

THE REALITY OF INTERACTIVE LEADERSHIP AS AN APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN THE IRAQI MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to identify the level of interactive leadership practice among directors of departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It was also to reveal the relationship between the interactive leadership style and the quality of the administrative work environment. It was also to provide recommendations for improving leadership styles, which would positively impact the work environment and the institution. The research areas were: the human domain: employees in the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports. The time domain was from March 6, 2025, to June 12, 2025. The spatial domain was: departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports. The researcher used the descriptive approach using a survey and correlational approach. The current research community was defined as employees in the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, numbering (450) employees distributed across the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports. The percentage taken was (50%), with (225) employees being relied upon. As shown in Table (1) and Figure (1), the researcher took a research sample of (225) with a percentage of (50) of the total population. Then, he took a exploratory sample of (30) with a percentage of (13%), a stability sample of (36) with a percentage of (16%), and an application sample of (159) with a percentage of (70%). He recommended enhancing the interactive leadership style by training managers on dialogue, participation and collective decision-making skills, linking leadership to achieving goals and not just managing individuals, and developing a fair and transparent reward system linked to employee performance in all work tasks and not just seasonal activities, in order to achieve job justice and support the physical work environment by modernizing the infrastructure and providing modern technical tools that facilitate work performance, especially in departments that rely on electronic systems, expanding internal communication channels and activating feedback

between employees and management to ensure that opinions and comments are conveyed in a systematic and effective manner.

Introduction

Leadership represents one of the most important pillars upon which contemporary organizations are built. It is impossible to achieve an organization's goals or ensure its continued efficient and effective performance without leadership capable of constructively interacting with its employees. In government institutions, leadership is increasingly important as a decisive factor in developing the administrative work environment, improving the quality of services provided, and enhancing employee satisfaction. In this context, "interactive leadership" emerges as a modern model based on mutual interaction between leaders and subordinates through dialogue, participation, and the encouragement of ideas and initiatives. This contributes to creating a positive work environment that enhances job commitment and stimulates innovation. Given the challenges facing government institutions, particularly in service ministries such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports, adopting a leadership style based on interaction and participation is an urgent necessity to overcome traditional administrative stagnation and achieve the desired institutional performance.

This study seeks to explore the reality of interactive leadership among directors of departments in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, and to reveal the extent to which this leadership style contributes to developing the administrative work environment from the perspective of employees. The importance of this research lies in expanding understanding of the concepts of interactive leadership and their impact on improving the work environment. It enables decision-makers in the Ministry of Youth and Sports to understand the reality of leadership from the employees' perspective. It also helps develop mechanisms for administrative interaction and improve the organizational climate within the ministry.

2. Research Problem:

Work environments in Iraqi government institutions face a number of challenges, including weak administrative interaction, a lack of genuine participation in decision-making, and a lack of modern leadership styles. It is noted that leadership still tends, in many cases, toward an authoritarian or bureaucratic style, which negatively impacts the work environment and employee relationships. The research problem is defined by the following question: What is the reality of interactive leadership among directors of departments in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, and to what extent does it contribute to developing the administrative work environment from the employees' perspective?

3. Research Objectives:

1. To identify the level of interactive leadership practice among directors of departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
2. To reveal the relationship between the interactive leadership style and the quality of the administrative work environment.

3. To provide recommendations for improving leadership styles to positively impact the work environment and the institution.

4. Research Areas:

Human Domain: Employees in the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Time Domain: March 6, 2025 to June 12, 2025.

Spatial Domain: Departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports.

2. Research Methodology and Field Procedures:

2-1 Research Methodology:

The researcher used the descriptive approach using the survey method and correlational relationships.

2-2 Research Community:

The current research community was determined from employees in the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, numbering (450) employees distributed across the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports. The percentage taken was (50%), with (225) employees being relied upon. As shown in Table (1) and Figure (1), it is clear that the researcher took a research sample of (225) with a percentage of (50) of the total community, and then took the exploratory sample of (30) with a percentage of (13%), and a stability sample of (36) with a percentage of (16%), and an application sample of (159) with a percentage of (70%)..

Table (1) shows the research community and sample

Departments	Research Population	Research Sample	Exploratory Sample	Reliability Sample	Application Sample
Administrative Department	26	13	0	2	11
Sports Clubs Department	20	10	0	2	8
Sports Federations Department	20	10	0	2	8
Scouts Department	8	4	0	2	2
Athletes Welfare Department	12	6	10	2	2
Sports Disability Department	6	3	0	2	1
Sports Activities Department	24	12	0	2	10
Women's Sports Department	12	6	0	2	4
Administrative Department	24	12	0	2	10
Technical Department	16	8	0	2	6

Specialized Sports Department	18	9	0	2	7
Sports Awareness Department	18	9	0	2	7
Sports Doping Department	18	9	0	2	7
Drugs Department	18	9	0	2	7
Baghdad / Bismayah	54	27	10	2	15
Babylon	50	25	0	2	23
Diyala	42	21	0	2	19
Karbala	66	33	10	2	21
Total	450	225	30	36	159

2-3 Research Tool:

The researcher reviewed previous sources and studies related to the study variables. In order to implement the research objectives set for the study title, which states: "The Reality of Interactive Leadership as an Introduction to Developing the Administrative Work Environment in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports from the Perspective of Employees," the researcher prepared two questionnaires to study these variables. He prepared an interactive leadership questionnaire consisting of (3) main dimensions, and an administrative work environment questionnaire consisting of (5) dimensions. The researcher relied on these dimensions based on what was agreed upon by the experts, who confirmed their affiliation to the phenomenon to be measured, as shown in Table (2).

Table (2) Dimensions of the Two Questionnaires: Interactive Leadership and Administrative Work Environment

Interactive Leadership Questionnaire			Administrative work environment	
NO	Dimensions	Number of phrases	Dimensions	Number of phrases
1	Participation in decision-making	7	Clarity of roles and tasks	7
2	Motivation and reward for performance	7	Effective administrative communication	7
3	Effective interaction and communication	7	Motivation and professional recognition	7
4			Administrative fairness and transparency	7
5			Physical and organizational conditions	7
Total		21	Total	35

The statements were presented to (5) experts in the field of sports management, and they expressed their agreement with all the statements presented, with some minor modifications to suit the nature of the field presented.

Table (3) shows the domains and statements of interactive leadership.

Interactive Leadership	
Participation in Decision-Making	
1	The department director at the Ministry of Youth and Sports includes me in making decisions related to our daily tasks.
2	We are invited to attend meetings to develop plans for sports or youth activities before they are implemented.
3	The director in my department allows us to offer suggestions for developing the programs we offer to serve youth and athletes.
4	Our opinions are taken into consideration when amending instructions or updating administrative work mechanisms.
5	The department's staff feel they have an active role in formulating decisions related to the work environment.
6	We are given the opportunity to participate in reviewing annual plans or evaluating achievements.
7	The administration encourages employees to freely express their opinions when planning any ministry activity.
Motivation and reward for performance	
1	The department director rewards employees who efficiently complete ministerial activities.
2	Employees' efforts are recognized during youth campaigns or sports tournaments.
3	Certificates of appreciation and rewards are distributed based on actual contributions to the success of ministerial activities.
4	The director in our department encourages outstanding employees to continue their work through verbal or moral encouragement.
5	I notice special attention given to employees who initiate suggestions that serve to improve work.
6	Opportunities to participate in delegations or external events are given to those who demonstrate commitment and creativity.
7	Our rewards or benefits are clearly linked to how well we perform our tasks.
Effective interaction and communication	
1	The department director deals with us in a flexible and understanding manner in the face of difficult work conditions.
2	I notice that the department director is keen to listen to employees' opinions about the reality of our work with youth and athletes.
3	There is a direct channel of communication between us and the management for submitting comments or complaints.
4	The director opens the door for open dialogue during regular meetings or informal gatherings.
5	Our inquiries are answered clearly and transparently, without delay or procrastination.
6	The department director strives to build an environment of respect and trust among all employees.
7	The management encourages constructive discussions that contribute to improving the performance of the ministry's employees.

Table (4) shows the areas and expressions of the administrative work environment.

Administrative work environment	
Clarity of roles and tasks	
1	Tasks within my department are distributed in a clear and organized manner.
2	I am fully aware of the scope of my responsibilities when implementing youth or sports programs.
3	There is no overlap between my duties and those of my colleagues in the department.
4	The tasks assigned to me are consistent with my job specialization.
5	The administrative instructions we receive are clear and unambiguous.
6	I receive guidance from a specific administrative body within the department without confusion.
7	Employees are informed of any changes to their duties in a formal and organized manner.
Effective administrative communication	

1	We are regularly communicated with regarding new decisions and instructions.
2	I can easily reach my direct manager when needed.
3	More than one method is used within the department to ensure that information is accessible to everyone.
4	Management meetings are held regularly and allow for the exchange of opinions.
5	I feel my voice is heard within the administrative organization.
6	There is transparency in communicating instructions and news related to the department's work.
7	Suggestions and comments submitted by employees are discussed in a timely manner.
Professional motivation and recognition	
1	I receive encouragement when I complete assigned tasks efficiently.
2	The management notices and appreciates individual efforts and volunteer initiatives.
3	Our achievements are celebrated during internal events or meetings.
4	The ministry provides simple yet meaningful incentives that boost morale.
5	I feel that my contribution to the work makes a difference and is respected.
6	The management shows genuine interest in supporting us psychologically and professionally.
7	The manager motivates us to participate in self-development and skills development programs.
Administrative justice and transparency	
1	Work and opportunities within our department are distributed fairly.
2	I receive the same rights and benefits as my colleagues in the same position.
3	Our performance evaluation is based on clear and announced criteria.
4	Laws and regulations are applied without discrimination among employees.
5	I feel fair in the way management treats employees.
6	Privileges are not granted based on personal relationships.
7	Management deals transparently with administrative and financial matters.
Material and organizational conditions	
1	The office I work in is adequate in terms of space and comfort.
2	We have the tools and supplies we need to complete our work.
3	The work environment in the department is clean and organized.
4	The computers and technology in our department work efficiently.
5	I find the workplace adequately equipped to perform my tasks without hindrance.
6	Working hours are compatible with the nature of the work and our daily needs.
7	We have facilities for rest and relaxation during long working hours.

2-4 Exploratory Testing of the Two Questionnaires:

The researcher piloted the two questionnaires on a survey sample of (30) randomly selected from the research sample to identify the difficulties facing the sample, the ease and difficulty of the phrases, and the time required to complete them.

2-5 Scientific Basis for the Two Questionnaires:

2-5-1 Validity of the Two Questionnaires:

The researcher reached the apparent validity of the two questionnaires by presenting them to experts to assess the validity of the dimension and phrase. Thus, the dimension obtained apparent validity (content).

2-5-2 Reliability of the Two Questionnaires:

The researcher obtained reliability by using a reliability sample of (36) employees. The researcher used the Cronbach's alpha equation for reliability, and achieved a high percentage of (82.88), which is an acceptable percentage for these questionnaires.

2-6 Application of the Two Questionnaires:

The researcher administered the two questionnaires to a research sample of (159) employees in the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports on Thursday, May 8, 2025, through electronic distribution. The researcher obtained (150) responses suitable for statistical analysis.

2-7 Statistical Methods:

The researcher used the SPSS statistical package to process the data statistically.

3. Presentation and Discussion of the Results of the Two Questionnaires:

The researcher used the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and hypothetical mean to determine the differences between the two means and compared them with the calculated t-test, as shown in Table (5).

3-1 Presentation, Discussion, and Analysis of the Results of the Interactive Leadership Questionnaire:

Table (5) shows the values of the arithmetic and hypothetical means, standard deviations, and the (T) value for the Interactive Leadership Questionnaire and its domains.

Variables	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Hypothetical mean	value (t)		Statistical significance
				The calculated	Sig	
Participation in decision-making	22.556	1.324	21	4.655	0.000	significant
Motivation and reward for performance	21.766	1.753	21	8.021	0.000	significant
Effective interaction and communication	23.865	2.459	21	2.786	0.000	significant
Overall score	68.187	5.536	63	15.462		

From Table (5), it is clear that all areas of interactive leadership, through the arithmetic means, are higher than the hypothetical means. This indicates that the areas with the phrases are significant below the significance level (0.000). The researcher here believes that the practice of motivation within the work environment is one of the most prominent functions of interactive leadership, which depends on encouraging distinguished performance and linking individual effort to tangible results. It appears from the phrases of employees in the

departments of the Ministry of Youth and Sports that motivation represents a vital aspect in the relationship between the manager and the employee, as those who participate effectively in ministerial activities are honored and rewards are given based on actual achievement and not on relationships or seniority. Management's interest in appreciating efforts during youth campaigns or sporting events reflects an organizational awareness of the importance of the executive role undertaken by employees. Encouraging managers to provide moral motivation through direct praise and appreciation creates an environment that encourages creativity and initiative. This reinforces a fundamental concept in interactive leadership, which is to build a positive and reciprocal relationship based on respect and continuous encouragement. Providing opportunities to participate in external delegations or publicly honoring initiators is an indication of the existence of a leadership mechanism based on competence and employing motivation as a tool for professional justice and empowering functional energies. This achieves clear consistency between the effort expended and the expected reward, which increases work motivation and reduces feelings of exclusion or neglect. In the interactive style of leadership, the relationship between the manager and employees is not understood as a directive relationship, but rather as a professional partnership based on communication and dialogue. The phrases indicate that managers in the Ministry of Youth and Sports adopt an open communication approach where an atmosphere of understanding prevails and space is provided for discussion and open meetings. Comments and complaints are received in a direct manner that reflects the seriousness of the management in listening and responding. It is noted from the content of the phrases that responses to inquiries are done transparently and that administrative meetings are not based on formality, but rather are used to build trust and exchange viewpoints. These interactive practices not only contribute to improving the work environment but also enhance the employee's sense of value in the administrative system and give him space to express himself and contribute. Indicators confirm a general trend toward building an institutional culture based on mutual respect and transparency. This is a characteristic of modern leadership, which views people as a primary resource for development, not merely an implementer of orders. The reality of interactive leadership in the departments of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, as demonstrated by employee responses, reflects a true practice of the principles of interaction, motivation, and appreciation. It also demonstrates an administrative commitment to activating effective communication and being open to employee suggestions. These practices enhance the effectiveness of government administration and support the development of the work environment in state institutions.

3-2 Presentation, analysis, and discussion of the results of the administrative work environment questionnaire:

Table (6) shows the values of the arithmetic and hypothetical means, standard deviations, and the (T) value for the work environment questionnaire and its areas.

Variables	arithmeti c mean	standard deviation	Hypotheti cal mean	value (t)		Hypothetical mean
				The calculated	Sig	
Clarity of roles and tasks	24.654	1.452	21	4.655	0.000	Moral
Effective administrative communication	22.987	1.776	21	8.021	0.000	Moral
Professional motivation and recognition	23.665	2.641	21	2.786	0.000	Moral
Administrative fairness and transparency	21.764	1.767	21	3.976	0.000	Moral
Fundamental and organizational conditions	22.876	2.875	21	3.865	0.000	Moral
Overall score	115.946	10.511	105	23.303		

From Table (6), it is clear that all areas of the administrative work environment, through the arithmetic means, are higher than the hypothetical means. This indicates that the areas with the phrases are significant below the significance level (0.000). The researcher believes here that a clear and organized work environment is one of the most important foundations upon which administrative efficiency in government institutions is based, as clarity of tasks and precise definition of responsibilities contributes to reducing overlap in work, limits duplication of roles, and enhances understanding between employees, which creates a climate of job discipline and cohesive professional organization. The phrases indicate that the employees of the Ministry of Youth and Sports feel that the distribution of tasks in their departments is done in an organized manner and that each employee is aware of his responsibilities related to youth or sports programs. This clear definition of roles reflects the existence of an organized administrative structure in which powers are delegated with flexibility that is consistent with the job description of those assigned to the work. Also, indicating that instructions arrive in a precise form and from a clear administrative authority reveals regularity in administrative channels and professionalism in vertical communication within the administrative unit. This clarity in defining roles has a direct impact on performance efficiency, as it makes the employee more committed and more capable of controlling the rhythm. Work and integration with colleagues, as it reduces the possibility of procedural errors resulting from ambiguity or conflict in directives. As for the level of administrative communication, it appears that there is a communication structure within the ministry that allows employees to be informed of administrative decisions and developments regularly, which is an important indicator of the existence of a management that seeks to reduce the gap between leaders and workers. It is also clear from the content of the phrases that periodic meetings play a pivotal role in ensuring employee interaction with work issues and the exchange of views on developments and proposals. Employee responses indicate that they feel that their voice is heard, which reflects the principle of administrative participation in the ministry's institutions, which supports a democratic climate within the

work environment and establishes an organizational culture based on openness and transparency, not monopoly and isolation. On the other hand, it is understood from the phrases that information within the department is not transmitted through only one channel, but rather there are multiple means to ensure its arrival. This enhances the concept of active institutional communication, which limits confusion, prevents the spread of rumors, and creates administrative clarity that helps employees understand their institution's decisions and directions. Thus, clarity of roles and the efficiency of communication channels together form an integrated fabric for a stable and effective work environment that enables employees to perform their duties with confidence and grants Management: The ability to manage human resources with flexibility and balance.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations:

4-1 Conclusions:

1. Interactive leadership is clearly practiced in some departments of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, where managers involve employees in decision-making and motivate good performance through moral and material rewards.
2. Direct interaction between managers and employees contributes to creating a climate of trust and mutual respect, which positively impacts administrative discipline and job commitment.
3. Most of the Ministry's departments possess elements of a positive work environment in terms of organization, spatial comfort, and task distribution, indicating the presence of departments striving to provide appropriate conditions for work performance.
4. Clarity of roles and instructions and easy access to administrative information have contributed to reducing overlap in responsibilities and giving employees a sense of organizational stability.
5. Communication channels in some departments are effective enough to allow for the exchange of information and feedback, but there are still gaps in implementing rapid responses and feedback.
6. The motivational methods used are mostly based on performance related to youth and sports activities, which enhances the value of the initiative and encourages job excellence.

4-2 Recommendations:

1. Promote an interactive leadership style by training managers on dialogue, participation, and collective decision-making skills, linking leadership to goal achievement rather than just personnel management.
2. Develop a fair and transparent reward system linked to employee performance across all work tasks, not just seasonal events, to achieve job equity.
3. Support the physical work environment by updating the infrastructure and providing modern technical tools that facilitate work performance, especially in departments that rely on electronic systems.

4. Expand internal communication channels and activate feedback between employees and management to ensure that opinions and observations are communicated systematically and effectively.
5. Regularly review job descriptions to ensure that the distribution of roles reflects practical reality and prevents overlap of tasks among employees within the same department.
6. Involve employees in developing operational plans for the ministry or department's activities, which enhances institutional belonging and increases their motivation for effective participation.
7. Conduct periodic surveys to measure employee satisfaction with the work environment and leadership effectiveness, which helps diagnose problems early and improve overall performance.

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