

# THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ACHIEVING INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE IN NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS IN IRAQ

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## Abstract

Finding out how digital transformation contributes to national sports federations' institutional excellence is the goal of the study. Using correlational connections and the survey technique, the researchers employed a descriptive approach. Using the thorough enumeration approach, the study sample comprised 347 members of Iraq's national sports federations, representing 100% of the research community.. The survey sample, the preparation sample, and the application sample were divided. Scientific foundations were used in preparing the study scales (digital transformation and institutional excellence). The researchers concluded that federations that rely on digital transformation become more able to compete with other federations by providing innovative and value-added services and products. Digital transformation technologies enable sports federations to better understand customer needs through big data analysis. Digital transformation makes national sports federations more flexible in the face of rapid changes in performance and technology. The researchers recommended paying attention to the technology infrastructure in all aspects of digital transformation. National sports federations must pay more attention to an objective system for measuring and evaluating employee performance and strengthening the organizational structure of national sports federations so that it supports effective communication between different departments. Keywords: Digital transformation, institutional excellence, national sports federations

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## Introduction

Digital transformation is one of the most prominent innovations of our time. Digital transformation represents a significant competitive advantage for any organization, as possessing modern technology helps it advance, especially during crises. The need to digitize services has become more urgent, as organizations must demonstrate greater

flexibility and efficiency to allocate available resources and rebuild economies, in addition to meeting growing user expectations.

Digital transformation in sports occurs in three main areas: within the organization through streamlining business processes, in sports performance through data analysis, and in the fan experience through technologies such as iBeacons and blockchain payments. Digital transformation also includes new digital sports business models, big data analysis, and changing organizational culture through digitization. In the era of globalization and openness, organizational excellence has become a topic of widespread interest. Achieving organizational excellence requires effective leadership, flexible organizational structures, and the adoption of integrated policies that govern and regulate the organization's work. Organizational excellence reflects the extent to which an organization responds to internal and external environmental conditions and encompasses all sectors of the organization to achieve balance and interconnected performance. Since institutional excellence is a broad and inseparable notion, it is impossible for an organization to perform exceptionally well in one area while performing poorly in others. Two essential qualities of greatness in different areas of sports federations are balance and interconnection. It encompasses two aspects of contemporary management axes: the pursuit of excellence is the real objective of management, and all choices and activities taken by management, as well as the systems and processes that support them, must be distinguished by excellence.. The two dimensions are complementary and considered two sides of the same coin, and one cannot be achieved without the other. Technological advancements and reliance on data and numbers have become a fundamental requirement for sports federations. Excellence in building federations that rely on strategies that keep pace with the era of global change helps sports federations achieve excellence. Digital transformation helps improve the quality of services provided by sports federations, enhance management efficiency, raise transparency, and achieve a radical change in the services provided to beneficiaries in all fields, improving their experiences and productivity. The importance of this research lies in improving the institutional performance of national sports federations by achieving institutional excellence. The research results can be relied upon to improve the institutional performance of sports federations by adopting digital transformation.

## **1-2 Research Problem**

Based on the researchers' experience from their previous work in sports federations and conducting interviews with members of some administrative bodies of Iraqi national sports federations, achieving institutional excellence requires effective leadership, flexible organizational structures, and the adoption of integrated policies that govern and regulate the work of national sports federations. Institutional excellence reflects the extent to which sports federations respond to internal and external environmental conditions and encompasses all sectors of the organization to achieve balance and interconnectedness in performance. The research problem crystallized into identifying the role of digital transformation in achieving institutional excellence.

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### **1-3 Research Goals**

1. Creating metrics for institutional excellence and digital transformation in national sports federations.

2. Recognizing institutional excellence and digital transformation in Iraqi national sports federations.

3. Determining How Digital Transformation Helps Iraqi National Sports Federations Achieve Institutional Excellence

Research Topics 1–4

1-4-1 Human Domain: National Sports Federation members in Iraq

1-4-2 December 10, 2024–January 10, 2025 Time Domain

1-4-3 Spatial Domain: Headquarters of National Sports Federations

## **2. Field Procedures and Research Methodology**

### **2-1 Methods of Research**

Using a survey and correlational analysis, the researchers employed a descriptive methodology.

Applying the correlational and survey methods

2-2 The sample and the research community:

2-2-1 The scientific community:

To achieve the objectives of any research, it is necessary to first understand the original community and its characteristics, because using any method is incomplete unless the study community is accurately described. Therefore, the research community will include members of the Iraqi national sports federations, numbering (347), who were selected by the researchers using a comprehensive survey method.

2-2-2 The research sample:

After defining the characteristics of the research community, the researchers resorted to selecting an appropriate sample from it in preparation for applying the research to it. Therefore, the researcher selected his research sample of (347) members, representing (100%) of the research community, using the comprehensive survey method, as shown in Table (1). Therefore, the research sample was distributed as follows:

1- The exploratory experiment sample:

The exploratory experiment sample numbered (14) members, representing (4.03%), and they were chosen intentionally.

### **2- Preparation Sample:**

The sample for constructing the study's metrics (digital transformation, institutional excellence) included (200) members of the research community, representing (57.63%).

3- Application Sample:

The application sample included (100) members of the research community, representing (28.81%).

Table (1) shows the study community and samples for the national sports federations.

No.	Name of Federation	Population Size	Exploratory Sample	Construction Sample	Application Sample	Excluded Sample
1	Basketball	7	-	5	2	-
2	Handball	7	-	5	2	-
3	Volleyball	7	-	5	2	-
4	Weightlifting	7	-	5	2	-
5	Boxing	7	-	5	2	-
6	Wrestling	7	-	5	2	-
7	Tennis	7	-	4	2	1
8	Badminton	7	-	4	2	1
9	Swimming	7	-	4	3	-
10	Cycling	7	-	5	2	-
11	Equestrian	7	-	4	2	1
12	Fencing	7	-	4	2	1
13	Shooting	7	7	-	-	-
14	Archery	7	-	4	2	1
15	Taekwondo	7	-	4	2	1
16	Judo	7	-	4	2	1
17	Rowing	7	-	4	2	1
18	Athletics	7	-	4	3	-
19	Gymnastics	7	-	4	2	1
20	Table Tennis	7	-	4	2	1
21	Triathlon	7	-	4	2	1
22	Karate	7	-	5	2	-
23	Baseball & Softball	7	-	4	2	1
24	Sailing & Water Sports	7	-	4	2	1
25	Canoe	7	-	4	2	1
26	Chess	7	-	4	2	1
27	Billiards	7	-	4	2	1
28	Bowling	7	-	4	2	1
29	Bodybuilding	7	-	4	2	1
30	Powerlifting	7	-	5	2	-
31	Camel Racing	7	-	4	2	1
32	Kyokushin Kai	7	-	4	2	1
33	Kickboxing	7	-	4	2	1
34	Jujitsu & Kurash	7	-	4	2	1
35	Muay Thai	7	-	4	2	1
36	Wushu Kung Fu	7	-	4	2	1
37	Squash	7	-	4	3	-
38	Arm Wrestling	7	-	4	2	1
39	Corporate Sports	7	-	4	2	1
40	Crossball	7	-	4	2	1
41	Sports Medicine	7	-	4	2	1
42	University Sports	7	-	4	2	1
43	Sports for All	7	-	4	2	1

44	Travelers Club	7	-	4	2	1
45	Taikong Jutsu	7	-	4	2	1
46	Aerial Sports	7	-	4	2	1
47	Football Tennis	7	-	4	3	-
48	Kabaddi	7	7	-	-	-
49	Football	11	-	7	4	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>57.63</b>	<b>28.81</b>	<b>9.51</b>	

### 2-3 Research instruments, apparatus, and techniques:

Regardless of the instruments, information, or gadgets, this is the way the researcher may answer his issue. The instruments employed depend on the type of hypotheses (Mahjoub: 2005). (Observation, in-person interviews, references and sources, and support personnel) Study measures (digital transformation, institutional excellence) International Information Network (Internet) (pens, papers), hand calculator, HP electronic calculator

#### 2-4 Field Research Procedures:

To arrive at the results of the current research, the researchers followed the following steps:

##### 2-4-1 Defining the areas of study measures:

For the purpose of preparing digital transformation and institutional excellence, the researchers prepared the areas of research variables. After reviewing numerous studies in the field of sports management, the researchers identified several areas, namely:

1- Areas of the digital transformation measure (organizational culture, human resources, infrastructure).

2- Areas of the institutional excellence measure (organizational structure, development and change, innovation).

A panel of 17 sports management specialists were asked by the researchers what they thought about the areas' validity. Following data collection and transcription, the researcher identified viable regions using the Chi-square law. Since the computed Chi-square values exceeded the tabular value, the findings showed that all regions of the two measures were legitimate. Using a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of (1), the value of (3.84)

##### 2-4-1-1 Preparing the initial version of the study scales:

Preparing the initial version of the scales required several procedures, beginning with constructing the scale's paragraphs, determining the paragraph formulation method and its foundations, beginning paragraph formulation, and finally preparing the scale instructions and understanding the statements from the respondents. The following describes these procedures:

##### 2-4-1-2 Collecting and constructing the study scale paragraphs:

The scale paragraphs were collected and prepared by reviewing numerous scientific sources and theoretical studies related to the study's scales.

2-4-1-3 Determining the method for formulating the study scale items:

After reviewing the relevant theoretical sources and studies for the study scales, (14) items were formulated, distributed across (3) areas of digital transformation, and (14) items for institutional excellence, distributed across (3) areas.

2-4-4 Assessing the research scale items' validity:

The items were shown to seventeen experts in the field of sports management in order to assess their validity and eliminate those that were deemed invalid in each research area. The researcher collected the surveys and then transcribed the information. Valid items were identified using the Chi-square test. The findings demonstrated that the fourteen items on the digital transformation scale and the fourteen items on institutional excellence were valid.

2-4-5 Exploratory Experiment of the Study Scales:

The researchers conducted an exploratory experiment of the study scales on a sample of (14) members of national sports federations. The purpose of the experiment was to:

1. Determine the clarity of the scale's paragraphs.
2. Clarity of the scale's instructions.
3. The possibility of observing the scale's paragraphs within the allotted time.
3. The integrity, ease of understanding, and accuracy of the scale's paragraphs.

2-4-6 Preparation Experiment:

After completing the exploratory application procedures, the researchers began conducting the preparation experiment by applying the scales to a sample of (200) administrative members from the overall research community. This was done to obtain better results and generalize them. The larger the sample, the better the results. The goal was to conduct statistical analysis based on discriminatory ability. Internal consistency, as well as extracting validity and reliability indicators for the scales.

2-4-7 Statistical analysis of the study scale items

2-4-7-1 Validity A-Discrimination Capability (Two Extreme Groups): This is the capacity to differentiate between respondents with high and low scale questionnaire scores. In order to obtain the discriminatory ability of the scale's statements, the responses of the sample of (200) administrative members for statistical analysis were transcribed into a table containing the statement scores and the total score of each administrative member in the sample. They were arranged in ascending order from lowest to highest score, according to the total score. Then, the method of two extreme groups, with equal numbers in each group (27%), was used, as (27%) is considered one of the preferred percentages to determine the strength of the statement in distinguishing between the upper and lower groups. The results of the two groups' scores were then processed using the t-test for unrelated samples for each statement in the scales.

**B- Internal Consistency Coefficient:**

1. The relationship between the item's score and the field's score:

In order to determine the correlation coefficient value between the item score and the field's overall score, the researcher by obtaining Pearson's simple correlation coefficients for the building's sample members. Since the correlation values' error level values were below the



significance threshold (0.05), the correlation coefficient value between all scores was significant.

2. The relationship between the domain score and the scale's overall score:

This indicates that, based on the replies of the sample members (building), which included 200 administrative members, the domain assesses the same notion as the scale's overall score. Because the correlation values' error level values were below the significance threshold (0.05), the correlation coefficient value between the domain score and the scale's overall score across all fields was significant.

#### 2-4-7-2 Dependability

A test is considered dependable if it measures the intended outcome with a high degree of accuracy, precision, consistency, and objectivity. According to Hassanin (2001), consistency is the absence of irregular mistakes that affect scores. These errors can come from a variety of sources, some of which are related to the measuring instrument or the methods used to administer and correct the test, while others are related to the test takers.

The concept of reliability is one of the fundamental concepts in testing. Along with validity, it demonstrates the foundations that a test must meet in order for it to be valid, taking into account the importance of its validity. To verify the reliability of the scales, the researchers followed the following procedures:

A. Split-half: Because it saves time and effort, the split-half approach is one of the most used dependability techniques. Data from the sample members was used by the researchers. This approach is based on splitting the scale into two equal pieces after applying it to a certain group and figuring out the correlation coefficient between the two portions. The following are some benefits of this approach:

1. It prevents the examiner from having to retest or prepare an equivalent version of the test.
2. It eliminates the impact of changes that may occur in the examinee's scientific, psychological, and health status, which could then affect their performance on the test (Malham, 2000).

Odd and even paragraphs made up the two halves of the scale paragraphs. Since there are fourteen paragraphs on the digital transformation scale, we will obtain seven even and seven odd paragraphs. We will receive seven even paragraphs and seven odd paragraphs since the institutional excellence paragraphs are fourteen paragraphs long. The statistical software (spss) was used to derive the correlation coefficient between the two halves' total scores using the Pearson technique. The association coefficients for institutional excellence and digital transformation were 0.754 and 0.689, respectively. Stability for only half of the test is shown by the extracted correlation coefficient. To ensure that the test was completely stable, the researchers carried again The digital transformation scale and the institutional excellence scale both had strong reliability coefficients of 0.860 and 0.816, respectively, when the Spearman-Brown equation was used. B. The Cronbach's Alpha Formula:

This kind of dependability, which is regarded as one of the most popular and suitable phrases for scales, asserts internal consistency. For example, "the strength of correlations between items in the test" (Awda, 2000) is described. The idea behind this approach depends on how well each item correlates with the scale overall and how well things within the scale correlate

with one another. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is calculated as the average of the internal correlation items between the items. The statistical package (SPSS) was used to apply the Cronbach's alpha equation to a sample of 200 technical personnel. The reliability coefficient for the study scales was extracted, as shown in Table (8).

Table (2) shows (Pearson's correlation coefficient - Spearman-Brown equation) and the Cronbach's alpha equation.

Scale	Split-Half Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Pearson Correlation	Spearman-Brown Formula
Digital Transformation	0.689	0.816	0.899	
Institutional Excellence	0.754	0.860	0.850	

Institutional Excellence 0.754 0.860 0.850

## 2-5 Final Application of Study Measures:

After completing the preparation of the study measures, they were applied to the final application sample of (100) with the assistance of the support team, after all requirements were completed.

## 3-6 Statistical Methods:

- SPSS Statistical Package

## 3- Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results

Table (3) shows the values of the arithmetic means, standard deviations, (T) values, and significance level for the digital transformation measure.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	Degrees of Freedom	T Calculated	T Tabulated	Sig	Statistical Significance
Overall Scale	58.90	2.350	42	99	27.440	1.984	0.000	Significant

Table (3) shows the scores of the digital transformation scale from the perspective of members of national sports federations, with an arithmetic mean of (58.90) and a standard deviation of (2.350). When comparing the average scores of the research sample on the scale with the hypothetical average of (42) points, it was found that the average scores on the scale were higher than the hypothetical average. This means that the sample views the importance of digital transformation in national sports federations. To determine the statistical significance of the differences, a single-sample t-test was used. The calculated t-value was (27.440), which is significant because the sig value of (0.00) is smaller than the significance level of (0.05) and the degree of freedom is (0.99). The researchers believe that as a result of technological progress in various fields of administrative work, including the sports aspect, there has become a need to utilize digital transformation, which is the process of using digital technology to radically improve the performance of sports federations. This



includes adopting new technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing to improve internal operations.

Al-Buhairi (2019) stated that digital transformation and its use provide employees in sports federations with electronic information at any time and from any place. It also provides an opportunity to interact with them in an effective and distinctive manner. Digital transformation has become one of the most important requirements for advancing desired administrative work, not only to keep pace with modern technological developments, but also because of its critical importance in achieving outstanding institutional performance (Al-Buhairi: 2018).

The results of the study (Abu Al-Saud: 2020) also demonstrated the importance of achieving digital transformation in non-governmental organizations due to its importance in improving administrative services.

Table (4) shows the values of the arithmetic means, standard deviations, t-values, and significance level for the institutional excellence scale.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	Degrees of Freedom	T Calculated	T Tabulated	Sig	Statistical Significance
Overall Scale	66.87	2.150	42	99	20.440	1.984	0.000	Significant

Table (4) shows the scores of the digital transformation scale from the point of view of members of national sports federations, with an arithmetic mean of (58.90) and a standard deviation of (2.350). When comparing the average scores of the research sample for the scale with the hypothetical average of the scale, which is (42) points, it became clear that the average scores of the scale are higher than the hypothetical average of the scale. This means that the sample sees the importance of digital transformation in national sports federations. In order to determine the statistical significance of the differences, a t-test was used for a single sample, as the calculated (t) value reached (27.440), which is significant because the (sig) value, which is (0.00), is smaller than the significance level (0.05) and the degree of freedom (99). This confirms the significance of the institutional excellence scale from the point of view of the sample. Institutional excellence is a state of administrative creativity and organizational superiority that achieves unusually high levels of performance and implementation of production, marketing, financial, and other processes in the organization, resulting in results and achievements that surpass what competitors achieve. It satisfies customers and all stakeholders in the organization (Al-Salmi: 2001).

The researcher believes that excellence is the concern of all national sports federations to meet unexpected future requirements through performance that exceeds expectations and achieves balanced benefits for the national sports federations. A distinguished federation works to develop and sustain the provision of added value in its work, exceeds the routine requirements within which it operates, and does everything in its power to achieve excellence in positive competitive performance that exceeds current needs. It also has the ability to do everything in its power to meet the future expectations of all employees. (Shawki and Al-Kharsha, 2008) indicate that excellence is a qualitative process of practices

that includes self-evaluation to improve the organization's effectiveness, competitive position, and work flexibility, as well as the participation of all employees in all departments of the organization to work together, through understanding all activities, to eliminate errors, and to improve the process towards achieving excellence. Excellence represents the expertise and ability of an organization's explicit and procedural knowledge, which reflects the unique, successful, and efficient performance directed at performing any task in a distinguished manner (Al-Sayrafi, 2009).

3-3 Regression equation model for the percentage of digital transformation's contribution to institutional excellence

Table ( ) shows the quality indicators of the linear regression equation model.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient (R)</b>	<b>Contribution Rate (R<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Standard Error of Estimate</b>	<b>Predictive Variable</b>	<b>Outcome Variable</b>
Institutional Excellence	0.841	0.707	0.701	3.883	Digital Transformation	Institutional Excellence

It appears from Table ( ) that the value of the simple correlation coefficient was (0.841) and the value of the explanation coefficient (contribution ratio) was (0.707). This means that digital transformation explains a percentage of (70.7%) of institutional excellence. This indicates that the prediction of (institutional excellence) does not depend only on digital transformation but also on other factors that were not included in the model. Digital transformation is a set of processes undertaken by national sports federations to utilize modern technology in all their activities, helping them achieve their goals and ensuring their sustainability in society. These processes include organizational culture, human resources, and infrastructure. Digital transformation plays a crucial role in achieving institutional excellence by enabling organizations to improve their performance, increase their efficiency, and enhance their ability to adapt to rapid changes in the economic and technological environment. Digital transformation helps automate and streamline internal processes, reducing human errors and saving time and resources. Digital transformation also contributes to improving communication and coordination among members through digital collaboration tools.

The researchers also emphasize that digital transformation is not an option, but rather a strategic necessity for organizations seeking organizational excellence and survival in an increasingly complex competitive environment.

Digital transformation is also the foundation for achieving institutional excellence, as it helps organizations innovate, improve efficiency, and increase customer satisfaction. Institutional excellence is the primary incentive for adopting digital transformation to ensure survival and growth in a changing competitive environment.

## **4- Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4-1 Conclusions**

- 1- Federations that rely on digital transformation become more competitive with other federations by offering innovative and value-added services and products.
- 2- Digital transformation technologies enable sports federations to better understand customer needs through big data analysis.
- 3- Digital transformation makes national sports federations more resilient in the face of rapid changes in performance and technology.
- 4- Digital transformation helps foster a culture of innovation and change within national sports federations, fostering a spirit of excellence among members.
- 5- National sports federations striving for excellence need to embrace digital transformation to remain competitive and keep pace with rapid changes in performance.
- 6- Intelligent data analysis provides accurate insights that enable national sports federations to make evidence-based strategic decisions.

#### **4-2 Recommendations**

- 1- Pay attention to technology infrastructure in all aspects of digital transformation.
- 2- National sports federations must place greater emphasis on an objective system for measuring and evaluating employee performance.
- 3- Strengthen the organizational structure of national sports federations to support effective communication between different departments.
4. Promote innovation within sports federations, as it significantly contributes to improving the quality of administrative performance and services provided.
5. Provide regular training for members of national sports federations on digital skills.
6. Develop a digital transformation strategy that aligns with the objectives of national sports federations. This will contribute to achieving institutional excellence and increasing administrative efficiency, enhancing the federations' ability to adapt to technological changes and achieve their strategic objectives.

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## Appendices

### Digital Transformation Scale

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Sports federations encourage innovation and technology.					
2. Continuous training courses are held to enhance the efficiency of sports federation staff for implementing the transformation system.					
3. Staff in sports federations are motivated regarding the importance of digital transformation.					
4. Units are established to promote digital transformation culture in sports federations.					
5. Awareness is provided about new trends and challenges brought by digital transformation for staff in sports federations.					

Axis Two: Dimensions of the Dependent Variable (Institutional Excellence)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Dimension One: Development and Change Management</b>					
1. Development and change management contributes to improving internal processes.					
2. Development and change management helps achieve the strategic goals of sports federations.					
3. Development and change management enhances employee satisfaction.					
4. Development and change management contributes to improving overall performance of sports federations.					
5. Sports federations have an objective system for evaluating staff performance.					

<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Innovation contributes to improving the quality of products and services.					
2. Innovation enhances the institution's competitiveness.					
3. Innovation supports achieving strategic goals.					
4. Innovation enhances the institution's competitiveness.					