



Arab media evaluation of the Iraqi Football Association's smart leadership in organizing national matches

Evaluación de los medios árabes sobre el liderazgo inteligente de la Asociación de Fútbol Iraquí en la organización de partidos nacionales

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Abstract

Objective: Identify the level of smart leadership in organizing football tournaments and matches in Iraq from the perspective of the Arab media.

Research methodology: The researchers used a descriptive approach with a survey style (analytical type) to suit the nature of this study. The research community consisted of (330) Arab media professionals who visited Iraq for international matches. The researchers included all of them in the sample. They were divided into an exploratory sample for construction (5), a scientific foundations sample (200), a exploratory sample for application (5) trainers, and an application sample (120) media professionals (5 questionnaires were discarded from the application sample due to incomplete responses to the questionnaire). All of them were deliberately selected to constitute the total study sample (100%).

Results: The Iraqi Football Association is a prominent model for applying the concept of smart leadership in the management and organization of international tournaments within Iraq relying on a management style characterized by strategic vision, organizational flexibility, and the use of modern analysis and planning tools. This role has been clearly demonstrated in recent years through the Association's success in lifting the ban on Iraqi stadiums and organizing major tournaments on home soil, most notably the 25th Gulf Cup, held in Basra in 2023, which represented a true test of the capabilities of sports leadership in Iraq.

Conclusions: The study results show that smart leadership in the context of organizing international football tournaments in Iraq is still in its infancy, achieving some success in certain areas (such as organizational intelligence and transformational leadership).

Keywords

Arab media; Iraqi Football; smart leadership; organizing matches; evaluation.

Resumen

Objetivo: Identificar el nivel de liderazgo inteligente en la organización de torneos y partidos de fútbol en Irak desde la perspectiva de los medios de comunicación árabes.

Metodología de la investigación: Los investigadores utilizaron un enfoque descriptivo con un estilo de encuesta (de tipo analítico) adaptado a la naturaleza de este estudio. La comunidad de investigación estuvo compuesta por 330 profesionales de medios árabes que visitaron Irak para partidos internacionales. Los investigadores incluyeron a todos en la muestra. Se dividieron en una muestra exploratoria para la construcción (5), una muestra de fundamentos científicos (200), una muestra exploratoria para la aplicación (5) de formadores y una muestra de aplicación (120) de profesionales de medios (5 cuestionarios se descartaron de la muestra de aplicación debido a respuestas incompletas). Todos ellos fueron seleccionados deliberadamente para constituir la muestra total del estudio (100%).

Resultados: La Asociación Iraquí de Fútbol es un modelo destacado en la aplicación del concepto de liderazgo inteligente en la gestión y organización de torneos internacionales en Irak, basándose en un estilo de gestión caracterizado por la visión estratégica, la flexibilidad organizativa y el uso de herramientas modernas de análisis y planificación. Este papel se ha demostrado claramente en los últimos años con el éxito de la Asociación al levantar la prohibición de estadios iraquíes y organizar importantes torneos en su propio país, en particular la 25.ª Copa del Golfo, celebrada en Basora en 2023, que representó una verdadera prueba de las capacidades del liderazgo deportivo en Irak.

Conclusiones: Los resultados del estudio muestran que el liderazgo inteligente en el contexto de la organización de torneos internacionales de fútbol en Irak aún se encuentra en sus primeras etapas, con cierto éxito en ciertas áreas (como la inteligencia organizacional y el liderazgo transformacional).

Palabras clave

Medios árabes; fútbol iraquí; liderazgo inteligente; organización de partidos; evaluación.



Introduction

Competition in the World Cup and major tournaments (Olympic Games, continental championships, World Cup tournaments for age groups), with the emergence of various media outlets, the expanding popularity of this game, and its dominance over other sports, has not been limited to what is witnessed in the stadiums. Rather, the matter has extended beyond that, and FIFA member states, continental and even regional federations are now competing to submit organizing files to win the honor of hosting. These countries have been keen to include in their files a comprehensive and integrated study of the infrastructure and sports facilities, as well as reports on the security, economic, and health situation. This has not been without exploiting positive relations and political influences. Hosting football tournaments has begun to achieve many goals, including political, economic, social, religious, and tourism objectives. Some have even invested in organizing tournaments beyond that. Leadership constitutes the essence of administrative work, and the administrative leadership style determines the extent of an organization's success in achieving the desired goals, especially creative ones. It has been said in the past that human groups cannot be reformed or organized without wise leadership that seeks the interests of its followers, bringing about goodness and virtues and repelling evil and vices (-Dabbagh & Muhammad, 2022). Despite the completeness of the information in the detailed bid files for the hosting request for the interested countries, the most important resource and the real capital in organizing all football tournaments, despite the difference in times, standards and goals, remains the human resource. It is the source of success and failure, and it is leadership, planning, organization, follow-up and evaluation (Hani et al., 2025). Iraq is one of the countries that achieved a great renaissance and a wide boom in the infrastructure of football and succeeded in organizing local competitions. However, it waited a long time in order to host official tournaments after the ban on its stadiums was officially lifted at the beginning of 2017. This prompted the Iraqi Football Association to organize many specialized development courses in match management and nominate individuals to participate in workshops outside the country in a proactive step. Because hosting and organizing football tournaments adopted standards characterized by high quality as necessary requirements, Iraq, as one of the competing countries in organizing, moved towards applying the highest modern management systems and concepts that achieve this goal. In recent years, the concept of smart leadership has received the attention of many scientific fields, especially in the literature of organizational behavior. Perhaps the reference for this interest is due to the belief it is one of the pillars of organizational life and the cornerstone of the work of many organizations due to its direct impact on the strategic performance of the organization. This impact is evident on employees, as they develop a sense of satisfaction, belonging, commitment, and creativity at times, or dissatisfaction, absence from work, and neglect at other times. All of this depends on the level of leadership and its impact on employees in managing football tournaments in their various jobs.

Sports organization is one of the important elements that influences collective behavior. Views on organizational culture vary; some consider it an independent factor, while others consider it a product of social values, including symbols, rituals, and norms. Since sports organizations operate in an environment where competition abounds in many areas, those responsible for managing them must possess a diverse organizational culture that helps them choose the appropriate approach to addressing these conflicts (Muhammad, 2025). Football has proven to be more than just a sport; it is a global industry with an effective impact on many sectors of life and society, such as politics, economics, culture, and the media. It also constitutes a diplomatic tool that enhances the role of countries at the global level and moves towards achieving development goals and consolidating various ideas. It has gone beyond the concept of entertainment and activation, and countries have begun to transform this into a philosophy and a real field of work to implement future visions and administrative and organizational strategies for hosting football events in order to achieve specific goals. The world has also witnessed a rapid development in the methods of managing and organizing football matches (Khudhair et al., 2022), as smart leadership has become a crucial element in the success of major sporting events that depend on adopting modern technologies and making decisions based on analysis and innovation, which affects its position in the Arab media. From this principle, the idea of the research stems from the need to understand the reality of smart leadership in organizing football tournaments and matches in Iraq, and the extent of its impact on the mental image that the Arab media conveys about Iraqi football. There is no doubt that the media impression plays a pivotal role in shaping the reputation of any sports system, whether on The

public level or among the organizing and sponsoring bodies of tournaments and matches (Dhahi et al., 2022).

Based on the above, the research will seek to analyze the extent to which smart leadership methods are applied in organizing matches, evaluate their impact on the Arab media, and compare the Iraqi experience with successful regional and international experiences. Through this, the research will provide solutions and recommendations that we hope will contribute to improving match organization and enhancing the standing of Iraqi football at the Arab and international levels. The requirements of the Asian and International Football Associations (AFC) for hosting international matches and tournaments, as well as the standards of the Arab and Gulf Federations and the West Asian Football Federation, are of great importance to member federations. Hosting matches and tournaments depends primarily on the implementation of these standards or controls specified according to the classification of tournaments and matches. Among the most important of these requirements is the preparation of leadership and administrative staff to organize football events, whether at the club level, such as the AFC Champions League for elite teams or club tournaments. However, the challenges facing the organization of football tournaments and matches in Iraq, and the multiple problems, clearly affect the quality and development of football, which necessitates the study and analysis of these problems and challenges from a scientific perspective. With recent developments in the management of sporting events in general, and the organization and management of football matches in particular, adopting smart leadership methods has become an absolute necessity to ensure the success of organizing matches and achieving the highest levels of efficiency and quality. This is what leading countries in hosting football matches and tournaments have sought, working to continuously improve organizational methods in accordance with the international standards approved by sponsoring and organizing Arab and Gulf bodies, or international matches and tournaments.

Research objective

Identify the level of smart leadership in organizing football tournaments and matches in Iraq from the perspective of the Arab media.

Method

Research Methodology

The researchers used a descriptive approach with a survey style (analytical type) to suit the nature of this study. This approach seeks to determine the current state of the phenomenon and then describe it. As a result, it relies on studying the phenomenon as it exists in reality and is concerned with accurately describing it (Malham, 2000).

Community and sample research

The research community consisted of (330) Arab media professionals who visited Iraq for international matches. The researchers included all of them in the sample. They were divided into a exploratory sample for construction (5), a scientific foundations sample (200), a exploratory sample for application (5) trainers, and an application sample (120) media professionals (5 questionnaires were discarded from the application sample due to incomplete responses to the questionnaire). All of them were deliberately selected to constitute the total study sample (100%).

Research Tools

Smart Leadership Scale

Final Form of the Scale

The researchers used the Smart Leadership Scale, which consists of five domains (creative intelligence, organizational intelligence, participatory leadership, transformational leadership, and sustainable leadership) and (51) items, as shown in Table (1) and Appendix (1). The answer keys were based on the six-point Likert scale, as shown in Table (2).



Table 1. Shows the number of domains, the number of items in each domain, and their numbers for the Smart Leadership Scale.

No.	Field Name	Number of paragraphs	Paragraphs
1	Creative Intelligence	10	10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
2	Organizational Intelligence	11	21, 20, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11
3	Participatory Leadership	11	32, 31, 30, 29, 28, 27, 26, 25, 24, 23, 22
4	Transformational Leadership	9	41, 40, 39, 38, 37, 36, 35, 34, 33
5	Sustainable Leadership	10	51, 50, 49, 48, 47, 46, 45, 44, 43, 42

Table 2. Shows the answer alternatives and their scores for the positive and negative paragraphs.

No.	Type Paragraphs	Applies completely	Applies to a large extent	Applies to a moderate extent	Applies weakly	Applies very weakly	Does not apply completely
1	Positive	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6

In order for the researchers to ensure the clarity and comprehension of the items, the ease of answering them, the clarity of the scale's instructions, the time taken to answer each scale, and consideration of the obstacles the researchers might encounter during the primary application of the scales (Hani, 2018b), the scale must meet scientific foundations. The researchers followed a scientific method for procedures and presented the questionnaire to 20 experts. This was done in order to achieve the validity of the hypothetical construction, also called conceptual validity. In this type, the validity of the test and scales is verified statistically based on the examinee's answers. The validity of the hypothetical construction depends "on the experimental verification of the extent to which the scale scores match the concepts on which the researchers relied in constructing it" (Saeed & Hani, 2016). The researchers verified the validity of the hypothetical construction in the two smart leadership scales at 100%.

Then, a mini-experimental study was conducted to verify the procedures before embarking on the information collection process, which is considered one of the most essential pillars in implementing scientific research (Majeed, 1999), which is considered a exploratory experiment as practical training for the researcher to identify the negatives and positives encountered during the testing process, to avoid them in the future. The researchers then conducted exploratory experiments on January 12, 2025, on a portion of the research sample, numbering (5) Arab media professionals.

After completing the procedures for identifying the scientific foundations and validity of the scale, the researchers applied the scale to the sample of (200) media professionals, for the period from January 23, 2025, to March 22, 2025. The researchers then extracted the statistical description of the scale.

Table 3. Shows the descriptive statistical data for the Smart Leadership Scale (scientific foundations sample).

Statistical data	Variable					
	Smart leadership	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5
Mean	188.3000	36.2200	40.7550	39.2700	32.1450	39.9100
Median	189.0000	38.0000	42.0000	38.0000	33.0000	42.0000
Std. Deviation	70.99331	15.16812	15.66339	16.12661	13.33466	14.73729
Skewness	-0.206	-0.286	-0.276	-0.035	-0.171	-0.229
Std. Error of Skewness	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172
Minimum	59.00	10.00	11.00	11.00	9.00	11.00
Maximum	312.00	60.00	66.00	66.00	54.00	66.00

Statistical Analysis of the Smart Leadership Scale Items

The statistical analysis aims to calculate the discriminatory ability and internal consistency of questionnaire items. Discrimination ability refers to the ability to differentiate between individuals who score high and those who score low on the same questionnaire, while internal consistency refers to the degree of homogeneity of the items in their measurement of a trait. In other words, item analysis means retaining the best items in the test. The researchers will follow two methods in analyzing the questionnaire items:

1. Discrimination ability (two extreme groups).
2. Internal consistency coefficient: Internal consistency is verified by the following:



A. Correlation between the item score and the total questionnaire score.

B. Correlation between the item score and the total domain score.

C. Correlation between the score of each domain and the total questionnaire score.

Statistical Analysis of the Items of the Smart Leadership Scale

One of the most important steps in using scales and tests is conducting a statistical analysis of its items after presenting the questionnaire to a group of individuals, then correcting and analyzing it statistically, as follows:

First: The extreme group's method (discrimination ability): The researchers used the extreme groups method to identify the distinctive items in constructing the Smart Leadership scale. This method involves dividing the sample members representing the research community into two extreme groups. To achieve this, the responses of the sample, which amounted to (200) questionnaires for each variable, were arranged in descending order. The two extreme groups were then identified in each group (27%), representing (0.27%) of the construction sample, i.e. (54) media professionals from the upper group and (54) media professionals from the lower group. The middle group included (92) media professionals. The results were extracted using the T-test to determine the significance of the differences between the arithmetic means of two independent (unrelated) samples between the upper and lower groups. The researchers adopted the items with a significance value less than the approved significance level (0.05) and a degree of freedom of (106).

Table 4. Shows the discriminatory ability of each of the (52) items of the smart leadership scale.

Paragraph number	Lower group		Upper group		T value calculated	Level Sig	Type Sig
	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation			
1	1.2037	0.40653	5.6111	0.49208	50.742	0.000	Sig
2	1.2963	0.46091	5.4815	0.50435	45.014	0.000	Sig
3	1.6296	0.80789	5.7963	0.40653	33.855	0.000	Sig
4	1.2963	0.46091	5.7407	0.44234	51.124	0.000	Sig
5	1.2222	0.41964	5.5000	0.50469	47.893	0.000	Sig
6	1.4074	0.63002	5.5926	0.49597	38.356	0.000	Sig
7	1.2778	0.56357	5.5185	0.50435	41.205	0.000	Sig
8	1.0741	0.26435	5.4259	0.49913	56.620	0.000	Sig
9	1.3704	0.62333	5.4444	0.50157	37.419	0.000	Sig
10	1.3148	0.54337	5.6111	0.49208	43.067	0.000	Sig
11	1.5370	0.71935	5.5185	0.50435	33.303	0.000	Sig
12	1.5926	0.81307	5.6111	0.49208	31.072	0.000	Sig
13	1.5185	0.66562	5.6111	0.49208	36.332	0.000	Sig
14	1.5370	0.69263	5.7407	0.44234	37.588	0.000	Sig
15	1.3519	0.55482	5.4815	0.50435	40.473	0.000	Sig
16	1.2222	0.41964	5.5741	0.49913	49.041	0.000	Sig
17	1.4074	0.71424	5.5370	0.50331	34.731	0.000	Sig
18	1.4444	0.69137	5.6111	0.49208	36.081	0.000	Sig
19	1.4074	0.49597	5.4444	0.53787	40.548	0.000	Sig
20	1.5556	0.74395	5.5741	0.49913	32.962	0.000	Sig
21	1.1481	0.35858	5.6296	0.48744	54.422	0.000	Sig
22	1.5000	0.66588	5.5556	0.50157	35.749	0.000	Sig
23	1.5556	0.74395	5.6111	0.49208	33.412	0.000	Sig
24	1.6111	0.76273	5.5926	0.49597	32.158	0.000	Sig
25	1.2778	0.45211	5.5556	0.50157	46.553	0.000	Sig
26	1.3889	0.56357	5.5926	0.49597	41.148	0.000	Sig
27	1.1852	0.39210	5.5741	0.49913	50.813	0.000	Sig
28	1.1852	0.39210	5.5000	0.50469	49.612	0.000	Sig
29	1.2407	0.43155	5.5000	0.50469	47.134	0.000	Sig
30	1.2778	0.45211	5.5741	0.49913	46.880	0.000	Sig
31	1.4630	0.74512	5.5185	0.50435	33.122	0.004	Sig
32	1.3704	0.52472	5.5185	0.50435	41.883	0.000	Sig
33	1.2593	0.52071	5.6852	0.46880	46.419	0.000	Sig
34	1.2407	0.43155	5.4630	0.50331	46.799	0.000	Sig
35	1.3333	0.47583	5.7037	0.46091	48.479	0.000	Sig
36	1.3333	0.54944	5.6852	0.46880	44.277	0.000	Sig
37	1.5741	0.76730	5.7037	0.46091	33.903	0.000	Sig
38	1.2037	0.40653	5.5185	0.50435	48.947	0.000	Sig
39	1.1667	0.37618	5.2407	0.77545	34.736	0.034	Sig
40	1.2037	0.45056	5.4444	0.50157	46.221	0.000	Sig
41	1.4815	0.60628	5.6111	0.49208	38.864	0.000	Sig
42	1.7963	0.83281	5.5926	0.49597	28.780	0.000	Sig

43	1.8519	0.87755	5.5741	0.49913	27.094	0.000	Sig
44	1.5926	0.71424	5.7407	0.44234	36.284	0.000	Sig
45	1.2407	0.43155	5.3889	0.49208	46.574	0.000	Sig
46	1.3704	0.68118	5.4815	0.50435	35.643	0.000	Sig
47	1.5185	0.77071	5.3889	0.52903	30.425	0.000	Sig
48	1.4444	0.50157	5.6111	0.49208	43.576	0.000	Sig
49	1.3148	0.46880	5.5185	0.50435	44.862	0.000	Sig
50	1.6481	0.75629	5.5926	0.49597	32.049	0.000	Sig
51	1.5370	0.63582	5.2778	0.73758	28.228	0.000	Sig

The significance value is considered significant if it is < 0.05 with a degree of freedom of (106).

We find that all items in the Smart Leadership Scale are statistically significant at a significance level of (0.05).

Second: Internal consistency coefficient: The researchers used the consistency coefficient to determine the extent to which the item aligns with the scale or domain, using the correlation coefficient between each item in the scale and the total score for the scale and domain, and the correlation coefficient between the domain and the scale.

It is used to demonstrate the validity and homogeneity of the scale. Validity is one of the most important factors for determining the quality of tests and scales. A test or scale is characterized by validity when it actually measures the trait or characteristic for which it was developed (Hani, 2018a). The internal consistency coefficient is used to determine the degree of homogeneity of the paragraphs in measuring the phenomenon or behavioral dimension and the ability to highlight the correlation between the paragraphs of the scale (Saeed & Hani, 2016). The researchers used three types of internal consistency, but they used only one type, which is the relationship between the paragraph score and the total score. The measure is to find the correlation between each paragraph and the total score of the scale for all sample members. The aim of this procedure is to determine whether the answers, in general, for specific paragraphs are reasonably consistent with the behavioral or personality trends assumed by the scores. The correlation of the paragraph score with the total score of the current scale means that the paragraph represents the concept or characteristic to be measured, as the correlation of the paragraph score with the total score of the scale is evidence that the paragraph actually measures the behavioral dimension that the test or scale aims to measure. This indicator was extracted by using the Pearson correlation coefficient between the paragraph score and the total score of the scale for all members of the sample consisting of (200) media professionals, and Table No. (5) Shows this.

Table 5. Shows the correlation coefficient between the item score and the total score of the smart leadership scale.

Paragraph number	Simple correlation coefficient	Level Sig	Type Sig	Paragraph number	simple correlation coefficient	Level Sig	Type Sig
1	0.828**	0.000	Sig	27	0.871**	0.000	Sig
2	0.857**	0.000	Sig	28	0.856**	0.000	Sig
3	0.874**	0.000	Sig	29	0.823**	0.000	Sig
4	0.866**	0.000	Sig	30	0.867**	0.000	Sig
5	0.833**	0.000	Sig	31	0.831**	0.000	Sig
6	0.871**	0.000	Sig	32	0.854**	0.000	Sig
7	0.850**	0.000	Sig	33	0.907**	0.000	Sig
8	0.758**	0.000	Sig	34	0.827**	0.000	Sig
9	0.873**	0.000	Sig	35	0.895**	0.000	Sig
10	0.876**	0.000	Sig	36	0.828**	0.000	Sig
11	0.838**	0.000	Sig	37	0.846**	0.000	Sig
12	0.832**	0.000	Sig	38	0.827**	0.000	Sig
13	0.800**	0.003	Sig	39	0.784**	0.000	Sig
14	0.701**	0.000	Sig	40	0.888**	0.000	Sig
15	0.793**	0.000	Sig	41	0.861**	0.000	Sig
16	0.850**	0.000	Sig	42	0.796**	0.000	Sig
17	0.871**	0.000	Sig	43	0.734**	0.000	Sig
18	0.815**	0.003	Sig	44	0.840**	0.000	Sig
19	0.820**	0.000	Sig	45	0.470**	0.000	Sig
20	0.877**	0.000	Sig	46	0.669**	0.000	Sig
21	0.853**	0.000	Sig	47	0.778**	0.000	Sig
22	0.888**	0.000	Sig	48	0.855**	0.000	Sig
23	0.866**	0.000	Sig	49	0.802**	0.000	Sig
24	0.788**	0.000	Sig	50	0.786**	0.000	Sig
25	0.765**	0.000	Sig	51	0.684**	0.000	Sig
26	0.848**	0.000	Sig				

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05.

We find that all items in the Smart Leadership Scale are statistically significant at a significance level of (0.05).

Reliability

Reliability is one of the conditions that must be met by scales and tests used to measure their intended purpose. Test reliability refers to the consistency of scores obtained by the same individuals in different contexts. (Bahi, 1999) To verify the reliability of the scale, the following methods were used:

A. Split-Half Method: The researchers divided the scale items into two halves, a first half and a second half. The correlation coefficient between the total scores of the two halves was extracted using the Pearson method. Its value was found to be (0.984) for the Smart Leadership Scale. The correlation coefficient here indicates the reliability of half of the scale. Full reliability was then extracted using the Gitman equation to correct for reliability, resulting in total reliability of (0.965) for the Smart Leadership Scale.

B. Cronbach's alpha method: Cronbach's alpha is the internal consistency of a test or scale. It is one of the most common and most appropriate reliability coefficients for psychological assessments. Cronbach's alpha relies on the consistency of an individual's performance from one item to the next and the strength of the correlations between items in a scale or test. It provides a good estimate of reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

The reliability coefficient for the Visionary Leadership Scale, after applying Cronbach's alpha using SPSS, was found to be 0.991, a high indicator of reliability.

Objectivity

In addition to the clarity of the instructions for administering the test, the test's high objectivity is demonstrated when a group of judges calculates the test scores simultaneously. When the test is administered to a specific group of individuals, they obtain approximately the same results. This indicates that the judges are highly qualified to perform this task. The main experiment for applying the smart leadership scale:

To complete the analysis process, the researchers distributed the smart leadership scales after completing the scientific foundations procedures to (120) randomly selected Arab media professionals. The scale questionnaires were distributed between Sunday, March 30, 2023, and Saturday, April 26, 2023.

After completing the main experiment, the researchers arranged the scale questionnaires and scales in preparation for statistical analysis.

Statistical Methods

1. Microsoft Excel for downloading and simplifying data.
2. SPSS Vre20 for statistical data processing using the following statistical formulas:
 - Arithmetic mean.
 - Standard deviation.
 - Skewness coefficient.
 - Cronbach's coefficient.
 - Simple correlation coefficient.
 - Percentage.
 - T-test.
 - Hypothetical mean.

Findings

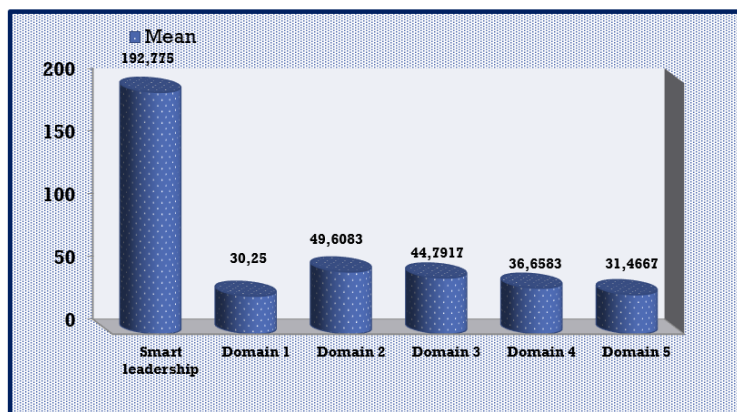
Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results

The study results revealed a detailed analysis of the level of availability of smart leadership in the context of organizing international football tournaments and matches in Iraq from the perspective of the Arab media, specifically in light of five main areas: organizational intelligence, transformational leadership, participatory leadership, creative intelligence, and sustainable leadership. According to statistical processing, the overall results are shown in Statistical Description Table No. (6).

Table 6. Shows the descriptive statistical data for the smart leadership scale.

Statistical data	Variable					
	Smart leadership	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5
Mean	192.7750	30.2500	49.6083	44.7917	36.6583	31.4667
Median	190.5000	30.0000	49.0000	42.0000	35.0000	31.0000
Std. Deviation	29.22255	6.43030	8.04535	10.90439	9.21772	7.19703
Skewness	-0.982	0.249	-0.907	0.142	0.148	0.646
Std. Error of Skewness	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.221	0.221
Minimum	51.00	10.00	11.00	11.00	9.00	10.00
Maximum	262.00	50.00	66.00	66.00	54.00	60.00

Figure 1. Shows the mean for the smart leadership scale.



Presentation and analysis of the results of the smart leadership level and its domains, and discussion

Presentation and analysis of the results of the smart leadership level

According to the statistical processing, it was found that the differences were significant in some axes, which indicates the presence of a clear awareness of some aspects of smart leadership. However, the overall results did not reach the desired level of ambition in this field, as shown by the statistical description table. Table (6) shows that for the application sample (Arab media) for the two smart leadership scales, the arithmetic mean for smart leadership reached (192.7750), which is greater than the hypothetical mean, which reached (178.5). In addition, the significance value (0.000) is less than (0.05). This indicates that the difference is significant and in favor of the (arithmetic mean) of the sample. This indicates that the level of smart leadership in organizing international matches is at a high level, which does not meet the ambition, as we aspire for it to be more in the future. 1- Presentation and analysis of the results for the domain level (Creative Intelligence):

Creative intelligence ranked fourth. Table (4-5) shows the above description of the domain, as the arithmetic mean reached (30.25), which is smaller than the hypothetical mean of (35). Furthermore, the significance value, which reached (0.000), is smaller than the significance level of (0.05). This indicates a significant difference in favor of the hypothetical mean and negative results. This indicates a weakness in generating new solutions or innovation in organizational methods. It became clear that there is a

greater reliance on traditional patterns in event management, without a serious focus on adopting creative methods or unprecedented initiatives. This result may reflect weak investment in young minds or the absence of institutional incentives for sports innovation, which enhances institutional performance and makes sports organizations more effective and adaptable (Doherty et al., 2025).

Table 7. Shows the smart leadership level and the (T) value between the hypothetical mean and the arithmetic mean for the Iraqi Football Association from the perspective of the Arab media.

Variables	Unit of measurement	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error of Skewness	Arithmetic mean of difference	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Smart leadership	Degree	178.5	192.7750	29.22255	2.66764	14.27500	5.351	.0000	Sig

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05 at a degree of freedom of (119)

Presentation and analysis of the results for the Organizational Intelligence domain

The description table above for the Organizational Intelligence domain shows that the arithmetic mean was (49.6083), which is greater than the hypothetical mean of (38.5). Furthermore, the significance value of (0.000) is smaller than the significance level of (0.05). This indicates that the difference is significant, placing organizational intelligence in first place in terms of the verification level, with a positive significant difference. This reflects a growing awareness among those responsible for organizing football tournaments of the need to employ organizational intelligence, whether through task coordination, clarity of the administrative structure, interaction between cadres, or the use of technology in organization and management. This result is consistent with previous studies, such as Hassan Al-Khaldi's study (Al-Khaldi, 2022), which emphasized the importance of a smart organizational structure in enhancing the effectiveness of sporting events, especially at the international level. (Al-Harbi, 2021) believes that organizational intelligence in the sports context is one of the decisive factors in achieving institutional excellence, especially in light of rapid international changes. However, the results he obtained The researchers indicate that this intelligence has not yet translated into a comprehensive, integrated level that matches the ambitions of government institutions and the Iraqi Football Association, as well as the organizing committees, which go beyond organizing Asian championships or gathering national teams in the qualifiers for major international tournaments.

Table 8. Shows the level of the first domain (Creative Intelligence) and the (T) value between the hypothetical mean and the arithmetic mean for the Iraqi Football Association, from the perspective of the Arab media.

Variables	Unit of measurement	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error of Skewness	Arithmetic mean of difference	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Creative Intelligence	Degree	35	30.25	6.43030	0.5870	4.75	8.092	.0000	Sig

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05 at a degree of freedom of (119)

Presentation and analysis of the results for the domain level (participatory leadership)

Participatory leadership ranked third, as evidenced by the domain description table above. The arithmetic mean was (44.7917), which is greater than the hypothetical mean of (38.5). Furthermore, the significance value of (0.000) is smaller than the significance level of (0.05). This indicates that the difference is significant and achieved a positive result, reflecting a growing awareness of the importance of distributing responsibilities and promoting participation in decision-making, whether by organizing bodies or local and international partners. However, the results indicate that participation was not sufficiently deep or systematic, remaining within certain limits in some cases and not entirely clear, as indicated by the study (Fransen et al., 2015).

Table 9. Shows the level of the second domain, organizational intelligence, and the (T) value between the hypothetical mean and the arithmetic mean for the Iraqi Football Association, from the perspective of the Arab media.

Variables	Unit of measurement	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error of Skewness	Arithmetic mean of difference	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Organizational intelligence	Degree	38.5	49.6083	8.04535	.734440	11.10833	15.125	.0000	Sig

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05 at a degree of freedom of(119)

Presentation and analysis of the results for the (Transformational Leadership) domain

It is evident from the description table above for the (Transformational Leadership) domain that the arithmetic mean was (36.6583), which is greater than the hypothetical mean of (31.5). Furthermore, the significance value of (0.000) is smaller than the significance level of (0.05), indicating a significant difference. Transformational leadership ranked second, and its results were significantly positive. This indicates the presence of some transformational manifestations and initiatives among the leaders responsible for the organization, such as motivating working teams, instilling a spirit of future vision, and raising the level of collective ambition and inspiration for change. Some Arab media outlets have noted evidence of this transformation. However, the indicators have not risen to the level of excellence, which is still in its infancy and requires greater support in the areas of inspiration, intellectual influence, and empowerment. It can be considered an emerging transformation that has not yet been completed, which is consistent with study (Al-Latif, 2020).

Table 10. Shows the third domain level, participatory leadership, and the (T) value between the hypothetical mean and the arithmetic mean for the Iraqi Football Association from the perspective of the Arab media.

Variables	Unit of measurement	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error of Skewness	Arithmetic mean of difference	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Participatory leadership	Degree	44.7917	10.90439	.995430	6.29167	6.321	.0000	44.7917	Sig

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05 at a degree of freedom of(119)

Presentation and analysis of the results for the "Sustainable Leadership" domain

Sustainable leadership recorded the lowest percentage, and its results were negative. This is evident from the description table above for the domain, as the arithmetic mean reached (31.4667), which is greater than the hypothetical mean of (35). Furthermore, the significance value of (0.000) is less than the significance level of (0.05), indicating a significant difference in favor of the hypothetical mean. This reflects a lack of awareness of leadership practices related to sustainability, whether in terms of considering the environmental dimension, long-term social impact, or ensuring the continuity of institutional work after the end of tournaments.

This result is an indicator of a real gap in organizational policies and their weak connection to the concepts of sustainable development, which have become an international standard for assessing the effectiveness of any global sporting event.

Table 11. Shows the level of the fourth domain, transformational leadership, and the (T) value between the hypothetical mean and the arithmetic mean for the Iraqi Football Association from the perspective of the Arab media.

Variables	Unit of measurement	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error of Skewness	Arithmetic mean of difference	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Transformational leadership	Degree	31.5	36.6583	9.21772	.841460	5.15833	6.130	.0000	Sig

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05 at a degree of freedom of(119)

Table 12. The fifth domain level, "Sustainable Leadership," shows the (T) value between the hypothetical mean and the arithmetic mean for the Iraqi Football Association from the perspective of the Arab media.

Variables	Unit of measurement	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error of Skewness	Arithmetic mean of difference	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Sustainable Leadership	Degree	35	31.4667	7.19703	.657000	3.53333	5.378	.0000	Sig

The significance value is significant if it is < 0.05 at a degree of freedom of(119)

Discussion

Discussing the results of the level and scope of smart leadership

The Iraqi Football Association is a prominent model for applying the concept of smart leadership in the management and organization of international tournaments within Iraq. It has demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt to administrative and political changes, relying on a management style characterized by strategic vision, organizational flexibility, and the use of modern analysis and planning tools. This role has been clearly demonstrated in recent years through the Association's success in lifting the ban on Iraqi stadiums and organizing major tournaments on home soil, most notably the 25th Gulf Cup, held in Basra in 2023, which represented a true test of the capabilities of sports leadership in Iraq.

The smart leadership adopted by the Association is reflected in its ability to build effective partnerships with continental and international federations, harness governmental and institutional support to develop infrastructure, stadiums, and organizational facilities, and adopt a participatory approach to managing organizing committees, which has enhanced the efficiency of task allocation and rapid response to event requirements. The use of modern digital tools in ticketing, crowd management, and match coverage demonstrates a clear trend toward digital transformation in sports management, reflecting a high level of technological understanding among the federation's leadership.

In addition, the federation has demonstrated a high capacity to manage crises and emergencies during tournaments, through well-thought-out plans and constant coordination with security and health authorities. This has strengthened the confidence of local and international audiences in Iraq's ability to host major sporting events. The federation has also worked to involve national cadres in various organizational aspects, including referees, organizers, and observers, seeking to create a sustainable institutional structure capable of continuing operations and organizing future tournaments with high efficiency.

Accordingly, a realistic examination of the Iraqi Federation's experience in organizing international tournaments and matches reveals the presence of a sports leadership that adopts a smart management approach that combines vision, planning, and investment in people and technology. This qualifies it to be one of the most prominent leadership models in the region in the field of contemporary sports management.

The success of the Iraqi Football Association in organizing international matches and tournaments is a clear indicator of the effectiveness of the smart leadership models it adopts. The Federation's performance can be analyzed of five key areas of smart leadership: creative intelligence, organizational intelligence, participatory leadership, transformational leadership, and sustainable leadership:

- First: Creative Intelligence

Creative intelligence is an important pillar in developing unconventional solutions and innovating new approaches to managing sporting events. However, this area remains weak in the Federation's performance, as it relies on traditional organizational methods and rarely employs modern technology or innovative international experiences in tournament management. Furthermore, the lack of individual and collective creative initiatives within the organizing committees indicates the absence of an environment that encourages out-of-the-box thinking.

- Second: Organizational Intelligence

The Iraqi Football Association's organizational intelligence is excellently demonstrated, as it demonstrates a high capacity to coordinate human, financial, and logistical resources during preparations for international matches. The flexibility of its administrative and organizational structure and its rapid response to emergencies are clear evidence of this excellence. The distribution of roles and tasks among



committees and the integration between various departments reflect the association's organizational maturity, enabling it to efficiently implement international events.

- Third: Participative Leadership

The Iraqi Football Association has demonstrated a high level of participatory leadership by involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process, including administrators, technicians, and club representatives. The teamwork approach and specialized committees contribute to broadening the base of participation, enhancing the sense of belonging and improving the quality of decisions made. This leadership style reflects transparency in work and reduces organizational errors.

- Fourth: Transformational Leadership

The Federation also boasts a highly transformational leadership, evident in a clear development vision that seeks to advance Iraqi football to levels that are more professional. This is demonstrated through ongoing strategic planning, efforts to improve infrastructure, and the organization of tournaments in a manner that matches international standards. Encouraging individual initiatives from staff and motivating high performance also reflects a leadership orientation that drives change and continuous improvement.

- Fifth: Sustainable Leadership

Despite apparent short-term successes, the Federation suffers from a clear weakness in adopting sustainable leadership. Organizational processes lack long-term strategies that ensure institutional continuity. Furthermore, the lack of real investment in youth cadres and reliance on temporary solutions poses a long-term threat to the Federation's ability to maintain a high level of tournament organization. Furthermore, the environmental and social dimensions of organization are often absent, weakening the sustainability of the adopted management model.

It is possible that smart leadership concepts (such as organizational intelligence, strategic intelligence, creative intelligence, etc.) are not institutionally or balanced within the bodies responsible for organizing sports, or that they are practiced in a traditional manner that does not meet modern standards of smart leadership. Therefore, the lack of impact may reflect limited practical application of smart leadership, rather than a shortcoming in the theoretical model itself (Cândido & Santos, 2019) (Al-Shawk & Al-Kubaisi, 2006)

Conclusions

- The study results show that smart leadership in the context of organizing international football tournaments in Iraq is still in its infancy, achieving some success in certain areas (such as organizational intelligence and transformational leadership), while suffering from weaknesses in other areas, such as creativity and sustainability.
- Weak application or integration of smart leadership dimensions.

Recommendations

- Adopt multidimensional smart leadership models (transformational, participatory, and organizational) within the administrative structure of organizing sports tournaments.
- Develop specialized training programs in creative and sustainable leadership to enhance the capabilities of sports leaders.
- Adopt internal and external evaluation mechanisms for the quality of tournament organization to ensure continuous development.
- Develop a national sports media strategy that integrates the goals of smart leadership and reflects Iraq's realistic image in the sports field.
- Conduct comparative studies of Arab countries' experiences in using smart leadership in sports.



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Appendix

Appendix 1. Smart Leadership Scale

No.	Paragraphs	Applies completely	Applies to a large extent	Applies to a moderate extent	Applies weakly	Applies very weakly	Does not apply completely
1	The Iraqi Federation motivates organizing committees to provide creative solutions to organizational challenges.						
2	The Federation encourages organizing committees to think outside the box and innovate in organizing tournaments and matches.						
3	The Federation strongly supports creative initiatives that contribute to improving the quality of sporting events.						
4	The Federation motivates organizing committees to use new and innovative technologies in organizing matches.						
5	The Federation encourages brainstorming sessions to generate new ideas that contribute to improving the experience for participants and fans.						
6	The Federation and its organizing committees are affected by sudden changes and are slow to find effective solutions for organizing tournaments and matches.						
7	The Federation encourages the development of the skills of its employees and organizing committees to provide an environment that supports creative thinking.						
8	The Iraqi Federation implements innovative ideas that align with modern global trends in organizing sports events.						
9	The Iraqi Football Association demonstrates intellectual flexibility when dealing with different viewpoints to foster creativity.						
10	The Association manages professional relationships with professional creativity, serving the success of international tournaments and matches.						
11	The Association demonstrates an ability to efficiently organize resources and organizing committees to achieve sporting objectives.						
12	The Association motivates committees to adopt clear and effective organizational strategies that contribute to the success of international matches.						
13	The Association demonstrates skill in coordinating the efforts of the various departments and teams involved in organizing matches.						
14	The Association seeks to develop flexible organizational methods that contribute to improving the experience of participants and fans.						
15	The Federation emphasizes improving coordination between the various departments to ensure the smooth running of matches.						
16	The Federation places great importance on effectively distributing tasks within committees to ensure timely implementation of organizational activities.						
17	The Federation develops periodic evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of the adopted organizational strategies.						
18	The Federation encourages the use of modern technology and organizational tools to						

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- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational processes.
- 19 The Federation demonstrates an ability to anticipate organizational challenges and intelligently address them to ensure the continued success of events.
- 20 The Federation encourages decisions based on logical data analysis rather than relying on assumptions.
- 21 The Federation is adept at dealing with diverse personalities within the organizational teams during international tournaments and matches.
- 22 The Federation involves members of the organizing committees in making decisions related to the organization of international matches.
- 23 The Federation encourages the exchange of opinions and suggestions with all committees before implementing organizational plans.
- 24 The Federation fosters a work environment based on mutual trust and shared responsibilities.
- 25 The Federation is committed to distributing tasks in a participatory manner that takes into account the expertise and competencies of members.
- 26 The Federation demonstrates openness to the opinions of committees, even if they contradict their own views.
- 27 The Federation empowers committees to make independent decisions within their mandate.
- 28 The Federation reflects a team spirit by involving everyone in organizational achievements and successes.
- 29 The Federation places importance on the contribution of each committee member, regardless of their position.
- 30 Through leadership, the Federation fosters participation, belonging, and commitment among members of organizing committees.
- 31 Sports leaders in Iraq demonstrate integrity and transparency in their decision-making regarding the organization of international matches.
- 32 Leaders demonstrate respect for individual rights and foster a positive work environment.
- 33 The Iraqi Federation demonstrates a clear and inspiring vision for developing the organization of international matches.
- 34 The Iraqi Federation motivates organizing committees to achieve goals that exceed normal expectations.
- 35 The Iraqi Federation encourages innovative thinking to solve organizational problems in international tournaments.
- 36 The Iraqi Federation enhances organizing committees' confidence in their ability to successfully organize international events.
- 37 The Iraqi Federation encourages the development of individual skills among members of organizing committees.
- 38 The Iraqi Federation motivates committees to respond positively to organizational challenges.
- 39 The Iraqi Federation encourages the adoption of values of fairness and equality in the distribution of tasks and responsibilities.
- 40 The Iraqi Federation fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization among members of the organizing committees.
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- 41 The Federation is committed to enhancing Iraq's image before international delegations through direct coordination with the media.
- 42 Sustainable leadership enhances the sustainability of organizational successes at international sporting events.
- 43 The Federation encourages the adoption of organizational practices that conserve resources and reduce waste.
- 44 Sustainable leadership contributes to building strong relationships with international tournament sponsors.
- 45 Sustainable leadership enhances the ability of organizing committees to adapt to future challenges.
- 46 The Federation encourages innovation in organizing matches and tournaments to ensure their sustainability and success.
- 47 Sustainable leadership contributes to enhancing Iraq's image as a reliable host of international tournaments.
- 48 The Federation demonstrates commitment to international standards for organizing matches and tournaments.
- 49 Sustainable leadership enhances the confidence of local and international audiences in Iraq's ability to organize sporting events.
- 50 The Iraqi Federation demonstrates a clear strategic vision for developing the organization of international matches in the future.
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