

The Administrative Competency as Possessed by Heads Departments and its Relationship to Task Delegation from the Perspective of Teaching Staff Members at the University of Baghdad

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the administrative competency of heads of scientific departments and the extent of task delegation at the University of Baghdad, as perceived by teaching staff. It also explores the correlation between administrative competency and task delegation. Using a descriptive correlational method, the study targets 6,174 teaching staff, with a random sample of 494 (8%). Two scales are developed: one for administrative competency (21 items across planning, organizing, and evaluating) and one for task delegation (21 items across decision-making, administrative, and financial delegation). The scales undergo validation for reliability and psychometric integrity. Statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, t-tests, and Pearson correlation will analyze data, leading to conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions.

Keywords: Administrative competency; Task Delegation; Head Department; Teaching Members; Iraq.

INTRODUCTION

While educational institutions work hard to develop themselves, management legacy remains a challenge. Therefore, the success of any institutional system depends on the effectiveness and competency of its management, development performance, and efficiency of activities. The use of guidance is a way to achieve the desired development in a contemporary manner. It has a negative impact on the administrative competency of educational institutions due to weak independence and the burden of systems and directives in their ambiguity and contradiction (Khanal & Ghimire, 2024).

Educational conferences held at the Ministry of Higher Education's office in Baghdad in (2016) under the slogan "Education Shapes the Future" highlighted that the issue of administrative leadership at universities, represented by heads department is a challenge posed by upper management. The competency of universities and these leaders, along with their administrative performance, is a principal factor in the development and excellence of educational institutions in the fields of science and management (Alsarayrah & Alsarayrah, 2021). The university community is increasingly designed to enhance education, as well as the competency and effectiveness of the education system, to achieve the desired objectives (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). Educational management must elevate its practices by addressing areas of weakness and competency in order to create a competent and capable tool for lower administrative leaders (Choi et al., 2024).

The First Scientific Conference held in Anbar Province in 2011 for Colleges of Education for Humanities noted that most administrative leaders in Iraqi universities have a deficiency in administrative competency. The conference also emphasized the development of the performance of these leaders, represented by the heads of scientific departments. Departments are required to update with the requirements of reality continuously. A head

department who is effective today may not be effective tomorrow as time is constantly changing. The goal of our institutions is to remain effective through high-level task delegation, which is reflected in the effectiveness of administrative work. Conversely, the competency of administrative work is largely linked to the role of its members. The work they perform is closely linked to the competencies of the institution. It can be said that the university's ability to achieve its goals largely depends on the success of the institutions entrusted with tasks and managing them successfully in providing a suitable climate for the job, granting individuals job satisfaction, and fostering organizational loyalty for task delegation in their institutions (Ismaya et al., 2023).

The proliferation or spread and rapid growth of knowledge and technology have led to significant changes, most notably in administrative competency, in light of major and rapid developments in these competencies. This has necessitated the presence of human resources qualified to the required level to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently (Mansour et al., 2024). The main reason for progress in various life domains is management, as it is considered an essential means and basis for the effectiveness of systems. Its significance lies in the educational field, as it represents a productive and technological process that plays a crucial role. Therefore, the strength and effectiveness of education depend on the management's ability to lead institutions according to the educational objectives outlined (Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou, 2023).

One of the most important tasks of educational institution management is to motivate and mobilize human resources and invest them systematically to develop the educational institution, thereby achieving goals more quickly and with less effort (Serafini et al., 2022). The acumen and policy of the administrator determine the successes and failures of the institution's management. The higher the level of administrative competency, the more inevitable the institution's success becomes. Researchers and most administrators have focused on the topic of administrative competency, considering it important due to its significant role in the success of institutions. It heavily depends on the administrative leadership and their skills, making it one of the crucial resources in administrative work.

However, this study aims to find out the level of administrative competency possessed by heads of scientific departments at the University of Baghdad (from the perspectives of faculty members). In addition to investigating the level of task delegation possessed by heads of scientific departments at the University of Baghdad. Finally, this study will explore the relationship between administrative competency and delegation of tasks among heads of scientific departments from the perspectives of view of faculty members.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order for the study to complete its various aspects, it must be based on a scientific background for such a background guides the researchers and ensures their importance in the subject of his study, with the experiences, facts, concepts, and ideas it represents. The process of defining concepts and terminology is one of the important matters in scientific research. It is an important point that contributes to removing ambiguity and overlapping in the ideas that arise. The use of concepts and terminology in the study of psychological sciences provides clarification to the specialized and non-specialized reader regarding the implications of these concepts.

Administrative Competency

Administrative competence refers to the necessity for a head department to possess all knowledge and skills considered essential (Wanyonyi et al., 2023). It also encompasses the ability to accomplish tasks with competency, effectiveness, and a certain level of performance (Serafini et al., 2022). Usually, this is linked to a practical framework, and the concept of administrative competency is a mixture of practical knowledge represented by experience and behavioral skills (Campion et al., 2011).

In recent years, significant attention has been paid to outlining and defining administrative competencies, with a focus on training leaders, including heads of scientific departments. This is in light of the work competencies required as human resources necessary for creating a change at the administrative and university levels, equipping them with the skills, tasks, and roles that a head department must possess or should have to perform his work and accomplish it effectively (Amushila & Bussin, 2021). The necessity to achieve goals with a high degree of competency requires the presence of capabilities and possibilities in the institution, and these goals may vary from one institution to another depending on these capabilities and the activities achieved. Administrative competency is considered a fundamental indicator that can be recognized through how well available resources are used efficiently and how coordination and selection of the best alternative from the available options are managed (Kertati et al., 2023). Administrative competency is purposeful through which different knowledge is employed with the intent of achieving a specific goal or carrying out a particular activity (Semenets-Orlova et al., 2022). A person is competent if he can fully perform this activity in managing an organization (Sutaguna et al., 2022). Competency is formulated dynamically, as all its components interact in feedback loops of technical knowledge

(Elsawah et al., 2023). Competency is acquired; an individual is not born competent to perform certain activities but acquires it through direct training (Miço & Cungu, 2023).

Researchers have varied in categorizing competency, but the most prominent categorization is done according to three levels: individual level, collective level, and organizational level, also referred to by some as strategic competencies (Oztemel & Ozel, 2021). Individual competencies include individual knowledge and skills, also known as personal competency, which is a mix of visible resources, internal resources, behaviors, and personal abilities (Doblinger, 2022). Many researchers describe it as the Iceberg Model, i.e. part of it is clearly visible and can be easily monitored, such as skills and knowledge (Kabashkin, 2024; Ramos-Vielba & Fernández-Esquinas, 2012). In contrast, the other part is not easily observable or discoverable because it is invisible, like traits, thinking, and values (Mason & Singh, 2022). Collective competencies involve groups, departments, work teams, and collective experiences through cooperation among them (Henrique da Silva & Ghedine, 2023). Strategic competency is not only related to human resources but also includes the quality of individuals who work efficiently and manage the activities of the organization more effectively (Palupi et al., 2024).

Task Delegation

Delegation referring to the assignment of responsibility or the act of returning and negotiating shared financial interests as partners, forming a partnership (Micinski, 2022). It also means to negotiate or to handle matters collaboratively; as stated, "he delegated the matter," meaning he transferred control and gave another authority over it (Bello-Gomez & Avellaneda, 2022). Administrative delegation is the process of transferring authority and responsibility from a manager or administrative official to another employee within the organization (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). Delegation aims to enable employees to make decisions and perform tasks independently based on the trust and reliance granted to them by senior management (Aithal et al., 2024). Thus, delegating tasks plays a role in managing organizations offering various advantages such as enhancing creativity and innovation by assigning responsibilities to team members, staff members have the opportunity to exercise judgment and introduce concepts fostering a culture of creativity and innovation in the company (Huang et al., 2022). Delegation plays a role in leadership by facilitating various advantages (Norris et al., 2021). It can serve as a way to inspire them, as it shows that they are valued and respected by being entrusted with responsibilities (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). This, in turn, fosters a drive to strive for success and quality in their work. When responsibilities are assigned to team members, they get a chance to grow their expertise and strengths in fields. This can pave the way for their career progression, boosting their chances of moving up the ladder in the run.

Administrative delegation is a process where certain authorities are granted to various levels of the administrative system (Ali et al., 2021). It also involves defining the framework within which each can operate to facilitate the administrative process, as administrative delegation is a key to the organization (Shore et al., 2022). Necessity arises because it is impossible for any individual, no matter their mental capacity and energy, to perform all the tasks of their subordinates without experiencing mental fatigue. This, in turn, often leads to the postponement of most of their tasks, leading to their inability and thereby disrupting the administrative apparatus (Hammouri et al., 2022).

Moreover, there are two types of delegation, the first type is temporary delegation, it is a temporary delegation that occurs when the manager travels on vacation or is outside his workplace or due to his illness (Liao et al., 2021). This delegation ends when the manager returns. The second type is continuous delegation, this type is based on a study conducted by the director of his management and reviewing the evaluation of his management or through committees formed to study the organization's need for delegation to accomplish its tasks (Amon & Bustami, 2021).

For a delegation to be effective and to facilitate the administrative process while achieving organizational goals, the administrative leader must adhere to several fundamental principles, including specificity of duties, the tasks to be delegated should be specific, not general; clear, not ambiguous (Richman, 2022). The delegated authority must be sufficient to achieve the anticipated outcomes of the delegation. Effective communication, the effectiveness of communication channels between the leader and subordinates is crucial, as is maintaining open lines of communication with those to whom authority is delegated (Badjie, 2021). Proper selection of subordinates, the capability and efficiency of the employee to whom authority is delegated are essential requirements for effective delegation (Mirkhan et al., 2024). Avoiding criticism, criticism can make subordinates resistant to accepting additional delegated tasks (Park et al., 2023). If errors occur, they should be explained in a way that improves future performance. Sufficient authority, subordinates should be granted sufficient authority and the right to make decisions and issue instructions necessary to perform their duties (Joullié et al., 2021).

Task delegation has become a necessity for proper organizational management to achieve the objectives assigned to each administrative body (Nwanakezie & Ogonu, 2021). The increasing importance of delegation is due to the advantages it provides, as revealed through practical applications, such as promoting democratic management, it reduces the administrative leader's workload (Mirkhan et al., 2024). Revealing employee

capabilities, it boosts their morale. Speeding up decision making, and focusing on core competencies, this allows leaders to focus on core capabilities and subordinates on secondary skills (Groves & Feyerherm, 2022)

The stages of the delegation process vary among authors and researchers, reflecting clear differences in the stages that are deemed necessary for successful delegation (Crevacore et al., 2023). These stages include training stage, in this stage, leaders should provide sufficient training to their deputies and heads of departments who are tasked with specific duties, allowing them space for clarification and inquiries during this phase (Rajoo, 2012). Guidance stage, in this stage, leaders should offer adequate guidance to their deputies and department heads during the performance of their duties, allowing them to exercise the delegated powers and provide necessary advice and guidance during the process (Jansen & du Plessis, 2023). Observation stage, in this stage, leaders should provide a brief overview of the task performance procedures to their deputies and department heads, who then proceed under their supervision, with the opportunity to ask questions and make inquiries, and a performance report may be written (Kalane & Rambuda, 2022). Monitoring stage, in this stage, leaders should monitor and oversee their deputies and department heads during task execution and may choose to write a performance report if desired (Yekani et al., 2024). Decision-making stage, in this stage, leaders delegate tasks and activities to their deputies and department heads when confident in their competencies to perform them, ensuring that they have the necessary procedures to directly transfer the tasks to them, along with the right to pose necessary questions and inquiries (Rajoo, 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The correlational descriptive approach was adopted, which is distinguished by providing detailed data about the phenomenon and offering explanations for the associated factors, thereby aiding in future predictions (Van Witteloostuijn et al., 2022).

Population

The population of the current study consists of all teaching staff members at the University of Baghdad, totaling (6174) distributed across (24) colleges, as detailed in Table (1):

Table (1): Teaching Staff Members -University of Baghdad –Academic Year 2023-2024

University	No.	Males	Females	Prof.	Assist. Prof.	Lecturer	Assist Lecturer
Baghdad	6174	4074	2100	1418	2982	1138	636

The study sample covers 494 teaching staff members from the University of Baghdad, representing (8%) of the total number as Table (2) illustrates.

Table (2): Teaching Staff Members -University of Baghdad –Academic Year 2023-2024

University	All Sample	Male	Female	Prof.	Asst. Prof.	Lecturer	Asst. Teacher
Baghdad	494	326	168	114	238	91	51

Two instruments were constructed to achieve the study aims. Each instrument covers a variable and includes a series of items distributed into domains and applied on the sample for obtaining data. A questionnaire was constructed based on five steps. The first step is identification of questionnaire content, it involves identifying the concepts related to the study, reviewing several similar studies, reviewing the administrative tasks of heads departments, consulting several experts and specialists. Following these steps, the administrative competency questionnaire was constructed with (21) items equally distributed across three domains, each containing (7) items for each domain. Similarly, the task delegation questionnaire comprised (21) items distributed over three domains, with (7) items per domain. The second step is alternatives response and their scores, the five-point graded scale was adopted, as it gives the respondent greater freedom to choose the appropriate alternative from his point of view and more precisely. The alternatives are: (Very Strongly – Strongly- Satisfactorily- Little- Very Little) and the weights were given respectively (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The third step is facing validity, the study instrument was presented to a group of (13) specialized and experienced arbitrators, to indicate their opinions on the suitability of the items for the variable to be researched, either by approving, modifying, or deleting it. Consequently, about (80%) or more of the experts' opinions were approved. That is, experts and specialists agree that if the percentage of agreement between arbitrators or experts is (80%) or more, the questionnaire is valid. The fourth step is reliability;

for the purpose of verifying reliability indicators, a sample of (50) university students, other than the main study sample, was selected. The researchers have used the test –retest method, and the period between the first application and the second application was (16) days. After completing the two applications, the answers were analyzed, and the questionnaire scores as a whole were calculated. Using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, the values of the Correlation Coefficients between the scores of the first and second applications were extracted. The Reliability Coefficient values according to this method was (0.86) which is a good percentage and can be adopted in descriptive research. The final step is the final application of the instrument. Having validated and established the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was distributed among the study samples during the period from February 24 to March 10, 2024.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section introduces the results achieved based on the study aims as follows:

Firstly: finding out the level of administrative competency as possessed by heads departments at the University of Baghdad from the perspectives of teaching staff members.

To achieve this aim, the administrative competency scale was conducted, consisting of (21) items and distributed into the study sample of (494) college teaching staff members. Results showed that the arithmetic mean of the scores according to this scale was (160.564), with a standard deviation of (19.673). To determine the significance of the differences between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical mean, which amounts to (157), it was found that the difference is statistically significant at a level of significance (0.05), knowing that the computed T-value was (3.46), which is higher than the tabulated value (1.96), with a degree of freedom (493) as shown in Table(3) below

Table (3): Mean Score, Computed T-value, and Tabulated T-value of Administrative Competency

Sample	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Degree of Freedom	T-Value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
493	157	19.673	160.564	493	3.46	1.96	0.05 Significant

Table (3) above revealed the level of Administrative Competency among the heads of scientific departments is good, as the arithmetic mean is higher than the hypothetical one. This is due to the fact that the heads of scientific departments may have enrolled in development courses and extensive scientific experience that gave them skills in administrative work, which increased their administrative competency.

Secondly: finding out the tasks delegation as possessed by heads of scientific departments at the University of Baghdad from the perspectives of teaching staff members.

In order to achieve this aim, a task delegation scale, consisting of (21) items, was applied to the study sample totaling (494) teaching staff members. The results of the study showed that the arithmetic mean of the sample's scores on the task delegation scale was (146.749), with a standard deviation (14.583). In identifying the significance of the differences between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical mean of (157), it has been found that the difference is significant at the significance level (0.05), noting that the computed T-value (3.57) is higher than the tabulated t-value (1.96), with a degree of freedom (493) as shown in table (4) below:

Table (4): Mean Score, Computed T-value, and Tabulated T-value of Tasks Delegation

Sample	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Degree of Freedom	T-Value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
494	157	14.583	146.749	493	3.57	1.96	0.05 Significant

Table (4) revealed the arithmetic mean is higher than the hypothetical one, and the computed T-value is higher than the tabulated T-value. It seems that the heads of scientific departments have a good level and that they delegate some of their tasks. This indicates that the heads of department use democratic methods of leadership, and they also train their staff members, and that is why their tasks delegation is recognized.

Thirdly: finding out the correlational relationship between the administrative competency and tasks delegation to heads of scientific departments at the University of Baghdad from the perspectives of teaching staff members.

To verify this aim, the researchers has collected the sample's responses to the administrative competency scale and their responses to the task delegation scale. Then, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used, obtaining the results as shown in Table (5).

Table (5): Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Sample	Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Administrative Competency & Tasks Delegation	T-value		Level of Significance
		Computed	Tabulated	
492	0.595	13.780	1,96	0,05 Significant

As indicated in Table 5, the correlation coefficient between administrative competency and task delegation is (0.595). To find out the significance of this relationship, the researchers have used the t-test for the significance of the correlation coefficient, yielding a computed t-value of (13.780), which is higher than the critical value (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) with degree of freedom (705). This suggests that the relationship between administrative competency and task delegation is statistically significant and positive, implying that the more headed departments have good administrative and technical skills, the more delegation of tasks the department has.

CONCLUSIONS

The heads of scientific departments have a good level of administrative competence in their work and job performance. This demonstrates through development courses and good knowledge of modern sciences that keep pace with the times in the specialty of administration. Therefore, according to the scale, they possess quality in administrative work. The heads of scientific departments possess sufficient knowledge and a good level of tasks delegation, and this indicates their good practice, good work, and appropriate delegation among the faculty members who deserve this delegation, in a way that suits the interest of the department in order to achieve its goals. There is a very good correlational relationship between their administrative competence and the delegation of their tasks to the department heads, and this reflects their good leadership of their departments and the appropriateness of their selection for this position by senior administrations, as the results show that the relationship is direct between administrative competence and delegation of authority. So, the higher their competence in administrative work, the more they are being employed for their tasks to some competent teachers. Further studies may be conducted to explore the relationship between administrative competency and communication performance, and the relationship between task delegation and performance management.

This study provides some recommendations as the following:

1. Although the level of administrative competency among the heads of academic departments at the University of Baghdad is good, there is an aspiration for it to be excellent.
2. It is hoped that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research will issue laws and legislation to enhance administrative competency.
3. The role of administrative and academic committees at academic departments should be activated to enhance the administrative competency process.

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