The Impact of Political Skills on Strategic Decision-Making for Senior Leaders - Directorates of Education

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Abstract

In this article we aim to verify the impact of political skills on strategic decision-making among senior leaders in the six directorates of education in Baghdad governorate. A hypothetical research model has been built that determines the nature of the relationship and its impact between the dimensions of the independent variable represented by political skills (Social astuteness, Interpersonal influence, Networking ability, Apparent sincerity.) and the dimensions of the dependent variable strategic decision-making (rationality, intuition, political behavior). The research relied on the questionnaire as a main tool in collecting its data, as the questionnaire forms were distributed to the research community of (18) members, was also used by ready-made statistical programs to test hypotheses and reach multiple results, including: The respondents' possession of political skills had a positive impact on increasing their capabilities in strategic decision-making, which plays a key role in the directorates' success and prosperity, through the use of their rational influences to increase the capabilities of senior leaders in making strategic decisions, which allows them to easily influence others and change their behavior to achieve the desired goals.

Introduction

Leaders face many challenges in how to maintain the success and continuity of their organizations, and the strategic decision is the essence of the administrative process and its success as it is the means that works to develop and adapt the work of the organization in response to those challenges. It is also one of the most difficult and complex tasks that managers take during their career Functionalism because of its impact on the future of the organization and its continuity, and it is a continuous process organized from a group of activities represented in collecting information, processing it and evaluating it to turn it into decisions. Which appeared at the beginning of the third millennium, which is increasingly needed in light of the recognition by many researchers that organizations are nothing but "political arenas", which makes it imperative for leaders, if they want to achieve organizational success, to possess political skills, which is one of the most important capabilities for individuals, especially for managers who must have in the work environment.

Plane of the Research

Research Problem

The education sector is one of the most important sectors of community development and means of the country's renaissance and development. It represents the factory of thinking and creative minds that make change. There is no doubt that this sector, like the rest of the state's sectors, has been affected by the (Covid-19) crisis that cast a shadow over all state institutions and even the world at large. Which required its leaders to possess the political skill, which is an important intellectual resource to contribute to the development of plans, programs and strategies related to making strategic decisions to confront this crisis and achieve organizational success. The research problem can be summarized in the following questions:

1.   What are the conceptual bases for the research variables (political skills, strategic decision-making)?
2.   What is the importance of the research variables within the six directorates of general education in the province of Baghdad?
3.   To what extent are the directors of the General Education Department in the province of Baghdad aware of the importance of political skills and their dimensions?
4.   To what extent are strategic decisions taken within the six directorates of public education in the province of Baghdad?
5.   What is the impact of political skills on strategic decision-making within the surveyed directorates?

Research Importance

The importance of the current research is reflected in the following:
1.   The research deals with modern organizational and behavioral variables in administrative and organizational thought (political skills, strategic decision-making).
2.   The current research provides a scientific and practical contribution to diagnosing the impact of political skills on strategic decision-making in the general directorates investigated.
3.   The importance of the current research stands out by choosing one of the most important sectors of the state, which is the education sector as the main engine in building societies, the advancement of individuals and the development of civilizations.
4.   Presenting a practical model that seeks to develop some proposals for the management of public education directorates and the possibility of benefiting from them, in order to improve their organizational performance, through the efforts of education directors in applying the concepts of political skills to make strategic decisions that contribute to achieving positive results.

Research Objectives

 The current article seeks to achieve a set of goals, the most important of which are:

1.   Presenting the most important concepts related to research variables by reviewing the most important scientific proposals related to those variables.
2.   Revealing the importance of research variables within the six directorates of public education in the province of Baghdad.
3.   Guidance senior leaders in the six directorates of education about the importance of political skills and their dimensions in strategic decision-making.

Research limits

1. Spatial boundaries: represented by the six directorates of general education in the province of Baghdad.
2. Human limits: It included the senior leadership of the education directorates (general managers and their assistants), the population size equal (18) individuals.
3. Time limits: The theoretical aspect of the research was completed from February (2021) to April (2021). And the research was completely completed in July (2021).

Research Methodology

The research relied on the analytical descriptive approach, which is one of the ways to describe the subject to be studied through a correct scientific methodology and to depict the results reached on expressive digital forms that can be interpreted to reach acceptable generalizations (Al-Mahmoudi, 2019: 46).

Hypothetical Scheme of Research

Figure (1) shows the hypothetical scheme of the research, which includes the political skills variable with its dimensions (Social astuteness, Interpersonal influence, Networking ability, Apparent sincerity) as an independent variable and the dimensions of the strategic decision-making variable (rationality, intuition, political behavior) as a dependent variable.
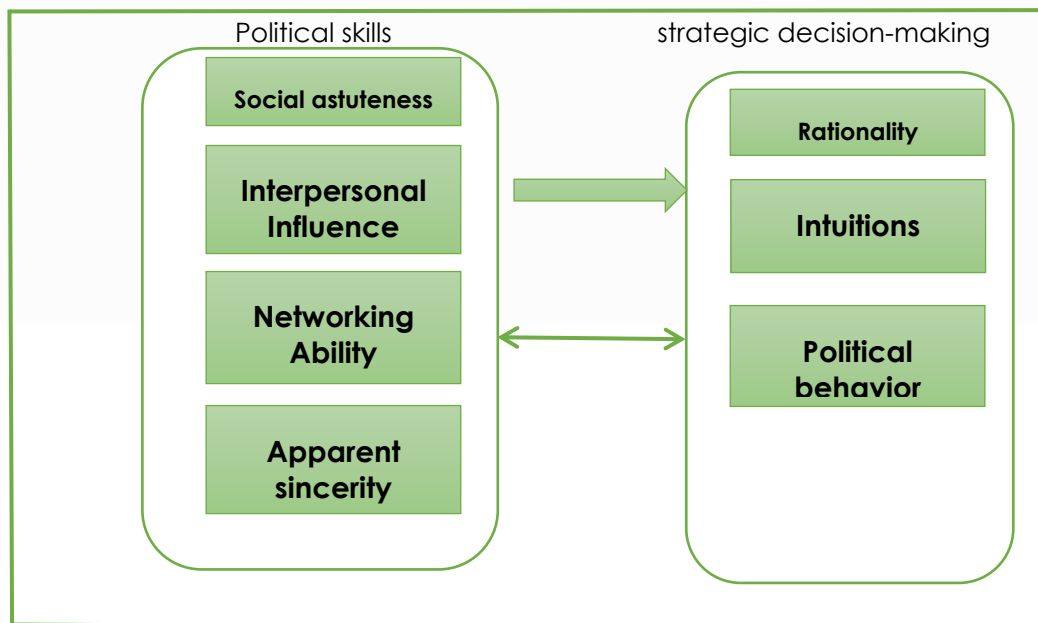

Figure (1) Research Diagram

In line with the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:
❖The main hypothesis: Political skills, and their dimensions, have a positive and moral effect on strategic decision-making. Four sub-hypotheses are derived from this hypothesis:

● Social acumen has a positive and significant effect on strategic decision-making.
● the impact of personal relationships has a positive and significant impact on strategic decision-making.

● Network communication has a positive and significant effect on strategic decision-making.
● Clear honesty has a positive and significant effect on strategic decision-making.

Search tools

It requires the use of two types of means for this purpose, as follows:

The theoretical part

To enrich the theoretical part, it was relied on what was produced by the literature of administrative and organizational thought, in terms of books and research, as well as what the (Internet) network provided from modern sources (periodicals, letters, and theses) related to research variables.

Practical part

The questionnaire was used to collect information to complete the requirements of the practical part and to reach the results. The questionnaire was designed in a way that serves the purpose and requirements of the study. The answer to the questionnaire's paragraphs was based on the Likert scale (exactly agreed, agreed, agreed to some extent, did not agree, no Totally agreed), and the questionnaire consists of two parts, the first part includes the demographic data of the research population, while the second part of the questionnaire included paragraphs that measure the main and sub-dimensions of the study variables, as the political skills variable was measured in its four dimensions depending on the scale (Ferries et al, 2005.) scale was adopted (Jafari & Nilipour : 2017, 6) to measure strategic decision-making.

Literature Review

Political Skills

The concept of "political skills" is a relatively recent concept, as it was presented more than three decades ago as a necessary competency for leaders to achieve organizational effectiveness in turbulent environments (Cheema et al, 2008, 7). Organizational leaders are successful in achieving both personal and organizational goals (Gallab, Abdel Karim, 2011: 205)) and (Pfeffer, 1981) is one of the first researchers who planted the first seed of the term political skills in the scientific literature, then Mintberzg (1983) came to be the godfather of this concept emphasized that organizations are political arenas and pointed out that survival and effectiveness in such contexts require the use of successful influence tactics (Brouer, 2007: 15) and that individuals need to possess two basic characteristics to be effective and successful in organizations: First, it is necessary to Possession of the "political will", or the required desire and motivation to expend the personal resources involved (personal relationships, knowledge, experience, time, etc.). Second, it asserts that political will alone is not sufficient for political behavior and that it must be accompanied by "political skill" (Atay, 2009b: 892-893). As for the definition of political skills, the researchers put forward a number of definitions (Ahearn et al., 2004, p. 311) as "the ability to understand others effectively at work and to use that understanding and knowledge to influence others to act in ways that advance one's personal or organizational goals." Whereas (Farries et al, 2005, 2007) stated that political skills are "an effective interpersonal building that combines social understanding and the ability to adjust behavior according to the requirements of the situation in honest, inspiring, confident and supportive ways that effectively influence others" (Blickle et al, 2007). 2007, 378) to proceed (Liu, 2007:147) from the same idea and define political skill as "a deep understanding of social situations with the ability to adjust their behavior to meet changing needs and demands in a way that inspires confidence and allows to influence and control others effectively." On the other hand, each from (Braddy, Campbell, 2014:1) that political skills are "the ability to maximize relationships and benefit from them in order to achieve organizational, individual and team goals." From the above it is noted that political skill is characterized by the social awareness of leaders and the ability to modify the behavior of the individual according to different and changing circumstantial needs and to understand others effectively to achieve organizational goals.

The importance of political skills

a)   It allows leaders to understand more accurately what subordinates need and how to motivate them to achieve organizational goals (Brouer, 2007: 15).
b)   It gives consistent indicators of increasing job success rates and achieving high job performance, as well as positive personal effects and distinct mental abilities (Frieder, Basik, 2016: 2).
c)   It is an important factor in understanding social interactions within the workplace through understanding the behavior of others, modifying it and influencing it according to the requirements of changing situations, and thus effectively controlling the responses of others (Ferries et al, 2007: 291).
d)   Contribute to the development of ambitious women by breaking the glass ceiling and advancing to senior leadership roles (Watkins, Smith, 2014: 207).

Dimensions of Political Skills

After reviewing the literature of the political skills variable, most of the studies were approved, including (Blickle et al, 2007: 380), (Brouer, 2007: 15, (Ferries et al, 2007: 292), (Shi et al, 2010: 360), (Galab, Abdel Karim, 2011: 206), (Lvina et al, 2012: 173), (Xue et al, 2015: 1879), (Frieder, Basik, 2016: 6) on the researcher's scale (Ferries et al, 2005: 127).), which in turn defined political skill as "a comprehensive set of social competencies that consist of four interconnected and distinct dimensions," which are:

Social Astuteness

The skill of observing others intelligently and adapting to diverse social situations, which is the ability to understand and interpret the behavior of workers and the accurate awareness of all that is happening within social situations, as individuals with social astuteness enjoy a higher degree of self-awareness, as well as an accurate awareness of their behaviors and the behaviors of others. Socially, they take time to observe others in order to accurately understand their true intentions. These individuals are fully self-aware and deal with individuals in an intelligent and discreet manner.

Interpersonal Influence

Individuals have a certain style that allows them to easily influence others and change their behavior according to what the situation requires in order to achieve the desired goals, that is, leaders with high political skills exercise a strong influence on others around them within the work. Personal and organizational.

Networking Ability

The ability to identify and develop diverse contacts and networks with others, which is the ability to build and use various networks and social contacts, develop friendships, create beneficial and powerful alliances and coalitions, and take advantage of opportunities in order to access the various valuable resources required for personal and organizational success.

Apparent Sincerity

The ability to convey ideas and implement behaviors in sincere and authentic ways that will be interpreted as authentic by others. Politically skilled individuals demonstrate high levels of integrity, authenticity, and sincerity. They are honest, genuinely open and allow them to successfully influence others.

Strategic Decision Making

Strategic decision making is one of the main episodes in the strategy formulation process, as strategic decision making is made based on the results of the analysis process carried out by the

organization, through the formation of a number of available alternatives. In the organization's transition to a better future situation (Numan: 2017, 27), and decision-making is one of the most important functions of managers in any organization. Without decisions, the organization cannot achieve any success, as strategic decisions determine the course of all business activities required to achieve organizational goals and they differ from (administrative) decisions and operational) because they deal with a range of organizational activities and deal with environmental uncertainty and involve large-scale risks and changes and have been described as decisions that require significant resources and affect organizational orientation, management and organizational structure and have long-term effects on the organization and primarily target areas of work necessary for organizational growth, prosperity and survival (Ivan & Ivana, 2012, 8). It defined (two sons: 2020, 71) the strategic decision as "long-term future decisions of the responsibility of the senior management formed by complex and different circumstances in the past, present and future. As for (Khashei & Sabour, 2019:123), they defined strategic decision-making as "a set of activities through which strategic issues are identified, interpreted, dealt with and resolved, and strategic decisions are taken by senior managers at the top of the organizational hierarchy." Whereas (Vasilescu: 2011, 101) believes that strategic decision-making is "the chosen alternatives that affect the main factors that determine the success of the organization's strategy." It was expressed by (Al-Shadadi: 2015, 18) that it is a non-routine decision, characterized by complexity, reflecting the interaction between the organization and its environment, taken by the higher levels, affecting the organization's stability and survival, and involving high levels of uncertainty, and it is difficult to undo it after it is taken. From the previous definitions, we can deduce the following:

1. The strategic decision is the responsibility of the senior management at the top of the organizational hierarchy.
2. Strategic decision-making takes place under conditions of complexity and environmental uncertainty.
3. The strategic decision is a long-term future decision.
4. Strategic decisions require significant resources.
5. Strategic decisions bring organizational success, prosperity and survival.

The importance of making strategic decisions

The strategic decision is the essence of the administrative process and its main means of achieving organizational goals, because it enables any organization to continue its administrative activities efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the importance of decision-making stems from the positive results that it achieves for the organization, which are as follows:

a.   Strategic decision-making is one of the most important areas of management and plays a crucial role in achieving the success and continuity of the organization. (Papulova, Gavova: 2016, 571)
b.   Strategic decisions provide the competitive advantage and try to change the general scope of the organization and its strategic direction.
c.   It is important for organizational health and organizational survival in general. (Jankelova, 2017: 88)
d.   Strategic decisions are concerned with the distribution of human and financial resources that affect in one way or another the workers. (Wuldan: 2020, 71).

Dimensions of strategic decision making

One of the difficulties facing any research is to complete its requirements in terms of finding scientific and approved methods to measure its variables, and after reviewing and reviewing the literature, it was relied on the (Jafari & Nilipour: 2017, 6) scale as dimensions for strategic decision-making, which are as follows:

Rationality

(Herbert Simon) argues that "the hypotheses of perfect rationality are contrary to truth, not a matter of approximation; they do not describe even a little the processes that human beings use

to make decisions in complex situations and suggested that decision-making is limited by the limited ability of managers to perceive information, and this is what he called "specific rationality" His theorem assumes that managers in practical life do not search for the best solution as much as they search for the satisfactory solution, meaning that they choose the solution that is good enough to solve the problem and deal with it (Hamaydi: 2017, 39). Rationality is defined as "an analytical and systematic mechanism based on clear rules for decision-making, and individuals who prefer rationality follow a step-by-step decision-making process that includes defining and formulating the problem, a comprehensive evaluation of the available information, creating a set of alternatives, evaluating the costs and benefits of these alternatives, and ultimately making a logical choice." It is based on conscious deliberation (Calabretta et al: 2017, 367).

Intuition

(Mintzberg) pointed out that most recent studies in the field of decision-making indicate that the manager depends in making strategic decisions on the functions of the right hemisphere responsible for intuition, wisdom, feelings and emotion, while he sees that intuition represented by feelings and emotions did not rise to the frameworks of daily practice, but rather remains Hidden in the dark hemisphere of the human brain represented by the deep knowledge of the problem being studied, this intuition is not contrary to the mind and is not the sixth sense, but rather an advanced form of thinking based on years of experience (Dahak: 2017, 204). The intuitive model of strategic decision-making is characterized by attention to detail in verifying information, rather than systematic searching for and processing information and the tendency to rely on obsessions and feelings (Thunholm: 2004, 933). , which is of great importance for strategic thinking and decision-making, as it makes it easier for the decision maker to conduct the necessary analysis to solve problems, reduce effort, and obtain good information that contributes to choosing the appropriate alternative to solve the problems facing the organization (Weldan: 2020, 86).

Political Behavior

It is the behavior of individuals or groups that involves the use of force or the exercise of influence. The origin of the political perspective for strategic decision-making lies in the literature of political science in the fifties of the last century, when many authors developed a view that the conflicting goals and interests of individuals affect decision-making in general, and assumes the point of view considering that decisions are the result of a process in which decision makers have different goals and form alliances to achieve their goals and in which the preferences of the strongest prevail (Child et al: 2016, 2), and historically (Ellen et al: 2013, 844) that political behavior has characteristics negative represented by self-interest and counterproductive behavior, but researchers began to notice that political actions can produce positive ends. researchers began to support the study of positive political behavior, as they adopted a main idea related to "politics is necessary" instead of describing it as a source of evil. Recently, researchers have developed a framework that allows political behavior to be positive by integrating it with morals, and thus leaders must enjoy certain ethics represented by the following: (Al-Hakim: 2016, 57)

1. The benefit of the results: that the results of the manager's behavior are related to achieving the optimum satisfaction of employees within the organization, that is, to lead to the greatest benefit for the largest number of employees.
2. Individual rights: The manager's behavior should respect the rights of all concerned parties, such as respect for freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and privacy for any individual.
3. Distributive justice: that the manager's behavior respects the rules of justice, he must treat employees in a fair and just manner and not arbitrarily.

Analysis and Findings

The level of answers to the political skills variable

This variable includes four dimensions, as indicated in **Table. (1**), as follows: In order to analyze the dimensions of this variable, the results have been developed with regard to the weighted arithmetic averages of the answers to the questionnaire for the research sample, as well as the

standard deviations and the coefficient of variation for each paragraph and for each dimension of that variable, and in order to shed light more accurately, it will be based on the T-test of the One sample for each paragraph and for each of the variable dimensions, compared with the hypothetical mean of (3.4), as shown in **Table (2)** To verify the research hypotheses, about the responses to the paragraphs and dimensions and the extent to which they are close to agreement and complete agreement, that is, there is a real role for all the main variables and their dimensions in the general directorates of education surveyed.

Table (1)
Descriptive statistics of the data on the dimensions of the political skills variable

variable	dimensions	Questions	mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of Variation	ranking
Political skills	Social Astuteness	Q1	400.	0.84	20.92	4
		Q2	4.05	0.74	18.28	2
		Q3	4.05	0.80	19.88	3
		Q4	3.85	0.65	16.97	1
		Q5	3.71	1.02	27.11	5
	Interpersonal Influence	Q1	4.19	0.93	22.15	2
		Q2	3.72	0.76	20.47	1
		Q3	3.89	0.99	25.54	4
		Q4	3.80	0.93	24.37	3
	Networking Ability	Q1	3.90	0.83	21.30	5
		Q2	3.90	0.7	17.95	2
		Q3	4.20	0.87	20.76	4
		Q4	400.	0.71	17.68	1
		Q5	4.09	0.83	20.29	3
	Apparent Sincerity	Q1	4.14	1.06	25.64	3
		Q2	3.86	0.96	24.98	1
		Q3	3.81	1.03	27.05	4
		Q4	4.05	1.02	25.29	2

Table (2)
The values of the coefficient of variation and the T-test for the one-sample average for the dimensions of the political skills variable

dimension	mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of Variation C.V	ranking	T-test averages	significant
Social Astuteness	3.93	0.70	17.81	2	3.494	sig
Interpersonal Influence	3.90	0.75	19.23	3	3.093	sig
Networking Ability	4.02	0.58	14.43	1	4.897	sig
Apparent Sincerity	3.96	0.93	23.48	4	2.772	sig

It is noted from the **Table (1) above** that the descriptive statistics were presented with regard to the questions related to the dimensions of the first variable (political skills), as well as the coefficient of variation and its arrangement of questions for each of the dimensions of the first variable, while **Table (2)** refers to the Descriptive statistics of the total dimensions of the political skills variable, and through the results it is clear that there is a significant difference for the average dimensions of the variable and their difference from the hypothetical mean of (3.4) and the direction of the answers towards agreement and completely agreement, and this indicates the possession of the studied community of social acumen and its ability to understand and explain the behavior of workers and its accurate awareness of everything it takes place from events within social situations, as well as their possession of the capabilities of relational influence, networking and creating beneficial alliances that are in the interest of work, as well as their possession of honesty, sincerity and dedication to work, meaning that the senior management under study contribute significantly for building and developing social relations with all parties and investing it in order to achieve organizational goals, as it is the organizational capital that will contribute to the success of the work of the general directorates. The difference, as the dimension of networking capabilities was ranked first, followed by social acumen and the impact of personal relationships, respectively, while the dimension of clear honesty came within the last option, and this generally indicates the awareness of the higher leaders in the six directorates of education of the political skills variable and its dimensions, which will contribute to sound strategic decision-making.

The level of responses to the strategic decision-making variable

This variable includes three dimensions, as indicated in **Table (3)**, as follows:

Table (3)
Descriptive statistics of data on dimensions of strategic decision-making variable

variable	dimensions	Questions	mean	standard deviation	coefficient of Variation	ranking
strategic decision making	Rationality	Q1	4.04	0.87	21.45	2
		Q2	3.83	1.02	26.52	4
		Q3	3.77	0.69	18.25	1
		Q4	3.52	0.93	26.32	3
	Intuitions	Q1	3.27	1.14	34.81	3
		Q2	3.89	0.94	24.23	2
		Q3	3.69	0.78	21.20	1
	Political Behavior	Q1	3.2	1.25	39.03	3
		Q2	3.43	1.12	32.70	1
		Q3	3.14	1.108	35.27	2

Table (4)
The values of the coefficient of variation and the (T-test) for the mean of one sample for the dimensions of the strategic decision-making variable

dimension	mean	standard deviation	Variation coefficient C.V	ranking	T-test averages	significant
Rationality	3.79	0.72	18.99	1	2.505	Sig.
Intuitions	3.62	0.78	21.55	2	1.298	Non-sig.
Political Behavior	3.26	1.03	31.595	3	-0.633	Non-sig.

From **Table (3)**, we note that the descriptive statistics were presented with regard to the questions related to the dimensions of the second variable (strategic decision-making), as well as the coefficient of variation and its arrangement for each dimension of the second variable, while **Table (4)** refers to the descriptive statistics of the total Dimensions of the strategic decision-making variable, and through the results it is clear that there is a significant difference for the average dimensions of the variable and their difference from the hypothetical mean of (3.4), the dimension of rationality achieved the highest arithmetic mean and the least dispersion, which indicates the presence of high homogeneity for the individual of community , As well as its arrangement based on the values of the coefficient of variation, as it came in first place, and this indicates that decision-makers in the six directorates of education possess sufficient relevant and important information to make the strategic decision properly, as well as a broad and comprehensive analysis of that information by using additional quantitative analytical techniques Long-term decision-making, and through the t-test for one sample compared with the hypothetical mean, we find that this dimension was significant compared to the dimensions of intuition and political behavior, which showed their insignificance, As well as their importance, which was less than the first dimension of rationality, which indicates the impact of the external environment, whether economic, political or health effects, after the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, which had a high impact on the joints of life in general and education in particular.

Table (5)
The values of the coefficient of variation and the one-sample T-test for the average of the political skills variables and strategic decision-making

dimension	mean	standard deviation	coefficient of Variation C.V	ranking	T-test averages	significant
Political skills	3.9576	0.63951	3.996	1	16.16	Sig.
strategic decision making	3.5795	0.58	1.43	2	16.25	Non-sig.

for the values shown in the table above, which refer to the significant of the political skills variable and the Non-significant of the strategic decision-making variable, which indicates the approach of the average to the hypothetical mean and the impartiality of strategic decision-making based on the respondents' answers as a result of the circumstances that affected the general situation of the country and the inability to build a strategic decision Pre-planned as a result of emergency crises **Table (6)** below shows the correlation coefficient between the political skills variable with its dimensions (Social Astuteness ، interpersonal Influence, networking abilities, Apparent Sincerity) and the strategic decision-making variable with its sub-dimensions (rationality, intuition, political behavior), as well as at the overall level for both variables. The results of the correlation analysis were as follows:

Table (6)
person Correlation between the studies variables and their dimensions

strategic decision-making		Rationality	Intuition	Political behavior	significant relationship	
Political skills					number	%
Social Astuteness		0.724**	0.471*	-0.082	2	66.7
Interpersonal Influence		0.799**	0.723**	-0.007	2	66.7
Networking Ability		0.660**	0.490*	-0.067	2	66.7
Apparent Sincerity		0.689**	0.480*	0.016	2	66.7
significant relationship	number	4	4	0	8	
	%	100	100	0		66.7

* The correlation is significant at the level of 0.05
**The correlation is significant at 0.01 level

It is clear from the above table the significance of the dimensions between the political skills variable with the dimensions of rationality and intuition at the level of significance (0.05) and (0.01), while the results showed the insignificance of relationships for the dimensions of political skills with the dimension of political behavior, which indicates that there is no relationship between them. While the results indicated the significant relationship between the political skills variable and the strategic decision-making variable at the overall level, as the correlation coefficient between them was (0.634) at the level of significance (0.01). While **Table (7)** shows the results of analyzing the impact of political skills as an independent variable in strategic decision-making as an approved variable using the simple linear regression model. The analysis included measuring the impact of the total political skills, and the results were as follows:

Table (7)
The effect of the political skills variable on strategic decision-making using simple linear regression

Explanatory variables	constant value	The value of the beta coefficient B	R^2	F- value	Significance level (0.05)
Political skills	1.321	0.571	0.402	12.798	significant

From **Table (7)**, it is clear that there is a significant effect of the political skills variable on strategic decision-making, as the calculated F value to (12.798), which is greater than the tabulated **F** value with a degree of freedom (1,16), and this was also explained by The value of each of the coefficient of determination of (0.402) as well as the value of B (0.571), and according to this result accept the hypothesis that (there is a significant effect of the total political skills on strategic decision-making). In order to show the impact of the sub-dimensions on the strategic decision-making variable, the backward elimination procedure was used for the sake of clarification, that is, the dimensions that actually affected the strategic decision-making variable, and **Table (8)** below refers to the results of the backward elimination procedure, and this method is one of the methods of choosing the best regression model, which showed the effect of the interpersonal relations dimension on the strategic decision-making variable, while there was no effect on it for the rest of the sub-dimensions.

Table (8)
The results of the (backward) elimination procedure for the dimensions of the political skills variable on strategic decision-making

Explanatory variables	constant value	The value of the beta coefficient B	R^2	F- value	Significance level (0.05)
Interpersonal Influence	1.514	0 .529	0.472	16.979	significant

Discussion

The results of the analysis of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant effect of the political skills variable with its dimensions on the characteristics of strategic decision-making, and this means that political skill affects the dimensions of strategic decision-making, and the results also showed that political skills support the rationality of leaders in the strategic decision-making process. Special capabilities and managers who are characterized by leadership personalities and experiences, because the decision has an impact on the future of organizations and these results are consistent with a study **(Sheehan et al, 2015),** while it was found from the level of the sample's answers that there is a tendency among individuals towards neglecting intuition, although it helps them in making the right decisions quickly, and guides them on how to face daily challenges, and this indicates that they are managers who rely on confirmed information and real numbers in Gathering information in light of the crises they face. Therefore, it is necessary to know how to use intuition and listen to it, and to ensure that it works in perfect harmony with intelligence. The results also confirmed the sample members' lack of clear understanding of the dimension of political behavior due to the negative view taken on this concept, while research and studies confirmed its importance in enhancing organizational results These results contradicted the study **(Wildan: 2020**), The results of the study may change if it is applied in other institutions and with a large sample, as the surveyed community was chosen despite its small number and this may affect the results, but it was chosen for the reason that they are from the members of the council responsible for making fateful decisions for all schools in Baghdad governorate as well. On how they make decisions and deal with them in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

Recommendations

1. The necessity of paying attention to the political skills of the six directorates of education and working to develop them continuously at all organizational levels without exception through the establishment of training courses in which all employees participate, as well as specialized development programs in this aspect to develop human resources.
2. Introduce the information technology (IT) systems that help facilitate obtaining the correct information at the right time and from its original sources to improve the effectiveness of strategic decision-making.
3. Directing senior leaders to focus on the importance of intuition in making strategic decisions.
4. Develop strategic plans to meet the challenges of the external environment and circumstances beyond the control of the decision maker so that there are alternative solutions that can be taken in the event of a particular emergency and direct all directorates to those alternatives and work on them when needed.
5. Paying attention to the dimension of political behavior, despite the negative viewpoint taken on it, but studies have confirmed its importance and positive role in achieving the goals.

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