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DIAGNOSING THE LEVEL OF STRATEGIC THINKING  
IN THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION IN  
DHI QAR GOVERNORATE (2022)

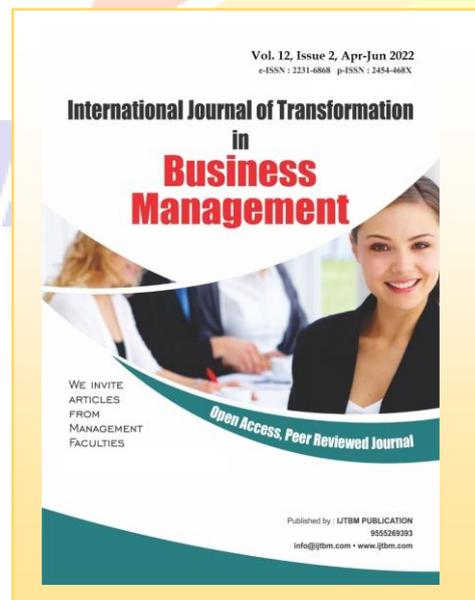
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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to diagnose the level of strategic thinking in public education in Dhi Qar Governorate, and in order to achieve this, the strategic thinking variable was measured in four dimensions, and (9) departments were selected representing all departments of the Dhi Qar Education Directorate as an environment for application.

The research sample included (121) individuals from the administrative leaders of education, and the questionnaire was used as a main tool in collecting information for the study, and for the purpose of data analysis and statistical processing, the study relied on a set of appropriate statistical methods such as the normal distribution test, confirmatory factor analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation parameters and a fair model. The structure is based on ready-made statistical programs (SPSS V.23, Amos V.23). The study reached a set of results, including the interest of the higher administration of education in the province of Dhi Qar in strategic thinking by defining its strategic intent in a clear and integrated system.

### INTRODUCTION

The strategic thinking process is an intuitive, predictive intellectual process that raises people's creative abilities and identifies clear visions and how to achieve them. Strategy into action. This type of thinking is characterized by the leaders of successful organizations by helping to sense threats or problems and overcome them before they occur, whether in the internal or external environment, as well as predicting and investing potential opportunities, as well as creating a future vision that helps in setting the policies and plans required to achieve the goals that It is the reason why organizations exist. Therefore, achieving excellence and success for organizations and their leaders wise leadership requires managers to possess

many contemporary management skills, and the strategic thinking of the educational institution is one of the important means for drawing its future plans to keep pace with the great scientific acceleration in the use of the most important resource (human resource), which is the most important engine for the development and progress of organizations.

#### **First: The Concept of Strategic Thinking**

Strategic thinking is a means and an end for organizations that seek to create future value (Young, 2016 7). He also interpreted strategic thinking as a specific method of solving strategic problems at the individual and institutional level and the level that combines rational and generative thinking processes and is the starting point where it combines creativity and analysis that

facilitates problem-solving or hypothesis-oriented approach (345: 2014,Pang, Pisapia). Strategic thinking also represents a method of analyzing situations - faced by the organization - characterized by challenges and change, and dealing with them through strategic vision to ensure the survival of the organization and its rise to its social and moral responsibility, present and future (Abu Salim, 2019: 19). The purpose of strategic thinking is to discover the new and visualize strategies and vision towards the desired future, as it is an intangible tool, but it constitutes the mentality of the planner, as it represents a necessity for building the leader and making transformations because the leader acquires a new and effective mind (Taha, 2019: 20). Gathering information, formulating ideas and planning action, for each of these three activities, they consider three useful steps to take: Each step involves a different thinking skill, when you can use all the thinking skills involved, then you can think strategically, strategic thinking also includes moral and ethical thinking and disseminate five core groups, five groups, and three high-level thinking skills, The five basic skills are memory, imagination, arithmetic, empathy, and conversational thinking (Hani, 2014: 867). Strategic thinking helps you to overcome limitations, because when you think strategically, you go beyond the daily work, and think about the larger environment in which you operate,

asking questions and challenging assumptions about how things work in the company, collecting and interpreting complex and sometimes ambiguous data, and using the insights gained To carry out smart tests and choose the appropriate paths for the initiatives (Al-Gharbia, 2004: 16).

### **Second: The Importance of Strategic Thinking**

Because of the increase in organizational problems and their complexity, there is a need for better solutions than strategic planning, because managers who have strategic thinking, will have better performance, and also that strategic thinking is complementary to strategic planning, and it is an appropriate approach in leading organizations, and leads to a systematic solution to problems, and a better awareness of opportunities. And better allocation of scarce resources and achieving the desired results, and strategic thinking can be used in organizations that seek to gain a competitive advantage with a focus on improvement, Through creativity and innovation, where strategic thinking builds a vision for the future of the institution (Salamzadeh, 2018: Also, strategic thinking comes in response to the strategic dimension in management, which helps it answer questions related to its long-term perceptions, for example, what do you want the organization to be in the next (20, 10, 5) years? And what do you do to get

there? And what resources should it attract and obtain? What are the changes in the environment processes? What is the way to deal with it? How can you achieve it and achieve a competitive advantage through it? These questions are basic challenges for senior management in the formation of the organization, encouraging it to use strategic thinking in various scenarios and plans to ensure its achievement. (Majthab: 2018 292)

The importance of strategic thinking can be clarified through the following points: (Al-Qara Lucy, 2012: 37)

1- Arranging and defining priorities, and disseminating them among the members of the department.

2- Develop the ability to shape the future.

3- Clarity of vision is like human sight and insight.

4- Reducing the percentage of error in dealing with situations and making decisions.

5- Continuous development and updating, which requires improving performance.

6- Good dealing with events and facts through the exploitation of the time element.

7- Being prepared with a sufficient amount of intellectual, material and human capabilities.

Also, strategic thinking is considered as a tool for creating the future through: (Shaath, 2020: 25).

1- Helping managers to anticipate the future and bring the picture closer to it through their possession of the foresight capabilities.

2- Strategic thinking contributes to achieving alignment between organizational capabilities and the reality of competition through the development of strategic thinking and the absorption of it by senior management.

3- There are several strategies in strategic thinking, including (experience, personal capabilities, and external sources).

4- Strategic thinking creates resources and generates capabilities, and helps these institutions to exploit opportunities and avoid threats.

5- It enhances the institution's prestige and ability to innovate and differentiate.

6- Enhances leadership and management skills in the field of decision-making

### **Third: Dimensions of Strategic Thinking**

#### 1) Strategic Intent

Focusing on intent (strategic intent) means that the organization's management becomes more determined and less dispersed than

competitors in the market, and credit is attributed to (Hammel and Abraham) for popularizing this concept, as Abraham (2005) describes strategic intent as “the focus that allows individuals within the organization By tiring their energy, focusing attention, and resisting distraction. The focus on strategic intent is also found to be a complex set of knowledge, skills and personal traits that drive the performance of librarians and that makes people effective in the specific role, and that the intent (intent) is a clear statement of the individual's goal, vision and tasks, which They act as a guide for key decisions, ideas, and actions, and subsequently influence their work outcomes and job performance (Saari, 2019:121). Through the element of strategic intent, strategic thinking enables organizations to focus on what is really important, makes them more prepared to face unexpected scenarios, improves their ability to adapt quickly to sudden changes, improves focus and orientation towards goals (Abu Zeid, 2019: 314). (Liedtka, 1998) that strategic thinking is a process led by strategic intent, and provides focus, attention and energy that secures individuals and organizations to achieve goals, and therefore, strategic intent is the desired position by the leadership and preparation for the desired future, as well as the goal that the organization focuses on. (Al-Abadi, 2019: 72).

2) Think of the time

Thinking about the right time is one of the important things that bridge the gap between the reality of the present and the intention of the future, as strategic thinking in this case does not recede in aligning the current resources and capabilities of the organization with the opportunities available in the environment. This vision is based on evoking the past and comparing it with reality, and then anticipating the future in order to determine what is important from the inheritance, abandoning unimportant things, and developing the present to reach the future (Ibrahim, 2014: 37). Thinking about time has three components, the first is the recognition that the future has no place to come from except the past, and secondly, the recognition that what matters to the future in the present is to depart from the past. Modifications, changes, which transform future or actual into familiar flows from the usual channels, and third is a continuous comparison, a semi-constant oscillation from the present to the future to the past and back, concern for the future (Liedtka, 1998:123).

2) Systematic Thinking

The emergence of the term systems thinking dates back to the middle of the twentieth century, as the systems model was associated with operations research, systems analysis, and system engineering. into parts and then

analyze them. Systems thinking is defined as studying the parts in terms of their relationship to the whole and focusing on the way they interact with each other and then evaluating them in terms of success in serving the goals of the system (Abdul Redha, 2014: 28). Thought and action can be intertwined, linear, or something in between, depending on the strategy context facing the organization. The activity is participatory because it can include both internal and external stakeholders according to the context, so practicing managers need some flexibility in solving problems, and this depends on the systems perspective, so this can be developed with their focus on the flexible inputs to the organization's strategy, including (soft elements, leadership style, personnel, skills, systems, and values shared with solid resources, capital equipment, technology, and structure) and provide a system perspective that promotes organizational change (O, Shannassy, 2006:2). Strategic thinking was diagnosed as, the shift from the vision of the organization as a fragmented company consisting of separate parts competing for resources to a vision and dealing with it as a comprehensive system that integrates each part in a relationship with the whole. This, in turn, requires the ability to stay away from daily work problems, and Liedtke sees how different problems and vital issues are related to each other, and that the solution that

affects one area has the same effect in other areas. He called this entrance systemic thinking and says in this regard we must look beyond the characters and events, and we must look at the basic structures, those that shape the actions of the individual and create the conditions, in which events of all kinds become a possible thing (Al-Marsoumi, 2009: 48).

#### 4) Opportunity Thinking

Goal-oriented thinking accompanies the element of seizing smart opportunities, and this intellectual accompaniment is a container that contains the possibilities of dealing with two types of strategies, one of which is the intended strategy and the other is the episodic strategy, as the episodic strategy is one of the axes of strategic thinking directed towards seizing the smart opportunities that these opportunities may go to. When not anticipating emergency environmental changes, and then neglecting any possibility of mobilizing emergency opportunities may lead to an unforeseen loss in the calculation of strategic thinking (Ibrahim, 2014: 38). It was also pointed out that it represents the spirit of the idea of seizing the smart opportunity as being open to new experience that allows a person to benefit from alternative strategies and new ideas that may seem more related to the dynamically changing market environment (Al-Abadi, 2018: 73).

**THE SECOND TOPIC: THE PRACTICAL SIDE**

**First: Scale Stability and Adequacy of Its Size**

1- Reliability or reliability: It is one of the basic things in measurement. The importance of consistency becomes clear once its meaning is fully and well understood. As the term suggests, a reliable or stable tool is one that works in consistent and predictable ways. For a scale to be stable, the scores that result from its use must represent some of the true state of the variable being evaluated and measured. In practice, this implies that the degree obtained from using the tool should not change unless there is an actual change in the variable that the tool measures. (Rober, DeVellis: 2016:49) As reliability refers to the extent of the internal consistency of the scale, which means that the questions all serve a general purpose to be measured, and the probability of obtaining the same results when the same scale is repeated again (Oppenheim, 2019: 144). The oscillating tool that gives varying results when applied more than once is a cause for concern and lack of confidence in its results, and then it is a waste of effort, time and money (83 2012: Huck.), as Cronbach's alpha coefficient is one of the most widely used internal stability

measures in practice, as the value of alpha ranges between Between zero and one, zero indicates that (a tool with no stability), while the correct one indicates (a tool with complete stability). In general, the scale is considered to have low stability as its value ranged between (0-40.0) and with medium stability if the value of alpha falls between (40.0 - 70.0) It has a high stability, as the value of the alpha coefficient is (70.0 and above), and if the scale is of high stability, then this means that the items of the scale are fixed, and then the scale is fixed (Hair et al, 2019: 775). But if the stability is low, this means that there is at least one of the questions or statements of the scale that is not stable and its internal consistency is considered weak, and it does not carry the acceptable level of stability, as it should be identified and treated by deleting the question or statement from the analysis. (Al-Qahtani, 307: 2015), as Table (2) shows that the values of Cornbrash's Alpha ranged between (745.0 - 929.0) for the variables and dimensions, as it turned out that they are greater than) 70.0) and this indicates that the variables and dimensions have appropriate internal consistency, and these results indicate that the research scale (resolution) enjoyed a good level of stability, and this is evidence of the extent of internal consistency for it, and the stability of

questions, and evidence of the extent to which the scale can be repeated and give the same results, and thus can Perform other statistical tests based on these results.

2- As a first step to correctly perform the statistical analysis, it is to conduct a (KMO) test (Kaiser-Meyer Olkin) to ensure the adequacy of the sample size in the current research, and Bartlett's test to ensure that there is a statistically significant and moral correlation between the research variables. As shown in Table (15), it is clear that the value of (KMO) for the two variables exceeded (50.0), and this indicates that the size of the research sample is sufficient to conduct the subsequent analysis (Pallant, 2011:192). It is also noted that the value of Bartlett's for the two variables is (000.0), which is less than the level of moral significance

adopted in this research, which is (05.0). Which indicates that the correlation between the two variables shown in the table below is statistically and morally significant, and this leads to making sure that the correlation matrix is not a unity matrix, meaning that the correlation coefficients between the factors are not equal to zero, as we can generally conclude from the previous results that the size of The sample was sufficient, which is a good indicator for subsequent statistical analyzes.

*Table (2) Cronbach, KMO and Bartlett's alpha test and coefficients for the dimensions of the search variable*

Dimensions	number of questions	of Alpha Nabach coefficients	Crow KMO test	Bartlett test	Sig
strategic intent	4	0.811	0.902	1020.270	0.000
Thinking of the time	4	0.815			
systems thinking	4	0.778			
Opportunity thinking	4	0.823			
strategic thinking	16	0.926			

## Second : The Descriptive Analysis of The Strategic Thinking Variable

### 1- The Strategic Intent

According to the research model, the strategic intent was relied on as one of the dimensions of the strategic thinking variable, that the highest value was at the paragraph, which reads (the organization's management works to have its vision, mission and goals integrated) with an arithmetic mean (99.3) and a good level and a standard deviation (88.0), as it reached It has a coefficient of difference (055.22), as this paragraph came in the third level in terms of relative importance, which indicates that the Directorate of Education Dhi Qar often seeks to have its vision, mission and goals integrated and clear for the environment in which it operates, as well as for employees and senior, middle and brighter departments, because of its great role in the process of strategic intent. As for the lowest value, it came at the paragraph which reads (the organization's management works to achieve parity between the resources it owns and its ambitions to achieve) and with an arithmetic mean (82.3) and at a good level and with a standard deviation of (885.0), as its coefficient of variation reached (168.23), This paragraph came to the fourth level in terms of relative importance. That is, there is a state of logic in the management of the organization in question, especially in not

formulating strategies that are not achievable, but rather they are often formulated through creating a balance between the resources owned by the Directorate and the ambitions it seeks to achieve. In general, it achieved the strategic intent, arithmetic mean (60.3), with a good level, and with a standard deviation of (676.0). Which indicates the lack of dispersion of the answers of the sample and their confirmation that the management of the organization in question often implements ideas and strategies A new strategy that simulates the reality in which it is in, especially since the current environmental situation and the repercussions of the Corona epidemic have imposed on the Directorate of Education great challenges that forced it to adopt new strategies represented by e-learning in order to be consistent and compatible with those challenges that will eventually lead to the implementation of the Directorate's goals that often correspond with Its mission is to reach the strategic intent.

### -The Thinking About The Time 2

The results showed that after thinking about time, the highest value was at the paragraph which reads (the organization's management works to benefit from the experiences in the past and employ them for the future) with an arithmetic mean (97.3) and a good level and

with a standard deviation (846.0), as its coefficient of variation reached (310.21), as this came The paragraph is on the second level in terms of relative importance, meaning that the directorate's management often works on benefiting from the previous experiences it faced in order to employ them for future steps and try not to make mistakes in order to invest time and take the right steps from the first time. As for the lowest value, it came at the paragraph that reads (the organization's management depends on experiences and competencies in formulating the future of the organization), with an arithmetic mean (82.3) and a good level and with a standard deviation of (983.0), as this paragraph came to the fourth level in terms of relative importance, as the coefficient of variation reached Her (733.25). That is, the management of the surveyed directorate often seeks to employ the expertise and competencies it possesses from their investment in formulating the directorate's future, meaning that the senior management has strategic thinking towards the future through which it seeks to employ those experiences and competencies in the right place and take advantage of those strengths in order to Invested in formulating the directorate's strategy. As for overall and overall, it achieved, after thinking about time, the mean of my arithmetic mean (88.3) and at a good level and with a standard deviation. ( 702. 0). Which indicates the lack

of dispersion of the answers of the sample and their affirmation of the presence of good attention by the surveyed directorate in thinking about time and considering it one of the basic pillars in strategic thinking, since taking into account the time factor is a key point invested by the directorate and at the same time it is the directorate in order to invest time correctly From the first time, it is working on the need for there to be a balance between the capabilities of the Directorate and the goals it sets.

### 3 : Systemic Thinking

With regard to systems thinking, the highest value came in the paragraph which reads (The organization's management seeks to obtain all accurate information about its internal and external environment with an arithmetic mean (4.01) and at a good level and with a standard deviation (758.0), as its coefficient of variation reached (903.18) as it came This paragraph is at the first level in terms of relative importance, meaning that the senior management in the directorate under discussion often seeks to search for information regarding its internal and external environment in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that it may face and take appropriate steps in light of that. It came) at a good level and with a standard deviation of (735.0), as its coefficient of variation reached (027.20). This paragraph came to the third level in

terms of relative importance. That is, the directorate often works on the need to deal in an integrated manner with the departments and units in order not to favor one section over another or one unit over another unit because this distinction may cause duplication and overlap that may negatively reflect on the work of the directorate. In general, it achieved after systemic thinking an arithmetic mean (83.3) and at a good level and with a standard deviation of (611.0). Which indicates a good presence of systemic thinking for the Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar, as we find that it implements the basics of systemic thinking, especially in terms of follow-up and comprehensive monitoring of the environment, the internal and external environment, and work on analyzing those variables and making decisions. The occasion with following up on its internal resources of human, information and financial resources and trying to unify them for all departments and units within the directorate in order to reach the general goals sought by the directorate's strategy.

#### 4 : Thinking About The Chances

The results of the opportunity thinking dimension showed that the highest value was in the paragraph (the organization's management works to seize new opportunities in order to achieve the best results in the future) with an arithmetic mean (93.3) and a good level and with a standard

deviation (863.0), as its coefficient of variation reached (929.25), as it came This paragraph is of the second level of materiality. Which indicates the management of the surveyed directorate working continuously to seize the new opportunities it faces in order to achieve the best possible results. As for the lowest value, it came at the paragraph which reads (the organization looks forward to attracting creative workers by preparing all the needs), with an arithmetic mean (74.3), a good level and a standard deviation (962.0), Its coefficient of variation was (722.25), as this paragraph came at the fourth level in terms of relative importance. That is, the higher management of the Directorate is working to achieve creativity in order to advance the general levels of the Directorate by attracting creative people and providing all possible needs. On the whole, it achieved after opportunistic thinking with an arithmetic mean (82.3) and at a good level and with a standard deviation of (697.0). This indicates the lack of dispersion of the answers of the sample and their affirmation of the presence of good interest on the part of the surveyed directorate in thinking of opportunities and trying to invest all the opportunities they face, especially in the external environment and trying to create the appropriate flexible organizational structure that should not constitute an obstacle to the speed of response to those variables.

In general, the strategic thinking variable achieved an arithmetic mean with a value of (86.3) and at a good level and with a standard deviation of (582.0). For the dimensions of the strategic thinking variable, the coefficient of variation was used, as shown in Table (3) as it

becomes clear that the dimension of (systemic thinking) came in the first order in terms of the dimensions of the strategic thinking variable, as most of the sample answers were in agreement about this dimension compared to the other dimensions.

*Table (3 ) order of importance depending on the coefficient of variation for the dimensions of the strategic thinking variable*

	variable	mean	St. d	C. V	Rank
1	strategic intent	3.90	0.676	17.325	The second
2	Thinking of the time	3.88	0.702	18.102	the third
3	systems thinking	3.83	0.611	15.947	the first
4	Opportunity thinking	3.82	0.697	18.267	the fourth
	<b>strategic thinking variable</b>	3.86	0.582		

### THE THIRD TOPIC: CONCLUSIONS

1. It became clear from the results of the research sample that the majority of the study population in general education in Dhi Qar governorate are males, and that the majority of them are young groups, and that the majority of them hold a bachelor's degree, and some of these demographic characteristics reinforced their understanding of the subject of the study.

2. The results of analyzing the answers of the research sample in general education in Dhi Qar governorate showed that its administration had made a good use of strategic thinking within its field of work.

3. The results of the practical analysis of the research sample showed that the General Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar Governorate often seeks to have its vision, mission and goals integrated and clear for the environment in which it operates.

4. The departments of the General Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar province pay good attention to time and consider it one of the most important determinants of achieving strategic thinking by employing the most important expertise and competencies in the right place.

5. Shows the interest of the Directorate General of Education in Dhi Qar Governorate to implement the basics of systemic thinking by striving to integrate all departments and units with some of them and not to have duplication or preference between departments. As it came after systemic thinking in the first place of importance within the dimensions of strategic thinking.

6. The General Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar Governorate is concerned with opportunistic thinking and trying to invest all opportunities within its environment and creating the appropriate flexible organizational structure that achieves response to those variables.

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