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The impact of strategic leadership on achieving organizational excellence

A survey study of a sample of opinions of employees in commercial banks in Baghdad

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Abstract

The research aims to test the effect of strategic leadership through its dimensions (setting the strategic direction, investing in and preserving core competencies, maintaining an effective organizational culture, emphasizing ethical practices, and establishing balanced regulatory controls) in achieving organizational excellence through its dimensions (strategic excellence, service excellence, resource excellence, and knowledge excellence) based on the opinions of a group of employees in the researched banks, totaling (100) employees. The study data was collected using a questionnaire form. The study relied on a set of statistical methods to reach its related results, most importantly the simple

correlation coefficient and simple regression analysis with the help of the statistical program (SPSS V.25; AMOS V.23). The study reached a set of conclusions, the most prominent of which is that organizational excellence comes through spreading a culture of excellence in the researched banks and encouraging employees to be creative and innovative, which in turn makes individuals the foundation of excellence in the researched banks. The current study also came out with a set of recommendations, the most prominent of which is to involve human resources in training courses.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, organizational excellence, commercial banks.

Introduction

In light of technological development, global competition, and the rapid changes in the business environment, organizations have begun to search for means through which they can respond and adapt to these changing environments. Therefore, they



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must possess human resources that enable them to keep up with these developments and sustain competitive advantage (Samimi, 2022). Human resource management plays a fundamental role in shaping strategies and the strategic planning process of the organization in various ways, which necessitates designing HR functions such as performance evaluation, human resource planning, employee selection, training, and compensation and reward management according to the organization's strategic plans. Most organizations prefer to integrate their HR management systems with the process of implementing their strategy. This requires effective strategic leadership that possesses the vision and the ability to deal with environmental change and the challenges facing the organization, or the provision of managerial skills to handle the repercussions of continuous change. Due to the vital nature of its work and its clear connection to the success or failure of organizations, leadership behavior is considered an indicator of the effectiveness

of leaders' performance and achievements. Therefore, what strategic leaders possess Skills and abilities that enable them to perform their role in influencing the behavior of employees and achieving the desired objectives. (Kimonyo, et al, 2016). This is considered essential for the success of strategic leadership in the organization, in addition to the fact that strategic leaders have the ability to align human resources effectively and directly with the business strategy. The study consisted of four main axes, the first of which included the research methodology, the second was dedicated to presenting the theoretical framework, with the independent variable being strategic leadership and the dependent variable organizational excellence, while the third was the practical aspect. The fourth axis contains the conclusions and recommendations.

Research Problem:

The research problem can be summarized in knowing which roles are adopted by strategic leadership to contribute to achieving organizational excellence and how these



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strategic roles are practiced in the surveyed banks. In light of the foregoing, the research problem can be diagnosed through a number of essential questions as follows :

- 1-Do the surveyed banks practice strategic leadership?
- 2-Does strategic leadership affect organizational excellence in the surveyed banks ?
- 3-Is there a correlation between strategic leadership and organizational excellence in the researched banks ?

Research Importance:

The importance of the current research can be determined by the fact that it addresses matters of significance, both in its theoretical aspect and in its practical aspect, as follows:

- 1- The research addressed discussions on modern and contemporary topics of great importance in the work of organizations.
 - Providing information that helps the 2 leadership in the researched banks to enhance their strengths and address their weaknesses.
 - Understanding the current situation of the 3 researched banks regarding strategic

leadership style and strategic human resource management practices.

- Assisting the researched banks in building a 4 competitive advantage that distinguishes them from other researched banks.

5-The current research constitutes a modest intellectual contribution that serves other researchers who wish to delve into the realms of strategic management and organizational excellence.

Research Objectives:

1. To deepen awareness of the research findings by understanding the extent to which the banks under study are aware of contemporary concepts of strategic leadership and organizational excellence, their interest in applying these modern concepts, and to provide appropriate recommendations based on the results, as well as assessing the extent to which these results and recommendations can be utilized.
2. To identify the capabilities of the banks under study and their ability to



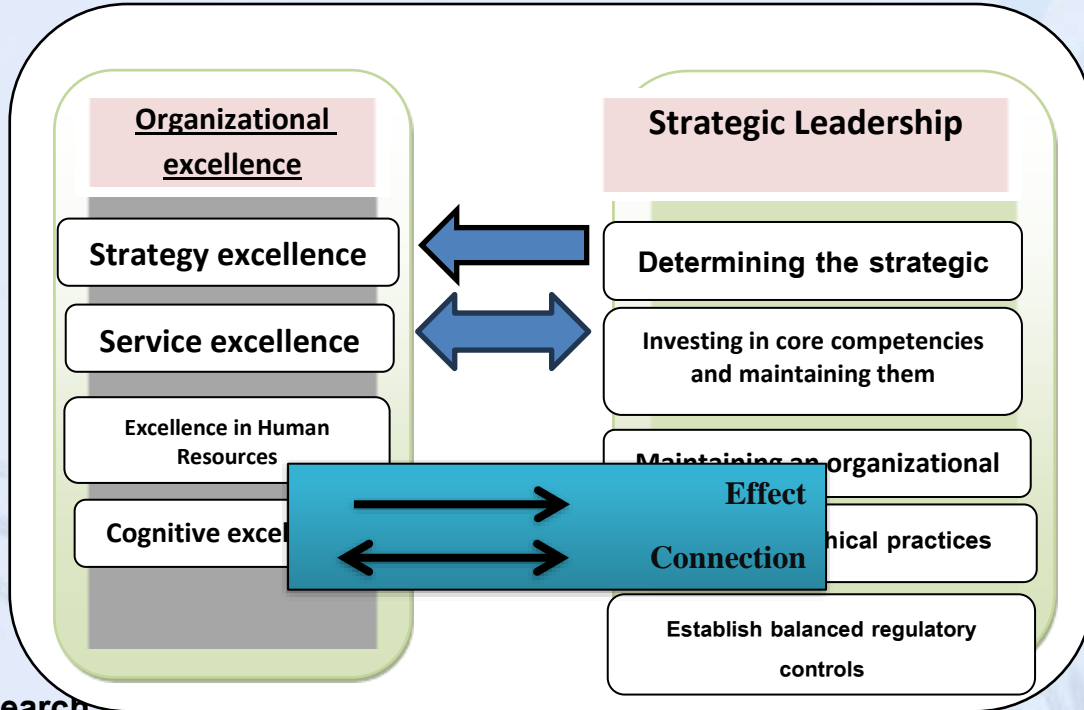
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implement the dimensions of strategic leadership within their activities.

3. To offer suggestions and recommendations that will help the banks under study, in general, to benefit from modern methods and concepts in the field of strategic management and human resources.
4. To measure the impact of strategic leadership on organizational excellence in the banks under study.

Search framework:

In continuation of addressing the research problem and achieving its objectives, a conceptual framework has been developed that includes the research variables, represented by the independent variable strategic leadership and the dependent variable organizational excellence, to understand the nature of the relationship between them, test their hypotheses, and analyze their results, as shown in Figure:(1)



Research hypotheses:

The research hypotheses came as an attempt to answer the questions that



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arose in the research problem, and in light of that, the two main hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- The first main hypothesis: It states that (there is a statistically significant correlation between strategic leadership and organizational excellence).
- The second main hypothesis: It states that (there is a relationship with a significant effect of strategic

leadership on organizational excellence).

Research community and sample

Commercial banks in Baghdad were selected, as 110 questionnaires were distributed, 105 were returned, and the number of valid questionnaires for analysis was 100. Table (1) shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table (1) Description of the study sample

% Percentage	repetition	Category	The attribute
%65	65	Males	Gender
%35	35	females	
%100	100	the total	
%34	34	One year or less 30	Age
%46	46	40 -31	
%20	20	50 -41	
%100	100	the total	
%56	56	Bachelor's	Academic achievement
%31	31	Higher Diploma	
%10	10	Master's	
%3	3	PhD	
%100	100	the total	
%36	36	5 – 1	Years of service
%35	35	10 – 6	
%12	12	15 – 11	



%6	6	20 – 16	
%10	10	25 – 21	
%1	1	30 – 26	
%100	100		the total

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the questionnaire form

Research methods

1. Theoretical Aspect: To enrich the theoretical aspect of the study, the researcher relied on the contributions of authors and researchers gathered from various sources, including scientific references such as books, journals, dissertations, theses, and research papers in both Arabic and

foreign languages relevant to the current study topic. The researcher also utilized internet resources.

2. Field Aspect: The researchers relied on a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection for the field study. This questionnaire was distributed to the study sample, which consisted of the banks included in the research.

Table No. (2) Axes of the Questionnaire Form and Values

Reference	The scale was accurate	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of phrases	Distance	variable
(Nochh , 2026)	0.88	0.77	6	Defining the strategic direction	Strategic leadership
	0.84	0.70	5	Investing in and retaining core competencies	
	0.89	0.79	4	Maintaining an effective organizational culture	



	0.84	0.72	5	Emphasis on ethical practices	
	0.84	0.77	4	Establishing balanced regulatory controls	
(Shakhour et al,2021)	0.85	0.73	7	The strategy is distinguished	Organizational excellence
	0.86	0.77	4	Service excellence	
	0.88	0.78	4	Resources Excellence	
	0.85	0.72	5	Knowledge excellence	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the survey outputs

Chapter Two: The theoretical framework of the research variables

First: Strategic Leadership:

A leadership style recently introduced to organizations, and it is considered an important and decisive element in developing their effectiveness and improving their performance over a short period of time. Therefore, there has become an urgent need for this effective style that is capable of dealing with developments, problems, and challenges facing organizations.

The Concept of Strategic Leadership:

In fact, strategic leadership can be understood by highlighting what senior active leaders do to ensure that the

organization has a distinguished and long-term strategic position. Moreover, strategic leaders need to be able to focus on vital resources that are likely to make a difference in ensuring sustainable success in the future (Avwokeni, 2026). Strategic leadership has also been defined as the ability to articulate the organization's strategic visions as a whole or in part, in addition to the ability to motivate others and guide them to believe in and understand them (Nochh, 2026). It is the capability of an experienced leader, endowed with wisdom and vision, to create and



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implement plans and make the resulting decisions in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous strategic environment (Fadhel, 2025), including the ability to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility, which enables the necessary and required strategic change by the organization.(Khairullah, 2025). The ability to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility, which enables the implementation of necessary and required strategic change by the organization (Nyamboga, 2025), is the capability to illuminate the future with a more creative and clear vision in its embodiment and to invest external opportunities to achieve efficiency and effectiveness within the organization (Kadim, 2025). It is the ability of the top management team to create the organization's vision and mission, to think and act strategically, and to sustainably build organizational competitive capability. Strategic leadership includes the ability to communicate the organization's vision and motivate followers to achieve strategic

goals (MAHABUB, 2025). Based on the foregoing, the researcher views strategic leadership as the leader's ability to influence others through possessing skills and behaviors and the ability to analyze reality in preparation for establishing a future vision translated into actions, benefiting from the capabilities and orientations of these leaders by preparing and establishing an internal organizational environment that helps and encourages human resources to innovate through adopting appropriate mechanisms for selecting those human resources.

The importance of strategic leadership:

Strategic leadership in business organizations is described as a key and rare resource for the organization, as building a strategy and creating a state of harmony between it and functional policies, activities, and various operations, in a way that aligns with different capabilities, situations, and



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cultures, influences the determination of the organization's direction towards higher goals, and aligns with competitive conditions. All of this requires the presence of effective strategic leaders within the organization. A number of researchers have mentioned the importance of strategic leadership as follows:

(Fadhel, 2025)

Strategic leadership involves a very important organizational change because it leads to changes in roles, structures, and plans to achieve the organization's strategic goals.

(1) Strategic leadership contributes to maximizing and increasing the high performance of organizations in light of the requirements of internal and external environments and the pursuit of obtaining sustainable competitive advantage.

(2) The importance of strategic leadership lies in its role in aligning the requirements of different parties

through the qualifications and capabilities it contains to handle these tasks.

(3) Strategic leadership supports and maintains collective effort at all levels of the organization, as leadership can take different forms depending on the various stages of the organization's development.

(4) Strategic leadership is characterized by comprehensive attention to the entire organization, its development, and its changing objectives, in addition to selecting, developing, and maintaining the resources and capabilities necessary to enable it to compete.

Dimensions of strategic leadership:

A- Determining the Strategic Direction: Organizations operate in a rapidly changing world with a highly competitive environment that is unpredictable. Consequently, there has emerged a need to better understand the organization's environment (Avwokeni, 2026). The strategic direction of an organization is defined as a process that requires determining



the organization's mission, vision, objectives, environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation and monitoring. Therefore, the primary goal of the strategic leader is to gain a better overall understanding of the business, that is, understanding work conditions, the environment, and all other aspects that define future challenges (Kimonyo, et al., 2016). Determining the strategic direction involves specifying the vision and the strategies needed to achieve the vision over time, and they are set within the context of the conditions that strategic leaders expect the organization to face over the next 3 to 5 years (Bornay et al., 2025).

B- Leveraging and Maintaining Core Competencies: Core competencies are the resources and capabilities that give an organization a competitive advantage over its rivals. (Singh, 2023). Core competencies relate to the organization's fundamental functional skills, such as manufacturing, finance, marketing, and research and development. Strategic leaders must ensure understanding of the organization's core competencies when selecting strategies during the strategy formulation phase, and then reinforce them when implementing the chosen strategies (Schaedler et al., 2022). Strategic leaders possess diverse

capabilities that support the coordination and execution of the organization's strategy. Exploring core competencies involves sharing resources within the organization, a role defined by effective strategic leaders, and resource-based intangible core competencies are more effective as they are less obvious in terms of their connection to employees' knowledge and skills (Iqbal et al., 2024).

C-Maintaining an effective organizational culture:

Organizational culture is defined as a complex set of ideologies, symbols, and core values that are shared throughout the organization and influence the way business is managed (Alateeg, 2024, et al.). Since organizational culture affects how the organization manages its business and helps regulate and control employee behavior, it can be a source of competitive advantage (Wong, 2022). When organizational culture aligns with business strategy, human resources will act in ways that support the achievement of business objectives. Therefore, it is the leader's duty to support the organization's values and culture through their actions and decisions, which in turn will enable the implementation of the strategy (Samimi, 2022). Organizational culture can encourage (or discourage) strategic leaders and their colleagues from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities,



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which are a vital source of growth and innovation. Accordingly, strategic leaders encourage and promote innovations by pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities (Negeri, 2023, et al.). In addition to senior leaders, managers have a significant impact on change that positively affects organizational performance, through integrating and coordinating work of others, activating the culture, and enhancing alignment with the organization's vision and mission (Mollick, 2012).

D. Emphasis on ethical practices:

Ethics, which is a branch of philosophy, can be defined as a philosophical inquiry into the nature of morality and its foundations (Khairullah, 2025). The effectiveness of processes used to implement organizational strategies increases when they are based on ethical practices, as ethical organizations enable individuals at all organizational levels to act ethically during the strategy implementation phase, which in turn creates social capital in the organization (Negeri, 2023 et al.).

E- Establishing Balanced Regulatory

Controls: Regulatory controls are considered essential for any system and have always been regarded as an important part of strategy implementation processes and necessary to help ensure organizations

achieve their desired outcomes (Khairullah, 2025). Controls are defined as formal, information-based procedures used by managers to maintain or change patterns of organizational activities. Organizations use both strategic controls and financial controls to support the implementation of their strategies. Additionally, the strategic leader ensures the presence of mechanisms for balanced strategic controls, which help build credibility, demonstrate the value of strategies to stakeholders, and promote and support strategic change (Mahabub, 2025).

Second: Organizational Excellence

Excellence today represents an important attribute through which companies, whether industrial or service-oriented, can achieve a sustainable advantage that helps them face various external factors. The term 'business excellence' was established and became widely spread in the late 1980s with the emergence of quality awards. The importance of organizational excellence increased in the 1990s with the emergence of techniques such as Business Process Reengineering (BPR) and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (Alhabeeb, 2020:63). It is a reasonable and deliberate progress to change and improve the company, and to promote,



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create, and disseminate a culture of change to enhance the company's effectiveness (Al-Dhaafri, 2014). It is an ideal model for business growth and development as well as improvement by identifying strengths, identifying opportunities, exploiting them and improving them (Ershadi, 2019). It is a framework adopted by the company to make it better in growth, improvement, and enhancing organizational efficiency; that is, it is a methodology that ensures comprehensive improvement for companies (Diekola, 2021).

Dimensions of organizational excellence

1- The strategy is distinctive

Strategic excellence is considered one of the main and important approaches for success and continuity for companies, especially in today's business environment. Companies strive for comprehensive improvement in all their aspects and achieving sustainable success, which requires companies to be flexible in facing and keeping up with changes and to adopt modern methods. This is achieved through strategic planning, which serves as a means to achieve the company's goals at a higher level (Grant, 2021).

A business approach that aims to create a distinctive and unique

position for products or services within their industry or market. The strategy involves offering something perceived as exceptional or exclusive by customers, often involving unique features, design, quality, innovation, or branding, as outlined below:

1. Unique Features: Premium products or services possess distinctive qualities that competitors cannot easily replicate.
2. Brand Identity: Building a strong brand identity that reflects uniqueness and customer value.
3. Innovation: Continuous innovation to maintain differentiation and stay ahead of the competition.
4. Quality Focus: A strong emphasis on quality and excellence to justify higher prices.
5. Customer Focus: Understanding and addressing specific customer needs and preferences through customization or tailored solutions.

2-Service Distinction.

Ariffin (2020:6) pointed to the importance of service excellence, which is primarily centered on:

- Satisfying customers with services that exceed their expectations



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-Getting what they want on time, whether they are internal or external customers.

-Making customers happy, gaining their loyalty, and promoting a culture of service in organizations.

It can be said that the service is directly related to the employees and then reflected on the customers, as taking care of them, paying attention to increasing their satisfaction, and providing a suitable work environment and working conditions positively affects their interactions with customers in a good manner. This plays a role in increasing customer satisfaction, which in turn has an impact on companies in terms of increasing customer engagement with them, thereby achieving excellence for the company.

3-Human Resources Excellence

The term "human resources" refers to the intangible assets of companies through which they can achieve their goals and develop their capabilities (Hafez, 2019: 215). The importance of human resources is centered around the following:

- 1- Good human resource management leads to better financial results.
- 2- Good human resource management reduces conflict between management and employees and improves their relationship.

3- It improves company efficiency by attracting, training, developing, and motivating outstanding talent to gain a competitive advantage.

Therefore, this dimension focuses primarily on the capabilities of the company's employees, their inherent skills, and their development and enhancement to achieve the company's goals. In other words, human resources are the cornerstone of the company, and given this importance, efforts should be made to develop and enhance their skills to the highest level, which is reflected in the company's work methods and how it achieves its objectives.

4 -Cognitive Excellence

Cognitive excellence refers to the continuous flow of insights and skills that resolve uncertainties and problems. Knowledge holders are a crucial resource for knowledge processes, and companies need to cultivate these proactive capabilities in their employees to achieve purposeful and effective business performance. (Hashemy, 2016:8)

(Malkawi, 2018:150) points out that the goals of cognitive excellence primarily reflect the continuous development and improvement of organizations, providing a platform for long-term organizational success, increasing business value, reducing



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non-value-adding activities, and providing a good return on investment.

Chapter Three: The Practical Aspect of the Research

Testing Research Hypotheses;

1. Correlation Test:

The first main hypothesis: It states that (there is a statistically significant correlation between strategic leadership and organizational excellence).

Table (10) shows the matrix of simple correlation coefficients (Pearson) between these variables, and the

strength of the correlation coefficient is judged in light of the rule (Cohen, 1977:79-81) as follows.:

- 1.Low correlation: if the correlation coefficient value ranges between (0.10 to 0.29)
- 2.Moderate correlation: if the correlation coefficient value ranges between (0.30 to 0.49)
- 3.Strong correlation: if the correlation coefficient value ranges between (0.50 to 1)

Table (3) Test of the First Main Hypothesis

Strategic leadership	independent variable	Application location
	dependent variable	
**0.82	Organizational excellence	Commercial banks
Commercial banks		

Source: Prepared by the researcher Significant at the 1% level**

The table (3) shows that the first main hypothesis, which states that there are strong correlations (since their value is greater than 0.50), positive, and statistically significant at the 1% level between strategic leadership and organizational excellence, was tested.

The value of the simple correlation coefficient between them reached (0.82) respectively concerning commercial banks. This leads the researcher to reject the null hypothesis (H0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1), meaning that there is a statistically significant



correlation between strategic leadership and organizational excellence. In other words, both commercial banks can benefit from enhancing strategic leadership practices for the purpose of improving organizational excellence.

Test of influence relationships:

The current section aims to test the influence relationships between the research variables. According to what was stated in the second main hypothesis, the effect of the dimensions of the independent variable (strategic leadership) on the dependent variable (organizational excellence) will first be tested

During the use of the Simple Regression Analysis, the effect of the independent

variable on the dependent variable (at the overall level) will then be tested in the same manner, and the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable (at both the partial and overall levels) will be measured through the significance of the calculated t-values for the multiple regression coefficients. The coefficient of determination (R^2), which measures the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable, was also used, through the statistical program (SPSS V.25).

The second main hypothesis states that strategic leadership affects organizational excellence. The table below shows the results of the simple regression test for the second main hypothesis.

Table (4) Analysis of Simple Regression Relationships for the Second Main Hypothesis

the society	Coefficient of determination R^2	Calculated value of f	Calculated t value	Organizational excellence		dependent variable
				B	A	



						independent variable
Commercial banks	0.67	**82	**9.04	0.77	0.90	Strategic leadership
	Commercial banks					Preference

It means that the regression coefficient, and the regression model as a whole, are ** .significant at the (1%) level

Source: Prepared by the researcher

It can be seen from the table above thæexcellence will improve by (0.71) if following: –

The value of the regression coefficient of strategic leadership on organizational excellence for commercial banks reached (0.77), which means that organizational excellence will improve by (0.77) if attention to strategic leadership practices in commercial banks increases by one unit. It should be noted that the regression coefficient was significant at the (1%) level, as the calculated (t) value of 9.04 was significant at the mentioned level. As for commercial banks, the value of the (0.71) regression coefficient reached.

This means that organizational

attention to strategic leadership practices in commercial banks improves by one unit. It should be noted that this effect was significant at the (1%) level, because the calculated (t) value for the regression coefficient reached (2.92), which is significant at the mentioned level. The calculated (F) value, which measures the overall significance of the regression model for commercial banks, reached (82), and for commercial banks (67), and both values are significant at the (1%) level.

The value of the determination coefficient (R^2) for Imam Sadiq University reached (0.67), which means



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that strategic leadership explains. Hence, the researcher deduces from the above analysis the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the

conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusions:

1-Although the company sets a broad strategy through its mission and specific goals, as well as formulating its strategic options, there is limited attention regarding knowledge management strategies by the study sample .

2-The results proved the existence of a statistically significant impact of digital skills in improving the services provided. .

3-Organizational excellence comes from spreading a culture of excellence in the company and encouraging employees to be creative and innovative, which in turn makes individuals the foundation of excellence in companies.

4-Reports announced by the company showed that it had received a number of awards, as it is considered a pioneer in its field, but this does not mean that it does not need improvement or development; being a pioneer is what makes it seek new ways and methods to achieve and maintain excellence.

Recommendations:

acceptance of the existence hypothesis (H1), meaning that (strategic leadership affects organizational excellence).

1-Adopting or adding other dimensions to the study variables that differ from the dimensions of the current study and developing them in the future.

2-This can be achieved by involving human resources in training and awareness courses to instill these concepts, realize their importance, and awarding certificates of appreciation to participants to motivate them to attend this type of course.

3-By rephrasing the mission, objectives, and strategic direction to be linked to the important tools for knowledge management strategies through discovering knowledge, storing it, sharing it, and applying it.

4-By creating an organizational structure for knowledge management at an organizational level not lower than a department that reports to the Board of Directors or the company's General Manager, responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the capturing, processing, storing, and sharing of knowledge in accordance with the company's strategic direction.

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