Investigating the Impact of Strategic Leadership Practices on Workplace Spirituality: A Survey of Employees at the Diyala Governorate Office

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Abstract— The research examines the impact of some strategic leadership practices, namely: (strategic direction, strategic vision, strategic thinking, strategic change, human capital development, exploration of core capabilities, and establishing ethical practices), on the spirituality of the workplace in its three dimensions : (meaningful work, a sense of community, and the compatibility between the values of the individual and the organization).), by testing three main hypotheses in the Diyala Governorate Office as a site for conducting the research, and data were collected from 261 individuals who represented the research sample and were randomly selected, and from different administrative levels. The research relied on the questionnaire as the main measurement tool, and descriptive and inferential statistical methods were adopted to answer the problem, test hypotheses and interpret their results, and the results proved The existence of the impact of strategic leadership practices on the spirituality of the workplace, and the recommendations came to adopt the research model in the governorate office in order to increase the spirituality of their workplace.

Keywords—Strategic Leadership Practices, Workplace Spirituality, Diyala Governorate Office.

I. INTRODUCTION

Considering the rapid environmental changes surrounding organizations of different types, sizes, and sectors in which they operate, achieving success and its continuity has become very difficult unless the ingredients for this success are available. Strategic leadership is one of the most important elements of success, as its importance is highlighted by working to align the organization's capabilities, capabilities, and resources with its external environment. Which increases the spirituality of work in it, and then its stability, survival and growth, The value of the organization is the value of its strategic leadership with a future direction and vision that supports creativity, which indicates a link with increasing the spirituality of the workplace among employees and its reflection on their performance. To achieving this end, the research material was distributed to four sections, the first dealt with the field research methodology, while the theoretical content was framed in the second section, and the third section came to review the applied aspect. We also devoted the last section to the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

II. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH AND ITS FIELD PROCEDURES

1. **The problem of the study:** Current organizations seek to adapt to complex and interrelated variables, and from here they must rely on the human resource, which is one of the most important productive elements in the organization, as its effectiveness is linked to its efficiency, which comes from urging and encouraging it to work through leading it in an effective strategic manner, that is, the success of the organization depends on the effort made by individuals towards work. Leadership has an impact on guiding this resource, as well as their values, behaviours, and ethics... After conducting a preliminary survey in the Diyala Governorate Office, it was found that there is a problem related to the spirituality of the workplace, as spirituality opens promising prospects for the approach of employment, training, performance evaluation and career development... Because it establishes the "soul" as a dimension of human capabilities no less important than "mind and hands." Therefore, the research problem can be diagnosed by raising the question "Is there an impact of strategic leadership practices on the spiritual dimensions of the workplace in the Diyala Governorate Office?".

2. **The importance of research:** The current research is the first attempt to study the relationship between strategic leadership variables and enhancing the spirituality of the workplace (according to the researcher's knowledge) in the Diyala Governorate Office specifically, hence the importance of the research by seeking to demonstrate the impact of strategic leadership practices in enhancing the spirituality of the workplace, which is reflected in the performance of working individuals, as well as that the organization's understanding of this phenomenon will help it improve working conditions and enable it to achieve a work environment characterized by the ability to complete its work with great efficiency and effectiveness.

3. **Research Objectives:** The current research seeks to: reveal the level of strategic leadership in its dimensions, as well as reveal the level of spirituality of the workplace in its dimensions in the Diyala Governorate Office, and then diagnose the correlation and influence between the research variables to provide recommendations that can contribute in the future to finding solutions to many of the problems suffered by the Diyala Governorate Office.

4. **Hypothetical research scheme:** Based on the research question and in line with its objective, the procedural chart was formulated that illustrates the nature of the relationships and influence between the research variables, as shown in figure 1.

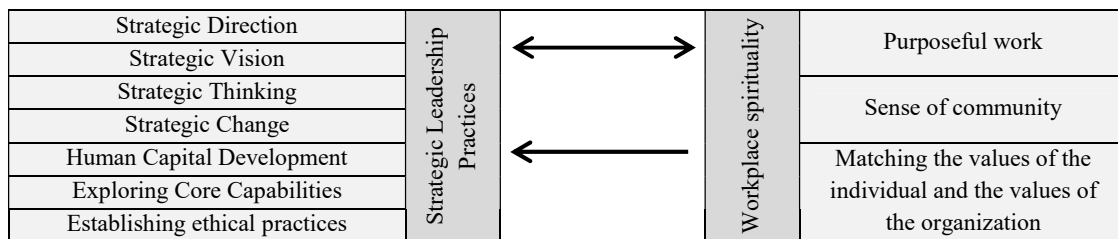| Strategic Leadership Practices			Workplace spirituality	
Strategic Direction				Purposeful work
Strategic Vision				Sense of community
Strategic Thinking				
Strategic Change				
Human Capital Development				Matching the values of the individual and the values of the organization
Exploring Core Capabilities				
Establishing ethical practices				

Fig. 1 Action research scheme (main and sub-variables).

5. **Research hypotheses:** The research seeks to prove the following: (The ordinal importance of the research variables and their dimensions differ by the Governorate Office), and (There is a significant correlation between the practices of strategic leadership in its dimensions with the spirituality of the workplace in its dimensions). (There is a significant impact of strategic leadership practices in their dimensions on the spirituality of the workplace in their dimensions).

6. **Research Methodology:** The research followed two complementary paths. The first was represented in the theoretical dimension and dealt with the theoretical aspects of the two research variables and their dimensions, and according to the inductive and deductive approaches, while the other takes the path of the applied dimension, and we follow the descriptive analytical approach.

7. **Description of the research (community) site and its sample:** The research community gives an accurate perception of the research questions and objectives, because it represents all the people who form the answer to the questions of the research problem in a more realistic way in practice, and based on the requirements of the research scheme, the Diyala Governorate Office has been chosen as a site for the application of the research, because it is one of the most important sources of decision-making in Diyala Governorate, and the size of the community has reached (800) employees. A sample of (261) people was randomly tested, from all administrative levels, Based on the organizational structure of the Governorate Office.

8. **Data collection tools:** The scientific literature was relied on to build an intellectual framework for the variables studied, as well as the questionnaire that was designed to serve the objectives of the research and answer its questions.

9. **Data analysis tools:** The current research relied on the statistical package for the social sciences SPSS and the AMOS program, as well as the Excel tabular data program.

III. THE SECOND TOPIC: THE THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH VARIABLES

First: Strategic Leadership.

Leadership is still one of the most important management phenomena, especially strategic leadership as a result of the continuous developments in the organizational environment, which was demonstrated by (Kotter, 1982), (Mintzberg, 1984) and (Gupta, 1984) and originally emerged from strategic management, because the role of the strategic leader is to formulate the strategy (Zappi and Baitish, 2021: 149). And that what led to the emergence of strategic leadership are the factors of uncertainty, increasing complexity and ambiguity, as well as the speed of change, and the expansion of uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity (Dawood, 2018: 37), hence the focus on the concept in the framework of organizations currently and the views of those concerned differed in defining a unified concept of strategic leadership, as it was defined as "leadership that makes decisions with wide impact in an environment of different cultures, people and desires, as requires devising plans that are desirable and acceptable to stakeholders" (Shahid, 2016:236). Frank & Rothaermel (2017: 40) defined it as "the use by higher authorities of the principle of power and influence when directing others to achieve the goals of an organization.

" It has also been defined as "a leader's ability to anticipate, visualize, maintain flexibility, and empower others to make strategic change as necessary" (2019:4 Mubarak & yusof). Prasertcharoensuk & Tang, 2017:317)   It is "the leader's ability to anticipate the environment, sustain resilience, and empower others to make the desired strategic change." From this standpoint, most researchers agreed that the main goal of strategic leadership is to try to early warning of future problems in a way that accommodates changes and deals with them flexibly in the future, as well as achieving the strategic objectives of the organization at the lowest cost and in the shortest possible time (Al-Qaisi, 2015: 35). It is clear from the opinions of writers and researchers that strategic leadership embodies many characteristics, namely:

- Abilities: such as: (vision, wisdom, commitment, flexibility, motivation, maneuver, change, empowerment, creativity, innovation...).
- Interactive processes: resulting from understanding and interacting with the elements of the environment.
- Influencing subordinates: through interaction and mobilizing their energies to serve the objectives of the organization.
- The ability to bring about strategic change: which achieves sustainable competitive advantage for the organization.
- Alignment: Alignment between long-term goals and short-term goals.

Shoemaker et al. (2013: 2) pointed out that the main abilities of strategic leadership are the ability to: anticipate, challenge, interpret decide, align, and learn. The elements of strategic leadership are: (1) Individuals: Because leadership is practiced in organizations that involve a range of Individuals. (2) The leader: the one who controls the work of groups and prevents their dispersal. The common goal is pursued by all members of the group. (3) The process of influence: specifically, positively influencing the behavior of group members (Baker, 2013: 21). As for the characteristics of a strategic leader, they are also different between the two stakeholders, and we agree in classifying them with (Bozman & Staussan, 1990) into: (diverse experiences, patience, logical thinking, critical analysis, effectiveness, efficiency, intuition, good motivation, and ambiguity). Many stakeholders have worked hard to define strategic leadership practices according to their philosophical perspective and intellectual orientation and according to the requirements of the environment, and in line with the goal of the current research, we adopt a model that suits the research community, as follows:

A. **Strategic Direction:** It represents the approach that determines the organization's drive towards superior performance, as well as the organization's behaviors and attitudes that bring about a positive change in its internal environment, and reduce the harms of the surrounding environment, and accordingly, the first task of the strategic leader is to determine the strategic direction of the organization (Mathura, 2009: 20). Because it will reflect its direction of sustainable excellence in the performance of its work, and (Abdul Hussein and Madloul, 2020: 189) believes that the organization can be strategically oriented towards several things, including: (innovation, technology, projects, quality, productivity...). Al-Jowder and BozYR, 2015: 19) argue that the strategic direction has outputs (values, vision, and mission).

B. **Strategic: (ion:** et al, 2015: 141 (Cheema) believes that it is a tool for understanding perceptions according to the accumulated experience of the leader, that is, it does not mean imagination, but rather it is closely related to the existing situation, and it is originally an intellectual process and one of the most important entrances to strategic planning" (Khadija and Abdelkader, 2022: 12), and if it is to succeed, it must be characterized by several characteristics, including: (Focus on the future, clarity, translation of the organization's strategic direction, ambition, challenge, ability to inspire, stability, relative stability, and harmony with the organization's culture) (Qasimi, 2012: 57). To define an effective vision for the organization, leaders must carefully consider formulating it based on an analysis of the internal and external environment and current performance of the organization (Hitt et al, 2011: 361).

C. **Strategic thinking:** It is an intellectual pattern that contributes to achieving a balance between the capabilities of the organization and its future with the reality of competition, as it is an intellectual path with specific goals and is effective only if it performs the required results with the least possible effort and in the shortest possible time (Al-Ashi, 2013: 23), and differs from ordinary thinking in that it has the ability to predict, imagine and predict from the impact of reality to the future, and is characterized by being thinking: (systematic, developmental, competitive, synthetic, constructive, optimistic) (Hamza and Ibtihaj, 2018: 22).

D. **Strategic change:** The forces of the external environment affect the survival and sustainability of the organization, which requires taking strategic actions to change and adapt to environmental forces and their changes, and the importance of strategic change lies in its response to three main effects: tension, rigidity and hypothesis (Ahmed, 2017: 6), and the basis adopted by the leaders of transformation and change is to provide an appropriate environment that adopts the introduction of new behaviors at work (Younis, 2017: 118), and accordingly classified strategic change into two levels: radical change and gradual change (Dosa and Hussein, 2008: 65). Strategic leaders follow a set of approaches to strategic change: empirical mind, coercive power, relearning and standards, camouflage and evasion, persuasion, and participation (Finjan, 2018: 184).

IV.

A. **Human capital development:** Organizations rely on their human capital almost entirely because it is the reason for their success, as it is the most precious and valuable resource of any organization, and because it represents the cumulative sum of knowledge, experience, and capabilities that individuals possess and contribute to increasing the economic value of the organization (Al-Issawi and Al-Obaidi, 2022: 19). Building human capital is vital for the effective implementation of strategic leadership (Hitt et al, 2011: 364). From this standpoint, the need was imposed on leaders to provide their employees with continuous evaluation and training with knowledge, as (Al-Ameri and Hussein, 2018: 308) the development of human resources is positively related to employee productivity and performance and is affected by it, and (Hussein, 2007: 60) pointed out that the components of human capital are: (knowledge, skill, capabilities, and innovation).

B. **Exploring Core Capabilities:** It refers to the skills and abilities required of an individual to carry out a task efficiently, and as such it is a resource for the competitive advantage of the organization. Rather, the organization outperforms its competitors (Daft, 2010: 62), because the contemporary trend of organizations towards superiority does not mean that they have financial, natural or technological resources only, but that they have human competencies that can maximize the use of those resources (Hammoud, 2018: 41). At the organizational level, it is the way to seize the future opportunities it wants to obtain (Idan, 2019: 132), and the activity of managing core capabilities by strategic leaders includes a set of processes, the most important of which as he sees (Tanai and Hussein, 2014: 20): (identification, acquisition, building, use, protection, and defense of core capabilities).

C. **Establishing ethical practices:** Employees are honored and respected as human beings and not tools, and through ethical practices a positive image of the organization is built towards them, and the failure or success of the organization may depend on the extent to which it adopts ethical practices (A. L. Murad et al., 2021: 451), as strengthening and developing ethical practices is the personal responsibility of strategic leaders (Mohammed, 2016: 348). Based on the foregoing Ethical behaviors represent the mirror that reflects mutual trust between leaders and subordinates, because they are one of the basics of the development of the internal and external organizational environment in organizations, to create a work environment based on reliability, transparency, friendliness, respect, and adherence to the law (Goetsch & Davis, 2016: 84).

Second: Workplace Spirituality

The term "spirituality" is derived from the Latin word (spiritus), which means "breathing or life", meaning that it represents the meaning of life and focuses on conscience and self-awareness, and this concept has received the attention of writers and researchers in management science to determine spirituality within the organization's environment because of its impact on the cultural pattern of organizations (Mahmoud, 2022: 53). The concept of spirituality in the workplace is also a complex concept due to the rapid change and competition that the world is witnessing and the different view of it, hence the literature indicates that there is no consensus about the concept of workplace spirituality, however, we will cite some definitions that serve the practical side of the research, as it is defined as "a framework for organizational values that stimulate advancement in the behaviors of workers in the work environment" (Giaclone & Jurkiewicz, 2010: 254), also defined as "the expression of man's desire to connect with lofty ideals, and the desire for self-integration as being meaningful in his life and achieving his goal" (Phipps, 2012: 179). Spirituality in the workplace contributes to improving ethical behavior during work performance. Building a distinct organizational climate that encourages creativity, innovation, well-being, integrity, personal achievement, comfort, productivity, competitive advantage, job satisfaction, honesty, and ethical behaviour... From reviewing the research and studies that specialized in the topic of workplace spirituality, we note that there are several dimensions addressed by the researchers and we will adopt the model (Kamal, 2019) and (Al-Abdi and Al-Abadi, 2013) because they meet the concept and agree with the current research direction, as follows:

- **Purposeful work:** This dimension is represented by how workers interact with their daily work, and includes a deep sense of the individual's purpose and the true meaning of work, and psychology experts point out that purposeful work has material aspects behind it (Yousfi and Aroussi, 2018: 199), and that the idea of purposeful work is the result of: (work environment, characteristics of the individual, and social interactions). One of the most important aspects of workplace spirituality is the existence of a goal that shows how the employee interacts at the individual level with his daily work. 2020: 243) that meaningful work consists of three dimensions: (enjoying work, activating work, and creating personal meaning for work).

- **Sense of community:** It means "the individual's experience of a deep sense of communication with other individuals and their work, meaning that the individual feels that he is part of society and can recognize himself as well as the common goal of the group" (Schweit, 2021: 507), and this concept also indicates the importance of the individual's awareness of belonging, the spirit of teamwork, interdependence, working as a family, and establishing good relations between members of the work team to reach the common goal (Ashry, 2021: 267), as the sense of belonging to the community increases social interaction, and leaders seek with their subordinates to enhance a sense of community, which in turn will improve institutional and even individual results (Aboobaker et al, 2022: 9), as evidenced by a study (Vanover, 2014) found that the higher the worker enjoys group participation, the higher performance levels appear (2020: Mousa)

- **Alignment between the values of the individual and the group:** It means that there is a compatibility of abilities, goals, values and personal traits, that is, compatibility between the work group and the individual, (Mansour, 2018: 249), as when employees like to work in their organization, they feel more comfortable and harmonized, and the leaders of organizations seek to achieve the social interest of the group (Al-Sheikhly and Rahima, 2018: 120), and this means that individuals believe that managers have correct values and strong morals and show real care for the well-being of the organization and its employees (Majeed et al, 2018: 51), and relevance is associated with: (match of values, job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, socialization, job participation...).

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA OF THE APPLIED SIDE OF THE RESEARCH

1. **Measuring the research variables and testing the first hypothesis:** We include a presentation of the research variables according to the analysis of the sample answers, which is shown in table 1.

TABLE 1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE ANSWER FOR THE TWO RESEARCH VARIABLES (N = 261).

The main variables andtheir sub-dimensions		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Materiality	Coefficient of variation	Resolution	Order
Strategic Leadership	Strategic Direction	3.35	0.98	67.00	29.25	middle	Seventh
	Strategic Vision	3.51	0.80	70.18	22.79	High	Fourth
	Strategic Thinking	3.48	0.90	69.60	25.95	High	Sixth
	Strategic Change	3.51	0.82	70.25	23.44	High	V
	Human Capital Development	3.67	0.80	73.37	21.81	High	Third
	Exploring Core Capabilities	3.68	0.74	73.51	20.03	High	The first
	Establishing ethical practices	3.60	0.76	72.01	21.13	High	Second
Strategic Leadership Variable Dimension Rate		3.50	0.68	70.10	19.36	High	Second
Workplace spirituality	Purposeful work	3.97	0.64	79.33	16.25	High	The first
	Sense of community	3.72	0.77	74.46	20.76	High	Second
	Alignment between the values of the individual and the organization	3.49	0.90	69.81	25.90	High	Third
Variable dimensional rate of workplace spirituality		3.70	0.62	74.08	16.85	High	The first
General average of search variables		3.60	0.66	72.01	18.33	High	

The statistical results of the descriptive analysis in the Diyala Governorate Office showed that the general average of the two research variables and their dimensions is 3.6 and the relative importance is 72% and with a high level of application, which means that the two variables are available in the Governorate Office at high levels and in close proportions, and the result of the strategic leadership variable is similar to the results of (Al-Maghrabi, 2015) and (Al-Ghazzawi, 2021), as they indicated that Strategic leadership is working to define its direction and vision as it reaches its goals of survival, growth and long-term challenges, as well as creativity in all steps of its work, which we fully agree with. As for the variable of workplace spirituality, the Governorate Office has proven to apply it at high levels, which indicates that workplace spirituality enhances the positive behaviour of workers to improve their performance in the workplace, as most studies have indicated the great correlation between work spirituality and increased performance of human resources, and this is what we also agree with.

It is clear from (Table, 1) also the variation and difference in the order of the sub-variables that make up the two research variables, which indicates the different importance of looking at the variables by the Governorate Office, and based on all of the above, we accept the first hypothesis, which indicated the difference in the ordinal importance of the research variables and their dimensions by the workers in the Governorate Office.

2. **Correlation hypothesis test:** It stipulated (the existence of a significant correlation between strategic leadership in its dimensions with the spirituality of the workplace in its dimensions), which can be proven in table 2.

TABLE 2 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY IN THEIR DIMENSIONS (N = 261)

The transponder variable and its subdimensions	Correlation coefficient	Itself.	The explanatory variable and its subdimensions
Purposeful work	.365**	0.000	Strategic Leadership
Sense of community	.465**	0.000	
Alignment between the values of the individual and the group	.468**	0.000	
Workplace spirituality	.449**	0.000	
	.291**	0.000	Strategic Direction
	.355**	0.000	Strategic Vision
	.442**	0.000	Strategic Thinking
	.342**	0.000	Strategic Change
	.332**	0.000	Human Capital Development
	.411**	0.000	Exploring Core Capabilities
	.344**	0.000	Establishing ethical practices

Also, table 2 shows the following:
- Strategic leadership in its entirety is associated with workplace spirituality with a medium positive and moral relationship of 0.449, which is what we went to in the theoretical framing.
- All dimensions of workplace spirituality are associated with strategic leadership in their entirety with medium and moral positive relationships, amounting to (0.365, 0.465 and 0.468) respectively.
- The dimensions of strategic leadership in their entirety are associated with all dimensions of workplace spirituality with positive relationships ranging from low to medium, but they are all moral.

3. **Impact hypothesis test:** (There is a significant impact of strategic leadership in its dimensions on the spirituality of the workplace in its dimensions), which can be proven in table 3.

TABLE 3 THE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ON WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY IN ITS DIMENSIONS

Supported variable	Direction of influence	Independent variable	Impact	Standard error	Critical value	P-Value	Statistical significance	Coefficient of determination
Workplace spirituality	→	Strategic Leadership	.413	.051	8.107	***	Slab	.202
Purposeful work	→		.347	.055	6.325	***	Slab	.133
Sense of community	→		.530	.063	8.470	***	Slab	.216
Alignment between the values of the individual and society	→		.624	.073	8.539	***	Slab	.219
Workplace spirituality	→	SD	.185	.038	4.901	***	Slab	.085
	→	SV	.277	.045	6.121	***	Slab	.126
	→	ST	.305	.038	7.940	***	Slab	.195
	→	SC	.259	.044	5.864	***	Slab	.117
	→	HCD	.259	.046	5.668	***	Slab	.110
	→	CC	.348	.048	7.265	***	Slab	.169
	→	EP	.282	.048	5.906	***	Slab	.118

The results of Table 4 indicate the following:

➢ The significance of the impact of strategic leadership in its entirety on the spirituality of the workplace in its entirety in the Diyala Governorate Office, because the level of significance (0.000, which is less than 0.05) and that the critical value (C.R = 8.107) is greater than the criterion specified for its acceptance, which is: (C.R. > 1.96) to infer the significance of the impact. And that the value of the impact is rather large, reaching 0.413) and a standard error (0.051), which indicates that an increase in the strategic leadership variable by one unit will increase the spirituality of the workplace in the Diyala Governorate Office by 41.3% of the standard deviation unit.

➢ The significance of the impact of strategic leadership practices on all dimensions of workplace spirituality, with all high levels of influence, reaching (0. 347 and 0. 530 and 0. 624 and 0. 436) respectively.

➢ The significance of the impact of all dimensions (practices) of strategic leadership on the spirituality of the workplace in general and at levels ranging from medium to high.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Governorate Office generally indicated a high level of strategic leadership practices, which reflected a clear perception of the course of work of the Bureau among employees, and their serious endeavor to reach the desired ideal level of performance, due to the sub-dimensions of strategic leadership. Overall, the Governorate Office indicated a high level of workplace spirituality, which reflected the positive attachment of individuals to their work, their sense of belonging to their jobs, and the creation of a kind of harmony with the environment in which they work, due to the sub-dimensions of total quality management. After exploring the core capabilities, it ranked first among the dimensions of strategic leadership, which indicates the sufficient awareness of the Governorate Office in retaining their core capabilities, training, and developing them, and creating an internal climate that suits them, as evidenced by the Governorate Office's attention to the dimension of developing their human capital. After meaningful work, it ranked first among the dimensions of workplace spirituality, which indicates that the employees of the governorate office are aware of their work and that it is of great value to them, which indicates that their positive attachment to their work came from having a real purpose for their work. The results of the association confirmed the good role of strategic leadership practices in achieving good levels of spirituality at work and its performance, that is, whenever the Diyala Governorate Office seeks to apply strategic leadership and takes care of its dimensions (practices), this will reflect positively on the spirituality of the workplace. The results of the impact confirmed that the attention of the Governorate Office to the strategic leadership practices in total and detailed will positively affect the spirituality of the workplace and add value to their performance and work and reflect on the internal work environment of the Governorate Office as a whole.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approval of the results of the research by the Diyala Governorate Office, as well as the possibility of circulating it to its departments. Focusing on strategic leadership practices in a holistic and detailed way can increase the spirituality of the workplace.
2. Holding periodic meetings between the leaders of the senior, middle and supervisory management levels to strengthen and emphasize the practices of this leadership among them, especially the strategic direction as well as vision, change and ethical practices..., with the aim of translating them on the ground effectively and efficiently.
3. The need to adopt a special evaluation system for leaders that measures their skills, experience, and competencies..., to evaluate them before assuming senior management positions to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency in completing the work, with a long-term strategic direction.

Work to enhance the spirituality of work in the internal environment of the Diyala Governorate Office in terms of spreading the culture of commitment to meaningful work, and a sense of group when working with them, and balancing between the values of employees and the values of the Governorate Office and enhancing work loading.

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