

Dimensions of Strategic Planning and Control in the Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.)

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Abstract

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The teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) place special emphasis on planning as a condition for the perfection of faith and a safeguard against error. Despite this wealth of narrative heritage, a theoretical gap remains in the systematic connection between the “science of strategic management” and the “managerial conduct (Sīrah) of Imam Riḍā.” Aiming to fill this gap, the present study addresses the question of how a conceptual model for strategic planning and control can be designed based on Imam Reza’s teachings. This descriptive-analytical study was conducted using a documentary method. Three pivotal traditions from Imam Reza (A.S.)-“He who seeks a matter from its proper avenue” (man ṭalaba al-amr min wajhihī), “Excellence in estimating one’s livelihood” (ḥusn al-taqdīr fī al-ma’īshah), and “The division of one’s time into four parts”-were analyzed through a directed qualitative content analysis approach and juxtaposed with the global literature on strategic control. The result of this longitudinal study is a conceptual model comprising three primary variables-“formulation, implementation, and evaluation”-and ten secondary variables (including self-control and accountability). The model’s novelty lies in the integration of the technical principles of strategic control with the value-based foundations derived from Imam Reza’s teachings. The application of this model guides organizations toward the realization of strategies through an ethics-centered approach.

Keywords: Managerial Conduct (Sīrah) of Imam Reza (A.S.), Planning Science, Strategic Planning, Strategic Control.



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1. Introduction

Planning, as the primary and most fundamental function of management, constitutes the foundation of all levels of individual and organizational life. Despite the significant development of the knowledge of strategic planning and control in contemporary management literature and the formulation of numerous models to guide organizations toward success, a deep chasm is evident between these technical advancements and their value-based and ethical foundations. The global literature on strategic control has predominantly focused on technical and competitive dimensions and is incapable of addressing fundamental questions concerning the value-based, ethical, and human foundations of these systems. This is while within Islamic sources, particularly in the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.), there exists an immense treasury of strategic teachings capable of filling this theoretical void. Three pivotal traditions from his eminence form the basis of this research: the narration “He who seeks a matter from its proper avenue” (*man ṭalaba al-amr min wajhihī*), which emphasizes purposeful and methodical action and the existence of an error-compensation mechanism; the narration “Excellence in estimating one’s livelihood” (*ḥusn al-taqdīr fī al-ma’īshah*), which places planning among the conditions for the perfection of faith; and the narration of dividing one’s time into four parts, which presents a comprehensive model for the strategic management of time. Despite the conceptual richness of these teachings, no systematic study analyzing these narrations within the theoretical framework and operational models of strategic planning and control is available. Aiming to fill this gap, the present study seeks to design a conceptual model for strategic planning and control based on Razavi teachings.

2. Research Objectives

Aiming to fill the theoretical gap between the science of strategic management and the managerial conduct (*Sīrah*) of Imam Reza(A.S.), the present study pursues three fundamental questions: first, how can the concepts of strategic planning and control be redefined and explicated based on the teachings of Imam Reza(A.S.)? Second, what variables constitute the conceptual model of strategic control grounded in the Razavi *Sīrah*, and what are the relationships among them? And third, what fundamental distinctions does this model exhibit compared to prevalent models in strategic management literature? At a broader level, this study seeks to demonstrate

how the epistemic and value-based capacities embedded in Islamic narrations can be utilized to enrich the knowledge of strategic planning and control and to build a bridge between “the science of strategic planning” and “the managerial Sīrah of Imam Reza(A.S.)” This bridging link can assist the country’s executive organizations in realizing their strategies through an ethics-centered approach grounded in Islamic values.

3. Methodology

This research is fundamental-applied in terms of its purpose and descriptive-analytical of a documentary nature in terms of its essence and method of data collection. The research approach is qualitative and based on directed content analysis. This study is the result of longitudinal research spanning the period from 2012 to 2020, which led to the design of a strategic control model. The examined sample consists of authentic texts that were purposefully selected and include two categories: a) key documents and research in the domain of strategic management and control, including Persian and Latin scholarly books and articles by theorists such as Fayol, Schreyögg, Lorange, and up-to-date research such as Oviedo et al. (2017) and Board et al. (2022); b) original narrative and hadith sources, focusing on the traditions of Imam Reza(A.S.) contained in authoritative sources such as Bihār al-Anwār and ‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Reza(A.S.). Data analysis was conducted using the directed qualitative content analysis method. Thus, initially, based on the theoretical foundations of strategic management, principal categories including the dimensions of planning and control were identified. Subsequently, the Razavi teachings related to these categories were extracted and analyzed with a comparative-analytical approach to explicate how these concepts are completed and elevated within the Razavi Sīrah and to yield the conceptual model of the research. The method of conceptual modeling in the humanities was employed as the basis for the model design, which defines a model as the representation of the interrelationships among simplified components of reality

4. Findings

The outcome of this longitudinal study is a conceptual model comprising three primary variables-”formulation, implementation, and evaluation”-and ten secondary variables. This model redefines the concepts of planning, strategic planning, and strategic control at the intersection of strategic management literature

and Razavi teachings. In the formulation stage resides the variable of “setting strategic objectives.” In the implementation stage, six variables are organized: “task assignment,” “accountability,” “budgeting,” “self-control (responsibility),” “employee competence,” and “client-orientation (honoring clients).” In the evaluation stage, three variables are embedded: “feedback mechanism,” “tracking,” and “corrective action.” The distinguishing feature and principal innovation of this model is the presence of variables such as “self-control” and “honoring clients,” which are directly inspired by the value-based foundations of Islam and the Razavi Sīrah and are absent in conventional strategic control models.

The comparative analysis revealed that in the intellectual system of Imam Reza(A.S.), planning and control are regarded as “a dimension of the perfection of faith” and a sign of “human intellectual maturity.” The hadith “Excellence in estimating one’s livelihood” places strategic planning in livelihood on par with “understanding religion” (*tafaqquh fī al-dīn*) and elevates it from a worldly skill to a faith-based virtue. The four-part model of time management in the Imam’s words (worship, livelihood, association with critical elites, and lawful pleasure) presents a “sustainable equilibrium model” wherein the fourth part functions as the driving engine and enhancer of the other three parts—a mechanism adaptable to the concept of “feedback and corrective action” in modern strategic control models.

Furthermore, the hadith “He who seeks a matter from its proper avenue” emphasizes purposeful action from the correct path, which has a substantive consonance with the logic of “strategy formulation” and “ensuring its proper pursuit” in strategic control. In the dimension of control, the Razavi Sīrah, with the narration “When the Messenger of God (PBUH) dispatched an army and suspected a commander, he would send along with him someone from among his trusted ones to gather intelligence on his conduct,” delineates concealed strategic control based on trust and expertise, wherein the “moral competence” and “professional qualification” of the controller are interwoven.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study demonstrated that a deep chasm exists between the philosophical and value-based foundations of the global strategic control literature and Islamic teachings. The global literature defines strategic control primarily as a technical tool for ensuring the achievement of objectives and gaining competitive advantage, whereas in the Razavi Sīrah, these concepts are interwoven with faith, rationality,

and ethics. The conceptual model presented, with its ten variables, represents an attempt to fill this theoretical and operational gap and to operationalize Razavi teachings within the context of modern organizations. The model's novelty lies in the integration of the technical principles of strategic control with the value-based foundations derived from Imam Reza's teachings-an integration manifested in variables such as "self-control" and "honoring clients.

At the practical level, the research findings recommend that the country's executive organizations: first, in the strategy formulation stage, design contingency scenarios in addition to primary strategies for confronting environmental changes to enhance the flexibility of strategic control. Second, in the implementation stage, replace purely policing and traditional inspection approaches with control mechanisms based on "self-control" and "trust"-inspired by the Sīrah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in appointing specialized and committed agents, as narrated by Imam Reza(A.S.). Third, design a dynamic and continuous evaluation system capable of receiving environmental feedback and enabling timely corrective actions. The application of this model guides organizations toward the realization of strategies through an ethics-centered approach. Future research may empirically test this model in various organizations and assess the degree of influence of value-based variables on the effectiveness of strategic control. Furthermore, extending the scope of the study to other teachings of the Infallible Imams (A.S.) in the domain of strategic management can contribute to the further enrichment of this model.

Keywords: Managerial Conduct (Sīrah) of Imam Reza(A.S.), Strategic Planning, Strategic Control, Conceptual Model, Self-Control, Razavi Model.