

The Reality of the Overall Performance Level in the Palestinian Universities

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Abstract: The study was designed to identify the reality of the overall performance level in the Palestinian universities. The study used the analytical descriptive method. The study was conducted on university leadership at Al-Azhar and Islamic universities. The study population consisted of 282 individuals. The study sample consisted of (135) the questionnaire was used for data collection. The results of the study were as follows: there is a high degree of overall performance results in Palestinian universities, the results also showed that the sub-areas of the overall performance results were in the following order: Total Performance Indicators - Internal Standards of the University for Monitoring, results of non-financial performance, finally, the results of the financial performance. The study presented a number of recommendations, the most important of which is: Increasing the interest of the universities in the overall performance and raising awareness of international quality standards and adopting the application of international quality standards as a basis for achieving outstanding performance and creativity. Laxative to adopt the approach of excellence and quality in their work.

Keywords: Overall Performance, International Quality Standards, University Leadership, Al-Azhar University, Islamic University, Palestinian Universities, Gaza Strip, Palestine.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of quality management and "outstanding performance" is based on a clear conceptual framework based on integration and interdependence and is committed to the logic of systemic thinking, which the institution sees as an integrated system whose components interact and intertwine its mechanisms. Hence, its outputs are the result of all its capabilities. To harmonize and coordinate the elements of the institution and operate in an integrated and coherent to achieve the highest rates of effectiveness, and so to the level of outputs that fulfill the wishes and benefits and expectations of beneficiaries (Abu Naser et al., 2016), (Abu Amuna et al., 2016), (Al Shobaki et al., 2016), (El Talla et al., 2017), (Abu Naser et al., 2017), (Abu Amuna et al., 2017), (Al Shobaki et al., 2017), (El Talla et al., 2018), (Abu Naser et al., 2018), (Abu Amuna et al., 2018), (Al Shobaki et al., 2018).

The Arab universities face double challenges in comparison to the technical gap in different fields, which separate them from the organizations of the developed world, in addition to facing fierce competition in all fields. The concept of quality and excellence became the only acceptable level of performance in the era of competitiveness, globalization and knowledge. The rule of the human mind and the control of the power of science and human thought. And the fact that possessing the ingredients of quality and excellence and activating it is the way for the survival of institutions and their continuation in today's world (Abu Amuna et al., 2016), (Al Shobaki et al., 2016), (Abu Naser et al., 2017), (Abu

Amuna et al., 2017), (Al Shobaki et al., 2017), (El Talla et al., 2018), (Abu Naser et al., 2018), (Al Shobaki et al., 2018).

In order for higher education institutions to competently compete in their markets, they need to be characterized by their services to ensure the satisfaction of their internal and external customers alike. The strong internal culture that appreciates the organization's clients can help improve employee motivation, create loyalty, reach high performance and achieve innovation; to achieve an institutional competitive advantage (Khan & Matalay, 2009).

Based on the above, the present study is considered one of the rare studies aimed at answering the following main question: **What is the overall performance level in the Palestinian universities?**

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In line with the study's question, the current study seeks to achieve a set of objectives, namely:

1. Identify the overall university performance level in the Palestinian universities.
2. To reveal the most important areas of strength and weakness in the overall university performance in the Palestinian universities.
3. Provide recommendations to decision-makers in Palestinian universities on ways to improve university performance.

3. RESEARCH IMPORTANCE

1. Highlighting the reality of university performance in Palestinian universities.
2. To provide recommendations and proposals documented and derived from the field study so that the senior management of the Palestinian universities help to apply the quality approach and excellence in performance.
3. This study may contribute to drawing the attention of researchers to undertake many studies and researches in modern administrative curricula and apply them to vital sectors such as the higher education sector.

4. RESEARCH LIMITS AND SCOPE

- **Objective Limit:** The study was limited to revealing the reality of the overall performance level of the Palestinian universities.
- **Spatial Limit:** The application of the study was limited to the Palestinian public universities operating in the southern governorates (Islamic University, Al-Azhar University).
- **Human Limit:** This study focused on the employees of the supervisory centers of the universities in question.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of outstanding university performance:

This is a reflection of the way in which tangible and intangible resources are invested in the university in order to achieve the desired goals and performance (Rashid and Al-Zayadi, 2009) as a holistic activity that reflects either the success to adapt to the environment, or failure based on specific criteria that the organization describes according to the requirements of its activity and in the light of long-term goals. Al-Douri (2005) defines organizational performance as the integrated system of the organization's business in the light of its interaction with the elements of its internal and external environment.

In order for the university to be successful in its work and adaptable to its environment, its performance must be distinct in comparison to the competing universities. Outstanding performance is no longer an option but an imperative necessity imposed by many conditions and variables surrounding the universities.

The outstanding performance is the uniqueness and positive superiority of performance, practices and services provided, and is an advanced stage of workmanship and efficient performance based on leading management concepts (Buhaji, 2008).

The modern management of institutions, including universities, depends mainly on a set of concepts and principles governing their performance, the behavior of their employees, and seeks to achieve excellence by maximizing their capabilities and improving their components by defining a clear vision and mission and comprehensive goals for all elements of their institutional performance.

In this context, there is a need for a set of elements for this excellence in performance. These include the availability of strategic leadership that sets strategies and policies that define the direction of the university, the existence of organizational systems and structures that define the tasks, responsibilities and powers, the inputs required by the organization to perform its work, Performance, in addition to the performance outputs that distinguish the university from others and create a competitive advantage.

Global quality and excellence models have divided their standards into quality standards and performance criteria. In this context, the US-based Malcom model has set a single benchmark for performance results, the Overall Performance Score, which contains a set of sub-criteria (Baldrige education criteria performance excellence, 2013-2014):

Results Standard: It provides systematic focus on all outcomes necessary for the stability of educational organizations, student learning, outcomes of operations, results of focus on students and other beneficiaries, results of focus on the workforce, leadership and governance results, public and financial budget and market performance through five sub-criteria :

- Results of student learning and processes.
- Results of focus on beneficiaries.
- Results of focus on the workforce.
- Leadership and governance results.
- Budget, financial, and market results.

The European Model of Excellence identified three performance criteria (EFQM Excellence Model, 2014):

1. **Beneficiary results:** Distinguished organizations achieve and maintain desired outcomes that meet the needs and expectations of beneficiaries.
2. **Results of individuals:** Outstanding organizations achieve and maintain the desired results that meet the needs and expectations of their individual.
3. **Community Outcomes:** Outstanding organizations achieve and maintain desired outcomes that meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders in the community.
4. **Key Performance Results:** Outstanding organizations achieve and maintain desired results that meet the needs and expectations of their stakeholders.

Standard Overall Performance Results:

It measures distinguished universities and comprehensively achieves outstanding performance results while respecting key elements of its strategy and plans. This standard consists of the following sub-criteria:

1. **Results of financial performance. Examples include:**
 - The University's commitment to spending according to the budget line items.
 - Rationalize the University for its Expenses.
 - The University achieves a financial surplus from its operations.

- University collection of debts owed by beneficiaries.

2. Non-financial performance results and examples:

- Increasing number of students enrolled in university.
- Higher opportunities for university graduates in employment for other universities.
- Distinguish the results of internal and external self-assessment.
- The University has introduced new programs constantly adapted to the labor market.

3. Overall performance indicators - internal university metrics for overall performance monitoring.

- Improvement in university performance.
- Exploitation of buildings and facilities effectively.
- Link the university with good relations with suppliers and partners.
- Access to information and knowledge in the form, time and quantity appropriate.

6. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

Study Approach:

The study followed the descriptive analytical method, in which it attempts to describe the phenomenon of the subject of the study, analyze its data, and explain the relationship between its components, the opinions that are raised around it, the processes it contains, and the effects that it causes.

Study Society:

The study population consists of all employees of supervisory centers in the public universities operating in the

Table 1: the degrees of the five - dimensional Likert scale

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Not Agree	Strongly Disagree
Class	5	4	3	2	1

In addition, a numerical scale was used to give the mean of the arithmetical mean using the ordinal scale of significance. The study adopted the criterion mentioned by Abdel-Fattah (2008) to judge the trend when using the five-dimensional Likert scale.

7. STATISTICAL PROCESSES:

The study used the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform the necessary analysis of the questionnaire data. The following statistical methods and tests were used: percentages, frequencies and arithmetic mean, Pearson Correlation Coefficient to measure the degree of correlation: This test examines the relationship between two variables which was used to calculate the internal

Gaza Strip (Islamic University, Al-Azhar University), which number (282) employees and employees.

The Study Sample:

The sample of the study was selected using the method of class randomization as one of the statistical methods used to be representative of the study society in accordance with the rules of scientific research in the selection of samples. The sample size was 135 companies with 47.9% of the size of the society. The questionnaires were distributed manually (119) questioners and the recovery rate was (88.1%). A sample of 25 companies was selected from within the study sample. Statistical analysis was conducted to verify the validity and stability of the questionnaire.

Study Tool:

To achieve the objective of the study, the questionnaire was used as a data collection tool, developed and developed using the criteria set by the researchers, and to reach the final form of the questionnaire. It emerged in its final form, which consists of three main areas: the field of financial performance results, which consists of (4) paragraphs, and the area of "non-financial performance results" is (4) paragraphs, while the area of "overall performance indicators - internal standards of the university to monitor the overall performance" may be of (4) paragraphs.

Correction Tool Study:

The five-point Likert five-point scale was used to determine the importance of each paragraph of the questionnaire to measure respondents' responses to the questionnaire sections as follows:

Table 1: the degrees of the five - dimensional Likert scale

consistency and structural integrity of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha test to determine the persistence of the vertebrae, T test in the case of one T-Test: to determine whether the average response was neutral (60%) plus or minus, and it has been used to confirm the mean significance of each paragraph of the questionnaire.

Validity of the Study Tool:

The validity of the questionnaire means that the questionnaire questions measure what has been set for to measure, where the internal consistency of the questionnaire paragraphs was calculated by calculating the correlation coefficients between each paragraph and the total score of the field as follows:

Table 2: Correlation coefficients and significance level for each paragraph of the field with the total score of the field

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Results of financial performance			

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
1.	The university is committed to spending according to the financial budget	0.823	0.000
2.	The University guides its expenses	0.911	0.000
3.	The University achieves a financial surplus resulting from its operations	0.759	0.000
4.	The majority of the university's financial dues are collected from students	0.693	0.000
Non-financial performance results			
1.	There is an increase in the number of students enrolled in the university	0.907	0.000
2.	There is an increase in university employment opportunities for other universities	0.638	0.000
3.	There is a distinction in the results of internal and external self-assessment	0.837	0.000
4.	The University is constantly introducing new programs that are compatible with the labor market	0.950	0.000
Overall performance indicators - internal university metrics for overall performance monitoring			
1.	There is an improvement in the university's performance	0.711	0.000
2.	Buildings and facilities are effectively exploited	0.735	0.000
3.	The university has good relations with suppliers and partners	0.859	0.000
4.	Access to information and knowledge in the form, time and quantity appropriate	0.639	0.000

It is clear from the above table that the first area, "financial performance results", is directly correlated with all the paragraphs it measures. The correlation coefficients ranged from (0.693 to 0.911). The second area, "non-financial performance results," is directly correlated with all the paragraphs it measures, the correlation coefficients ranged between (0.638 - 0.950), and the third area, "Overall performance indicators - internal measures of the university to monitor overall performance" is directly correlated with all the paragraphs it measures. The correlation coefficients ranged between (0.639 - 0.859), all of which are statistically significant at the level ($\alpha = 0.01$), It indicates the association of the paragraphs that measure the first domain in its field,

which means that it is internally consistent with the area you measure, which is fundamental in its measurement.

Stability of the Study Instrument:

The persistence of the study questionnaire was determined by the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The following table shows that the value of the Cronbach alpha was high for all domains, ranging from 0.711 to 0.841. The value of the Alpha Cronbach factor for the questionnaire as a whole is (0.820), which means that the questionnaire is consistently stable.

Table 3: Determination of the stability of the resolution using Cronbach's Alpha

No.	Dimension	No. Of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Results of financial performance	4	0.718
2.	Non-financial performance results	4	0.841
3.	Overall performance indicators - internal university metrics for overall performance monitoring	4	0.711
Overall performance as a whole		12	0.820

Answer The Study Questions:

The researchers used several statistical methods to answer the study questions such as: arithmetical averages, standard deviations, in addition to the use of one sample T test for each of the field sections, and to review the responses of the sample of the study on the overall performance level in the Palestinian universities under study. Table (4) indicates that the averages for all the financial performance results ranged between (2.42- 4.13). In general, this field obtained an average of (3.57) and the second field "Non - financial performance results" The mean averages for the paragraphs ranged between (3.66-3.82), and in general (3.74). The third

area "involves and communicates leaders with beneficiaries, partners and community representatives". The average scores for the paragraphs ranged from (3.86-4.19). In general, this field obtained an average of 3.75, In general, the questionnaire as a whole has obtained an average of (3.72), which is a large degree. The researchers attribute this to the fact that the universities surveyed are the oldest Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. They offer the most outstanding scientific disciplines and services to the community. Its performance, face the fierce competition under entry Private sector in higher education.

Table 4: Analysis of paragraphs and areas of overall performance

No.	Item / Dimension	Mean	S. D.	T – Test	Sig.	Rank
1.	The university is committed to spending according to the financial budget	3.89	0.86	11.28	0.00	2
2.	The University guides its expenses	4.13	0.84	14.64	0.00	1
3.	The University achieves a financial surplus resulting from its operations	2.42	1.10	-5.67	0.00	4
4.	The majority of the university's financial dues are collected from students	3.83	1.04	8.69	0.00	3
Results of financial performance		3.57	0.53	11.71	0.00	-
1.	There is an increase in the number of students enrolled in the university	3.68	0.83	8.91	0.00	3
2.	There is an increase in university employment opportunities for other universities	3.66	0.85	8.56	0.00	4
3.	There is a distinction in the results of internal and external self-assessment	3.79	0.69	12.54	0.00	2
4.	The University is constantly introducing new programs that are compatible with the labor market	3.82	0.77	11.72	0.00	1
Non-financial performance results		3.74	0.55	14.65	0.00	-
1.	There is an improvement in the university's performance	3.86	0.83	11.32	0.00	4
2.	Buildings and facilities are effectively exploited	3.90	0.89	11.06	0.00	2
3.	The university has good relations with suppliers and partners	4.19	0.77	3.46	0.00	1
4.	Access to information and knowledge in the form, time and quantity appropriate	3.80	0.75	11.60	0.00	3
Overall performance indicators - internal university metrics for overall performance monitoring		3.94	1.12	9.14	0.00	-
Overall performance as a whole		3.75	0.57	14.35	0.00	-

The results indicate that the responses of the members of the research sample exceeded the average approval level, which is 3 in all the paragraphs. The low dispersion is also evident, which indicates the convergence of their views. Given the probabilistic value (SIG), there were no differences in the views of the study sample members on the "availability of

regulatory requirements" clauses. All of the paragraphs were statistically significant at the level of ($\alpha = 0.01$).

The following table shows an analysis of the overall performance areas:

Table 5: Analysis of overall performance areas

No.	Dimension	Mean	S. D.	T – Test	Sig.	Rank
1.	Results of financial performance	3.57	0.53	11.71	0.00	3
2.	Non-financial performance results	3.74	0.55	14.65	0.00	2
3.	Overall performance indicators - internal university metrics for overall performance monitoring	3.94	1.12	9.14	0.00	1
Overall performance as a whole		3.75	0.57	14.35	0.00	-

In general, the adoption of the driving standard obtained an average of 3.75, which is a large degree, and the standard deviation at (0.57), which means that the dispersion is low, indicating the convergence of their views. The overall performance indicators - internal measures of the university for overall performance monitoring were ranked first with an average score of (3.94) and the non-financial performance score was in the second order with an average of (3.74) while the field of financial performance results obtained In the third order with an average of (3.57), which indicates that the results of the overall performance in the universities in the place of the study is good, and properly so as to achieve

the objectives of universities, and in line with the quality and excellence approach.

The results of the study agreed with Rashid and Al-Zayadi (2013), which showed great interest in financial performance results, and studies by Badri and Selim (2006), Adel (2009), Al-Dajani (2011), Moradzadeh , 2015), all of which indicated higher performance results.

The results differed from the study of (Rashid and Jalab, 2007) (Ghashi, 2007), a study (Al-Jabaree, 2009) that indicated a medium degree of performance results.

The researchers found that the results of the overall performance were high as a result of the efforts of the universities across the various axes. In the continuous

improvement of the performance of the universities seek to diversify their financial sources, and not rely entirely on the fees collected from students, and universities allocate part of its budget scientific research, partnerships with the labor market to attract funding sources for universities, and on the other hand, enhance social responsibility and achieve stakeholder satisfaction. In terms of non-financial performance, universities, through their leaders and staff, need to do more to advance this Performance and optimization. This is in line with what Shirvani et al (2011) pointed to the need for universities to plan and implement improvement projects for all standards, especially the results criteria. In this context, universities should strive to invest this good performance in obtaining quality certificates and excellence from international quality institutions, which has a great impact on the reputation of the university, and gives the university momentum to continue the process of improvement and improvement of performance.

8. RESULTS

The study reached a number of results:

- There is a high degree of overall performance results in Palestinian public universities.
- The sub-areas of the overall performance were as follows: Overall performance indicators - internal university metrics for overall performance monitoring, non-financial performance results, and finally: results of financial performance.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above results, the study recommended:

- Increase the interest of universities in the overall performance and awareness of international quality standards.
- Adopting the application of international quality standards as a basis for achieving outstanding performance and creativity.
- To motivate university leaders to adopt the approach of excellence and quality in their work.

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