

STRATEGIC CLARITY AND ITS IMPACT ON STRATEGIC SUPREMACY

²Prof. Dr. Khamees Naser Mohammed

University of Anbar, College of Administration and Economics, Department of Business
Administration

dr.khamees_mohammed@uoanbar.edu.iq

¹Qassim Mohammad Ismael Al-Mohammadi

University of Anbar, College of Administration and Economics, Department of Business
Administration

qas21n1001@uoanbar.edu.iq

Abstract

The current research seeks to determine the impact of strategic clarity as an independent variable in strategic supremacy as a dependent variable in Iraqi private banks, and to achieve this goal, the descriptive analytical approach was relied upon, and the research community was represented by managers working in Iraqi private banks, who numbered (225) managers, The research was applied to a sample consisting of (107) managers who hold the position of delegated manager, his assistant, department managers and branch managers in the surveyed private banks, which are (7) banks that were chosen for their experience in their field of work. (41) Paragraphs that were processed and analyzed using a number of descriptive and inferential statistics tools such as (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of difference, multiple linear regression model) through the use of statistical analysis programs (SPSS V.24), (AMOS V.24) to test the main and secondary research hypotheses, The research reached several results, the most important of which is the presence of a significant effect of strategic clarity in its dimensions on strategic supremacy in its dimensions, In the light of the findings of the research, a number of recommendations were presented, the most important of which is to draw the attention of the surveyed bank managements by exploiting the positive impact of strategic clarity on strategic supremacy in a way that contributes to motivating working individuals to practice strategic clarity during their work performance and thus achieving the desired supremacy.

Keywords: strategic clarity, strategic supremacy, Iraqi private banks.

introduction

Globalization has changed many business organizations' work patterns and the performance gap has begun to narrow or almost non-existent among most organizations, which prompted organizations to search for new resources that can be exploited with what has been exploited from traditional (tangible) resources in order to provide satisfactory solutions to the problems of those organizations, And here, a lot of fundamental propositions emerged from the nature of the stage, including the trend towards strategic management and its developments. The practices of strategic clarity were one of the effective solutions in the field of defining strategies and drawing appropriate policies to confront challenges and environmental changes and taking a set of proactive steps in order to ensure its access to advanced competitive positions, This requires the leadership of organizations to reconsider building organizational work tasks by effectively employing the practices of strategic clarity in organizations in order to perpetuate their performance and activate their role in society, which can achieve strategic supremacy for them,

despite the importance of the private banking sector and its prominent role in achieving development. The economy of any country, especially in Iraq in particular, However, it has become clear that the current situation of this sector in Iraq needs more reforms in the strategic organizational structure of banks in terms of their suitability to reality and their conformity with international regulatory standards, which may generate strategic ambiguity that may affect their plans, which leads to a decline in the levels of organizational performance. As a result of this vital importance of the private banking sector in Iraq, the idea of this research was crystallized, which focused on attempting research and analysis to contribute to the development of the organizational structure of this sector, specifically with regard to the issue of strategic clarity and its role in achieving strategic supremacy as a contribution to achieving progress and growth for this important sector.

research problem

Most organizations, including those in the private banking sector, suffer from complex problems and challenges, especially in an era when the limits of progress and leadership have become almost obsolete. Everyone is looking for achieving the strategic supremacy of his organization, in order not to waste the opportunity on these organizations, and to make them benefit from their strategic clarity practices, they must realize that strategic clarity practices are the source of thought, creativity, and the basis of development. Therefore, they should invest in strategic clarity practices, and apply them directly in order to build organizations that can be Able to achieve strategic supremacy, From these standpoints, the research problem can be identified by the following main question: (What is the role of strategic clarity in achieving strategic supremacy in the Iraqi private banks under study), and the following sub-questions branch out from the main question:

1. What is the nature, interest or levels of strategic clarity and strategic supremacy and their dimensions in the banks under study?
2. What is the level and nature of the influence relationships of the strategic clarity in the strategic supremacy of the private banks under study?

Research objectives

In light of the research problem and its questions, the current research seeks to achieve the following goals:

1. Measuring the level of availability of the sub-dimensions of each of the strategic clarity and strategic supremacy in the private banks surveyed.
2. Diagnosing the impact nature of the strategic clarity in the strategic supremacy and the contribution of its dimensions and the statement of its results by testing the research hypotheses according to the hypothetical scheme.
3. Reaching results that can contribute to enhancing the practices of strategic clarity and strategic supremacy in the surveyed private banks when applying the dimensions of the research in particular, as well as the possibility of generalizing the results to organizations in the sectors close to them in general.
4. Providing solutions and recommendations from the reality of the private banks examined in the light of the conclusions that are reached that can benefit from those banks in particular and the general Iraqi organizations in general about the role that strategic clarity can play in achieving strategic supremacy.

importance of research

The importance of the current research lies in the following:

1. The importance of the research comes as a scientific attempt that sheds light on one of the important and vital topics for organizations in general and the Iraqi private banks examined in particular, which is the role of strategic clarity in achieving strategic supremacy.
2. Highlighting the applied role of the research variables in the private banks surveyed in order to be able to develop and achieve the desired progress and prosperity and thus its clear reflection on the entire society, as the practices of strategic clarity are the only way that cannot be dispensed with in most organizations and perhaps all of them as practices to reach the required supremacy.
3. The current research reinforces previous knowledge efforts due to the lack of studies linking the variables of this research to the extent of the researcher's knowledge and knowledge, which achieves an accumulation of knowledge to enrich the Arab and Iraqi libraries alike in this field.
4. The findings of the research can lead to the understanding of the research organizations of the nature of the relationship between strategic clarity and strategic supremacy, which may help them diagnose problems related to improving their performance and thus be more conducive to showing creative practices of their capabilities, as well as improving their programs, plans and future goals.

research hypothesis

There is a significant effect relationship of strategic clarity with its dimensions in the strategic supremacy with its dimensions in the private banks surveyed.

Theoretical framework

First: strategic clarity

Strategic clarity is a relatively new concept that attracted the attention of researchers in the late nineteenth century on the grounds that most organizations have a specific strategy, but these organizations may have difficulty translating their plan into specific actions, and this difficulty may lie in the lack of clarity of this strategy, In order to avoid the state of ambiguity that affected the level of performance in organizations with different activities (Dhaher & Saeed, 2021: 2500). This requires strength in difficult decisions and organizational discipline to create goals, achieve harmony with the organizational structure, and develop a plan that fits with the culture of the organization and the technology used in it. (Kazem, 2020: 5), This indicates that strategic clarity means that the organization or business unit has a well-defined strategy, which is communicated and understood within the organization. A clearly formulated strategy is a necessary condition for the effective implementation of a well-thought-out strategy (Kock & Gemünden, 2021: 43). For the purpose of clarifying the concept of strategic clarity, the researcher decided to present some definitions, as shown in Table (1) below:

Table (1) definitions of strategic clarity based on the opinions of a number of researchers

J	Researcher name	Definition of strategic clarity
1	)Parnell et al, 2015: 410(	It is the extent to which business efforts are grouped around one overall strategy.
2	)Covin et al, 2020: 2(	The clarity of the mission, goals and values proposed for the project

		management of the organization in the development phase.
3	(Mohammed & Ismael,2021: 775-776)	It is the product of strategic thinking and comes from clarity about the values and capabilities in the organization, and what the outcome should be.

The importance of strategic clarity

Creating a clear and long-term strategic image in an ever-changing environment is crucial for strategic thinking, and what is above it in importance is how to implement this strategy to achieve goals that raise the level of performance of organizations globally and locally, and this in itself represents a strategic challenge for the leaders and individuals of organizations, through Following strategic clarity, these organizations can overcome these challenges (Al-Qusayr, 2015: 39).

Business organizations have achieved many benefits through their use of strategic clarity, which are summarized by (Srinivas et al, 2013: 3) as follows:

1. Strategic clarity plays a major role in the strategic transformation of the organization in light of the pressures and risks of organizational performance.
2. Strategic clarity works to tighten the control perspective by comparing the performance and effort of employees with the performance required according to the tasks of each job and in accordance with the strategies of the organization.
3. Implementation of what the organization aspires to reduce the risks of functional complexity and avoid some of the complex administrative problems that it may face.
4. Reducing operational and implementation risks related to reputation and investment risks.

Dimensions of strategic clarity

Despite the lack of studies that dealt with the issue of strategic clarity, it turned out that the five dimensions on which the (GRASP) model was based for researchers (Ritchie & Puente, 2008) formed agreement among the majority of researchers, and because it is an integrated model as well as in line with current research trends, it will be adopted as dimensions Essential in this research, and the following is an explanation of these dimensions:

1. Clarity of goals

Specific goals are necessary to direct individuals' attention and efforts to a certain minimum level of acceptable performance, because when individual goals are not clearly defined the resulting ambiguity is likely to lead to worse performance while ensuring individual goal clarity increases one's productivity (Davidson et al, 2012:10), In addition, clearly defined goals help managers evaluate performance and provide feedback, and help employees self-organize their efforts (Anderson & Stritch, 2016: 3).

2. Clarity of the organizational structure

Defines (Miller, 1987) the organizational structure as the permanent distribution of work roles and administrative mechanisms to enable the organization to perform, coordinate and control its business activities and the flow of resources (Kalay & Lynn, 2016: 125), and Burns and Stocker (1961) explain that the environment in which the organization operates determines

the optimal structure organization, and they have considered two types of structures at opposite ends of a spectrum ranging from organic to mechanical, and have suggested that the organic form will work best when the external environment is dynamic, turbulent, or hostile (Cosh et al, 2012: 2).

3. Clarity of activities and procedures

Clarity of activities is defined as the degree to which individuals are certain of how to perform their duties. When there is high clarity in the process at the employee and team level, employees and team members clearly understand the actions needed to achieve their goals (Kim et al, 2020: 4). Therefore, the need to have clear and effective procedures is higher to understand the entire process chain and link it together (Silva & Oliveira, 2020: 16).

4. Clarity of resource use

Organizations have two types of resources that are used to satisfy each of the stakeholders and to achieve the global goal (value drivers and enablers), Value-driven resources are those resources that drive value to stakeholders and the organization as a whole, and they are intangible assets, such as product quality, customer satisfaction and trust, while enabling resources are those few resources that all organizations have access to, such as human resources, related skills, physical assets, technology, and capital. Money (Ritchie-Dunham & Puente, 2008: 8).

5. Clarity of employee roles

Role clarity expresses the workers' clear understanding of what is expected of them at work (Templer et al, 2020: 3). When workers are clear about their roles, they do not need repeated instructions for innovative work behavior about daily work tasks and can use this saved time and knowledge resources to generate and implement new ideas (Kundu et al, 2021: 460).

Second: strategic supremacy

The term strategic supremacy refers to a special type of power that the organization possesses, and it is not related to the organization’s capabilities and capabilities, but rather to the extent that the organization can use its capabilities and capabilities efficiently and effectively to achieve strategic supremacy (Abu Doush, 2019: 13). (Strikwerda & Rijnders, 2005: 9) in defining the concept of strategic supremacy stresses that what must be recognized is that organizations do not only compete for customers or for market share, but also display behavior to push competitors out of the market through the use of competitor control strategies. And the formation of a competitive force that makes entering the market more difficult and complex, and for the purpose of clarifying the concept of strategic supremacy, the researcher decided to present a set of definitions, as shown in Table (2) below:

Table (2) definitions of strategic supremacy based on the opinions of a number of researchers

J	Researcher name	Definition of strategic supremacy
1	)Goeltz,2014: 16(	It is a set of complex processes to achieve geographical, technological and informational reach, and it is a way to organize quantitative and qualitative activities.

2	)Al-Zu'bi,2017: 1241(	The ability of the organization to set the rules of the game at any time, in order to enable it to impose its control over the market or part of it, and to show its strategic supremacy.
3	)Plenert & Plenert ,2018: 1(	Strategic thinking applied and designed to develop a robust agile strategy that adapts to changing circumstances and drives a high-performance culture of striving for exemplary behaviours.

The importance of strategic supremacy

Strategic supremacy helps the organization to estimate the relationship between environmental disruption and appropriate strategic models and understand them in order to enable better formulation of strategies, the ability to shape and control the scope and rules of competition at any time and to achieve stability in the environment by setting barriers that prevent competitors from entering the industry (Thomas & D'Aveni, 2009: 392). And this is through environmental analysis that will enable organizations to reduce or even change the behavior of competitors to serve their interests and increase the possibility of competition faster and more confidently (Khatib & Alshawabkeh, 2022: 205), and strategic supremacy represents the top performance in organizations that achieve outstanding results based on the application of criteria Quality, continuous improvement and development, and the ability to adapt and change that constitutes a competitive advantage, supremacy has become a top priority that organizations seek to achieve, especially in a changing environment (Ibrahim et al., 2021: 907).

Dimensions of strategic supremacy

1. The sphere of influence

The concept of sphere of influence indicates that there are areas over which individuals or organizations have relatively more influence, and therefore more responsibility for them, than others (Karches et al, 2021: 3537). Accordingly, the most widely used criteria for determining the sphere of influence are market share dominance and local competitive advantage, In the banking sector, the sphere of influence is defined as those markets in which the bank has the largest proportion of branches among banks operating in the same market. This determination corresponds to both market share dominance and local competitive advantage. First, in the banking sector, The market through the percentage of branches in which each bank operates in the market (Fuentelsaz & Gomez, 2006:478), Secondly, in the retail trade, banking services to individuals, the availability of information, and proximity to customers may provide a competitive advantage, and this form of information is collected more effectively through local branches, and this means that banks that have a large network of branches have a media advantage in retail banking activities, and therefore It can be said that the dominance of bank branches works to achieve the local competitive advantage (Gomez et al, 2020: 10-11).

2. Competitive pressure

Competitive pressure depends directly on the number of organizations operating simultaneously in the industry (Moyano-Fuentes & Martínez-Jurado, 2016: 2) and (Bunjak et al, 2021: 7) considers that competitive pressures exist in situations in which many organizations are

By producing similar or competing products or services, and due to intense competition in a competitive environment, it is likely that organizations will adopt the innovation process for the purpose of providing innovative products or services to interact with competitors in a high-risk environment (Sin et al, 2016: 437).

3. Competitive configuration

Competitive configuration is associated with the development of a competitive advantage and is often envisioned as the organization's ability to effectively integrate its resources and capabilities that seek to create value-added efficiencies that are difficult to replicate from other competitors (Barney, 2001:644). Therefore, analyzing the strategic ability to achieve a competitive advantage is crucial. For two reasons, first, it determines whether the organization's resources and competencies fit the environment, and second, it identifies new opportunities to expand and exploit the unique and rare competencies of the organization in ways that are difficult to imitate, or by creating new market directions, or both (Mutunga et al, 2014: 149).

practical framework

First: the statistical description of the strategic clarity variable and its dimensions

Table (3) shows the results of the descriptive statistics for the strategic clarity variable, which was measured in five dimensions. The total arithmetic mean for this variable was (4.299), the standard deviation was (0.728), and the coefficient of variation was (16.93). These statistical results indicate that the strategic clarity variable has obtained a very high degree of importance according to the answers of the research sample, and the order of the sub-dimensions of strategic clarity has been arranged as follows (clearness of employee roles, clarity of objectives, clarity of the organizational structure, clarity of resource use, clarity of activities and procedures) respectively, according to the answers of the research sample, and Table (3) shows the order of these dimensions.

Table (3) the level of importance of the strategic clarity variable among the research sample and the order of its dimensions

J	dimension	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation	coefficient of difference	approval	order
1	Clarity of goals	4.287	0.717	16.72	very high	2
2	Clarity of the organizational structure	4.306	0.733	17.02	very high	3
3	Clarity of activities and procedures	4.265	0.757	17.74	very high	5
4	Clarity of resource use	4.257	0.754	17.71	very high	4
5	Clarity of employee roles	4.381	0.683	15.59	very high	1
The general rate of the strategic clarity variable		4.299	0.728	16.93	very high	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS V.24.

Second: The statistical description of the strategic supremacy variable and its dimensions

Table (4) shows the results of the descriptive statistics for the strategic supremacy variable, which was measured in three dimensions, Where the total arithmetic mean for this variable was (4.224), the standard deviation was (0.790), and the coefficient of difference was (18.70). These statistical results indicate that the variable of strategic supremacy has obtained a very high degree of importance according to the answers of the research sample. The sub-strategic arrangement came as follows (competitive pressure, sphere of influence, and competitive configuration), respectively, according to the answers of the research sample individuals, and table (4) shows the arrangement of these dimensions.

Table (4) the level of importance of the strategic supremacy variable among the research sample and the order of its dimensions

J	dimension	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation	coefficient of difference	approval	order
1	sphere of influence	4.210	0.814	19.33	very high	2
2	competitive pressure	4.270	0.731	17.11	very high	1
3	Competitive configuration	4.194	0.827	19.71	high	3
The general rate of the strategic supremacy variable		4.224	0.790	18.70	very high	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS V.24.

Third: Testing the main impact hypothesis of the research

Through table (5) it is possible to note the data of testing the second main hypothesis, the content of which is: There is a significant effect relationship of strategic clarity with its dimensions in strategic supremacy with its dimensions in the private banks surveyed.

Table (5) data for testing the main effect hypothesis of the research

hypothesis	the path	β	T	P	R ² -F-Sig	decision
The second main	Clarity of goals >> Strategic supremacy	0.034	0.366	0.715	R ² = 0.689 F= 44.724 Sig = 0.000	Acceptance of the hypothesis
	Clarity of organizational structure >> strategic supremacy	0.035	0.397	0.692		
	Clarity of activities and	0.194	2.110	0.037		

	procedures >> strategic supremacy					
	Clarity of use of resources >> strategic supremacy	0.428	5.441	0.000		
	Clarity of employee roles >> strategic supremacy	0.288	3.636	0.000		
N=107	Tabular F value = 3.92	The number of significant dimensions = 3			Total dimensions = 5	

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS V.24.

The results of Table (5) show the following:

- A. The calculated (F) value amounted to (44.724), which is higher than the tabular (F) value at a significant level (0.05), which amounted to (3.92). This indicates that there is an impact relationship for the dimensions of strategic clarity in supremacy This is considered a justification for accepting the second main hypothesis, the content of which is: There is a significant effect relationship of strategic clarity with its dimensions in the strategic supremacy with its dimensions in the private banks surveyed.
- B. As for the value of (R2) for the multiple regression model, it amounted to (0.689), and this indicates that the dimensions of strategic clarity explain (68%) of the changes that occur in the dependent variable (strategic supremacy), while the remaining percentage is due to other variables. It was not included in the regression model. Regarding the significance of the regression model, the value of (Sig) was (0.000), which is less than (0.05). This confirms the significance of the multiple regression model and the acceptance of the second main hypothesis.
- C. T- With regard to the effect of the dimensions of (strategic clarity) on (strategic supremacy), it became clear that there is a significant effect for each dimension (clarity of activities and procedures, clarity of use of resources, clarity of roles of employees),The values of (β) for the moral dimensions were (0.194, 0.428, 0.288), respectively, and this confirms that the change in the dimension (clarity of activities and procedures) one unit leads to a change in strategic supremacy by (19%), and that the change in the dimension (clarity of use Resources) one unit leads to a change in strategic supremacy by (42%), as well as with regard to the clarity of the roles of employees, As for the significant (Sig) values for these dimensions, they amounted to (0.037, 0.000, 0.000), respectively, which is less than (0.05),This indicates that the dimensions (clarity of activities and procedures, clarity of the use of resources, clarity of the roles of employees) are given attention by the managements of the surveyed banks due to their moral impact on strategic supremacy, As for the two dimensions (clarity of goals, clarity of the organizational structure), it did not achieve a significant impact on strategic supremacy because its value is greater than (0.05), reaching (0.715, 0.692) respectively, and this indicates that the managements of the surveyed banks did not realize the active role of these two dimensions in achieving excellence. Strategic resulting in a depreciation.

Fourth: Conclusions and recommendations

First: conclusions

1. The strategic clarity variable achieved a very high level of importance according to the answers of the research sample individuals, which indicates that the departments of the banks surveyed are very interested in the level of their strategic clarity, and this confirms their endeavor to pay attention to the clarity of their detailed activities and work procedures within the lines of administrative communication between their administrative levels and the clarity of their general objectives among all Individuals working in order to improve their job roles and duties entrusted to them and how to use and distribute the various resources to all the branches of the banks surveyed.
2. The variable of strategic supremacy gained a very high degree of importance according to the answers of the research sample, and this indicates that the managements of the surveyed banks seek to achieve supremacy over their competitors by providing the best services compared to competitors, and the surveyed banks have a clear vision about the types of competitive pressures they face. In her area of influence and this stems from her knowledge of her strengths and weaknesses.
3. It is clear from the results of the analysis that there is a significant positive effect of the independent dimensions (clarity of activities and procedures, clarity of use of resources, clarity of the roles of employees) on the strategic supremacy of the private banks surveyed, but for the dimensions (clarity of goals, clarity of the organizational structure) it did not achieve a significant effect In the strategic supremacy, and perhaps the reason for this is due to the fact that these dimensions were not effective in their impact on the strategic supremacy of the private banks, the research sample, which led to a decrease in their value.

Second: Recommendations

1. The departments of the banks of the research sample should employ the dimensions of strategic clarity that showed great interest by the research sample in order to invest them by supporting and strengthening these dimensions in a comprehensive manner.
2. The departments of the banks of the research sample must employ the dimensions of strategic supremacy that showed great interest by the research sample in order to invest them in a way that achieves the desired supremacy for them.
3. Urging the departments of the surveyed banks to pay more attention to the two dimensions (clarity of goals and clarity of the organizational structure) through re-engineering the organizational structure in order to become more effective in meeting routine and unexpected work requirements, in addition to focusing on using objective methods in setting goals and narrowing the gap between goals. Employees and the bank and create a state of balance in it.

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