The Impact of University Leadership and the University Organizational Environment on the Performance of staff: A Case Study at Al Maaqal University (Private Sector)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the impact of the interaction of the university leadership and the university organizational environment on the performance level of the staff at Al-Maaqal university. This university was chosen as a field of study because it is a new university and needs studies that develops and contributes to improve its overall performance. The problem defined by the following question: to what extent does the interaction of the university leadership and the university organizational environment affect the performance level of the teaching staff at Al-Maaqal University?). The method of this study adopted a major hypothesis in which there is a statistically significant effect of university leadership and university environment on the performance of university staff. A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of testing the relationship and the impact between university leadership and university environment and the performance of university staff. The results of the study indicated that the building of university leadership was appropriate environment for staff, which is reflected in improving their teaching performance.

Keywords: University leadership, University organizational environment, Performance of staff, Al-Maaqal private university

1. INTRODUCTION

Al-Maaqal private university was chosen as a field of this study as it is concerned with improvement procedure. The size of the study community (65 teachers), and because it is relatively small, all were taken as a sample for the study. The research adopted a main hypothesis that (There is a statistically significant effect of university leadership and university environment on the performance of university teachers). For the purpose of data collection, a questionnaire designed for this purpose was used. For the purposes of the analysis, a set of appropriate statistical methods were used. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which is (the effective impact of the interaction of university leadership and the university organizational environment in improving the performance of teachers).

Staff performance is an important topic that has captured the attention of academics and professionals. Governments around the world have attached great importance to the issue of education at all levels, especially at the university level. Universities play an active and important role in the development process as a scientific and academic organization that will promote other processes from the social and economic aspects of society. However, the performance of a university depends largely on the performance of its faculty. Consequently, the performance evaluation system plays an important role in the progress of universities and the prosperity of societies. In fact, better employee performance will lead to better organizational performance. However, most previous studies have focused on the performance of employees in business institutions and few of them have studied the performance appraisal system in universities

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research attempts to review some previous literature to identify the views of other researchers for the impact of university leadership and the university organizational environment on the performance of university staff. Thoha and Miftah (2010:45) indicated that leadership is the process of influencing the interpretation of the events of his followers, organizing activities to achieve the goals, maintaining cooperative relations and group work, obtaining support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization. On the other hand, the study of Kreitner and A Kinicki (2005) explained that leadership is a process of social influence through

which leaders aim for the voluntary participation of subordinates to achieve organizational goals. The leadership should possess the ability to influence the followers, and direct their behavior towards specific goals. The responsibility for implementing policy in universities rests primarily with the university's higher administration (the university president). The president is responsible for creating the conditions to facilitate the implementation of the policy, interpreting the policy, translating it into actions, and leading the staff towards implementing this policy in the university. Beerens (2003) and Abdullah et al. (2021) believe that the responsibility of evaluating the teaching staff lies with the higher management of the university. This illustrates the important role of university leadership in monitoring and improving the performance of staff (Melissa Tuytens et al. (2010). However, the university leadership exercises its role in different university organizational environments, and this may encourage or limit the effectiveness of the leadership role of the university. Because the organizational environment of any organization, including the university, reveals the organization's material and human capabilities, and its strengths and weaknesses to determine the competitive position of the organization.

Akbar et al. (2017) and Mehmood, Mohd-Rashid, Ong., & Abbas (2021) indicated that the success or failure in achieving a good level of performance in higher educational institutions is the result of the level of influence of university leadership supported by the appropriate university organizational environment. Often a lack of interest in these two factors causes poor organizational performance because leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve specific goals (Miftah & Thoha, 2010). The internal organizational environment describes the social, economic and psychological events and conditions through which the members of the organization work. Therefore, the appropriate environment for achievement and improvement of performance provides psychological and social conditions, safety, health, and comfort. And circumstances of a good or comfortable working environment will have a good effect on all parties whether workers, leaders or working conditions (Anoraga, 2001). The situation is clearer for the university's staff, as stability and psychological reassurance motivate them to provide the best for the university (staff and research). Thus, it can be deduced from the previous studies that:

- The level of performance of the teaching staff at the university is reflected in the development in the university and the country.
- University leadership constitutes an influential factor in stimulating the creative energies of staff.

- The leadership action of the university leadership appears when the appropriate economic, social and psychological environment is available for the staff.

- Effective university leadership contributes to the formation of an appropriate university organizational environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

1- **Purpose:** To explore the impact of the interaction of the university leadership and the university organizational environment on the performance level of the teachers at Al-Maaqal University

2 - Justification:

- The university needs to set work contexts for staff that contribute to their development and improve their performance.

- The importance of exploring the reasons for developing interaction between university leadership and staff.

- The role of initiative and proactiveness of university leadership and staff in activating the level of comprehensive university performance.

- The possibility of creating an appropriate university organizational environment for the development of teachers and the development of their creativity in the fields of teaching and research.

3 - Problem Statement: Al-Maaqal University (private sector) is one of the new Iraqi universities, which aspires to set work contexts to organize the work of staff and provide them with conditions for creativity and development in the two processes (teaching and research). The problem presented for the research is the detection and the use of factors affecting the improvement of the performance of staff at the university. Several studies, some of which were previously discussed have shown that university leadership and the university environment are the most influential in improving the performance of staff and overall university performance. However, university leadership and the university environment may differ from one university to another, as well as the diversity in leadership styles and the characteristics of the university organizational environment. Thereby, the problem in its field aspect will be determined by the characteristics of the university environment and leadership, which leads in its interaction to

improve the performance of staff, and the overall performance of the university. The problem is defined by the following questions:

- To what extent does university leadership affect the level of performance of staff at Al-Maaqal university?
- To what extent does the university organizational environment affect the performance level of the teaching staff at Al-Maaqal University?
- To what extent does the interaction of the university leadership and the university organizational environment affect the performance level of the teaching staff at Al-Maaqal university?

Objectives:

- Exploring the characteristics and practices of university leadership that affect the performance level of teachers at Al-Maaqal university.
- Exploring the characteristics of the university organizational environment that affect the performance level of teachers at Al-Maaqal university
- Detecting the impact of the interaction of university leadership and the university organizational environment on the level of performance of staff at Al-Maaqal university

5 -Importance:

- Scientific importance: Providing researchers, academics and professionals with information and data about the concept of university culture and its impact on the level of university organizational loyalty.
- Developing the research and creativity capabilities of the teaching staff at Al-Maaqal University and what it means to develop the overall performance of the university.
- Economic importance: Increasing the financial returns of the university as a result of the effects of excellence on students and their families and society.

6 - Determinants

- The unstable political and social conditions in the country, and their reflection on the level of university stability.

- Covid-19 effects the working hours of universities and official departments of the state, and this result difficulty of distributing the questionnaire to the sample of study especially since the limited awareness of the study variables requires direct confrontation with the respondents.

7 - Hypothetical Diagram and Hypotheses

a. hypothetical Diagram
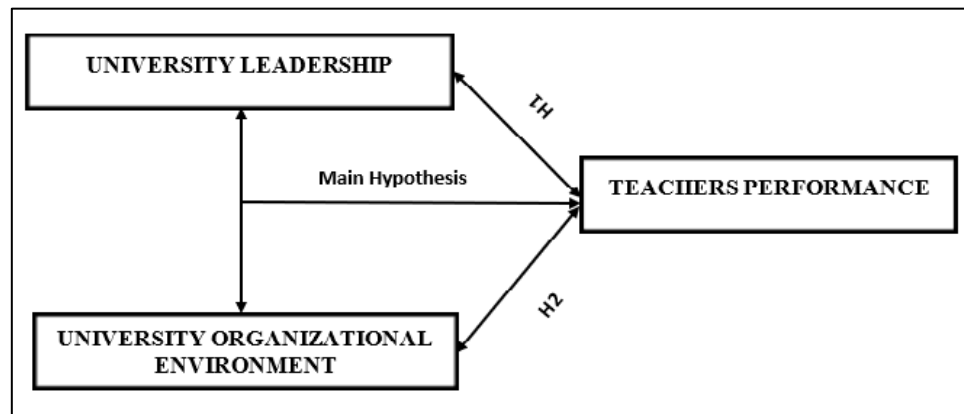
b. Hypotheses

There is a statistically significant effect of university leadership and university environment on the performance of university staff.

- The sub hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant effect of university leadership on the performance of university staff.
- The sub hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant effect of university environment on the performance of university staff.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. University Leadership

Leadership is the power of influencing followers to achieve specific goals. University leadership is responsible for implementing the university's comprehensive strategy. It develops and clarifies the vision, establishes directions, and builds strategies to confront change.

The university leadership of the present stage is characterized by more tendency towards democracy, and a reduction as possible from hierarchical models (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling, 2008). Beerens (2003) believes that the responsibility of evaluating the teaching staff lies with the higher management. For this, the distributive (participatory) and the collective (team) models were chosen as a means to develop joint responsibility among academics (Jones et al., 2012; Bolden et al., 2008; Middlehurst, 2008). Distributive leadership focuses on group collaboration rather than individual power and control to build leadership capabilities in learning and teaching (Jones et al., 2012). Leadership in higher education should be dealt with as position, performance, practice, and a professional model (Abdullah, 2019; Juntrasook, 2014). It drives effectively and understandably despite it is a complex learning and research process. More than a simple learning process, leadership development and student empowerment must be viewed from a systemic and institutional perspective based on three dimensions: sustainable leadership, leader perspective, and actions, which together constitute a leader-follower perspective (Walter et al., 2020). The act of leadership requires appropriate conditions for the leadership's interaction with the community so the university leadership should interact with the university community, and in particular (staff). Thus, the importance of the university organizational environment appears as a supportive force for university leadership in improving the performance of staff.

1. University Environment

The internal work environment is one of the main challenges that faces any organization - regardless of activities, work or culture. In this case, it must be addressed within the framework of determining the future strategies and general objectives of the organization. The process of analyzing the internal environment of the organization is importance because it determines the capabilities of the organization both physical and human, and the capabilities of the organization determine the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. It also helps determine the position of the organization compared to competing organizations. Good or appropriate working environment conditions at the university help the teaching staff to carry out the activities in an optimal, healthy, safe and comfortable manner (Akbar et al., 2017).

The university environment affects the performance of teachers is divided into two types. Firstly, the physical work or teaching environment, which is the environment that affects the physical and health status of the teachers, and is represented by the material conditions that characterize the workplace and can affect the teachers directly or indirectly. Secondly, the non-material work environment that describes the social and human conditions in which the teachers work, a good work environment for teachers is one that provides a psychologically and socially comfortable atmosphere for teachers (Anoraga, 2001). Therefore, the behavior of the university leadership varies according to the conditions of the university environment in which the followers work, and the difference in the environment requires different patterns and practices according to the requirements of improving the performance of staff (Kenneth et al., 2004). A healthy university environment helps university leadership to improve the performance of staff.

1. Performance of Instructors

There are many factors that influence the instructors' job performance such as aptitude, attitude, subject mastery, teaching methodology, personal characteristics, the classroom environment, general mental ability, and personality, relations with students, preparation and planning, effectiveness in presenting subject matters. The quality of the instructor is described as a set of personal traits, skills and personal concepts that he/she exercises during teaching, including diversity in teaching methods, and these vary depending on the concepts and goals of education on the one hand. The knowledge and skills of the instructor on the other hand (Aman-Ullah, Aziz, Ibrahim, Mehmood., & Abbas, 2021;Yassir et al., 2014). The characteristics of a successful instructor are ability to organize and explain ideas, having the knowledge of the topics, knowing how to teach others in his teaching field and having the ability to develop skills mindset, understanding learners and their ways of learning and development - including how to assess and support learning, how to support students who have differences or learning difficulties, how to support language and content acquisition for those not already proficient in a language, adaptive experience that allows educators to issue judgments about what is likely to succeed in a given area in response to students' needs.)

5. STUDY DESIGN AND METHOD

This study is depended on its structure and orientation on the descriptive method by using the inductive method (presentation, analysis, discussion and abstraction in the theoretical side, and quantitative method in the practical side. The study community included leader and instructors in Al-Maaqal university. A sample was selected from the study population according to the statistical methods for selecting the sample. The field analysis was based on a main hypothesis that there is a statistically significant effect of university leadership and university environment on the performance of university staff. A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of testing the relationship and influence between university leadership and university environment, and the performance of university staff. For the purposes of the analysis, the research used a set of appropriate statistical methods.

Field Study

Analyzing Sample of Study

The survey of sampling study has indicated the followings. There has been a clear convergence for the percentage of males and females, which for the sampling, and the percentage is also from young people and adults. The educational attaining for all is higher education; master and doctoral degrees. Meaning that, the sampling is about experiences and other growing able skills along with higher educational level. As a result, having the high capacity to comprehend the contents of survey for the study.

Tests of Validity and Reliability

Validity Test (content and face): based on the results of the survey; the opinion of the panel of experts is 87% ensure that the items of measurement are clear in accordance with their goals. Whereas, the lowest percentage has shown simple comments, and based on that some of the items have been amended. Thus, the measurement tool is clear in terms of format and content for the respondents.

Reliability Test: this test has been used for the purpose of verification of scale invariance. It's also used for revealing the homogenous among the items of measurement by using **Cronbach Alpha.** The results of statistical analysis have shown the followings:

Table1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.995	26

Table1 includes the test of reliability by using (**Cronbach Alpha**) that alpha value is (.995), which is bigger than the standard alpha value (70%). Thereby, it has been confirmed that there is a high homogeneity among the items, and also approved that the reliability of measurement tool.

Descriptive Statistics

It expresses the importance of respondents' interest in the main variables for measurement. It can be measured by the mean, standard deviation, and standard of errors based on the next analysis table2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variable code	Variable description	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Comments
var27	developing	76	3.8026	.12860	1.12108	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var28	Change	76	3.8202	.12603	1.09874	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var29	leadership practice	76	3.8333	.10624	.92616	Positive and strong interest from the sample members

var30	Transformational Leadership	76	3.5658	.12659	1.10356	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var31	university leadership	76	3.7555	.11948	1.04157	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var32	Characteristics of the university environment	76	4.0395	.12719	1.10884	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var33	Improving university performance	76	3.5702	.11827	1.03110	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
va34	university quality	76	3.7325	.11698	1.01983	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var35	University organizational environment	76	3.7807	.11872	1.03502	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
var36	The independent dimension (university leadership and environment)	76	3.7681	.11892	1.03668	Positive and strong interest from the sample members
Valid N (listwise)		76				
	The hypothetical mean (3), if the value of the arithmetic mean of the variable is higher than the hypothetical mean, it means positive and strong interest, and if it is less than the hypothetical mean, it means negative and weak interest					
	Result (1): All variables have the approval of the sample members, consistent with the nature of the requirements of the description of the university under study					

Hypothesis Test

The sub hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant effect of university leadership on the performance of university teachers.

Table 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig.	Commitment
1	.978ᵃ	.957	.955	.20190	.000ᵇ	The significance value (0.00< 0.05) indicates the significance of the test model and the acceptance of the sub-hypothesis (1).

a. Predictors: (Constant), var29, var28, var27

The sub hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant effect of university environment on the performance of university teachers.

Table 4

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig.	Commitment
1	.986ᵃ	.972	.971	.16141	.000ᵇ	The significance value (0.00 < 0.05) indicates the significance of the test model and the acceptance of the sub-hypothesis (2).

a. Predictors: (Constant), va34, var32, var33

Main hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect of university leadership and university environment on the performance of university teachers.

Table 5

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig.	Commitment

1						The significance value (0.00< 0.05) indicates the significance of the test model and the acceptance of the main - hypothesis
	.985^a	.971	.970	.16571	.000^b	
a. Predictors: (Constant), var35, var31						

6. DISCUSSING THE RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussing the Results

The research was an attempt to examine the effect of university leadership and university organizational environment on the performance of staff in Al-Maaqal private university. To prepare an information database about the topic, the research used some literature related to the topic. The concluding of the literature was that the effective leadership contributes to constitute the suitable university organizational environment. Considering that the leadership and environment as well as the relationship between the leadership and environment are the topic of the current study, the findings of the study revealed the followings:

In one hand, the clarity of measurement and the coherence of its items. On the other hand, the awareness of survey respondents for the purpose of measurement as well as its content. These findings are beyond the accuracy of the answers of the response. The high interest from the respondents regarding the main variables of measurement in terms of the realistic of study variables, and its agreement with the survey sampling. This is referring to the results of expected measurement closing to the target results. The powerful and morality of the determination of factor values (R2), and the results of the three hypotheses indicate that the variance of the two main variables (combined or individual) resulted in a change at least (90%) in the depended variable. Meaning that, the university is prepared to enhance its staff performance.

THE RESULTS

-University leadership and environment affect as combined or individually on the level of university performance.

- The level of staff performance is affected by the characteristic of university environment and its features.

- The level of staff performance is affected by the type of university leadership and its way of dealing with teaching environment.

- The construct of university leadership for the suitable environment of instructors reflects on enhancing their teaching level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing the potential and abilities of university leadership in AL-Maaqal university. Involving the members of university leadership in an advance developing and training workshops inside or outside the country. Continuing of revising and evaluating for the performance of university leadership. Choosing university leaderships based on the regulations, whom have knowledge as well as scientific, administrative and technical experiences. Developing the effective relationship, which prevails mutual of respect and affection among university leadership and instructors. Providing suitable environment for the performance of instructors in the university. Providing suitable and comfortable financial environment for instructors during teaching process or rest breaks. Providing psychological and social environment in which instructors can feel relaxed and assured. Transparent and fair treatment of the university leadership towards its teaching authority. Making a fair and clear system for rewards and incentives where credit is due.

CONCLUSION

There is an integrative relationship between the university environment and university leadership in influencing the level of performance of instructors. The environment provides the appropriate physical, social and psychological conditions for instructors, which makes them able to provide the best and finest performance. While the university leadership organizes the environmental data to reveal the latent capacities of the instructors, and direct them towards creativity and continuous improvement of performance. Therefore, the interaction of the university leadership with the appropriate conditions of the university environment leads to continuous improvement in the performance of instructors.

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