

Exploring the Role of Strategic Physiognomy in Driving Strategic Renewal: A Case Study of KAR Group in Erbil

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Abstract

This study intends to explore the role of strategic physiognomy in facilitating strategic renewal. Based on the research objectives, the research problem was clearly articulated as a series of questions: Is there a statistically significant relationship between Strategic Physiognomy and Strategic Renewal inside Kar Group in Erbil City?

Researchers employ analytical descriptive methodologies. This study examines hypotheses and analyzes the interrelationships and effects of research variables. The research sample comprises a subgroup of leaders from the Kar Group in Erbil City. Kar Group leaders in Erbil City numbered 53. A representative sample of 53 questionnaires was distributed. There were 46 questionnaires suitable for statistical analysis. The hypotheses were tested with SPSS 26.

The study produced several conclusions, one of which indicates that the analysis and diagnosis reveal that Kar Group's management actively seeks and discovers new products that surpass those of its competitors. The study also provided a series of recommendations. The organization's management should emphasize the knowledge and skills of its workers to take advantage of available opportunities.

Keywords: Strategic Physiognomy, Strategic Renewal, Strategic Management, KAR GROUP.

JEL classification: L620, L190.

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1. Introduction

In an ever-evolving business landscape, the ability of organizations to adapt and renew their strategies is paramount to their long-term success. One critical aspect of strategic renewal is the role of information technology in driving this process, particularly in the context of e-commerce disruption (Xiao, et al. 2018). The case study of Kar Group in Erbil provides a unique opportunity to investigate the interplay between strategic physiognomy and strategic renewal, and how IT-based innovations can facilitate this transformation (Tenggono, et al. 2024). Strategic renewal has been defined as a "rethinking of the company's directions and the opportunities available to it" (Balawi and Alkshali, 2022), or a management philosophy that involves investing in organizational capabilities to explore and exploit new opportunities through structural, cultural, and technological modifications in response to environmental changes. This process is not without its challenges, as evidenced by the painful transformations undergone by once-successful companies like General Motors, Sears, and IBM (Xiao, et al. 2018).

Kar Group, a distinguished commercial conglomerate located in Erbil, Iraq, has a portfolio of market-leading enterprises primarily engaged in construction, engineering, property investment and development, and general trading. The business has broadened its scope along the building supply chain and has moved into performance and collector automobiles, travel and leisure, and equestrian activities. It presents a compelling illustration of how strategic renewal can be influenced by a distinctive element: the strategic significance of physiognomy. Physiognomy, the practice of assessing an individual's character or personality based on their external appearance, has historically captivated diverse disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and business management. This study examines the crucial influence of physiognomy on the strategic renewal initiatives implemented by Kar Group, a diversified enterprise engaged in the construction, real estate, and hospitality sectors.

The strategic physiognomy of the organization, or the unique combination of its resources and capabilities, plays a crucial role in determining the path of strategic renewal. Firms with a strong resource endowment may opt for a more incremental, resource-complementing approach, while those with fewer resources may be forced to undertake a more discontinuous, resource-substituting transformation (Agarwal and Helfat, 2009). The role of information technology as an operand or operant resource in this process is also a key consideration. IT-based innovations can serve as either a complementary or a substitutive resource, depending on the firm's strategic physiognomy and the nature of the e-commerce disruption it faces (Fadhil, et al. 2024).

This research study analyzes the strategic renewal initiatives of Kar Groups to offer insights into the intricate relationship of strategic physiognomy, IT-driven innovations, and the trajectories of strategic renewal. The research examines how the company's leadership team has utilized their knowledge of physiognomy to recognize and develop talent, promote a culture of creativity, and adjust its business model to meet evolving market demands. This paper provides a distinctive viewpoint on the convergence of physiognomy and strategic management, based on an extensive case study analysis and insights from the current literature on strategic renewal and corporate entrepreneurship.

1.1 Research Problem

In a more dynamic and competitive global business landscape, businesses must perpetually adapt and refine their strategies to sustain relevance and attain sustainable growth. Strategic renewal, characterized as the reevaluation of organizational directions and capacities, has emerged as an essential requirement for enterprises functioning in unstable marketplaces. Notwithstanding its significance, the processes by which organizations attain strategic renewal are inadequately comprehended, especially within the framework of swiftly changing industries affected by digital transformation and e-commerce.

The strategic physiognomy of an organization—the distinctive amalgamation of its resources, capabilities, and structural characteristics—serves as a crucial factor in influencing its strategy for renewal. Some organizations implement modest modifications to enhance their current resources, while others engage in more dramatic reforms to replace obsolete skills. The relationship between strategic physiognomy and strategic renewal pathways remains inadequately examined, particularly in developing economies and family-owned businesses.

Kar Group in Erbil faces increasing challenges from e-commerce and digital transformation. Understanding how the organization employs its strategic attributes to tackle these challenges offers a substantial opportunity to bridge gaps in the existing studies. From this perspective, scholars contend that the research problem revolves around the following inquiries:

1. Does Kar Group in Erbil city engage in Strategic Physiognomy?
2. Is strategic renewal present in the company under examination, and what are its levels?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation between Strategic Physiognomy and Strategic Renewal within the scientific community?
4. Is there a statistically significant Regulation between Strategic Physiognomy and Strategic Renewal within the scientific community?

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to investigate the influence of strategic physiognomy on facilitating strategy renewal, utilizing the Kar Group in Erbil as a case study. The research specifically intends to:

1. Evaluate the degrees of Strategic Physiognomy indicators inside the analysed Company.
2. Evaluate the existence of Strategic Renewal dimensions inside the analysed Company.
3. Analyze the correlation between the Strategic Physiognomy variable and Strategic Renewal using modern statistical methodologies.
4. Analyze the regulation between the Strategic Physiognomy variable and Strategic Renewal using modern statistical methodologies.

1.3 Research Importance

This research is significant for its potential contributions to both the theoretical and practical aspects of strategic management and organizational rejuvenation. The significance of the study can be encapsulated as follows:

1. This study fills a significant need in the literature by exploring the relationship between strategic physiognomy and strategic renewal within a developing economy.

2. This research offers practical lessons for analogous firms, emphasizing how they may utilize their strategic characteristics to address external shocks, such as digitization and evolving consumer behaviours.

3. This research, based in Erbil, holds local and regional significance. The study aids policymakers and business leaders by presenting techniques that allow regional enterprises to maintain competitiveness in a swiftly changing global market, thereby promoting a resilient and inventive private sector.

4. This research offers a guide for decision-makers to recognize and execute effective renewal strategies that correspond with their organizational characteristics. This guarantees that companies may attain sustained growth while managing industry upheavals and uncertainty.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Initial Hypothesis: The relative significance of the search variables fluctuates according to respondents' perceptions of the research organization.

The second hypothesis posits an important correlation between Strategic Physiognomy and Strategic Renewal in the Kar Group located in Erbil.

The third hypothesis posits that Strategic Physiognomy greatly influences the Strategic Renewal of Leaders in the Kar Group located in Erbil.

1.5 Research Model

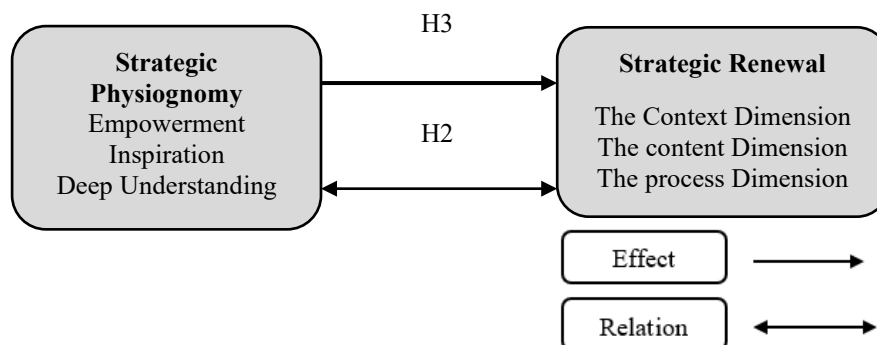


Figure 1. Research Model
Source: Prepared by researchers

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic physiognomy

Numerous notions have been articulated by authors, scholars, and enthusiasts in this domain that pertain to physiognomy, as researchers have utilized them in developing the notion of strategic physiognomy, derived from its essence, substance, and philosophy (Dabbas and Muhemmed 2018, 99). Furthermore, Strategic Physiognomy is a process that enables the predator to discern the truth, representing the way by which an individual can investigate even a little component of it, by employing a scientific approach devoid of subjective influence (Althabhawee and Al flawy, 2024, 229). (Kashkool, 2020, 49) Posited that strategic physiognomy entails an organization advancing toward its objectives by adeptly interpreting the competitive landscape in which it functions, achievable through the empowerment and inspiration of personnel to attain profound comprehension. Researchers assert that strategic physiognomy entails the company proactively engaging in its operations and imparting the principles of physiognomy to its personnel, enabling them to anticipate forthcoming changes in the competitive landscape. (Ali, et al. 2024, 157) elucidated strategic foresight as the methodologies through which an organization advances by comprehensively understanding employee behavior, consumer preferences, and environmental shifts, thereby motivating and empowering its leaders and subordinates to adapt to changing conditions and align with societal needs and aspirations, facilitating the progression toward the growth and maturity phases of the organization's life cycle, while ensuring its sustainability.

The researchers concurred (Wing 2015, 73), (Hussain 2018, 47), (Dabbas and Muhemmed 2018, 63), and the present study aligns with these scholars in employing the three dimensions, as this approach is deemed more acceptable and suitable for the field of study, given that this topic is characterized by modernity and ongoing debate regarding the delineation of dimensions:

- **Empowerment:** Empowerment is frequently characterized as a knowledge of one's environment and the capacity to influence results or attain objectives. Empowerment enables employees to behave autonomously and make independent judgments (Bergquist 2018, 10). According to (Al-Omari, et al. 2020, 843).
- **Inspiration:** It is a motivational condition that drives individuals to generate ideas; inspiration is crucial for strategic Physiognomy, and comprehending inspiration serves as the biological foundation for generating creative concepts, particularly when individuals transform these ideas into products and services (Spinou 2020, 96).
- **Deep Understanding:** In an era of quick development, people need to utilize clever and innovative approaches to solve their problems because there are frequently pressing responsibilities and challenges that cannot be disregarded (Burke 2017, 43).

2.2 Strategic Renewal

Strategic Renewal signifies the actions that allow the firm to alter its chosen trajectory and its methods to shape future investments by identifying possibilities. It is a dynamic and healing process that seeks to align organizational and environmental competencies, serving as a crucial factor for the organization's survival and the attainment of competitive advantage (Sulaiman 2019, 77). The Institute's management's proficiency in identifying external opportunities and allocating its resources and capabilities to innovate methods that facilitate prompt service delivery, catering to beneficiaries' preferences, whether individuals or institutions, in the labor market, while adapting to environmental changes (Al-Ofiri 2023, 200). Furthermore, it is adapting, altering, and enhancing the organization's strategic competitive capabilities to attain its strategic objectives (Press et al. 2019, 242). In addition, Strategic renewal is characterized as the transition from one strategy to another, rather than revisiting prior competitive strategies (Schmitt et al. 2018, 85). A leadership approach wherein the business aims to transform its markets or competitors within the industry by implementing a fundamental shift in its competitive strategy.

Today's understudied topic of strategic renewal requires years of careful investigation and analysis by scholars to develop and consolidate its notions. The researchers chose the most widely repeated and consensus-driven dimensions among experts to match the investigation. These aspects have a multidimensional conceptual framework that supports strategy renewal. According to researchers and scholars, these dimensions have been studied by (Kwee, et al. 2011), (Heyden 2012), (Rajes 2013), (Al-Yahdrawi 2015), (Sulaiman 2019), and (Atta et al.2022). The dimensions are context, content, and process. The next sections detail these three dimensions:

- **The Context Dimension:** - The study (Rajes 2013, 84) identifies two categories of strategic actions under the context dimension: internal and external actions conducted by the firm. Internal actions are characterized by the initiation of new ventures and the introduction of new products, whereas external actions pertain to mergers, alliances, and similar activities.

- **The content Dimension:** - The content dimension focuses on "what" strategic renewal initiatives are, according to (Leeuwen 2007, 110) and (Al-Hadrawi, 2015, 100), who both affirmed this. Describe the distinction between exploration and investment activities. Investment activities are described as "strategic renewal activities that invest in their current activities within the current geographical scope, or rationalize some activities and save costs, and sell some activities through mergers or acquisitions." In terms of exploration activities, strategic renewal broadens the organization's geographic reach or incorporates new operations into its existing ones.

- **The process Dimension:** - The number of strategic initiatives the company completes in a given timeframe determines strategy renewal frequency. The standard deviation of strategic renewal operations over a given duration is their

volatility. Assessing strategic renewal initiative frequency and volatility affects modern businesses' timeliness, robustness, and environmental responses. Leadership's views of the organization's link with its environment and the severity of environmental changes may affect their behavior throughout transitions. These differences demonstrate strategic renewal's popularity. Some organizations follow a set strategy for strategic renewal, while others adapt. These differences are assessed by strategy renewal initiative variability (Flier, 2003:45).

3. Research Methods

3.1 Methodology

To fulfill the aims and hypotheses of this investigation, a descriptive-analytical method was employed, utilizing several pertinent scientific sources. A questionnaire comprising a series of questions was developed and distributed to the target sample at Kar Group in Erbil City, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, employing a quantitative methodology. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26 software to evaluate the results.

3.2 Data collection method

The researchers employed a field study methodology for data collection, utilizing a questionnaire issued randomly to 46 Leaders (primary group leaders, subsidiary leaders, departmental leaders, and supervisors) within Kar Group in Erbil City, achieving a complete response rate of 100%. The questionnaire comprises two components. The initial section addresses the respondents' demographics, encompassing gender, education level, position, and years of experience. The second section examines the selected determinants, including institutional performance and the processes of knowledge collection, storage, distribution, and application. The questionnaire consists of 24 items intended to assess the model constructs. The inquiries were chosen from previous studies. The commodities had minor adjustments to align with the Kar group in the Kurdistan Region. The measurements from the previous study were altered, A five-point Likert scale with a range of 1 for "Strongly disagree" if the item average is 2 for "disagree" if the Mean is 3 for "Natural. If the Item is 4 for "agree," and if the Item is 5 for "Strong agree," then the result is "agree."

3.3 Normal Distribution Test

Reliability of measurements for all variables

Table 1

Variables	Number of questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic Physiognomy	10	0.862
Strategic Renewal	10	0.855
Overall	20	0.910

Source: Output of SPSS

Table 1 below presents the estimated values of Cronbach's coefficient utilized to assess the internal consistency of the measurement. Cronbach's alpha indicates that the scores for Strategic Physiognomy are 0.862, Strategic Renewal are 0.855, and all independent factors, along with the dependent variable, are 0.910, respectively. Table 1 indicates that all constructs have successfully passed the reliability assessment, with all α -values surpassing the suggested minimal threshold of Cronbach's alpha (Taber 2018).

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Data Analysis

In this section, the statistical findings of this investigation are presented. This part is Descriptive, reliability, correlation, and analysis using an in-depth linear regression model. The results are based on surveys given to leadership positions at Kar Group in Erbil City.

4.1.1 Strategic Physiognomy from a Descriptive Statistics Perspective

Descriptive Statistics about Strategic Physiognomy

Table 2

Items	Paragraph	Mean	SD	Agreement percentage
X1	Managers possess a profound understanding of the challenges and their ramifications.	3.35	1.016	67
X2	Managers offer solutions before finalizing the storytelling and knowledge dissemination.	3.63	0.974	72.6
X3	Managers engage with employees with sagacity and exceptional dependability.	3.63	0.826	72.6
X4	Managers exert significant authority over work performance.	3.52	0.960	70.4
X5	Managers assume complete accountability for decision-making.	3.41	1.147	68.2
X6	Managers can confront challenges and embrace risks.	3.22	1.147	64.4
X7	Managers possess a unified and concentrated vision, perceiving aspects that others overlook.	3.52	1.005	70.4
X8	They inspire and motivate others around them, fostering enthusiasm for optimal performance in their work.	3.30	1.051	66
X9	Managers promote the open expression of opinions and ideas among all employees.	3.41	1.087	68.2

Items	Paragraph	Mean	SD	Agreement percentage
X10	Managers are distinguished by their capacity to promote and invent varied approaches and methodologies in the workplace.	3.20	0.957	64
Overall		3.417	1.017	68.34

Source: Output of SPSS

The outcomes from Leaders Members Kar Group in Erbil City are detailed in Table 2 about the independent variable (X1-X10). The accessibility of Strategic Physiognomy demonstrates this. The arithmetic mean (3.417) and standard deviation (1.017) substantiate the conclusion that the Agreement percentage rate of 68.34% was attained.

Table 2 indicates that the most significant component of the independent variable (Strategic Physiognomy) is the sentence (X2), which asserts, "Managers provide solutions before concluding the storytelling and knowledge dissemination," and (X3), which asserts, "Managers interact with employees with wisdom and remarkable reliability." This outcome is corroborated by the Agreement percentage of 72.6, the arithmetic mean of 3.63, and the standard deviation. For X2, the value is 0.974, while for X3, it is 0.826. Statement (X10), the lowest tier among the assertions in this methodology, received consensus from 64% of the participants. It states, "Managers are characterized by their ability to foster and devise diverse strategies and methodologies in the workplace." The arithmetic mean was 3.20, while the standard deviation was 0.957.

4.1.2 Strategic Renewal from a Descriptive Statistics Perspective

Descriptive Statistics about Strategic Renewal

Table 3

Items	Paragraph	Mean	SD	Agreement percentage
Y1	The company's management articulates its expectations for the future state of the organization.	3.61	0.954	72.2
Y2	The Company possesses investment strategies aligned with the phases of achieving its future objectives.	3.54	0.721	70.8
Y3	The corporation undertakes a search and discovery process to develop new items that surpass those of its competitors.	3.65	0.795	73
Y4	The company's management have	3.30	0.813	66

Items	Paragraph	Mean	SD	Agreement percentage
	exceptional abilities in articulating innovative concepts.			
Y5	The company's management incentivizes employees who provide unique ideas that enhance excellence and innovation.	3.46	1.005	69.2
Y6	The company's management promptly addresses competitive demands in emerging areas.	3.48	0.888	69.6
Y7	The company's management seeks to invest in current possibilities ahead of competitors to fulfill its organizational goals.	3.48	0.960	69.6
Y8	The company's entrepreneurial efforts seek to deliver innovative items that correspond with its future aspirations.	3.41	0.858	68.2
Y9	The company's management prioritizes the expertise and talents of its personnel to capitalize on existing opportunities.	3.28	0.886	65.6
Y10	The company's management aims to enhance its cognitive capabilities to realize its future aspirations.	3.30	1.008	66
Overall	Overall	3.451	0.889	69.02

Source: Output of SPSS

Table 3 presents the results for (Y1-Y10), which denote the dependent variable (Strategic Renewal) derived from leadership positions at Kar Group in Erbil City. The overall arithmetic mean (3.451) and standard deviation (0.889) support the claim that this result was achieved when the Agreement percentage rate reached (69.2%).

The results in Table 3 indicate that the statement (Y3), which asserts "The corporation undertakes a search and discovery process to develop new items that surpass those of its competitors," is the most significant component of the dependent variable (Strategic Renewal). Seventy-three per cent of respondents agree with this assertion. The arithmetic mean was 3.65, and the standard deviation was 0.795. The assertion (Y9), the most basic level among the claims in this methodology, received consensus from 65.5% of the participants. The management of the organization prioritizes the skills and talents of its employees to leverage current opportunities. The arithmetic mean was 3.28, and the standard deviation was (0.886).

The Initial Hypothesis is validated, indicating that the importance of the search variables varies according to respondents' perceptions of the research company.

4.2 Correlation and Regression

Correlation analysis was employed to ascertain the link between independent and dependent variables. Regression analysis is a statistical technique employed to represent the functional connection between a response variable and a collection of explanatory or predictor factors. Subsequently, Simple Linear Regression Analysis was employed to ascertain explanatory variables, including Strategic Physiognomy that predict response variables (Strategic Renewal).

Pearson Correlation Between independent variables (Strategic Physiognomy) and dependent variable (Strategic Renewal)

Table 4

	Strategic Renewal	
Strategic Physiognomy	Pearson Correlation	0.677**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	40

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

Source: Output of SPSS

Table 4 demonstrated a robust positive significant correlation between the independent variable of Strategic Physiognomy and the dependent variable of Strategic Renewal. The P value was 0.000, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.677** at a significance level of 0.00. In the examined company, this results in enhanced Strategic Physiognomy and a rise in Strategic Renewal. The Second Hypothesis is accepted, demonstrating that the independent variable (Strategic Physiognomy) positively influences the dependent variable (strategic rejuvenation).

Simple Linear Regression Analysis between the Independent Variable (Strategic Physiognomy) and Dependent Variable (Strategic Renewal)

Table 4.4

	Coefficients			Model Summary	ANOVA	
	B	t	p-value	R-square	F	p-value
(Constant)	1.451	4.339	0.000	0.458	37.243	0.000
Strategic Physiognomy	0.586	6.103	0.000			

Source: Output of SPSS

Table 4 presents the ANOVA table assessing the goodness of fit for the explanatory variable (Strategic Physiognomy) concerning the response variable (Strategic Renewal), indicating model appropriateness with F=37.243 and P-Value=0.000.

The table above presents the results for the constant, slope, t-value, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The regression coefficient (B) for Strategic Physiognomy is 0.586, indicating that a rise of one unit in Strategic Physiognomy will result in a 0.586 increase in Strategic Renewal. The coefficient of determination (R^2) quantifies the extent to which variation in the dependent variable is accounted for by the independent variable. The calculation of the Coefficient (R^2) indicates that 45.8% of Strategic Physiognomy is influenced by Strategic Physiognomy itself, while the rest variation is attributed to other factors affecting Strategic Physiognomy. This result substantiates the third hypothesis, which posits a statistically significant moral influence relationship between Strategic Physiognomy and strategic renewal.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

1. The investigation revealed a high level of availability of Strategic Physiognomy techniques throughout the studied company.
2. Decision-makers ought to embrace adaptable strategies for renewal, emphasize IT-centric innovations, and synchronize their approaches with internal capabilities and external requirements.
3. The findings from the description and diagnosis indicated that the management of Kar Group Company engages in a search and discovery process to create new products that exceed those of its competitors.
4. A positive link exists between Strategic Physiognomy and Strategic Renewal.

5.2 Recommendations

1. KAR Group could enhance its strategy framework by improving leadership styles, organizational culture, and decision-making processes to better match with strategic renewal goals.
2. Consistently evaluate external elements, including market changes, competitive dynamics, and consumer inclinations, to guarantee that renewal tactics stay pertinent and efficient.
3. KAR Group must implement a systematic framework for ongoing strategic renewal, guaranteeing agility and adaptation to market fluctuations via regular performance assessments and innovation programs.
4. KAR Group must focus on training and leadership development initiatives to cultivate a culture of adaptability and strategic foresight, enabling managers to effectively drive renewal.

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