

The Impact of Practicing Strategic Adaption on Economic Crisis Management Strategies under the Circumstances of War (Syrian Case from 2011 to 2018)

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to identify the impact of practicing strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war, identifying the procedures which the ministries and institutions took to address the present economic crisis and determine the obstacles which faced the ministries and institutions in managing the crisis. The study used the descriptive analytical approach, where (172) questionnaire forms were distributed to respondents who occupied upper and middle administrative positions at six governmental ministries and institutions in Syria. The study revealed a statistically significant impact of practicing strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies and that some procedures have been taken such as: preventing the importation of many products that consume foreign exchange reserves like new cars and luxury products, reliance on private sector companies to import materials that the Syrian government is not allowed to import due to economic sanctions and opening a credit line with Iran worth one billion dollars to provide oil derivatives and other goods. The study recommended forming a committee of senior experts from the six ministries and institutions to develop adaptive strategies for managing the crisis and review them periodically every 6 months, as well as reducing the domestic demand of foreign exchange through control of imports and seizure of smuggling operations and speculation.

Keywords: Crisis management, Strategic adaption, Syrian war.

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Received on 8/3/2019 and Accepted for Publication on 15/10/2019.

أثر ممارسة التكيف الاستراتيجي في استراتيجيات إدارة الأزمات الاقتصادية في ظل ظروف الحرب (الحالة السورية من عام 2011 إلى عام 2018)

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ملخص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تحديد أثر ممارسة التكيف الاستراتيجي في استراتيجيات إدارة الأزمات الاقتصادية في ظل ظروف الحرب السورية، والتعرف على الإجراءات التي اتخذتها الوزارات والمؤسسات لمعالجة الأزمة الاقتصادية الحالية، وتحديد العقبات التي واجهت الوزارات والمؤسسات في أثناء إدارتها للأزمة. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، والاستبانة أداة للدراسة. وتم توزيع (172) استمارة على أفراد عينة الدراسة الذين يشغلون مناصب إدارية عليا ومتوسطة في ست وزارات ومؤسسات حكومية في سوريا. وكشفت الدراسة عن تأثير ذي دلالة إحصائية لممارسة التكيف الاستراتيجي في استراتيجيات إدارة الأزمات الاقتصادية، وعن عدد من الإجراءات التي تم اتخاذها، ومنها: منع استيراد العديد من المنتجات التي تستنزف احتياطي النقد الأجنبي مثل السيارات الجديدة والكماليات، والاعتماد على شركات القطاع الخاص لاستيراد المواد التي لا يُسمح للحكومة السورية باستيرادها بسبب العقوبات الاقتصادية، وفتح خط انتمان مع إيران بقيمة مليار دولار لتوفير المشتقات النفطية وغيرها من السلع. وأوصت الدراسة بتشكيل لجنة من كبار الخبراء من الوزارات والمؤسسات الست لوضع استراتيجيات تكيفية لإدارة الأزمة ومراجعتها بشكل دوري كل 6 أشهر، وتقليل الطلب المحلي على النقد الأجنبي من خلال ضبط الواردات ومنع عمليات التهريب والمضاربة على العملة.

الكلمات الدالة: إدارة الأزمة، التكيف الاستراتيجي، الحرب السورية.

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تاريخ استلام البحث 2019/3/8 وتاريخ قبوله 2019/10/15.

1. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Countries can face unprecedented situations of constant challenges and rapid changes under crises, which in turn imposes a series of severe obstacles affecting the economic and financial situations of the state and the people. The country's success in surviving in the shade of these conditions depends on flexibility and adaptation to rapid changes, finding quick solutions to the problems and challenges it faces and developing flexible strategies that enable it to manage successive crises (Coombs, 2012). Crisis management represents the methodology through which a country could deal with the crisis in light of knowledge, awareness, available capabilities, skills and prevailing management patterns (Al Sairafi, 2008).

There is no doubt that crises, especially wars, leave a devastating impact on the economic, social and political life of countries. The nature of managing the crisis by the government plays a big role in the aggravation the crisis or mitigation its effects and the Syrian war is a vivid example of severe crises that can be experienced by countries. In this sense, the researcher sought to study the Syrian situation to take advantage of the lessons learned and to highlight the ability of the Syrian government to adapt strategically to the conditions of war and survive, as well as the extent to which it adopts flexible strategies to manage the economic crisis.

1.2 PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The economies of many countries are exposed to crises, varying in severity as a result of many reasons, whether economic, political or social. The method of governments' treatment of these crises differs from country to another according to the extent of experience and vigilance to crises and the nature of the prevailing economy. The current Syrian crisis is one of the biggest and most dangerous crises in the modern era and had significant impacts on many countries, both economically and politically, such as European

countries, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. Remarkably, the Syrian economy is still standing after intensive and hard seven years and could adapt with the circumstances of the war, unlike many countries that suffered major collapses in their economy as a result of exposure to similar conditions, such as Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Rwanda, Somalia ...etc. In this sense, the researcher seeks to conduct a thorough research to highlight the Syrian experience in managing the economy and Syrian success in preventing the collapse of the economy through adopting flexible strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war. Therefore, the present study tries to answer the following questions:

- 1- What is the practicing level of strategic adaption by the Syrian governmental ministries/ institutions?
- 2- What is the practicing level of economic crisis management strategies by the Syrian governmental ministries/ institutions?
- 3- What is the impact of practicing strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war?
- 4- What are the procedures which the ministries/ institutions have taken to address the present economic crisis?
- 5- What are the obstacles which have faced the ministries/ institutions in managing the crisis?

1.3 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The current study tests the following hypothesis:

H. There is a positive correlation between practice strategic adoption and economic crisis management strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- Identifying the practicing level of strategic adaption

by the Syrian governmental ministries and institutions.

- 2- Specifying the practicing level of economic crisis management strategies by the Syrian governmental ministries and institutions.
- 3- Revealing the impact of practicing strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war.
- 4- Identifying the procedures which the ministries and institutions have taken to address the present economic crisis.
- 5- Determine the obstacles, which have faced the ministries and institutions in managing the crisis.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study comes to highlight the Syrian model in managing the economy in light of crises that face countries, where this study gains its importance from two sides:

1. Theoretical significance: This study acquires its theoretical importance through lack of studies related to managing the economic crises under the circumstances of war in comparison with other managerial studies. In addition, the

subject of the study is one of the pressing and required topics at the moment, where a number of countries around the world are likely to experience political and social upheavals that threaten severely their economies.

2. Practical significance: The importance of this study emerges from the geostrategic importance of Syria as a country that links three continents; Asia, Africa and Europe and its location in an area that is considered the primary supplier of oil in the world. Thus, the current crisis must leave negative impacts on many surrounding countries. Moreover, the results and recommendations of the study are hoped to contribute to assist decision-makers in the Syrian government, other governments around the world interested in the Syrian crisis or humanitarian organizations relevant to the Syrian crisis to make decisions that can mitigate the effects and repercussions of the Syrian crisis, both economically and socially. The results of the study are also hoped to provide lessons learned to manage economic crises in times of war.

1.6 MODEL OF THE STUDY

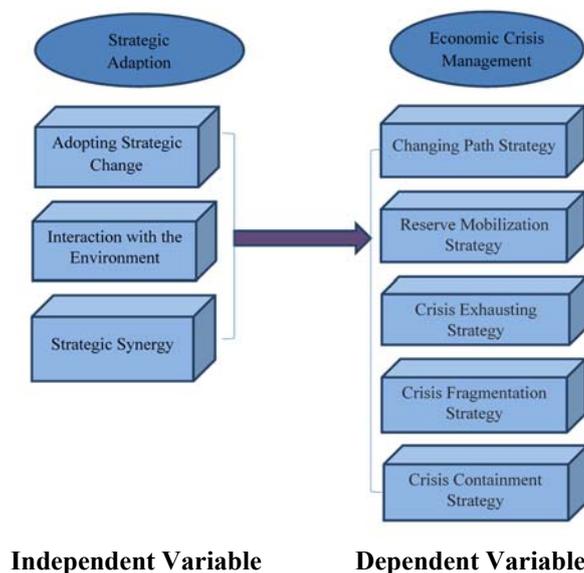


Figure (1): Model of the study

Source: Developed by the author based on (Tayauova, 2011; Gilpin & Murphy, 2008).

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF THE STUDY TERMS

Crisis Management: is the strategic planning for a crisis by the use of scientific and practical tools during the various stages of the crisis, in order to address it and try to control it to avoid its negative sides and take advantage of its positive sides (Fearn-Banks, 2007). It is procedurally defined in this study as: the strategies and measures taken by the Syrian governmental ministries to contain the current crisis and overcome the difficulties and risks faced.

Strategic Adaption: is the ability to foresee the risks and future internal and external problems and being aware of the means to control them as much as possible (Mykhailivna, 2016). It is procedurally defined as: the ability of the Syrian government to predict the risks and adapt with the new circumstances in the shadow of war.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Syrian economy has been subjected to unprecedented fundamental imbalances, where there has been a significant decline in productivity, as there has been a deterioration in human capital, which is the main source of productivity and competitiveness, due to migration, decline in the educational process and deterioration of the health system in the country, in addition to the lack of physical and operational investment, especially in hot spots. The Syrian economy has witnessed a dramatic shift in its overall indicators, as the crisis has cast a shadow over the GDP and the state budget, increased the pressures on the population's living level and increased the external and internal debt to record levels after Syria was ranked among the least indebted countries in the world. The total loss of GDP during the crisis years amounted to 81 billion dollars distributed over the various economic sectors. This loss is equivalent to 212% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the year 2015. The loss was distributed over the economic sectors as follows: the industrial and mining sector (50%), the wholesale and retail trade sector (18.7 %), the transport and storage sector (9.9

%), the agriculture sector (9.8 %) and the rest of sectors (11.6 %). However, the Syrian economy was able to adapt to the crisis, as some sectors achieved good growth rates compared with the beginning of the crisis, especially after the improvement of the security situation in the country (Damascus Center for Research and Studies, 2016).

According to a new study conducted by the World Bank on the economic situation in Syria (2018), it was found that damage to productive factors and economic activity has been extensive, damaging capital stock (e.g. about one-third of housing stock and one half of health and education facilities has been damaged or destroyed), while disrupting economic activity. From 2011 to 2016, cumulative GDP loss is estimated at \$226 billion. In addition, disruptions in economic organization are the most important driver of the economic impact, superseding physical damage. Conflict has disrupted economic activity by diminishing economic connectivity, reducing incentives to pursue productive work and disconnecting networks and supply chains. Cumulative GDP loss due to disruptions in economic organization exceeds that of physical destruction by a factor of 20. This contrast is explained by how the economy reacts to different shocks. A "capital destruction only" is like some natural disasters: in a well-functioning economy, its effects on investment are limited (-22% in simulations), as capital can be rapidly rebuilt and repercussions contained. In comparison, economic disorganization reduces investments significantly (-80% in simulations) and effects propagate over time.

Despite the massive negative effects and the sharp decline in the economic indicators, many economists believe that the Syrian economy has been able to continue and has not collapsed, where Gardi (2017) argues that the success of the economy to survive is an

economic miracle in the harsh conditions experienced by the country, which is attributed to four main reasons:

- 1- The long experience gained in dealing with the economic sanctions and the conditions of the siege, as happened during the 1980s.
- 2- Economic support by friendly countries, such as Iran and Russia.
- 3- Diversity of the Syrian economy, which enabled the state to reach self-sufficiency in most economic sectors before the war.
- 4- The existence of a shadow economy, which becomes more active at the time of crises.
- 5- The existence of a good reserve of strategic goods before the crisis.

A number of studies have been conducted on the subject of the present study, where Jaffar (2017) conducted a study that aimed to identify the impact of strategic planning on crisis management at public institutions in Jerusalem suburbs in Palestine for minimizing the risks and crises facing public institutions. The descriptive analytical method was used through a questionnaire which was distributed to 850 employees. The results of the study showed that strategic planning in public institutions contributed to the reduction of the potential problems and that the lack of explanation introduced to employees declined the effectiveness of crisis management. Moreover, the lack of employees' involvement in strategic planning was an obstacle to solving problems. Abu Rumman (2016) linked between exercising transformational leadership and being ready to manage crises at the Arab Potash Company and the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company. The study sample was composed of (359) male and female workers from the two companies. The results revealed that the exercise of transformational leadership accounts for (64.1%) of the crisis management preparedness and the most effective transformational leadership in crisis management preparedness is the empowerment dimension, followed by

the individual consideration and then by the brainstorming dimension.

On the other hand, Janssen & Brumby (2015) accomplished a study to investigate how individuals in their multiple tasks can adapt to new strategies and adopt an optimal strategy to achieve the tasks assigned to them. The study was conducted on (24) participants working in dual-tasking companies. It was found that the change in tasks and monetary compensations together affected the strategy adopted by individuals in achieving the tasks entrusted to them and that the change in the adopted strategy affected their performance levels in each task, the matter which was reflected in the final result on the overall performance of the organization. Lusia (2013) discussed how organizations deal with crisis management and confront crises according to their nature. The study used the methodology of historical research in previous studies and methods of managing past crises and how to deal with them, as they were divided into two main types: natural crises and man-made crisis. The results revealed that members of organizations have to understand the steps of crises management and develop appropriate strategies and leadership models for managing crises effectively and that organizations should evaluate existing strategies before building new ones. Furthermore, Al Kubaisy and Hussien (2013) conducted a study that aimed to determine the role of strategic planning in the effectiveness of crisis management over the stages of crisis management. The sample consisted of (76) managers in the Ministry of Planning in Iraq. The results found that the Ministry of Planning used strategic planning with all its indicators for crisis management and found that the contribution of change in strategic planning in order to achieve positive change in the effectiveness crisis management. In turn, Tayauova (2011) conducted a

study to examine the relationship between the international entrepreneurial orientation and strategic adaptation of the companies in the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The study sample consisted of 114 managers and owners of Turkish companies in two countries. The researcher used the analytical descriptive method through a questionnaire. The study showed a positive relationship between the dimensions of international entrepreneurial orientation and the strategic adoption of Turkish companies working in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Also, Unluet al. (2010) fulfilled a study that aimed to clarify the extent of evolution of crisis and disaster management systems of the government in the Turkish system. The study revealed a governmental failure in the field of crisis management, as the Turkish system has a significant problem of coordination and organization where there is no clear mechanism for cooperation and management among the institutions working in crisis and disaster management. This causes duplication in the system and therefore, plans and actions fail in the case of implementation. Regarding crisis management, Brent (2004) executed a study entitled: "Chaos, crises and disasters: A strategic approach to crises management in the tourism industry", which focused on the strategic approach to crisis management. The results of the study exposed the need of tourism organizations to flexibility, continuous monitoring and design and implementing effective strategies to deal with crises. The study emphasized the need of organizations to use the holistic approach for crisis management and restructuring their administrative structures.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study relied on the analytical descriptive approach, through the literature related to strategic adoption and crisis management, available in books, articles, previous studies and published studies. In addition, data was collected from the field by a questionnaire designed and distributed to the study

sample to cover the surveyed areas and their dimensions. For this purpose, the researcher formed an assistant research team consisting of (5) members to help the researcher distribute the questionnaire to the study sample members and help them answer the open two questions.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The study population consisted of all employees at six Syrian governmental ministries and institutions, which are directly responsible for managing the Syrian economy and drawing the economic policies of the state, including: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade, Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection, Ministry of Industry, State Planning Commission and Central Bank of Syria. The study sample consisted of the employees at upper and middle administrative positions at those ministries and institutions under job titles (general manager, assistant/ deputy general manager, head of main department, head of department) and amounting to (172) employees, according to the Department of Personnel at each ministry or institution. Upper and middle administrations were selected as the study sample, because adopting economic strategies is done at those two administrations.

3.2 INSTRUMENT RELIABILITY

In order to investigate the reliability of the questionnaire, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was calculated on a survey sample from outside the study sample (30). Table 1 shows that the coefficients are suitable for the purpose of conducting the study, because all coefficients are higher than 0.7.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha
Adopting strategic change	0.88
Interaction with the environment	0.82
Strategic synergy	0.79
Strategic adaption as a whole	0.85
Changing path strategy	0.84
Crisis fragmentation strategy	0.73
Crisis containment strategy	0.91
Crisis exhausting strategy	0.77
Reserve mobilization strategy	0.82
Economic crisis management as a whole	0.87

4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The number of questionnaire forms distributed to the study sample was (172), while the number of questionnaire

forms retrieved and valid for the purposes of analysis was (116), with a rate of recovery of (67.44%). Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of the functional characteristics of the sample of the study.

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages according to the study variables

	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Job Title	General manager	3	2.59%
	Assistant/ deputy general manager	14	12.07%
	Head of the main department	28	24.14 %
	Head of the department	71	61.20 %
Institution Name	Ministry of Finance	13	11.21 %
	Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade	20	17.24%
	Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection	27	23.28 %
	Planning and International Cooperation Commission	21	18.10%
	Ministry of Industry	26	22.41 %
	Central Bank of Syria	9	7.76 %
Total		116	100 %

4.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The First Question: What is the practicing level of strategic adaption by the Syrian governmental ministries/institutions?

In order to answer this question, means and standard deviations of the practicing level of strategic adaption by Syrian governmental ministries and institutions were found and Table (3) presents the results.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of the level of strategic adaption

N	Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Adopting strategic change	3.52	0.750	Moderate
2	Interaction with the environment	3.04	0.770	Moderate
3	Strategic synergy	3.95	0.890	High
	Strategic adaption as a whole	3.50		Moderate

Table 3 displays that the general level of practicing strategic adaption by Syrian governmental ministries and institutions was moderate with a mean of (3.50). It also represents that the means ranged between (3.04) and (3.95), where the dimension "strategic synergy" ranked first with the highest mean (3.95) and a high level, followed by the dimension "adopting strategic change" with a mean of (3.52) and a moderate level, while the dimension "interaction with

the environment" came last with a mean of (3.04) and a moderate level. The Table also shows that the standard deviations ranged between (0.75) and (0.89) which indicates the convergence of the study sample responses.

1. Adopting Strategic Change

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of adopting strategic change

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	The ministry/institution draws multiple scenarios to prepare for change.	3.45	0.860	Moderate
2	The ministry/institution creates strategies to counter the changeable conditions.	3.97	0.920	High
3	The ministry's/institution's operations enable to make decisions quickly when conditions change.	3.32	0.760	Moderate
4	The ministry/ institution conducts a survey of the work environment to reduce the threats it faces.	3.27	0.890	Moderate
5	The ministry/ institution utilizes its resources to respond to the opportunities available.	3.62	0.640	Moderate
	Adopting strategic change as a whole	3.52		Moderate

Table 4 demonstrates that the general level of adopting strategic change as a whole was moderate, with a mean of (3.52). It is obvious that the means ranged between (3.27) and (3.97), with the item "The ministry/ institution creates strategies to counter the changeable conditions" ranking first with the highest mean (3.97) and a high level. The item "The ministry/ institution utilizes its resources to respond to the opportunities available" came second with a mean of (3.62)

and a moderate level, whereas the item "The ministry/ institution conducts a survey of the work environment to reduce the threats it faces" came third with a mean of (3.27) and a moderate level. The Table presents that the standard deviations ranged between (0.64) and (0.92) and that refers to the convergence of the study sample responses.

2. Interaction with the Environment

Table 5. Means and standard deviations of interaction with the environment

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
6	The ministry/institution collects information about the external environment.	3.77	0.980	High
7	The ministry/ institution owns systems to exchange information with the external environment.	3.02	0.720	Moderate
8	The ministry/institution encourages employees to interact with the external environment	2.79	0.830	Moderate
9	The ministry/institution provides adequate resources of its tasks and activities for interaction with the external environment.	2.85	1.08	Moderate
10	The ministry/institution develops the employees' knowledge to perform activities of interaction with the external environment.	2.80	0.800	Moderate
	Interaction with the environment as a whole	3.04		Moderate

According to Table 5, it is clear that the general level of interaction with the environment as a whole was moderate, where the mean was (3.04). The means ranged between (2.79) and (3.77), where the item "The ministry/institution collects information about the external environment" came first with the highest mean (3.77) and a high level, followed by the item "The ministry/ institution owns systems to exchange information with the external environment" which came second with a mean of (3.02) and a moderate level.

Last came the item "The ministry/institution encourages employees to interact with the external environment" comes with a mean of (2.79) and a moderate level. Table 5 also shows that the standard deviations ranged between (0.72) and (1.08) and that refers to the convergence of the study sample responses about the items, except for item (9).

3. Strategic Synergy

Table 6. Means and standard deviations of strategic synergy

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
11	Individuals working at the ministry/institution from various levels cooperate to accomplish complex tasks in hard circumstances.	3.94	0.840	High
12	The ministry's/institution's departments share efforts in order to face risks and threats.	3.87	0.660	High
13	The ministry's/institution's departments keep open communication between each other.	3.95	0.780	High
14	The ministry/institution conducts effective communication and alliances with friendly countries to obtain their support and benefit from their experience.	4.06	0.81	High
	Strategic Synergy as a whole	3.95		High

The results in Table 6 illustrate that the general level of strategic synergy as a whole was high, with a mean of (3.95). The means ranged between (3.87) and (4.06), where the

item "The ministry conducts effective communication and alliances with friendly countries to obtain their support and benefit from their experience" took the

lead with the highest mean (4.06) and a high level. The item "The ministry's departments keeps open communications between each other" came second with a mean of (3.95) and a high level, whereas the item "The ministry's/institution's departments share efforts in order to face risks and threats" came last with a mean of (3.87) and a high level. The Table also presents that the standard deviations ranged between

(0.66) and (0.84), which refers to the convergence of the study sample responses about the items.

The Second Question: What is the practicing level of economic crisis management strategies by the Syrian governmental ministries/ institutions?

Table 7. Means and standard deviations of the level of economic crisis management strategies

N	Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Changing Path Strategy	3.60	0.91	Moderate
2	Reserve Mobilization Strategy	3.39	0.82	Moderate
3	Crisis Exhausting Strategy	3.91	0.96	High
4	Crisis Fragmentation Strategy	3.77	0.70	High
5	Crisis Containment Strategy	3.05	1.04	Moderate
	Economic crisis management strategies as a whole	3.54		Moderate

In order to answer this question, means and standard deviations of the practicing level of economic crisis management strategies by the Syrian governmental ministries/institutions were found and Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7 displays that the general level of economic crisis management strategies by Syrians governmental ministries/institutions is moderate with mean (3.54). It also shows that the means ranged between (3.05) and (3.91), where the dimension "crisis exhausting strategy "came first with the highest mean (3.91) and a high level, followed by

the dimension "crisis fragmentation strategy" with a mean of (3.77) and a high level, while the dimension "crisis containment strategy" came last with a mean of (3.05) and a moderate level. Table 7 also shows that the standard deviations ranged between (0.70) and (1.04), which indicates the convergence of the study sample responses, except for dimension (5).

1. Changing Path Strategy

Table 8. Means and standard deviations of changing path strategy

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
15	The ministry/ institution applies changing path strategy to face the challenges of the current economic crisis.	3.73	0.87	High
16	The changing path strategy has a positive impact on the performance of the ministry's/institution's work.	3.09	1.16	Moderate
17	The ministry/ institution changes its approach to deal with the current crisis according to its intensity at each stage.	4.12	0.880	High
18	The ministry/ institution periodically reviews its applicable strategies.	3.48	0.690	Moderate
	Changing path strategy as a whole	3.60		Moderate

Based on the results in Table 8, it is a clear that the

general level of changing path strategy as a whole was

moderate with a mean of (3.60). The means ranged between (3.09) and (4.12), with the highest level of application for the item (The ministry/ institution changes its approach to deal with the current crisis according to its intensity at each stage) with a mean of (4.12) and a high level, whereas the item (The ministry/ institution applies the changing path strategy to face the challenges of the current economic crisis) came second with a mean of (3.73) and a high level. The item (The changing path strategy has a positive impact on the

performance of the ministry's/institution's work) came last with a mean of (3.09) and a moderate level. The Table also shows that the standard deviations ranged between (0.69) and (1.16), which refers to the convergence of the study sample responses about the items, except for item (16).

2. Reserve Mobilization Strategy

Table 9. Means and standard deviations of reserve mobilization strategy

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
19	The ministry/ institution had sufficient reserves of materials and human resources before the crisis, which helped it cope with the repercussions of the current crisis.	3.45	0.86	Moderate
20	The ministry/ institution has sufficient cash reserves to counter the repercussions of the current crisis.	3.22	0.72	Moderate
21	The ministry/ institution prepares contingency plans for addressing the intensive shortage of resources.	3.51	0.92	Moderate
	Reserve mobilization strategy as a whole	3.39		Moderate

Table 9 shows that the general level of reserve mobilization strategy as a whole was moderate, with a mean of (3.39). The means ranged between (3.22) and (3.51), where the item (The ministry/ institution prepares contingency plans for addressing the intensive shortage of resources) came first with a mean of (3.51) and a moderate level, whereas the item (The ministry/ institution has sufficient cash reserves to counter the repercussions of the

current crisis) came last with a mean (3.22) and a moderate level. The Table also shows that the standard deviations ranged between (0.72) and (0.92), which indicates the convergence of the study sample responses about the items, where all items were converged with values less than 1.00.

3. Crisis Exhausting Strategy

Table 10. Means and standard deviations of crisis exhausting strategy

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
22	You believe that crisis exhausting strategy is suitable for treating the crisis.	4.12	0.93	High
23	The ministry/institution analyzes the content and dimensions of the crisis for exhausting it.	3.40	1.10	Moderate
24	The ministry/institution recognizes the existence of the crisis in order to ensure that it is properly addressed.	4.23	0.85	High
	Crisis exhausting strategy as a whole.	3.91		High

The results in Table 10 show that the general level of crisis exhausting strategy as a whole was high, with a mean

of (3.91). The means ranged between (3.40) and (4.23), where the item "The ministry/institution recognizes the

existence of the crisis in order to ensure that it is properly addressed "came in the first place with the highest mean (4.23) and a high level, whereas the item" The ministry/ institution analyzes the content and dimensions of the crisis for exhausting it "came last with a mean of (3.40) and a moderate level. The Table also shows that the standard

deviations ranged between (0.85) and (1.10), which refers to the convergence of the study sample responses about the items, except for item (23).

4. Crisis Fragmentation Strategy

Table 11. Means and standard deviations of crisis fragmentation strategy

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
25	The ministry/ institution has sufficient information about the nature of the crisis it faces.	4.36	0.59	High
26	The ministry/ institution conducts the necessary studies to determine the main conflicting factors causing the crisis.	3.54	0.75	Moderate
27	The ministry/ institution relies on experts and specialists to break up the current crisis.	3.88	0.81	High
28	The ministry/institution divides the crisis into parts and deals with each part to facilitate the resolution of the crisis as a whole.	3.32	0.77	Moderate
	Crisis fragmentation strategy as a whole	3.77		High

The results in Table 11 demonstrate that the general level of crisis fragmentation strategy as a whole was high, with a mean of (3.77). The means ranged between (3.32) and (4.36), where the item "The ministry/ institution has sufficient information about the nature of the crisis it faces " took the first place with the highest mean (4.36) and a high level, followed by the item "The ministry/ institution relies on experts and specialists to break up the current crisis" with a mean of (3.88) and a high level, whereas the item "The ministry/institution divides the crisis into parts and deals

with each part to facilitate the resolution of the crisis as a whole" came last with a mean of (3.32) and a moderate level. Table 11 also shows that the standard deviations ranged between (0.59) and (0.81), which refers to the convergence of the study sample responses about the items, where all items were converged with vales less than 1.00.

5. Crisis Containment Strategy

Table 12. Means and standard deviations of crisis containment strategy

N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
29	The ministry/ institution depends on work teams inside it for containing the crisis.	2.97	0.86	Moderate
30	All employees in the ministry/ institution commit to the measures taken to contain the crisis.	3.07	1.21	Moderate
31	The ministry/ institution could freeze the crisis to a specific extent for containing the crisis.	3.90	1.03	High
32	The ministry/ institution is negotiating with some of the parties contributing to the current crisis.	2.29	0.91	Low
	Crisis containment strategy as a whole	3.05		Moderate

Table 12 shows that the general level of crisis

containment strategy as a whole was moderate, with a

mean of (3.05). The means ranged between (2.29) and (3.90), where the item "The ministry/ institution could freeze to a specific extent for containing the crisis "came first with the highest mean (3.90) and a high level, followed by the item "All employees in the ministry/ institution commit to the measures taken to contain the crisis " with a mean of (2.87) and a moderate level, while the item " The ministry/ institution is negotiating with some of the parties contributing to the current crisis" came last with a mean of (2.29) and a low level. The Table also shows that the standard deviations range between (0.86) and (1.21), where items (29, 32) refer to the convergence of the study sample

responses about the items, whereas the rest of items indicate the divergence of responses about these items, with values higher than 1.00.

The Third Question: What is the impact of practicing strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war?

In order to answer this question, simple linear regression was used for the practicing level of strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies under the Syrian war, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Simple linear regression analysis for the practicing level of strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies

Independent variable	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R-square	F	Sig.
Adopting strategic change	0.451	8.117	0.000	0.632	0.521	96.342	0.000
Interaction with the environment	0.362	7.243	0.000				
Strategic synergy	0.493	8.545	0.000				

Dependent Variable: economic crisis management strategies.

Table 13 illustrates a statistically significant impact at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the practicing level of strategic adaption on economic crisis management strategies. It also shows that R-square is (0.521), which means that the dimensions of strategic adaption as a whole interpret 52.1% of the total economic crisis management strategies. It is also clear that there is a statistically significant positive impact for adopting strategic change on economic crisis management strategies as a whole, as t value is 8.117 with Sig. 0.000. The dimension of interaction with the environment has a statistically significant positive impact on economic crisis management strategies as a whole, since t value is 7.243 with Sig. 0.000. Furthermore, strategic synergy has a statistically significant positive impact on economic crisis management strategies as a whole, because t value is 8.545 with Sig. 0.000. T test indicates that all the coefficients are statistically significant at 5% significance

level, as the t-values are between 7.24 and 8.545, which are higher than the critical value (1.96).

The Fourth Question: What are the procedures which the ministries/ institutions have taken to address the current economic crisis?

According to respondents' answers of this question, the most important procedures which have been taken by ministry/institution can be classified into 3 categories as follows:

Economic and trade procedures:

Executive Procedures

- 1- Preventing the importation of many products that consume foreign exchange reserves, such as new cars and luxury goods.
- 2- Reliance on private sector companies to import materials that the Syrian government is not allowed

to import due to economic sanctions.

- 3- Contracting to import consumer goods, which are not existing in Syria, in sufficient quantities from friendly countries, such as Lebanon, Iran, Russia and China.
- 4- Opening a credit line with Iran one billion dollars' worth to provide oil derivatives and other goods.
- 5- Reducing the prices of 1550 food types from 10 to 40 per cent, 836 clothing types from 10 to 50 per cent, 3269 household equipment, 289 manufacturing materials and 988 electric tools, by 15%, as well as reducing the prices of 1204 types of detergents by 25%.
- 6- Tightening the rationing control on the markets through organizing a large number of ration punishments in all governorates on a daily basis.
- 7- Holding training courses organized by the ministry/institution for managers of companies and institutions in the field of development and administrative reform, as well as courses for rationing supervisors to supply the trade directorates in the provinces with sufficient and effective food control cadres to tighten control on prices of goods and consumables in different markets.
- 8- Opening new halls for the Syrian Institution for Trade and establishing a number of exhibitions in those halls, such as the exhibition of school supplies, among others and selling the supplies at low prices in comparison with private sector.
- 9- Automating the work systems of grain distribution centers in the governorates and monitoring the centers with cameras to prevent waste.

Financial and Monetary Procedures

- 1- Pumping part of the foreign exchange reserves in the markets to adjust the exchange rate of the Syrian lira.
- 2- Increasing allocations of running spending in the state budget significantly at the expense of investing spending in order to cover the expenses of war.

- 3- Flexibility in the monetary policy procedures according to the new circumstances, where the Central Bank of Syria has determined an interest rate of 7% on deposits in banks for a month, considering it the reference price through which the interest rates have been determined for the rest of periods, in addition to identifying the interest rate on investment certificates at 10 percent, while interest rates on deposits for more than one month have not been determined, as it is up to the working banks to determine them according to their vision and need for liquidity. The banks were previously required at the beginning of the crisis to adapt fixed rates for each specific period of time (7 percent from 1 to 3 months, 8 percent from 4 to 6 percent, 9 percent from 7 to 9 months, 10 percent from 10 months to one year, 10 percent up to 20 percent for more than 1 year). In addition, full freedom was given to deposit money in banks with foreign currencies and withdraw them with their accrued interest, after this was not allowed at the beginning of economic crisis.
- 4- Allowing recently money transfer in foreign currency to Syria and receiving it in cash in foreign currency, while the previous procedure forced the owners of remittances to receive their money in Syrian lira.

Administrative Procedures

- 1- Activating the one-stop shop for investors to facilitate and accelerate investment procedures and make them limited to one place.
- 2- Establishing new centers under the name of Citizen Service Center to facilitate procedures for citizens.
- 3- Establishing many vocational rehabilitation courses to provide job opportunities for the unemployed.

The Fifth Question: What are the obstacles which have faced the ministries/ institutions in managing the crisis?

Based on respondents' answers of this question, the most important obstacles which have faced ministries/ institutions were as follows:

- 1- The problem of smuggling through the entering of a lot of smuggled materials to the Syrian markets in illegal ways, which was harmful to the local products.
- 2- Continuous volatility of the exchange rate of the Syrian lira against the dollar.
- 3- The sharp decline in the country's foreign exchange reserves to reach \$ 700 million after it was \$18 billion before the war.
- 4- Lack of skilled labor as a result of the migration of a large number of young people and scientific qualifications outside the country as a result of the war.
- 5- Exacerbation the financial and administrative corruption in various economic sectors due to the war conditions.
- 6- Significant decline the industrial and agricultural

production during the crisis years.

- 7- Trade balance deficit through a significant drop in exports.
- 8- Decline in revenues of the state budget, worsening of the state budget deficit.
- 9- The harsh economic sanctions imposed by the European Union and Western countries on Syria in the energy, oil, financial and commercial sectors.
- 10- Stopping of foreign investments and the departure of a significant number of domestic investments outside Syria.

4.3 HYPOTHESIS TEST OF THE STUDY

H. There is a positive correlation between practicing strategic adaption and economic crisis management strategies under the circumstances of the Syrian war.

In order to test the hypothesis of the study, Pearson correlation was used as Table 14 illustrates.

Table 14. Pearson correlation between strategic adaption and crisis management strategies

	Strategic Adaption	Crisis Management
Strategic Adaption Pearson Correlation	1	0.672**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
N	15	116
Crisis Management Pearson Correlation	0.672**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
N	116	15

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 14 indicates that there is a positive correlation between strategic adaption and economic crisis management strategies. This result enhances the previous result on the existence of a statistically significant impact between both variables. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study is accepted.

5. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the long experience gained by the Syrian economic planners in dealing with crises and economic siege of the last century, the diversification of the Syrian economy before the war and its ability to

build an effective network of relations with important international parties have played a role in the economy's steadfastness in the current crisis. These insights have been embodied through the results of the current study from a strategic perspective by demonstrating a good level of flexibility and rapid response by governmental ministries and institution, which has manifested in the search for alternatives and contingency plans for each stage, in addition to an acceptable level of strategic adaptation of Syria's economic decision-makers during the crisis years, which has enabled the state to coexist with and manage the crisis, in a way that prevented the collapse of economy, stopping it at a certain level of decline and then beginning a gradual recovery. The significant lesson from this study for those involved in the economic affairs of countries is to benefit from its findings and recommendations and to work on building the economy and preparing it to be flexible and strategically adaptive in a way that allows it to face any crisis, no matter how severe it might be, by diversifying the sources of state income, balancing all sectors of the economy and adopting an appropriate economic model to the circumstances and nature of the country, away from the ready molds and full economic dependence on other countries, taking into account benefiting from the experiences of others to avoid the occurrence of similar economic crises to those which occurred in some countries.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study provides recommendations based on the results of the study, in addition to general recommendations which will benefit the Syrian economy from the researcher's perspective.

- 1- Forming a committee of senior experts from the six ministries/institutions to develop adaptive strategies for managing the crisis and reviewing them periodically every 6 months.
- 2- Creating boundary spanning units at the six ministries/institutions considered to interact more with the external environment to adapt appropriately to changes and crises as they occur.
- 3- Giving a bigger role to the State Planning Commission, which makes it have the tools that enable it to predict the surrounding environment and plan for the state on this basis.
- 4- Reducing the domestic demand of foreign exchange through control of imports and seizure of smuggling operations and speculation.
- 5- Creating a reserve fund under the supervision of the Central Bank for use only in times of crises through the allocation of 2% of the annual government budget, where this fund is separate from the foreign exchange reserve in the Central Bank.
- 6- Transforming all profitable state companies into a participatory system in accordance with the shares of stocks with the private sector.
- 7- Reviewing the structure of interest rates on deposits and loans in Syrian lira and US dollar.
- 8- Supporting the national industry and exports by helping exporters reach potential markets through agreements with friendly countries, such as Iran, Iraq, China, Russia, ...etc. for securing the participation of Syrian companies in foreign exhibitions.
- 9- Forming a special office to attract the funds of Syrians from abroad for investment through certain facilities and procedures, noting that these funds are estimated at more than \$ 100 billion, according to economic experts.
- 10- Creating a modern and fair tax system that attracts investments and solves the problem of weak revenues and tax evasion.
- 11- Combating financial and administrative corruption by accelerating the transition to e-government system.

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