HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY: REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE IN THE IRAQI MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS AND DERIVING DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

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Abstract
The study aimed to identify the gaps and needs in the implementation of organizational governance from a human resources perspective within the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, and to determine the most prominent factors affecting its effectiveness. The research also sought to develop a skill-based and structural framework that links human resource policies with governance strategies, including standards, procedures, and mechanisms for measurement and follow-up.

The researcher adopted a descriptive methodology using the survey approach, employing questionnaires, personal interviews, and online tools to suit the nature of the study and to fulfill its objectives and research questions. A purposive sampling method was used, involving 276 individuals, selected from employees of the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as stakeholders interacting with the Ministry, including clubs and sports federations in Iraq.

A pilot study was conducted on 23 participants, while the main study included 253 participants. The data were collected and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.25).

The study concluded that there are structural gaps in linking human resource policies with governance strategies, leading to lack of coordination and confusion in allocating human resources according to organizational priorities.

One of the most important recommendations was to develop a comprehensive framework for organizational governance that integrates human resources with governance strategies, through the establishment of unified policies, measurement procedures, and monitoring and

evaluation mechanisms to ensure the application of standards across the Ministry and its sub-units.

Keywords: Human resources strategy, its full potential, used for development.

Introduction

The importance of organizational governance is increasingly recognized as a comprehensive framework that defines the roles and responsibilities of governmental institutions, while enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in delivering services to citizens. In the context of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, the application of organizational governance has become a strategic necessity to improve institutional performance, enhance human resource management, and direct investments and programs towards achieving national objectives related to youth, sports, and social inclusion.

Organizational governance requirements include establishing a clear organizational structure, defining employees' rights and responsibilities, activating internal and external communication channels, and applying standards of control, transparency, and differentiation between administrative levels—all of which enable regular performance monitoring and evaluation (Nadia Aref, 2002, p. 55; Iftikhar & Li, 2024, p. 2).

Within this context, the research focuses on exploring the requirements for implementing organizational governance in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports from a human resources perspective, identifying current gaps in policies, procedures, and human capacities, and proposing practical and applicable developmental mechanisms. The study also aims to extract development priorities based on an analysis of organizational needs and available resources and to identify indicators for measuring the effectiveness of governance implementation and the advancement of institutional performance.

Accordingly, this research contributes to enhancing the Ministry's effectiveness in planning, implementation, and follow-up, thereby fostering public trust in the services provided to youth and the wider community. Strategic management plays a crucial role in guiding the organization toward securing its strategic future, as long-term success requires intellectual and strategic capabilities to anticipate future trends and reduce uncertainty, thereby helping to build a strong strategic position (Naeem Ibrahim Al-Zahir, 2009, p. 260; Atchia et al., 2022, p. 667).

Modern organizations operate in environments marked by uncertainty, unpredictability, and rapid change—creating numerous challenges. These include increasing globalization, rapid technological advancement, the growing need for qualified employees, and the demand for performance improvement. Consequently, organizations are compelled to maximize the use of available resources to achieve competitive advantage, with human resources considered one of the most critical success factors (Vanhala and Stavrou, 2013, p. 416).

1.2 Research Problem

Amid increasing organizational complexities and growing demands for transparency and accountability in public institutions, the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports faces major challenges in activating organizational governance from a human resource perspective.

The research problem lies in the gap between the theoretical frameworks of governance and their practical implementation in departments and divisions, leading to weak coordination, diminished internal oversight, and inconsistency in the competencies and human capacities required to support governance standards. Furthermore, the absence of unified performance standards and effective measurement mechanisms makes it difficult to monitor progress or accurately define development priorities.

Employees and leadership also face a lack of standardized procedures and policies that align human resource management with governance strategies, which obstructs the achievement of transparency, efficiency, and service quality for youth and society.

This study aims to diagnose these challenges by identifying policy, skill-based, and structural gaps, and to propose a practical framework for developing human resources that enables effective implementation of organizational governance.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study aims to define the key requirements for the strategic management of human resources in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, through:

1. Identifying the **gaps and needs** in applying organizational governance from a human resources perspective within the Ministry and determining the most significant factors influencing its effectiveness.

2. Developing a **skill-based and structural framework** that links human resource policies to governance strategies, incorporating standards, procedures, and mechanisms for measurement and monitoring.

3. Proposing **implementable development mechanisms** aimed at enhancing institutional performance, improving transparency and accountability, and optimizing human resource planning and distribution according to governance requirements.

4. Defining **performance indicators** that allow for measuring the progress of governance implementation and evaluating its impact on the quality of services provided to youth and the broader community, while guiding investment in priority programs.

5.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the main gaps between the declared frameworks of organizational governance and their actual implementation from a human resources perspective in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports?

- How can human resource policies be effectively linked to governance strategies to achieve transparency, accountability, and continuous performance evaluation?

- What are the development priorities and performance metrics needed to assess the effectiveness of organizational governance and its impact on improving youth and community services?

1.5 Research Methodology
The researcher adopted a descriptive research approach using survey methodology, employing structured questionnaires, personal interviews, and online (electronic) tools, appropriate to the nature of the research and its objectives and questions.

1.6 Research Domains
1.6.1 Time Domain:
All research procedures were conducted between **April 2, 2023, and September 2, 2025**.
1.6.2 Human Domain (Research Population):
The research population included **employees of the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports**, as well as **stakeholders interacting with the Ministry**, such as **sports clubs and federations** within Iraq.
1.6.3 Spatial Domain:
All research procedures were conducted within the **Republic of Iraq**. **Pilot studies** were conducted through **personal interviews**, while the **main study** was carried out via a **Google Forms online questionnaire**.

3.3 Research Sample
The research sample included **276 individuals**, who were selected using a **purposive sampling method**. This sample consisted of **employees** of the **Ministry of Youth and Sports** as well as **stakeholders** interacting with the Ministry, including **sports clubs** and **sports federations** in Iraq. The **pilot study** involved **23 individuals**, while the **main study** included **253 individuals**. **Table 1** presents the numerical description of the total sample based on several demographic variables, divided between the pilot and main studies.

3.4 Research Tool
The researcher used a **questionnaire** (designed by the researcher) as the research instrument.
To determine the appropriate research tool (measurement instrument), the researcher reviewed the **laws and regulations** governing the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Iraq, as well as **scientific references** and **previous studies** related to the areas of the research and its variables. These included works by:

• Al-Hadi Bougloul (2004),
• Abdulaziz Saleh Habtoor (2004),
• Wasfi Aqili (2005),
• Souad Brinouti (2007),
• Faisal Hassouna (2008),
• Youssef Abu Hajjaj (2010),
• Nouri Mounir (2010),
• Nader Abu Shaikhah (2010),
• Aziza Al-Otaibi (2010),
• Mahmoud Abdel Fattah Radwan (2012),

- Mohamed Al-Qahatani (2012),
- Rola Nayef Al-Maayta (2012),
- Saleh Saleem Al-Hamouri (2012),
- Nadia Habib Ayoub (2014),
- Abeer Abdelkhaleq (2014),
- Nabil Mohamed Morsi, Ahmed Abdel Salam (2017),
- Kaisar Ahmed Abdullah (2022),
- Hussein Abdel Fattah Mohamed (2022),
- Sofiane Aziz Latif (2023),
- Nagwa Ibrahim Mohamed (2023),
- Amr Ibrahim Gaber (2023),
- Abdul Razak Moussa Bri (2023),
- Dina Qarni Mahfouz (2023).

Based on these sources, the researcher designed the questionnaire, which includes five key dimensions for assessing the **basic requirements for the strategic management of human resources in the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports**. These dimensions are as follows:

1. **First Dimension**: Strategic Thinking Requirements for Implementing Strategic Human Resource Management.
2. **Second Dimension**: Strategic Analysis Requirements for Implementing Strategic Human Resource Management.
3. **Third Dimension**: Strategy Formulation Requirements for Implementing Strategic Human Resource Management.
4. **Fourth Dimension**: Strategy Implementation Requirements for Implementing Strategic Human Resource Management.
5. **Fifth Dimension**: Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements for Implementing Strategic Human Resource Management.

3.5 Pilot Studies

5.3.1 First Pilot Study

This study aimed to assess the **face validity** of the **questionnaire**. The researcher presented the questionnaire to a group of **experts** in the fields of **sports management**, **strategic planning**, **human resources**, and **human development**. The purpose was to evaluate the appropriateness of the questions and topics to obtain the necessary data to achieve the research objectives.

The following tables provide the experts' feedback on the dimensions and items of the questionnaire:

Table (1): Frequency and Percentage of Experts' Opinions on the Dimensions of the Questionnaire Concerning the Basic Requirements for the Application of Strategic Human Resource Management at the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Iraq

N = 11 experts

Dimension No.	Dimensions	Agree		Disagree		Modification		Approval Rate
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	%
First Dimension	Requirements of Strategic Thinking for the Application of Strategic Human Resource Management	11	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	100.00
Second Dimension	Requirements of Strategic Analysis for the Application of Strategic Human Resource Management	11	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	100.00
Third Dimension	Requirements of Strategy Formulation for the Application of Strategic Human Resource Management	11	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	100.00
Fourth Dimension	Requirements of Strategy Implementation for the Application of Strategic Human Resource Management	11	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	100.00
Fifth Dimension	Requirements of Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation for the Application of Strategic Human Resource Management	11	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	100.00

It is evident from Table (1), which presents the frequency and percentage of experts' opinions on the dimensions of the questionnaire concerning the basic requirements for the application of strategic human resource management at the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Iraq, that there was **complete consensus among the experts**, as all of them agreed (100%) on the inclusion of the proposed dimensions without suggesting modifications or expressing disagreement.

5-3-2 Second Pilot Study:
The purpose of this study was to establish the scientific validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire to a pilot sample consisting of (23) individuals, who shared the same characteristics as the main research sample. This was carried out through personal interviews in order to verify the validity and reliability of the questionnaire's axes and items.

6-3 The Main Study: Research Procedures
The procedures of the main study included: verifying the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, determining the sample, its categories, and locations, converting the questionnaire into an electronic format via Google Forms, testing the scale with colleagues, correcting errors, sending the link to participants and responding to their inquiries, providing immediate follow-up, opening the questionnaire for responses from 4/6/2024 to 28/6/2024, and downloading the Excel data for statistical analysis.

7-3 Statistical Treatments Used in Research:

The researcher employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.25) and used the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test to compare the means

Table (3) Frequency, Percentage and Statistical Indicators for the Sample's Responses Second Dimension: Strategic Analysis for the Application of Strategic HRM
N = 253

Item No.	Item (English)	Very important		Important		Moderately important		Unimportant		Not important at all		Mean	Std. Dev.	Chi-Square	Total agreement %	Rank
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%					
1	Analyze the internal environment of strategic HRM to identify strengths and weaknesses.	143	56.52	92	36.36	14	5.53	4	1.58	0	0.00	3.48	0.68	*207.47	86.96	1
2	Strategic HRM's attention to analyzing productive and financial factors.	118	46.64	107	42.29	23	9.09	4	1.58	1	0.40	3.33	0.74	*259.23	83.30	6
3	Continuous updating of strategic HRM activities.	108	42.69	95	37.55	46	18.18	4	1.58	0	0.00	3.21	0.79	*107.81	80.34	11
4	Analyze the external environment to continuously identify opportunities and threats.	105	41.50	106	41.90	32	12.65	9	3.56	1	0.40	3.21	0.82	*208.80	80.14	12
5	Understanding laws, regulations and policies issued by the Iraqi state relevant to its work.	123	48.62	100	39.53	23	9.09	7	2.77	0	0.00	3.34	0.76	*153.44	83.50	5
6	Analyzing economic, social and technological factors.	107	42.29	99	39.13	41	16.21	4	1.58	2	0.79	3.21	0.82	*200.58	80.14	13
7	Attention to improving working conditions (work environment).	139	54.94	85	33.60	27	10.67	2	0.79	0	0.00	3.43	0.71	*178.29	85.67	2
8	Focus on aligning employees' personal culture with the Ministry's culture.	101	39.92	113	44.66	36	14.23	2	0.79	1	0.40	3.23	0.75	*226.66	80.73	10
9	Work to increase employee satisfaction at the Ministry.	103	40.71	94	37.15	48	18.97	8	3.16	0	0.00	3.15	0.84	*91.87	78.86	14
10	Provide financial resources to enable expansion of Ministry activities.	137	54.15	85	33.60	24	9.49	5	1.98	2	0.79	3.38	0.80	*272.67	84.59	3
11	Continuous identification of training needs and designing training programs.	126	49.80	97	38.34	25	9.88	4	1.58	1	0.40	3.36	0.76	*259.39	83.89	4
12	Invest political stability to expand the Ministry's activities.	121	47.83	93	36.76	35	13.83	3	1.19	1	0.40	3.30	0.78	*231.68	82.61	7
13	Explain and clarify goals/objectives/procedures to employees and continuously revise them.	110	43.48	103	40.71	37	14.62	2	0.79	1	0.40	3.26	0.76	*222.95	81.52	8
14	Analyze current capabilities and future change.	102	40.32	115	45.45	33	13.04	3	1.19	0	0.00	3.25	0.72	*137.94	81.23	9
15	Analyze competition surrounding the Ministry and analyze markets/clients periodically.	99	39.13	102	40.32	44	17.39	8	3.16	0	0.00	3.15	0.82	*98.07	78.86	15

It is evident from Table (3) that the sample's agreement percentages on the items of the second dimension ranged from 78.86% to 86.96%. The Chi-square values for the items ranged from 91.87 to 272.67, all of which are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Items ranked highest (1–3) indicate that internal environment analysis, improvement of working conditions, and provision of financial resources were perceived as the most important aspects of strategic analysis for applying strategic HRM at the Ministry. The results emphasize the need for continuous internal/external environmental scanning, legal/policy alignment, capacity building (training), and institutional cultural alignment to support strategic HR decisions and implementation

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Conclusions

1. The existence of structural gaps in linking human resource policies with governance strategies leads to a lack of coordination and confusion in the allocation of human resources according to organizational priorities.

2. Variations in competencies and human capabilities across administrative units hinder the unified application of monitoring, transparency, and performance evaluation standards.

3. The absence of standardized performance indicators and benchmarks for measuring governance effectiveness makes it difficult to monitor progress and accurately identify developmental priorities.

4. Weaknesses in internal and external communication channels, as well as insufficient activation of community participation efforts and coordination with stakeholders in youth and sports, negatively affect the effectiveness of services.

5. The presence of an operational framework and heterogeneous human resources cause laws and organizational policies to diverge from practical implementation, highlighting the necessity of aligning policies with applied realities and strengthening developmental capacities.

Recommendations

1. Developing an integrated framework for organizational governance that links human resources with governance strategies: This includes establishing unified policies, measurement procedures, and follow-up and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the application of standards at both the Ministry and subunit levels.

2. Establishing a performance indicators system and a centralized database: This involves adopting measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ensuring periodic updates, and producing transparent reports that assess accountability, transparency, and service efficiency.

3. Enhancing capacities and competencies through continuous education and training programs: This includes designing training pathways targeting post-recruitment development, as well as middle and senior management levels, in order to strengthen the readiness of human resources for governance.

4. Consolidating effective communication channels and integration with relevant stakeholders: This entails strengthening internal communication (competence and evaluation), external communication (youth and sports partners), and activating mechanisms for community participation in planning and monitoring.

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