

THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL ON STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE- AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN IRAQI ASIACELL TELECOM COMPANY

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Abstract

Business organizations are increasingly interested in using information technology and developing its applications with the aim of digital transformation towards the electronic business environment. They also rely on improving the efficiency of their human resources to represent the human capital that achieves a sustainable competitive advantage. Which is reflected in improving the strategic performance of organizations, the problem of the study stems from the great challenges facing contemporary business organizations, especially with regard to their ability to improve their strategic performance, which can be enhanced through the integration of information technology and human capital, thus, the problem of the study is the extent of the impact of the integration of information technology and human capital on the strategic performance of business organizations. The study aimed to define the concept of information technology, its importance and the rules for its construction, to identify the concept of human capital, to identify its characteristics and dimensions, and to shed light on the concept of strategic performance, its inputs and measures, and showing the impact of information technology and human capital on strategic performance, the study adopted a main hypothesis that: There is a statistically significant effect of the integration of information technology and human capital on strategic performance. The study gains its importance from the important role that information technology and human capital play in the strategic performance to achieve the goals of the organization. The study population consisted of workers in the Iraqi Asiacell Telecom Company, using the random sampling method, which amounted to 110 individuals. The study relied on some statistical tools using the SPSS statistical program. The results of the study showed that there is a strong correlation between information technology, human capital and strategic performance, as well as the presence of a statistically significant effect of the independent variables (information technology and human capital) on the dependent variable (strategic performance).

Keywords: Information technology, human capital, strategic performance.

Introduction

Information technology and its associated applications constitute the most important modern innovations that have brought about radical changes in various aspects of human life (Malkawi, 2016, p. 176). Given the importance of information technology in achieving the competitive advantage of organizations, many countries of the world are competing in developing innovative strategies to activate the use of information technology in the business world (Fath El-Din, 2019,p.2).

Human resources are the backbone of organizations of all types, sizes, and businesses, as these resources in their various administrative, technical, professional, and scientific categories form the organizational structure of the organization and give it its true meaning, in light of the policies and plans that aim to improve the performance of workers and stimulate their motives by achieving job satisfaction, as performance Excellence results from the effectiveness of the internal and external environment, which achieves job satisfaction (Al-Kathiri, 2018, p. 22). Therefore, the formation of human capital within the organization is reflected in the activation of strategic management and the development of the capabilities of the organization, the exploitation of core competencies and the development of social capital, the activation of individual and collective partnerships, and the preparation of ways for creativity in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Ahmed and Al-Faqih, 2011, p. 19), and improving the strategic performance of the organization that achieves a deep understanding of the work environment, monitoring and evaluating the available opportunities and the available material and human resources, in the light of which the organization sets its appropriate plans that achieve the best results for it (Al-Dajani, 2011, p. 146). The study adopted the descriptive analytical approach through a questionnaire form of (25) questions that included demographic data and objective data related to the subject of the study. It included three axes: the first axis included information technology, the second axis human capital, and the third axis strategic performance.

The theoretical framework of the study

Information Technology:

In line with the evolutionary theory (Alchian 1953), which indicates that the company focuses on information and keeps pace with it in order to be able to continue and adapt to developments that occur in its internal and external environment. Information technology was known at the beginning of its emergence as modern information and communication technology (NTIC), then it happened to become information and communication technology (TIC), and with the widespread use of the Internet; The term has been shortened to Information Technology (IT) (Alwan and Abdul Razzaq, 2016, p. 176). (O'brien, 2000, p.467) indicates that it is a method of dealing with data based on computer systems that are capable of bringing about organizational and administrative change and its performance in decision-making, designing administrative structures and work tasks in various organizations. It also represents the modern tools that individuals possess to deal with computers. (Laudon & Jane, 2000, p.86) , defined it (Abdul-Rahman, 2014, p. 65) as the

massive interdependence between advanced computer technology and various communication technologies, which facilitate the transfer of a large amount of information at high speed, regardless of time and place, up to information networks, especially the Internet.

Importance of Information Technology:

The importance of information technology is as follows:

- **Rapid dissemination of information:** by reducing the need to keep multiple copies of programs, and thus the organization dispenses with a lot of publications and paper forms for which information technology provides electronic alternatives (Belgium, 2013, p. 22).
- **Reducing costs:** by reducing operating costs, using internal communication networks to manage business and performing various administrative activities, or using remote communication networks in different business areas, which leads to reducing production costs, inventory management, distribution, marketing, and the cost of accessing markets. Or opening new markets (Malkawi, 2016, p. 182).
- **Time saving:** by reducing the time spent on communication processes between departments and departments within the same organization, and ensuring the accuracy of communication flow and non-overlapping, and organizing the exchange of administrative information through agreed standard forms, and thus information technology saves accuracy and time (Al-Bahi, 2016, p. 44) .
- **Supporting decision-makers:** by providing officials and decision-makers with all reports on performance levels in the organization, and thus they have an idea of the degree of work efficiency in general and the accuracy of decision-making in particular (Al-Qahtani, 2015, p. 2).
- **Developing human resources:** Information technology is not just tools or means that are operated only, but rather interactive systems that lead to radically changing the cognitive and skillful capabilities of man .(Salah El-Din, 2015, p. 65)
- **Improving customer service:** Information technology directly contributes to improving customer interaction with the organization, and the organization also benefits from customer databases in communicating and fulfilling requests optimally, which is reflected in achieving customer satisfaction .(Al-Samarrai, 2020, p. 24)
- **Achieving the competitive advantage:** Providing the department with the necessary information in a timely manner constitutes a competitive advantage by which organizations face environmental changes in a shorter time. Feedback, which speeds up the decision-making process within the organization, thereby achieving the advantage of speed of response as a competitive advantage (ALAOIT, 2013, p.10). Based on the behavioral theory (Cyert & March.1963), which indicates the need for organizations to search for information and try to adapt to their internal and external environment on an ongoing basis.

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- **Improving institutional performance.**

IT rules:

Malkawi (2016, p. 181) and Al-Samarrai (2020, p. 31) define the rules of information technology as follows:

- **Computer rules:** They represent the rules that provide the organization with computer services that link workers, customers and suppliers.
- **Communication rules:** These are the rules that provide the organization with digital data in an interactive way, and secure communications between employees, customers and suppliers.
- **Organizational rules:** The rules that provide the organization with the necessary capabilities at all levels, such as organization resource planning, value chain management, knowledge management systems, and customer relationship management, are represented in all business units of the organization.
- **Information technology management rules:** These are the rules that provide the organization and its business units with various policies that describe the types of information that must be used.
- **Information technology learning rules:** These are the rules related to training employees on how to use the information technology system, and training managers on proper planning for investment in information technology and how to manage it.
- **Information technology development rules:** They represent the rules that provide the organization with the latest research on potential projects and investments in the field of information technology in the future, which help the organization's distinction and future growth. (Turban, *et al.*, 1999: 52)

Human capital:

Human capital means all the knowledge, skills, capabilities, capabilities, attributes and characteristics inherent in human resources within the organization and what they possess of capabilities and self-powers that can be developed and to support productivity and improve creativity and innovation of the organization (Abdul Nabi, 9: 2015).), (Goldin, 2014, p.1) believes that it is the various skills that human resources possess, which are a major resource of the organization's resources and an important asset that is invested through educational and training activities to increase the productivity of the individual and raise the efficiency of institutional performance

Characteristics of human capital:

Al-Azouni (2020, p. 180) and Abdullah (2022, p. 16) identified the characteristics of human capital in several aspects, including:

Integration of the overall performance of the organization, represents the added value governing the formation of the competitive capabilities of human resources within the organization, an element to achieve competitive advantage through the mediating role of job satisfaction as human resource practices have a significant impact on competitive

advantage, through the mediating variable which is job satisfaction. And in line with (the theory of dependence on resources . and Salancik 1978 Pfeffer) that performance is not distinguished and successful unless there are sufficient resources, otherwise the company must search for these resources from the outside.

Dimensions of human capital:

- **Knowledge:** It includes professional skills, technical knowledge, and general background on jobs and related fields .(Al Malhama, 2018, p. 45)
- **Skill:** Obtaining qualified individuals to work in various jobs in order to produce goods and services in the best way, at the lowest costs and services, and in accordance with predetermined quantitative and qualitative standards .(Al-Zaid, 2016, p. 18)
- **Experience:** What human resources gain from practical and knowledge experiences. (Lagakos, et.al., 2012, p.24)
- **Innovation:** a group of new ideas by which traditional daily work methods are changed and routine problems are solved in non-traditional ways (Fakhry, 2021, p. 142). In line with the theory of cognitive flexibility. Scott, William A. (December 1962) Cognitive complexity that relates the cognitive system to the mental ability to control action.

Strategic performance:

The concept of strategic performance:

Depending on (contingency theory. Scott. R. (1981) which believes that the organization is an open system in order to adapt to the variables it faces in its internal and external environment. The strategic performance is planning and implementation based on maintaining the competitive advantage, through The process of evaluating the external and internal environment of the organization, developing business models, directing organizations, competitive and strategic tactics, and this requires building appropriate organizational structures, the development of organizational culture, and the management of strategic operations (Machado, et.al., 2019, p.66), (Kelesbayev, (et.al., 2015, p.36) believes that it is the technical and operational aspects of the organization that can be developed through the competencies used, And access to speed, effectiveness and efficiency, and he believes (Idris and Abu Al-Rous, 2022, p. 377) that it is the ability of the organization to utilize its resources very efficiently, and produce outputs that are in line with its goals and consistent with the needs of customers, and this concept is linked to both individual and institutional behavior, being the final outcome of the total activities in the organization.

Entrances to strategic performance:

Entrance to strategic performance improvement: It means the series of systematic, organized and continuous procedures and processes that the organization uses to reduce the gap between actual performance and target performance.

Job improvement approach: The starting point for improving strategic performance is to provide accurate knowledge of each of the job tasks, and to provide the opportunity for workers to participate in work teams, which helps in solving organizational problems. The job performance approach is also improved by expanding the scope of the job and enriching the job. And the integration of many tasks that require the same amount of skill to increase the link between the individual and the final product or service, and to increase the levels of responsibility given to workers. (Al-Sakhni, 2020, p. 37)

Entrance to employee improvement: Depending on (the Stakeholder Theory .. The Stakeholder Theory of the Corporation Donaldson, Thomas; Preston, Lee E. (1995)), it is in their interest to develop the organization and improve its production because this is beneficial. Modern organizations view workers as the human capital of the organization, because they represent the most important elements of development and development, because of their great value in raising the efficiency of the strategic performance of the organization. (Al-Qasim, 2015, p. 113)

Strategic performance measures:

Strategic performance measures can be divided into four types shown in the table below:

Table (3) strategic performance measures.

Financial metrics	Productivity metrics	Stakeholder metrics		Added value metrics	
		Stakeholders	Measurements	Performance characteristics	Scale
Liquidity ratios	Total productivity = output / factors involved in its production	Customers	Sales growth	Growth	Value Added
Financial leverage ratios	Multifactor productivity = output/two or more factors	Suppliers	Cost growth rate	efficiency	Return on added value
Activity rates	Partial productivity = output / specific factor	Sponsored	The ability to convince the stock market of the return on equity growth strategy	Asset exploitation	The ratio of return on value added to return on investment
Profitability ratios		Employees	The number of promotions from within, the turnover rate of the workforce from within		

Source: (Hashem and Al-Abbadi, 2010, p. 47)

The practical framework of the study:

Description of the researched organization:

Asiacell Communications Company is the main provider of mobile communications services in Iraq. It was established in 1999. It is headquartered in the city of Sulaymaniyah. It is a subsidiary of the parent company, Ooredoo, and has more than 12 million subscribers (Raouf, 2019, p. 97). The largest company whose shares are traded in the Iraq Stock Exchange during the years 2019-2020 AD (Al-Dabbagh and Al-Husseini, 2021, p. 295)

Descriptive statistics for demographic data:

Variable	Response	Repetition	Percentage	Mean
Type	Male	68	61.8	1.38
	female	42	38.2	
Age group	Less than 30 years old	20	18.2	2.24
	From 30 years to less than 40 years	52	47.3	
	From 40 years to less than 50 years	29	26.4	
	50 years and older	9	8.2	
Educational Qualification	Middle	3	2.7	3.00
	High School	10	9.1	
	Bachelor's	80	72.7	
	Postgraduate	17	15.5	
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	22	20.0	2.37
	From 5 to less than 10 years	33	30.0	
	From 5 to less than 15years	47	42.7	
	More than 15 years	8	7.3	

Test the validity and validity of the questionnaire:

The reliability of the scale was tested for the questionnaire items using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, which is used to verify the degree of reliability of the scale, using the statistical program (SPSS Vr.26). It is clear from Table (2) that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire, which consisted of 21 items, was 0.993. , which indicates a high degree of reliability of the questionnaire items, as the measurement tool is more appropriate if the value of Crombach's alpha is greater than or equal to 0.707 (Navarro, et.al., 2010, p.53).

Table (2) Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient for the axes of the questionnaire:

Axes	Title	paragraphs number	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Internal consistency validity
First	information technology	7	0.976	0.988
Second	Human capital	7	0.989	0.994
Third	strategic performance	7	0.982	0.990
The sentence of the questionnaire		21	0.993	0.996

The validity of the scale indicates the validity of the questionnaire to measure what it was intended to measure. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by measuring the

validity of the self-consistency, as it is noted from Table (2) that all coefficients of the validity of the self-consistency were higher than 0.90 in all axes of the questionnaire, and reached the total number of items. 0.996, which indicates a high degree of self-consistency for the questionnaire items.

Descriptive statistics of the study variables:

The first axis - information technology:

Table (5) descriptive statistics of the study sample responses about information technology:

Phrase		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company provides devices and modern information technology means to complete work tasks	Repet	3	6	15	60	26	3.90	0.91
	%	2.7	5.5	13.6	54.5	23.6		
The company relies on technological means to exchange information within the administrative structure	Repet	5	8	19	45	33	3.84	1.07
	%	4.5	7.3	17.3	40.9	30.0		
The company offers many services through websites to achieve customer satisfaction	Repet	0	2	20	64	24	4.00	0.69
	%	0	1.8	18.2	58.2	21.8		
The technological programs used are constantly updated according to the latest developments	Repet	4	10	25	40	31	3.76	1.07
	%	3.6	9.1	22.7	36.4	28.2		
The company is interested in training employees to use modern technological devices and programs	Repet	1	5	16	52	36	4.06	0.85
	%	0.9	4.5	14.5	47.3	32.7		
The company has a modern electronic protection system to maintain the confidentiality of customer and employee data	Repet	0	3	18	30	59	4.31	0.84
	%	0	2.7	16.4	27.3	53.6		
The company has a special section for the maintenance of equipment and technology systems	Repet	0	0	11	25	74	4.57	0.66
	%	0	0	10.0	22.7	67.3		

Table (5) shows the responses of the study sample about the use of information technology in the researched company, where it was found that most of the employees believe that the company has a special department for maintaining devices and technology systems with an arithmetic average of 4.57, and that the company has a modern electronic protection system to maintain the confidentiality of customer and employee data with an arithmetic average of 4.31 The company trains employees to use modern technological devices and programs, with an arithmetic mean of 4.06. The company also offers many services through websites to

achieve customer satisfaction with an arithmetic average of 4.00, and the company provides devices and modern information technology means to accomplish work tasks with an arithmetic average of 3.90, and the company relies on technological means to exchange information within the administrative structure with an arithmetic average of 3.84, and technological programs are also updated Used continuously according to the latest developments with an arithmetic mean of 3.76.

The second axis - human capital:

Table (6) descriptive statistics of the study sample responses about human capital:

Phrase		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company provides professional training programs to raise the efficiency of employees on a regular basis	Repet	5	11	18	50	26	3.73	1.07
	%	4.5	10.0	16.4	45.5	23.6		
The company's management encourages employees to innovate and create freely	Repet	5	14	20	46	25	3.65	1.10
	%	4.5	12.7	18.2	41.8	22.7		
The company links the system of material incentives for employees to the level of service provision	Repet	2	7	17	53	31	3.94	0.92
	%	1.8	6.4	15.5	48.2	28.2		
The company offers moral incentives and appreciation to distinguished employees	Repet	4	7	15	59	25	3.85	0.96
	%	3.6	6.4	13.6	53.6	22.7		
The company adopts the job rotation system to prepare and qualify the employees within the company	Repet	3	9	12	60	26	3.88	0.95
	%	2.7	8.2	10.9	54.5	23.6		
The company follows a policy of retaining experienced employees through a fair promotion system	Repet	1	6	10	55	38	4.11	0.85
	%	0.9	5.5	9.1	50.0	34.5		
The company is interested in solving the workers' professional and social problems	Repet	5	8	12	60	25	3.83	1.00
	%	4.5	7.3	10.9	54.5	22.7		

Table (6) shows the responses of the study sample about the human capital of the company, where it was found that the employees believe that the company follows a policy of retaining experienced workers through a fair promotion system with an mean of 4.11, and that the company links the system of material incentives for employees to the level of service provision with an mean of 3.94. The company adopts the job rotation system to prepare and qualify the employees within the company with an arithmetic average of 3.88. The company also provides moral incentives and appreciation to distinguished workers with an arithmetic average of 3.85. 3.73, and the company's management encourages employees to innovate and create freely, with an arithmetic mean of 3.65.

The third axis - strategic performance:

Table (7) descriptive statistics of the study sample responses on strategic performance:

Phrase		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The use of information technology helps improve the company's brand reputation with customers	Repet	2	4	15	50	39	4.09	0.89
	%	1.8	3.6	13.6	45.5	35.5		
The use of information technology reduces the cost of service provision in the company	Repet	1	3	12	55	39	4.16	0.79
	%	0.9	2.7	10.9	50.0	35.5		
The company's use of information technology increases the speed of response to customer problems	Repet	0	3	15	57	35	4.12	0.74
	%	0	2.7	13.6	51.8	31.8		
Information technology helps to discover errors in work and avoid their recurrence	Repet	2	4	10	57	37	4.11	0.85
	%	1.8	3.6	9.1	51.8	33.6		
Human resources training programs raise the quality of service provided to clients	Repet	0	0	7	40	63	4.50	0.61
	%	0	0	6.4	36.4	57.3		
The company's retention of distinguished employees increases profits	Repet	4	8	5	59	34	4.00	0.99
	%	3.6	7.3	4.5	53.6	30.9		
The company's human resources achieve a competitive advantage to face competitors	Repet	0	5	11	62	32	4.10	0.75
	%	0	4.5	10.0	56.4	29.1		

Table (7) shows the responses of the study sample on strategic performance, where it was found that the employees believe that the training programs for human resources raise the quality of service provided to customers, with an average of 4.50, and the use of information technology leads to a reduction in the cost of service provision in the company, with an average of 4.16, and increases the use of information technology the company has the speed of response to customer problems with an arithmetic mean of 4.12. and information technology helps to discover errors in work and avoid their recurrence, with an arithmetic mean of 4.11, and the human resources working in the company achieve a competitive advantage to confront competitors, with an arithmetic mean of 4.10. of earnings by 4.00.

4 - Inferential statistics of the study variables and testing the validity of the hypothesis:

The validity of the study hypothesis was tested using the multiple linear regression model using the SPSS program. Table No. (8) shows the results of the test:

Table (8) the results of the multiple linear regression analysis of the influence of the independent variables (information technology and human capital) on the dependent variable (strategic performance).

Model dimensions	Regression value (B)	standard error	T value
strategic performance	0.693*	0.138	5.012
information technology	0.612	0.150	4.084
Human capital	0.253	0.130	1.938
The calculated F value	759.336		
The level of significance F calculated	0.000		
Correlation coefficient (R)	0.967		
Determination coefficient (R ²)	0.934		
The standard error of the estimate	0.200		

The results of the multiple regression model shown in Table (8) showed the strong relationship between information technology and human capital on strategic performance in the regression model, as the correlation coefficient (R) was (0.967); This indicates the strong impact of information technology and human capital on strategic performance.

The value of the interpretability of the regression model represented by the coefficient of determination (R²) was (0.934); This indicates that 93.4% of the changes in strategic performance are explained by information technology and human capital.

The value of (F) calculated in the regression model of the hypothesis was 759.336, with a level of statistical significance (sig = 0.000), which is smaller than the level of statistical significance adopted (0.05), and this indicates that there is a statistically significant effect between information technology and human capital on strategic performance. It is clear from the foregoing the rejection of the null hypothesis, and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that there is a statistically significant effect of the integration of information technology and human capital on strategic performance.

Conclusion:

Information technology is the main source of data used by companies, which express objective, interconnected and unconnected facts, which describe part of the events and do not provide judgments or interpretations. Its importance is embodied in the rapid dissemination of information, reducing costs, saving time, supporting decision-makers, developing human resources, improving customer service and achieving competitive advantage. Human capital is an important asset of the company and is invested through educational and training activities to increase individual productivity and raise the efficiency of strategic performance.

. With its four dimensions (knowledge, skill, experience, and innovation), strategic performance is based on evaluating the external and internal environment of the organization, developing business models, directing competitive strategic tactics through

building appropriate organizational structures, developing organizational culture, and managing strategic operations. It has three entrances: (The entrance to strategic performance improvement, the entrance to job improvement, and the entrance to employee improvement.). Its measurement includes four groups: financial measures, productivity measures, stakeholder measures, and value-added measures.

The study showed a high degree of study sample responses about the independent variables (information technology and human capital) as well as the dependent variable (strategic performance).

The statistical analysis model also showed that there is a statistically significant effect of the integration of information technology and human capital on the strategic performance.

In order to develop the current study, we suggest conducting future studies on:

The impact of organizational culture and technical flexibility on strategic performance.

The impact of human resources and service provision flexibility on strategic performance.

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