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## A Comparative Study on the Results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale Among Heads of Sports Talent Departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A Comparative Study on the Results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale Among Heads of Sports Talent Departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports

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## Abstract

Sports management is a fundamental pillar that supports sports institutions and plays a pivotal role in achieving advanced levels of success in talent development. The Talent Development Project is one of the key strategic initiatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. This study compares department heads with effective managerial competence to those with ineffective competence to highlight differences in performance quality. Through this comparison, the urgent need to assess the administrative performance skills of the heads of sports talent departments becomes evident, particularly their ability to lead and manage the Sports Talent Development Project. The objective is to identify strengths and weaknesses, establish a clear framework for performance enhancement, and contribute to strengthening sustainable management effectiveness to achieve the desired outcomes. The research problem lies in the challenges faced by the heads of sports talent departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports in effectively applying administrative performance skills. These challenges lead to inconsistencies in performance levels, which in turn negatively impact decision-making and hinder the achievement of project objectives, ultimately delaying the institution's progress. The objective of this research was to examine the differences in the results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale among the heads of sports talent departments, as assessed by the employees working under their supervision. The researchers employed a descriptive approach utilizing comparative analysis. The research population comprised 453 employees with a minimum of five years of service, while the study sample included 329 participants. The study was conducted across 15 centres in various Iraqi provinces, excluding the Kurdistan region. The findings revealed significant variations among all centres. One of the key conclusions drawn from the study is that there are discernible differences in administrative performance skills among the heads of sports talent departments across the 15 centres, as perceived by their employees. and this achieves one of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations in Iraq which is (Quality Education)

**Keywords:** Administrative performance skills, Heads of sports talent departments

## 1. Introduction

Sports management is one of the fundamental pillars on which sports institutions are built, playing a pivotal role in achieving advanced levels of success in the field of sports talent development. The sports talent development project is one of the most

important planning initiatives within the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Effective management relies on a set of diverse skills, including planning, organizing, decision-making, communication, and problem-solving. The level of administrative performance skills presents a challenge to achieving its goals, as

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these skills are critical determinants of the project's success. According to Solaf Hassan and Faris Sami (2023), citing Kadhim, M. J., Shihab G. M., & Zaqair, A. L. A. A. (2021), administrative performance consists of "essential elements and components, without which it is impossible to speak of effective performance" [10, pp. 905–925]. This necessitates enhancing the administrative skills of department heads responsible for managing human and material resources to prevent inefficiencies and stagnation. Moreover, Hussein and Shabba (2019) emphasize the importance of avoiding "the causes of instability and disruption in performance" [11, pp. 214–221] while also minimizing wasted time and delays in achieving objectives. Additionally, improving decision-making efficiency, adapting to continuous changes and emerging challenges, strengthening communication, and aligning employees' efforts with the project's goals and aspirations are essential for ensuring effective leadership and sustainable progress.

The comparison between department heads with effective managerial competence and those with ineffective competence aims to achieve differentiation in performance quality (cited in Shabba and Hmood, 2014) [9, pp. 54–69]. Advanced managerial skills enable individuals to achieve significant and rapid progress. Through this comparison, the pressing need to highlight the level of administrative performance skills among the heads of sports talent departments becomes evident, with a focus on their abilities to lead and manage the Sports Talent Development Project. The objective is to identify areas of strength and weakness, provide a clear vision for improving performance, and contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of sustainable management while achieving the desired goals. Furthermore, Affes and Abed (2023) emphasize that "knowledge creation through research and the acquisition and updating of existing knowledge (knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience)" [4, pp. 129–151] is a fundamental step in fostering this development.

The research problem lies in the challenges faced by the heads of sports talent departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports in effectively applying administrative performance skills. These challenges result in disparities in performance levels, negatively affecting decision-making and the achievement of project objectives, ultimately delaying the institution's advancement as required. This issue contradicts the concept of success, as cited by Shabaik (2008): "The difference between a successful person and others is not in their abilities but in their desire to reach their fullest potential" [1, p. 33].

The objective of this research was to identify the differences in the results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale among the heads of sports talent departments based on the assessments of their employees. The research hypothesis posited that there are no statistically significant differences in the results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale among the heads of sports talent departments. Accordingly, this study seeks to analyze these disparities through an objective comparative approach to determine their causes and propose practical solutions to enhance the effectiveness of the responsible departments, elevate the level of sports talent development, achieve the objectives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and strengthen its capacity for administrative decision-making to address emerging challenges. Furthermore, Ismail Hamed and Maghawri (2014) emphasize the importance of achieving one of the fundamental concepts of performance management reconstruction, which suggests that success stems from excellence and the differentiation in efforts exerted [3, p. 160].

## 2. Methodology

The researchers adopted a descriptive approach using comparative analysis, as it aligns with the nature of the study. The target population consisted of employees working in Sports Talent Development Centers, totaling 762 individuals. The research population included 453 employees with a minimum of five years of service, while the study sample comprised 329 participants. The study covered 15 centers across Iraqi provinces, excluding the Kurdistan Region, as presented in Table 1.

### 2.1. Administrative performance skills scale for heads of sports talent departments

The scale was adopted from the doctoral dissertation of Al-Qadhi (2024) [2, p. 92] and includes six domains of the researched skills: human and social relations, decision-making, communication and interaction, time management, organization and control, and analytical and diagnostic skills. The scale consists of 33 positively worded statements, utilizing the following response options: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree), with corresponding weightings of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively, as detailed in Appendix Table A.1. The scale possesses the characteristics of scientific validity and reliability. The highest possible score on the scale is 165, while the lowest possible score is 33.

Table 1. Distribution of the research sample (employees) across sports talent development departments in Iraqi provinces.

No	Sports Talent Development Departments in Iraqi Provinces	Working Employees	No	Sports Talent Development Departments in Iraqi Provinces	Working Employees
1	Wasit Governorate	27	9	Al-Anbar Governorate	26
2	Basra Governorate	24	10	Al-Muthanna Governorate	17
3	Karbala Governorate	23	11	Babil Governorate	24
4	Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate	23	12	Dhi Qar Governorate	18
5	Baghdad Governorate	23	13	Salah Al-Din Governorate	21
6	Diyala Governorate	26	14	Al-Diwaniyah Governorate	27
7	Kirkuk Governorate	18	15	Maysan Governorate	11
8	Nineveh Governorate	21	Total		329
			Percentage of the research Population		72.62%

Table 2. Description of the results of the administrative performance skills scale for the heads of sports talent departments in the ministry of youth and sports, as evaluated by their employees.

No	Sports Talent Development Departments in Iraqi Provinces	Working Employees (329)	Variable	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Skewness Coefficient*
1	Wasit Governorate	27	Administrative	100.89	7.552	−0.630
2	Basra Governorate	24	Performance	97.95	7.023	−0.491
3	Karbala Governorate	23	Skills Scale	97.43	9.704	−0.210
4	Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate	23		100.13	7.307	−0.414
5	Baghdad Governorate	23		92.30	9.711	0.095
6	Diyala Governorate	26		101.73	5.862	−0.226
7	Kirkuk Governorate	18		98.50	4.973	−0.055
8	Nineveh Governorate	21		103.62	4.955	0.467
9	Anbar Governorate	26		99.08	7.429	0.594
10	Al-Muthanna Governorate	17		105.41	8.733	−0.037
11	Babil Governorate	24		99.67	6.176	0.114
12	Dhi Qar Governorate	18		96.44	4.422	0.437
13	Salah al Din Governorate	21		100.24	3.687	−0.295
14	Al-Diwaniyah Governorate	27		99.59	4.593	−0.763
15	Maysan Governorate	11		96.45	3.174	−0.051

\* Skewness is considered normal when its value falls within the range of  $\pm 1$ .

## 2.2. Statistical methods (SPSS program)

Percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, skewness coefficient, analysis of variance (F-test), least significant difference (LSD) test.

## 3. Results

The Table 2 presents a description of the results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale for the heads of sports talent departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports. This is based on data related to various Iraqi provinces, including the number of employees, the arithmetic mean of the results, the standard deviation, and the skewness coefficient.

The mean values of administrative performance skills from the above table indicate a clear disparity among the provinces, which may reflect differences in the training and administrative support provided. Furthermore, the standard deviation values illustrate the extent of data dispersion around the mean; lower values indicate a concentration of results around the

mean, while higher values suggest greater variability. The table also shows skewness coefficients that fall within the acceptable range ( $\pm 1$ ), indicating that the distribution of results is balanced and close to a normal distribution. To identify the statistical differences among the various groups of employees based on the researched Iraqi provinces, Table 3 presents the analysis of variance for the results of the Administrative Performance Skills Scale for the heads of sports talent departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The table indicates a significant difference between the groups, as the (sig.) value is smaller than the significance level (0.05). To determine the least significant difference (LSD) among the 15 centers representing the Iraqi governorates, excluding the Kurdistan Region, the LSD test was applied, as presented in Table 4.

It is clear from Table 4 that there are significant differences among all the groups representing the talent centers distributed across the Iraqi governorates, excluding the Kurdistan region. The ranking of these groups is based on their mean

Table 3. Analysis of variance for the results of the administrative performance skills scale for heads of sports talent departments in the ministry of youth and sports based on employee assessments.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Sig. Value*
Between Groups	2799.888	14	199.992		
Within Groups	14439.662	314	45.986	4.349	0.000

\* Significant when the value of (sig.) < (0.05).

Table 4. Least significant difference (LSD) test for the results of the administrative performance skills scale among the heads of sports talent departments in the ministry of youth and sports based on employee assessments.

Group	Groups	Mean Difference	(sig.) Value*
First: Wasit Arithmetic Mean = 100.89	5: Baghdad (Basmaya) / Arithmetic Mean = 92.30	8.59	0.000
	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−4.52	0.032
	12: Dhi Qar / Arithmetic Mean = 96.44	4.45	0.032
Second: Basra Arithmetic Mean = 97.95	5: Baghdad (Basmaya) Arithmetic Mean = 92.30	5.65	0.006
	6: Diyala / Arithmetic Mean = 101.73	−3.78	0.039
	8: Nineveh / Arithmetic Mean = 103.62	−5.67	0.004
	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−7.46	0.000
Third: Karbala Arithmetic Mean = 97.43	5: Baghdad (Basmaya) Arithmetic Mean = 92.30	5.13	.0110
	6: Diyala / Arithmetic Mean = 101.73	−4.30	.0280
	8: Nineveh / Arithmetic Mean = 103.62	−6.19	.0030
	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−7.98	.0000
Fourth: Najaf Arithmetic Mean = 100.13	5: Baghdad (Basmaya) Arithmetic Mean = 92.30	7.83	.0000
	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−5.28	.0150
Fifth: Baghdad Arithmetic Mean = 92.30	6: Diyala / Arithmetic Mean = 101.73	−9.43	.0000
	7: Kirkuk / Arithmetic Mean = 98.50	−6.20	.0040
	8: Nineveh / Arithmetic Mean = 103.62	−11.32	.0000
	9: Anbar / Arithmetic Mean = 99.08	−6.78	.0010
	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−13.11	0.000
	11: Babylon / Arithmetic Mean = 99.67	−7.37	.0000
	13: Salahaldin / Arithmetic Mean = 100.24	−7.94	.0000
Sixth: Diyala Arithmetic Mean = 101.73	14: Diwaniya / Arithmetic Mean = 99.59	−7.29	.0000
	12: Dhi Qar / Arithmetic Mean = 96.44	5.29	.0110
	15: Maysan / Arithmetic Mean = 96.45	5.28	.0310
	8: Nineveh / Arithmetic Mean = 103.62	−5.12	.0190
Seventh: Kirkuk Arithmetic Mean = 98.50	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−6.91	.0030
	9: Anbar / Arithmetic Mean = 99.08	4.54	.0230
Eighth: Nineveh Arithmetic Mean = 103.62	12: Dhi Qar / Arithmetic Mean = 96.44	7.18	.0010
	14: Diwaniya / Arithmetic Mean = 99.59	4.03	.0420
	15: Maysan / Arithmetic Mean = 96.45	7.17	.0050
	10: Al-Muthanna / Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	−6.33	.0030
Ninth: Anbar Arithmetic Mean = 99.08	11: Babylon / Arithmetic Mean = 99.67	5.745	.0080
Tenth: Al-Muthanna Arithmetic Mean = 105.41	12: Dhi Qar / Arithmetic Mean = 96.44	8.967	.0000
	13: Salahaldin / Arithmetic Mean = 100.24	5.174	.0200
	14: Diwaniya / Arithmetic Mean = 99.59	5.819	.0060
	15: Maysan / Arithmetic Mean = 96.45	8.957	.0010

\* Significant when the (sig.) value < (0.05).

scores, with the unit of measurement being the scale score. The ranking, in descending order, is as follows: (1. Al-Muthanna, 2. Nineveh, 3. Diyala, 4. Wasit, 5. Salah al-Din, 6. Najaf, 7. Babylon, 8. Diwaniya, 9. Anbar, 10. Kirkuk, 11. Basra, 12. Karbala, 13. Maysan, 14. Dhi Qar, 15. Baghdad). The significant differences among the groups, based on employees' perspectives toward their supervisors within the studied talent centers, are attributed to

variations in planning, organization, leadership, communication, implementation, support, and trust. These variations are influenced by differences in experience and administrative competence among the heads of the talent departments. Furthermore, Shabba and Amidi (2017b) assert that "the selection of appropriate alternatives to achieve organizational goals by those in charge is subject to variations in their understanding and application of modern



management standards” [7, pp. 63–68]. Additionally, workload and pressures introduce complex and varied challenges that necessitate effective solutions to administrative problems and the implementation of strategic approaches in task distribution to achieve objectives while ensuring a secure environment. Hussein and Shabba (2019) affirm that this approach “helps mitigate risks and prevent the negative impacts of political, social, and other fluctuations” [12, pp. 214–221]. Furthermore, Shabba and Amidi (2017a) emphasize that “the need for change has become imperative, as maintaining the status quo is no longer sufficient for advancing into a new phase of the future. Moreover, effectively engaging with internal and external environmental changes is crucial for problem-solving and overcoming obstacles through enhanced planning and organizational strategies, which, in turn, improve attitudes, skills, and various other attributes among individuals” [6, pp. 11–30]. Hasan and Shabba (2023) further elaborate that “administrative performance is not merely about a centre manager executing their tasks and responsibilities in a routine manner. Rather, it involves carrying them out effectively, successfully, and in an integrative manner that fosters collaboration with all stakeholders, ensuring the achievement of predefined objectives and ultimately enhancing work quality within the administrative environment” [10, pp. 905–925]. At the same time, the percentage achieved for the top-ranking category was 63.88% of the total score, indicating a shortfall in reaching the ideal level. This is a natural occurrence in any administrative evaluation, necessitating continuous improvement and capacity enhancement under real-world working conditions to attain higher levels of performance. This also underscores “the readiness and competence of administrators to implement the principle of integrating theory and practice in building a clear vision that simultaneously fosters change and innovation, ensuring alignment between outcomes and objectives” [8, p. 150]. In conclusion, the results reveal a disparity in administrative performance skills among the heads of sports talent departments. On this point, Abdulwahhab and Nazzal (2022) assert that “this gap should not be perceived as a negative condition, but rather as a positive one, as it represents the objectives and aspirations that the ministry seeks to achieve in order to bridge or minimize the disparity” [13, pp. 125–139]. Furthermore, citing Nidham Muhammad Al-Zatma (2011), Ali and Malih (2022) emphasize that “the administrative skills possessed by managers will have a positive impact on institutional performance excellence” [5, pp. 117–122].

#### 4. Conclusions

- The study established quantitative values for the administrative performance skills of the heads of sports talent departments in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, as assessed by their employees, across the 15 centres distributed among the Iraqi provinces, excluding the Kurdistan Region.
- There are variations and discrepancies in the administrative performance skills of the heads of sports talent departments across the 15 centres, based on employee evaluations.
- Certain centres, such as Al-Muthanna (63.88%) and Nineveh (62.8%), demonstrated superior performance in managing sports talent compared to other centres, such as Dhi Qar (58.44%) and Baghdad (55.93%).

#### 5. Recommendations

- Implement regular evaluations to measure administrative performance skills, ensuring the continuity of the assessment process.
- Develop standardized administrative training programs focused on enhancing administrative performance skills.
- Organize joint workshops to facilitate the exchange and enhancement of administrative expertise among sports talent centres.
- Adopt a comprehensive national strategy aimed at improving administrative performance levels to achieve sustainable development.

#### Author’s declaration

**Conflicts of interest:** None.

We confirm that all tables and figures in this article are ours and written by the researchers themselves.

**Ethical-Clearance:** This manuscript approved by local ethical committee of physical education and sport sciences college for women on (January/2024).

#### Author’s contributions

All contributions of this study were done by the researchers (F.S, S.H and S.N) who get the main idea and work on writing and concluding also with number of experts, Faris Sami Youssef Shaba in Statistics, Prof. Haifaa Ahmed Jawad in revision, Ayman Sabah in translating, Dr. Batoul Ahmed Salim in proofreading.

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## Appendix

Table A.1. Administrative performance skills scale for heads of sports talent departments based on employee assessments.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The manager fosters teamwork among employees.					
2	The manager cultivates a sense of responsibility among employees.					
3	The manager listens to opposing viewpoints, demonstrates the ability to tolerate them, and engages in constructive dialogue.					
4	The manager provides guidance and supervision to employees during work.					
5	The manager conducts dialogue sessions with employees.					
6	The manager strives to balance work objectives with employee goals in alignment with the surrounding environment and the institution's needs.					
7	The manager analyzes employee behavior and interacts with them based on this analysis.					
8	The manager strengthens relationships by understanding the challenges employees face and actively working to resolve them.					
9	There is a mutual sense of trust between the manager and employees.					
10	The manager respects employees' opinions and ideas while understanding their motivations, needs, and aspirations.					
11	The manager selects qualified individuals for important tasks.					
12	The manager operates based on the principles of justice and equality, avoiding bias and favoritism.					
13	The manager values individuals and their abilities, often providing them with opportunities to express their opinions transparently.					
14	The manager strives to develop individuals within the institution, create a conducive work environment, and provide opportunities for promotion and career advancement.					
15	The manager makes alternative decisions that are suitable for work conditions in an objective manner.					
16	Employees respond positively to all decisions made by the manager.					
17	Decision-making is conducted objectively and remains open to discussion and deliberation.					
18	Most of the decisions made by the manager result in appropriate solutions that align with the institution's objectives.					
19	The manager possesses strong communication and interpersonal skills with employees.					
20	The manager effectively facilitates communication with employees without difficulty.					
21	The manager utilizes technology for inquiries, responses, and addressing questions between management and employees.					
22	The manager ensures a swift response to employees' requests.					
23	The manager implements modern work methods, which help streamline procedures and optimize time management.					
24	The manager frequently guides employees in setting work priorities when executing tasks.					
25	The manager provides incentives and motivation to enhance work behavior and ensure adherence to deadlines for task completion.					
26	The manager ensures the availability of all necessary resources and work essentials that facilitate efficient task completion.					

(Continued)



Table A.1. Continued

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27	The manager stays informed about the latest administrative developments to overcome external obstacles.					
28	The manager understands their role within the institution and operates within the organizational framework and defined authority.					
29	The manager is proficient in utilizing databases and applying them effectively.					
30	The manager oversees the evaluation of work plans based on their feasibility, flexibility, timing, and accuracy.					
31	The manager leverages technology for monitoring, accountability, and evaluation.					
32	The manager is capable of conducting studies to assess the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation, as well as restructuring administrative systems and organizational relationships within the institution.					
33	The manager consistently makes decisions based on a forward-looking vision, grounded in an analysis of the institution's work environment.					