

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-53949

Date: 20/09/2025

Title: The Impact of Shifts in Banking Services Under Treasury Sanctions and the Intensification of Competition in the Iraqi Banking Environment.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Techn. Quality	✓			
Clarity		✓		
Significance	✓			

Reviewer Name: Dr. Bishwajit Rout

Date: 20/09/2025

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)

The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.

- Significance:** This research is significant as it analyzes the impact of U.S. Treasury sanctions on Iraqi banks, offering insights into how reliance on limited income sources leaves institutions vulnerable. By comparing sanctioned and non-sanctioned banks, it highlights the importance of diversification, compliance, and digital transformation. The findings guide policymakers, regulators, and banks in adopting sustainable strategies for resilience.
- Strength:** The study's strength lies in its comparative approach, examining two banks Middle East Bank (sanctioned) and National Bank of Iraq (non-sanctioned) as contrasting models. This method provides concrete evidence of how different strategies affect adaptability and sustainability. Its integration of quantitative financial indicators with qualitative analysis ensures a comprehensive understanding of banking performance under sanctions and competitive pressures.
- Key Insight:** The key insight is that banks dependent on a single income source, such as foreign currency sales, collapse under sanctions, while those with diversified revenue streams, advanced technology, and compliance adaptability thrive. The National Bank of Iraq's growth demonstrates that resilience stems from innovation and diversification, making digital transformation and international compliance central to long-term competitiveness in volatile environments.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Reviewer's Comment / Report

The paper titled “*The Impact of Shifts in Banking Services Under Treasury Sanctions and the Intensification of Competition in the Iraqi Banking Environment.*” analyzes the 2022 US Treasury sanctions' impact on Iraqi banking through comparative case studies of the sanctioned Middle East Bank and unsanctioned National Bank of Iraq (2016–2024). Findings show dependency on foreign currency auctions caused declines and losses for sanctioned banks, while diversified income, technological infrastructure, and compliance enabled adaptation and profit growth for others. Recommends flexible strategies, multi-bank relations, and transparency. Valuable insights for sanction-hit economies, despite small sample.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Streamline the narrative currently, it is lengthy and includes repeated historical background.
2. State the research gap more explicitly (e.g., lack of comparative studies on sanctioned vs. non-sanctioned Iraqi banks).
3. The problem statement could be shortened and made sharper with one clear research question.
4. The hypothesis should be linked directly to measurable indicators (e.g., profitability ratios, revenue diversification index).
5. Concepts could be tied better to the research context (Iraq's sanctions and competition).
6. Insert more recent data or statistics (e.g., number of active banks, % of unbanked population).
7. Use subheadings for clarity (structural challenges, technological challenges, customer trust).
8. Include more financial ratios (ROA, ROE, NPL ratios) to strengthen the quantitative analysis.
9. Provide statistical tests or trend analysis rather than descriptive comparisons only.
10. Avoid repeating earlier results word-for-word; instead, synthesize insights more concisely.
11. Prioritize recommendations into short-term vs. long-term actions.
12. Indicate specific stakeholders responsible (Central Bank, commercial banks, regulators).

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

The paper presents an important and timely analysis of Iraqi banking under U.S. sanctions, offering valuable insights through a comparative case study. Its strength lies in highlighting diversification as a resilience strategy. However, the paper requires revisions to reduce repetition, sharpen research questions, and incorporate more robust empirical analysis. With improvements in methodology, clarity, and updated references, the study has strong potential for publication. Addressing the identified weaknesses will make it suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.