



MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES AND ITS ROLE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES AT SELECTED IRAQI UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess the level of implementation of management by objectives (MBO) in university sports activities at selected Iraqi universities and to explore the role of using the MBO approach in the performance of employees engaged in sports activities in these institutions. The study sample consisted of 380 employees selected from the study population. A questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection, and several statistical analyses were employed, including arithmetic means and normality tests. The results indicated the following:

1. The level of implementation of MBO in university sports activities at selected Iraqi universities was moderate. This is attributed to the comprehensiveness of the MBO elements as a performance evaluation tool, its accuracy, and the clarity of its content.
2. Statistically significant differences were found regarding the use of the MBO approach in the performance of employees involved in university sports activities at selected Iraqi universities.

Keywords: Management by Objectives, Sports Activities, Iraqi Universities

Introduction

Individuals represent one of the most critical resources in organizations. While other resources diminish over time, human resources, in contrast, can increase in value and importance. On this basis, one of the primary responsibilities of managers in modern organizations is to focus on this resource and work towards enhancing its knowledge and capabilities. Within this context, performance evaluation plays a significant role as both a tool and a method for the growth and development of these organizations.

Performance evaluation of human resources is a fundamental factor influencing the success of any organization or economic project. It is one of the primary tasks of human resource management, carried out in coordination and collaboration with other department managers. The goal is to achieve complete employee satisfaction, psychological stability, and confidence in the management, thereby ensuring their commitment to achieving organizational objectives¹.

Study Problem and Questions

The problem of this study lies in the limited awareness among employees engaged in sports activities at Iraqi universities regarding the impact of applying management by objectives (MBO) on their performance. Observations indicate a decline in performance levels and weak implementation of modern administrative methods. Such large institutions consistently require effective strategies to improve performance, enhance the effectiveness of activities, and adopt the best approaches to achieve their goals. However, merely identifying methods and objectives is insufficient to achieve desired outcomes. Organizations need substantial and continuous efforts to implement concepts and transform realities using scientific and practical approaches.

¹ Mustafa Hamid Hussein; *Human Resource Management in Sports Organizations*, 1st Edition (Jordan: Dar Al-Wifaq for Publishing and Distribution, 2021), p. 62.



Therefore, employing modern administrative methods such as MBO proves beneficial. This study seeks to explore the effect of MBO on the performance of employees in university sports activities.

Study Questions

1. What is the level of implementation of management by objectives in university sports activities at selected Iraqi universities?
2. Is there a statistically significant effect of using the management by objectives method on the performance of employees in university sports activities at selected Iraqi universities?

Study Objectives

1. To determine the level of implementation of management by objectives in university sports activities at selected Iraqi universities.
2. To identify the role of management by objectives in enhancing the performance of employees in sports activities at selected Iraqi universities.

Methodology and Tools

This study is descriptive, and survey based. The study population consisted of employees involved in sports activities at various public and private Iraqi universities. The sample included 380 employees across different specializations and academic qualifications (Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD).

Table (1): Distribution of Sample Members According to the Academic Qualification Variable

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic Qualification	Bachelor's	142	37.4%
	Master's	155	40.8%
	PhD	83	21.8%
Total		380	100%

Field Research Procedures:

After identifying the four domains of the questionnaire, the researchers formulated the items for each domain, resulting in a total of twenty-two items in the questionnaire. The items were then presented to a group of experts to assess their validity and relevance. The experts deemed the items valid, with an approval rate of 80%, indicating the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis of the Scale Items:

1. Internal Consistency:

o Correlation Between Item Scores and the Total Scale Score:

This is referred to as the "internal consistency validity of the scale," measured by calculating the correlation coefficient between each item and the total score of the dimensions or the overall scale score.

The purpose of this procedure is to determine whether the responses to the items are reasonably consistent with the behavioral trends the scale intends to measure. The analysis revealed that most of the items showed significant correlations with the total questionnaire score.

o Correlation Between Items and Domains:

Given the diversity of the scale's domains, the researchers calculated the correlation coefficients between each item score and the total score of its respective domain. The findings showed that most of the scale's items were statistically significant.



2. Reliability:

Test reliability refers to "the consistency of scores obtained by the same individuals in repeated administrations of the test, meaning that the test scores are not influenced by external factors or changing conditions."

Consequently, the researchers assessed the reliability, a fundamental requirement in scale construction. They used the split-half method and Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine the reliability of the scale.

Table (2): Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficient of the Questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Number of Items	Alpha Value
1. Management by Objectives	22	0.823
1-1. Trust Between Supervisor and Subordinate	5	0.862
2-1. Participation	5	0.850
3-1. Commitment	6	0.719
4-1. Feedback	6	0.840
2. Employee Performance	7	0.872

The table (2) shows the reliability values for the main variables of the study, which ranged from 0.823 for Management by Objectives (the lowest) to 0.872 for Employee Performance (the highest). These Cronbach's alpha indicators suggest that the study tool has a high reliability coefficient and can achieve the study's objectives.

Pilot

The researcher administered the questionnaire to a group of employees involved in sports activities outside the study sample. The results indicated that the sample accepted the questionnaire, as the instructions were clear, and the items were easy to understand.

Results:

Table (3): Mean, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Level of Using Management by Objectives Among Employees in Sports Activities at Some Iraqi Universities

No .	Variable	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated t-value	Sig (Significance Level)*	Importance Ranking	Practice Level
1.	Trust Between Supervisor and Subordinate	5	3.398	0.615	18.871	0.000	2	Moderate
2.	Participation	5	2.85	0.537	13.539	0.000	4	Moderate
3.	Commitment	6	3.59	0.672	22.736	0.000	1	Moderate
4.	Feedback	6	3.29	0.629	15.662	0.000	3	Moderate
Overall Mean and Standard Deviation for		22	3.42	0.511	16.593	0.000	Moderate	



Management by Objectives						
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The **tabulated t-value** at a significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) is **1.650**.

The **t-value** was calculated based on the hypothetical mean of the item, which is three.

As shown in **Table (3)**, there is variation in the responses of the study sample regarding the use of management by objectives, reflecting the alignment of opinions among employees in university sports activities regarding the application of this method. The table also highlights the convergence in the mean values, where it is observed that, based on the significance levels, there were no differences in the viewpoints of the sample members regarding the level of using management by objectives. All significance levels were below 0.05 for all dimensions of management by objectives. In general, the level of using management by objectives in university sports activities, according to the opinions of the employees, was moderate.

In this regard, **Zakaria and Asma (2022)** stated, "Managing institutions according to their strategic goals creates a greater flow of new ideas, enhancing the ability of the institution's human resources to increase creativity and innovation, thereby improving the institution's administrative and organizational performance."²

As for the items within each dimension of management by objectives, the mean values, standard deviations, and t-test values were calculated to verify the significance of each item and the level of its usage, as shown in **Tables (4) and (5)**.

Table (4): Mean Values, Standard Deviations, and t-values for Trust Between Supervisor and Subordinate in University Sports Activities

No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Sig*	Importance Ranking	Level of Usage
1	My supervisor has enough trust in me at work.	3.30	0.689	12.663	0.000	4	Moderate
2	The work relationship between me and my supervisor is good.	3.56	0.777	15.229	0.000	2	Moderate
3	My supervisor understands my problems and needs.	3.32	0.612	17.662	0.000	3	Moderate
4	My supervisor knows my expectations.	2.96	0.861	13.991	0.000	5	Moderate
5	My supervisor is willing to solve the work problems I face.	3.85	0.550	16.552	0.000	1	Moderate
Total Mean and Standard Deviation		3.398	0.615	Moderate			

The **t-table value** at a significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) is **1.650**.

The t-value was calculated based on the assumed mean for the item, which is three.

Table (4) shows the sample's responses to the items related to the dimension of trust between the leader and subordinates. The mean scores for this variable ranged from **2.96** to **3.85**, with an overall mean of **3.398** on the five-point Likert scale, indicating a moderate level of trust between the leader and subordinates. The item "My manager is willing to solve the work problems I face" ranked first with a mean score of **3.85**, which is

² **Zakaria Motlak Al-Douri and Asmaa Qahtan Al-Douri**; *Human Resource Management*, 1st ed. (Amman, Dar Al-Maseera for Publishing, Distribution, and Printing, 2022), p. 256.



higher than the overall mean of **3.398** and a standard deviation of **0.550**. The item "My manager knows my expectations" ranked last with a mean score of **2.96**, which is lower than the overall mean of **3.398** and a standard deviation of **0.861**.

The table also shows low dispersion in the responses of the study sample regarding the trust dimension, reflecting the consistency of opinions among the sample regarding the level of trust between the leader and subordinates in the university sports activities. The table further highlights the close alignment in mean values, as there were no significant differences in the sample's opinions on the items forming the trust dimension, with significance levels all below **0.05** for all items. Overall, the level of trust between the leader and subordinates in the university sports activities under study is moderate.

In this regard, **Osama (2014)** mentions: "Successful organizations that work according to modern leadership styles, which adopt a set of principles and foundations, guide the institution's directions and behaviors towards better results. This is achieved through effective and efficient performance management and fostering positive cooperation among institutions working in the same field through mutual cooperation principles³."

Table (5) shows the mean scores, standard deviations, and values for the level of participation in goal setting in university sports activities.

No.	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated t-value	Significance Level (Sig)	Importance Ranking	Level of Use
1	Subordinates participate with leaders in setting goals according to their specialization	4.105	0.741	14.583	0.000	1	High
2	The leader and subordinates agree in advance on the activities related to each subordinate	3.379	0.727	10.362	0.000	3	Medium
3	Subordinates are asked to participate in arranging goals based on their importance and priority	3.536	0.785	11.272	0.000	2	Medium
4	Subordinates have complete freedom to express opinions and suggestions when setting goals	3.115	0.918	11.614	0.000	4	Medium
5	Subordinates participate with leaders in setting general goals for the	2.995	0.871	10.883	0.000	5	Medium

³ Osama Khairy; *Organizational Excellence*, 1st ed. (Jordan, Dar Al-Raya for Publishing and Distribution, 2014), p. 27.



institution based on the management level						
General Mean and Standard Deviation for Participation in Goal Setting	3.426	0.648	Medium			

The table (5) shows the responses of the sample on the statements related to participation in goal setting between the leader and subordinates in university sports activities. The means for this variable ranged from 2.995 to 4.105, with an overall mean of 3.426 on the five-point Likert scale, indicating a moderate level of participation in goal setting between the leader and subordinates.

The highest-ranking statement was "Subordinates participate with leaders in setting goals according to their specialization," with a mean of 4.105, which is higher than the overall mean of 3.426, and a standard deviation of 0.648. On the other hand, the statement "Subordinates participate with leaders in setting the institution's general goals according to the administrative level" ranked fifth, with a mean of 2.995, which is lower than the overall mean of 3.426, and a standard deviation of 0.871.

The table also shows a low variation in the responses of the sample members regarding participation in goal setting between the leader and subordinates, reflecting the convergence of their perspectives on the level of participation. Additionally, the closeness in the mean values indicates that there were no significant differences in the views of the sample members regarding the statements in the participation dimension, as all significance levels were below 0.05 for all items. Overall, the level of participation in goal setting between the leader and subordinates, according to the sample's perspective, was moderate in terms of the effectiveness of performance among the institution's members.

In this regard, Nimsith (2016) notes, "The effectiveness of the performance of individuals within the organization is a mix of resources, methodologies, activities, processes, and information that help generate effective solutions to overcome obstacles by correctly utilizing the human resources' skills, energy, and capabilities based on specific standards and measures to enhance its standing among organizations and improve its functional performance⁴."

Table (6) Mean Values, Standard Deviations, and t-Values for the Level of Subordinate Commitment in Achieving Goals in University Sports Activities

No.	Subordinate Commitment to Achieving Goals	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance Level (Sig*)	Importance Rank	Usage Level
11	I am happy in my career due to achieving the goals of my institution and my own goals	3.879	0.997	14.646	0.000	1	High
12	I feel happy when discussing matters related to achieving the	3.547	1.003	8.879	0.000	3	Medium

⁴ Nimsith S. I&Rifas AH&Cader MJA, Impact of Core Competency on competitive Advantage of Branking Firms in Sri Lanka , **International Journal of Scientific Resaerch and Innovation Technology**, Vol 03,N7, (2016) ,P 66.



	goals of my institution with my supervisors						
13	I believe that my ability to achieve the goals of my institution gives me a greater sense of professional belonging	3.377	0.953	6.439	0.000	4	Medium
14	I feel an ethical obligation that drives me to continue working to achieve its goals	3.207	1.040	3.248	0.001	6	Medium
15	I do not hesitate to offer help to my supervisor in setting the goals of my institution	3.550	0.987	9.080	0.000	2	Medium
16	I am keen to work within the team to achieve the goals of my institution	3.309	0.985	5.109	0.000	5	Medium
Overall Mean and Standard Deviation for Subordinate Commitment to Achieving Goals		3.478	0.817				

The **t-table value** at a significant level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) is **1.650**.

The critical value of **t** was calculated based on the default average of the paragraph, which is three. Table (6) shows the responses of the sample members to the statements related to the level of subordinates' commitment to achieving set goals among those working in sports activities. The arithmetic means for this variable ranged from 3.207 to 3.879, with a total mean of 3.478 on the five-point Likert scale, which indicates a moderate level of participation in determining goals between the superior and subordinates. The first-ranked statement was "I am happy in my professional life as a result of achieving my organization's and my own goals," with an arithmetic mean of 3.879, which is higher than the total mean of 3.478, and a standard deviation of 0.977. On the other hand, the statement "I feel a moral duty that drives me to continue working in the institution to achieve its goals" ranked last with an arithmetic mean of 3.207, which is lower than the total mean of 3.478, and a standard deviation of 1.040.

In this regard, Mohsen (2008) notes that the availability of effective management principles and functional communication within institutions allows employees to set meaningful goals by involving the educational community and local environment, which provides a level of positivity that enhances flexible work and social relationships, as well as the ability to face challenges with a team spirit⁵.

Table (6) also shows the low variation in the responses of the sample members regarding the level of commitment of subordinates to achieving goals, reflecting the convergence of views among the sample members on the level of subordinate commitment to achieving the goals.

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level (Sig*)	Importance Ranking	Usage Level
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⁵ Mahsin Ali Atiyya; Total Quality of Curriculum: (Amman, Dar Al-Manahij for Publishing, 2008), p. 83.



22	Feedback allows identifying strengths and weaknesses in job performance	3.309	0.985	5.109	0.000	5	Medium
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The tabular value of t at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) is (1.650).

The tabular value of t was calculated based on the expected mean of the item, which is (3).

Table (7) shows the sample's responses to statements related to the level of feedback between subordinates in achieving sports activity goals. The arithmetic means for this variable ranged from (3.207 to 3.779) with an overall mean of (3.478) on the five-point Likert scale, indicating an average level of feedback between subordinates in achieving goals. The statement 'Employees are informed of the results of their job performance evaluations' ranked first with an arithmetic mean of (3.779), higher than the overall mean of (3.478), and a standard deviation of (0.977). On the other hand, the statement 'The feedback process followed in the institution helps motivate employees' ranked last with an arithmetic mean of (3.207), lower than the overall mean of (3.478), and a standard deviation of (1.040), based on the principles of effective leadership.

Niel (2017) believes that effective leadership contributes to linking and integrating employees' capabilities with competitive business strategies, leading to outcomes characterized by high efficiency and effectiveness. Moreover, it plays a key role in enhancing individuals' abilities to face workplace challenges, influencing others, and utilizing their capabilities and skills for the benefit of the institution, leading to the best solutions for confronting these challenges⁶.

Table (7) also shows the low dispersion in the sample responses regarding the dimension of the feedback sharing level between subordinates in achieving goals, as reflected in the consistency of the sample's views on the level of feedback sharing between subordinates in achieving goals. **Table (7)** also indicates the closeness of the mean values. It is observed that, based on significance levels, there were no differences in the opinions of the sample members regarding the statements forming the feedback level dimension between subordinates in achieving goals, as all significance levels were below (0.05) for all statements. In general, the level of feedback sharing between subordinates in achieving goals, from the perspective of the sample members, was moderate.

In this regard, **Dahma (2018)** confirms that the environment surrounding the institution, along with the level of awareness of its management and the necessity of aligning with the standards of that environment in a balanced way, contributes to the excellence, creativity, and sustainability of those institutions in their outputs⁷.

Performance of Workers in Sports Activities in Some Iraqi Universities:

To describe and analyze the performance of workers in sports activities at some Iraqi universities, the researcher used arithmetic means, standard deviations, and the t-test to verify the significance of the item and the level of verification, as shown in Table (8).

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level (Sig)	Importance Rank	Level of Use
23	The university administration has witnessed a noticeable	3.883	0.815	17.637	0.000	1	High

⁶ Neil Ritchenberg; A Vision on Human Resources in the Public Sector: (Human Resources Echo Journal, Issue 16, 2017), p. 10

⁷ **Dahma Muflih Al-Hajaya**; *The Role of Human Resource Management Policies in Improving Institutional Performance*, first edition: (Jordan, Dar Wael for Publishing and Distribution, 2018), p. 21.



	improvement in the communication skills of its employees.						
-	General Mean and Standard Deviation for the Commitment of Subordinates in Achieving Goals	3.664	0.665	-	-	-	-

The table value of (t) at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) is (1.650).

The table value of (t) was calculated based on the default average for the paragraph, which is (3).

Table (8) refers to the performance level of workers in university sports activities, where the mean scores for workers' performance ranged between (3.352 - 3.883). The overall mean score for the performance level was (3.664), indicating a medium level of achievement on the five-point Likert scale. The paragraph "The institution's administration has witnessed a significant improvement in the communication skills of workers over the past three years" ranked first with a mean of (3.883), which is higher than the overall mean of (3.664), and a standard deviation of (0.815). Meanwhile, the paragraph "The institution's administration enables workers to make decisions effectively and quickly" ranked seventh and last, with a mean of (3.352), which is lower than the overall mean of (3.664), and a standard deviation of (0.75), under institutional management with administrative flexibility.

In this regard, (Mohammed, 2020) states, "Institutional excellence and brilliance is not just about the quality of the service provided by the institution, but it is a broader concept that includes the quality of all organizational aspects, including human and material resources management, operations management, time management, organizational culture, and a flexible organizational structure that reduces administrative levels where possible, ensuring clear and effective communication channels that align with the size of its requirements and aspirations."⁸

Table (8) also shows the low dispersion in the responses of the sample members regarding the performance level of the employees, reflecting the alignment in their views on the performance level. The table further indicates the similarity in the values of the mean scores. It is noted that, based on the significance levels, there were no differences in the views of the sample members regarding the statements constituting the performance level dimension, as all significance levels were less than (0.05) for all the items. In general, the level of performance of the employees in the university sports activity studied was average, according to the sample members.

Table (9) The Role of Management by Objectives in the Performance of Employees in Sports Activities at Some Iraqi Universities.

	correlation	Coefficient of Determination	Calculated R ²	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Calculated Regression Coefficient	Calculated R ²	Significance Level
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⁸ Mohamed Ibrahim Youssef; *Management and Restructuring of Public and Private Institutions – The Path to Institutional Excellence*, 3rd ed. (Alexandria, Dar Al-Jamiaa for Publishing and Distribution, 2020), p. 176.



Employee Performance	0.673	0.597	78.686	Between Groups	4	0.000	Trust	0.116	2.546	0.004
				Remain	375		Participation	0.139	3.572	0.000
				Total	379		Commitment	0.193	6.351	0.012
							Feedback	0.129	2.517	0.016

The effect is statistically significant at the level ($\alpha < 0.05$).

"It is clear from Table (9) that there are statistically significant differences in the role of purposeful management in the performance of sports activities. The researcher believes that this type of management should be used for those working in sports activities, as it plays a significant role in achieving the set goals. This will ease their work, contribute to the institution's excellence, and improve its administrative and organizational outputs. As confirmed by (Reda, 2012), "The success and excellence of administrative systems come from their ability to optimally invest their human, material, and marketing resources and to achieve a participatory vision for the exchange of experiences through benchmarking with administratively and organizationally successful organizations to ensure the improvement of their service levels."⁹

Conclusions:

1. The level of applying Management by Objectives (MBO) in university sports activities in some Iraqi universities was average. This is due to the comprehensiveness of the elements of the MBO method as a tool for performance evaluation, its clarity, and the clarity of its content.
2. The perceptions of the study sample regarding trust between the supervisor and the subordinate were at a medium and positive level. This might be due to the workers in sports activities knowing the criteria used for evaluating their performance.
3. There was a statistically significant effect of applying the MBO method on the performance of workers in university sports activities in some Iraqi universities.

Recommendations:

1. Continue and focus on the importance of using the MBO method as a valuable tool for performance evaluation in university sports activities.
2. Emphasize comprehensive participation in setting the objectives of university sports activities.
3. Focus on implementing feedback (feed-forward and feedback loops) between the supervisor and the subordinate as a constant strategy for goal setting.

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⁹ Reda Ibrahim Al-Melgee; *Institutional Excellence Management: Theory and Practice*, 1st ed. (Cairo, Alam Al-Kutub Publishing and Distribution, 2012), p. 83.



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