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The role of strategic leadership and its impact on organizational excellence through emotional intelligence as a mediating variable: An applied study on a sample of Iraqi private universities

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to identify the role played by strategic leadership and their impact in achieving organizational excellence through emotional intelligence. The problem of the study revolved around identifying the intellectual and philosophical foundations of this perspective at the level of higher education institutions and private universities in the Iraqi environment that possess academic leaders with high scientific qualifications. A number of Iraqi universities (Assyria University, Al-Isra University, Al-Rafidain University, Al-Mamoun University, and Baghdad University of Economic Sciences) were chosen as a field for study through a sample of (242) academic leaders out of the total study population of (650) academic leaders. There were (242) questionnaires suitable for statistical analysis.
The study produced a number of results that were consistent with its hypotheses, the most important of which were: Achieving organizational excellence in the Iraqi universities, sample of the study, is linked to strengthening and strengthening the relationship between strategic leadership and emotional intelligence, as the influence increases through them in achieving excellence first, and then focusing on providing all the elements of academic work that enhance the level of competitive strategic performance, second. At the level of private universities, Assyria University came in first place in terms of the strength of the relationship and influence between the variables, followed by Al-Isra University, followed by Al-Rafidain University, then Al-Ma'moun, and finally Baghdad University for Economic Sciences. This result confirms the importance of variables in the top universities in the study sample. The study concluded with a set of recommendations and proposals that it considers necessary for their adoption by educational institutions.

Keywords: Strategic leadership practices, emotional intelligence, organizational excellence

Introduction

Globalization has changed many types of business organizations, and the performance gap has begun to narrow or almost disappear between most organizations in the global environment, which has prompted the search for new resources that can be exploited in addition to the traditional (Tangible) resources that have been exploited, to provide satisfactory solutions to the problems of those companies. For institutions, including educational institutions (Higher education institutions), and here many fundamental propositions in administrative thought began to emerge as a result of the nature of the stage, including the trend towards stratetowardagement and its developments. Strategic leadership practices were one of the effective solutions in the field of policy-making and defining strategies to confront environmental challenges and changes. And taking a set of proactive steps to ensure its access to advanced competitive positions in the global environment, as well as supporting its influence with emotional intelligence and organizational excellence on which strategic leaders rely in both the areas of management and the organization's decisions regarding future plans and managing the risks facing the organization in a proactive manner, The higher education sector, like other sectors, is under tremendous pressure as a result of rapid changes, and this requires academic leaders to reconsider the construction of academic work tasks for leadership by effectively employing strategic leadership practices and emotional intelligence in educational institutions, thus achieving organizational excellence, sustaining their performance, and activating their role.

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In society, make the leadership position a place for making strategic decisions instead of absorbing yourself in the details of daily work. Despite the difficulties that faced the researcher throughout the period of preparing the study, represented by the breadth of the field of study, the current study comes to constitute a valuable scientific addition and a distinguished intellectual contribution to enriching the variables of the study theoretically and in the field, especially the topic of strategic leadership and its impact on achieving organizational excellence through emotional intelligence, which has not previously been addressed. In a limited way in the local environment, whether theoretically or applied, the current study was applied in one of the most vital and important sectors of the country, which is the higher education sector, which is considered one of the most important pillars of strength in the societies of any country. In light of these data, it identified a number of private Iraqi universities (Isra University, Assyria University, Mamoun University, Al-Rafidain University, and Baghdad University of Economic Sciences) as a field for study. Based on the above, the current study based its intellectual and philosophical foundations on the following aspects:

- Most studies in administrative literature emphasize the adoption of a strategic approach in managing institutions in general and higher education institutions in particular, and that diagnosing the future of these institutions depends largely on the extent to which they possess academic leaders who possess strategic capabilities and emotional intelligence with a great deal of responsibility.
- The variation in the intellectual and philosophical perception of academic leaders applies to the variation in the dimensions of the emotional intelligence of institutions, which express the response to environmental and value-based variables that serve the organization in the future.
- The interaction between strategic leadership practices and emotional intelligence leads to the trend toward achieving organizational excellence, which is a basic requirement that everyone seeks to achieve

Strategic leadership
The concept of strategic leadership is one of the relatively recent concepts in administrative literature, and it quickly gained exceptional importance in the business world today more than ever before. Perhaps the reason is due to the rapid environmental changes (Wright *et al*., 2005:665) [4], as it looks at the leadership process. Strategy is a set of decisions and procedures that lead to the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of plans designed to achieve the organization's vision, mission, strategies, and strategic objectives within the administrative environment in which it operates (Pearce & Robinson, 2007: 3) [8], and both (Wheelen & Hunger, 2004: 56) [16] agree. With that approach, we point out that the strategic leader is the person or people who draw up the steps of strategic management and its various operations in the organization by analyzing the organization's internal and external environment for the purpose of setting and implementing strategic objectives, and evaluating and monitoring the results that have been achieved. Both (Davies & Ellison (2003:18-25) [17] that strategic leaders look beyond the present to an uncertain future related to strategic intentions, and here is an indication of the need for strategic leaders to realize the complex and unpredictable nature of the future, through which they will develop strategies to prepare for the unexpected rather than simply " "Planning according to good," while (Sarrattana, 2014: 9) believes that strategic leadership is a theory that describes the processes of determining the organization's direction and formulating and implementing strategies in practice to achieve the desired goals. Here, there is an emphasis on the fact that the strategic leader must have unusual intellectual dimensions that allow him the possibility Visualization, intuition, contemplation, foresight, and perception to penetrate the unknown, and approximate future images in preparation for making strategic decisions. According to this approach, (Ongonge, 2013:37-42) [15] confirms that strategic leaders must rely on their implicit knowledge and position to focus on what is important, as they accomplish tasks through their personal experience and cooperation. With others, taking care of the technical, mental, and emotional capabilities of employees and mobilizing these capabilities to achieve the desired results. Therefore, one of the most important criteria on which strategic leaders are judged is their talent in managing the strategic resources required for the success of the new competitive landscape expected for the twenty-first century.

It appears from the above that the term strategic leadership is used by many writers and researchers in the field of management and strategic management, especially when they talk about the strategic mind, as both (Al-Douri and Saleh, 2009: 9) [12] indicate that this term is one of the most successful contemporary management techniques and is described as the owner of a wandering mind. Which moves in the available spaces without being closed, and perhaps what the Center for Creative Leadership mentioned is the most comprehensive of the strategic leader, as it defined him as the person who plays the strategic role in business organizations by thinking, analyzing, working, and influencing others in ways that enhance the competitive advantage of the business organization (Center of Creative leadership, 2002).

In light of the concepts presented, strategic leadership is seen as a vital concept used to describe how organizations can take a strategic perspective in a turbulent and changing environment and everything related to strategic intentions in accordance with the requirements of the present and benefit from its data in order to anticipate the future and prepare for it. Therefore, the researcher believes that the strategic leader He is the one who improves the strategic management of his organization by accurately identifying its strengths and weaknesses, knows the meaning of opportunity and the seriousness of the threat, and knows how to act? It also represents the ideal method for the strategic mind found in organizations, including educational ones, to be able to face challenges and crises effectively and with outstanding success through a clear vision of the various internal and external factors that make the change process smooth, simple and uncomplicated.

Emotional intelligence
Emotional intelligence is not a new concept, but rather it has solid scientific and historical roots, and it goes back to the concept of social intelligence, which includes the non-cognitive aspects of emotional intelligence represented by excellence and success in life. In 1930, the concept of social intelligence appeared as a manifestation of intelligence, and

it was defined Cherniss) is: the ability to understand others and act wisely in human relationships. Cherniss, 2000: 94) [4]. In the late 1930s, Thorndike wrote about the non-cognitive aspects of emotional intelligence.

In 1940, Wechsler defined intelligence as an analogue of personality integration. It is: the total or comprehensive ability that makes the individual work purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with the environment. This definition is the basis of contemporary definitions of emotional intelligence, because it introduced the non-cognitive aspects of intelligence. He believes that cognitive abilities are not just elements of cognitive intelligence, even if they are very important elements, but that non-cognitive abilities exist alongside cognitive abilities that affect the level of intelligence in general, and if this is true; We cannot measure the general level of an individual's intelligence without testing these non-cognitive elements or abilities (Villard 2004:27) [11].

In 1953 AD, Edgar & Wekseller conducted a test for the social maturity of the individual, and from here we can consider them pioneers in the study of social intelligence since the 1930s, which became the starting point for emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997:6) [18].

In 1983, Gardner proposed the theory of multiple intelligences in his book (Frames of Mind), where he explained that intelligence includes, in addition to linguistic, mathematical, and logical intelligence, musical intelligence, motor intelligence, social intelligence, personal intelligence, and spatial intelligence. He classified what he called Personal Intelligence into two parts, one of which is Intrapersonal Intelligence, and the other is Relational Intelligence, which relates to the relationship between the individual and others (Interpersonal). Personal intelligence is "the ability to form a true, accurate model of a person's self, and the ability to operate and use this model effectively in life." That is, it includes the subjective and emotional side of the individual. Relational intelligence is "the ability to understand others, what motivates them, and how to make them work collectively with others." (Gardner, 1983:25) [5].

In 1985, Sternberg and Smith published a book entitled (Awareness of Intelligence), in which they explained that social intelligence is independent of academic abilities, and that it is an essential key to successful performance. Through many studies, Sternberg arrived at the importance of non-linguistic communication, through decoding. And understanding it is considered a component of social intelligence (Sternberg & Smith, 1985:61) [10]. The first use of the term emotional intelligence was in America in 1985, when a student, Dr. Payne, at the College of Liberal Arts, included this term in his thesis to obtain a doctoral degree from the United States (Al-Samadouni, (2007: 39) [13].

In 1990, the term and concept of emotional intelligence appeared with (Salovey & Mayer) in their articles entitled (Emotional Intelligence), in which they pointed out the urgent importance of developing a theory that assumes a new type of intelligence that focuses on the individual aspects of processing emotional information. Their study was an extension of the studies of (((Emotional Intelligence). Gardner and Sternberg), and they were fully aware of the above elements of non-cognitive intelligence. Emotional intelligence is defined as a type of social intelligence associated with the ability of a person to monitor himself, his feelings and emotions, and the feelings and emotions of others, distinguish between them, and use

the resulting information to rationalize his thinking, actions and decisions, (Salovey & Mayer, 1990:95) [9].

In 1995, Goleman became familiar with the works of Salovey and Mayer, which prompted him to publish his famous book, "Emotional Intelligence," which was announced on the cover of Times magazine. Its importance even reached the White House when the former American president (Bill Clinton) that the book (Emotional Intelligence) is considered a very interesting book (Shapiro, 2001:30) [14], and after Goleman's two books (Emotional Intelligence in 1995, and Working with Emotional Intelligence in 1998), interest increased greatly in the role of feelings and their management, or what is called emotional intelligence in the processes of Developing leadership and harnessing it in all human resources functions. Hence, Salovey & Mayer are considered the first to explicitly present the concept of emotional intelligence, but the real development was through the writings of Goleman in 1995 and 1998, as he contributed to erasing emotional literacy and addressing The concept in an accurate scientific manner, (Hassan, 2005: 33) [19], From the above it is clear that the concept of emotional intelligence is not a modern concept, but it has pioneers who also contributed to its emergence. Many writers have referred to it since an early period, but recently its importance has increased, and it has become the focus of conversation in service organizations that care about subordinates and customers to reach the highest level of efficiency and quality.

Organizational superiority
Organizational excellence is a compound term consisting of two parts. The first is the word "excellence," which is derived in the Arabic language from the verb "faqa," which means elevation, excellence, success, ingenuity, conquest, advancement, and exaltation. It can be expressed as "an intellectual style and administrative philosophy that relies on a curriculum linked to how to achieve good results." For the organization, and the second is "organizational", which is a word derived from the word organization or systems, and Robbins defined it as "a social entity with clearly defined boundaries and consciously coordinated, working to achieve a specific goal or set of goals," (Hafez *et al.*, 2019, 212) [20].

The term organizational excellence is called by most researchers as high performance, organizational excellence, and outstanding organizational performance, and it is considered one of the modern concepts in management. It is a "philosophical and intellectual method of management that relies on a specific methodology to achieve tangible and tangible results in the organization to achieve a balance in meeting. The needs of all parties dealing with the organization, whether stakeholders or society as a whole, within a culture of creativity, learning and continuous improvement" (Waswas & Jwaifell, 2019, 55) [6].

Researchers' interest in the concept of organizational excellence has increased as it is a comprehensive approach to methods, rules and procedures that lead to achieving development and creativity through the optimal use of the organization's available resources, which gives it the ability to adapt to all changes occurring in the surrounding environment, which requires attracting human resources that are distinguished and possess knowledge. In order for the organization to achieve excellence in its performance, the individuals working in it must stay away from stereotypical

and routine actions in performance and behavior in other organizations and adopt vital and effective systems (Kamel and Mahdi, 2020, 46) [21].

The study (Al-Zubaidi, 2016, 279) [22] **believes that achieving the idea of organizational superiority is based on paths and axes, including**
- Excellence by focusing on processes and fewer ideas.
- Excellence by focusing on results and quality in the competitive market.
- Excellence through outstanding performance and best practices.
- Excellence by achieving levels of distinction compared to competitors.
- Excellence through balance in achieving results in the short and long term.

Many researchers and writers differed in their views on the concept of organizational excellence, and based on their previous theses, the researcher can conclude the procedural concept of organizational excellence as "the organization's ability to use all its material and human capabilities and employ them in a way that achieves a high level of performance and implementation of production and service activities and processes, and to study the surrounding environment and work." "To exploit available opportunities and produce results and achievements that outperform competitors and achieve customer satisfaction with the organization."

Research Methodology
The study used two basic approaches: the descriptive analytical approach and the constructivist approach. Data were also obtained through secondary sources and primary data sources, as follows:
- **Secondary sources:** Data were obtained through secondary sources represented in books, Arabic and foreign references, periodicals, articles and previous studies related to the subject of the study, specialized scientific and professional journals, and some relevant websites on the Internet.
- **Primary sources:** Primary sources were obtained by designing a questionnaire as a main research tool, and then transcribing and analyzing the questionnaire through the SPSS statistical program.

Research population and sample
The study population consisted of all of the leadership of private colleges (deans and their assistants, department heads, and division officials) distributed among five colleges (Assyria University, Al-Isra University, Al-Mamoun University, Al-Rafidain University, Baghdad University of Economic Sciences), numbering (650) leaders, thus The appropriate sample size in this case is at least 242. The researcher worked to increase the questionnaires distributed by (20%) to ensure that the minimum sample size is recovered, so that the number of questionnaires distributed becomes (232) questionnaires. The researcher also worked to distribute them using the stratified random sampling method according to the college. The recovered questionnaires that were suitable for statistical analysis amounted to (180) questionnaires, so the percentage of responses was (80.21%).

Testing the research hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect between the dimensions of strategic leadership and organizational excellence through emotional intelligence as a mediating variable in a sample of Iraqi private colleges and universities.
To test the validity of this hypothesis, structural equation modeling was used to determine the effect and path between the dimensions of strategic leadership and organizational excellence through emotional intelligence as a mediating variable. The results related to this hypothesis can be illustrated in the following table:
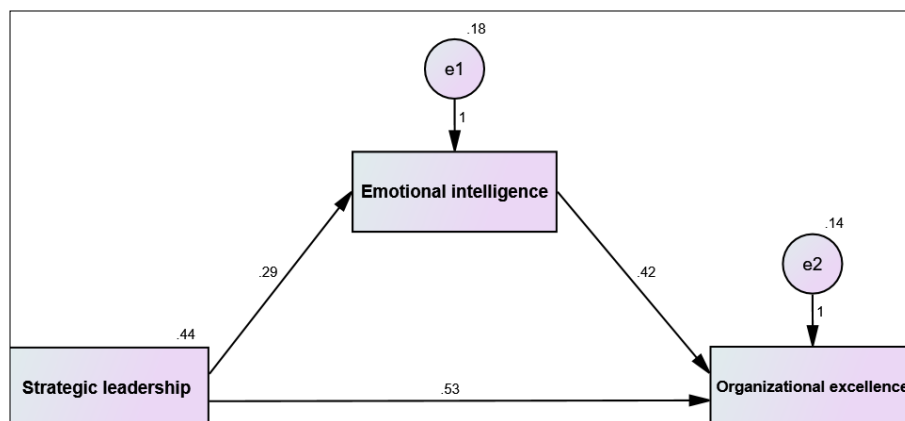
Source: Prepared by the researcher with reference to the outputs of the statistical analysis.

Fig 1: The effect of strategic leadership dimensions on organizational excellence through emotional intelligence as a mediating variable in universities and private colleges in the city of Baghdad.

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Emotional intelligence	<---	Strategic leadership	.290	.047	6.119	***	par_1
Organizational excellence	<---	Emotional intelligence	.417	.066	6.367	***	par_2
Organizational excellence	<---	Strategic leadership	.527	.046	11.534	***	par_3

Source: Prepared by the researcher with reference to the outputs of the statistical analysis.

Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
Emotional intelligence	<---	Strategic leadership	.416
Organizational excellence	<---	Emotional intelligence	.325
Organizational excellence	<---	Strategic leadership	.590

Source: Prepared by the researcher with reference to the outputs of the statistical analysis.

It is clear from the table above that there is a direct, indirect, total and partial effect between the variables, and that strategic leadership has a positive effect on emotional intelligence, $0.05 \geq P$ $(0.290) = \beta$. Likewise, strategic leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational excellence, $0.05 \geq \beta = 0.527$ P, as well as emotional intelligence. It has a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational excellence, $0.05 \geq \beta = 0.417$ P, which means achieving the first three steps. In addition, the results show that taking the mediator into account improved the percentage of explaining variance in the dependent variable, which means that emotional intelligence partially mediates the relationship between strategic leadership and organizational excellence.

The researcher attributes this result to the fact that attention to emotional intelligence and its various conditions, both material and moral, supports the practices of strategic leadership and organizational superiority within the organization. The application of the dimensions and variables related to them is greater than in institutions that neglect emotional intelligence, which negatively and greatly affects organizational superiority and the ability of strategic leadership in it to Development, growth and improvement of the work environment.

Conclusion

Through the problem of the study, which centered on knowledge of leadership, strategic leadership and its role in organizational excellence through emotional intelligence as a mediating variable in private colleges and universities in the city of Baghdad, and finding the link between the dimensions of strategic leadership and the dimensions of organizational excellence and the dimensions of emotional intelligence, as well as knowing the ways that contribute to Building and enhancing the performance of private university institutions in a way that leads to achieving organizational excellence as a goal that guarantees survival, growth, and competition in the future. This problem was addressed according to a combination of the theoretical and practical aspects, and by following the method and tools described previously, the study concluded by relying on the presentation and review of the study's literature and the description and analysis of the data. necessary for it to produce a set of results, which contributed to solving the problem of the study and answering the study's questions: Strategic leadership in light of the current changing environment is considered one of the most important determinants of the success or failure of private university institutions, and this is what made private university education institutions pay more attention to the human resource as it is considered the source of success and excellence. It allowed him freedom of initiative, creativity, innovation and development, providing an organizational environment characterized by independence in solving problems and challenges, and providing an effective communication system. Therefore, leaders must be made aware of the concept of strategic leadership and emotional intelligence through training programs and workshops.

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