommend the necessity in future studies to activate research, theoretical, and applied contributions in the field of analyzing and diagnosing the role of strategic leadership in achieving social capital and dealing with crises in the future, which did not find tangible interest in previous literature. It is necessary for researchers to activate the role of those with experience, competence, and knowledge in participating in decision-making, taking their opinions and suggestions, as well as acquiring their ideas and applying them in projects. And, the researchers have to be encouraged to

conduct in-depth research and studies with an interpretive philosophy rather than an objective one to study strategic leadership in the Iraqi directorates by adopting case studies and extensive structured interviews in an effort to identify the crisis management processing power present in the work environment of Iraqi municipalities' directorates.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Strategic leadership, social capital, Crisis management.

## **Introduction**

The success of organizations depends on their ability to keep pace with scientific and practical developments that constitute a modern challenge for successful organizations, which requires them to work to prove their ability and suitability for the volatile and constantly changing environmental changes, which result in the emergence of crises facing the organizations and constitute a major challenge for them. The ability of administrative leaders in the organization to realize the expected events in the surrounding environment, which are characterized by complexity and rapid change, helps them increase their ability to compete and adapt to the surrounding environment. The environment is one of the important factors that determine the success of the organization, as the organizations that currently facing an environment characterized by a high degree of complexity, complexity and change, and environmental factors in general are witnessing rapid transformations recently, which cause an increase in the strategic crises. The current time is characterized by many crises that have taken on a strategic dimension, which represent a direct threat to the future of organizations, individuals, and future plans, which may lead to a disaster if they are not dealt with properly, especially since the crises have become important and influential events in the lives of peoples, individuals, organizations, society, state and government. This is because the crisis has become an integral part of human life, and constitutes a source of concern for leaders, officials and citizens alike, due to the difficulty of controlling it owing to the sharp and sudden changes in the political, economic, social, technological, and legal environment on the one hand, and the weakness of the responsible departments in the ability to adopt an administrative model appropriate to these changes on the other hand. The current study came as a serious contribution to shed the light on this important and vital topic on the one hand, and the need of directorates in Iraq for studies and research related to the factors that work to enhance their performance and strategic leadership on the other hand. The importance of the study comes from its consideration of three very important variables that have occupied the attention of many researchers and writers in the academic and applied fields, namely (strategic leadership, social capital, and crisis management), which interacted to form the intellectual and philosophical framework of the study, as the dimensions of the strategic leadership variables (creativity, risk tolerance, flexibility, and vision) have been determined. The mediating variable is social capital (structural, relational, and cognitive), and the

dependent variable is crisis management (strategic planning, resource mobilization, communications and information flow, and speed of decision-making and response). Accordingly, this study came to shed the light on the methods and approaches through which the role of strategic leadership of social capital in Islam is known in managing the Corona crises in the municipalities of Dhi Qar.

**Research problem:**

Institutions seek to excel and achieve superiority in local and global competition; therefore, one finds that it does not hesitate to adopt new management methods that can achieve this goal, and among the modern management methods is what is known as global leadership, which can be achieved by adopting some development approaches. The strategic leadership has emerged as one of those development approaches that have found a great popularity among the institutions that aspire to global leadership, and even consider it a strategic option through which excellence can only be achieved; therefore, the leadership is considered the prevailing logic for excellence and acquiring competitive advantages, and the institutions and directorates cannot continue if they do not acquire real leadership skills. The leadership directorates require the management that is different from the existing management, but it requires that to be a regular, organized, and purposeful management based on adopting the strategic leadership approach as a development approach. Therefore, this study will address the strategic leadership as an administrative approach based on tracking and exploiting opportunities without considering the currently controlled resources, as the leadership management behaviors enhance the culture of innovation and risk, create short informal structures, and formulate a strategy to benefit from specific opportunities. Accordingly, the strategic leadership can be addressed as an act of developing a new work program in the Directorate of Dhi Qar Municipalities.

**The importance of the research:** The importance of this research is evident through the variables under study, represented by strategic leadership, social capital, and its role in the crisis management. Accordingly, this research seeks to provide a scientific and practical contribution on how to benefit from these dimensions. The research presents topics characterized by modernity in the field of management, and researchers can benefit from them in future research, by combining the research variables of strategic leadership and social capital in crisis management, and thus contribute to fill the gap in the Iraqi administrative library in this field.

**Study objectives:** This study aims primarily to answer the questions raised previously. The study also seeks to achieve a basic goal represented in trying to identify the role of strategic leadership in the elements of social capital for employees in the Special Directorate. It also identifies the obstacles that prevent reaching the distinguished strategic position of business organizations by

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employing the available capabilities and resources and identifying the existing obstacles and crises as well as adopting both strategic leadership and elements of social capital as supportive methods for solving crises in the Directorate of Municipalities of Dhi Qar.

**Research hypotheses:**

The first main hypothesis: There is a positive significant correlation between strategic leadership, social capital and crisis management.

The second main hypothesis: There is a positive significant correlation between strategic leadership, social capital and crisis management.

**The First Section: Research literature:**

**First: The concept of strategic leadership and its dimensions:**

The concept of strategic leadership is one of the modern concepts in the field of administrative sciences. Therefore, as is the case with all modern concepts, the concept of leadership has emerged based on methods and theories borrowed from other sciences. In order for the field of leadership to grow and achieve its desired status as an independent field of administrative sciences, it must have its own methods and theories which have not happened yet. Strategic leadership is one of the intellectual fields that the contemporary schools have studied and analyzed. It represents aspects in addition to the perspective of leadership and organizational leadership (Al-Issawi, 2012, 76).

Strategic leadership was defined by (Kraus et al.). Strategic leadership is the integration of the field of leadership in searching for opportunities with the field of strategy in searching for advantages to form strategic leadership to deal with the company's actions taken in exploiting new innovations that result from the company's efforts in the continuous discovery of opportunities (Kraus, 2011, 87).

Kuratko and Audretsch indicated that the strategic leadership is the broad spectrum of entrepreneurial manifestations that result from new work added to the company, and all forms of leadership share in presenting a series of organizational innovations to obtain competitive advantage (Kuratko, 2009, 39).

Morris et al. defined that the strategic leadership is a direct vision and a broad organization that relies on the entrepreneurial behavior that continuously renews the organization and shapes its process by identifying and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities (Morris, 2008, 197).

Yilmaz indicated that the strategic leadership is a modern field in the world of management that depends on the integration of leadership and strategic management to evaluate and implement the entrepreneurial strategies that work to create wealth (Yilmaz, 2012, 62).

By presenting the previous definitions of the concept of strategic leadership, the researcher sees that it focused on opportunities and how to exploit them to achieve a competitive advantage for organizations, as a process, field, or phenomenon. While, the definitions focused on it are the integration of two fields or behaviors,

opportunity, and advantage. In addition, the researcher concludes that the strategic leadership represents a new and strategic approach to leadership, as it is a more administrative approach to leadership. This approach works to enhance the leadership activities, as it works on a more rational view, with the presence of the strategic vision, and the competitiveness of the entrepreneur will achieve a higher level, as they are looking for an opportunity that values their advantages and achieves wealth. Strategic entrepreneurship strategies are manifested in the following: The first is the creation of new businesses within the existing organization (venture companies or the development of internal initiative), as researchers, such as (Burgelman, 1983; Kuratko et al., 1990; Guth and Ginsberg, 1990) call it "strategic entrepreneurship", which is what (Al-Anzi, 2011) goes to, as he sees that the entrepreneurship differs from business leadership, as the latter relates to new organizations and projects, while the former refers to existing and already existing organizations. The second is the most widespread activity associated with transformation or renewal in the existing organizations (Stopford and Fuller, 1994), and the third is where the organization changes the rules of competition for its industry in the way proposed by (Stevensen and Gumpert, 1985) and (Ferreira, 2002, 84).

### **Second: Social capital and its dimensions:**

The common concept of social capital refers to the set of social norms, relationships, and networks that enable individuals to work together, and represents an explanation for many economic and social activities. The abundance of writings and publications in this regard indicates the rise in its status and importance as a phenomenon subject to research.

Bowey (2007, 1) confirmed that the number of books and references that addressed the subject of social capital within the years (1986-1996) was (97), while their number became (674) within the years (1997-2000). This trend towards the social capital in the recent years is one of the most important movements and changes in the modern social history. Social capital is the size of daily life and the standards that link it and its quality. It is a dynamic, productive source and medium due to its diverse mixture of flexible social trust, reciprocal rules of behavior, and multiple forms of commitment. Social capital is often reflected in the stock of trust, cooperation, and good intentions that the members of network depend on, which they contribute to creating directly or indirectly. According to this concept, successful communication processes and harmonious understanding between the individuals are developed, leading to knowledge to activate a single society as an integrated system, which achieves security and well-being for the members of society. The concept of social capital is a relatively modern term, and perhaps this late launch of this concept explains the multiplicity and difference in the researchers' viewpoint of its concept. Its relative modernity and the multiplicity of fields that have addressed it have prompted researchers to use it in a way that is very different from its current meaning (Abu Zaid, 2009, 19).



However, the early use of this term at the individual level is represented in a group of resources inherent in family ties and social organizations in the society (Al-Saadi, 2011, 140).

Al-Anzi and Al-Saleh confirmed that the social capital is a contemporary and fundamental concept, and it is a moral, ethical and moral resource that is concerned with the advantages of social organization, to achieve familiarity, cooperation, and effective coordination of the required resources as well as build it in the best way (Al-Anzi, 2009, 369).

The dimensions of social capital are elucidated in the following: The structural dimension (Silkose) confirms that the structural dimension of social capital covers the connections between the individuals with similar desires through the participation in the social network, as groups of practice work within the network of social relations, to help individuals connect with others. Also, this enables them to evaluate the knowledge possessed by other members quickly and without contacting each individual of them, and these practices lead to building social capital and thus the growth and prosperity of the organization. (Lindstrand, et al.) indicated that this dimension is represented by the general pattern for communication between individuals and networks, and it sheds the light on how to form a communication network between the groups and know what is available within it (Lindstrand, 2011, 80). And, for the cognitive dimension, Milan believes that the presence of the cognitive dimension at a high rate leads to a high increase in the stock of social capital as well, as the member of the group will expect others to have the same level of awareness, which provides the possibility of participation, cooperation and exchange of experiences. The result may be the opposite in the event that the group does not believe in the same perceptions, especially with the presence of a perception of injustice, to generate a feeling of suspicion and hostility sometimes, which are the characteristics of disintegrated societies (Milani, 2006, 42). For the relational dimension, Carey, et al. showed that this dimension involves a set of informal relationships of individuals, such as trustworthiness, relationship rules, reciprocity, obligations, and expectations, as well as the networks that represent its basic facts (Carey, 2011, 288). While, Lindstrand, et al. pointed out that this dimension is the content of communication and that it consists of developing relationships between the individuals with each other through repeated interactions, and that its most prominent elements are the trust and social interaction between the individuals. Also, it can also be considered a prerequisite for the experience of relationship-based learning due to the transfer of the personality of interaction between the individuals (Lindstrand, 2011, 78).

### **Third: Crisis management and its dimensions:**

Crisis in the language means "drought, famine, distress, and severity resulting from the withholding of rain and then poverty and famine (Rahima, 2008, 31). It means severity and famine and is derived from "azam" meaning to become very famine. As for the economic aspect, a number of writers and economic thinkers have

referred to the concept of crisis, and their views differed regarding its definition. Some of them believe that the financial crisis is "the basic imbalances in the financial markets characterized by a sharp decline in asset prices and the failure of many financial and non-financial institutions" (Salah al-Din, 2009, 5). The origin of the word is derived from "zam zamman zawumana" meaning to die quickly (Jamal, 2010, 24). The Oxford University Dictionary defined the crisis as a turning point in the development of a disease or the development of life or the development of history. This turning point is a time characterized by difficulty, danger, and anxiety about the future, as well as the necessity of making a specific and decisive decision within a specific period of time (Developmental Institute for Human Resources Development, 2011, 14). The crisis is a public, incidental event resulting from dissatisfaction with the rules, ideas, opinions, values, people, and resources of the organization. It is an unusual atmosphere that hinders the achievement of certain desired or achievable goals. It is a cancerous, mysterious, widespread, and common problem for all organizations. (Oparanma, 2014, 4) defined the crisis as (BOOTH): A situation faced by individuals, groups or an organization, it cannot be dealt with using normal routine procedures, and in which the pressures arising from a sudden change appear.

**Administrative crisis:** (Abdulrahman, 2008, 11) defined the administrative crisis as a weak possibility, which has a major impact that threatens the survival of the organization, and is characterized by the ambiguity of the issue and affects the decision-making, in addition to the belief that the decision must be taken quickly. (Alghamdi, 2013, 14) and (Al-Azzawi, 2014, 48) defined the crisis management as: An ongoing administrative process concerned with the potential crises and preparing resources to deal with the crises efficiently and effectively as well as studying the causes of the crisis to extract results to prevent their occurrence or improve the ways of dealing with them in the future. While, the crisis management means a fictitious artificial situation based on creating a crisis as a means to escalate a certain situation or to cover up a problem or put competing and related parties in a confusing situation. The crisis management may be used as a method for implementing a major strategy of control and domination as a type of conspiracy making, in which the highest degree of cunning and the most severe degrees of deception are used to achieve goals for the benefit of their creators (Al-Azzawi, previous source, 128). The dimensions of crisis management were formed as follows: Strategic planning is "all procedures aimed at setting goals that can be implemented from an environmental perspective and in light of the available financial and human resources and in view of the established priorities" (Obeidat, 2009, 19). On this basis, it is considered the general framework within which the crises are dealt with in general and marketing crises in particular, in addition to determining in advance what should be done and how to do it, when, and who will do it. Thus, the planning is linked to the facts of crisis and to the perceptions of its future situations, anticipating events, preparing for emergencies and drawing up a

scenario with sequences of activities capable of dealing with crises as effectively as possible (Al-Hadami, 2008, 148).

**Mobilization and mobilization of resources:** Mobilization means gathering the force entrusted with dealing with the crisis at the time that provides the technical abundance of force and the appropriate place to ensure the implementation of the crisis confrontation process, and eliminate the crisis, its causes and elements, and the force that includes multiple elements. Some of which are related to the place where the crisis occurred and where it will be confronted, some of which are related to the time and stage in which the crisis occurred, and some of which are related to what the crisis leader can mobilize materially and morally in order to resist the crisis. Also, from here, the force is the result of an interaction between the place and time in which the crisis occurred on the one hand, and what can be found and mobilized from resources, capabilities, technologies and human expertise capable and willing to deal with the crisis on the other hand (Al-Musada, 2012, 51).

**Communications and information flow:** Communication has existed since the existence of man, as it is one of the most prominent basic elements in the human interaction. The reality that should be focused on and realized is that without communication, the societies would not have grown in economic, social, political, and civilizational aspects (Al-Taie, 2009, 17). And, another definition is “a process through which the meanings are exchanged between the individuals through a shared system of symbols” (Hareem, 2010, 15). George Lindbergh (1939) also defined the communication as “interaction by means of symbols and signals that act as a stimulus (or stimulus) that arouses a certain behavior in the recipient” (Al-Musa, 2009, 11).

## The Second Section: Testing the Research Hypotheses:

**First: Testing and analyzing the correlations among strategic leadership, social capital, and crisis management:**

**The first main hypothesis:** There is a significant correlation among strategic leadership, social capital, and crisis management. See Table (1).

**Table (1): Values of the correlation coefficients among strategic leadership, social capital, and crisis management**

Independent and mediating variable	Dependent Variable	Spearman's correlation coefficient (r)	Test (t)	Significance level ( $\alpha$ )
Strategic Leadership	Crisis Management	*0.878	5.786	0.05
Social Capital		*0.977	28.153	



Table (1) portrays the correlation among the among strategic leadership, social capital and crisis management, where the results indicate a test of the significance of the correlation coefficient by comparing the calculated value (T) with the tabular value (T) which is (1.976), and the (\*) indicates the significance of the relationship at a significance level of (0.05).

It is also clear from the results that the data in the table indicate the existence of a positive correlation with important significance at a significance level of (0.05) among strategic leadership, social capital, and crisis management, where the value of Spearman's correlation coefficient between them reached (\*0.878, \*0.977), respectively. This value specifies the strength of the relationship between the variables, which means that the employees of the study sample are aware of the extent to which the strategic leadership and social capital are related to the crisis management. This relationship also indicates that the crisis management derives great importance from the strategic leadership in its dimensions and social capital in its dimensions, which contributes to achieve and motivate the research sample and this is reflected positively on their performance. Thus, the first main hypothesis is accepted.

## Second: Testing the influence relationships between the research variables, analyzing and interpreting them

**Testing the second main hypothesis:** There is a significant influence relationship between the independent variable (strategic leadership) on the dependent variable (crisis management) through the mediating variable (social capital). See Table (1).

**Table (2): Values of the regression model for the research variable**

Independent variables	Dependent Variable	Calculated (F)	Tabular (F)	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta_0$	$\beta_1$	$\beta_2$
Strategic leadership	Crisis Management	2026.750	3.056	0.964	0.088	0.244-	1.263
Social capital							

**First:** The calculated value of (F) for the estimated model is (2026.750) which is greater than the tabular value of (F) which is (3.056) at a significance level of (0.05) and with a confidence level of (95%), which means that the model is suitable for statistical analysis.

**Second:** It is clear from the value of the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) which is (0.964) that strategic leadership and social capital are able to explain (96.4%) of the changes that occur in crisis management. As for the percentage of (3.6%), it is attributed to the contribution of other variables not included in the research model.

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**Third:** It is clear from the constant limit ( $\beta_0$ ) of (0.088-) and the value of the marginal slope ( $\beta_1$ ) of (0.244-) and the value of (Sig=0) which is less than the significance level (0.05) and this means that the independent variable (strategic leadership) has a significant impact on crisis management and the value of the marginal slope ( $\beta^2$ ) of (1.263) and the value of (Sig=0) which is less than the significance level (0.05) and this means that increasing social capital by one standard deviation will lead to an increase in crisis management by (126.3%) of one standard deviation if the third main hypothesis is accepted.

### **Conclusion:**

According to the results reached by the researchers, a set of conclusions can be made, and the most important of which is: Strategic leadership is one of the contemporary and vital topics in strategic thought that is still in the process of framing and conceptual rooting. It is subject to different interpretations in terms of concept and measurement, and therefore it needs to explain the intellectual contents and philosophical dimensions, especially since the strategic leadership is a moving goal that cannot be fixed in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Understanding and realizing the social capital as a vital topic in formulating a human resources management strategy requires research into its topic as a network of useful relationships in developing the experience of diverse employees towards building knowledge and expertise that contribute to building a model for the crisis management directorates. Crises are faced on a large scale, and in the case of man-made crises, the organizations do not only prepare to confront them if they occur, but they seek to prevent their occurrence by using crisis management and sensing as one of the important aspects of this management. Finally, researchers recommend the necessity in future studies to activate research, theoretical and applied contributions in the field of analyzing and diagnosing the role of strategic leadership in achieving the social capital and dealing with the crises in the future, which did not find tangible interest in previous literature. It is necessary for researchers to activate the role of those with experience, competence and knowledge in participating in decision-making, taking their opinions and suggestions, and acquiring their ideas and applying them in projects. Also, researchers are encouraged to conduct in-depth research and studies with an interpretive rather than objective philosophy to study the strategic leadership in the Iraqi directorates by adopting case studies and extensive structured interviews in an effort to identify the crisis management processing power present in the work environment of Iraqi municipalities directorates.

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