Exploration of the Mediating Relationship for Human Resource Capabilities in Strategic Leadership and Crisis Management

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how strategic leadership contributes to strengthening crisis management within the training centres of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, with particular attention to the mediating influence of human resource capabilities (HRC). The study employed a sample comprising 202 participants, including general managers, assistant managers, and departmental heads within the security sector, a group that has received limited attention in management scholarship. Data analysis was conducted through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. The findings indicated significant positive associations between strategic leadership and HRC, between strategic leadership and crisis management, and between HRC and crisis management. Furthermore, results from the Sobel test confirmed that HRC serves as a complete mediator in the link between strategic leadership and crisis management, with the indirect effect proving stronger than the direct relationship. These outcomes emphasise that training centres enhance strategic leadership by cultivating strategic thinking and leadership competencies. Nonetheless, security organisations in non-Western contexts, which operate amid persistent instability, encounter substantial difficulties due to their restricted familiarity with contemporary management approaches concerning HRC and crisis management.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Human Resources Capabilities, Crisis Management, Iraqi Ministry of Interior

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organisations encounter intense competitive pressures that necessitate effective strategic leadership. Such leadership requires a well-defined vision, the capacity for strategic thinking, competence in team building, an orientation towards innovation, adherence to ethical

principles, efficient resource allocation, and the ability to plan for the long term. Strategic leaders harness security capital using planned Orderliness and vision-based implementation, looking at internal and environmental conditions, and synthesising organisational actions across varying organisational organisational levels for the purposes of creating changes facilitating HRC. Sound crisis management directly impacts security competitiveness and institutional flexibility in responding to changes in the environment without which territorial superiority and public safety are not feasible for sustenance.

Iraqi security establishments have the mandate of developing the capacity of officers within the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), for example, specialist training such as the Kirkuk Police Academy counter-IED course. This is a mandate particularly with respect to strategic leader development and crisis planning towards a bid to create organisational capacity for managing subsequent security problems. These training command directories operate with a tremendously high set of stakes, leadership failure directly impacting on a country's security through providing insufficiently trained personnel. But effective leaders with a capability of sustaining progressive modes of education have the prospective mandate of strengthening security forces for managing multi-faceted threats that are complex, such as manifested in the Mosul security decline. The case for Iraq identifies such dynamic, which describes how leadership developmental weaknesses led towards the inability of security forces, yet command such as the Kirkuk Police Academy illustrate their strategic investments that create discernable increments towards managing crises better. This study consequently identifies a cumulative spread of two research questions:

RQ1: In what ways can human resource capabilities and crisis management experiences contribute to strengthening strategic leadership, rather than being limited to outcomes shaped by it?

RQ2: How does the inclusion of personality development metrics advance the understanding of the interrelationships among strategic leadership, crisis management, and leader development?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Leadership (SL)

Leadership has been described as the achievement of a vision and the fulfilment of organisational objectives through the ability to influence others within the institution (Cortes & Herrmann, 2020). It has also been defined as the integration of behaviours, traits, communication skills, authority, and relationships associated with administrative functions, coupled with the capacity to inspire and guide others in advancing the organisation (Men et al., 2021). Leadership has been identified as a crucial determinant of organisational success or failure and is considered a key element in formulating performance improvement strategies that provide competitive advantage (Soomro et al., 2020). Strategies Trian Leading has grown progressively interesting for management researchers, which has led to a raft of definitions drawing on a range of intellectual traditions. This variety attests to the richness of grasping both the framing and practice of leading strategically. Arguably, leadership capabilities are generated through iterative learning processes that endow leaders with a range of skills for strategic effectiveness.

Development here, consequently, necessitates structured learning, practical engagement, lifelong learning, and deliberate reflection. Strategic leadership has also been operationalized as the ability to keep developing and remain adaptable through the learning of time management, motivation of workers towards corporate objectives, and making strategic organisational transformations (Usman, 2020). Another conception views it as a leader's ability to communicate purposes, direction, and opportunities to draw out superior performances from internal and external players (Lemoine et al., 2021). Similarly, it has been hypothesised that strategic leadership involves a leader's ability to express organisational vision and values to workers while making suitable decisions for the institution with minimal external intervention (Abu Orabi et al., 2024). It has also been portrayed as an exceptional set of competencies which aid leaders to look forward to challenges, generate conception of chances, flex adaptively, think strategically, and motivate workers to embrace creativity and innovation with the aim of organisational results enhancement (George, 2024). More recently, strategic leadership has been positioned as the capability to accommodate persistent change and unpredictability been encountered in today's management settings (Mohammad et al., 2024). In short, strategic leadership could be hypothetically posited as the total sum of capabilities and skills which aid leaders to adapt with internal and external changes with an eye on making the organisation achieve its set targets and remain competitive. Such capabilities encompass expressing a clear vision, involvement in strategic review and planning, and marshaling human resources with efficiency, consequently aiding organisational development and continuous progress.

Academics (Hitt et al., 2020) further contended that successful strategic leaders go through four major phases when facing abrupt crises: unification, protection, challenge, and integration. They also hold that strategic leadership goes beyond planning and outlining strategies but also involves a mindset that is adaptive with matters relating to ambiguity and unpredictability. Among the top frameworks employed on the topic is the model of Hitt and Hoskinson, which has also been a seminal refence for conceptualising and critiquing strategic leadership. Through the model, strategic leaders are successful because they have the capacity of tying core practices together, such as cautious resource management, the building of human capital, capitalising on competitive advantages, creating a healthy organisational culture, creating balanced mechanisms of control, and being guided at all times through principles of morality and ethics. The model also captures successful leaders as ones descriptive through their capability of making educated decisions at strategic places such as declaring strategic direction, optimising places for resources, attaining organisational balance, creating places for work to a pleasure, and putting morality and ethics at centre circuit.

Human Resources Capabilities (HRC)

Human resource (HR) capabilities are known to play a critical determiner of organisational success and long-term competitiveness. According to argument from (Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2020), HR capabilities are constructed through the compilation of workers' knowledge and skills applied in the execution of their professional assignments. Such compiled expertise not only refines personal competence but also organisational value through the enabling of implementation of customer results-enhancing strategies. From such an argument, Agustian et al. (2023) operationally defines core HR capabilities as distinct and professional capabilities present in workers, who utilise them to boost efficacy and effect organisational excellence. Similarly, Hirudayaraj and Matić (2021) defines such capabilities as an integrated makeup of experience, capabilities, knowledge, and creativity collectively enabling workers to

execute their assignments with heightened efficacy. Additionally, Menne et al. (2022) defines fortifying HR capabilities and skills as value creation enhancement through the development of principles such as integrity, responsibility, cooperation, creativity, and discipline. Collectively, such arguments posit HR capabilities to encompass beyond technical competence, with an integrated assimilation of knowledge, experience, and principles defining worker delivery and organisational success.

Therefore, teams are also actively developing capabilities in order to lay the groundwork for improved results-based performances through carefully planned steps with considerable organisational commitment and operational efficiency impacts (Rezaei et al., 2021). The HR capabilities concept can then be conceived as the repertoire of some attributes required in every position to ensure successful task completion. Their lack makes organisational success an impossible feat to achieve. Competitive advantage maintenance and creation is an area where the HR function has an overriding strategic role to play through an enabling environment supportive of employee-related and work-related capability building. These capabilities constitute success bedrock through enabling processes such as appraisal, development, and recognitions of the employee. Individual capabilities delivery comes first because they empower workers to efficiently and effectively work with positive organisational results feedbacks. It is also stated that rising HR importance is due to an orientation treating the employee as an enthusiastic organisational goal-achievment partner. Out of this orientation, human resource quality emerges as an overriding behaviour determinant of an organisational capability to meet organisational goals. Human capital here refers to a crucial determinant arrived at through employees unique attributes—capabilitiy, assumption, needs, and experience—jointly determining behaviour and enabling organisations with regularity and reliability to achieve stated goals (Saks, 2022).

The writer elaborates that work quality is deeply connected with human resource quality, reflected through three principal dimensions: knowledge, including intellectual power, strength of reasoning, and dominance over specialisation expertise; skills, reflecting the potential to utilise operating technologies in prescribed specialties; and capabilities, encompassing characteristics such as loyalty, discipline, cooperation, and responsibility (Balouei Jamkhaneh et al., 2021). For this reason, it is advanced here that superior work is accomplished and sustainable competitive position is preserved with human resources opponents find difficult to replicate, and that HR capabilities are a prime provider of long-term success when organisational objectives correspond with HR capabilities. Successful workers enable organisations to satisfy markets' needs efficiently, either through quality services, product distinction, innovation, or technological development (Roziq et al., 2021). Accordingly, HR becomes an organisational principal preoccupation, considering high-performing organisations' attempts to capitalise staff potential on a higher level of individual effectiveness, organisational continuity maintenance, and institutional objectives attainment.

The author further asserts that developing the cognitive capacities of human capital represents the cornerstone of institutional performance, and preserving this resource necessitates continuous investment in training and organisational learning programmes aimed at improving employee experience and productivity (Chen et al., 2020). Moreover, it is emphasised that HR management's initiatives to strengthen employee capabilities are fundamental to achieving organisational objectives, as HR constitutes the driving force behind institutional activities (Olayinka & Ridwan, 2025). It is also argued that human capabilities are the primary

determinants of organisational success across diverse functions, representing the core of institutional resources. Attracting, developing, and retaining talent is identified as one of the most pressing challenges confronting HR managers in increasingly competitive environments, making investment in human capability development an essential condition for realising organisational goals (Faugoo, 2024).

As a result, HR capabilities have evolved into a strategic foundation for achieving organisational objectives and shaping future directions, requiring a diverse set of skills to meet evolving HR demands. This study therefore adopts four dimensions proposed in previous research—knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practice—as the critical elements of HR capabilities. These dimensions have been selected to highlight their importance as essential components (Alnoor, 2020). They aim to equip HR with the necessary capacity to achieve developmental objectives, support change processes, and strengthen adaptability. Since these dimensions represent human capabilities more than organisational features, they are widely recognised by scholars as fundamental and are thus applied to support the objectives of the present research.

Crisis Management (CM)

The concept of crisis management emerged within the field of management science and has gained increasing significance in the contemporary environment, where rapid changes influence human life across multiple levels. It represents a critical scientific approach and preventive framework designed to confront various types of crises (Raymond et al., 2020). Crisis management is regarded as a comprehensive process that addresses a wide spectrum of potential risks capable of threatening organisational stability. Its fundamental objective is to guarantee continuity of operations and effective response measures while protecting stakeholder interests, reputation, brand identity, and core institutional values (Sawalha, 2020). Organisations adopt proactive measures aimed at either preventing or minimising adverse effects, while simultaneously seeking to enhance positive outcomes through diverse strategies, with a particular focus on organisational learning. They also possess the capacity to collect and disseminate information, make informed decisions, and critically assess alternatives by constructively questioning interpretations, options, and supporting evidence in advance (Evenseth et al., 2022). Scholars note that limiting reputational damage requires developing appropriate response strategies, a process that necessarily involves interaction with human resources to address diverse crises and formulate effective responses (Thakur & Hale, 2022).

A crisis typically induces significant shifts in managerial functions and decision-making processes, underscoring the need for systematic preparation. Accordingly, crisis management may be defined as the rigorous assessment and anticipation of potential organisational risks with the aim of reducing uncertainty and implementing the necessary actions to navigate critical circumstances while safeguarding employees, the environment, organisational assets, and financial stability. In recent decades, crisis management has become one of the most extensively studied areas due to the rising incidence of crises and natural disasters. Historical evidence highlights that well-designed crisis management policies can preserve lives and reduce financial costs. Within this context, it has been emphasised that the importance of crisis management lies in the full range of measures taken by organisations to manage emergency and unprecedented situations requiring a swift and effective response to restore normal activities as quickly as possible (Abdel-Latif et al., 2022). These measures involve pre-crisis planning,

activation of mitigation mechanisms during a crisis, and expedited recovery processes aimed at re-establishing stable working conditions.

It has also been argued that crisis management must be implemented at the strategic level throughout the crisis period, enabling teams to operate effectively and strengthening organisational capacity to motivate and empower individuals. Such practices assist in addressing leadership difficulties, mitigating institutional challenges, and sustaining competitiveness (Buhagiar & Anand, 2021). Strategic solutions and processes are therefore considered essential mechanisms for reducing undesirable consequences by offering practical responses that help contain crises. Despite being stressful and threatening, crises also create opportunities for organisations to acquire new knowledge and develop enhanced capabilities (Thakur & Hale, 2022).

BUILDING HYPOTHESES

The Relationship Between Strategic Leadership and Human Resource Capabilities

Research dictates that the strategic leadership dimensions have a overriding effect on human resource development at organisational level, such that the leaders are able to sketch out effective ways of developing such capabilities. This includes maintaining a clear strategic direction, achieving balanced organisational control, effective resource management, developing a sustainable culture, and intangible ethical values incorporation. As individual practices, all help strategic leadership to cultivate an effective organisational human capital (Zaheenah Chummun & Nleya, 2021). Research also shows that human resource capability results in knowledge creation, development of skills, and expertise application on diverse tasks, as a result, strengthening institutional performance. This is, however, conditional upon effective strategic leadership, which acts as the organisations' motivator through their reliance on strategic thinking. This observation is vindicated by scholars who posit that strategic leadership is the organisations' principal enabler of human resource capability activation and growth (Papa et al., 2018).

Strategic leadership involves looking into the future, identifying what is likely to happen, planning appropriate action for responding, while at the same time inspiring staff members to be active organisational processes participants and individual professional developmental participants. This guarantees organisational long-term sustainability. This isn't a managerial approach, but a way of thinking, practice, and leverage which allows for knowledge transferral, knowledge of expertise, and best exploitation of individual talent. Without this, activation and developmental exploitation of man-power capabilities become erratic and incapable of satisfying organisational or future goals needs. In addition, strategic leadership is seen as a foundation for talent acquisition, retention of skilled workers based on formal training, qualifications, developmental activities on a continuous basis, motivational plans, and capacity development activities. Current evidence shows that its role goes beyond talent management, which includes stimulating organisational innovations within the sphere of man-resource, making it a crucial mechanism for gaining sustainable competitive advantage (Liu et al., 2019).

H1: There is a significant effect of strategic leadership on human resources capabilities.

The Relationship Between Strategic Leadership and Crisis Management

Strategic leadership is a primary driver of the organisational ability of managing crises efficiently and effectively. Strategic leadership allows for planning, which looks towards the future, for protecting organisational functions and activities from the continuity perspective of the long-term perspective. This is attainable on a long-term basis through sustained investment in employee training, developmental activities, and building of organisational capacity, facilitated adequately by financial outlays. In parallel, strategic leadership strengthens the organisation's ability to examine internal and external environments, build constructive engagement with stakeholders, and deploy resources in an optimal manner. Through the adoption of well-structured strategies, leaders are able to make sound decisions concerning implementation approaches and the scheduling of tasks, thereby reinforcing competitive positioning and fostering individual motivation towards achieving superior levels of performance. In this respect, strategic leadership emerges as an indispensable prerequisite for the successful management of crises (Sunoto & Eko, 2025).

Equally, strategic leadership plays a central role in motivating organisational members to contribute effectively towards realising strategic objectives, while simultaneously enhancing the capacity of human resources to respond to crises in a timely and efficient manner. The extent to which leaders inspire employees and cultivate a spirit of teamwork directly influences their commitment, cohesion, and ability to achieve targeted outcomes, which in turn strengthens the organisation's responsiveness in critical situations. At its core, strategic leadership involves the systematic development and advancement of employees to ensure alignment with crisis management requirements. It also reinforces decision-making processes and accelerates response mechanisms through the adoption of rigorous strategic management practices (Gandrita, 2023). In this sense, strategic leadership constitutes a vital mechanism for developing practical, resilient, and sustainable solutions that mitigate the consequences of crises and protect organisational integrity. Consequently, strategic leadership is indispensable for organisations seeking to manage crises effectively, elevate the quality of operations, and support growth, continuity, expansion, survival, and long-term sustainability.

H2:   There is a significant effect of strategic leadership on crisis management.

The Relationship Between Human Resources Capabilities and Crisis Management

Human resource capabilities represent a critical foundation within organisations, as they are closely associated with the processes of knowledge development that strengthen individual skills and align purposeful practices with organisational strategies. By leveraging these capabilities, organisations are able to manage crises more effectively, particularly through the systematic collection and dissemination of information among employees, the facilitation of strategic adjustments, and the assurance of achieving objectives across both internal and external domains. In addition, human resource capabilities facilitate the transformation of past experiences into new knowledge, thereby enhancing overall performance and reinforcing competitive advantage. This renders them a strategic priority for guiding the organisation's long-term direction. The advancement of these capabilities operates as a mechanism for fostering dynamic competencies and human potential, enabling the acquisition, renewal, and application of knowledge in support of sustainable performance and effective crisis management. Such advancement requires robust organisational support that ensures knowledge utilisation and the integration of skills within a unified framework encompassing procedures, information systems, structural arrangements, and strategic orientations. These processes

collectively enhance the achievement of intended outcomes while strengthening the organisation's capacity to confront challenges and crises (Akdere & Egan, 2020). Accordingly, human resource capabilities stand as essential pillars for enabling effective crisis management across organisations.

H3:   There is a significant effect of human resources capabilities on crisis management.

The Relationship Between the Study Variables (Strategic Leadership, Human Resource Capabilities, Crisis Management)

Philosophical investigation of the relationship between study variables reveals a theoretical link between strategic leadership dimensions, crisis management, and human resource capabilities in organisations. Strategic leadership constitutes the prime point of entry towards efficient crisis management because it offers avenues of cultivating organisational vision, communicating strategic intentions, and planning implementation schedules. In such a context, strategic leadership also energises human resource capabilities through fuelling innovation and facilitating processes of continuous improvement. These capabilities in turn play an instrumental role in empowering organisational responsiveness to environmental changes and facilitating development of skills and knowledge required to increase efficiency and augment productivity.

In this regard, human resource capabilities, encompassing cognitive, technical, behavioural, and practical dimensions, play a crucial role in strengthening crisis management effectiveness through early preparation, preventive measures, damage containment, and the eventual restoration of institutional operations. Strategic leadership facilitates the advancement and utilisation of these capabilities by ensuring the provision of necessary support and resources, promoting teamwork, and nurturing a culture of knowledge and experience sharing. Accordingly, the relationship between strategic leadership, human resource capabilities, and crisis management is characterised as complementary. The activation of strategic leadership drives the development of human resource capabilities, which in turn enhances the efficiency of crisis management. Conversely, successful crisis management reinforces confidence in leadership while simultaneously contributing to the sustainable development of human capabilities. Thus, strategic leadership constitutes the cornerstone of organisational success, as its presence secures the advancement of human resources and the attainment of effective crisis management, whereas its absence results in adverse consequences that weaken the organisation's capacity to address challenges.

H4:   There is a significant indirect effect of strategic leadership on crisis management through the mediating role of human resources capabilities.

A conceptual research model was developed to clarify the mediating role of HRC in the relationship between SL and CM. In line with the objectives of the study, a hypothetical framework was formulated, as presented in Figure 1, which depicts how HRC operates as a mediating variable within the significant association between SL and CM.
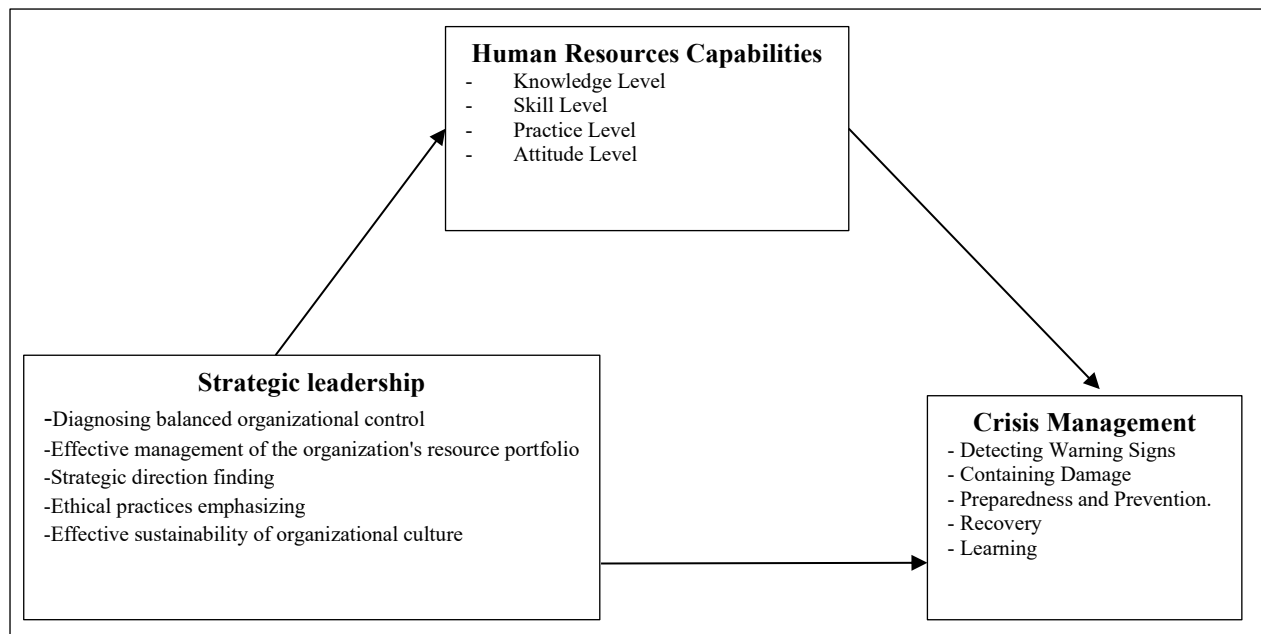
Figure 1: Research Model

METHODOLOGY

The core idea of this study emerged in response to the persistent challenges and transformations encountered by the training complex of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, represented by its subordinate directorates, namely the General Directorate of Training and Qualification, the Police College, the Higher Institute for Security and Administrative Development, the Police Commissioners' Training Institute, the Leadership Preparation and Qualification Centre, and the Women's Training Institute. Practical evidence indicates that this system is frequently confronted with crises that arise on an almost daily basis, reflecting the sudden and unpredictable nature of such events and the urgent need for timely and effective interventions. Within this context, the adoption of strategic leadership becomes a critical mechanism for informed decision-making. It functions as a central tool of strategic thinking, enabling leaders to take rapid and decisive actions through the effective utilisation of human resource capabilities. In doing so, strategic leadership helps to reduce the potential adverse consequences of crises and supports the continuity and resilience of the institution. Consequently, the present study seeks to examine the influence of strategic leadership on crisis management, with particular attention to the mediating role of human resource capabilities in reinforcing this relationship.

STUDY SCALES

The researcher adopted a total of three major measurement scales for the analysis of variables for this study. The independent variable, strategic leadership, was measured on the Hitt and Hoskisson scale, which includes five dimensions: defining strategic direction, acquiring balanced organisational control, getting effective management of the organisational resource portfolio, perpetuating organisational culture, and adherence towards ethical practices. This scale contained twenty items, evenly distributed across the five dimensions. The dependent variable, crisis management, was measured through a

scale structured around five dimensions: detecting early warning signs, preparedness and prevention, damage containment, recovery, and organisational learning. The instrument comprised eighteen items, with four items for each of the first three dimensions and three items for each of the final two. The mediating variable, human resource capabilities, was evaluated using a scale comprising four dimensions: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practice (Zhu & Li, 2021). This scale included twenty-seven items, consisting of six items for the knowledge dimension and seven items for each of the remaining three dimensions.

In total, the three instruments consisted of sixty-five items. Responses were captured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) = "strongly disagree" to (5) = "strongly agree." Reliability and internal consistency of the scales were confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, while confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to verify construct validity. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was utilised to analyse the data, as this method is extensively applied across disciplines such as management, sociology, and economics for the rigorous testing of theoretical models. Both descriptive and analytical approaches were adopted. Descriptive statistics, including arithmetic mean and standard deviation, were used alongside analytical techniques to examine relationships, influences, and mediating effects among the study's core variables. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS and AMOS, supported by relevant administrative literature in the fields of strategic management and human resource management.

STUDY COMMUNITY AND SAMPLE

The researcher selected the training complex directorates of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior for the practical application of this study, given their role as essential components of the ministry. These directorates play a pivotal role in strengthening human resource capabilities, promoting strategic leadership across different levels, enhancing effective management, responding to crises during critical periods, and ensuring prompt and coordinated action. The directorates considered include the General Directorate of Training and Rehabilitation, the Police College, the Higher Institute for Security and Administrative Development, the Institute for the Preparation of Police Commissioners, the Centre for the Preparation and Rehabilitation of Leaders, and the Women's Training Institute. The study sample was deliberately chosen to consist of 202 participants, including general managers, assistant directors, and department heads within these directorates. This selection was based on their substantial knowledge of the study variables and alignment with the goals and vision of the directorates. Table 1 presents a detailed scientific description of the individuals included in the sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics for Study Sample

Demographic Characteristics	Target Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males	180	89.10
	Females	22	10.89
Age Groups	30 and Under	7	3.46
	31 – 40	59	29.20
	41 – 50	74	36.63
	51 – 60	57	28.21
	61 and Over	5	2.47

Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	29	14.35
	Higher Diploma	19	9.40
	Master's Degree	106	52.47
	Doctorate	48	23.76
Years of Service	10 and Under	9	4.45
	11 – 15	33	16.33
	16 – 20	69	34.15
	20 – 25	79	39.10
	26 and Over	12	5.94
Job Position	Manager	12	5.94
	Assistant Manager	48	23.76
	Head of Department	142	70.29

RESULTS

Measurement Model Analysis (Descriptive Statistics and Correlation)

Table (2) presents the findings of the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for the main variables were as follows: strategic leadership (M = 3.528, standard deviation = 0.726, coefficient of variation = 20.58), human resource capabilities (M = 3.472, standard deviation = 0.748, coefficient of variation = 21.55), and crisis management (M = 3.223, standard deviation = 0.675, coefficient of variation = 20.94). The Pearson correlation coefficient results indicate a statistically significant and positive association between strategic leadership and human resource capabilities (r = 0.865, p < 0.1), as well as between strategic leadership and crisis management (r = 0.790, p < 0.1). In addition, a strong positive relationship was observed between human resource capabilities and crisis management (r = 0.884, p < 0.1). These findings are consistent with the study's hypotheses, thereby reinforcing their credibility and confirming the robustness of the theoretical framework underpinning the research.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviations, Coefficient of Variation and Correlations for Main Variables

Variables	M	SD	C.V	1	2	3	3
Strategic Leadership	3.528	0.726	20.58	1	**0.865	**0.790	**0.790
Human Resources Capabilities	3.472	0.748	21.55	0.865**	1	0.884**	0.884**
Crisis Management	3.223	0.675	20.94	**0.790	**0.884	1	1

Note: N=202, **p<0.01

Reliability and Validity Measurement

Table (3) presents the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Parameter estimates are deemed reasonable and acceptable when their values exceed 40%. The critical ratio (CR), which serves as the statistical benchmark, determines the significance of parameter estimates, with smaller standard errors indicating greater reliability. Estimates are considered statistically significant when the CR surpasses 2.56 at the 1% significance level or 1.96 at the 5% significance level (Fadhil et al., 2023). With the exception of two items within the Continuous Improvement dimension, all factor loadings exceeded 0.40, demonstrating statistical acceptance. In addition, the baseline fit indices of the structural equation modelling exceeded the required statistical thresholds. Reliability analysis, as shown in the table, confirms that Cronbach's alpha values were above 0.7, indicating a high level of internal

consistency in the measurement instrument. Accordingly, the measurement model employed in this study meets both validity and reliability standards.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables (Dimensions)	Cranach's Alpha	Loading	Quality Indicators
Strategic Leadership	0.907		
(Determining Strategic Direction)	0.922	.780	$\chi 2$= 333.144
		.777	CIMN/DF=2.177
		.643	CFI=0.926
		.316	TLI=0.908
(Diagnosing Balanced Organizational Control)	0.873	.529	RMSEA=0.077
		.648	
		.630	
		.656	
(Effective Management of the Organization's Resource Portfolio)	0.878	.730	
		.801	
		.595	
		.741	
(Effective Sustainability of Organizational Culture)	0.871	.782	
		.819	
		.732	
		.747	
(Emphasizing Ethical Practices)	0.881	.861	
		.776	
		.771	
		.875	

Table 3 (continued): Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables (Dimensions)	Cranach's Alpha	Loading	Quality Indicators
Human Resources Capabilities	0.94		
(Knowledge Level)	0.927	.804	$\chi 2$=541.444
		.736	CIMN/DF=1.769
		.729	CFI=0.937
		.688	TLI=0.928
		.596	RMSEA=0.062
		.761	
(Skill Level)	0.923	.694	
		.780	
		.755	
		.838	
		.811	
		.788	
		.703	
(Attitude Level)	0.915	.775	
		.755	
		.599	
		.730	
		.818	
		.684	
		.660	
(Practice Level)	0.922	.774	
		.774	
		.803	

		.777	
		.863	
		.714	
		.739	
Crisis Management	0.791		
(Detecting Warning Signs)	0.706	.837	χ2=149.289
		.876	CIMN/DF=1.623
		.855	CFI=0.970
(Preparedness and Prevention)	0.798	.698	TLI=0.961
		.414	RMSEA=0.056
		.469	
		.775	
(Containing Damage)	0.817	.859	
		.835	
		.536	
(Recovery)	0.701	.885	
		.845	
		.808	
(Learning)	0.702	.900	
		.759	
		.719	

Tests of Hypotheses

This study examined the influence of strategic leadership on crisis management through the utilisation of human resource capabilities. The SEM, together with the results presented in Table 4, outlines the direct effects, critical ratios (C.R.), and levels of statistical significance (p-values).

Table 4: Path Coefficients, S.E, C.R, and P-Values

Effect	Hypotheses	B	S.E	C.R.	P
Direct Effect	Strategic Leadership → Human Resources Capabilities	0.891	0.037	24.401	***
	Strategic Leadership → Crisis Management	0.096	0.061	1.582	0.114
	Human Resources Capabilities → Crisis Management	0.717	0.059	12.180	***
Indirect Effect	Strategic Leadership → Human Resources Capabilities → Crisis Management	0.639			

Hypothesis 1: The results indicated a statistically significant positive effect of strategic leadership on human resource capabilities (β = 0.891, p < 0.001).
Hypothesis 2: The results showed a statistically significant positive effect of strategic leadership on crisis management (β = 0.096, p < 0.001).
Hypothesis 3: The results confirmed a positive effect of human resource capabilities on crisis management (β = 0.717, p < 0.001).
Hypothesis 4: To verify the mediating role of human resource capabilities in the relationship between strategic leadership and crisis management, a bootstrap analysis was conducted using 5,000 subsamples with a 95% confidence interval. The results showed that the mediating role was statistically significant, supporting H4.

On this basis, the outcomes of the structural equation modelling confirm that strategic leadership exerts both direct and indirect effects, through human resource capabilities, in strengthening crisis management, as illustrated in Figure (2).
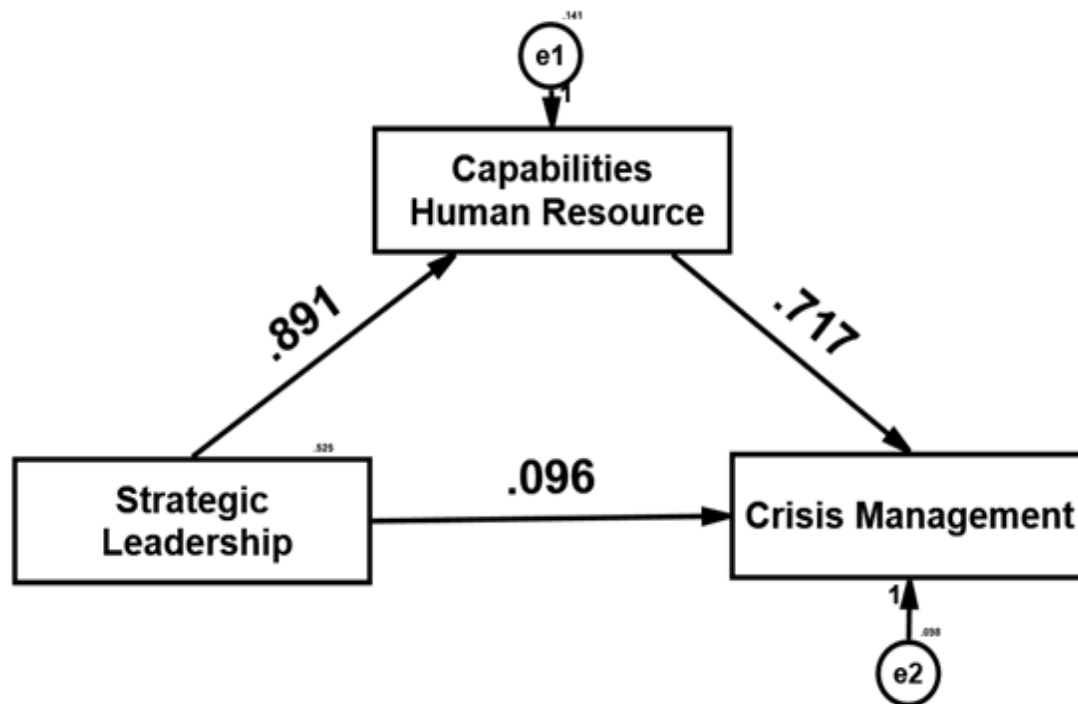

Figure 2: Structural Model

The findings confirm that human resource capabilities function as a crucial mediating factor in the association between strategic leadership and crisis management. The analysis revealed that the indirect influence of strategic leadership on crisis management, channelled through human resource capabilities, was 0.639, which is considerably higher than the direct effect of 0.096. Moreover, the CR of the direct effect between strategic leadership and crisis management was 1.582, falling below the threshold value of 1.96. This result indicates that the direct effect of strategic leadership loses statistical significance once the mediating variable is introduced. Accordingly, the evidence supports the conclusion that human resource capabilities fully mediate this relationship. In other words, strategic leadership does not exert a direct influence on crisis management; instead, its contribution is entirely realised through the development and strengthening of human resource capabilities. Hence, the strategic commitment to enhancing human resources within training institutions plays a decisive role in advancing crisis management, as such support enhances organisational efficiency in addressing and overcoming crises. On this basis, the hypothesis suggesting that strategic leadership significantly affects crisis management through human resource capabilities is statistically validated. The Sobel test, as depicted in Figure (3), was employed to verify the mediating effect of human resource capabilities on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The obtained Sobel test value of 10.897 exceeds the reference threshold of 1.96, confirming the significant impact of the mediator. This outcome establishes that human resource capabilities play a substantial role in shaping the influence of strategic leadership on crisis management, thereby offering a deeper understanding of the relationship and highlighting the strength of the mediation effect.

Figure 3: Soble Test Based on Critical Values

DISCUSSION

The finding showed that strategic leadership does not exert a direct effect on crisis management. Rather, it is actualized indirectly through human resource capability, serving as the prime mediator of the relationship. The research confirmed that strategic leadership's indirect effect through human resources is stronger than its immediate effect. The implication is that human resources serve as the operational vehicle through which strategic orientations are realized in operational actions so that organisations might address their issues efficiently. Mainly discussed points of the current study are as follows:

1. Cross-national comparisons highlight the need for investment in human resource development for enhanced institutional recovery credibility and effectiveness for crises aftermaths. For example, the post-genocide experience of Rwanda describes how trauma-sensitive leadership and specialised training allowed security institutions to survive despite limited resources.
2. South Africa faced serious problems subsequent to the eradication of apartheid, primarily because of a lack of investment on the part of skill development. This deficit turned institutional culture into a barrier, which resisted the implementation of new practice.
3. In Iraq, tribal leadership and social networks held a double position, sometimes reinforcing, at other times undermining, state crisis responses. Nevertheless, programs which involved tribal organizations and involved women at community policing levels managed innovatively to transform likely sources of instability into key lithium for security support.
4. Literally, all such cases prove that strategic leadership is at peak performance when human resources are activated and incorporated into organizational mechanisms for dealing with crises.
5. Whilst at the same time, such interdependencies make known hidden organisational vulnerabilities and are warning sights for prospective systemic perils.
6. Awakening strategic leadership fortifies human resource building, deepens the mechanism of managing crises, facilitates resource portfolio management, and encourages ethical governing. For instance, the Civil Defence of Singapore practiced a strategic national health threat response during the SARS epidemic and subsequent public health crises, creating a proactive mechanism for managing crises.

As a combined package, international evidence lends effort towards marrying strategic leadership with human capacity building because the combined effect also facilitates institutional robustness during health, security, or financial crises. Plans facilitated with training support featuring foresight strategies have better performances than resource-centric plans, which inevitably disappoint due to bureaucratic inertness or rigidity towards change. The comparison between cases identifies the link between strategic leadership and crisis management exhibiting a complex and multi-dimensional nature with human capacity serving

as the turning point through which strategic vision delivers concrete results on the ground. Eventually, organisations putting effort towards developing diversified workforces, increasing on-going learning, and creating receptiveness towards innovative ideas outclass responding towards emerging challenges. Therefore, marrying strategic leadership with human resource building matters highly towards developing sustainable robustness, attaining stable performances, and deringing competitiveness amidst turbulent environments (Amanah et al., 2022; Shyaa et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The interplay between the dimensions of strategic leadership, human resource capabilities, and the effectiveness of crisis management demonstrates that strong strategic leadership—defined by clarity of direction, sound management of resource portfolios, preservation of organisational culture, and adherence to ethical practices—significantly strengthens crisis response mechanisms within the Iraqi security sector. Strategic leadership functions in tandem with human resource development by providing visionary direction for the advancement of technical skills, behavioural competencies, and practical applications. This integration equips personnel with resilience, supported by forward-looking supervision and prudent allocation of resources. Nevertheless, the findings do not suggest that strategic leadership itself is enhanced by co-variables such as strategic thinking or personality development, as these were not explicitly investigated. While personality development may be implicitly embedded within human resource capabilities, the study positioned these capabilities as a mediating construct between strategic leadership and crisis management, rather than as an independent or outcome variable. The evidence further highlights that the consolidation of strategic leadership and human capacity development is fundamental to sustaining organisational performance and enhancing the adaptability of security institutions in confronting future challenges with stability and flexibility. Accordingly, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior could utilise these insights to strengthen specialised training initiatives, establish structured communication channels between leadership and human resources, and adopt more adaptive approaches to resource management. Such measures would enable swifter and more effective responses to crises. A balanced investment in knowledgeable leadership and a well-trained workforce would ultimately enhance the resilience of the security system, ensuring both effective crisis management and long-term institutional stability.

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