



The Reality of The Organizational Crises Inside Iraqi Football Association from The Perspective of Iraqi Stars League Coaches

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the reality of the organizational crises experienced by the Iraqi Football Association during the Iraqi Stars League. This was achieved by developing and applying a scale to measure the reality of these organizational crises from the perspective of the Iraqi Stars League coaches. The research population consisted of 76 coaches and assistant coaches from the Iraqi Stars League clubs, and the research sample was the same size. The researchers developed a questionnaire based on the organizational crisis scale and administered it to the research sample. The researchers reached several conclusions, including identifying several levels of crisis based on the results and statistics obtained (very high, high, medium, low, and very low). The results showed that the crises were at the very high level, affecting 36% of the research sample. The results also revealed a clear crisis in the continuity of league matches, particularly during the preparation periods for the World Cup qualifiers preceding FIFA international windows. This is due to the Federation announcing sudden and lengthy league suspensions, followed by compressing the match schedule to compensate for these unnecessary breaks. This constitutes an organizational crisis as it is inconsistent with the schedules of other Arab leagues.

Keywords: Organizational crises, Iraqi Stars League, Iraqi Football Association, Football.

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Introduction

Management is one of the most interesting disciplines for the leaders who desire success in every field of work. Theoretical foundations and modern applications it is based on help, in practice, to achieve goals set by federations or clubs considering the realistic time sequence. So, it is the execution of available resources in accordance with an acceptable methodology that could be monitored directly over time and successively (Khudhair et al., 2022; Waleed Abdulkareem & Sattar Jabbar, 2025).

Public administration is a very formal, scientific, and collective activity. Therefore, management is the art of combining science with the impact that seeks to lay modern scientific foundations for institutions and bodies to pursue their objectives in a systematic and applied manner. In other words, management is the one who leads individual labor toward the organization's overall and sports federation goals. Hassan and Abdul Razzaq (2013) reflect the same point of view; they explain that management can be classified as both science and art, and most of the contemporary approaches for administration represent this mixed orientation.

One of the main benchmarks in realizing good governance is acculturation, which is a policy that also has an important role for any sports federation or football association. Organizational culture must provide a framework for how employees behave and interact with each other in line with the values and beliefs of the federated organization. The more employees share the same values and beliefs, and the more they align with their own personal value systems, the better a federation is at achieving its objectives. The Iraqi Football Association runs several domestic tournaments and is a central partner in the organization of international competitions. So, the role of sports management is vital to ensuring that these tournaments and events succeed without any glitches in administration. In this sense, management works to manage the industry by site operation in advance, determining when the event will be held or if its duration can potentially conflict with these local or global sporting movements (Jasim et al., 2019; Abdulghani et al., 2025).

Crisis management is a significant challenge, undoubtedly, for individuals and organizations in sports and federations of different types, sizes, and origins. These crises will lead to operational problems and breakups in the organizations and limit the material and human resources of the organization, causing a decrease in organizational success. One of the federations that cannot escape from its use (to complain or speak about difficulties during their organization process) is the Iraqi Football Association. However, FIFA international match days and FIFA World Cup qualification matches take precedence over even midweek domestic league matches, where applicable. Such interruptions create administrative headaches in terms of compensating for postponed matches and also shorten recovery time between games, putting pressure on the league's calendar. So it is on high-ranked officials of the Iraqi Central Football Association to keep up with their business carefully through managing different internal championships or sport events by adopting modern known global organizational mechanisms and dealing with internal or external crises. Crisis management processes do not occur during the moment of the level, if you will, but through forecasting, preparedness, obtaining information before the events happen, and



implementation of procedures that have a scientific base scaled from past experiences and practice instead of human perception or soft speculation. It is important to correctly forecast the crises; false or many prophecies may create administrative havoc, and these will also be another crisis to manage (Talib Jasim & Lazim, 2023; Hassan & Abdulkareem, 2025).

A significant factor for success is management, organization and supervision executed by staff members of a sport federation. All members and working committees must operate towards the implementation of activities in seasonal operational plan by available capacity and within provisions and objectives. Thus, the closeness of individuals' personal culture to the organizational culture in a federation will increase institutional success, with better administrative performance and vice versa (Jasim et al., 2023).

By integrating the administrative process itself to arrange the administrative work based on available energies and within a specific time frame. This is how it allows sports federations to thrive and clubs to develop their own plans and organize themselves on the basis of the federation's system. These processes form an intertwined series in which the administrative functions are interdependent, and consequently no local organization is able to shape its own charter to organize itself without coordinating with that of the Football Association. The current situation of displaced people and those living in areas outside the control of law, in addition to holding several sporting events sequentially, presents a challenge for the reality of the resources of the Iraqi Central Football Association Research to organize its activity this season of the Iraqi Stars League, where many matches were delayed or suspended. Within that structural imbalance these recurring ruptures assume league business management—from player contracts through the beginning and end of the competition. And because of unexpected cancellations caused by FIFA match windows, World Cup qualifiers, or other continental tournaments, coaches struggle to maintain the players at optimal readiness. These practices also diverge from scheduling systems used in overseas and neighboring leagues. The research problem is being crystallized in a clear question: Are there organizational crises facing the Iraqi Stars League? and what is the level of these organizational crises according to the specific model representing the framework of the Iraqi Central Football Association? It is important and necessary to identify the crises of these dimensions and scientifically diagnose them in a way that contributes to building their football performance as well as raising the efficiency of organizational work for them, thereby enhancing its efficiency, particularly in Iraq.

This study aims to construct and implement a scale measuring the reality of crises that are flung at organizational fronts faced by the Iraqi Central Football Association as represented by organizing the Stars League in Iraq. It also intends to establish the extent of organizational crises suffered by the Association and determine the type and size of organizational obstacles facing the management and organization of the Iraqi Stars League football championship.

Methodology

Due to the nature of this study, its topic and problem required the researchers to adopt a descriptive approach using the survey method. The sample population included only head and

assistant coaches that worked in the Iraqi Stars League during the 2025–2026 football seasons that are officially registered in the Iraqi Central Football Association system as a head coach or assistant coach only. The total participants were (76) coaches.

The study sample represented the entire research population (100%) of the study community. The sample group was divided into two groups: a pilot study sample of (5) individuals selected from the research population to ensure the clarity and applicability of the procedures specified in this research, and a main study sample of (71) coaches who participated in implementing the scale used in this study, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of Research Samples*

No.	Sample Type	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
1	Pilot Study Sample	5	6.57
2	Scale Application Sample	71	93.42
3	Total	76	100%

Research Scale

In the study, researchers constructed a particular scale examining the organizational crises in the (Iraqi) Stars League for the Iraqi Central Football Association. To this end, the scale (Nazzal and Hassan, 2013) used for the same purpose previously was adopted, after making necessary modifications according to the nature of the study and its population. Based on the original scale, the prepared questionnaire was modified to (22) items. Items were positively worded and similarly spread into four domains: organizational crises, technical crises, financial crises, and administrative crises.

The suitability of the scale for the research problem, objectives, and study sample was assessed by a number of experts in the field of sports management, measurement, and evaluation. After the expert review and approval, the final version of the questionnaire was aired to the research sample for a response. In order to measure the responses, the researchers used a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from (5) Always; (4) Often; (3): Sometimes; (2) Rarely and 1: Never. This so-called five-point scale that was deemed better sensitivity can discriminate more accurately the marks' level (Mamdouh & Issa, 1995).

Pilot Study

The pilot study served as a vital initial process that helped to ascertain possible strengths and weaknesses related to the main experiment; this exercise also facilitated researchers in identifying challenges that could arise during data collection and allowed them to proactively ensure these were avoided. On Saturday, December 13th (2025), a pilot study was completed with (5) coaches who went on to be excluded from the main study.



Validity of the Scale

The researchers used content validity to determine the scale is valid. This was done by ensuring that the items in the scale match with the objectives of the study and by presenting to several informed panels consisting of experts and specialists in fields such as management science, sports psychology, and measurement and evaluation.

Reliability of the Scale

The process of determining reliability is known as one of the necessary scientific procedures to evaluate that the scale shows even a dead measure of consistency. Because the retesting procedure on different samples is difficult to apply, they used the split-half reliability method, one of the most universal techniques of measuring data reliability (Al-Hakim, 2004). This technique enables reliability to be measured with a single administration, free from potential psychological or health changes that develop across repeated testing scenarios (Melhem, 2002).

To that end, the researchers split scale items into two halves (odd- and even-numbered items). We then computed the Pearson correlation coefficient between scores of both halves. As the obtained correlation coefficient is considered reliability for half of the scale, the Spearman–Brown equation was used to calculate the total-scale reliability coefficient. Table (2) showed a statistically significant correlation, indicating that this scale has high reliability.

Table 2. Reliability Coefficient of the Research Scale Using the Split-Half Method

Scale	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Spearman–Brown Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Organizational Crises Scale	0.78	0.82	Significant

Not. Significance level at (0.05)

Main Study

The total number of participants from the main study included 71 head coaches and assistant coaches working in clubs participating in the Iraqi Stars League football competition. The final study was implemented from Saturday, December 20, 2025, to Wednesday, January 7, 2026. The research scale had been applied to the sample of study during this period so that it would help in gathering the data necessary for achieving the objectives of the present research.

Results

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Hypothetical Mean of the Organizational Crises Scale

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean
Organizational Crises	68.77	8.91	66

Table 4. *Levels of Organizational Crises and Percentage Distribution According to the Scale*

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	20	36%
High	15	27%
Moderate	9	16%
Low	7	12%
Very Low	4	7%

In Table (3), the level of organizational crisis at the Iraqi Central Football Association (from the coaches' standpoint) came to a mean score of (68.77) with a standard deviation of (8.91). We can conclude this value is above 66, which explains the presence of organizational crises in the Iraqi Central Football Association.

Discussion

By determining the level of organizational crises that occur in these cases, Table (4) shows us that the organizational crises are relatively high for the Iraq Central Football Association. The distribution of coaches' responses between each of the five levels of severity (very high, high, moderate, low, and very low)—indicates discrepancies in the perception of the severity of the organizational crisis within the Association. The researchers find it on the higher side due to several organizational challenges that need proper monitoring and intervention by the Iraqi Football Association.

Some of the prominent organizational crises identified include the scheduling aspect of the league season, which is particularly ambiguous in terms of league opening and closing dates, along with recurrent interruptions taking place during the competitive season. Preparations for FIFA World Cup qualification matches often suspend league competitions for very long periods, and sometimes indefinite ones. The researchers noted that almost all Asian and Arab leagues surrounding Iraq are limited to suspending their league exclusively during officially scheduled FIFA international windows that have been published ahead of time in the international fixtures calendar. On the other hand, in the Iraqi league, these dates are often preceded by suspensions that end much earlier as national team players leave their clubs very early, leading to long pauses and then squeezed schedules for matches to recover lost time (Hassan & Abdulkareem 2026).

In terms of the organizational aspect, one of the main problems is the delays in announcing and approving the official sports calendar for various local competitions by the Iraqi Central Football Association. The league often only issues the competition schedule a few days before the league kicks off, which poses logistical problems for clubs, particularly those who must travel between provinces in early rounds of the competition. Also, a crisis was indicated in the systems consequential to haggling for national-team picks. Many coaches reflected on the unclear and unfair criteria in the selection processes, such as a successful youth-category coach clinching a league title but receiving no national appointments compared to other coaches with lesser achievements (Abdulhusein et al., 2026).



The research also highlighted weaknesses in organizational cooperation with coaches on administrative and financial issues. Besides coaches' commitment to the profession, many obstacles stand against achieving optimal performance considering limits in the working environment, like scarcity of licensed and endorsed stadiums. This scarcity directly ties into scheduling clashes across competitions and divisions. This creates what is commonly known as work-related crises due to causing stress and impeding efficiency in the organization.

That being said, some challenges come from organization-related issues through committees that exist within the Association such as: Competitions Committee, Disciplinary Committee and Player and Coach Affairs Committee. Given the difficulties associated with sustaining in-depth decisions without nearness to administrative machinery, these types of issue are likely to cause administrative mayhem and instability if we hold on past a specific level. Hence, such committees should be comprised of well qualified professionals who are knowledgeable on global movements and can provide an informed decision swiftly as per the desired norms. Good organizational performance protects the federation from potential crises while facilitating efficient time management, and the successful organization of events.

Resisting the pressures stemming from crises can also lead to poor decision-making and administrative errors that, in turn, become cumulative organizational crises. Since unexpected issues related to administration must be promptly and fairly addressed for the sake of continuity and stability in organizational processes. Tackling the causes of crises is most credible way to prevent recurring organizational disruptions and strengthen institutional efficiency and performance. Al-Rubaie (2010) adopted a similar view, focusing on the fact that directing athletes' matters is one of the most vital, yet complicated administrative tasks in sports and it necessitates having experienced and qualified staff to reach institutional goals.

The Iraqi Central Football Association needs a willingness to develop organizational performance based on the need for sports calendars long-term and in accordance with international plans that are compatible with league requirements globally. Ashour (2006) pointed out that effective organizational systems, regulations, and procedures contribute to operational clarity, flexibility, and stability in the body, as well as employee satisfaction. This article focuses on the evolution of modern-day physical education and sports administration systems being heavily reliant on scientific principles with systematic management approaches in their administration process (Salah, 2009).

Based on the results obtained by these researchers, they recommend conducting technical workshops and preparatory meetings before announcing the league competitions and sports events in which specialists and coaches can express their views directly. It is also advisable to create a committee of specialists for coaches and the ability to find routes of communication between coaches in all governorates with the Iraqi Central Football Association. This committee is thus expected to enhance the organization of tournaments, scheduling decisions, and financial incentives, as well as development opportunities using both local and international training programs (Jasim et al., 2021).

Moreover, organizations that utilize systematic approaches with long-term vision can also determine and monitor their strategic direction, making better preparations for uncertainties.



Marwan (2002) defined planning as the part that provides a real direction and meaning to an organization; thus, it helps organizations foresee difficulties due to changes in world affairs and make use of their previous experience for new strategy formulation.

In conclusion, the organizational crises scale developed in this study is valid for the research population and showed that the level of systematic crises within the core competitive activity unit (Iraqi Central Football Association) is very high, whereas the application sample fell at a mature level or ranged from a very high to very low position. The research also established an evident organizational crisis as far as the league's continuity is concerned, especially in stages before FIFA international windows, where long suspensions of all forms are immediately succeeded by condensed match schedules contradictory as compared to international league norms. Resource allocation, strategic planning objectives, and implementation efficiency are other challenges (Jasim et al., 2023; Khalif, 2025).

Accordingly, these researchers recommend the use of the developed scale as a scientific tool in diagnosing and defining organizational crises in the Iraqi Central Football Association, involving federation committees in specialized training programs on modern crisis management methods, encouraging reliance on scientific approaches for managing local competitions such as the Iraqi Stars League and Iraq Cup, and establishing a clear format for competition by announcing it at an early date that helps limit league suspensions only to official international breaks. Moreover, capitalizing on the knowledge of sport management experts and doing more research on a contemporary basis will help in clarifying issues and pinpointing organizational barriers before they become a full-blown crisis.

**Appendix (1)
Organizational Crises Scale**

No.	Statements	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	There is an adopted strategy for organizing festivals and championships similar to those followed by international federations.					
2	A scientific classification system is applied to evaluate the levels of both players and coaches.					
3	There is a clear organizational structure for all local leagues.					
4	Coordination between the Central Association and clubs is clear in determining league schedules and season interruptions.					
5	There is accurate knowledge of the timing of international championships, and clubs are informed of these dates in advance.					
6	The Association establishes an organized sequence for scheduling sports championships.					
7	There is alignment between the orientations and objectives of clubs and the Central Association.					
8	Committees within the Association are formed based on specialization.					



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- 9 There is continuous preparedness to avoid any crisis that may hinder the continuity of local football leagues.
- 10 A clear operational plan is formulated for organizing championships based on accurate assessment of local and international events.
- 11 Championships are organized according to the financial capabilities of participating clubs.
- 12 The financial revenues obtained by clubs are proportional to seasonal expenditures.
- 13 Financial funding provided to clubs by state institutions is delivered at fixed and appropriate times.
- 14 Members of the Competitions Committee possess prior organizational experience in managing local leagues.
- 15 The number of competitions during a single football season is appropriate and does not create difficulties for clubs.
- 16 Consideration is given to the time required for clubs to complete the preparation of all teams participating in local championships.
- 17 Workshops are conducted prior to the football season to discuss upcoming sporting events.
- 18 Clubs have a significant number of players represented in national teams.
- 19 Iraqi Stars League clubs are able to continue playing matches before international break periods.
- 20 National team coaching staff are selected according to previously established criteria.
- 21 Local championship schedules are distributed across different time periods throughout the season.
- 22 The Association does not frequently change league match schedules during the season.
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