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THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT IN IMPROVING STRATEGIC DECISION

AN APPLIED STUDY AT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HEADQUARTERS

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**Key terms of the research: strategic alignment, improvement of strategic
decision.**

Abstract:

This current research aims to identify role of strategic alignment improving strategic decision, It research problem indicated that there is a weakness his been use of strategic alignment it, is clearly reflected in performance and its ability to face developments, specifically the field of technology, with clear weaknesses emerging in the strategic directions of managers , their neglect of this vital role to monitor and review all changes that may occur in the organization's business environment, which have an impact on the planning and implementation of its strategies, and the importance of research has emerged by providing possible solutions to problems , challenges it faces while performing its work according to the current research variables, and two hypotheses have been identified. There are several sub hypotheses for the

purpose testing a relationship and influence between research variables. Two researchers have relied on descriptive isanalytical approach when presenting and collecting data and analyzing them. This research was conducted on Ministry of Health located in Bab Al-Moazam area and research community reached (208) managers, a form The questionnaire was a tool for collecting data. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted, and the validity and reliability of questionnaire was tested. There are (155) questionnaires this research sample, and the total of questionnaires valid for statistical analysis reached (140) forms. The current research Check a set of results, the most prominent of which was existence of positive relationship between strategic alignment and improving strategic decision.

1: Introduction:

The complex and dynamic environment caused an interest in strategic alignment in order to address all the problems and threats facing its work, and to achieve the goals it seeks, but most of them continued to suffer from these threats due to inefficiency in the use of strategic alignment, which may be caused by the negligence of managers in identifying and analyzing changes Which gives a warning to the organization that its adopted strategies are not valid, and in order to properly implement strategic alignment, this requires it to take proactive measures to deal with these changes facing its work by using and developing an early warning system and making proactive change. There are a number of previous studies of strategic alignment, including one (Siham Musa 2014),) Robert H. Chenhall 2005,((Afandi, 2017) and (Barnes, 2017)) that dealt with alignment with other variables. What distinguishes my research from previous research is that I dealt with alignment. Strategy and improvement of strategic decision at the same time when changes in the environment are fast, difficult to anticipate and complex, this leads to the interest of the researched organization to focus on improving the strategic decision in order to respond better and faster to the changes that occur in the work environment, and its success or failure in providing its services is based on Great on its ability to understand, perceive and respond to the environments in which it operates, as the advanced views of strategic management view improving the strategic decision as being strategically present in situations where it is difficult to anticipate what will happen in the environment, and the descriptive analytical approach was used as it is based on a comprehensive description And a detailed analysis of the research problem, and at the same time a procedure by which information and data are collected to identify the problem, after which it is analyzed and the nature of the relationship and the impact between the dimensions of The main and sub-variables and the research community reached (208) managers, and the questionnaire form was used as a tool for data collection, and the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and the validity and reliability of the questionnaire tested, and (155) forms were distributed to the research sample, and the total of the forms valid for statistical analysis reached (140) Form. Statistical programs (Amos _v26, spss_v26) were used in processing and analyzing data, in addition to descriptive statistical methods (percentages, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, arithmetic mean, Pearson correlation coefficient, relative importance), as hypotheses were built that represented the nature of the effect and the relationship between The variables are in raw and assumed form, for validation and testing. We can summarize the research methodology as follows.

2- Research Problem:

The initial problem of the research was embodied in the presence of weakness in the use of strategic alignment, and this was clearly reflected in the performance of these organizations, due

to their inability to face developments, especially in the field of technology, with a clear weakness in the strategic directions of managers, and based on the above, the research problem crystallized with several questions that attempt this Current research answered it.

- What is the level of availability of strategic alignment in the researched organization?
- What is the level of availability of methods for improving the strategic decision in the researched organization?
- What is the relationship of strategic alignment in improving the strategic decision?
- What is the effect of strategic alignment in improving the strategic decision?

2- 1: The importance of the research / the current importance of the research is determined by the following:

A- Giving importance to strategic alignment and highlighting its important role in achieving the objectives of the researched organization through the implementation of its work and plans now and in the future, as it is the basis for raising the level of its performance and thus improving the strategic decision.

B - It is considered one of the serious attempts that will be applied in the Iraqi environment, especially in the health sector, and the extent of its contribution to the development of the field and application aspect of the research organization.

C- Clarify the problems and challenges that impede the researched organization in using strategic alignment in improving the strategic decision while providing the necessary mechanisms to address them.

2-2- Research objectives: The current research seeks to achieve a set of objectives, which are embodied in the following:

- A- What is the level of availability of strategic alignment in the researched organization?
- B - Knowing the availability of methods for improving the strategic decision in the researched organization
- C- The extent to which alignment can be applied in the researched organization and its impact on improving the strategic decision.

2-3:-Research hypotheses: The research starts from two main hypotheses:

- A- There is a significant correlation between strategic alignment and improvement of strategic decision
- B - Strategic alignment has a significant effect in improving the strategic decision

2-3: Research methodology and limits:

The research methodology is described by plan by which methods , procedures for collecting , analyzing data are determined, and the analytical descriptive approach was used as based on a comprehensive detailed description of the research problem, It same time a procedure by which information data are collected to define the problem, and after that it analyzed. knowing it type of nature of the relationship , the effect between the dimensions of the main and sub-variables.

2-4: Society and Research Sample:

It includes the Ministry of Health Bab Al-Moazam, and it includes the Minister's Office, the Administrative Agent, Technical Agent, the Projects and Engineering Services Department, the Planning and Resource Development Department, the Administrative, Financial Legal Department, and the Technical Matters Department. Intentional community (managers) when determining the size of the sample, as the general directors, assistant directors, department directors and divisional directors were identified as being the most knowledgeable and experienced with the research variables and their administrative and scientific level that they possess in addition to their competencies in the job, which consisted of (208) managers.

3: Introduction:

3-1: Concept of strategic alignment:

We live in a turbulent fast-moving environment that is not stable, which requires organizations to give clear importance to these changes that surround them, by focusing on strategic alignment, which expresses the organization's ability to cope with changes in the external environment and harmonize the components of the internal environment, and make its activities Regular in dealing with problems and changes in organizational strategies and structures, thus it requires an understanding of the procedures, objectives and goals as well as agreement between all organizational levels on how to achieve them, and it also generates a feeling among workers of the existence of common values at work, clarity of purpose with a sense of ambition and renewable energy (Hicks, 2016: 73) and in the comprehensive framework can be embodied in four forms (Kaplan & Norton: 2006: 261): - Organizational alignment: it describes how the parts and activities of the organization are unified to create the highest possible effort of cohesion and integration, - Alignment of human capital: as it is formulated The strategy is at the highest level, but it is implemented at the lower levels according to the different processes and mechanisms in which the various workers contribute, and here alignment is achieved when global goals are taken. Laxative to consider when developing strategies. - Strategic alignment: if it is represented by the internal coherence of all activities that are identified and implemented in the various strategic components of the organization, - the alignment of planning and control systems: as resources are allocated and processes are created for different activities and performance monitoring, as the alignment process occurs when the administrative systems for planning and operations are The oversight has been linked well with the organization's strategy. The writer (Souba, 2001: 144) defined the concept of strategic alignment as linking strategy, vision and goals at all levels of the organization to ensure that everyone seeks to achieve the organization's strategy.

As for the importance of strategic alignment, most of the organizations have recognized the importance of strategic alignment as it is the lifeline that they stick to in the conditions of the rapidly changing environment, so it was considered a condition to raise their ability to face the challenges in the environment and keep pace with the needs and desires of customers, and determine the speed in providing services and providing value This is great, as it increases the efficiency, effectiveness, and strategic plans of the organization that require it to make adjustments to it, and helps senior management to take the right decision in a way that contributes to achieving customer satisfaction and is considered the main key for organizations to get rid of the state of stagnation, stagnation, diversity in strategic options (2012: 120 (Salimian ,. (2017: 48, Afandi) added that the basic idea of alignment depends on the basic premise that

organizations that focus on alignment between strategic elements and structure (at all organizational levels) will reach a much higher level of performance than those that do not. Alignment is used, as the application of strategic alignment leads to the emergence of positive results such as rationalizing the use of resources, strong financial performance and reaching organizational results Targeted targets, on the other hand, increase strategic flexibility and the ability to respond effectively to environmental changes (2020: 659, Ates et al). The strategic alignment aims to - support the strategy and business processes by determining the overall direction of the organization and through it the internal processes are directed (Silvius, 2007: 24). Finding integration in work systems and making them work smoothly and improving productivity in addition, and striving to transform the strategy into a possible model for use to coordinate workflow within the organization, and to enhance decision-making and solve other problems (Issa-Salwe et al., 2010: 122).

Alignment between resources and available opportunities, achieving harmony and balance between the organization and its environment, forming positive interaction with the external environment, and containing the supporting and supportive forces of the organization (Almohamadi 2011: 53).

3-2: Dimensions of strategic alignment:

-Efficiency:

Research has shown that organizations that have a common sense of achieving a specific goal are superior to those organizations who do not have this feeling, in addition to improving performance as a sense of common purpose improves employee participation and understanding of the organization's primary purpose. There are strong indications that if workers clearly know what the purpose of their performance is, they are more likely to be committed and satisfied with their work, and in the opposite case, a lack of understanding of what is going on around them can lead to a lack of motivation and emotional detachment, which in turn leads to an unintended workforce. Integrated and dissatisfied (Vagadia, 2014: 161).

-Human capital:

It is represented by the knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities, qualities and various characteristics inherent within the workers and which are related and related to their performance in the organization, and the human capital is not only limited to what individuals possess in terms of knowledge and skills and what they possess in terms of capabilities, characteristics and attributes, but this concept indicates the extent to which it can be That workers be able to use all they have learned and what they own to use a product directly or indirectly related to the activity of the organization (Hitt et al, 2001: 15).

-Partnership:

A strategic alliance process through which mutual thinking is stimulated in order to achieve mutual benefits between business groups, suppliers, stakeholders, and customers. The principle of partnership is based on the senior management providing the appropriate atmosphere in the environment of the organization and forming alignment between workers in order to be able to exchange knowledge, experience and skills among themselves and with external parties, which directly contributes to achieving the goals of the organization, as the organization can,

through participation, know the surrounding environment, which helps it On Perceiving Risks and Avoiding Uncertainty (2013: 22, Golonka).

3-3: The concept of improving strategic decision:

Strategy does not emerge through a single decision taken once, It decisions are not make arbitrarily, but by relying on logic that relies on a deep analysis of stimuli in environment, as managers build their ideas has been understanding of environment through external stimuli , then work on adjusting the strategy. Gradually (Johnson , 198875:), strategic planning defines basic assumptions and helps to form mental models for strategic decision-makers, as it is basis for control process to reveal strategic alternatives, directed forces, opportunities and threats, and thus it is described as roadmaps that help the decision maker in selecting and evaluating alternatives. deep strategy insight, changing possibilities and predictive signals can form an intellectual base for identifying strategic options to deal with changes in the future, as it is of constructive value based on activating the collective mind and brainstorming in order to confront unknown challenges by brainstorming and evoking them to avoid difficult future problems (Heijden , 2005: 96). Strategic planning helps to avoid bias and risks in making strategic decisions by providing a high expectation of uncertainty and overconfidence in data. Strategic planning is used for cases in which decisions have a different range of different future outputs (Drew, 2006: 245).

4: Analyzing Data and method:

4-1: Data analysis of strategic alignment:

Human capital ranked first with a relative coefficient of variation (12.4%), a standard deviation (0.505) and an arithmetic mean (4.06) available, indicating agreement, coherence and convergence in the level of the sample responses to the ministry's relative interest (81.2%) in the stock of knowledge and capabilities that Owned by its members, it contributes to the achievement of development and increases the efficiency of its outputs and returns to its members, as the researcher believes that the Ministry of Health cadres are medical competencies with certificates that are compatible with the objectives of the Ministry, and are supported by secondary technical and administrative cadres that help them achieve that goal and this is in line with the demography of the sample and the qualification Scientific and years of experience, but at the level of the paragraphs in which the dimension (6-10) was measured, paragraph (7) (We have the willingness to adapt to modern technological changes such as the use of modern technologies) topped the ranking with a relative difference coefficient (14.4%), and it is provided with an arithmetic mean (4.07).), While the fifth order of paragraph (8) (the ministry is keen to possess skills that greatly exceeds other ministries) with a relative difference coefficient (19%) and provides an arithmetic mean (4.05), while the other three paragraphs showed the ministry's encouragement for the functional specialization that follows It is compatible with the type of work and the form of the task entrusted to its members, especially as it works to provide training programs that qualify them to exchange and develop experience, knowledge and skill, as well as its keenness to attract talented individuals with high skills in the field of the Ministry's specialization. While the efficiency obtained a relative coefficient of variation (14.5%), a standard deviation (0.592), and an arithmetic mean (4.08) at the general level, to indicate agreement and homogeneity around the ministry's relative interest (81.6%) in possessing a mixture of individual, group and organizational skills. The researcher noticed the existence of competent medical leaders who have patents and innovate new methods in treating patients in a

way that saves the country sums invested in the development of society, and the dimension was measured through Paragraphs (1-5), arranged by descriptive statistical analysis in order of priority through the coefficient of relative difference, paragraph (4) (We see a clear contribution made by information technology in achieving strategic goals) was ranked first with a relative difference coefficient (17.4%) and an arithmetic mean (4.03). (Available), while the fifth order was for paragraph (3) (performance efficiency is evaluated periodically) with a relative difference coefficient (20%) and provided with an arithmetic mean (4.11), while the other paragraphs showed their availability and the ministry’s interest in adopting them through a routine periodic evaluation. I mean, to find out the level of change in its services, especially as it adopts carefully studied methods and methods, and adopts continuous improvement in work procedures, in addition to that, the Ministry adopts documentation, archiving and registration of all its services in a manner that reflects the efficiency of its performance. The third ranking was for the partnership dimension, with a relative coefficient of difference (14.5%), and with relative interest (81%). Its good cooperation with others in finding partnership and cooperation agreements on enhancing competencies and developing the ministry's human resource, in addition to its other resources in a way that achieves its current and future goals. With more flexibility when facing urgent problems and bypassing the chronic ones, the partnership obtained as a result of this activity and behavior a mean of (4.05) available, and a standard deviation (0.588) indicating harmony and agreement, as the researcher sees through observations and interviews the existence of diversity in partnership with other ministries, And private sector companies, as well as partnership with ministries of health in Arab, regional and international countries, and sober global pharmaceutical companies, and establishing long-term agreements that provide drugs and limit price fluctuations in the global drug market, in a way that secures their needs. The dimension of the Ministry of Health has been measured through the paragraphs. (11-15), all of them scored a mean of my calculation (4.16-3.98) is available, and they are practicing with relative interest (83.2% -79.8%), and with a standard deviation (0.788-0.678) to indicate harmony and convergence in the answers, which is what Making the coefficient of relative difference (19.4% -17%) close to some extent about its keenness to harmonize and harmonize with the external environment around technological development, accept new ideas and work to support them continuously, and resort to sharing goals, as it has an organizational culture that supports sharing and exchange of information and ideas, Its belief in partnership was an approach through which it proceeded to keep pace with the development in the external environment and in harmony with scientific proposals and new developed ideas in the field of medicine, human health, reducing pollutants and protecting the environment, as well as its keenness to create a healthy work environment among its managers and individuals.

Table (1): Variables resentation and analysis of strategic alignment data (n = 140)

	The paragraphs	Coefficient of variation%	Relative importance%	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
1	The Ministry adopts deliberate practices for continuous improvement in work procedures to achieve efficiency	19.4	84	0.815	4.20

2	Document the services provided in our ministry to express the efficiency of performance.	19.7	80	0.791	4.00
3	Performance is evaluated periodically.	20	82.2	0.823	4.11
4	We see a clear contribution made by information technology in achieving strategic goals.	17.4	80.6	0.703	4.03
5	A periodic evaluation is conducted routinely to determine the level of change in the services provided.	18	80.8	0.728	4.04
	<u>Efficiency</u>	<u>14.5</u>	<u>81.6</u>	<u>0.592</u>	<u>4.08</u>
6	The Ministry encourages job specialization that is compatible and consistent with the work assigned to the employees.	16.5	83.4	0.688	4.17
7	We are ready to adapt to modern technological changes, such as the use of modern technologies.	14.4	81.4	0.588	4.07
8	The Ministry is keen to possess skills that greatly exceed other ministries.	19	81	0.771	4.05
9	The Ministry relies on qualifying courses to exchange experiences between workers.	17.2	79.4	0.683	3.97
10	The Ministry is keen to attract talented and highly skilled workers in the field of the Ministry's work.	18.7	80.4	0.753	4.02
	<u>Human capital</u>	<u>12.4</u>	<u>81.2</u>	<u>0.505</u>	<u>4.06</u>

11	We are constantly accepting and supporting new ideas.	17.3	83.2	0.722	4.16
12	We resort to sharing goals as a culture of engagement in our ministry.	18.6	81	0.756	4.05
13	We are constantly keen to create a harmonious work environment between the manager and the workers.	19.4	81.2	0.788	4.06
14	We are keen on harmonization and harmony with the external environment regarding technological development.	17	79.6	0.678	3.98
15	We believe in partnership as an approach to developing a harmonious work environment and sharing ideas.	19.4	79.8	0.777	3.99
	<u>Partnership</u>	<u>14.5</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>0.588</u>	<u>4.05</u>

4-2: Presentation and analysis of strategic data decision improvement:

Regarding improvement of the strategic decision, it appeared with a relative difference coefficient (13.9%), and a standard deviation (0.573) indicating agreement and harmony in the level of answers about its availability with an arithmetic mean (4.12), and practice and adoption with its relative interest (82.4%). The dimension was measured through the paragraphs (40-36), all of them received relative attention (86% -80%) from good to high, and with a standard deviation (0.763-0657) indicating convergence, homogeneity and harmony of agreement on availability with an arithmetic mean (4.30-4.00) from available to high and with a difference coefficient Relative (19% -16.4%) about the ministry’s tendency to reduce the time and effort expended in decision-making and taking it, as it believes in activating its ability to form and share knowledge, as well as deepening and linking it to work environment variables, in a way that pushes it to reduce the level of risks and the possibilities of failure in the decisions taken, And enhancing its ability to respond quickly to sudden changes in the work environment, as shown in the results of Table (2).

Table (2): Presentation and analysis of strategic decision improvement data (n = 140)

	The paragraphs	Coefficient of variation%	Relative importance %	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
36	We seek to deepen knowledge of work environment variables.	16.8	85.4	0.718	4.27
37	We believe in activating the power of knowledge formation in order to share it.	16.5	81	0.671	4.05
38	We enhance the ability to quickly respond to sudden changes in the work environment.	19	80.2	0.763	4.01
39	We reduce the time and effort expended in making and making decisions.	16.4	80	0.657	4.00
40	We seek to reduce the level of risk and the possibility of failure in the decisions that are taken.	17.3	86	0.746	4.30
	<u>Improve strategic decision</u>	<u>13.9</u>	<u>82.4</u>	<u>0.573</u>	<u>4.12</u>

4-3: The nature of the correlation relationships between the research variables:

Through Table (3) it is possible to know the nature of the relationship between the independent variable (strategic alignment) and the dependent variable (improving strategic decision), depending on the Kendall correlation coefficient as follows:

Table (3) shows the values of the Kendall correlation coefficient between the independent variable (strategic alignment) and the main variable

Table (3): The correlation coefficient of the two research variables

Strategic alignment	Improve strategic decision
Efficiency	0.046

	0.496
Human capital	0.142*
	0.033
Partnership	0.169*
	0.011

P<0.01, P*<0.05 (n=140)**

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the results of the electronic calculator

The Kendall correlation coefficient illustrates the nature of the correlation relationships between the independent variable of strategic alignment and the second major variable (improving strategic decision), where the Kendall correlation coefficient scored a total of six out of six relationships, and at a rate of (100%), positive and significant positive correlational relationships with with Improving the strategic decision (0.314 **) is of medium strength, and this indicates that there is a positive relationship between strategic alignment and improving the strategic decision. As for the type of relationship, it is a direct relationship, that is, the greater the strategic alignment, the greater the improvement of the strategic decision, and this is justified in order to accept the first main hypothesis.

The independent variable (strategic alignment) achieved a significant correlation with the second major variable (improvement of strategic decision) and thus there is a significant correlation relationship.

4-4: The nature of influence relationships between research variables:

Table (2) shows results of the regression analysis effect of strategic alignment in improving the strategic decision and notes that the strategic alignment with its dimensions achieved a significant effect with improving the strategic decision, i.e. there is a significant influence relationship between the strategic alignment in the dependent variable to improve the strategic decision, as the value of (F) calculated (79.378). The value of (βs) amounted to (0.176, 0.274.0.065), respectively, indicating that the change that occurs to the strategic alignment by one unit leads to an increase in (improving the strategic decision) by (0.176, 0.274.0.065), respectively. (βs) is positive, it means that the effect of strategic alignment is positive in improving the strategic decision, and with the calculated value of (T) (1.987,3.173, 0.678), this indicates acceptance of the second main hypothesis.

Table (4): The effect of the combined dimensions of strategic alignment on improving the overall strategic decision (n = 140)

Dimensions	Statistical methods	Partnership	Human capital	Efficiency
Improve strategic decision	βs	0.065	0.274	0.176

	T	0.678	3.173	1.987
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Source: The two researchers were prepared based on the results of the electronic calculator program (SPSS V.26).

5: Limitations and conclusion:

This paragraph, the most important conclusions that the researchers were able to come out with through the results of the statistical analysis in the previous paragraphs will be mentioned, as follows:

- 1- The results of the statistical analysis showed that the organization possesses strategic alignment in facing the challenges it faces in the external environment.
- 2- The organizations surveyed have methods for improving the strategic decision.
- 3- The results of the correlation analysis confirmed the effective role of strategic alignment in improving the strategic decision of the researched organization, and this indicates acceptance of the first main hypothesis.
- 4- The results of the influence relations were consistent with what was mentioned, and this confirms the contribution of strategic alignment in improving the strategic decision, and this indicates acceptance of the second main hypothesis.

6: Recommendations:

- The trend towards the use of modern technologies and methods in which the organization operates, in order to be able to keep pace with technological developments occurring in the world.
- The researched organization needs to have the ability to anticipate and predict the changes that occur in the work environment and keep pace with them as a proactive step.
- The researched organization should develop a flexible environment in which it can participate with individuals while listening to their opinions, as it is considered an important factor that helps it improve the expected strategic decision.
- To ensure that the strategic decision is effectively improved, there must be an interest in strategic planning, rather than staying on the followed strategy, which leads to a worse situation.

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