

DESIGNING HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE IN IRAQI PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Public sector institutions are crucial to numerous activities in developing countries. However, these institutions encounter many challenges, particularly in meeting performance targets. These difficulties may arise from internal issues within the institution or the administrative authority overseeing them. This study explores the possibility of developing High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) in the public sector, specifically aiming to create a model for effective human resource strategies in the Iraqi public sector.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using a qualitative approach. Fifteen participants, nominated by their institutions as "experts" in human resources management, were interviewed to explore the feasibility of implementing HPWS in the Iraqi public sector. The interviews focused on five essential elements: human resource productivity, accountability and follow-up, quality of services, laws and regulations, and implementing plans to address deviations.

The findings underscore the pivotal role of these elements in establishing the system, providing reassurance about the feasibility of developing such systems within Iraqi public sector institutions. Despite the current challenges, the potential of these elements to create the system is promising.

Keywords: High-performance work systems; Public sector reform; Grounded Theory; Developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

Public sector institutions in developing countries suffer from many challenges, social and political changes. Despite these challenges, public institutions seek to ensure a work environment that helps achieve high performance compatible with social, cultural and technical development. However, public sector.

Institutions in Iraq still aspire to overcome many challenges, such as a need for more required competencies and a weak level of services, which prevent reaching higher performance levels. This drives building High Performance

Work Systems (HPWS) as an urgent necessity to improve the performance of public institutions ¹⁾.

Research has indicated that the public sector is responding to enhancing public performance, and introducing fundamental changes in policies and practices aimed at improving performance ²⁾ In this vein, human resources procedures have a positive relationship with employee behaviors and thus contribute to building HPWSs directly. Also, since human resources strategies and their effectiveness help create excellence and thus achieve the best performance levels, an entire model can be created to achieve high performance using human resources strategies. This model also explains how to enhance performance, employee skills, motivation, and opportunities to achieve the strategic goals of public sector institutions ^{3) 4)}.

Despite the challenges and concerns facing the public sector, few studies have addressed this issue. Enhancing performance through high-performance work systems (HPWS) to meet public expectations has become essential. This study aims to design a model of human resource strategies and practices that facilitate the implementation of a human resource management system in the Iraqi public sector. It seeks, specifically, to enhance human resource productivity, improve accountability and follow-up within the public sector, ensure high compliance with laws and regulations that support the public sector, increase the capacity to implement plans and address deviations, and improve service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

HIGH PERFORMANCE

High performance continues to gain significant attention, especially in the literature on human resources management. It is a substantial focus of top management's concerns as it constitutes the most crucial goal institutions seek to reach. High performance can be viewed as an activity achieved with complete success while observing business controls and rules for the individual's reasonable use. Organizations must achieve high performance to compete in a rapidly changing work environment. Organizations, therefore, must find appropriate strategies to reach the highest levels of performance ⁵⁾.

Today, high performance is considered one of the most important human resources management strategies because it supports creative activities, solving problems, and adapting to changing circumstances ⁶⁾. High performance is linked to a causal relationship with the growth and prosperity of human resources functions in various institutions ⁷⁾, and studies indicate the impact of human resource management functions on the level of overall performance ⁸⁾.

HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS (HPWS)

HPWS is defined as a set of individual and interconnected human resources practices that increase the performance of employees and organizations by improving the workforce's efficiency, attitudes, and motivation. These practices include comprehensive employee recruitment and selection procedures, incentive compensation and performance management systems, and broad employee participation and training ⁹⁾. Studies have shown that HPWS positively impacts improving performance in public sector institutions. HPWS, also, enhances human resources functions and performance in general, thus achieving excellent performance in public institutions. Furthermore, HPWS, also positively affects job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance in public sector organizations¹⁰⁾. However, empirical evidence shows that not all HR practices are suitable for application in public sector organizations due to the nature of the services provided and the characteristics of public sector employees ¹¹⁾. As a result, institutions seek to achieve high performance by choosing the appropriate strategy to provide the best possible service. Services affect an individual's life requirements, such as healthcare, education, transportation, social life, and others¹²⁾. Scholars seek to find new ways to ensure the use of high-performance work systems and improve the performance of public sector institutions¹³⁾.

ELEMENTS FOR CREATING HPWS

Researchers confirm the most critical components that help achieve an effective HPWS in public sector institutions. In this respect, human resource productivity is positively associated with using HPWS, which, in turn, reflects achieving high-performance levels in the public sector ^{14) 15)}. Accountability and follow-up also have a practical impact on achieving the desired goals of public sector institutions, and many strategies have been applied to achieve accountability and follow-up in a diverse and widespread manner through the use of HPWS in public sector ^{16) 17)}. Also, there is a real need for accurate accountability in managing public resources because accountability is

fundamental to public accountability and follow-up systems. Being an essential factor in controlling performance in general, accountability can improve financial and administrative performance in public sector institution ¹⁸⁾. Concerning improving services, scholars proposed many strategies that contribute to developing public sector institutions through high levels of service quality. Studies agree that institutions that use HPWS can work closely with service users to ensure high-performance levels are kept. Studies provide empirical evidence that institutions with HPWS provided services in a distinguished manner ^{19) 20)}. A positive relationship exists between laws and regulations and high performance in public sector institutions. Laws and regulations is the appropriate solution to achieve the organization's goals, such as transparency, competition, transparent accountability, and effective use of public resources. On the other hand, non-laws and regulations will restrict the implementation of main objectives in public institutions, thus making it difficult to achieve the optimal use of public funds, the quality of services, and adhering to the rules of work. Compliance with the law, therefore, is essential for obtaining accurate data and embodies fair, transparent, and accountable working methods that achieve better performance in the public sector^{21) 22)}. Implementing plans and addressing deviations can provide positive results for the public sector. Using flexible standards to face rapid changes and reduce errors helps public sector organizations achieve high performance ^{23), 24)}. The relationship between these elements and HPWS is positive and performs better in public sector institutions ²⁵⁾. Also, it is widely agreed that sets of HR practices can significantly impact organizational performance ²⁶⁾. HPWS also has significant advantages over individual HR practices, as they lead to building practices that support the organization's strategies. Therefore, the role played by designing HPWS in developing institutions is essential.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the qualitative interview method based on the assumptions of grounded theory ²⁷⁾. The qualitative approach enables the generalization of the results reached by analyzing the adopted data ²⁸⁾. Furthermore, the qualitative interview is more appropriate for the early stage of research in a field, especially when researchers seek to explore new issues in the institutions in depth ³⁰⁾. The qualitative interview could be used when the study purpose is exploratory rather than descriptive ²⁹⁾. Therefore, this approach is consistent with the purpose of this study, which is to explore indicators of high performance in public sector institutions by interviewing experienced people.

Adopting the explorative approach is to determine the character and kind of relationships between the main elements of the study. It also helps discover facts that are difficult to reach through other. Exploratory research is, therefore, relevant to this study because it plays a vital role in understanding various challenges. Gathering insights that lay the groundwork for more studies and developing effective strategies to address the identified challenges is essential. Data were collected by semi-structured interview and by interviewing (15) managers from (15) Iraqi public sector institutions. One participant was selected from each institution: (2) general managers, (1) administrative and financial managers, and (12) human resources managers. The selection of participants follows the qualitative interview method ²⁷⁾ and was based on institutional recommendations due to their confidence in the participants' expertise in the field of this study. More information about the participants is in Table 1 below. Transcripts were coded thematically according to the research questions and indicators identified from the literature. Direct quotes were anonymized to maintain participant confidentiality. Finally, the difference in equality between the number of interviewees according to gender is that the selection of participants was based on specialization, experience, and position.

Table 1. General data of respondents from directors of human resources departments in public sector institutions

Academic degree	P.H.D: 4	Masters: 4	Bachelor: 7
Gender	Female:2 Male:2	Female:1 Male:3	Female:2 Male:5
Position years	1 – 3 Years:5	3 – 5 Years: 7	More than 5 Years: 3
Position title	G.Manager:3	Administrative Manager: 2	H R. Manager: 10

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

We will present the results according to the essential elements that were assumed to design HPWS, which are human resource productivity, accountability and follow-up, improving services, laws and regulations, and implementing plans and addressing deviations.

HUMAN RESOURCE PRODUCTIVITY

The majority of respondents believe that human resources in public sector institutions can achieve the desired levels

of productivity if the requirements for this are provided in the institution. These requirements affect achieving high performance directly or indirectly in the organization. In this regard, respondents stress the importance of supporting human resources to achieve high productivity, as follows:

"We work to encourage and support the employees in the Resources Department, give them the necessary powers, and pay attention to an appropriate motivation system. The work has begun with great flexibility and confidence in recent years, and each is within his specialty. I believe that we can support employees more by placing the right person in the right place, providing transparency in evaluation, and providing rich training programs according to need and specialization." - Respondent (8)

"We are trying to create a teamwork system, involve all employees in making decisions, stay away from individual decisions, use the method of work teams, and empower employees. Moreover, develop training programs to help develop the skills and abilities of the employee. We are also working to activate oversight at the employee level. Productivity and performance: to achieve high productivity and then achieve high performance." - Respondent (7).

"The increase in productivity is achieved by paying attention to several factors, including the continuous interest of the institution and senior management in employees, supporting them financially and morally, giving them participation in decision-making, spreading the spirit of cooperation among employees, providing development courses, and providing an appropriate work environment. Moreover, this leads to achieving high performance and ensuring high employee productivity." - Respondent (9)

It is clear from the above that human resources managers have a clear vision and many implemented programs that have contributed to enhancing the productivity of human resources in their various institutions. Therefore, it can be said that achieving the desired productivity by the employees of those institutions is moving in the right direction towards designing a high-performance work system. Because the productivity of human resources is one of the fundamental pillars in the design of this system, it contributes significantly and effectively to achieving high performance.

On the other hand, some participants believe that there is a need to grant more powers to select and appoint employees according to the needs of the institution and not only according to the general appointments policy, and this is evident from the opinions of participants (10, 12), respectively:

"I think there is a weak interest in the human resources department in selecting competent and skilled employees according to the organization's needs. Employees in the public sector in Iraq are selected in different contexts that may not depend on competence as much as they depend on academic qualifications only. Therefore, it is difficult to find the right person." In the right place. We are largely defined by senior management."

"We have an inflated number of engineers and a lack of executive staff. Senior management is supposed to select and appoint employees according to the organization's needs and not randomly. To clarify, I believe the number of executive workers is no less than 40 if ten engineers are appointed, but this does not always happen." Because the executive workers ultimately bear the responsibility for implementation, and therefore the appointments must be comprehensive for different categories of employees and not just one category."

Based on those above, some institutions appoint people with important specializations, such as engineers. However, they do not consider the mechanisms that achieve high productivity of human resources. The number of executive workers is still not balanced with the number of engineers for the work system to be integrated.

Therefore, the productivity of human resources in most institutions is moving in the right direction. This achieved satisfactory productivity in terms of the necessary support it provides in their institutions. However, implementing a high-performance work system is not without some challenges because some institutions do not have efficient hiring policies. Providing highly qualified human resources cannot be a substitute for providing executive workers, which is what causes an obstacle to implementing the proposed system in some institutions.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND FOLLOW-UP

Most respondents tend to provide accountability and follow-up to help improve work effectively and direct employees in the work environment to master the tasks and duties assigned to them and perform them with high effectiveness. Accountability and follow-up are the basis for creating any sound institutional system. Public institutions need to use accountability and follow up effectively. This is what respondents explained, as follows:

Accountability and follow-up contribute to achieving better levels of performance. The lack of accountability and follow up will have a negative impact on our institutions. It is also necessary for the managers to be familiar with the instructions, controls, and laws that have an impact on the success of the accountability and follow up system in the institution. Respondent (11)

"We have accountability and follow-up from higher administrative levels, like ministries, but they do not have to be continuous throughout the year. Therefore, we perform the accountability and follow-up role continuously from within

the institution, contributing to achieving good performance in our institution." - Respondent (8)

"Poor performance leads to strict control criteria, which is one of the factors that helped reduce errors and improve performance. Our supervisory bodies provide their observations to improve performance, and we also have laboratories to ensure the quality of the service provided, which is one of the types of accountabilities and follow-up related to the institution's work." - Respondent (15)

It is clear from what is mentioned above that there are two types of accountability follow-up: external and internal. Although the external supervisory role is not continuous, it is carried out by the senior departments of the relevant ministries, and it achieves precise positive results towards achieving high performance. As for internal accountability, it is at a reasonable level in all institutions, by the standards and instructions of public institutions, and thus, it guarantees the achievement of high performance in these institutions. On the other hand, internal accountability seeks to limit deviations because it follows up on employees who have previously failed in their work, and the matter may reach the point of taking punitive measures against them.

Furthermore, other respondents add that accountability and follow-up depend to a large extent on the role of financial and administrative reports issued by their institutions. These reports help provide regulatory authorities with information to carry out accountability and follow-up work, and performance evaluation, performance reports, and transparency about the institution's accurate data, whether administrative or financial, are among the most critical control tools that help achieve high performance in government sector institutions. In this regard, many respondents emphasize the role of supervisory reports in this context, which are as follows:

"We submit administrative and financial reports to the Planning Department, which then forwards them to the Performance Evaluation Department in the relevant ministries for monitoring and following up on work on an ongoing basis and correcting errors. Reports are very effective if there is speed in their preparation and sending. This is achieved by using advanced technology systems." - Respondent (1)

"We prepare many reports for all departments in our institution. The reports could include everything related to employees in all departments. They also help provide the required data on employee performance and complete financial and administrative reports. However, more attention is paid to financial reports than administrative reports to reduce administrative mistakes in our institution." - Respondent (10)

"Reports on employee performance are sent to senior departments every month. The information in these reports is accurate and far from personal views." - Respondent (12)

It appears from what the respondents mentioned above that performance reports have an essential role in activating accountability and follow-up, and evaluating performance in institutions. These reports help provide regulatory authorities with the necessary data that enables them to perform their functions effectively. One of the most important of these financial and administrative reports now is that the focus in some institutions is on financial reports more than administrative reports due to the fear of some of the senior management of these institutions of financial waste. The use of technology helps speed up the process of completing and sending reports to decision-makers to address errors and correct the course. Therefore, accountability and follow-up play a significant role in HPWS designing, and it is at a reasonable level in terms of financial control. However, it still needs more work in its focus on some administrative aspects and performance evaluation.

IMPROVING SERVICES

There is a consensus among respondents that achieving effective and advantageous administrative services and constantly improving them can happen through simplifying administrative procedures and supporting employees by giving them sufficient managerial facilities, especially technological facilities, throughout their work. These services will be reflected in their work, and they will give their best, and this is shown by what the respondent (14) states, which is as follows:

"We rely on technology to improve our institution's facilities to its beneficiaries. However, these facilities still need to be at the level of ambition, and in general, this has helped reduce many procedures. This is what made our institution pay great attention to this aspect in order to improve services further. We have also employed qualified staff to make e-work more effective and thus achieve better performance."

Respondent (5) adds the following:

"Choosing employees with competencies and specializations compatible with the core of our work contributed to improving the service to a greater level. Competent employees also constitute the supporting level in improving and developing the service. In addition, the experiences of senior positions help ensure a service improvement strategy." More,

Respondent (1) added the following:

"The institution's financial support for its employees helps improve their financial benefits, and thus, they provide

better quality services. This also contributes to work stability, avoiding stress, reducing work turnover, and leads to accumulated experiences for employees, reflected in providing better service."

Respondent (4) also added the following:

"We seek to establish deep values and loyalty, and this comes by motivating them, making them feel their importance in the institution, giving them their rights, and creating a good relationship between them and the managers. However, we must give our employees broader powers to enhance their loyalty and ensure a high level of service."

It is clear from what the respondents mentioned that there is a straightforward relationship between better services and supporting employees financially and morally on an ongoing basis. This relationship becomes clear through encouraging and motivating employees to make exceptional efforts. Motivating employees also play a significant role in demonstrating creativity and capabilities through flexibility and creating an appropriate work environment within the institutions. Thus, such relationships will benefit the institutions providing the best services to their customers and ensure higher performance.

Regarding the importance of technology in improving service, it is considered an essential factor in accurately reducing procedures, as well as in achieving transparency, which helps improve the service provided, and thus, this has a positive effect on achieving better performance in public sector institutions.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Most respondents agree on the importance of establishing a methodical framework, setting flexible regulations for the performance system, and justice in implementing those instructions in public sector institutions. As stated by respondent (5):

"In our institution, we follow the laws and regulations carefully, which helps the workflow to proceed more effectively; we need more complexity in some laws. The complexity of the procedures is one of the main reasons for poor performance. If the complexity is addressed, our work will be more flexible."

Respondent (3) adds the following:

"Adherence to the legislation helps to avoid mistakes. However, some old laws must be revised to suit the current circumstances, and we have called for those laws to be amended to be appropriate to the current situation."

The respondent (10) also added the following:

"There is a comprehensive commitment to the laws within the institution. However, some instructions in the financial process hinder the assignment of funds as needed for our work, even though instructions are to prevent financial waste."

Public institutions are still subject to legislation in force that had been used in old times. However, these legislations no longer fit the current situation as in the past, as there are old legislations that need to be updated and developed, and remaining as they are causing needs to be clarified in work and positively affect performance. In addition, these legislations have become complex in the view of public institutions because they were designed for previous periods, perhaps before the technological development that widely influenced performance processes in general.

Other respondents believe that while other respondents believe that legislation, even if it is old, contributes to the stability of administration and policies, preventing financial corruption, working transparently, and protecting private and public property rights, which respondents state as follows: "All employees are committed to performing their duties by legislation and laws. However, some managers need to gain better competence in understanding legislation and laws, which may affect their implementation and thus reflect negatively on performance within the organization."

- Respondent (3):

"Our institution follows the laws systematically. However, influential external factors, such as economic, political, and demographic factors, limit the institutions' ability to perform their duties." - Respondent (11):

It is clear from what respondents mentioned that external factors, including economic, political, and demographic, affect employees' commitment to laws and regulations within the institutions, negatively affecting the achievement of high performance in public sector institutions.

IMPLEMENTING PLANS AND ADDRESSING DEVIATIONS

Most respondents agree with certain factors when developing plans, like using performance reports on the institution's reality. The institution should also consider developing flexible plans that can be revised continuously and improved directly through feedback. These plans also include all the institution's requirements for successfully implementing the strategy. In this regard, respondent (1) stated:

"Initially, plans are proposed by the Planning Department, in cooperation with other relevant departments that support this department with the data it needs, and the Performance Evaluation Department measures implementation of the

plans, identifies deviations, identifies strengths, and makes improvements to them, and this is done on an annual basis." Also, respondent (7) stated the following:

"We thoughtfully develop an annual and quarterly plan that includes all the necessary work requirements for our organization. It must be noted that planning must be precise and nothing else. We also develop strategic plans that include all aspects of work and administrative and technical development. Therefore, the implementation of these plans is accurate depending on the accuracy of the plan's development. There is also a focus on feedback from the plan's implementation to identify and address any deviations."

It appears from the above statements that public sector institutions, despite being governmental institutions. They develop independent plans for their practical activities, contribute to developing strategic plans within their fields, and pay great attention to their implementation. Also, feedback is carried out by measuring deviations from the established plans, working to address these deviations, and benefiting from these experiments to develop plans for the coming years, which contributes to improving performance levels in public sector institutions gradually and annually.

On the other hand, some respondents stressed that the lack of completion in some cases is not due to reasons related to the institution's specialization or its employees but rather to other reasons. For example, these institutions are public institutions that operate with public financing and are not self-financed. Therefore, the planned level of performance could be affected by the government's financial support, centralization policy, and other reasons. This is what respondents 13 and 14, respectively state.

"We need granting powers to set plans because we usually implement top management plans. There is an annual plan, a quarterly plan, and a monthly plan. Our institution implements 90%, while the 10% is due to conditions that may not allow us to implement these plans."

"We develop annual plans, and they are implemented at a rate of up to 75%. The reason for not implementing the 25% is financial challenges. If the financial budget is fully available, the plans could be fully implemented, and the plan could be matched with implementation and raised semi-annually and at the end of the year."

Respondent (15) adds that internal control is a necessary factor that the institution must perform accurately and effectively and is essential to improve operations and performance. He stated the following:

"We have established inspection committees, one of the most critical factors that helped improve performance. We have a supervisory role represented by the Internal Control teams. They have inspection committees and provide reports to improve performance. We have laboratories to ensure the quality of service provided, which is one of the types of follow-ups related to the institution's work. Of course, if a comprehensive strategy is implemented and responds to the institution's requirements, sufficient flexibility in our administrative system to shift to decentralization will guarantee more powers for the institution."

As shown above, it is essential to implement plans and address deviations to achieve good performance in public sector institutions. However, there are some requirements that, if they are not provided, prevent the completion rates of plans in these institutions.

Furthermore, the requirements could be divided into external and internal. For external critical ones, is the instability of government financial support, and its continuous decline, and the limited powers of the institution to develop its plan according to the data it has. The internal requirements are within the institution, and it is responsible for achieving them. An example of this is offering internal control because it is the closest to the work environment and knows all its details. Getting relevant feedback is one of the most important factors in ensuring deviations are addressed for the plan's success. It is also possible to quickly address problems in implementing plans, which reflects positively on achieving better performance in public sector institutions as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Identification of 15 Categories in Third-Level (Final) Coding (Strategies, Requirements, and Components of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) in the Public Sector)

No.	Categories (Resulting from Third-Level- Final Coding)	Requirements for Establishing HPWS System	Components of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS)
1	A Competitive and Merit-Based Work Environment and Conditions for Employees in the Public Sector	Internal Requirements	* Improving Services
2	Job Enrichment and Employee Empowerment		
3	An Agile Structure with a Reasonable Size		
4	Professional Development System and Skill- and Competency-Based Compensation	External Requirements	Human Resource Productivity
5	Stability in Management and Policy-Making		

6	Separation of Politics from Administration		Accountability and Follow-Up
7	Recruitment and Employment of the Most Qualified and Best Talents in the Public Sector		
8	Development of E-Government		
9	Strategic Thinking and Action Based on the Strategic Issues of the Public Sector	Shared Requirements Between Internal and External	Implementation of Plans and Addressing Deviations
10	Transparency and Continuous Public Performance Reporting		
11	Enhancing the Authority and Accountability of Managers Regarding Performance and Human Resource Productivity		
12	Implementation of a Management by Objectives System	Requirements to Be Established	Compliance with Laws and Regulations
13	Implementation of an Employee Performance Management System		
14	Establishment of Conflict of Interest Management in the Public Sector		
15	Motivation System and Performance-Based Reward Allocation		

DISCUSSION

This article aims to demonstrate the extent of the possibility of designing high-performance work systems in Iraqi public sector institutions. The findings show that there is a possibility of implementing HPWS in light of five elements suggested in this study (human resource productivity, accountability and follow-up, improving services, laws and regulations, and implementing plans and addressing deviations). Even if some difficulties are still partly hindering the system's design at present.

Current human resources provide a significant opportunity to establish HPWS due to the skills, experience, and competencies these institutions possess in their human resources, thus leading to high performance. On the other hand, the study's results showed that some challenges in public sector institutions should be addressed in this regard. One of the most recognized challenges is the need for more powers granted to human resources, especially those with experience, competence, and qualifications who have skills and a high ability to support activities. Also, the selection of employees was sometimes based on inaccurate choices, leading to gaps in some human resource occupations. Specializations exist in abundance, while others are required but unavailable, negatively affecting the construction of HPWS in the desired manner. These results agree with studies (30), (31), (32). The results confirmed this.

Regarding accountability and follow-up, it is clear that there is internal control system from within the institution and external control (from administrative bodies at higher levels in public sector institutions). Internal control is available in an equal manner and with a high level of accuracy and achieves positive results on the ground in daily work practices, and this is consistent with what was confirmed by the study of (33). Furthermore, some weaknesses need to be addressed for external control, as it focuses only on the financial aspect, while other aspects must also be considered, including administration factors. The role of external control in this regard comes because these institutions are linked to the role of the government sector. Therefore, these institutions must be subject to the government's supervisory role. Therefore, the results are broadly consistent with studies by (34). which emphasize the importance of external control and its positive impact on addressing deviations within the institutions.

Regarding improving the service provided, it has been shown that public sector institutions are much more aware of improving their services, especially through the widespread use of technology in their various areas of work. It positively affects improving the service provided in these institutions, which is consistent with the study (35) (36). which believes that technology has a vital role in improving the service provided within public sector institutions.

The authority to motivate employees to enhance their service in public sector institutions still needs to be improved as they are linked to the top management levels. However, moral motivations have a broad scope and a significant role in creating an appropriate work environment within the institutions. These results are broadly consistent with (37), (38) studies.

There is significant interest in public institutions developing strategic plans for all their activities on a quarterly and annual basis, in addition to conducting feedback and addressing deviations. These results are consistent with the studies of 39), 40), 41).

However, extreme centralization is one of the main challenges institutions seek to overcome. Granting institutions more powers and independence in funding could lead to comprehensive completion objectives. They are still looking to achieve this, as these institutions have limited authority and are subordinate in funding and decision-making by the central governmental ministries. These results meet with the results of studies 42), 43) regarding the negative effect of centralization.

Despite the necessity and importance of legislation and laws in the activities of these institutions, these legislations are considered relatively ancient and need to be updated to suit the technological, social and economic development. Therefore, it has become clear that these laws are among the main challenges facing executing HPWS. This result is consistent with studies that emphasize the need for legislation and laws to be compatible with current developments44).

As a result, there is a need to provide internal requirements that rely on the institutions' efforts and other external requirements related to the surrounding environment and higher authorities associated with these institutions, which also

need to be provided. That is because the elements adopted in this study differ in their level of support for the performance system. Figure 1 shows the current status of the five elements and the possibility of supporting high-performance work systems in the Iraqi public sector.

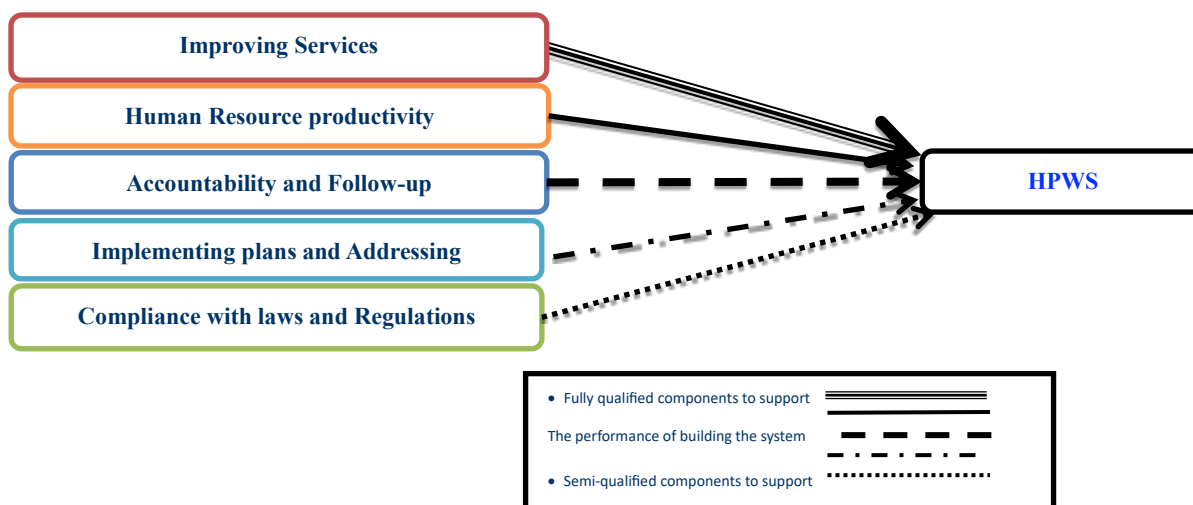


FIG. 1: DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR HPWS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Based on Fig. 1, improving services processes fully support building HPWS. As for the productivity of human resources, it is highly qualified to support the performance system. Regarding the role of accountability and follow-up, it is still partially qualified to support HPWS.

Meanwhile, implementing plans and addressing deviations are still moderately taking place and require more work. Laws and regulations are the factor that least supports HPWS for reasons related to the legislation itself, as it often needs to be more flexible and updated. Finally, establishing HPWS in Iraqi public sector institutions seems possible, but it is currently below the level of ambition.

CONCLUSION

This study has been carried out to present a model of high-performance work system (HPWS) in Iraqi public sector institutions through five elements related to the environment of Iraqi institutions. The data was collected through a semi-structured interview and analysed using a qualitative analysis strategy. The study contributes practically to supporting Iraqi institutions in building this performance system in public institutions. It also contributes theoretically to shedding light on a critical topic in the high-performance literature. All institutions seek to reach high performance and then achieve strategic goals. However, many requirements directly and indirectly affect performance in public

institutions. There are essential requirements that public sector institutions must provide, such as internal requirements, as well as striving to achieve external requirements related to government support, given that government agencies fund public sector institutions.

Among the limitations faced by this study were the difficulties in collecting data from different, geographically located institutions, along with the participants' desire to conduct interviews face-to-face and not online, which required obtaining prior official approvals to conduct the interviews since they are public institutions.

1. Finally, the researchers recommend continuing research in this field, especially studying the five elements separately because of their impact on achieving high performance in public sector institutions.

RECOMENADTIONS

1. Grant broader authority to organizations for managing human resources in alignment with their specific needs.
2. Update laws and regulations to ensure greater flexibility and relevance to current realities.
3. Activate internal oversight through accurate reporting and the use of modern technologies.
4. Motivate employees both financially and morally, while ensuring access to continuous training and development programs.
5. Enable organizations to independently develop and implement plans, incorporating effective feedback mechanisms.
6. Leverage technology to streamline administrative procedures and enhance service quality.
7. Promote future research to conduct in-depth analyses of the components of high-performance work systems.

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