



## THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN THE SUCCESS OF SPORTS CLUBS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CLUB ADMINISTRATORS IN THE NORTHERN GOVERNORATES OF IRAQ

**Ola Sabri Hazim**  
University of Kirkuk  
IRAQ

Corresponding Author: [Ola.s.hazim@uokirkuk.edu.iq](mailto:Ola.s.hazim@uokirkuk.edu.iq)

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### ABSTRACT

**Background.** Leadership is very important for the success of any group, such a school, business, government, or sports team. Good leadership in sports brings the team together, assists with day-to-day operations, makes the team better, and helps the organization realize its goals. **Objectives.** This study seeks to investigate the significance of leadership skills among sports club administrators in the northern governorates of Iraq and to create a measurement scale for evaluating these skills. The research also aims to ascertain which leadership skills are most and least common among club administrators. **Method.** The research utilized a descriptive survey methodology. There were 342 sports club administrators from the governorates of Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, and Dohuk in the population. The researcher created a structured questionnaire to gather data on three areas of leadership skills: human, mental, and technical. We used descriptive statistics and ranking analysis to figure out how important each leadership skill was in relation to the others. **Results.** The study found that technical skills are the most important leadership skills for sports clubs to be successful, while administrators don't use communication skills as much. According to what administrators thought, the order of leadership skills was: human skills, mental skills, and technical skills. **Conclusion.** The study underscores the essential importance of leadership skills in the proficient administration of sports clubs. It suggests setting up a standardized system for evaluating leaders and offering training programs for administrators to improve their skills in communication and human relations, which were found to be the most lacking.

**Keywords;** leadership skills, sports clubs, club administrators, governorates of northern region.



## A. INTRODUCTION

Everything we know about science, technology, and information is evolving swiftly in the modern world. These developments have affected the entire foundation of growth and progress in all areas, even sports. Organizations require competent management and strong leadership that can handle difficulties and get the most out of their institutions in order to keep up with this global transformation (Mega Widya Putri et al., 2021; Sandhya, 2017). Numerous studies indicate that the efficacy of contemporary institutions is contingent upon the caliber of their administrative leadership and its capacity to integrate planning, organization, and motivation in complex scenarios (DeMartini & Kao, 2023; Valenti et al., 2020). In this situation, leadership has become an important part of accomplishing institutional goals and remaining ahead of the competition.

In sports organizations, leadership is particularly vital because the field is continually changing and very competitive (Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024). Sports clubs need leaders who can keep athletes motivated, run teams, settle disagreements, and adapt to changing technological and administrative needs. Nauroh et al., (2025); Persada et al., (2025); Yuhatanza et al., (2025) claimed that for sports groups to compete effectively in intense competition, the people in control need to be able to solve problems, motivate others, and make choices swiftly. It's also very vital to have good leaders to help build a culture of teamwork and make sure that club activities are in accordance with strategic goals. So, the most important thing for sports organizations to do to grow and succeed over time is to learn how to lead.

Researchers have identified various dimensions of leadership crucial for effective sports administration, including interpersonal, technical, cognitive, and organizational competencies (Mafugu & Abel, 2022; Vinson et al., 2023). With their people abilities, leaders may encourage teamwork, understanding, and working together. They can use their technical talents to make plans and do jobs that require specialist expertise. Their cognitive abilities let individuals plan for the future and think critically. Many sports administrators don't have a set way to test and enhance these skills, even though they are vital (Purnomo et al., 2024). This is especially true in places that are still growing and don't have many programs for training leaders (Russo et al., 2023). This gap has made it necessary to quickly assess the leadership ability of local sports organizations.

Recent developments in sports management research have emphasized leadership as a critical determinant of organizational success (Al-Hamdani & Darwish, 2025; Sihotang, 2024). Nevertheless, most empirical studies have focused on Western or resource-abundant environments, leading to a scarcity of study on leadership methods in Middle Eastern sports institutions, particularly in Iraq. The northern governorates of Iraq are Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, and Dohuk. There are a lot more sports activities in these places now, but clubs still have trouble doing their best work because of concerns with the way things are run. You can identify strategies to make managers more effective and improve the sports system as a whole by learning about the leadership qualities of administrators in these areas.

This research is unusual because it develops a context-specific leadership abilities scale tailored for sports club managers in the northern governorates of Iraq. This research is unique compared to earlier studies that relied on broad leadership models, as it integrates cultural, institutional, and contextual aspects influencing Iraqi sports administration. It seeks to evaluate the comparative importance of diverse leadership aspects and to identify the most and least employed talents among administrators. The expected outcomes aim to augment theoretical understanding by enriching the comprehension of leadership within sports management and to offer practical, evidence-based recommendations for leadership development initiatives.

The main goals of this study are threefold: (1) to develop a standardized scale for assessing leadership skills among sports club administrators in northern Iraq; (2) to assess the perceived importance and competence of these skills as perceived by administrators; and (3) to identify potential variations in leadership competencies among members of administrative bodies. By focusing on this component, the study aims to improve the leadership skills of sports organizations and help them move forward in line with worldwide standards for managing and governing sports.

## **B. METHOD**

### *Participant*

The research community consists of sports club administrators in the northern governorates, specifically Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, and Dohuk. The total number of administrators is 342, as detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** shows research community

No.	Governorate	Number of administrators
1	Kirkuk	72
2	Sulaymaniyah	81
3	Erbil	106
4	Dohuk	83
	Total	342

This section outlines the various tools and methods employed by the researcher to address the research problem, including data, samples, and devices (Mahjoub, 1980, p. 122). To effectively find a solution, the researcher utilized the following methods: Questionnaires, Field visits, sources and references.

### *Research Design*

The researcher adopted a descriptive approach utilizing the survey method, as it is well-suited to the nature of the problem being studied. Preparing the Initial Version of the Scale: The researcher conducted a review of existing studies, research, and literature related to the research topic. From this review, eight domains were identified: technical, decision-making, personal, intellectual, communication, organizational, supervisory, and human. These domains were then presented to a group of experts for validation, as detailed in Table 2. After collecting their feedback through questionnaires, it was determined that five of the domains were valid, while three were excluded. This decision was made using the Chi-square test at a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 1, with a critical value of 3.84.

**Table 2.** Shows Validity Of The Scale Domains

No.	domains	Expert opinions		Chi-squared	Significance
		Agree	Not Agree		
1	Technical	13	2	8,07	significant
2	Decision-making	11	4	3,27	random
3	Personal	5	10	2	random
4	Cognitive	12	3	5,4	significant
5	Communication	14	1	11,7	significant
6	Organizational	13	2	8,07	significant
7	Controller	10	5	2	random
8	Human	15	0	15	significant

*Preparing the Scale Paragraphs*

After reviewing the sources, the researcher developed an initial set of 65 items, distributed across five domains:

1. Mental Skills Domain: 13 Paragraphs
2. Human Skills Domain: 14 Paragraphs
3. Organizational Skills Domain: 13 Paragraphs
4. Technical Skills Domain: 13 Paragraphs
5. Communication Skills Domain: 12 Paragraphs

To assess the validity of the paragraphs, the researcher presented a total of 65 paragraphs to a group of experts and specialists. After collecting the questionnaires from these experts, the researcher transcribed the data and applied the Chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ) test at a significance level of 0.05, with one degree of freedom (critical value = 3.84). The results indicated that 46 paragraphs of the scale were deemed valid, while 15 paragraphs were excluded due to their non-significant  $\chi^2$  values.

**Table 3.** Scale paragraphs according to the domains in their final form

phrase	بدائل الفقرات				
	دائما	غالبا	احيانا	نادرا	ابدا
<b>Technical skills domain</b>					
1-Administrators have the ability to accurately evaluate the execution of administrative tasks.					
2-They are skilled at coordinating activities to achieve organizational goals.					
3-Additionally, administrators are eager to conduct development courses for sports club leaders.					
4-Sports club administrators focus on showcasing successful sports leaders by directing creative energies within the sports field.					
5-They strive to effectively implement administrative processes.					
6- Furthermore, other stakeholders actively cooperate with the club's management to develop future strategies.					
7-One of the key qualities of administrators in sports clubs is their flexibility in adapting to different situations.					
8-However, administrators sometimes overlook the importance of time management and the effective handling of assigned tasks in order to achieve their objectives.					
9-Finally, they are proactive in developing alternative strategies to address unexpected challenges.					

#### Human skills

10-Participation in committees, both within and outside the club, is assigned as needed.

11-Administrators should respect the character of each individual, promoting positive interactions with everyone. It is essential to maintain mutual respect among administrators, as a lack of trust can hinder the achievement of goals.

13-Some administrators tend to resort to intimidation in the workplace, which creates an atmosphere of fear and caution among employees. Rather than helping employees resolve their issues, these administrators often avoid addressing their problems.

14-Social interactions among administrators are infrequent.

15-However, administrators can positively influence employees' attitudes, thereby facilitating better human interactions.

16-Administrators are inclined to hold negligent individuals accountable and

Do not overlook mistakes.

17-Furthermore, administrators often do not share their opinions and suggestions with employees, negatively impacting overall work performance. They may also use enticing tactics to encourage employees to engage in their work.

18-Administrators do not share their opinions and suggestions with employees, which affects work performance.

19-Administrators use the tactic of enticement to attract employees to their work.

#### Cognitive skills

20-Administrators are distinguished by their culture and awareness in performing their administrative duties.

21-They possess comprehensive knowledge and understanding of administrative work systems and instructions.

22-They face difficulty in solving problems and analyzing situations.

23-Develop appropriate plans and programs to achieve goals.

24-Conduct a comprehensive study of relevant circumstances and implement plans.

25-Develop alternative work strategies to address anticipated problems.

26-Administrators often tend to coordinate their administrative work according to their specialization.

27-Administrators work to gather all information and data related to administrative work.

28-All administrators are distinguished by their wisdom and fluency in the administrative work assigned to them.

29-They work to create new ideas that help achieve goals.

#### Communication skills

- 30-They utilize nonverbal communication skills.
- 31-They select appropriate and effective language when communicating.
- 32-They speak clearly and with an engaging tone.
- 33-They prepare personal correspondence at work properly and appropriately.
- 34-They use the most appropriate means of communication to achieve the purpose of communication as quickly as possible.
- 35-They activate informal communication to serve the club's goals.
- 36-The ability to communicate information to others in a clear and understandable language.
- 37-They clearly and effectively state the purpose of communication.
- 38-They participate in committees and conferences within and outside the club, as appropriate to the current situation.

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Organizational skills

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- 39-Preparing job descriptions for various positions.
  - 40-Distributing work among club employees.
  - 41-Identifying the practical procedures necessary to carry out work.
  - 42-Updating the organizational forms and records necessary to complete the work.
  - 43-Developing practical procedures to ensure routine workflow.
  - 44-Facilitating the use of necessary facilities, tools, and equipment within the club.
  - 45-Establishing internal instructions to regulate workflow within the sports club.
  - 46-Coordinating various activities within the sports club.
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### *Discrimination Ability*

The Two Extreme Groups (External Consistency): To assess the discriminatory ability of the scale items, the researcher utilized the two extreme groups method with a sample of 200 administrators. The following steps were taken:

1. The total scores were arranged in descending order.
2. The researcher determined 50% of the questionnaires with the lowest scores and 50% with the highest scores, forming two groups of 100 administrators each.
3. The discrimination coefficients for all 46 items of the scale were calculated using the independent samples t-test.

### *Internal Consistency*

The researcher calculated the simple correlation coefficient (Pearson) between the score of each paragraph and the total score of the scale. After completing the statistical analysis using the correlation coefficient, the results were compared with the tabulated correlation coefficient of (0.138) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom of

(198). As a result, four paragraphs were excluded, bringing the total number of paragraphs in the final version of the scale to 46.

The researcher also calculated the simple correlation coefficient (Pearson) for the score of each domain in relation to the total score of the scale, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Shows Correlation Coefficients Between Score Of Each Field Of The Scale

No.	domain	Calculated value
1	Technical Skills	0,745
2	Human Skills	0,825
3	Cognitive Skills	0,801
4	Communication Skills	0,740
5	Organizational Skills	0,737

### *Scientific Indicators of the Scale*

**Validity of the Scale.** The validity of a test refers to the extent to which the test measures what it is intended to measure. In other words, it assesses whether the test accurately captures the phenomenon it was designed to evaluate, without measuring something else or adding unrelated elements. According to Alawi and Radwan (1978), the researcher focused on two types of validity: face validity and construct validity.

### *Scale Reliability*

Reliability refers to "the degree of correlation of the test with itself". The reliability of the scale was assessed using the retest method with a group of sports club administrators. After collecting the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to compare the results of the first and second tests.

### *Standard scores for the scale*

The raw scores obtained by test takers are often insufficient on their own, as they do not provide a clear understanding of the level of what has been measured. To address this, raw scores must be converted into adjusted standard scores. As Scott points out, quoting Muhammad Hasan Allawi and Muhammad Nasr al-Din Radwan, these standards are "tables used to convert test scores so that they allow for inferences about the test takers' performance" (Alawi, Radwan, 2000).

To derive the standard scores, the researcher calculates the arithmetic mean and standard deviation and then applies the z-score formula. Additionally, any negative z-scores are adjusted by converting them into t-scores.

*Standard levels of the scale*

The researcher utilized the normal distribution curve (Gaussian) to select five levels for the scale, as illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5.** shows grades, standard levels and raw grades for the scale of sports club administrators and domain

degree in the curve	Levels	Standar grades	Raw scores the scale	Raw score for technical skill: domain	Raw score for the domain of human skills	Raw score for the domain Intellectual Skills	Fifth Grade domain Communicative Skills	Raw for the domain of organizational skills
4,86	V. good	80-68	193-230	38-45	50-42	50-42	45-38	40-34
24,52	good	68-56	155-192	28-37	41-33	41-33	37-28	33-27
40,96	Average	56-44	117-154	18-27	32-24	32-24	27-18	26-20
24,52	acceptal	32,44	79-116	8-17	23-15	23-15	17-8	19-13
4,86	poor	32-20	78And below	7-And below	14 And below	14 And below	7-And below	12 And below

*Final application of the scale*

was conducted after it was developed in its conclusive form. This application took place with a sample of 165 participants from November 24, 2024, to January 2, 2025. The scale comprised a total of 46 items, organized into five domains. Table 6 provides a detailed overview of these domains.

**Table 6.** Shows the distribution of the scale’s paragraphs across the domains in its final form

No..	domain	Positive paragraphs	negative paragraphs
1	Technical Skills	,9,7,6,5,4,3,2,1	8
2	Human Skills	19,17,16,12,11,10	18,15,14,13
3	Cognitive Skills	29,28,27,26,25,24,23,22,21,20	
4	Communication Skills	38,37,36,35,34,33,32,31,30	
5	Organizational Skills	46,45,44,43,42,41,40,39	

*Data Analysis*

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was applied to conduct descriptive and inferential statistical analyses relevant to the study objectives.

**C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

Table 7 shows the findings of the leadership skills scale. It shows the average and standard deviation for each area of leadership abilities among sports club administrators. The analysis seeks to identify the domains that are most and least frequently practiced and to elucidate their consequences for administrative performance.

**Table 7. Results of the Leadership Skills Scale**

No.	Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Technical skills	38.08	5.703
2	Cognitive skills	37.03	6.263
3	Organizational skills	35.28	5.011
4	Human skills	34.49	5.533
5	Communication skills	31.91	3.618

Table 7 shows that technical skills were the most important factor, with a mean score of 38.08. This indicates that sports club administrators are highly competent in the technical aspects of their jobs. This suggests that the majority of participants are well-versed in the nuts and bolts of sports program administration, including organizing, supervising, and executing various activities. Conversely, the mean score for communication skills was the lowest at 31.91, indicating a relative deficiency in both interpersonal communication and the exchange of information within groups. Previous research has shown that inadequate communication in sports organizations can diminish administrative efficiency and impede collaboration (Al-Hamdani & Darwish, 2025; Sukoco et al., 2024). Our findings are in line with that.

The results showed that administrators have moderate levels of cognitive and organizational ability, suggesting that they are capable of moderate degrees of strategic

thinking, problem-solving, and coordination. Human skills, meanwhile, had marginally lower mean scores, indicating that administrators might benefit from developing their emotional intelligence and focus on teamwork. Taken together, these results show that there is a discernible trend in the leadership abilities of Iraqi sports club directors in the provinces to the north. A task-oriented leadership style is evident in the focus on technical abilities, but there is room for improvement in the areas of communication and human aspects. Leadership effectiveness and the efficiency with which the organization achieves its goals could both benefit from an improvement in these interpersonal abilities.

## **Discussion**

According to Table 7, the five domains' arithmetic averages fell somewhere between 31.91 and 38.08. The technical abilities domain stood out with the highest average, reaching 38.08. The study's author attributes sports club administrators' top-notch technical skill performance to their dedication to scientific management concepts and their natural talent for building strong team dynamics. As a whole, the administrative process benefits from this degree of awareness and adaptability. Sports are distinct from other fields because they center on practice and interaction with the goal of influencing human behavior. By providing a welcoming space and inspiring good feelings toward one's community, it is an important factor in cultivating good citizenship (Ghildiyal, 2015; Saber et al., 2023).

This ranking is ascribed by the researcher to the significance of the organizational method in streamlining administrative tasks, cutting down on repetitive work, and saving time. Workers at sports clubs are able to accomplish this because their duties are well-divided and coordinated. Administrators of all kinds of social activities, including PE, have unique duties due to their position as group leaders. If it is feasible, everything they propose or declare will be put into action. According to Hassoun, (2025), this level of power is "inherent in the responsibility that comes with being an administrator.

Also, a sports administrator needs to know their stuff when it comes to the behavioral and technical parts of the job. They carry out a wide variety of tasks that are all interrelated and crucial to their job. The athletic administrator is an integral part of the administrative staff because of the vital role they play in mediating between the players and the management (Henry, 2016). To successfully complete this task, you need to have excellent

organizational abilities that will help you choose the best solutions and know when to tackle problems.

These individuals are responsible for carrying out administrative tasks, allocating those tasks correctly and according to each team member's specialization, and effectively communicating with their colleagues to achieve team goals. The findings among the administrative bodies' members, the researcher observes, are a direct outcome of their duties and obligations inside the sports club. On a daily basis, depending on the size and nature of the club's activities, these people communicate with coaches, players, the media, and any crises that may emerge (Bearman et al., 2023). Because of the importance of interpersonal skills in their profession, these members are vital.

In humanitarian, educational, social, and athletic settings, human relations take center stage. Interpersonal skills are unique in this context because of the demands of the sports movement and the unique nature of the workplace (Agustina et al., 2024; Pelamonia & Puriana, 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2025). Efficiency in work execution and full utilization of individual energies and skills depend on effective communication through appropriate channels. The administrators of the sports club should oversee this process and make sure that any problems are identified and resolved (Orr et al., 2021). With this method, you can be certain that everyone doing administrative work has access to up-to-date information.

The dedication to offering the finest in every element is what is built over years of hard effort. Organizations face a significant difficulty in sustaining their performance and staying at the top. This can only be achieved if the organization takes the time to assess, fix, and improve its work environment, making sure that everyone feels valued and respected while maintaining the utmost honesty and trustworthiness (Sulaiman et al., 2025). According to the researcher, sports clubs are more likely to achieve a successful organizational climate than other types of organizations since they often take a positive approach when interacting with members and promoting events.

It is the outcome of good management, not the cause, of sound, effective, and persuasive communication (Morkhat, 2018). A person's managerial abilities are directly related to their proficiency in communication; conversely, one can possess strong communication skills while still being an inadequate manager (Fella Suffa et al., 2019; Horan et al., 2023). Obtaining the appropriate amounts and kinds of resources to carry out an organization's

operations might be difficult in today's resource-constrained climate. Since this is the case, getting the best possible results requires a sensible and appropriate strategy (Al-Shamaa and Kazim, 2000). Therefore, American sports organizations work hard to conform to what is practical and accessible given their limited resources, a problem they've endured for a long time.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study evaluated the strengths and shortcomings of sports club directors in the northern governorates of Iraq about their leadership abilities. The findings indicate that administrators excel in technical decision-making, strategic planning, and execution in the context of managing sporting events. This indicates that technical skills are crucial for a leader. In contrast, club members demonstrated inadequate communication abilities, revealing a substantial shortcoming in collaboration, knowledge exchange, and interpersonal relations. Administrators self-assessed their leadership skills in the domains of technical, cognitive, organizational, interpersonal, and communication competencies. This trend indicates that leaders prioritize tasks excessively, neglecting the interpersonal and communicative aspects of leadership, which are crucial for fostering collaboration and productivity. The results indicate that achieving long-term success as a sports club manager necessitates a leadership model that effectively integrates technical competencies with interpersonal abilities. Structured training initiatives for administrators can enhance the leadership competencies of sports club leaders. These programs should emphasize cognitive, interpersonal, and communicative competencies, in addition to technical skills.

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## F. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Ola Sabri Hazim is the sole author of this research. She independently designed the study, developed the research instrument, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and wrote the manuscript.

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