

The Effect of Local Administration in Reducing Strategic Drift in Dhi Qar Governorate

**تأثير الإدارة المحلية في الحد
من الانجراف الاستراتيجي في محافظة ذي قار**

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Abstract

This research aims, through its discussions, to examine the extent of the impact of local governance on mitigating strategic drift. In order to elucidate this impact, a set of objectives was formulated, including highlighting the capacity of local governance to serve as a barrier against strategic drift in the province. The study population consists of 700 employees with various specializations and administrative levels, and 100 employees were taken as a sample from the research population. To achieve this purpose, a series of hypotheses was formulated, with a primary focus on establishing the relationship of influence exerted by local governance on strategic drift. For the purpose of verification and hypothesis testing, the research was applied to department managers and staff in the Directorate of Thi Qar Governorate.

This involved distributing questionnaires to the sample and utilizing field visits for personal interviews. Additionally, various statistical methods were employed to process the data using SPSS software during the research period. The most important research result necessitates the local administration to conduct a training program for senior leaders, particularly regarding how to deal with unplanned emergency situations. The senior leadership responsible for planning pays attention to its members and consider their opinions when initiating planning, as this has an impact on individuals and their response to the established strategic plan.

Keywords: Local Administration, Strategic Drift

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث، من خلال مناقشاته، إلى دراسة مدى تأثير الحكومة المحلية على التخفيف من حدة الانجراف الاستراتيجي. ولتوضيح هذا الأثر، تم صياغة مجموعة من الأهداف، منها تسليط الضوء على قدرة الحكومة المحلية على أن تكون بمثابة حاجز ضد الانجراف الاستراتيجي في المحافظة. يتكون مجتمع الدراسة من 700 موظف من مختلف التخصصات والمستويات الإدارية، وتم أخذ 100 موظف كعينة من مجتمع البحث. ولتحقيق هذا الغرض، تم صياغة سلسلة من الفرضيات، مع التركيز بشكل أساسي على تحديد علاقة التأثير الذي تمارسه الحكومة المحلية على الانجراف الاستراتيجي. ولغرض التحقق واختبار الفرضيات، تم تطبيق البحث على مديري الإدارات والموظفين في مديرية محافظة ذي قار. وتضمن ذلك توزيع استبيانات على العينة واستخدام الزيارات الميدانية لإجراء مقابلات شخصية.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم استخدام أساليب إحصائية مختلفة لمعالجة البيانات باستخدام برنامج SPSS خلال فترة البحث. من أهم نتائج البحث ضرورة قيام الإدارة المحلية بإجراء برنامج تدريبي للقيادات العليا خاصة فيما يتعلق بكيفية التعامل مع حالات الطوارئ غير المخطط لها. اهتمام القيادة العليا المسؤولة عن التخطيط بالاهتمام بأفرادها ومراعاة آرائهم عند الشروع في التخطيط، لما لذلك من تأثير على الأفراد واستجابتهم للخطة الاستراتيجية الموضوعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدارة المحلية، الانجراف الاستراتيجي

Introduction

In light of the rapid changes and environmental turmoil, as well as the trend towards democracy and support for participation, there has been a growing interest in the issue of local administration today. This is due to the expanded role of the central government, which now distributes powers between itself and local governments. Local governments are closer to the problems faced by citizens and are better informed about potential obstacles to their work, such as surprises and environmental changes, as well as what aids in expediting their resolution. One problem that may arise is the mismatch between the plan and the external environment, known as strategic drift. As a result, local administration faces significant pressure and must stand firm and confront these challenges. It needs to resort to planning to reinvigorate its activities and adapt to the external environment and its issues, in addition to a strong strategic leadership capable of controlling developments.

The researcher organized the study into four sections. The first section focused on the research methodology, while the second section addressed the theoretical aspect concerning local administration and strategic drift. In the third section, the practical side of the research was examined, and finally, the fourth section presented the findings and recommendations of the current study.

The Problem

The phenomenon of strategic drift has become evident in numerous organizations, making it challenging to overcome. Failing to address it can result in various problems, including the depletion of human and material resources, wasted time in attempting to adapt to rapid environmental changes, and various negative impacts. Given the crucial role played by local administration in mitigating drift, how can strategies leverage their proximity to individuals and their environment to develop solutions? In light of this, a question arises to elucidate the research problem: Is there an impact of local administration on reducing strategic drift?

The Aims

The aims of the current research are summarized in the following points:

- Clarification and presentation of the concepts of local administration and strategic drift.
- Explaining the impact of local administration in addressing the problem of strategic drift.
- Coming up with results and recommendations that may serve those studying the same topic in the future and those concerned with the study (Dhi Qar Governorate).

The Hypotheses

1. There is a significant correlation for the dimensions of local administration in strategic drift.
2. There is a significant relationship of influence for the dimensions of local administration on strategic drift.

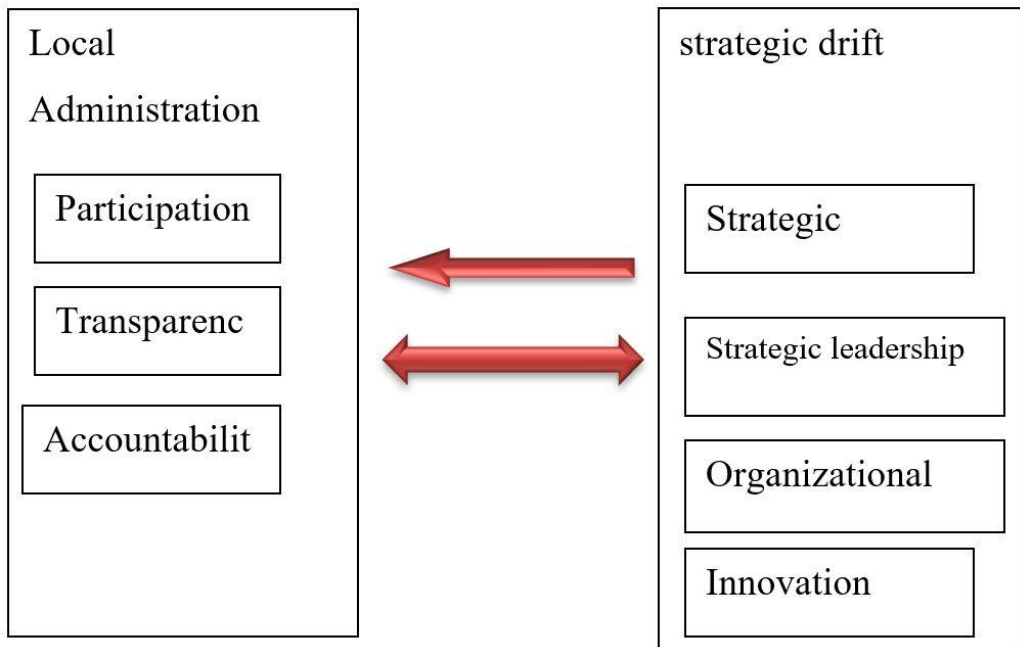
The Methodology

This part of the research entails presenting the problem and its associated questions, identifying the research's objectives and significance, presenting the hypothesis, clarifying the tools and methods used for data collection, and detailing the adopted analysis approach.

The value of the Study

The importance of the research came from the variables it dealt with, the impact they have on our lives, the problem posed where the local administration has a pivotal and fundamental role, and the problems that could result from the continuation of this phenomenon and its impact on the course of its work. Therefore, the local administration must focus on strategic leadership, strategic planning, and organizational culture, innovation in order to help reduce strategic drift.

Theoretical Framework



Validity and Reliability Tests:

After completing the design of the scale, whether relying on ready-made scales, designing a scale, or using a combination of both methods, the researcher must conduct validity and reliability tests to ensure the integrity, accuracy, and suitability of the scale for achieving the desired research objectives. The measurement of validity and reliability will be identified as follows:

Validity test: This test is one of the basic conditions to ensure that the questionnaire items measure the objectives for which they were prepared. Missing this condition means the invalidity of the scale and the lack of reliability in its results. To test the validity of the scale, there are two methods that the researcher relied on, which are as follows:

A - Apparent honesty, or what is referred to as the arbitrators’ honesty: (Validity), aims to verify the extent to which the paragraph belongs to its field, as the questionnaire is distributed after completing its formulation to a group of experts in the field of specialization to take into account their recommendations regarding amending some paragraphs, deleting others, or keeping them. Appendix (1) shows the names and specializations of the arbitrators who contributed to arbitrating the questionnaire, and whose opinions were positive about most of the paragraphs. Their comments about some of the paragraphs were also approved regarding the need to amend or reformulate them, which made the scale appear in the best form, as the questionnaire’s reliability rate reached (0.94). %) after taking into account all the directions provided by the arbitrators.

B - Content validity: refers to the extent to which each item of the scale is clear in terms of meaning, wording, and logical design, so that it covers the important area of its scope. The Cronbach Alpha - equation was used. After applying this equation, the results are presented in Table (1). These results confirm the validity of the scale and its applicability.

Table 1
Results of the Cronbach Alpha
Equation to Measure Content Validity

	strategic drift	Local Administration	variable
0.82	0.855	0.734	Alpha Cronbach
32	16	16	N of Item

2. Reliability testing: Reliability is tested using the split-half method. This method includes finding the correlation coefficient between the items of the scale. They are either divided into even and odd-numbered items, or they are split in half. Top of Form

The correlation coefficient is also corrected with the Spearman equation – Brown. After adopting this method from the outputs of the (SPSS) program, it was found that the value of (Cronbach's Alpha) for the first part and the second part is higher than the hypothesized correlation (0.5). Correction of the correlation coefficient was also performed with the Spearman - Brown equation. This is what makes the questionnaire in its entirety, axes, dimensions and paragraphs are highly stable, and can be used at different times for the same individuals to give the same results.

Limits of Research

-Spatial boundaries: Dhi Qar Governorate Office.

-Time limits: represented by the implementation period from 1/8/2023-2/12/2023.

Theoretical Aspect

Local Administration:

A form of administrative organization in which administrative functions are distributed between the local government, which is elected, and is also subject to the central government, which is assigned powers to complete the work (Chaib, 2015:12). It is also an integrated system that affects and is affected by its environment. It is the method of organizing the local administrative process, which is endowed with legal personality by law (Dhahi et al., 2019: 240).

It is defined by Jawad (2018: 329) as an administrative system centered on service and the execution of administrative tasks through elected or appointed members, who have been elected or appointed with reference to the government. This system combines elements of centralization with flexibility and coordination, both with the central administration and other local administrations. Mohamed Ali (2015: 166) views it as one of the administrative means that the central government resorts to help it convey its message and goal with clarity and efficiency.

It is one of the methods of administrative organization, as called for by Alao et al. (2015: 61) to establish a local administration system based on democracy under the law, in addition to strengthening the capacity of human resources and making leadership subject to accountability. Saeed Al-Alaq (2015: 149) explains that the oversight to which local administration is subject is by the government. Centralization does not impede its independence or hinder its ability to provide services to its citizens.

The researcher contends that, given the aforementioned points, the local administration system can be characterized as an integrated administrative model centered on fulfilling the needs of citizens. It operates based on the principle of cooperation and communication with the central government, despite having legal personality.

The Importance of Local Administration:

The local administration played a prominent role in improving the local service provided and working to make decisions with the necessary speed (Nasrallah, 2002: 170). Jawad (2018: 330) shows that the local administration supports elected or appointed representatives in fulfilling their duties and local responsibilities, benefiting from financial and administrative independence. Moreover, local administration contributes to development by striving for administrative effectiveness through its granted powers and assuming responsibilities. (Muhammad, Ali, 2015: 166) It also fosters a local democratic atmosphere and political engagement, wherein society members elect their representatives, thereby increasing confidence and a sense of belonging (Chaib, 2015:13).Top of Form

Dimensions of Local Administration

Participation

The spread of a high percentage of political and social culture and awareness among local citizens and local community bodies is an important factor in determining the type, size, and impact of community participation, as the higher the awareness rate and the more the participation extends to terms and fields, the more effective the participation becomes (Ochieng, 2015: 5).

It is defined by Al-Majidi and Razzuqi (2018: 65) as the participation of a group of individuals interacting among themselves to reach decisions aimed at fulfilling their common interests. They bear full responsibility for these decisions, which encompass public interests affecting everyone rather than one party.

Transparency

Transparency is an element of successful and good management in governance, and the more transparency is present and clear, the better the governance and the achievement of stability. Transparency implies an open process between the government, the people, and their representatives in parliaments, governorate councils, and civil society institutions (Al-Ajili and Al-Mandil, 2018: 2013).

Transparency is also a commitment of administrative units to disclosure, clarity, and honest presentation of the organization's information by subjecting them to responsibility (Abu Ajma, 2020: 83).

Accountability

Accountability signifies discipline and the dedication of public administration to assume responsibility for its actions and duties, aiming to enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness. It ensures the integrity and transparency of administrative work, combats corruption, and advances the public interest. (Shareef et al, 2023: 245).

Jadara (2021: 287) defines it as the response of institutions and individuals to the responsibilities assigned to them if they exhibit undesirable behavior in accordance with standards and laws, as accountability facilitates monitoring work, understanding actions well, and providing convincing scientific justifications.

Strategic Drift

Strategic drift has become a widespread issue at the present time, regardless of the sector in which the organization is located, whether private or public. Therefore, many organizations have resorted at the present time to studying this concept because of its importance and impact on their lives and their continued giving. As explained by Gilligan and Wilson (2009), the failure experienced by leaders often stems from an oversight in anticipating potential developments in the organization's external environment. Strategic drift also manifests when organizations persist in implementing current strategies that do not align with the evolving environment, leading to the failure of these strategies to address emerging challenges.

This situation can precipitate an organizational crisis. (Zafirova, 2014, 490) Lee (2018, 5) sees it as a state of decline and lethargy, as the organization has a prevailing organizational culture. This is in turn homogeneous with the organizational model, where change is not encouraged due to the control of leaders and work to resist this change. Therefore, this will be reflected in a decrease in focus on the external work of the organization, as it is a deterioration in the organization's intellectual ability, laziness in reaching the goals that are required to be achieved, a distraction from management's attention, a loss of financial and human resources, and an increase in costs. Productivity in order to continue and be in a good and satisfactory position, organizations need to have resources that help them survive and advance.

These resources include systems, processes, and a culture that will help develop capabilities and competencies necessary to reach and achieve the strategic fit required by the organization and the existing circumstances in the external environment. (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015, 1).

Al Shebli (2016, 50) and Maosa (2015, 4) believe that there are some ways that can be fruitful and help the organization avoid unnecessary drifts, including the presence of a flexible environment that allows departments at different administrative levels to participate in making decisions. The decision must be made by hearing the opinions of employees and effectively communicating with them. Managers also need to set priorities and understand the challenges that may face them, posing obstacles, while developing a comprehensive and clear plan to overcome these challenges.

Based on the above, the researcher believes that strategic drift is a situation in which the organization finds itself in a weakened position during its operations. This may result from leaders' difficulty in understanding and analyzing matters surrounding the organization accurately. Consequently, they may resort to strategies that are consistent only with the internal situation, while setting inflexible plans and failing to address deterioration and its treatment.

Causes of Strategic Drift

The occurrence of strategic drift can be due to stagnation, adherence to what exists, lack of confidence in the success of the new strategy. Also, weak implementation plays a role in the emergence of this situation, along with failure to keep pace with the changes taking place in the environment and the certainty that these strategies may be destined to fail (Lee, 2018, 5). Zafirova (2014, 491) note that there are two main reasons for the occurrence of strategic drift. The first is the external environment. This is characterized by complexity.

The second is the inability to anticipate and respond appropriately to events and problems encountered, develop solutions, and keep up with these events. Also, among the causes for the occurrence of drift is the lack of strategic flexibility, and coordination may be a reason for strategic drift. Flexibility helps the organization's management to benefit from its existing resources to develop competencies and capabilities in pursuit of achieving strategic compatibility (Alshebli, 2016, 5). Maosa (2015, 3) states that loss of enthusiasm and competition are problematic factors contributing to the emergence of strategic drift. This gradual state of failure within the organization entails an imbalance, a lack of focus on the external situation, and a deterioration in work performance as the organization becomes preoccupied with internal matters.

The researcher believes that there are many reasons that led to a state of strategic drift. The most important of which is the failure to identify and detect early what might happen outside the organization. This oversight reverberates within the organization's internal environment, particularly when it

relies solely on a current strategy that previously succeeded under different circumstances of alignment. Strategy, fundamentally, represents the relationship between an organization's internal policies and its external operating environment.

Dimensions of Strategic Drift

Strategic Planning:

A method followed by the organization in order to chart its path and develop a plan for a long-term vision. This process includes setting organizational tasks and formulating strategies in order to reach the required goals, along with developing action plans and monitoring. Implementation is carried out by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that occur in the organization's internal and external environment, while updating strategies.

In order to overcome difficulties or exploit opportunities (Zomorrodian, 2017, 1), strategic planning is considered a tool in the hands of senior management that it uses to ensure the work of the organization's members to achieve the goals set and required to be achieved while carefully adapting to external changes in a way that serves the interest of the organization. Planning gives positive results if they are Accurate information (Kabui et al., 2018, 20) as explained by Chen et al., 2018, 362) is a means used by senior management in order to determine the main directions of the organization through early detection of the future and creating an advantage that enables it to continue and compete.

Strategic Leadership:

Strategic leadership is considered one of the main components for implementing a strategy effectively by working to envision events, giving empowerment to others, and making an effort to maintain flexibility in order to bring about strategic change according to emerging circumstances when necessary (Palladanetal, 2016, 110), and is described by Arikan & Enginoglu, (2016, 1).

The process of setting a vision for the organization and motivating employees is the main component of strategic thinking about the future and working to find the appropriate method for the organization to invest its resources in a way that achieves its goals. Norzailan et al. (2016, 66) explains it as that activity that involves skill in thinking, creativity, and the ability to Seeing emerging opportunities, negotiating to solve obstacles, and finding an alternative that serves the interest of the organization is carried out by leadership in senior management.

Organizational Culture:

A system that distinguishes each organization from other organizations, as it is those traditions, values, policies, and positions that form a widespread pattern in the internal environment among working individuals. Also, the incompatibility that may arise between the organization's employees and its organizational strategy will lead to strategic drift (Maosa, 2015, 13).

Wahyuningsih et al. (2019,144) describe it as one of the soft management tools that helps in setting the organization's strategy, as it has a prominent impact on organizational decision-making, highlighting its identity, and contributes to

achieving compatibility between the internal and external environment and achieving success in accomplishing what is required to be implemented. Organizational culture is that system of values, standards, beliefs, and behaviors that members of the organization see as their work environment that helps them, unconsciously, to make the appropriate choice. It also has an impact on how they behave and adapt to achieve organizational goals. Organizational culture is considered the component that helps teamwork and performance. The relationship between non-human resources and human resources in the organization (Pathiranage et al., 2020, 523).

Innovation:

Innovation means coming up with something new and useful, which may be a service, idea, commodity, or activity that takes place within the institution and through the distinctive behavior practiced by the individual, which calls for change and encourages innovation and the use of modern methods and methods in the field of work. (Al-Hiti, 2023, 1726)

It is considered the basic foundation of institutions, as it gives them distinction and superiority in their sector. The concept of innovation has received great attention from management books, as Alexander Rushka says that innovation is a complex process with multiple dimensions and impacts on management. (Ulrich, 2020,12).

The Practical Aspect of the Research

1. Measure Variables

Table (1) below lists the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the study variables. The following table is an explanation of the:

A- Local Administration

Table (1) shows the variable "Local Administration" and its sub-dimensions of the studied sector, where the arithmetic mean of the overall variable "Local Administration" is (4.000), which is higher than the assumed mean of (3), Std. The difference is (.777), showing the importance of this variable. Dhi Qar Governorate Council level.

B- The Strategic Drift Variable

Table (1) below shows the strategic drift variable and its sub-dimensions of the research sector, where the arithmetic mean of the entire strategic drift variable reaches (3.95), which is higher than the assumed mean of (3), and one standard deviation is (.707), which shows the importance of this variable at the Dhi Qar Provincial Council level.

Table 1

Arithmetic Means and Standard
Deviation of the Stud Variables

Table: Descriptive Statistics for Variables		
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Local Administration	4.00	.777
strategic drift	3.95	.707

2. Test Research Hypotheses

First hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between local government and strategic drift and its dimensions.

Second hypothesis: There is an influence between local administration and strategic drift.

A. Test the first main hypothesis:

Correlation matrix table (2) shows that there is a direct and very strong correlation at a significant level (0.01%) between strategic drift and local administration, with a correlation coefficient of (.695**). This supports the preference that reaches (5.900), and its significance value is (.000).

It is clear that the existence hypothesis is accepted as the first main hypothesis, which states that (there is a statistically significant correlation between local administration and strategic drift and its dimensions).

Table 2

Correlation Matrix

		strategic drift
Local Administration	Spearman correlation coefficient	.695**
	Sig	.000

B. Testing the second main hypothesis (the effect between the Local Administration and the strategic drift):

Table (3) shows that the calculated (F) between the total strategic drift variable and the total Local Administration for the reached (33.600).

This means that there's an impact of the Local Administration on the strategic drift variable for the Dhi Qar Governorate Council, and we note a value of $\beta = (.711)$, which indicates that any change of (1) in the Local Administration will lead to a change in the abecedarian capabilities of (.755), as indicated by the value of the measure of determination R Forecourt, which is a descriptive measure used to interpret the extent of the retrogression equation's utility in estimating the evaluation.

It represents the chance of drop in crimes when using the retrogression equation, and its quantum was (.721 a), which means that the quantum of (.712 a) of the friction being in the strategic drift is friction explained by the strategic drift that the model contains, and that (.221) is a friction. It is explained by factors that weren't included in the retrogression model, as indicated in the moral table, which

shows a value of(.000 b) in the labors of the statistical system, which is evidence of the presence of goods of the Local Administration in achieving the strategic drift of the Dhi Qar Governorate Council sample of the study, and from then we infer the acceptance of the alternate main thesis, which concludes that there is a significant effect of the Local Administration on achieving strategic drift.

Table 3
Impact Matrix

		strategic drift
Local Administration	F	33.600
	Sig	.000 ^b
	α	.721
	β	.711
	R Square	.755 ^a

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

- 1-The phenomenon of strategic drift appears to pose a tangible challenge in numerous organizations, placing pressures on both human and material resources and leading to the wastage of time in adapting to rapid environmental changes.
- 2-Local governance emerges as a pivotal factor in addressing strategic drift, as its interaction with individuals and their environment can contribute to the development of effective solutions.

3-Involving local governance in resolving the issue of strategic drift can enhance organizational performance and foster integration between strategic aspirations and the external environment.

4-Strategic drift, if unaddressed, may lead to a ripple effect of negative consequences, affecting not only resources but also organizational efficiency and long-term sustainability.

5-The time wasted in attempting to catch up with rapid environmental changes could result in missed opportunities for innovation and growth, emphasizing the critical need for proactive strategies.

6-Recognizing the impact of local governance in mitigating strategic drift underscores the importance of investing in the development of leadership skills and strategic capabilities within the local administrative framework.

7-The negative repercussions of strategic drift highlight the urgency for organizations to adopt adaptive strategies, emphasizing continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation to ensure alignment with evolving external factors.

Recommendations:

1-It is advisable to reinforce the role of local governance in enhancing internal communication and encouraging active participation to identify and address the root causes of strategic drift.

2-Local governance should leverage its proximity to individuals and their environment to achieve better communication and identify suitable solutions for strategic challenges.

3-Enhancing the capabilities of local governance in strategic leadership and strategic planning is crucial to ensuring maximum effectiveness in tackling strategic drift.

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