

The Mediating Role of Individual Innovative Behavior on the Relationship between Strategic Leadership Behaviours on Adaptive Performance in the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit

Maisar Alwan Salih and Siti Rohaida Mohamed Zainal

School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800, Penang, Malaysia

Emails: Yg042249@gmail.com, siti_rohaida@usm.my

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Abstract

The Iraqi Supreme Audit Institution, the main oversight body for anti-corruption, controls governmental activities, protects public funds, and strengthens accountability. Effective leadership styles significantly impact adaptive performance, a crucial process for preventing crises. While research explores the impact of leadership styles on adaptive performance in both private and public sectors, few studies examine the moderating effect of individual innovative behavior on the relationship between strategic leadership behaviors and adaptive performance, particularly within the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit institutions. Employing contingency theory and systems theory, this study investigates the moderating effect of individual innovative behavior on the relationship between strategic leadership styles (transactional and transformational) and adaptive performance. To achieve the research objectives and test the hypotheses, a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey method was adopted. A total of 140 online questionnaires were distributed to public institutions within the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit. 133 completed and valid questionnaires were returned. The collected data was analyzed using the SmartPLS 3.3.3 software program. The study results support the hypothesized impact of transactional and transformational leadership styles on adoptive performance. Partial support was found for the mediating effect of individual innovative behavior on the relationship between leadership styles and performance. This research concludes by explaining the theoretical and practical contributions to academics and practitioners. The study recommends that government policy can positively influence public organization managers' behaviors and attitudes. Consequently, government policies should be clearer and more consistently enforced to enhance managerial confidence in performance improvement processes. The study also suggests that leadership styles play a significant role in controlling, reducing, and managing adaptive performance within the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit. Based on the results, the study proposes that managers emphasize transformational leadership factors, as this style is more effective than others in influencing staff's adaptive performance.

Keywords: Individual Innovative Behavior, Strategic Leadership Behaviors, Adaptive Performance, Iraqi Federal Board Of Supreme Audit.

Introduction

Limited awareness of the complexity and ambiguity inherent in leadership decision-making (March, 1978; Nooraie, 2012) creates challenges. Compared to other formal organizations, individual innovative leadership behaviors and the decision-making processes within the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit (FBSA) remain unclear (Grant, & Baden-Fuller, 2018). Understanding strategic decision-making in the government sector remains incomplete, often resembling more of an art than a science due to its reliance on decision-maker intuition and the integration of modern decision-support technologies (Di Vaio, et al., 2022). This dynamic necessitates a deeper understanding of the strategic decision-making process.

In Iraq, there is a pressing need for clarity regarding the visions, missions, and strategic objectives of organizations like the FBSA. Addressing these gaps is crucial to enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling their mandates. Additionally, traditional Iraqi management systems are characterized by complex processes, strong centralization, and interventions in decision-making. The FBSA faces a significant challenge related to the leadership styles, behaviors, and individual innovative decision-making of its department heads in implementing strategies. Adaptive leadership styles are crucial for addressing this challenge and finding effective solutions within the organization.

Practically, auditors at the departmental level operate under the supervision of their department head and contractual obligations. Disputes are common outcomes of managing audits in the public sector. Carlsson-Wall et al (2019), rightly concluded that the relationship between the department head and the auditor is critical, as it can significantly impact workplace quality. The majority of auditors are dissatisfied with the management style of their department heads and some with their section managers (Bajalan & Wahab, 2016). This highlights the importance of auditors' well-being within the FBSA, as their work is crucial for organizational prosperity. It can use technology such as deep learning and cloud computing in audit management (Wang, 2021; Wang & Zhang, 2021).

Leadership behavior and decision-making are central issues within the FBSA. Many department heads make more authoritarian decisions compared to auditors, leading to challenges. The study also identified additional practical obstacles, such as delays in managerial feedback on auditor ratings, assessments, and promotions, as well as high workloads. These factors informed the research focus.

Claus, et al (2011), emphasized the importance of leadership styles for strategy implementation, highlighting the role of adaptive performance managers (Wan Hanafi & Daud, 2019). Many leadership philosophies and techniques are based on various hypotheses and assumptions. The first three leadership styles – autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire – are typically associated with motivating people to perform their best (Claus, et al., 2011). However, pace-setting and dominating approaches can foster a negative work environment, with progress rarely achieved outside of critical situations requiring such leadership (Jony et al., 2019). Chirayath, (2022) note that each approach has its advantages and disadvantages

and is best suited for specific contexts. Effective leadership involves understanding different styles and applying the right one depending on the situation.

Building upon previous research and its findings, the current study proposes a research framework to explore the relationship between leadership behaviors within the FBSA. The framework also incorporates the mediating role of individual innovative behavior on adaptive performance.

Theoretical Insights and Hypotheses Development

Adaptive Performance

Job performance is a crucial concept in both international and national work environments. While well-established in national contexts Ramalu, & Janadari, (2022) argues that understanding job performance in international settings remains unclear. For example, cultural differences and varying work practices can significantly impact employee performance compared to their home countries. Further research is needed to enhance our understanding of this complex construct in a globalized world.

The taxonomy of job performance expatriation model, proposed by Caligiuri and Day, (2000), suggests that job performance comprises two dimensions: task performance and contextual performance. Additionally, Pulakos, et al (2000), offer a theoretical framework for understanding adaptive behavior within job performance with their model of adaptive job performance. However, their research also highlights that not all individual differences consistently align with this model's predictions.

In the context of this study, adaptive performance is defined as the ability to make effective changes in response to evolving circumstances (Pulakos, et al., 2006). This involves the capacity to flexibly adjust behaviors, strategies, and approaches to meet the demands of dynamic situations. This definition emphasizes the importance of being responsive, flexible, and proactive in adapting to changing conditions to maintain optimal performance and achieve desired outcomes.

Mediating Role of Individual innovative behavior

Strategic Leadership Behaviors: Effectiveness of Individual Dimensions

Several studies, both theoretical and empirical, have suggested the effectiveness of individual dimensions of strategic leadership behaviors (SLBs). Prior empirical research by Rothfelder (2013) indicated the effectiveness of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and contingent rewards on employee satisfaction, a construct related to Commitment to the Organization (COE).

Transformational Leadership and Shared Meaning

Brown and Treviño (2009) argued that transformational leaders, through idealized and inspirational influence, convey value-based visions to all employees, resulting in an improved value congruence between the organization and its members. These leader behaviors also create, change, and shape a shared sense of meaningfulness among employees.

Centralized Vision and Employee Engagement

In the context of a centralized vision, transformational CEOs empower employees to experience a heightened sense of agency, shared objectives, and reciprocal influence (Yasin Ghadi, et al., 2013). Consequently, collective engagement at work increases among organizational members (Barrick, et al., 2015).

Relationship between Strategic Leadership Behaviors and Adaptive Performance

As discussed in the evolution of strategic leadership, several previous studies have indicated the importance of combining transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles to achieve a broader impact from top leaders (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Transformational leadership is found to significantly augment transactional leadership. Therefore, a combination of both styles makes sense in any organization to enhance leadership effectiveness (Puni, et al., 2021).

Focus on Combined Effect

While the concept of strategic leadership behaviors emphasizes combining leadership styles, most studies examine the effect of individual styles on organizational outcomes. Few studies address the total effect of strategic leadership behaviors as a combination on adaptive performance. This study aims to explore the real relationship between strategic leadership behaviors (as a combination of dimensions) and adaptive performance.

Hypothesis

Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed for this study:

H1. Strategic leadership behaviors has a positive relationship on adaptive performance.

H1_a. Transformational Leadership has a positive relationship on adaptive performance.

H1_b. Transactional Leadership has a positive relationship on adaptive performance.

Mediating Role of Individual Innovative Behavior

Innovation and invention are crucial for firms to enhance their capacity to meet performance targets. Several scholars have investigated the link between strategic thinking and individual innovative behavior, (Utomo, et al., 2023). The positive association between strategic decision-making and individual innovative behavior has been extensively studied. Tajeddini (2016) investigated this connection in Iranian public organizations, involving 127 CEOs, planning executives, financial officers, human resource professionals, and marketing directors. Their study emphasized how innovation improves strategic decision-making. The relationship between individual innovative behavior and strategic decision-making outcomes. Their work adds to previous research highlighting the positive connection between innovation and strategic decision-making.

Building on this established positive relationship, Tsai & Yang's (2013), research employed a contingency theory perspective. They examined whether financial distress or competitive intensity moderate the link between a company's innovation capability and its business strategic decision-making. Their findings confirmed a positive and significant relationship between corporate strategic decision-making and company innovation (Gabel, et al., 2022). This research builds upon prior studies confirming these positive associations and proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Individual innovative behavior has a mediating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership behaviors and adaptive performance.

H3a. Individual innovative behavior has a mediating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and adaptive performance.

H3b. Individual innovative behavior has a mediating effect on the relationship between transactional leadership and adaptive performance.

Framework of Study

This research presents a novel approach, built on a strong theoretical foundation that combines contingency theory and systems theory. Contingency theory posits that employee empowerment, triggered by the independent variable of strategic leadership behaviors, acts as a motivational factor. For example, Cho, et al., (2021) suggests that when employees trust their leadership and feel valued by the organization, they feel obligated to reciprocate through individual innovative behavior. This aligns with the reciprocity norm, which is central to systems theory.

Cutting-Edge Integration

This study also represents a cutting-edge approach by integrating strategic leadership with performance using strategic measurement items. This unification brings together various aspects of strategic management within a single research model. The following sections will delve into the underlying theoretical modules.

Theoretical Framework

The framework incorporates both contingency theory and systems theory. Contingency theory is particularly well-suited for explaining the relationship between strategic leadership behaviors, high-performance work systems, and adaptive performance, mediated by individual innovative behavior. Therefore, the proposed research model is expected to make significant contributions by both addressing current gaps in the literature and remaining consistent with established theories. The study structure is depicted in Figure 1.

Independent Variable, Mediating Variable, and Dependent Variable

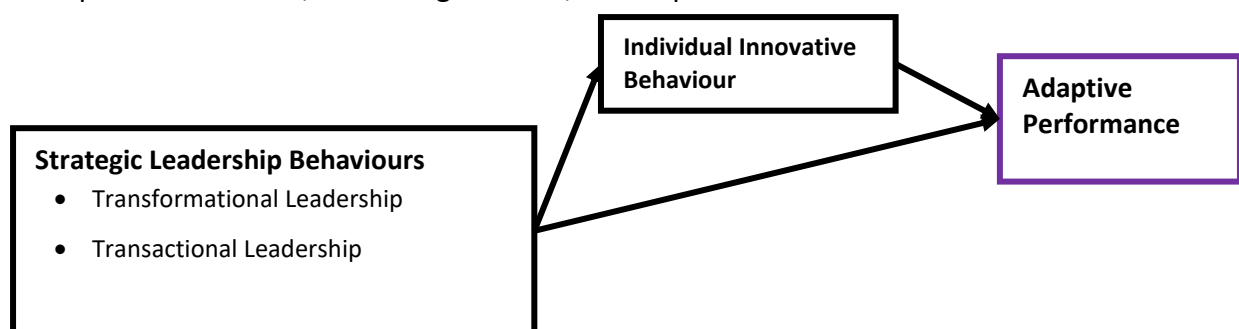


Figure 1. Framework of the study

Methodology

This research adopts a positivist, quantitative approach based on a research paradigm viewpoint (Al-Ababneh, 2020). To gather data and conduct statistical analyses, the study employs a questionnaire-based approach. A cross-sectional survey method is used to collect responses from participants, addressing the research questions through information obtained from current managers.

Survey Administration

Primary data collection occurred through an online survey questionnaire distributed via email to the target population at the Iraqi FBSA headquarters. This population included heads of department (counselors), assistant heads of department, senior financial auditors, and finance audit staff. Data collection took place during January and February 2024. Out of a targeted sample of 175 auditors, 133 individuals completed the questionnaires, resulting in a 76% response rate. The questionnaire was designed to be completed within 10 minutes. Anonymity of the survey respondents was ensured, as only aggregate data was required for this quantitative study.

Survey Instrument

Respondents were instructed to complete all survey questions regarding transformational leadership, transactional leadership, individual innovative behavior, and adaptive performance. Table 1 provides a list of the measures used in the study, along with their corresponding items and definitions of the constructs within the proposed framework.

Participants indicated their level of agreement with the survey statements using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 represented "strongly agree." The survey was piloted among a small sample of the target population.

Demographic information was also collected. In the final section of the survey, participants indicated their gender and age range (one of three categories). Additionally, they reported their highest educational qualification at the time of the study.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender Distribution: 62.4% of the respondents identified as male, with females comprising the remaining 37.6%.

Age: Participant ages ranged from 30 to 60 years old. The largest age group (58.6%) fell between 30 and 40 years old. The 41-50 year old age group comprised 28.6% of the participants, while the smallest portion (12.8%) belonged to the oldest age group (51-60 years old).

Job Titles: Considering the focus on the Iraqi FBSA headquarters, the target population consisted of heads of department (counselors), assistant heads of department, senior financial auditors, and finance audit staff. The data revealed that assistant heads of department formed the majority of respondents (33.8%), followed by finance audit staff (27.8%) and heads of department (19.5%). Senior financial auditors comprised 12.8% of the sample, and counselors represented the smallest group (6.0%).

Education: The educational background of the participants showed that 20.3% held a Bachelor's degree, 50.4% possessed a Master's degree, and 29.3% had achieved a PhD.

Work Experience: Respondents' work experience varied. The majority (45.1%) possessed experience ranging from 10 to less than 15 years, followed by those with experience less than 20 years (13.5%). Participants with experience between 15 and 20 years formed 21.8% of the sample, while the most experienced group (20 years or more) comprised 19.6% (Table 1).

Table 1
Profile of Respondents (N= 133)

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	83	62.4
	Female	50	37.6
Age	30 - 40	78	58.6
	41 - 50	38	28.6
	51 - 60	17	12.8
Position	Counsel	8	6.0
	Head of Department	26	19.5
	Assistant head of department	45	33.8
	Senior financial auditor	17	12.8
	Finance audit	37	27.8
Education level	Bachelor	27	20.3
	Master	67	50.4
	PhD	39	29.3
Experience	Less than 10 years	18	13.5
	10- less than15 years	60	45.1
	15-less than 20 years	29	21.8
	20 years or more	26	19.6
Workplace location	Northern Iraq	38	28.6
	Central Iraq	56	42.1
	Southern Iraq	39	29.3

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics

The survey results indicate that participants generally agreed with the statements presented in the questionnaire. Most mean scores were above 3, with IB06 (M = 3.87) having the highest average score and TC11 (M = 3.17) having the lowest. Standard deviation (SD) values were also relatively low, with the highest variance being 1.36 (for items AP09, AP13, and AP14), as tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Measurement Items

Latent Variables	Question Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Adaptive performance (AP)		3.52	1.10
	AP01	3.32	1.35
	AP02	3.24	1.21
	AP03	3.54	1.35
	AP04	3.39	1.34
	AP05	3.39	1.15
	AP06	3.32	1.28
	AP07	3.50	1.13
	AP08	3.61	1.34
	AP09	3.68	1.36

Latent Variables	Question Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
	AP10	3.71	1.25
	AP11	3.78	1.21
	AP12	3.56	1.33
	AP13	3.32	1.36
	AP14	3.67	1.36
	AP15	3.64	1.29
	AP16	3.56	1.33
	AP17	3.55	1.21
	AP18	3.76	1.34
	AP19	3.33	1.33
Transformational Leadership Behaviours (TF)		3.71	0.96
	TF01	3.50	0.96
	TF02	3.85	1.28
	TF03	3.71	1.13
	TF04	3.86	1.18
	TF05	3.56	1.23
	TF06	3.71	1.01
	TF07	3.76	1.12
Transactional Leadership Behaviours (TC)		3.57	0.98
	TC01	3.73	1.23
	TC02	3.61	1.15
	TC03	3.58	1.14
	TC04	3.77	1.11
	TC05	3.64	1.26
	TC06	3.58	1.21
	TC07	3.26	1.27
	TC08	3.48	1.25
	TC09	3.58	1.16
	TC10	3.69	1.11
	TC11	3.17	1.27
	TC12	3.71	1.17
Individual Innovative Behaviour (IB)		3.62	1.04
	IB01	3.31	1.26
	IB02	3.65	1.12
	IB03	3.72	1.35
	IB04	3.56	1.24
	IB05	3.59	1.34
	IB06	3.87	0.679

Results from PLS-SEM algorithm

The inner variance inflation factor (VIF) assessment indicated no evidence of common method bias in this study, as all VIF values were below 3.3 (Table 3). This suggests that the structural model is appropriate for further analysis.

Table 3
Multicollinearity Assessment

Relationship	VIF
IB -> AP	2.045
TC-> AP	2.691
TC-> IB	2.336
TF-> AP	2.581
TF-> IB	2.336

Table 4 presents the results for outer loadings, construct reliabilities, and convergent validity as measured by average variance extracted (AVE). Outer loadings ranged from 0.507 to 0.947. While all AVE figures exceeded 0.5, some outer loadings fell below the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2022), potentially indicating an issue with convergent validity for these constructs (specifically, for items IB06 and IB05).

Convergent validity was assessed following the guidelines by Hair et al. (2022). This approach suggests that an outer loading of 0.7 or higher and an AVE exceeding 0.5 are desirable. For items with outer loadings between 0.4 and 0.7, removal was only considered if it led to improvements in both composite reliability (CR) and AVE, provided these measures were already above the recommended thresholds. In such cases, item deletion would be unnecessary.

Table 4
Construct Reliability and Validity of Measurement Model

Constructs	Type	Indicators	Loading	No. of Items deleted	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
TC	Reflective			None	0.959	0.964	0.696
		TC01	0.874				
		TC02	0.870				
		TC03	0.878				
		TC04	0.873				
		TC05	0.875				
		TC06	0.889				
		TC07	0.691				
		TC08	0.776				
		TC09	0.878				
		TC10	0.894				
		TC11	0.519				
TC12	0.907						
TF	Reflective			None	0.937	0.949	0.728
		TF01	0.813				
		TF02	0.903				
		TF03	0.891				
		TF04	0.890				
		TF05	0.809				
		TF06	0.805				
TF07	0.854						
AP	Reflective			None	0.979	0.981	0.733
		AP01	0.788				
		AP02	0.85				

Constructs	Type	Indicators	Loading	No. of Items deleted	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE		
IB	Reflective	AP03	0.873	None	0.930	0.948	0.758		
		AP04	0.910						
		AP05	0.830						
		AP06	0.828						
		AP07	0.826						
		AP08	0.916						
		AP09	0.942						
		AP10	0.909						
		AP11	0.920						
		AP12	0.729						
		AP13	0.685						
		AP14	0.912						
		AP15	0.924						
		AP16	0.880						
		AP17	0.862						
		AP18	0.869						
		AP19	0.761						
								IB01	0.917
								IB02	0.919
		IB03	0.927						
		IB04	0.924						
		IB05	0.947						
		IB06	0.507						

Discriminant validity was assessed using the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) procedure outlined by Henseler et al. (2015). As shown in Table 5, the square root of AVE for each construct (bolded diagonal values) is higher than the correlation values within the same column. Additionally, the HTMT values presented in Table 6 (on the right side of the bolded figures) are all below 0.9 (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015), which suggests adequate discriminant validity.

Table 5
Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker criterion for Measurement Model

	AP	IB	TC	TF
AP	0.856			
IB	0.795	0.871		
TC	0.807	0.678	0.834	
TF	0.681	0.661	0.756	0.853

Table 6
Discriminant Validity - Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) for Measurement Model

	AP	IB	TC	TF
AP				
IB	0.796			
TC	0.811	0.688		
TF	0.699	0.692	0.792	

The partial least squares (PLS) analysis provided insights into the robustness of the structural model. It assessed the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variables and revealed the values of R-squared (R^2) and effect size (f^2). The results showed that the independent constructs explained 50.1% of the variance in individual innovative behavior and 74.7% of the variance in adaptive performance within the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit.

Individual innovative behavior (IB) had the strongest effect on adaptive performance (AP), with an effect size (f^2) of 0.43. Other noteworthy effects were observed between transactional leadership behaviors (TC) and adaptive performance (AP) ($f^2 = 0.38$) and between transactional leadership behaviors (TC) and individual innovative behavior (IB) ($f^2 = 0.152$). The effect size between transformational leadership behaviors (TF) and individual innovative behavior (IB) was lower ($f^2 = 0.11$). Figure 1.2 illustrates the path coefficients estimated in this study.

Figure 2. Results of Path Coefficient and Measurement Model Estimation

Results from the Bootstrapping procedure

A bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was employed to test the study's hypotheses. One-tailed tests were used for direct relationships, while two-tailed tests were used for indirect effects. The results, presented in Table 7, supported the robustness of the proposed model. Significant relationships were found between the exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent) constructs.

The strongest significant effect was observed for H2, which examined the relationship between transactional leadership behaviors (TLB) and adaptive performance ($\beta = 0.491$, $t = 4.025$, $p < 0.01$). Other significant effects were found for H1 (TLB and individual innovative behavior (IB): $\beta = 0.456$, $t = 3.645$, $p < 0.01$), H3 (effort expectancy and performance expectancy: $\beta = 0.417$, $t = 3.299$, $p < 0.01$), and H5 (transformational leadership behaviors (TF) and IB: $\beta = 0.346$, $t = 2.944$, $p < 0.05$). However, the hypothesis predicting a relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and adaptive performance (H4) was not supported ($\beta = 0.008$, $t = 0.096$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 7

Hypothesis Testing of Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Relationships	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	f ²	LL	UL	Decision
H ₁	IB -> AP	0.456*	0.125	3.645	0.001	0.243	0.243	0.649	Supported
H ₂	TC -> AP	0.491*	0.122	4.025	0.001	0.292	0.292	0.695	Supported
H ₃	TC -> IB	0.417*	0.126	3.299	0.001	0.212	0.212	0.627	Supported
H ₄	TF -> AP	0.008	0.082	0.096	0.462	0.125	0.125	0.146	Not Supported
H ₅	TF -> IB	0.346*	0.117	2.944	0.002	0.151	0.151	0.541	Supported

Note: $T > 1.95$. *** $P < 0.001$. ** $P < 0.01$. * $P < 0.05$.

H₁. The individual innovative behavior has a positive relationship on adaptive performance.

H₂: Transactional Leadership Behaviours has a positive relationship on adaptive performance.

H₃: Transactional Leadership Behaviours has a positive relationship on individual innovative behavior.

H₄. Transformational Leadership Behaviours has a positive relationship on adaptive performance.

H₅: Transformational Leadership Behaviours has a positive relationship on individual innovative behavior.

The results of the mediation analysis, presented in Tables 8 and 9, reveal that individual innovative behavior acts as a significant mediator in the proposed model. Table 8 shows that individual innovative behavior mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and adaptive performance. Similarly, Table 9 highlights the mediating effect of individual innovative behavior in the association between transformational leadership behaviors and adaptive performance. These findings suggest that individual innovative behavior plays a critical role in influencing adaptive performance, and this influence appears to be contingent upon the leadership style employed.

Table 8

The Mediated Effects of Individual Innovative Behavior on Transactional Leadership Behaviours on Adaptive Performance

Causal path	Original sample (O)	Original sample (O)	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Decision
H ₂ TC -> AP	0.491***			0.122	4.025	0.001	Supported
H _{2a} TC -> IB-> AP		0.19**		0.077	2.477	0.013	Supported
			0.681***	0.095	7.196	0.001	Supported (partial mediation)

Note: $T > 1.95$. *** $P < 0.001$. ** $P < 0.01$. * $P < 0.05$.

Table 9

The Mediated Effects of Individual Innovative Behavior on Transformational Leadership Behaviours on Adaptive Performance

Causal path	Original sample (O)	Original sample (O)	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Decision
H ₄ TF -> AP	0.008			0.462	-0.125	-	Not Supported
H _{4a} TF -> IB-> AP		0.158*		0.07	2.264	0.024	Supported
			0.166*	0.084	1.976	0.048	Supported (Full mediation)

Note: $T > 1.95$. *** $P < 0.001$. ** $P < 0.01$. * $P < 0.05$.

Contributions of the Study

This study offers insights and advancements in three key areas: theoretical, methodological, and practical. These contributions benefit various audiences, including the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit (IFBSA), academics, practitioners, and the broader field of knowledge management.

Theoretical Contributions: The study's findings provide empirical support for the theoretical relationships proposed within the research framework. Specifically, it validates the connections between strategic leadership behaviors, individual innovative behavior as a mediator, and adaptive performance. Furthermore, it integrates existing literature on strategic leadership, individual innovative behavior, and adaptive performance outcomes.

Methodological Contributions: This study employs a robust methodological approach. First, it examines the combined effect of strategic leadership behaviors as a novel variable, providing empirical evidence for the evolution of strategic leadership. Second, it utilizes a quantitative research design with a survey questionnaire and data analysis techniques appropriate for the research questions.

Addressing the Gap in Strategic Leadership Research

This study sheds light on the deeper nature of strategic leadership approaches. It provides the first empirical evidence to solidify the existence of "strategic leadership behaviors" as a construct through a comparative approach. While upper echelon contingency theory and the evolution of strategic leadership are ongoing areas of research, there has been a lack of empirical evidence for leadership styles combined under the umbrella of strategic leadership behaviors. Many prior studies have supported the combination of different leadership styles under this concept; however, empirical examinations have remained focused on individual dimensions or isolated leadership styles (e.g., transformational or transactional leadership). Therefore, this study offers valuable empirical evidence that fills a significant gap in the literature, establishing strategic leadership behaviors as a significant predictor in the proposed research model. This finding advances the understanding of strategic leadership behaviors as a powerful new variable in the field of management.

Methodological Contributions

This study makes two key methodological contributions. First, it employs a novel approach by examining the combined effect of strategic leadership behaviors (SLB) as a predictor variable, rather than focusing on individual leadership styles. The findings that SLB is a significant predictor in the research model provide empirical evidence supporting the concept of strategic leadership as a powerful force at the top levels of an organization. This strengthens the understanding of how leadership styles can evolve into a more comprehensive construct.

Practical Implications for the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit (IFBSA)

The study's findings offer valuable insights for policymakers within the IFBSA. They can inform the development of policies that empower staff by providing opportunities for growth and development, support staff by fostering a positive work environment, and enhance the professional development of staff to improve their skillsets and capabilities. By implementing these recommendations, the IFBSA can cultivate a more innovative and high-performing workforce. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on integrated performance management of managers and staff can be applied more broadly to improve leadership initiatives and innovation behavior in various organizations.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that future research can address:

Generalizability: The study's focus on the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit (IFBSA) limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The results may vary across different industries. Therefore, caution is advised when applying these findings to other settings.

Longitudinal Research: This study employs a cross-sectional design, which limits its ability to establish causal relationships definitively. Longitudinal research would be beneficial to explore how the variables interact and influence each other over time.

Level of Analysis: The study focuses on the relationships among variables at the organizational level. While this approach has advantages, collective organizational engagement can also be assessed at team or group levels, as it may influence engagement at those levels as well. Future studies could explore this variable from different perspectives.

Strategy Implementation: This study focuses on strategy in general, but strategy implementation involves various functional aspects. Future research could examine how these implementation aspects influence the relationships observed in this study.

Future Research Directions

Building on the limitations identified, this study can be extended in several ways:

Exploring Additional Mediators: Future research could expand the model by investigating other potential mediators of the relationship between strategic leadership behaviors and individual innovative behavior. Recent literature suggestions could be a valuable starting point for identifying these mediators.

Multilevel Analysis of Engagement: The study focused on engagement at the organizational level. Future research could explore how collective organizational engagement influences motivational states at lower levels, such as teams or groups. This multilevel analysis could reveal additional insights into the factors that promote innovation.

Examining Broader Perspectives: The model could be expanded to consider other potential mediators beyond individual innovative behavior. These mediators could include variables at different levels, such as group, team, or strategic business unit performance. This broader perspective could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing innovation.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of strategic leadership behaviors on adaptive performance within the Iraqi Federal Board of Supreme Audit (IFBSA), with a specific focus on the mediating role of individual innovative behavior. The findings provide empirical support for both contingency theory and system theory in explaining the relationships between these variables.

The study offers practical implications for policymakers within the IFBSA, informing the development of strategies to enhance leadership behaviors, individual innovative behavior, and ultimately, adaptive performance. However, limitations exist, including the generalizability of the findings beyond the IFBSA context. Future research recommendations address these limitations and explore leadership as a reflective indicator in other industries. Overall, the study successfully achieved its research goals, providing valuable insights into the factors that promote adaptive performance within the IFBSA.

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