

# Impact of governance on the social responsibility of sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the level of governance and its effectiveness within sports institutions, and the level of social responsibility of workers within sports institutions. It was used a descriptive approach (survey). Sample participants were recruited using comprehensive inventory method from sports clubs, sports federations and the Olympic Committee. A total of 176 individuals were recruited as the sample for the study. Out of 176 individuals, the researchers distributed 161 questionnaires to the study sample, and then took a sample of 15 people to validate the questionnaire. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that there was a lack of application of principles of governance within the sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate (Iraq), and that there was weakness of social responsibility towards society and the environment, and towards workers and employees within the sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate.

## KEYWORDS

Governance; social responsibility; sports institutions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate governance has become an important topic of discussion among all public and private sectors, at local, regional, national and international level (Rassouli, Sajjadi, Mosaffa, & Rasekh, 2020). Hence, the concept of corporate governance is one of the modern concepts that helps management authorities to address important issues by expanding the active participation of the employees in making plans, setting goals and making correct decisions. The active participation of employees increases their level of performance to an optimum level, helps in achieving job stability and makes them highly committed towards their work. It increases their level of comfort and acceptance of the tasks and duties assigned to them, the system of incentives, working hours, social justice and discipline at work. This leads to the personal and professional development of the

employee and of the institution as a whole. This organized structure of the system improves the performance of workers in institutions with all their specializations in general and sports institutions in particular (Fouad & Fayrouz, 2019; Muhammad Yassin, 2012).

Saad Ahmed (2006), Hassan El Shafei (2009) and Reham Amin (2015), in their respective studies, have stated that sports institutions are considered to have a well-thought-out structured system that includes the individuals and groups of individuals, possessing skills and talents in the respective fields of their interest. The institutions provide services in the form of modern training related to their sports activity and help them to achieve a group common goal efficiently and effectively (Sánchez, Zauder, & López, 2019).

The rapid development in the field of sports community in the form of expansion of the infrastructure of the sports organizations somewhere weakened the system of supervision and control over the performance of these sports institutions and their boards of directors. The poor techniques of training increased corruption and is responsible for obstructing the overall control system of the organizations as a whole. Hence there is a strong need of a good governance in the form of corporate governance in the sports institutions to strengthen their spirit of competitiveness and capabilities in achieving sustainable development. Though, the interest in the social responsibility preceded the interest in the corporate governance. Many studies have manifested a close relationship between corporate governance and social responsibility. The corporate governance is a response to meet the needs of society for integrity, disclosure and transparency. Social responsibility refers to an implementation and embodiment of some principles of governance (Abdullah, 2018).

Out of many important areas, the field of sports is one of the areas in which the social responsibility is manifested at every level from top to bottom, including the level of players, coaches, fans or the administrative staff. But unfortunately it did not receive sufficient attention in the sports field at every single step. Social responsibility can only be manifested when the administrations of sports clubs, national teams and sports federations search for qualified coaches who lead their players technically to win the various sports tournaments and competitions. These competent coaches do technical assessment and evaluation of the players and increase their motivation in training and their determination to develop themselves and make every effort in the competition.

In a study conducted by Hassan Al-Shafei and Karim Al-Hakim (2018), authors stated that the governance of sports institutions determines the distribution of rights, responsibilities and duties among the various members of the sports institution, such as the members of general assembly, the

board of directors, members of the executive office, committees emanating from the board of directors, stakeholders and other beneficiaries.

Therefore, Reham Dari (2018) indicated in their study that the concept of social responsibility is linked to many other concepts related to the modern terms in the field of business management, which includes corporate governance. The corporate governance is based on controlling all the processes and decisions issued by the institutions in accordance with the requirements of professional rules and work ethics, and in conflict with the applicable regulations and legislation in the institutions' work areas. Accordingly, the concept of corporate governance intersects with social responsibility in defining the responsibilities of the institution towards the stakeholder sector. Hence, corporate governance means the distribution of powers within the organization. It is the method of governance, leadership, and management model in the institutions belonging to both public and private sectors. In many studies it has been evidenced that the corporate governance has been implemented in the various sports organizations sectors and institutions. However, in some Arab studies, authors have linked the corporate governance and social responsibility (Naglaa Ibrahim, 2013; Hassan El Shafei, & Karim El Hakim, 2018; Jeffrey Cohen, et al., 2011; Jizi et al., 2014).

Followed by the extensive review of the existing literature, it was found that both the issue of social responsibility and the corporate governance have a strong connection with the field related to sports. Sports organizations and institutions have many benefits in implementing the terms of corporate governance in terms of a clean and developed environment for the employees and the players. It sets motivating laws for athletes and workers in the sports field in order to give them an incentive to succeed and promote their activities.

Hence, the researcher identified the problem by finding the dearth of Arab and foreign literature that linked social responsibility and governance to sports institutions. The present study is an attempt to highlight the advantages of applying the rules and regulations of corporate governance within sports institutions, as it works to reduce the level of risks and improve the performance of the players in the sports field and their decisions and the development of their social responsibility, which is reflected positively on their sports, financial and social performance. The primary aim of the study was to identify the level of governance and its effectiveness within sports institutions and to identify the level of social responsibility among workers within sports institutions and the impact of governance on social responsibility within sports institutions in the province of Kirkuk.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Participants

In the present descriptive study, sample participants were recruited using comprehensive inventory method from sports clubs, sports federations and the Olympic Committee. A total of 176 individuals were recruited as the sample for the study. Out of 176 individuals, the researchers distributed 161 questionnaires to the study sample, and then took a sample of 15 from the original population of the study and from the basic sample, in order to test the questionnaire as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Description of the main research sample and the pilot study sample

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Study population</b>	<b>Pilot study sample</b>	<b>Study sample</b>
<b>Clubs</b>	14	8	112	9	103
<b>Federations</b>	20	3	60	5	55
<b>Olympic Committee</b>	1	4	4	1	3
<b>Total</b>	35	15	176	15	161

### 2.2. Instruments

Extensive review of literature was done by the research team from various Arab and other foreign literature sources, such as books, web links, and journal articles relevant to the subject of this study. A questionnaire was designed with several phrases having a positive approach. The response of the participants to the phrases mentioned in the questionnaire was recorded on a three point Likert scale (agree / somewhat agree / disagree).

In the present study, the two members of the research team conducted a pilot study within the timeframe between April 2020 to November 2020. The pilot study was conducted on 15 individuals recruited as the participants of the study. The pilot study was conducted to identify the extent of clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire form was presented in its initial form with all its contents (axes and phrases) to 5 experts, specialized in the field of sports management and sports sociology. The questionnaire form was distributed to explore the opinions of the experts regarding the extent of the validity of the statements related to each axis separately. The phrases that obtained a consent of 80-100% of the experts were included in the final set of the questionnaire with the modifications

suggested by the experts. Based on the final words of the experts, the questionnaire was validated for the present study.

The internal consistency was established by calculating Spearman’s correlation coefficient between the degree of each phrase and the axis to which it belongs and the total score of the questionnaire, as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The validity of the internal consistency of the questionnaire

<b>Questionnaire axes</b>									
<b>First axis</b>						<b>Second axis</b>			
<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>	<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>	<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>	<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>	<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient</b>
1	0.69	9	0.67	17	0.70	24	0.74	32	0.71
2	0.67	10	0.65	18	0.71	25	0.69	33	0.70
3	0.68	11	0.70	19	0.72	26	0.71	34	0.69
4	0.68	12	0.69	20	0.70	27	0.70	35	0.70
5	0.69	13	0.70	21	0.69	28	0.70	36	0.71
6	0.69	14	0.69	22	0.71	29	0.74	37	0.71
7	0.69	15	0.71	23	0.70	30	0.69	38	0.70
8	0.69	16	0.69			31	0.71		
<b>Correlation coefficients between the score of each axis and the total score of the questionnaire</b>									
<b>0.70</b>						<b>0.71</b>			
<b>Questionnaire overall reliability coefficient: 0.67</b>									

Table 2 illustrates the correlation coefficients between the degree of each phrase and the degree of the axis to which it belongs, the degree of each axis, and the total score of the questionnaire. The correlation coefficients ranged between 0.70 and 0.71 for the axes. The total score of the questionnaire was 0.67 for the axes. Statistically significant results were obtained at 0.05 significance level with  $p=0.497$ , indication high correlation among the variables tested.

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient, illustrated in Table 3. The value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the phrases of each axis of the questionnaire form is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The reliability of the questionnaire

<b>Axis</b>	<b>Phrases total</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
1. Governance	23	0.70
2. Social responsibility	15	0.72

The questionnaire was drafted into its final version after establishing the reliability and validity. The final version of the questionnaire was distributed among the sample participants. A total of 161 questionnaires were distributed within the time frame between August 2021 to September 2021. The filled questionnaires were received back by the research team for interpretation of the results.

### 2.3. Statistical analysis

The primary set of data was obtained by the research team from the study participants. Statistical analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24. Descriptive tests (mean and standard deviations) and validity and reliability tests were used in the present study.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. The first question: What is the effective framework for the governance of sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate?

To verify the validity of the first question, the arithmetic mean and the standard deviation were calculated for all the axes and phrases of the governance questionnaire for sports institutions. This is evident through Table 4.

**Table 4.** Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and level of organizational structure, administrative and technical performance of governance

First Axis: Governance		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Level
<b>Board of Directors</b>				
1	There is a specific system for the board of directors at all levels that includes a declared policy	1.88	0.54	medium
2	There are approved standards for the needs of board members	1.96	0.46	medium
3	Availability of members with scientific backgrounds and practical experience in the field of sports in the Board of Directors	1.96	0.42	medium
4	Availability of advisory committees whose membership includes individuals from outside the sports community	1.98	0.44	medium
5	Provides standards for the performance of all tasks and responsibilities	1,95	0.50	medium
6	Decisions are taken with the participation of all stakeholders in the board of directors	2.01	0.48	medium
7	Board members are elected according to their experience and competence	1.87	0.49	medium
<b>Higher Management</b>				
8	Distribution of the roles of high management, each according to his position	1.97	0.44	medium

9	The high management forces the freedom to circulate information in the sports institution	1.95	0.40	medium
10	High management provides sources for the circulation of information (bulletins - reports - internet barriers and social media	2.00	0.46	medium
11	The high management publishes the budget of all its units and departments	1.86	0.51	medium
12	The high management provides periodic reports on the performance of the club or association	1.96	0.45	medium
13	High management provides a database available to obtain statistics and information on various activities	1.98	0.45	medium
14	There is accountability for the wrong decision-makers	1.93	0.50	medium
15	Allows the board of directors to discuss its decisions	1.93	0.50	medium
<b>Shareholders</b>				
16	The club (federation) communicates with the shareholders to attend the meetings of the general assembly	1.98	0.46	medium
17	The Board of Directors are keen to provide all the data and information necessary for the shareholders to carry out their duties	1.99	0.48	medium
18	Shareholders have the right to cancel the decisions of the board of directors in accordance with the rules of procedure of the sports institution	1.90	0.45	medium
19	Shareholders have the right to obtain information periodically	1.96	0.50	medium
20	Shareholders are provided with the decisions of the Board of Directors	1.96	0.43	medium
21	Shareholders will hold high management accountable in general assembly meetings	1.92	0.44	medium
22	Shareholders have the right to appoint and dismiss financial auditors	1.93	0.46	medium
23	There are visible channels of communication between the shareholders and the board of directors	1.93	0.47	medium

Table 4 illustrated arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores. The arithmetic means for governance ranged between 1.86 to 2.01, and the standard deviation score ranged between 0.40 to 0.51, indicating a lack in the clarification and application of governance in Iraq in general and especially in the field of sports. Based on the scores mentioned in the aforementioned table, there was an improper application and management and governance within sports organization despite the technical advancements in the field of sports. The researcher attributed this mismanagement to the lack of staff with experience or qualifications in this field. Researchers also observed that the support of the respondents for the participation in improving performance towards the local community of Iraq in Kirkuk governorate is very important, who are themselves a part of it. The development of

mechanisms for the participation of workers and shareholders in these activities is one of the important factors for the success and ensuring their effectiveness to achieve their goals. This is consistent with the results of the study conducted by Reham Dari (2018) and Marwan Hamouda (2015).

**3.2. The second question: What is the degree of social responsibility among workers in sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate?**

To verify the validity of the second question, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and level were found for all the axes and phrases of the social responsibility questionnaire for the cleaning, administrative and technical structure of sports institutions, and this is evident through Table 5.

**Table 5.** Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and level of the organizational structure, administrative and technical performance of social responsibility

Social responsibility		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Level
<b>Social responsibility towards society</b>				
24	The sports institution works to disclose the financial support it provides to participate in social, religious and national events in its community	1.87	0.47	medium
25	The sports institution discloses its contribution to increasing the number of participants in sports activities	1.98	0.48	medium
26	The sports institution discloses the extent of its participation in various sports competitions	1.87	0.44	medium
27	The sports institution is committed to disclosing the opening of participation for all groups to practice sports, whether with special needs, the elderly or women	1.91	0.47	medium
28	The Sports institution is keen to provide sports aid to some military colleges by providing the opportunity for training inside their facilities	1.93	0.43	medium
29	The Sports institution discloses the results that have been achieved in its participation in full transparency and the extent of its importance to the community to which it belongs	1.95	0.47	medium
<b>Social responsibility towards employees and athletes</b>				
30	The sports institution is obligated to disclose the problems experienced by its members and employees and work to solve them urgently	1.91	0.49	medium
31	The sports institution expresses interest in the suggestions of its members and employees, studies these suggestions and makes use of them	1.86	0.42	medium
32	The sports institution is committed to provide its services with the highest quality and efficiency	1.93	0.41	medium
33	The sports institution makes marketing plans in order to raise its efficiency to match the requirements of its members and employees	2.03	0.62	medium



34	Sports institutions work on sports and cultural media programs to spread the importance of sports and its role in upgrading the country and society	1.90	0.37	medium
35	The sports institution is keen to achieve job security for its employees	1.95	0.38	medium
36	The sports institution is obligated to provide health insurance for its employees and members	1.88	0.41	medium
37	The sports institution is committed to providing a reward to everyone who achieved outstanding results in tournaments and competitions or did a good job	1.89	0.44	medium
38	The Sports institution is keen to provide the best coaches and administrators for sports teams and follow them in their sports performance	1.86	0.47	medium

Table 5 illustrated arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores. The arithmetic mean for technical performance varied from 1.89 to 2.03 and the standard deviation scores varied between 0.37 to 0.62, indicating the lack of clarity of social responsibility among workers and athletes within sports institutions. Researchers attributed this to the lack of disclosure of social responsibility in most of the reports of sports institutions towards society, towards employees and players. It leads to many consequences including failure to disclose the problems they face and the lack of clarification of the number of participants and practitioners in sports activities, and the lack of transparency in the results achieved in the competitions and tournaments.

In addition to the lack of disclosure of social responsibility towards employees and other staff members in the sports institution with respect to the presentation of their problems and interests, their opinions should be taken to provide them with appropriate services in an appropriate manner, and not providing them with job security and health insurance. This is in addition to not disclose some social responsibility towards employees and workers in sports institutions in terms of presenting their problems and interests, taking their opinions and trying to provide them with appropriate services in an appropriate manner, and not providing them with job security and health insurance (Cohen et al., 2011; Najlala Ibrahim Yahya Abdul Rahman, 2013; Saleh, Abdel, Mohamed, & Shaker, 2017).

### **3.3. The third question: What is the impact of governance on the social responsibility of workers in sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate?**

To verify the validity of the third question, the correlation coefficient and the probability value for governance and social responsibility of sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate in Iraq were found by calculating the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, with the aim of identifying the nature of the relationship between them and this is evident from Table 6.

**Table 6.** The correlation coefficient of corporate governance and social responsibility

<b>Indication</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Arithmetic mean</b>	<b>Variables</b>
<b>Governance</b>	44.88	2.63	0.89	0.00	Significant
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	28.80	2.11			

Table 6 illustrated the significant correlation between governance and social responsibility, with a correlation value of 0.89 and a probability of 0.00, indicating that governance and social responsibility within sports institutions in Kirkuk governorate, Iraq, go in the same direction. It means that whenever the provisions of governance within sports institutions are applied, the social responsibility also increases within the sports institutions. This is in accordance to the studies conducted by Nassima (2015) and by Reham Amin Hamza (2015), where they agreed that the idea of applying governance within institutions is still unclear.

Based on the findings of the present study, it was observed that the sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq, apply the principles of governance. They have a specific board of directors that perform at all the levels. They had declared a policy and have approved certain standards for the members of the organization who have scientific background and practical experience in the field of sports. Each member of the institution was provided with certain roles and responsibilities. They are elected according to their level of competence. However, in case of any problem, they are held accountable for the fault. As for disclosure and transparency, researchers also found that the sports institutions in Kirkuk governorate are keen to provide financial and accounting information related to the institution's responsibility towards society to their employees and the players. But all of this is done without letting them know how the governance functions in the technical and scientific manner. Therefore, the application of governance does not exist in Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq, and therefore it does not adopt social responsibility.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers came to the conclusion that there was a lack of application of principles of governance within the sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq. This is attributed due to the lack of knowledge of the employees of sports institutions about governance, its principles and its method of application within the institution, and the benefits that accrue to them. Hence, the weakness of social responsibility towards society and the environment, as well as towards workers and employees within sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq, was

found due to the absence of laws and the absence of social awareness. This confirms the existence of a significant correlation between the application of governance principles and the existence of social responsibility. Social responsibility is one of the characteristics of a good governance system.

According to the set of conclusions adopted and formulated by the researcher from the results obtained in this experiment, some recommendations were made by the researcher. The researcher recommends that there is strong need to accelerate the legal commitment of sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate, through the application of the principles of governance to provide the institutional and legal framework as an appropriate environment. The author also recommends that the official authorities and the board of directors follow the principle of timely and accurate disclosure and transparency of their financial and administrative status. Finally, there is a need to change the prevailing concepts of social responsibility, in order to ensure that sports institutions in Kirkuk Governorate carry out activities of a sustainable development nature through which the needs of society and the environment are met through effective activities.

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**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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