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The Role of Employee Empowerment in Achieving Strategic Excellence : Exploratory Search for A Sample of Employees in Several Departments in the Mayoralty of Baghdad

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Abstract:

This research paper aimed to determine the role of employee empowerment through three dimensions (independence, delegation of powers, and training) in achieving strategic excellence in a number of departments operating in the Baghdad mayoralty, as the employee empowerment strategy is considered one of the strategies of great importance that organizations need at the present time. With the technological and cognitive acceleration witnessed to bring about positive changes in its work, its existence requires organizational components provided by administrative leaders that are able to influence employees and direct them towards achieving success and excellence. The main research problem was represented by the following question: Is it possible to achieve strategic superiority at the level of the Baghdad Municipality through... Empowering employees? The study also aimed to determine the level of empowerment of workers in the departments of the Baghdad Municipality in the research community. To reach the research goal, the researcher relied on the descriptive analytical approach, and a questionnaire tool was used to collect the data required for the research. Statistical programs (SPSS.V.25, Smart Plas4) were also used. To analyze the data, a sample of 100 employees in a number of departments of the Baghdad Municipality was selected. The results of the research concluded that there was a positive effect of empowering employees in achieving strategic excellence. The dimension of delegation of powers had the greatest impact on strategic excellence, followed by the independence dimension and then the training dimension, respectively. The research shed light on the level of variables and the relationship between them in one of the non-profit bodies represented by the Municipality of Baghdad within the Iraqi environment..

Paper type: Research paper

Keywords: employee empowerment , Strategic Excellence . service Excellence.

1.Introduction:

Employee empowerment has become a frequent term in modern businesses and their administrative executives at various levels, owing to critical issues, the most essential of which is the organization's performance and excellence, recent advances in administrative philosophy as a result of the move from instructions, control, and task execution to empowerment, the 1990s saw an increase in interest in the concept of employee empowerment. Many studies have shown the value of empowerment, its importance and varied dimensions, as well as the intended consequences attained via its use, whether for the organization or workers. As one of the fundamental concepts in achieving strategic excellence, adopting current leadership patterns characterized by decentralization that help achieve interaction between management and employees while also enhancing their creativity and innovation capabilities away from old patterns is one of the fundamental principles, employee empowerment, from this perspective, is one of the most significant value concepts for improving workers' behavioural elements in order to attain the maximum levels of support, innovation, teamwork spirit, entrepreneurship, self-confidence, and independent thinking. In order for organizations to be able to achieve the excellence they seek and have outstanding performance, they must follow many basic requirements and strategies that lead them towards strategic excellence. Empowerment is one of the strategies that organizations follow and resort to unleash the latent creative energies of individuals and use these energies to achieve superior performance, as this strategy provides opportunities. Making decisions regarding problems and situations without referring to higher departments (Hanaysha, 2016). Given the importance of the topic of employee empowerment in achieving strategic excellence, this research paper was completed through reviewing and studying previous studies that contributed to the study of employee empowerment. The researcher relied primarily on available Arab and foreign sources that dealt with the topic of employee empowerment and strategic excellence in the theoretical aspect of the research. In order to achieve the desired goal that the researcher seeks to test hypotheses, data on the applied aspect was collected through: the questionnaire tool and personal interviews with the study sample.

1.1 Literature review :

Many studies have touched on employee empowerment, including : Vu, (2020) mentioned that Employee empowerment can be utilized to increase employee performance and offers them the ability to make decisions, which increases motivation, dedication, and satisfaction while also assisting them in dealing with duties and goals that lead to excellence. The idea of empowerment stresses the circumstance in which people are given the authority to make organizational decisions, organizations that want to improve their performance should empower their employees so that they may contribute positively to the organization (Marta et al, 2020). According to Yakut and Kar (2022) mentioned in their study employee empowerment is a managerial technique that stimulates innovation and independence by offering feedback and emotional support to employees, assisting them in becoming talented individuals and so favorably improving their job performance. Bahram (2023) focused in his study on identifying the factors affecting job satisfaction, and employee empowerment was used as a model. This study dealt with clarifying the dimensions of employee empowerment and its impact on job satisfaction between males and females with an analytical framework, as the purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction.

On the other hand, there are many researchers who have addressed strategic excellence in their studies, as follows: Shelton et al (2020) explained a new heights of strategic excellence through the development of leadership strategies for organizational leaders. The goal of the study was to determine the nature of the relationship between strategic excellence and the values, strategies, and abilities that leaders possess. The study also sought to determine how effectively using leadership values, strategies, and abilities in organizations can result in success at the level of activities and ultimately strategic excellence.

While Aldarmaki and Yaakub (2022) mentioned in their study on components of strategic excellence, where the importance of organizations' practices in strategic planning was clarified, and an attempt was made to extract the content of planning and plans to explain strategic excellence. Another study by Jengwa (2022) explored the uneven assessment of all sectors of the dimensions of institutional excellence in the Dubai free zone, as well as a review of strategic excellence as a concept that has important dimensions for high-performance organizations, and providing an overview of the concepts of strategic excellence such as leadership, people, processes, policy and strategy in addition to partnership and resources, the study aimed to review the measurements of strategic excellence in order to determine the comprehensive strategic excellence practices of free zones in Dubai, as well as address the gaps related to strategic excellence in free zones and contribute to defining and discussing the concepts of strategic excellence, this study presented arguments and rationales for organizations, especially in free zones, to reconsider, in its concepts and measurements of strategic excellence in light of the effects of crises. Finally AlHindawy (2022) believed that the importance of employee empowerment is evident in the fact that the organization's established and drawn-up goals cannot be achieved in isolation from the participation and empowerment of employees, as these goals are in the interest of the organization and employees alike, this importance can be summarized as follows: the necessary response to achieve the principle of decentralization in decision-making and the development of skills and expertise, and the capabilities of subordinates, encouraging them to assume responsibilities and accept risks, raising the morale of workers, increasing their sense of belonging, and making the most of the creative energies of employees towards continuous improvement and achieving excellence, and the basic and effective requirements and components that make the organization excellence in service and able to compete, she mentioned In order for the organization to be superior in service, attention must be paid to technological requirements and talented human resources, the importance of this study was demonstrated in creating an integrated framework for building a model of service excellence that contributes to enhancing the competitive advantage of organizations.

Also there are a number of studies linked between employee empowerment and strategic excellence, the most important was from Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) mentioned in order for organizations to be able to achieve the excellence they seek and have outstanding performance, they must follow many basic requirements and strategies that lead them towards strategic excellence, empowerment strategies are one of the strategies that organizations follow and resort to to unleash the latent creative energies of individuals and use these energies to achieve superior performance. Another study from Bougherra et al (2019) explained in order for organizations to be superior in providing their services, attention must be given to adopting the concept of employee empowerment, as there are positive effects of employee empowerment in achieving strategic excellence.

Therefore, the problem of the research stems from the fact that most organizations in our current reality face great challenges as a result of economic, political and social situations and conditions, therefore, their success and excellence have become dependent on the existence of strategies that lead towards excellence, such as empowering employees. Recent administrative and intellectual studies and trends have confirmed the necessity of paying attention to employees as they are a valuable resource and an important element if these organizations wanted to achieve success and excellence

Through the researchers' review of a number of previous studies, the following main question was formulated:

Is it possible to attain strategic excellence at Baghdad mayoralty when employee empowerment elements are available? It spawned the following sub-questions:

What is the level of worker empowerment in the Baghdad mayoralty?

How does the relationship between employee empowerment and strategic excellence?

The main objectives of the research to achieve several things that can be summarized as follows:

Determining the level of employee empowerment by the administrative leadership in the Baghdad Mayoralty and testing the nature of the relationship between employee empowerment and strategic excellence.

2. Material and Methods:

The researchers depended on evaluating the necessary data to test the hypotheses and achieve the research objectives using a two-part questionnaire tool. The first section contains vital personal information on the research participants who work in the Baghdad mayoralty, such as gender, educational level, age, and years of service. The researchers employed a range of statistical applications, including SPSS.V.25 and Smart Pls4. The second section addressed issues about the research variables as personal interviews questions in order to analyze the data and develop conclusions.

2.1 Sample and research population:

A number of departments affiliated with Baghdad mayoralty were chosen to apply the practical aspect to know the impact of employee empowerment and its role in achieving strategic excellence. The sample size was about (155) people, the questionnaire was distributed to them and (100) people responded to answer the questionnaire.

2.2 Hypotheses:

The main hypothesis of the research was: There is a significant effect between employee empowerment and strategic excellence. The following secondary hypotheses emerge from them: There is a significant effect of the independence dimension on strategic excellence.

There is a significant effect of the perception and clarity dimension on strategic excellence.

There is a significant effect of the training dimension on strategic excellence.

2.3 Employee empowerment concept :

As a result of diversity of studies, definitions varied of employee empowerment and among these studies are: Kashkul et al (2023) consider employee empowerment as an approach to giving employees confidence and freedom to accomplish the work assigned to them by managers. The study by Ramadan (2023) described employee empowerment it is a phenomenon consisting of a number of interconnected steps and practices practiced by managers that grant independence and authority to workers. While Kumar et al (2022) discussed the concept of employee empowerment as a management tool dedicated to the organization's benefits, and it means supporting and inspiring the workforce to make decisions with high authority within the organization by providing authority and independence for workers to make critical decisions at the appropriate time for the organizations. The study by Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) defined employee empowerment as delegating authority and responsibilities from higher levels in the organizational hierarchy to workers at lower levels, especially the ability to make decisions, as their empowerment and participation in the decision-making process is the key to the organization's success and superiority.

2.4 The dimensions of employee empowerment

Several studies dealt with employee's empowerment variable. According to (shukri, 2022) which measured employee's empowerment in creativity organizations using three main dimensions are Training and development , Delegation of powers and Independence Training and development , according to (Trisivo,2017) the training is development of employees' knowledge and abilities and it became critical in order to improve performance, gain a competitive advantage, and assure ongoing progress and excellence, training refers to a set of behaviors related to the development of workers to become independent and qualified to work

independently, it also includes sharing knowledge between leaders and workers, encouraging mutual knowledge exchange, and gaining knowledge through training and education to improve worker performance or provide support to enable them to work independently. Muhammad (2014) stated that training programs are one of the key factors for the empowerment process's effectiveness it is impossible to empower workers in any practical field without developing the skills and expertise and raising the capabilities required to complete work tasks through regular training programs that provide the worker with knowledge and skills to improve his performance in work efficiently and effectively helps the organization achieve its objectives. According to the researchers, training is a planned effort by the organization's management to give workers with new skills and information, as it is one of the basic requirements and important determinants for organizational success and excellence.

Delegation of powers, Shweya (2022) stated that the main idea of the concept of employee empowerment is the process of empowering authorities, as empowerment refers to transferring authorities to a lower administrative level in the organization and through which employees become able to influence decisions that lead to achieving the required goals. Authorizing a portion of the powers and authority expedites the completion of tasks that lead to the achievement of the desired goals through prompt decision-making and assists the organization in dealing with diverse obstacles, and the expected positive effects of the authorization process are to increase worker efficiency and create a state of satisfaction for them with the direction of the organization in which they work, resulting in increased commitment and discipline at work, which leads to the achievement of the desired goals (Hadeef and Mesaieed, 2020).

Independence, Hansen et al (2021) mentioned Work autonomy refers to employees' high levels of freedom, autonomy, and appreciation in terms of work method, work schedule, work pace, work procedures, work evaluation, job kind, objectives, priorities, and work standards, furthermore autonomy is a strategy that encourages workers to engage in entrepreneurial behavior by providing them with sufficient freedom to carry out innovative activities with a minimum level of supervisory approval, thereby enhancing their creativity, generating ideas, intrinsic motivation, flexibility, directing a proactive role in problem solving and opportunity exploitation. According to (Saeeda and Rabi', 2021), independence is an important factor in employee empowerment because it gives workers freedom of action in completing tasks and activities related to their work that they practice, i.e. giving workers powers to take appropriate measures, but this is done within the structure determined by the administration Supreme.

2.5 Strategic Excellence concept :

The concept of Excellence appeared when Tom Peter) and Robert Waterman presented the framework for Excellence in their best-selling book *In Search of Excellence* in 1982, where they studied approximately (43) superior American organizations over a period of two years, where they explained a set of characteristics and advantages What these organizations share that makes them superior and distinct from others (Witcher, 2020). According to Hammad and Al-Kubaisi (2020) explained, in order to achieve balance in addressing the needs of all parties dealing with the organization, strategic excellence is a comprehensive philosophical and intellectual approach to management that relies on a methodology that is focused on delivering concrete results in the company, and it is the organization's ability to continuously improve, educate, achieve, and improve talents in creative ways that serve the organization and the consumer, and the optimal use of resources and diligence to achieve goals. By the study of Alzeidi and Mohammed (2022) defined strategic excellence as the ability to coordinate and harmonize the organization's elements and operate them at the highest rates of effectiveness to reach the level of outputs that meet the desires, needs, and expectations of the parties related to the organization.

2.6 The dimensions of strategic excellence

The researcher adopted (Hammad and Al-Kubaisi,2020) scale to measure strategic excellence, which included the following dimensions (Appropriate strategy, knowledge excellence and service excellence).

Appropriate strategy, refers to the steps taken by the organization to achieve its vision and mission, and their interaction as a unified and integrated plan that links the organization's strength to its strategic ability to confront environmental threats (Al-Awassa and Jawad, 2019). Alfatafta and Alkshali (2020) supported this view, that the dimension of the appropriate strategy depends on the future vision of the organization and the emergency situations that it may face , an effective strategy makes the organization capable of confronting potential scenarios and environmental changes and their accompanying effects that may affect, in one way or another, its success and excellence. An appropriate strategy works to achieve harmony between the organization's culture and the nature of the decisions and processes that are compatible with it (Alshalabe,2017).

knowledge excellence, knowledge is the way through which an organization can develop its products and services in a creative way that enables the organization to achieve excellence in the long term, knowledge has an effective role in bringing the organization to a state in which it can achieve its competitive goals and achieve strategic excellence (Alwan and Al-Najjar, 2022). A study of Abu Radan and Abdul Rahman (2020) defined it as it is the organization's possession of characteristics that distinguish it from other organizations, and among these characteristics is its possession of knowledge, represented by the capabilities, skills and experiences possessed by employees, which are intangible and difficult to measure or imitate, and through them organizations are able to achieve the competitive advantage that ensures their survival and excellence. The study by (Al-Awassa and Jawad, 2019) mentioned that, the organization's effectiveness in collecting, managing and using information and its knowledge assets to support the organization's main activities towards improving its performance to achieve the required results.

service excellence, A set of tools, values and procedures that the organization follows to enhance its institutional performance and its continued pursuit of developing the skills and capabilities of employees and working to meet the desires of customers and to achieve service excellence (Alwan and Al-Najjar, 2022).

the searchers see the quality of service provision is an important factor that distinguishes organizations from each other.

3. Discussion of Results :

3.1 Reliability test:

It means the emergence of the same questionnaire results if it was redistributed more than once and under the same conditions and circumstances; in other words, the stability of the questionnaire means the stability of the questionnaire results and their non-change in a significant way if the sample was redistributed over a period of time and several times. Table (1) explains the reliability test for the measurement tool.

Table 1: Reliability test results of the research

Search variables	Sub-dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	the decision
Employee empowerment	Independence	0.835	0.759	inside the parameters
	Training	0.858	0.851	inside the parameters
	Delegation Of Powers	0.832	0.820	inside the parameters
Strategic Excellence	Appropriate Strategy	0.861	0.864	inside the parameters
	Knowledge Excellence	0.892	0.890	inside the parameters
	Service Excellence	0.867	0.875	inside the parameters

Source: Conducted by the researchers based on the (Spss.V.25) program

The results of Table No. (1) demonstrate that the Cronbach alpha values for the variables and dimensions of the study range between (0.760-0.892) and are greater than (0.70). and this indicates that the variables and sub-dimensions have adequate internal consistency, and these results indicate that the study scale has a good level of stability, and this is evidence of the extent of its internal consistency, as well as the stability of its paragraphs, and evidence of the extent to which the scale can be repeated and yield the same results, and thus Other statistical tests can be performed based on these results.

3.2 Description of variables:

Tables Nos. 2 and 3 provide a summary of the results related to the dimensions of employee empowerment and Strategic Excellence, as it is clear that this employee empowerment variable achieved a total arithmetic mean (2.987), indicating the interest of Baghdad mayoralty departments in employee empowerment, which is supported by the standard deviation (0.802), It suggests that there is no dispersion in the study sample's responses, as evidenced by the value of the coefficient of difference, which was (26.8). In terms of dimensions, the results revealed that the dimension (delegation of powers) ranked top among the dimensions of the employee empowerment variable, with an arithmetic mean of (3.076). and a standard deviation of (3.076). 0.903), and the coefficient of variation was (29.4). Whereas, it came after (independence) in the second order in terms of the dimensions of the employee empowerment variable, with an arithmetic mean (3.026), a standard deviation (0.917), and a coefficient of difference (30.3). Finally, in terms of the dimensions of the employee empowerment variable, the dimension (training) placed third, with an arithmetic mean (2.858), a standard deviation (0.945), and a coefficient of difference (33.1). In terms of the Strategic Excellence variable's dimensions, this variable acquired a total arithmetic mean (2.957), indicating the interest of the Baghdad mayoralty Departments sample in Strategic Excellence, The standard deviation (0.910) confirms this.) as the research sample's responses show that there is no dispersion, as evidenced by the value of the coefficient of difference (30.8). The dimension (cognitive Excellence) rated top among the dimensions, with an arithmetic mean of (3.078), a standard deviation of (0.943), and a coefficient of difference of (30.6). And after (Excellence in Service), it came in second place, with an arithmetic mean of (2.944), a standard deviation of (0.987), and a coefficient of difference of (33.5). Finally, after (the appropriate strategy), it came in third place, with an arithmetic mean (2.850), a standard deviation (0.999), and a coefficient of difference (35.1).

Table 2: Reliability test of the employee empowerment dimensions

No	employee empowerment	mean	standard deviation	coefficient of difference	priority
1	independence	3.026	0.917	30.3	2
2	delegation of powers	3.076	0.903	29.4	1
3	training	2.858	0.945	33.1	3
		2.987	0.802	26.8	

Source: Conducted by the researchers based on the (spss.V.25) program

Table 3: Reliability test of the employee Strategic Excellence dimensions

No	Strategic Excellence	mean	standard deviation	coefficient of difference	priority
1	appropriate strategy	2.850	0.999	35.1	3
2	Service Excellence	2.944	0.987	33.5	2
3	knowledge Excellence	3.078	0.943	30.6	1
		2.957	0.910	30.8	

Source: Conducted by the researchers based on the (spss.V.25) program

3.3. Hypothesis testing:

The hypotheses aim to investigate the characteristics of employee empowerment as an independent variable and Strategic Excellence as a dependent variable, as shown in table No. (4):

Table 4: The findings of a multiple regression analysis on the impact of employee empowerment on strategic excellence

dependent variable	Employee Empowerment dimensions		Adj (R ²)	(F)	(t)	Sig	Decision/interpretation	
Strategic Excellenc	independence	(α)	1.138	0.360	56.702	7.530	0.000	Accepted / there is a significant effect
		(β)	0.601					
	delegation of powers	(α)	0.970	0.405	68.470	8.275		Accepted / there is a significant effect
		(β)	0.646					
	training	(α)	1.161	0.419	72.525	8.516	0.000	Accepted / there is a significant effect
		(β)	0.628					
	Employee empowerment	(α)	0.494	0.524	109.956	10.486	0.000	Accepted / there is a significant effect
		(β)	0.825					

Source: Conducted by the researchers based on the (Spss.V.25)

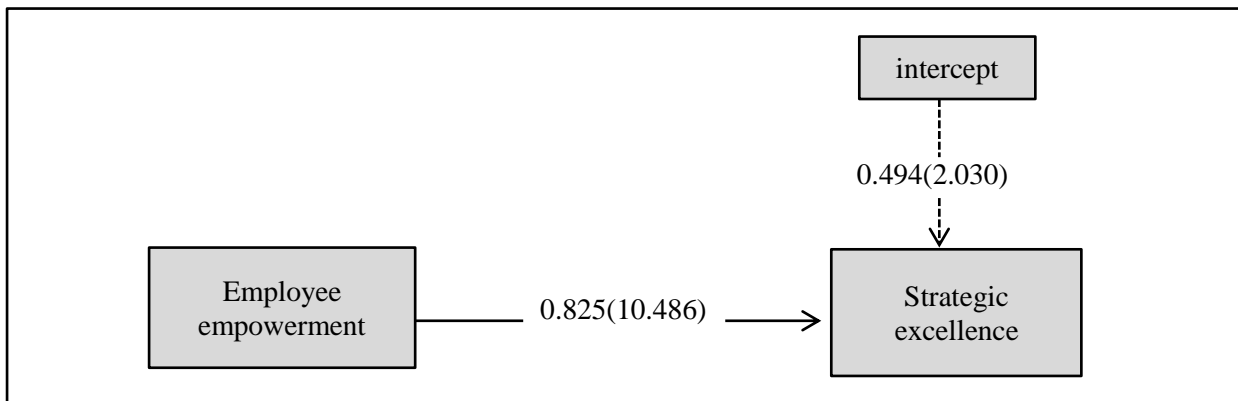


Figure 1: Analysis of the impact of employee empowerment on Strategic excellence
Source: prepared by the researchers based on the outputs of the (Smart Pls4) program

It is clear from Table (4) and Figure (1) that The value of (F) calculated to enable workers in Strategic Excellence amounted to (109.956), which is greater than the value of (F) tabular amounting to (3.94) at the level of significance (0.05), with a confidence level of (95%), indicating the existence of a positive moral effect to enable workers to excel Strategically. The corrected determination coefficient (R2) for empowering employees in Strategic Excellence was calculated (0.524) , This demonstrates that employee empowerment explains (52.4%) of the changes in Strategic Excellence, and that the remaining percentages are related to interpretation of other factors that did not enter the regression model . The calculated value of (t) for the marginal tendency coefficient to empower workers in Strategic Excellence was (10.486), which was greater than the tabular (t) value of (1.984) at the level of significance (0.05), indicating that the marginal tendency coefficient is significant to empower workers in Strategic Excellence. The marginal propensity coefficient for empowering workers in Strategic Excellence was (0.825), indicating that a one-unit increase in empowering workers leads to an increase in Strategic Excellence of (82.5%). Furthermore, by observing the value of the constant , personnel in the Strategic Excellence (0.494) can be empowered, When the Strategic Excellence is equal to zero, it will exist to empower the workers by the amount of its value. This results in the acceptance of the major hypothesis, which indicates that (there is a considerable effect of Employee Empowerment in Strategic Excellence).

4. Conclusion:

It is clear that the departments of the Baghdad mayoralty, the research sample, adopted the employee empowerment strategy to improve their level of performance toward excellence, as well as adopting the provision of appropriate training programs to increase the skills and capabilities of workers, in addition to giving them independence in completing tasks and empowering them with powers, as well as the administration's interest in criticism and encourage , therefore in order for these departments to attain the needed Excellence, they must pay greater attention to the process of employee empowerment, as it is one of the fundamental elements to achieving strategic excellence.

5. Further work:

Examine the present research variables (employee empowerment, strategic excellence) in the Iraqi non-profit service sector. Expanding or altering the dimensions of employee empowerment and structuring the dimensions to suit non-profit service organizations in Iraq.

Authors Declaration:

Conflicts of Interest: None

-We Hereby Confirm That All The Figures and Tables In The Manuscript Are Mine and Ours. Besides, The Figures and Images, Which are Not Mine, Have Been Permitted Republication and Attached to The Manuscript.

- Ethical Clearance: The Research Was Approved By The Local Ethical Committee in The University.

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دور تمكين العاملين في تحقيق التفوق الاستراتيجي : بحث استطلاعي لعينة من العاملين في عدد من دوائر أمانة بغداد

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مستخلص البحث:

هدفت هذه الورقة البحثية الى تحديد دور تمكين العاملين من خلال ثلاثة ابعاد (الاستقلالية ، تفويض الصلاحيات ، التدريب) في تحقيق التفوق الاستراتيجي في عدد من الدوائر العاملة في امانة بغداد ، حيث تعتبر استراتيجية تمكين العاملين من الاستراتيجيات ذات الاهمية الكبيرة التي تحتاجها المنظمات في الوقت الحالي وما يشهده من تسارع تكنولوجي ومعرفي لإحداث التغييرات الايجابية في عملها، يتطلب وجودها مقومات تنظيمية توفرها القيادات الادارية والتي تكون قادرة على التأثير في العاملين وتوجيههم نحو تحقيق النجاح والتفوق، تمثلت مشكلة البحث الرئيسية بالتساؤل الاتي : هل يمكن تحقيق التفوق الاستراتيجي على مستوى امانة بغداد من خلال تمكين العاملين ؟ كما وهدفت الدراسة الى تحديد مستوى تمكين العاملين في دوائر امانة بغداد مجتمع البحث ، وللوصول الى هدف البحث اعتمد الباحث على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي ، وتم استخدام اداة الاستبانة لجمع البيانات المطلوبة للبحث ، كما تم استعمال البرامج الاحصائية (SPSS.V.25,Smart plus4) لتحليل البيانات ، وتم اختيار عينة مكونة من 100 من العاملين في عدد من دوائر امانة بغداد ، خلصت نتائج البحث الى وجود تأثير ايجابي لتمكين العاملين في تحقيق التفوق الاستراتيجي ، وكان لبعده تفويض الصلاحيات التأثير الاكبر على التفوق الاستراتيجي يليه بعد الاستقلالية ومن ثم بعد التدريب على التوالي ، سلط البحث الضوء على مستوى المتغيرات والعلاقة بينها في احدى الهيئات غير الهادفة للربح المتمثلة بأمانة بغداد داخل البيئة العراقية.

نوع البحث: ورقة بحثية

المصطلحات الرئيسية للبحث: تمكين العاملين ، التفوق الاستراتيجي ، التفوق الخدمي .

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