THE CHALLENGES OF APPLYING CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES IN IRAQ AS A TRANSITIONAL SOCIETY: MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ERBIL CITY AS A CASE STUDY

2022
MASTER THESIS
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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Prepared as

Master Thesis

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KARABÜK

January 2022

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I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Nusaibah Saeed BAPEER titled "THE CHALLENGES OF APPLYING CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES IN IRAQ AS A TRANSITIONAL SOCIETY: MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ERBIL CITY AS A CASE STUDY" is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of Business Administration as a Master of Arts thesis. January 10, 2022

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FOREWORD

Admiration be to our thankfulness for the presence of God Almighty who gave us gifts and chances to learn.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to a number of people that have contributed directly or indirectly; those who have supported me in the process of writing this dissertation. I would like to pay my special regards to my research supervisor Prof. Dr. Elif Çepni, appreciate for being actively available in responding to my inquiries and extending continuous support with her help, guidance, and instructions, I wish her the best. It is impossible to extend enough thanks to my husband, child for being patient with me until finishing this dissertation. Finally, my deep and sincere gratitude to my family (my mum, my brothers, my sister)for their continuous and unparalleled love, help, and support.

ABSTRACT

This research studies the factors that are challenging the public sector in Iraq, Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) specifically in applying contemporary management approaches. This effort aims at highlighting the main problems that the MHE is facing currently, based on literature and questionnaire, to help the institution and public sectors in the country in identifying organizational, personal, technical and, cultural factors. The primary source of information for this study is a survey questionnaire and the secondary source of information is relevant literature. Survey result findings show that the public sector in the country and MHE is following the conventional approach of management generally; this conclusion can be manifested in organization structure and hierarchy, management system, line managers as well as the organization accommodation towards embracing development.

Keywords: Change, 21st Century Challenges, Conventional Management, Contemporary Management.

ÖZET (ABSTRACT IN TURKISH)

Bu araştırma, Irak Yüksek Öğretim Bakanlığı'ndaki kamu sektörünü özellikle çağdaş yönetim yaklaşımlarını uygulamada zorlayan faktörleri incelemektedir. Bu çaba, ülkedeki kurum ve kamu sektörlerine örgütsel, kişisel, teknik ve kültürel faktörleri belirlemede yardımcı olmak için literatüre ve ankete dayalı olarak MHE'nin şu anda karşı karşıya olduğu temel sorunları vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma için birincil bilgi kaynağı uygulanan ankettir ve ikincil bilgi kaynağı ilgili literatürdür. Anket sonucu bulguları, lucked kamu sektörünün ve MHE'nin genel olarak geleneksel yönetim anlayışını izlediğini; bu sonuç, organizasyon yapısı ve hiyerarşisi, yönetim sistemi, bola yöneticileri ve ayrıca gelişmeyi benimsemeye yönelik organizasyon uyumunda kendini gösterebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler (**Keywords in Turkish**): Değişim, 21. yüzyıl zorlukları, geleneksel yönetim, çağdaş yönetim.

ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

Title of the Thesis	The Challenges of Applying Contemporary Management Principles İn Iraq As A Transitional Society: Ministry Of Higher Education In Erbi City As A Case Study.
Author of the Thesis	Nusaiba Saeed BAPEER
Supervisor of the Thesis	Prof. Dr. Elif ÇEPNİ
Status of the Thesis	Approved
Date of the Thesis	January 10,2022
Field of the Thesis	Business Administration
Place of the Thesis	KBU/LEE
Total Page Number	71
Keywords	Change, 21st Century Challenges, Conventional Management, Contemporary Management,

ARŞIV KAYIT BILGILERI (IN TURKISH)

Tezin Adı	Bir Geçiş Toplumu Olarak Irak'ta Çağdaş Yönetim Ilkelerini Uygulamanın Zorlukları: Bir Vaka Çalışması Olarak Erbil Şehrinde Yüksek Öğretim Bakanlığı
Tezin Yazarı	Nusaiba Saeed Bapeer
Tezin Danışmanı	Prof.Dr.Elif Çepni
Tezin Derecesi	Onaylandı
Tezin Tarihi	January 10,2022
Tezin Alanı	Işletme
Tezin Yeri	KBU/LEE
Tezin Sayfa Sayısı	71
Anahtar Kelimeler	Değişim, 21. Yüzyıl Zorlukları, Geleneksel Yönetim, Çağdaş Yönetim**.**

ABBREVIATIONS

E-government	Electronic Government
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MHE	Ministry of Higher Education

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

The primary aim of this study is to highlight the obstacles that are faced throughout the process of transformation from the inevitable global change from the conventional management approach towards contemporary methods. The ever-changing developments in management using developing technological needs against the varying needs for effective task completion as well as quality service provision with change in time, are in a continuous struggle. This dissertation is focusing on highlighting the particular challenges that are faced in the process of development in the Iraqi context. Understanding the underpinning factors against progress is a stepping stone towards progress and achievement of enhanced results in the praxis of modern management principles in public sectors in Iraq. This study is an exploratory study that tries to showcase the major factors that dispute change towards modern management approaches such as personal, cultural, technological, and organizational factors. This research is a distinctive study in the area to study these factors in the public sector and the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) as an example. Therefore, the findings of this study will help in generating knowledge for future studies on one hand. On the other hand, it can lead the way for policy-makers, managers, and entrepreneurs in the process of developing management techniques in the public sector through recommending alternative approaches based on research study findings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is using exploratory research design to identify factors that challenge the adoption of contemporary management approaches in the public sector in Iraq. Previous studies have not identified this issue concerning the public sector or the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) in Erbil-Iraq. Therefore, this study attempts to examine the factors according to similar literature as well as through a survey questionnaire. A simple random sampling technique is used for this study. This method of data collection is preferred for this study as this study is unique in its type, previous research studies have not investigated this topic. As a base study, it aims to investigate the factors that have caused the challenges against development towards advanced management. A survey questionnaire was designed based on the problem statement and literature on this topic. The research sample population is 200 out of 420 employees, considering a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. This study is trying to investigate four aspects in relation to the research problem: Personal factor, cultural factor, technical factor and, innovation. The survey questionnaire will be distributed, collected and, analyzed using the SPSS application. Finally, results are analyzed and demonstrated in the discussion section.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Bureaucratic administration has faced numerous criticisms around the world due to its inability to respond to the changing needs of organizations through time, and the introduction of alternative methods in organization management. The public sector in the Iraqi context is still following the bureaucratic administration procedures throughout the country in the government offices. The conventional form of management is neither able to respond to the employees' expectations in the twenty-first century, nor is able to effectively respond to citizens' needs as in the provision of quality services in the public sector, and MHE as an example. The organizational structure of the conventional management is resistant to change due to infrastructural factors; on the other hand, the developing needs of service seekers at the public sectors multiply while the management system is continuing on conventional pathways or showing limited progress and change. As a result, the formal tasks and paperwork progress through routine and are time-consuming while modern forms of management can overcome many of these challenges through an analytical understanding of organization structure, task management, technology integration and, change in the organization structures.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Completing this research study was not without challenge, there were two main challenges in the process of getting this dissertation finalized. Firstly, the topic of this research was a unique topic thus no similar research topic was found to be conducted. Therefore, collecting secondary data as literature was not easy. Second, data collection required more time and follow-up due to the COVID-19 situation in which the participants were working on a roster basis and minimizing work attendance. Thus, the data collection required further dedication follow up to make sure all participants receive their questionnaires, completed and return them. Finally, it has to be stated that this is a case study and there might be some differences with future studies that could be conducted at other governmental institutions.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

This study is addressing the challenges of applying contemporary management principles in Iraq as a transitional society and taking the Ministry of Higher Education in Erbil city as a case study. Firstly, it will provide a background of the context about the nature of management and organization structure in the country. Also pointing out the factors that hinder the change and the organization systems that have resisted change (Al-Mawlawi, 2020). This study reflects literature on conventional forms of management and evidence of its shortcomings in praxis. This dissertation will also be reviewing academic papers and research-based information about modern management principles as an alternative system of administration. The contemporary management principles encourage learning through a knowledge-centered approach (Hussain et al., 2021), technological tools and devices (Pruna, 2008), change of organizational hierarchy (Hofstede, 1980), social and psychological needs of employees. It is to be noted that the words modern, contemporary and post-modern management are used interchangeably in this thesis, referring to the modern world management approach that explains the interaction between employee's capacities and organization structure holistically.

Looking at the public administration in the country generally, it can be noticed that the management system in the public sector is practicing a conventional bureaucratic form of administration; the system that was established half a century ago. For instance, paperwork and routine are integral parts of the current system. Despite modern tools, approaches and research-based practices in the management system, there is usually one specific way of getting a task done, which is through following the routine-based procedures designed by the system for decades. As a result of such practice, task completion is troubled by ineffectiveness, delay and inefficiency, while employees and service seekers stay unsatisfied. The under-performance of the public sector, in general, is manifested in many aspects, such as time management, quality of product or service, the effectiveness of products or services in response to the needs, people's response to the established way of

work mechanism and employees' response towards organizational commitment as well as service provision to customers.

In fact, the indicators of unsatisfactory performance in the public sector in Iraq generally and the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) in Erbil particularly are observable to policy-makers, organization management system as well the people, while little effort is made to change the existing approach. This struggle between the status quo and embracing the modern system of management has not yet settled. There are major factors that have caused the struggle between preserving the status quo (Opren, 1990; Kanter, 1983), the factors involve the organizational structure as established entities and their policies, as well as employees' participation that both together form a way of interaction. The contributing factors that hinder development and reform in the public sector could be many, however; this dissertation is limited to exploring the nature of the organizational setting and its tolerance towards integrating modern tools, promoting horizontal management and motivating information sharing and innovative thinking within the workplace. While at the individual level, investigating the intrapersonal factors that affect individuals'' such as culture in the context, as well as employees' mindset towards change and development.

This study aims to explore the factors that hinder implementing modern management principles through analyzing cultural and organizational nature integrating with survey responses. The hypothesis for this study assumes that change is hindered by the organization structure and policies, administration as well as the employees that are willing to preserve the status quo due to fear from unknown and losing their position as stated by Anderson (1997) as well as intrapersonal factors identified (Hökkä, 2012).

To test the hypothesis, this thesis will demonstrate the collected data and analyze the collected answers from surveyed participants. Data will be prepared, sorted, and analyzed to present research findings. This study is conducting quantitative simple random data collection to investigate the research problem. Two hundred employees at the MHE will be surveyed aiming at 95 percent of accuracy and 5 percent of margin error.

1.2. Background

The postmodern management approach came about as an alternative to the conventional forms of management in general through the experience of knowledge, testing and evaluation of results. The contemporary management theorists saw the gaps that were observed through research and studies with both people from management as employees, as well as people who use the services in a context whether in the private sector or public sector. In classical thought, it was believed that employees were simple workers that were merely influenced by a few factors that directly impacted their status: most commonly income and position. While modern management theory sees humans in any management system as complex beings that have many needs. It sees employees and workers as complex beings that have more to contribute when involved at the workplace.

This method of management also involves integrating other tools in management that were not used in the conventional form of management. For instance, after the technology revolution, management systems welcomed integrating technologies and software to run their business to increase efficiency, effectiveness as well as better time and resource management. While Iraq is yet following the conventional form of management in almost all public sectors, ministries, and directorates, official paperwork is yet depending on physical documentation and archiving. As a result, it is noticeable that the office management and the output of this form of management are unable to meet the demands of contemporary needs across the country. The increased workload on the public sector with the increased population has stressed the government in responding to the needs and has led to delay in productivity, time consumption, employees' dissatisfaction, people's dissatisfaction, and errors.

Iraq as a transitional society is also affected by the globalized wave of implementing developed management approaches as alternatives to the traditional form of management. The concept of postmodern system management is approved by some Iraqi government officials, and the downside of traditional management has been manifested in the performance of the public sector (Al-Mawlawi, 2020). Further, it has been researched that the contemporary needs of employees, the need to reduce error, increase efficiency and productivity in the management system require change towards an alternating method of

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administration. Implementing a contemporary form of management involves integrating modern tools and technologies that can enhance the performance of public sectors with increased efficiency (Bozeman and Bret Schneider, 1986). Furthermore, the lack of harmony between organisms of the same sector and the consequential shortcomings has created a de-facto reality that asks for alternative methods of management while resources such as technology, research studies, management tools, software, and other factors are already widespread in the country.

Despite the fact that adopting new approaches of management is a dire need to overcome the challenges that are facing the public sector in Iraq, the alternating system itself has become a challenge when put to practice. This is due to the constellation of the systematic influencers such as cultural, economic, structural, and political factors. To change the management system in the public sector in general and the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) as the case study of this research, requires an infrastructural change. This turn affects every aspect of a sector or a ministry from human resources, physical material, to intangible values that should be added. On the other hand, the question of how welcoming is the new form of management and organization structure by the employees of that organization is another challenge that is inherent to this change. This can be explained by the interpersonal factors, the way people are accustomed to easier tasks, little stress, short working hours, and lack of responsibility and accountability in the government sector. Thus, the change in management structure is not only a physical change that can be borrowed or bought; but also, a change that requires a commitment to integrate the values and principles of the postmodern form of management, embracing how the alternating approach may conflict with the status quo.

In addition, the cultural aspect of Iraqi society and the management culture that has been developed and fostered through years of implementation by the consecutive government systems, are at the core of the challenges towards applying a postmodern form of management within the public sector in general. The top-to-down form of chain command in the conventional management system is in harmony with the cultural aspect. As in the Iraqi culture families and tribes operate with a similar hierarchy, the ones at the bottom of the hierarchy receiving orders from the person above as a usual form of

administration. People who are at the top of the hierarchy enjoy being the decision-maker with minimum flexibility and questioning by those who are not entitled to participate in proposing, recommending, or changing any aspect of the course. Another challenging factor is the integration of technologies and tools in management, while a significant portion of the population is technology-illiterate or unable to operate software correctly Despite some efforts by the Iraqi government to technologically develop the public sector, such as gaining expertise from the US government and signing a memorandum of understanding with the Italian Ministry of Technology and Innovation (Qader et al., 2016), the impact is insignificant. The incorporation of computers, the internet, and software remain a considerable challenge for the citizens in general. Due to the abovementioned factors, officials in the country have faced challenges in adopting change within the government sector.

This study is going to study the postmodern management aspects in relation to their praxis in the Iraqi public sector, Ministry of Higher Education as an example. The Ministry of Higher Education in Erbil-Iraq has stepped forward in integrating new forms of management including provision of service as in online service. Thus, this study is going to research the challenges that MHE is facing with the transition from the conventional form of management to the contemporary system of administration.

1.3. Literature Review

In the past decades, public administration scholars questioned the key pillars of the traditional form of administration, criticizing bureaucratic administration and positivism, in pursuit of implementing substitute theories for better results. Starting from the 1970s, de-bureaucratization became popular at the level of international organizations. In this respect, scholars made efforts focusing on opening up public administration to society towards the post-bureaucratic trend (Olsen, 2008). This paradigm shift in public administration has been introduced as an inescapable change in the direction of enhanced administration and governance (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). The public bureaucracy characterizes rationality, centralism, while contemporary approach alternatives include escapism, disproportionality, pluralism, division, and fragmentation from the center against rationality, centralism, and universality (Ökten et al., 2018). In contrast, the new approach of management promotes values of transparency, liability, participation, horizontal work environment, result-orientated workplace for public administration employees, meanwhile participating people from the outside as active shapers of organization. Almost all of the contemporary thoughts of organization management oppose the centralization of authority, and rather discourage control and authority given to management in public administration (Genç, 2010).

Organizations are human constructs; they exist and operate to the limit that a notable number of people support it and recognize it as a respectable or flawless system of operation (Olsen 2008). This means that the legitimacy of a system is dependent on the group agreement of key personnel, or those who have the power to recognize an entity as a proper system of management. Since the rules and regulations of a particular system are a product of the intellectual effort of a number of men and(or) women in a particular era and time, there is space, probability, susceptibility for change, and development. Meaning that a particular system at best could operate impeccably at a particular period of time, however, lose its potency to time, economy, politics, disaster, or any other factor. With the change of the environment, organizations should change (Thompson, 1967). In this respect due to the volatility of development, change should be introduced, perceived and embraced by organizations if institutions are not influenced by government systems (Amanta, 2020).

Debela et al (2020) support this perspective and add that the sole issue is that the public sector has been immunized against change by government systems.

Change is inevitable (Drucker, 1999) thus, any system is liable to change, whether a private sector or public sector (Amanta, 2020); some types of changes can be noticeable and create a direct impact on witnesses, while other sorts of change could be unnoticeable. Organizational change encompasses the systematic and non-systematic interactions between parts of the system and the people who operate it (Wegerich, 2001). To make a change happen necessitates questioning the current values, routines or procedures against alternatives (Bourne, 2015). Peter (2000) states that the form of change that happens in an institution can either lead to deinstitutionalization when the institution is discontinued from the operation, or it can become a turning point for re-institutionalization, which means reform.

The former political regimes in Iraq have developed the government institutions as a form of control in the lack of effectiveness and corruption (Joseph and Sumer, 2019). Lack of transparency of public organizations, limited information and political factors lead to socio-cultural challenges, at the level of government as well as at individuals (Monte mayor et. al, 2016). Research findings of the performance of the public sector in Erbil city of Iraq in 2019 show that government employees are accustomed to unstressful work and lack of competition among employees their position is secured following the existing bureaucracy (Joseph and Sumer, 2019). In 2019 a round table meeting at the Middle East Research Institute it was stated "The administrative structure of the public sector governance has evolved into a highly centralized, inflated, and inefficient bureaucracy" and the need for decentralization was crucial (MERI, 2019). Aziz (2020) described the system as a bloated system that is burdened by economic, political, and administrational issues. A successful example of transformational governance in the area of the public sector is the United Arab Emirates (Abdullah, 2021). UAE among the Arabic nations is an example in the area that to date stands the most successful in applying advanced management approaches integrated with the latest technological tools. While Egypt's public sector is characterized by poor performance for factors such as corruption, street-level bureaucracy, ineffectiveness, a limited form of information and service provision to people (Reddick et al., 2011).

1.3.1. The Significance of Change

The classical public administration for running contemporary organization aspects has proven to be incompetent with the increased and varied modern world management needs and aspects; and this has been proven valid through research studies (Reddick et al., 2011; Abdullah, 2021). Alternatively, the necessity of integration of newly developed tools that include research-based values and principles of the postmodern form of administration in the public sector has become pivotal. Indeed, reshaping the management system through integrating newly developed tools creates further transparency and regains the trust of the public towards the system (Reddick et al., 2011; Abdullah, 2021). In this respect, to achieve the fundamental principles, policymakers in the position of decision-making, managers, and employees in management systems should commit to making the change happen despite the challenges and sacrifices. This systematic change is not only concerning policy-makers but also involves every aspect from human resources to tangible tools and intangible values such as motivation, innovation, work environment, and interactions within an institution. Welcoming this change as an institution is largely dependent on the overall embracing it from top management to frontline employees. The prospect of a country to embark upon a pathway to sustainable development significantly depends on its ability to seize opportunities available throughout key stages to reform its governance institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

Omoyefa (2008) defines reform in the public sector as thoughtful policy measures and administrative actions carried out by the country system to enhance administrative function. However, it should be noted that reform or change for development is a deliberate step that is performed in the pursuit of enhancing what is inefficient or outdated to be changed in a particular system (Omoyefa, 2008). Likewise, Ayee (2008) contends that reform in the administration of the public sector is a targeted or deliberately planned effort that encompasses fundamental changes in the public administration system in an institutionalized arrangement. Whereas there are different perspectives to change that refer to the underpinning factor of change to the wave of global pressure from powerful countries (Welch and Wong 1998).

1.3.2. The Change Direction

The contemporary trend of management is stepping towards the private sector method of management and this is to increase efficiency and productivity (Olsen, 2008). Amanta (2020) and Debela et al (2020) argue that public sector management is not any different from private sector management. The conventional approach of management has is characterized to be ineffective in resources mobilization (Omoyefa, 2008). This is due to the fact that the administrative system has not been able to review and amend its performance against the target goals and needs. In many cases, that is the problem with the Iraqi public sector in management. For instance, unlike the private sector approach of cost estimation and resource mobilization, the issue of too many employees is valid in the case of the Iraqi public sector; the governments and political parties have tried their best to employ more citizens thoughtlessly. As a result, there is a large number of employees in the public sector in all the ministries and directorates. The over-employment issue costs the government more and creates a further routine, while it is possible to manage the public sector more cost-effectively, through implementing business-like practices (Olsen, 2008). Omoyefa (2008) highlights the problem of "too many people doing poorly what fewer people can do better".

Organizational transformation is dependent on the sequential chain of learning practices that creates knowledge that ultimately leads to change (Hussain et al., 2021). In contrast to the centralism of thoughts and praxis, modern organizations systems are characterized by objectivity and the knowledge-centered approach (Pruna, 2008). Meaning that procedures, guidelines, and organization environment are dependent on data, feedback, information and research. This concept has been recognized as a key feature for a successful organization (Vong et al., 2016 cited in Aslam et al., 2018). It is considered the source of life in modern organizations (Muqadas et al., 2017). Knowledge at work has been given attention to by many scholars and there are many perspectives on the discourse. Davenport and Prusak define knowledge as:

A fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms" (Davenport and Prusak, 1998, p. 5).

Indeed, studies have found that knowledge sharing could facilitate innovation, enhance efficiency at work, decrease outflow, improve time management and product (Lin, 2007). Aslam et al (2018) argue that every stage of change requires special skill and knowledge; the specified knowledge is learned through creating the environment of knowledge sharing. Embedding knowledge concepts in a management environment requires the system to continuously check on validating, updating and collecting information. There are two main sources of knowledge that modern organizations can benefit from, which are employees and service users-people (Reddick, 2008). Organizations can benefit from employees' skills and input in making progress (Amabile, 1996). It is worth questioning whether how willing are the local public sector organizations in general and MHE in particular, to integrate employees' input to advance work productivity? Similarly, it is worth investigating whether the management system is eager enough to receive feedback from service users with the intention of improving services. The study of knowledge and the efforts made for knowledge sharing stands at the center point of organizational transformation; since gathering knowledge itself can function as a factor that understands barriers to organizational change (Park and Kim, 2015).

Other than organizational behavior and environment, technology is another trend that contemporary management systems are left with no choice but to integrate technological tools at the workplace. Today, technology plays a significant role in managing knowledge and data collection that is hard to undermine. In this sense, a knowledge-based organization is a combination of resources interconnected by computerized infrastructure (Pruna, 2008, p. 126). Knowledge (through its elements – data, information, expertise, maximum reasoning) conditions the functioning of organizational structures (Mazilescu,

2006, pp. 125-133). The use of technology is also a way to significantly reduce error, corruption and step towards objectivity (Abdullah, 2021).

In fact, systematic change has its own challenges that any system should anticipate when stepping towards reform and change. The most obvious challenges of applying the modern forms of management with its tools include economic and logistical challenges that burden the public sector budget (Jasim et al., 2021; Abdullah, 2021). In addition, such notable change will undeniably clash with the status quo flow of operation, and the level of reaction depends on the character of the transformation and the value that people place on satisfying different individual needs (Carnal, 1990 cited in Michalak, 2010).

1.3.3. Factors Affecting Change

There are many factors that determine organizational change, this study will focus on four major factors that are considered as main challenges against change and development at Iraqi public sector and MHE:

1.3.3.1. Personal Factors

There are many factors that could be counted as personal factors that affect employee behavior at work. Humans as complex beings are affected by many internal and external factors considering personal experience and development. Hökkä (2012) supports the social theory of Vygotsky (1978) and Wertsch (1991) that, to understand change one must study the individual characteristics. The constellation of all the behaviors that form human behavior is referred to as personality. A definition of personality by Hodgetts and Luthans (1991) explains personality as "the individual characteristics and behavior that are shaped uniquely that manifests distinctive perception and reflection towards his/her social surroundings. According to studies and evidence, the personalities of men and women have a notable impact on work performance. Personality is found to be a key determinant that contributes to the work environment and shapes human behavior (Yasil and Sozbilir, 2013). Similar studies by Matzler et al., (2011) have reinforced that there is a strong correlation of individual personality on performance, attitude as well as behavior. Likewise, Patterson et

al., (2009) state that employee behavior contributes a great deal in explaining and understanding the innovative behavior of individuals.

Personalities are established sets of thoughts and behaviors that root from the surrounding environment and learning. There is research evidence reinforcing that employee attitude and behavior can be changed or affected by the workplace environment nevertheless. Organizational culture can affect employee attitude, behavior and expectations (Mohsen et al., 2020). In the Iraqi context, the organizational culture in the public sector is characterized by bureaucracy and hierarchical distribution of authority. Such an administration system has limited tolerance for allowing fundamental changes. The top-down distribution of authority appreciates conserving the status quo (Bourne, 2015; Havelock, 1970). As a result of maintaining this policy, employees are accustomed to preserving what they have learned and what they can do best in a particular approach. As part of the established attitude, employees tend to resist change for some factors as claimed by Challa and Vamsi (2021):

Prior Commitment	When employees are used to an already established course of work, they would be resistant to change.
Inadequate Information	Lack of information is key to retaining conventional approach which looks safer against the unknown.
Maintaining Balance Theory	The theory of Fritz Heider refers to the fact that people naturally are motivated towards behaving in a way that preserves pre-conceived values and expectations.
Lack of Resources	The resource of any organization is limited, thus according to the particular organization's budget, the management system may preserve a way of work to avoid budget overspending.
Poor Reward System	The reward can change employee behavior and attitude at work and lack of it diminishes motivation towards change.

Table 1 Challa and Vamsi's theory of employee personality in a bureaucracy

The work pattern in a workplace is molded by certain factors from personal-cultural to organizational behavior and bureaucracy, that reproduce a particular mindset and attitude

that is preconceived and withholds fixed principles. In a slightly different perspective, according to Anderson (1997), the personal factors can be divided into two determinants: Individual effort: Attitudes and principles of the employee (that includes the struggle to change, fear of joblessness, fear of the new job) are often unquestionable factors in the way of change made. Individual capacity: The characteristics of the employee include skills, knowledge, and talents a person contributes to a specific role or context. In this light, the challenges faced in the pursuit of making a change in an organization generally and the public sector in particular, are equally dependent on the capacities and skillfulness of the staff of an organization. Finally, individual effort is a function of attitudes and beliefs covering all of the cognitive characteristics of the individual that motivate a person to productive behavior on the job. (Anderson, 1997).

In the light of explaining organizational influences on shaping individual identity, the contemporary management system pays attention to the developmental attributes of an employee's personality such as gender construct. Modern world organizations are social environments where individual identities are formed, with gender as a stepping stone in the process of identity formation (Aaltio and Mills, 2002). Unquestionably, the construct of gender has roots in the culture and society (Aaltio and Mills, 2002) however; modern organizations have the power to promote or demote the negative cultural practices such as promotion ceiling glass form women, distribution of managerial positions, power to make a decision and the accessibility to resources and learning from women in any work environment. Finally, another reason hindering change could be age, as elderly people have been found to be against using modern technological tools at work (Abdullah, 2021) whether they are unable to operate them or, finding it difficult to adapt to this model of working.

1.3.3.2. Cultural Factors

In contemporary organization systems, culture understanding is one of the important areas of study that managers and decision-makers take into consideration in everyday management; and in the process of making changes or reform, a profound understanding of cultural management aspects is vital. Organizations withhold cultural elements and expectations and an organization can prosper when able to interweave cultural values in the

system (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Cultural values are intrinsic in any organization, this is due to the fact that individuals carry the values and preconceptions of their particular culture into the workplace. In fact, culture can have both positive and negative impacts on work, therefore, a smart management system can benefit from the positive practices and avoid the negative reflections. Morey and Luthans (1985) argue that the new organization structure has prevailed conventional management through the integration of culture as a theoretical tool in organization understanding (Morey and Luthans, 1985). Several eastern countries have benefited from integrating cultural values into management systems for instance Buddhism and Taoism in China (Pan, Rowney and Peterson, 2012). Therefore, organization systems in the Iraqi context can also benefit from integrating cultural values for instance equality, honesty, collaboration, coordination, dedication, responsibility towards colleagues and service users. For instance, collectivist cultures tend to treat others based on their particular condition, unlike western individualist cultures treating others the same based on certain principles and values (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012), this can become a foundation for building the notion of teamwork. Shared activities are based upon the foundational bases such as culture, history, and context to bring the participants' behavior and shared understanding (Wells and Claxton 2002).

According to Hofstede (1980), there are four cultural determinants that can explain an organizational change in a particular context:

High Power Distance (in contrast to Low Power Distance) refers to the situation in which employees at the lower positions of an organization recognize that power is distributed unequally. This addressing of inequality is from the below rather than the management level. It explains that inequality in society is dependent equally on people at the lower level as well as people from power. In this realm organizational hierarchy is noticeable, such as the gap between managers and subordinates.

Collectivism (in contrast to individualism) explains the extent to which individuals are connected through social ties. Iraqi society as our example is collectivist in nature, meaning that individuals feel a sense of belonging together. People, in general, have a stronger sense of social ties and feel responsible for protecting the social bonds towards

each other. On contrary, individualism-driven personalities care more about self-realization, progress, and development at the workplace.

Masculinity (in contrast to femininity) explains the notion that in male-dominated societies women have a lower position in society and institutions. In this light, women in masculine cultures such as the Iraqi context often occupy lower positions in management with lower payment while the higher positions that involve decision-making are dominated by men. In such a context, the culturally established glass ceiling against women tends to recognize men as the usual characters to withhold position and authority.

Women's participation at the workplace has significantly increased in many societies thanks to the laws, provision of the chance of employment, and change of societal attitudes towards women in professions (Olum, 2007). Yet, in many societies, women are expected to stay out of the competition line in an organization especially when the competition is with men and on matters of raise, performance and success (Dennehy, 2012).

Uncertainty Avoidance points out society's level of accommodating uncertainty. Accordingly, each culture instills a different level of tolerance towards embracing the uncertain and risk-taking. The uncertainty is ambiguous, risky, unanticipated, and thus puts individuals at discomfort. Individuals raised in such cultures do not tend to trade the certain, adapted, and expected to a situation they do not know and are unprepared for. In such cultures, there are more rules and regulations that alleviate uncertainty. This pattern of thinking is mainly prevalent amongst collectivist societies in which individuals are more emotional and follow societal norms.

Cultural elements contribute a great deal of influence in determining the success of a management system. Max Weber (1978) states that cultural practices will survive despite the fact that they are not systematically written rules. Research results have demonstrated the success of flexible and balanced organization structures in integrating cultural tools; for instance, organizations that promote a balanced sense of individualism and collectivism tend to have the highest entrepreneurial characteristics (Bourne, 2015). For this reason, a modern tailored administration system should carefully account for including cultural

values in a way that can avoid negative impacts and utilize positive cultural norms at the workplace in any change or reform process.

1.3.3.3. Technological Factor

The way technology can support system performance and the working mechanism environment has been studied in public administration, including many research findings showcasing organizational development (Bozeman and Bretschneider, 1986). The practice of digitized work or what is called e-government has proved a great contribution in facilitating work management within organizations as well as enhanced interaction between the public sector and citizens. The technological advancement in the last decade and their integration in the public sector has had great potential for development from traditional work processing to the modern system (Snellen, 2002). Public sector digitalization is a significant aspect of advancement in modern systems of management. Examining the integration of technology and increased effectiveness of the modern system of management is growing; modern systems pay significant attention to investing in technology to enhance quality results (Goldfinch, 2007). The literature available on e-government positive impacts claims that this approach will have a constructive impact on organization performance, both as internal management as well as external in interaction with service seekers (Reddick et al., 2008).

Change is inevitable (Drucker, 1999) and the need for adoption of technological trends into the government system is part of the global pressure that Welch and Wong (1998) refer to. The aim of adopting an e-government system is to enhance services at a reduced cost to leverage workload and enhanced productivity (Abdullah, 2021). Another aim that technology can achieve specifically in developing countries such as Iraq is adding transparency and accountability to the administration process to the public sector (Atkinson and Castro, 2008). This is at the time that Iraq suffers from corruption and a lack of trust between the public sector and citizens. However, it is questionable whether this system could operate flawlessly. The notion of developing a management system to be technology-based has become prevalent in developed countries and is gaining interest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). African public administration as an example of a

developing country is known for underperformance in inefficiency, limited capacity and poorly trained staff, seeing modern technological tools as a method to overcome their organizational capacity gaps (Schuppan,2009).

There is a wealth of evidence proving that electronic task management can enhance efficiency, productivity, effectiveness (Abdullah, 2021; Atkinson and Castro, 2008; Schuppan,2009; Bozeman and Bretschneider, 1986; Goldfinch, 2007) however; these cannot assure that optimum result is achieved at no extra cost. In other words, technology is not a catalyst solution when considering psychological, economic, socio-cultural and political negative outcomes in Iraq. Despite limited reliable research data across the country indicating specific issues, there are socio-cultural, political and economic evidence explaining the challenges of the ICT system for governance. According to research conducted on this issue in 2021, it was found that political factors make a considerable influence on applying ICT systems in public sectors in Iraq (Jasim et al., 2021).

In addition, technology literacy is a primary concern that requires attention in the shifting trend towards electronic management. Research data has found that developing countries present a greater challenge with their citizens being unable to use modern technology systems (Olusoyi et al., 2014). This might refer to several factors from early education to economic, social, or political factors. The study by Jasim et al. (2021) found that technology illiteracy, confidence in using the new system and cyber security were the influential dissuading factors of using computerized systems in the public sector. Privacy, logistical supplies, cyber-crime and legislation gaps in this area were indicated as other deterring reasons of technological governance.

1.3.3.4. Innovation

Innovation sense in any organization defines the extent of individual freedom and openness (Goleman et al., 1992). Studies have proven the fact that innovative working environments embrace development much better than hierarchal environments (Amabile, 1996). According to Oslo Manual, innovation is defined as "a new or improved product or process (or a combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit's previous products

or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)". Innovation in the public sector by Mulgan and Albury (2003) is defined as the creation and application of newly found approaches, goods or services in the use of delivery of public services. For an idea or product to be identified as innovative, it should be unalike the approaches used before; not only that but also should meet the goal (Amabile, 1996). The logic behind innovation is primarily for the advancement and development of organization performance (West and Farr, 1990). Indeed, new studies have proved that the integration of innovative ideas to promote tasks (whether ideas from within organization staff or from service users) is key to success and staying updated with the changes that happen and the needs that arise with time. In this essence, understanding organization staff incentive for innovation is key to measuring organization success (Carmeli et al., 2006).

Evidence about organization success in relation to innovation has gained increased interest (Martins and Terblanche, 2003). and is viewed as a major factor behind organizational development (Salaman and Storey, 2002; Thornhill, 2006). Modern horizontal management systems welcome innovative ideas from employees regardless of position and background. Unlike the conventional wisdom that thought innovation and creativity are inborn talents or characters that belong to specific innovative people. Modern management systems recognize that all mentally healthy men and women could have intelligent ideas to present some form of creative work in certain areas (Amabile, 1996). Innovation comes from the ideas within an organization employees propose to management; thus, businesses rely on their staff for introducing and integrating new ideas into the workplace (Yesil and Sozbilir, 2013). Therefore, employees should be familiarized with change (Hussain et al., 2021). The more employees are familiarized with development and change concepts, the better and the more innovatively they can embrace it.

West and Farr (1990, p. 8) define innovative behavior as intentional[1] presenting and implementing an idea in an organizational setting, tailored to considerably advantage a

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[1] The word *intentional* in this context is precisely used by the author, to state that innovation is a planned, organized and monitored process that is introduced by the management system with a specific aim for development.

person, group, service provision, work environment, or society. Meaning that innovation is a designed and planned concept that is formed and presented for a particular purpose in an organization setting which serves productivity or facilitates it. Furthermore, innovative thought is influenced by factors that can promote or demote it. Amabile (1996) supports the idea that the working environment influences creativity.

There are several factors that function as inspirational means for innovation however, the fundamental reason that is worth exploring is organizational structure. Organization structure is the umbrella term that encompasses a line of command, manager-employee relation and hierarchy in management. The structure of an organization significantly affects the formula of human interactions for instance the number of hierarchical levels, the number of units and departments, complexity of tasks, and work division (Pruna, 2008). It is believed that creativity and innovation require a managerial culture of freedom of expression and openness (Goleman et al., 1992). Amabile (1990) identifies three primary factors that hinder innovation at work: organizational cultures such as the extent an organization is willing to try alternative approaches, organizational hierarchy, communication channel, and rewarding system.

Key principles of innovation include the value given to innovation, the value of risk-taking (against protecting the status quo), a sense of significance among the employees about their workplace and their value of work, organization strategy to maintain the status quo against going forward (Opren, 1990; Amabile, 1996; Karter, 1983; Havelock, 1970). The value given to innovation involves the organization's culture, the way it welcomes the introduction of new ideas, and the appreciative attitude that can motivate or demotivate innovative contributions (Amabile, 1996). This ultimately affects the motivation of organization staff towards participation in reforming, altering, or advancing aspects of work. Risk-taking is an integral part of change and innovation, thus the concept should be introduced rather than avoided (Kanter, 1983). Indeed, organizations need to understand the roots of culture and the way it influences performance and productivity. For instance, it has been researched that in collectivist societies, relationship with others is more important than being different from the others, harmony is principally more significant than individual achievement (Barkema et al., 2015). This cultural drive restricts employee tendency to do

what is abnormal, limits individuals to look selfish in front of colleagues and is discouraging towards change. For this reason, organizations need to holistically evaluate the factors that limit innovation sense and restructure the organization environment to one that encourages innovation and development.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section will demonstrate the quantitative data collected from participants at MHE and analysis will be drawn according to the results of the findings. Below is basic information about participants by age and gender.

Statistics

		Gender	Age	Education	Number of years of experience at your workplace
N	Valid	189	189	187	189
	Missing	0	0	2	0
Std. Deviation		.49619	.91086	.78171	1.01270
Variance		.246	.830	.611	1.026
Range		1.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Minimum		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum		2.00	5.00	4.00	5.00
Percentiles	10	1.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
	20	1.0000	2.0000	2.6000	3.0000
	25	1.0000	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000
	30	1.0000	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000
	40	1.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000
	50	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000
	60	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	4.0000
	70	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	4.0000
	75	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000	4.0000
	80	2.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000
	90	2.0000	4.0000	4.0000	5.0000

Table 2 Participants' background per gender, age and education

Table 2 shows the total number of participants which is a total of 189 participants with slightly more than half of the participants being female. Age, education and years of experience are also demonstrated in the table. Look at tables 3,4 and 5 for details of each.

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	81	42.9	42.9	42.9
	Female	108	57.1	57.1	100.0
	Total	189	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 Participants by gender disaggregation at the MHE

The study included both males and females to ensure the inclusivity and validity of data produced. As seen in table 3, almost 43% of participants are male and 57% are composed of females. The gender balance in the composition and recruitment of the ministry is considered according to the results. Gender diversity could be considered a strength in any modern institution.

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
	26-33	56	29.6	29.6	31.2
	34-41	84	44.4	44.4	75.7
	42-49	32	16.9	16.9	92.6
	50+	14	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	189	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 Participants' age range at the MHE

Table 4 is illustrating MHE employees' age with age, showing that more than 75 percent of MHE employees are between the age of 18 and 41, which is considered young. This result shows that there is a respectable tendency for capacity building of employees and making a change, as the youth can better comprehend change and adapt.

Education level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	PhD	8	4.2	4.3	4.3
	Master	29	15.3	15.5	19.8
	Bachelor	97	51.3	51.9	71.7
	Diploma and others	53	28.0	28.3	100.0
	Total	187	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		189	100.0		

Table 5 Sample group education background at the MHE

Table 5 demonstrates that a significant portion of MHE staff are holding high educational degrees for instance 70 percent of the participants are holding a bachelor's degree or above, with 4 percent holding PhD degree and 15 percent a master's degree. This means that the system has strong human resources available to manage these resources into reforming the management system. Only 28 percent of MHE employees are holding a diploma or equivalent degree. These statistics indicate some significant strength points about the MHE specifically and the public sector in Iraq in general. Having this high percentage of qualified staff in an organization should be manifested in the results produced in an ideal system. However, if the performance of the system is not meeting the expectations despite the availability of human resources, the infrastructure of a system can be questioned.

At this stage it is early to draw conclusions, the next sections of this study are going through the factors that affect employees and organization development and analyses the results accordingly:

Motivation at work is a significant factor that can push employees to suggest new ideas and contribute to advancing organizational performance towards service users and enhanced productivity. It is believed that employee performance is also influenced by motivation at work (Galli, 2020). In this question that employees were generally asked about their motivation level at work, more than half of the respondents claimed that they are motivated while 11 percent responded that

Figure 1 Motivation level of employees at work at their workplace

they are highly motivated. On the other hand, almost only 3 percent noted that they were not motivated and 11 percent answered 'little motivated'.

While when they were asked about their motivation level to propose ideas (figure 2), the response significantly changed. Close to 14 percent chose least motivation level in this respect, about 13 percent answered less motivated and almost 36 % responded chose neutral (that is meant neither unmotivated nor motivated, which is an indicator for not considering taking the chance) reaction towards motivation for proposing new ideas. In contrast to 23 percent choosing more and 14 percent showing

Figure 2 Showing employees' motivation for suggesting ideas

most motivated. In total, the number of people that are demotivated is 27% with 35.71% that are neither motivated nor demotivated. The total of both percentages is more than 62% of people that are demotivated or have no incentive in them for motivation of contributing in suggestions presented to the system.

On the other hand, figure 3 demonstrates that respondents showed optimism in having thought that they were able to make a change from their position. According to the data, 38.57 responded positively about the ability to make a change and 22.86 responded some influence on making a change at the workplace. The total of 61.43 positive responses for making a change and 22.86% of respondents being uncertain about their ability is in contrast to the data above. Because on the one hand, the majority of the participants have claimed demotivation in proposing new ideas as in figure 2, while almost the same percentage showed a positive attitude towards their

Figure 3 Perception of employees about making change at their workplace

ability to make change upon active participation and enhanced performance. It is unclear what is the correlation between the two, however.

Innovation is a key element of any organization to keep up with learning and development. In this essence, understanding organization staff incentive for innovation is key to measuring organization success (Carmeli et al., 2006). Innovation should come from the top to the bottom, that is from the top level of management towards the mid and lower level (Amabile, 1996). Risk-taking is an integral part of innovation. To have the tendency to make changes in organization structure, management and policies, decision-makers need to take risks and plan for risk management. This question aimed at determining employees' level of readiness for taking risks such as taking new paths, trying alternative ways for task accomplishment. According to the responses that are demonstrated in figure 4, fifty-seven percent of participants stated their willingness of taking risks and challenges, which is a notable number; with more than 42 percent choosing adherence to the procedures and avoiding risky and innovative approaches. In fact, having more than 57% of employees that are willing to try new hypotheses to make changes in the work environment is a decent rate for the management unit to work on this area to encourage other employees to try testing

new hypotheses for the sake of enhancing services. This rate of innovative attitude can positively be used at the MHE, because the willingness and ability of individuals to innovate ensure the flow of innovation the organizations (Yesil and Sozbilir, 2013)
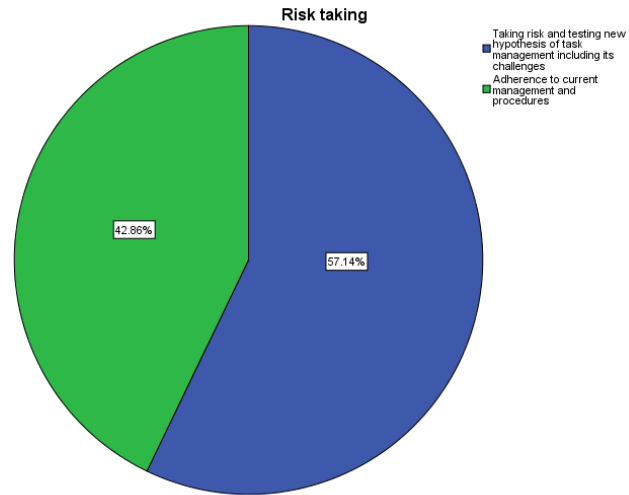
Figure 4 is showing employees' risk-taking incentive at their positions

Nevertheless, in response to the question of whether they were willing to move to the private sector, the majority of participants (above 59 %) responded negatively.

This question was asked for the purpose of testing employees' responses (government employees generally complain about the underpayment) to questions of motivation, innovation and risk-taking. Considering the fact that the public sector remuneration in the local context is relatively low compared to the private sector, especially after the economic crisis that forced the government to adjust and downscale employee salaries (Nawzad, 2021). As a consequence, many government employees took annual leave to seek private
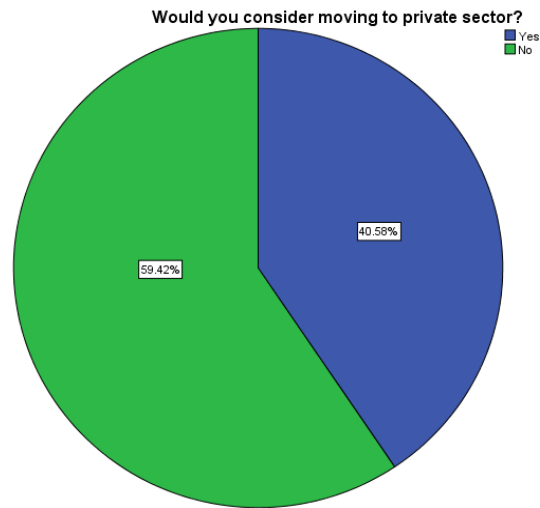
Figure 5 Illustrating employees' willingness to move to the private sector

sector or freelance business to compensate for the salary cut down for making a living. This question was drawn from the reality of the ongoing economic situation that was comprehensible to almost all individuals of the country, thus the answer to this question manifests the current reality. Despite the salary cut-down and economic crisis, the majority of the employees as shown in figure 5, which is almost 60% preferred staying in the public sector.

Despite lower salary scales in the public sector, a greater number of employees prefer governmental employment for many benefits, mainly job security (Joseph and Sumer, 2019). To find out the actual preference factor for appreciating their current job to moving to the private sector or leaving their current position, participants were asked about the factors that convinced them about staying at their position. According to the responses as in figure 6 below, more than 38 percent of respondents

Figure 6 Employees perception about their current job reward aspects

found job security as a positive factor about their current job; and the same number of respondents indicated work environment factor for staying at their current positions.

In contrast to the results of figure 6, figure 7 illustrates the question of choosing between a continuously changing, learning and challenging job and a fixed job, the majority (83%) chose the first option which is a more challenging job. Nevertheless, the majority prefers staying in the public sector (as shown in figure 5). The results finding of question 13 is in contrast to question 29 (figure 5).
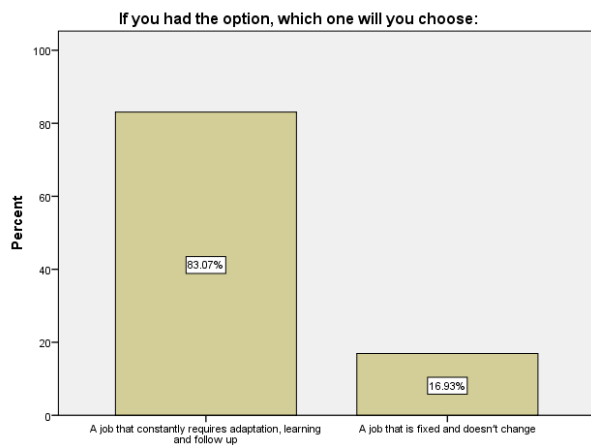
Figure 7 Choice of employees' between a challenging job versus a routine job

Professional learning is a continuing course that drives employees in daily tasks at the workplace (Hökkä, 2012). One explanation for this discrepancy is that, when people are given hypothetical options, their realizations might not be accurate, while when asked a more realistic and realizable question, they tend to be led by their ambition and hypothetical character. In fact, risk-taking is a strong element in modern organizations in the pursuit of testing new hypotheses and improving the quality of services.

The work environment factor that has a notable influence on employee sense of reward can be related to some of the answers that were collected from survey data. Firstly, employees do not seem to be very busy at their positions. Figure 8 demonstrates that 50% of the employees answered "busy" on a typical day, while almost 16 percent chose "very busy" and almost 7% chose "super busy". In addition, government offices are open to citizens from 9 am to 2 pm. Therefore, the short working hours which is 5 hours is another incentive to maintain a status quo job.
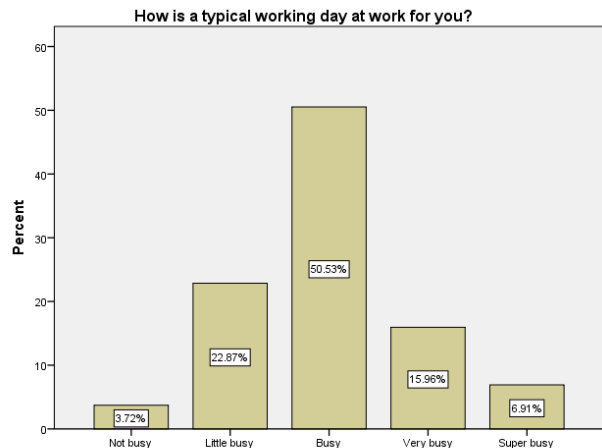
Figure 8 Workload in a typical day at MHE according to employees perception

Furthermore, to find about employees' engagement with work and their perception about their current job, employees were asked about their stress level at work, twice in slightly different ways to test the validity of the answers. First, it was asked as choosing upon 4 choices, from least stressful to most stressful; and the second time it was asked to choose as a scale from 1-5 as below in figure 9 and 10. Both results (65% and 69%) showed that employees were either at a normal level of stress or little stress at work.
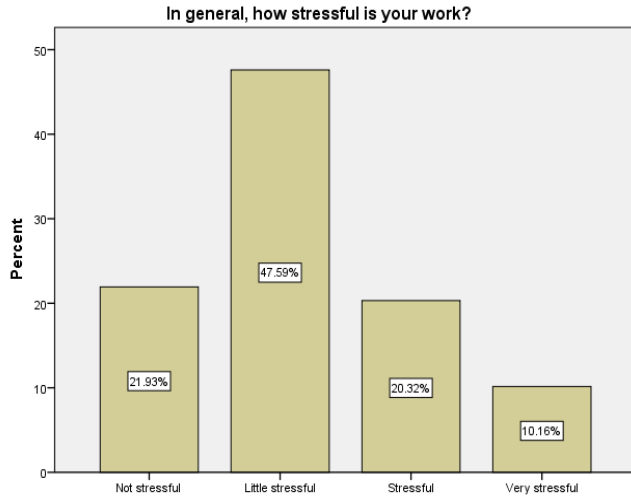
Figure 10 Measuring stress as lingual expression from least-1- to most-4-
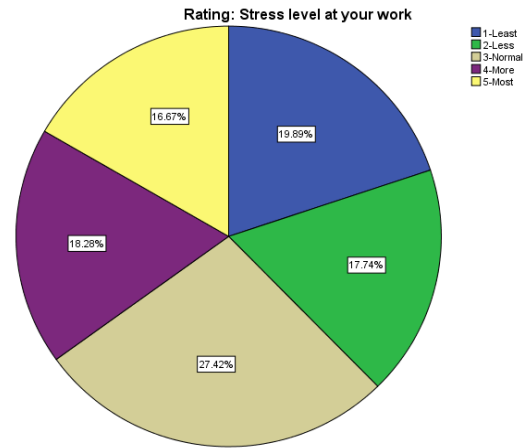
Figure 9 Scaling stress at work 1-5 one being least and 5 being the most

The public sector in Iraq has employed a large number of employees, this number especially escalated after 2003 (Al-Mawlawi, 2020). This phenomenon has led to budget drainage from the country by dedicating 45 percent of total government spending for salaries alone (Al-Mawlawi, 2020). For this reason, government employees are often not busy despite the short working hours. Alternatively, the management of MHE can use the energy and motivation of the employees to transform organizational management and enhance work quality. Also, more than 63 percent of respondents chose not to miss short breaks (such as tea, coffee, smoking breaks) or sometimes missing such breaks thanks to an unstressed working environment. This is especially valid in the case that employees are willing to take on responsibilities, explore new forms of management, contribute to decision-making and appreciate participation as demonstrated in the above questions.

Further, a significant number of respondents believe that **capacity building** can improve work productivity (84%) and this is a positive perception for initiative efforts for change and reform in the current management system.
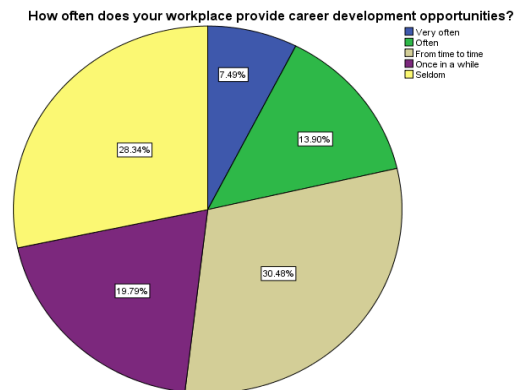
Figure 11 Capacity-building opportunity available at the MHE for

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However, it was found that the organization provides insufficient opportunities for capacity development for employees. This is another barrier against organizational development to catch up with the needs of the twentieth century. Especially considering the fact that the changes in the last few decades happened rapidly and spread around the world through globalizing means of communication, transportation and trade, and eventually affected the infrastructures of organizations around the world.

Using **technology** at work such as developed computer systems, network and database systems can considerably accelerate work performance, reduce cost and error. First, participants were asked about whether they use computers at work, then their preference of work between computer-based and paper-based; finally collected their opinion about their perception about the impact and benefits of using computer systems at work. For the question about the percentages of employees using computers in their role, the aim of the question was to find out the rate of employees using computers on a daily basis for performing their work. And this result helps in identifying the efficiency of using technology at work whether it is used in a way that can improve productivity. Accordingly, 87% of participants use computers in their role which is a sufficient
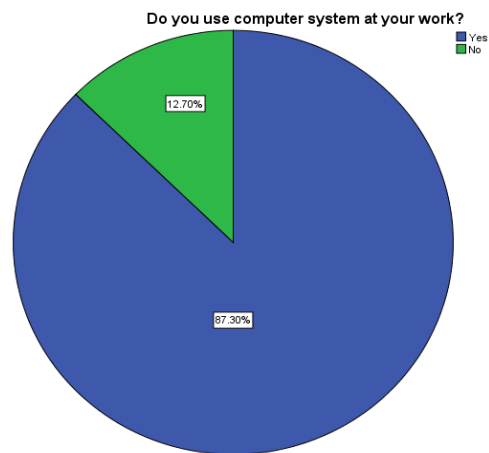
Figure 12 Percentage of employees using computers at work

number. However, it was found that more than 57 percent of the employees only use computers for basic functions such as typing and data saving. Participants were asked if they use computer software other than Microsoft Word and Excel, 57% only used these two applications. That means the use of computers for the majority of the employees is just for basic functions, rather than benefiting from technology to enhance the overall productivity of the institution. This is at the time that the majority of employees (83%) preferred working on a computer rather than paper-based work. This indicator shows that there is an opportunity for the management to benefit more from using technology at the workplace, especially considering the fact that the majority of employees believe that technology can increase work efficiency and effectiveness (see figure 13). This question was targeted

considering the cultural aspect of organizational management in the country, which is dependent on the traditional method of management and paper-based work. Therefore, it aimed at finding out the ratio of utilizing technology and advanced software to simplify work mechanisms and the preference of employees to transform work format.
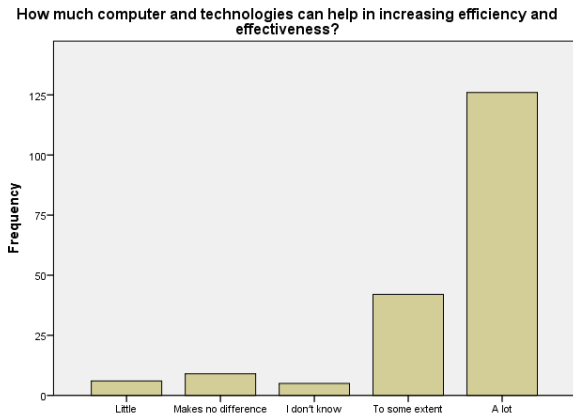

Figure 13 Employees' perception about the significance of technology use at work

Also, to test employees' perception about the impact of technology in facilitating official works within the ministry for better efficiency and effectiveness, 67% of the respondents thought that computer systems and technologies can enhance work productiveness significantly, and 22% thought to some extent, as shown in figure 13. In fact, this perception is a positive incentive showing the welcoming sense for transforming the system into a technological setting.

To understand better about the work environment at the Ministry of Higher Education, some of the questions targeted **employees' attitudes** towards change, a tendency towards development and their ambition. Participants were tested to see their ambition about their preference of choice between a highly paid but difficult job, and an easy low-paid job; most of the responses were of a difficult but highly paid job. This is at the time that the country is going through a financial crisis (Abdulla, 2021) therefore, the answers are expected to be affected by the financial hardship of government employees that wish to make a higher income at any price. While this did not seem to be consistent with the question that asked employees about their choice between a public sector and private sector job (figure 5). While the public sector, in general, is paid less than the private sector, the reality seems to tell a different story than what can be written or answered in a survey. This rate of response means that the majority of the employees prefer to prefer an easier and secure job to a risky, highly-paid job.

Further, in response to team working attitude, more than 74% of respondents were either willing to share responsibility with their team or didn't mind. This result can also be

related to the cultural aspect of communal sense that encourages and reinforces foundational bases such as culture, history, and context to bring the participants' behavior and shared understanding (Wells and Claxton, 2002). The high rate of positive attitude according to the responses can be seen as an asset to build on because a positive view can be directed towards positive changes, however, to achieve best results the attempt can be successful with effort and dedication (Challa and Vamsi, 2021). In this light, it is important to note that there could be many culturally-tailored tools that can be utilized for particular a purpose. These innovative efforts are not part of any particular culture, whether individualism or collectivism, but rather the way each is benefited and piloted for a useful purpose in a wise approach. However, this requires a strategic management mindset that designs that restructures work principles in a way that serves this goal.

Creating a learning work environment in contemporary organizations requires an organizational culture of welcoming **feedback** and integrating them in a continuous process of improving work conditions, productivity and efficiency (Park and Kim, 2015). In fact, information changes perspective, this may also affect planning, decision-making, and behavior (Alsam et al., 2018; Davenport, Prusak, 1998). Exchange of ideas between different levels of management about the efficiency and effectiveness of existing management approaches is widely practiced in modern management today. Surprisingly, when employees were asked about feedback mechanisms at their workplace a notable number indicated that there is no such mechanism existing, see table 6 below:

Is there a feedback mechanism for employees at the ministry?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	86	45.5	46.0	46.0
	No	101	53.4	54.0	100.0
	Total	187	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		189	100.0		

Table 6 Feedback mechanism and its significance at MHE

The statistics show that almost half of the employees believe that there is no feedback mechanism existing at their workplace. Also, about 70 percent of the respondents who believe that there is a feedback mechanism in place, thought that employee feedback is rarely, or from time to time reviewed. In contrast to 27% who thought their feedback is often or very often reviewed. This result in contrast to the contemporary management system is alarming. This result shows that the current employees at MHE do not

Figure 14 Probability of reviewing feedback at workplace in employees' view

feel that their workplace is giving them an opportunity to express their thoughts and perspective in designing or decision-making. This outcome is definitely included in the results of employee performance, innovative, thinking and motivation towards performing better or producing higher quality output. In addition, exclusion of employees at the lower level results in emotional and psychological wellbeing, which ultimately affect productivity issue at workplace.

Similarly, asking about the personal experience about the organization system receiving feedback from employees, the option of "never" and "seldom" comprised 43% and "little" was 37.5 percent. This indicator also shows that the feedback mechanism at the MHE is notably low compared to modern organization management that finds it beneficial to ask for employees' opinions to enhance service and performance. And in response to rating provision of opinion in problem-solving at work, employees had relatively equal diverse responses; meaning that no scale showed significant difference.
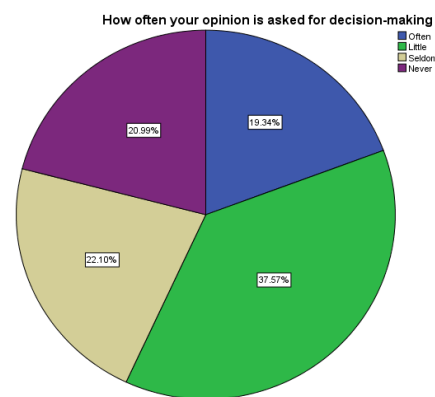
Figure 15 Individuals' opinion consideration for decision-making at MHE

Similarly, employees were asked about their perspective on the effectiveness of management decisions, considering inclusion and exclusion of staff. This question was triggered by results about the overall perceptions of employees, the way they think about decision-making. It was to test the thesis that in collectivist society organizations people tend to believe and follow charismatic leaders and prefer decisions by them (Bourne, 2015). However, the result showed a different result of the hypothesis, seventy percent of the respondents answered that decisions made through brainstorming and group activity have been more effective than the decisions made by top management against 30% who preferred top-down decision-making. This means that the employees' perception in regards to change has changed over time, however, the system is left behind in this respect. In other words, the commonsense of team working and brainstorming concepts have been accepted by the majority of employees, yet the management system is promoting the conventional approach.

Customer satisfaction in modern organizations is integrated into the system through an organizational learning unit. A team is positioned to measure performance and product against customer satisfaction. Ideally, this unit benefits from customer suggestions and inputs for developing and improving productivity. Horizontally structured organizations take advantage of benefiting from feedback from service users to make changes in management approaches
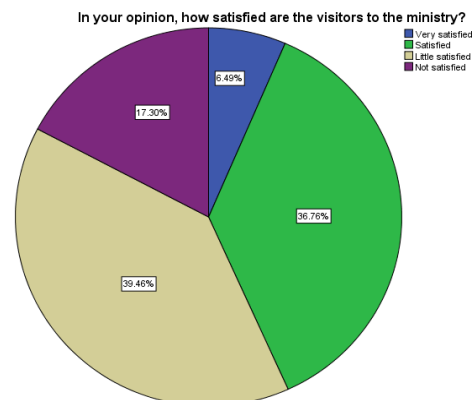
Figure 16 Level of customer satisfaction in employees' viewpoint at MHE

as well as service delivery. The question about customer satisfaction was directed to the employees to find out their perception of service users' views. The result as in figure 16 shows that only 6.49% of employees thought that service seekers are very satisfied with the services provided by the MHE; with 17 percent choosing the "satisfied" option. Whereas 39.46 % thought that citizens were "little satisfied" and 17.30 noted "unsatisfied". This means that the majority of the employees think that people are unsatisfied with the quality services provided in the ministry. Similar research investigating customer satisfaction is required to measure the exact customer satisfaction because many times there are thoughts

and feelings at work that are not expressed due to lack of opportunity. Or, in an organization system where customers feel that their opinions are not valued may not complain or suggest alternative approaches. On the other hand, there might be many issues around customer satisfaction that might not be perceived in the way that service users seek. This is because users do not know what the procedures and restrictions are, what they seek is a quality service. While employees might welcome or respond to people's needs differently because they know what the procedures are. Indeed, poorly trained employees and citizens that are raised in a context like Iraq may not have a clear understanding of what their rights and responsibilities are in an advanced system of management.

In response to a similar question, 22.22 percent of participants showed that citizens' feedback had no impact on changing a procedure at work. This is in addition to 24.44 % choosing "little impact" while, only 9.44 % thought users' feedback had a "lot of impact" with 27.22% choosing the "to some extent" option; the rest chose I don't know. The fact that employees are unsure if users' feedback can make a change signifies that the feedback mechanism at the MHE is questionable. Modern organization structures including the public sector, put efforts
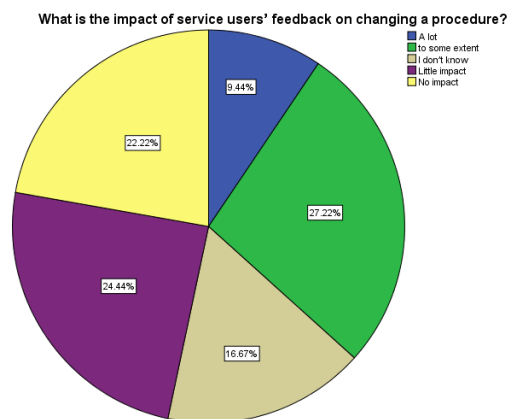
Figure 17 Service users' impact on MHE according to employees'

together to create a competitive and effective environment for service provision. The fact that a significant number of employees report the little impact of users' opinions, or are unsure if feedback creates a change shows a gap in the current system in this area. In fact, the feedback mechanism is a method of communication with users to improve organization performance and it could be used in this respect to make positive change (Bourne, 2015).

Finally, MHE employee participants were asked to provide their opinion about the **challenges and shortcomings** that are facing the public sector offices in general. This question was more of a general question that pointed out to the public sector in general. It was aimed to allow participants to freely express their opinion rather than being constrained to highlighting the shortcomings of own workplace which is uncomfortable and risky. Putting participants at unease may also affect the validity and confidentiality of the research, as the questionnaire was distributed and collected at working place. As a result, 39.46% thought that the cause of the shortcomings of public sector organizations is mainly caused by the

Figure 18 illustrating the factors behind public sector shortcomings

policies. This underlined factor makes good sense and it can be related to the answers to other questions such as the tendency towards change, horizontal method of work, leadership, entrepreneurship and feedback mechanism at the MHE. The aforementioned factors can be altered through policies and continuous monitoring. After policies, the management system was ranked by 29.73 percent becoming the second factor behind the challenges. Indeed, the management staff can have their role in adopting change and developing the system, this is an interactive process between the people higher position, employees as well as service users. The third factor was the role of line managers in the public sector that counted 18.92 percent. While "employees" were among the weakest factor in the equation, and "lack of technology" was the second weakest possibility. Resistance to change is familiar in management literature and is recognized among the most crucial inertial forces against any transformation (Carnall 1990). This conclusion can be related to former findings and observations for instance Peters (2003) and Charbonneau (2012) believe that if managers and the administrative system were free from politics, the system can perform better. In other words, if the management system and the line managers were
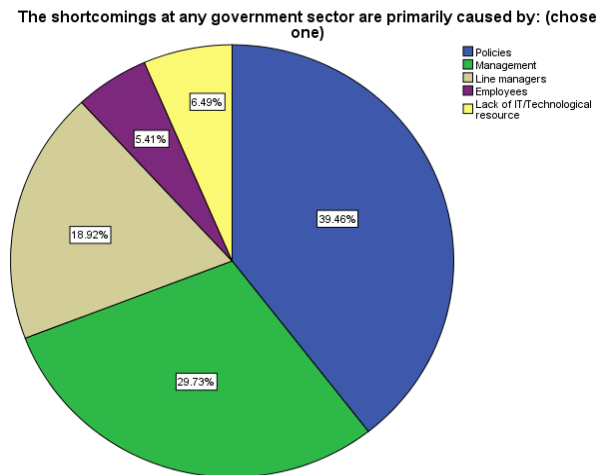
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not promoting the conventional form of management and organization structure, the system could be reformed.

2.2. CONCLUSION

Applying contemporary management principles in Iraq as a transitional society is indeed challenging. Despite the political and economic challenges that the country faces, resistance to change is integral to the nature of the process. Challenges and resistance to change are widespread in management literature and it has been proven to be considerably influencing. However, whether to reject or welcome it, change is inevitable, and this applies to both the private and the public sectors. Organizations around the world are affected by the globalized trending wave of modern public services that influences public institutions' behavior around the world.

In the Iraqi context, there are many factors that have contributed to furthering the challenge against development. Major contributing factors for this are organizational, personal, cultural, and technical. Firstly, the organizational structure in the public sector generally is following the same path of the management system of the late twentieth century. The ministry of higher education as part of the public sector system is at the macro level following the organization structure hierarchy that decisions are centralized by top management; with service users and employees having little impact on changing organization structure and innovative contributions not encouraged. Organization culture pays little attention to strengthening organization capacity and reform. Also, offers limited chanced and occasions to assess self or establish grounds for enhanced communication in this regard. Secondly, the personal factor is another influential agent in the equation. For instance, the habituation of employees on a particular method of work and the fear of change which is the unknown is strong. Furthermore, lack of information about modern alternating approaches of work in the world causes further complications when looking for solutions within the same frame of an existing system. In addition, the impact of organization environment on employees has shaped the way employees think, behave, motivate and expect based on the nurtured education. Meaning that individual psychology in such

workplace has been limited by the organization environment; this limitation ultimately is what will feed and reflect negatively in the future impact on the work environment. Whereas cultural influences such as employee-manager relation, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism are among the strongest contributors. Results showed that it was not random or just a normal range of differences that the majority of public sector employees avoid taking risks such as leaving their current job and moving to the private sector despite the challenges they had in their current workplace. Furthermore, the way individuals are raised whether in an individualistic or collectivist society is intrinsic to the investigation of the results. People who are raised in a competitive individualistic system are more likely to become independent. While collectivist individuals are more likely to adapt and behave in a situation to maintain the stability of the status quo. Technology was found to be having a stake in the challenge of development towards modern forms of management. A wealth of data is available in the literature about the way electronic management systems can advance work, reduce error, overcome corruption, benefit from time, decrease routine and save resources. Despite the benefits, the system has been unable to apply e-governance in the public sector. Most of the works done at MHE are paper-based it is challenging for the ministry to change its pathway while most of the employees have limited literacy of computer systems. The management system in the public sector is not promoting innovative approach towards finding contemporary solutions to the challenges. The organization structure has the authority to promote or demote the sense of innovative spirit through the encouragement of employees in this area, however; this was found to be limited according to the data findings.

Research findings show that despite employees' willingness towards implementing modern methods of management, the ruling system continues following the traditional management system. In addition, employees are not motivated or encouraged by the management system to present alternative methods for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. The system is not recognizing knowledge sharing or creating a learning environment through integrating employees and service users in reconstructing the management system. The feedback mechanism was found to be ineffective for both employees as well as service users. Further, the majority of employees believe that team

working and decisions made through brainstorming and collective thought is better option while the decisions are made by the top management. Furthermore, employees note that citizens that use the services of MHE are unsatisfied; and refer the shortcomings of public sectors to the policies, management system and, line managers. Finally, it has to be stated that this is a case study and there might be some differences with future studies that could be conducted at other governmental institutions. Also, the lack of literature and previous studies conducted in similar areas of study was also a challenge that was faced to compare and validate result findings.

2.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

With the change in time, cultural exchange, technological advancement, and the global pressure for transforming management systems per contemporary needs, public governance around the world is inescapably affected. Public sectors in Iraq generally and MHE specifically may resist or delay the process of change at a higher level, however; following the traditional methods of management leads to poor performance, inefficiency, poor quality results and, dissatisfaction of employees as well as citizens. As per research findings, the policies are key factors that can affect the organization's performance, thus reform in current policies and reshaping per contemporary needs is vital. Further, from the higher level, the management system and hierarchy require taking a different path of administration, taking into account psychological, personal and, cultural factors while benefiting from contemporary tools. Transforming organization structure creates enhanced communication between the upper level of management and employees. Management system and line managers may develop the organization system to motivate and encourage the innovative contribution of employees as well as service users through active feedback mechanism. The MHE can benefit from the technological advancement of the modern world to transform parts of the system to electronic to accelerate work performance, reduce error and improve the quality of work.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

Karabuk University

Institute of Graduate Programs

Department of Business Administration

The Challenges of Applying Contemporary Management Principles in Iraq as A Transitional Society**,** Ministry of Higher Education in Erbil City as A Case Study.

Dear Respondent,

My name is Nusaibah Saeed; I am an MSc student in the Business Administration program at Karabuk University. I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below. Your responses to the questions will be treated in the strictest confidence and can only be used for the purpose of academic exercise. Honest responses will be highly appreciated as they will result in more accurate research and study results of the thesis.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing the questionnaire.

The information provided will be used confidentially and will not be shared with any third party.

Nusaibah Saeed BAPEER   Prof.Dr. Elif CEPNI

  MSc student   Supervisor

Age?

☐18-25   ☐26-33   ☐34-41   ☐42-49   ☐50 and above

Gender

☐Male   ☐Female

1. Are you a line manager?

☐No   ☐Yes

2. Number of years of experience at your workplace

☐0-4 ☐5-9 ☐10-14   ☐15-19   ☐20 and above

3. How is a typical working day at work for you?

☐Not busy   ☐Little busy ☐Busy   ☐Very busy   ☐Super busy

4. How is your motivation level at work in a typical day?

☐Not motivated ☐little motivated ☐Just enough energy to come to work
☐Motivated ☐Highly motivated

5. How well can you perform the tasks you are assigned to?

☐Not very well ☐Moderately ☐Well ☐Very well ☐Perfectly

6. Do you think capacity building in some areas can increase productivity?

☐No ☐To some extent ☐Yes ☐A lot

7. How often does your workplace provide career development opportunities?

☐Very often ☐Often ☐From time to time ☐Once in a while ☐Seldom

8. Do you use computer system at your work?

☐No ☐Yes

9. Which one do you prefer:

☐paper-based work ☐computerized work

10. Other than Word and Excel, does your work require other software to use?

☐No ☐Yes

11. How much computer and technologies can help in increasing efficiency and effectiveness?

☐Little ☐Makes no difference ☐I don't know ☐To some extent ☐A lot

12. What is the best reward for hard work? Choose one

☐Work Appreciation by line manager ☐Work appreciation by service users
☐Financial rewarding ☐Promotion

13. If you had the option, which one will you choose:
☐A job that constantly requires adaptation, learning and follow up
☐A job that is fixed and doesn't change
14. If you had the option, which one will you choose:
☐A difficult highly-paid job
☐An easy low-paid job
15. In your experience, what type of decision has proven to be more effective:
☐A decision by the top management

☐A decision by a group of employees

16. If you had the choice, how willing are you to teamwork?

☐Not motivated   ☐Slightly motivated ☐I don't mind ☐Motivated   ☐Very motivated

17. Do you think you can make an influence for change in your position?

☐Yes   ☐Little   ☐I don't know   ☐No

18. Is there feedback mechanism for employees at the ministry?

☐Yes   ☐No

If yes, what is its main purpose?

☐Problem solving   ☐performance assessment   ☐development
            ☐integration of ideas in changing policies

19. How often feedbacks are reviewed?

☐Very often   ☐often   ☐from time to time   ☐seldom

20. What is the impact of service users' feedback on changing a procedure?

☐A lot ☐to some extent   ☐I don't know   ☐Little impact ☐No impact

21. How often your opinion is asked for decision-making

☐Often   ☐Little   ☐Seldom   ☐Never

22. In your opinion, how satisfied are the visitors to the ministry?

☐Very satisfied   ☐Satisfied   ☐Little   satisfied   ☐Not satisfied

23. The shortcomings at any government sector are primarily caused by (chose one)

☐Policies   ☐Management   ☐Line managers
        ☐Employees   ☐Lack of IT/Technological resource

24. If you are/were in a managerial position, how willing are you to share authority with your team?

☐Not willing ☐slightly willing   ☐I don't mind ☐I am willing

25. In general, how stressful is your work?

☐Not stressful   ☐Little stressful   ☐Stressful   ☐Very stressful

26. How often do you miss short breaks due to load of work?

☐Never ☐Sometimes ☐often ☐always

27. If you're free to choose between the two, which one you think is a better choice?

☐Complete adherence to policies ☐Customer satisfaction

28. What do you think is better if you had the choice?

☐Taking risk and testing new hypothesis of task management including its challenges

☐Adherence to current management and procedures

29. Do you have any interest to leave your current job for the private sector?

☐Yes ☐No

30. What is rewarding about your job?

☐Job security ☐Work environment ☐Short working hours ☐Less responsibilities

☐Remuneration

Please rate the following resembling your workplace environment from 1-5, one indicating the least and 5 the most:

	1	2	3	4	5
31. Your Work appreciation by colleagues/line manager	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
32. Giving opinion in problem solving	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
33. Your motivation level for proposing new ideas	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
34. Significance of service users' opinion to management	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
35. Stress level at your work	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

Ethics Committee decisions

Tarih ve Sayı: 04.08.2021 - E.49509

T.C.
KARABÜK ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu

Sayı : E-78977401-050.02.04-49509   04.08.2021
Konu : Etik Kurul Kararları

Sayın Prof. Dr. Elif ÇEPNİ

İlgi :   21.06.2021 tarihli ve 37434 sayılı dilekçe.

Üniversitemiz Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulunun 28/07/2021 tarih ve 2021/07-27 sayılı kararı yazımız ekinde sunulmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini arz/rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Elif ÇEPNİ
Kurul Başkanı

Ek:Etik Kurul Kararı (1 sayfa)

Curriculum Viate

Nusaibah Saeed Bapeer

Iraq-Erbil

ABOUT ME

I am a dedicated ambitious individual with fifteen years of working in administration and management experience. I enjoy learning and developing self; I take chances to invest in myself and embrace seeking challenges in my life and career.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **HR Manager** 2006-2018

Hawler Medical University

- **Audit Manager** 2018 to present

Erbil polytechnic University

EDUCATION

MSc in Business Administration ongoing

Karabuk University, Karabuk, Turkey

- **BSc in Business Administration** 2005

Salahaddin University, Erbil, Iraq

Skills

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Team working