

The Impact of Applying Governance Standards on Improving the Performance of Healthcare Organizations: A Case Study of Hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sulaiman Abdullah Alsalman¹, Saud Rasheed Alotaibi², Fahad Abdulaziz Binothman³, Salem Nader Alsharif⁴, Abdulrahman Mohammad A Alotaibi⁵, Hassan Mohammad Kloofah⁶, fayez mohammed fayez alasmari⁷, Hamad Salem Hamad Alzamanan⁸

¹Public Health, Ministry of Health Branch Riyadh Region

²Health services and hospitals management specialist: Sajer General Hospital: Saudi Arabia

³Technician public Health, Ministry of Health Branch Riyadh Region, Riyadh

⁴Technician public Health, Ministry of Health Branch Riyadh Region, Riyadh

⁵Technician public Health, Public Health, department Makkah Makkah

⁶Technician public Health, Public Health department, Makkah, Makkah

⁷Specialist administration of health and hospital, Al-Khobar Health Network, Al khobar

⁸Health administration, King Khalid Hospital, Najran

Abstract

The current study aims to identify the impact of applying governance standards in improving the performance of health organizations through a case study of Riyadh hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This study is a descriptive cross-sectional study using a questionnaire. The sample of the current study consisted of (357) employees in Riyadh hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To achieve the study objective, the researcher designed an electronic questionnaire to measure the impact of applying governance standards in improving the performance of health organizations. The validity and reliability of the study tool were also verified. The results of the study concluded that there is a strong correlation between the principles and standards of governance and improving performance in health organizations, and a strong correlation between administrative leadership and the application of governance standards, as well as a strong correlation between administrative leadership's adoption of governance standards and improving the performance of organizations. This shows that Riyadh hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia possess the components that allow for activating the possibility of applying governance standards and thus improving performance, which is positively reflected in improving the level of health care.

Keywords: Governance, Healthcare, Healthcare administration, Performance, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Organizations and institutions in our current era face many challenges that make them unable to progress, develop and grow. Perhaps the most important of these challenges are poor performance, waste of human and financial resources, and failure to apply correct scientific administrative practices, which leads to dissatisfaction among administrative bodies and customers [1].

The government is considered one of the most important concepts and practices that organizations and institutions need to find developments and reforms in the performance of organizations [2]. Governance focuses on making fundamental changes in the nature of human and institutional performance and tightening control over that performance through many foundations, the most important of which are responsibility, decentralization, transparency and accountability, in a way that ensures the refinement and rationalization of performance in a sound and correct manner that is consistent with achieving institutional and human effectiveness [3,4]. Since the philosophy and nature of health organizations differ from any other organizations because they operate from a humanitarian motive, which is to provide all preventive and therapeutic services to patients [5]. These health organizations must adhere to a high and high level of principles and ethics towards patients, ensuring that all services are provided without discrimination for all members of society [6]. Many efforts have been made by the World Health Organization and other specialized organizations to provide practical management for health organizations to meet all the challenges facing health organizations, such as applying the principles of total quality management and engineering, which are of great importance in increasing the efficiency of workers and raising the level and quality of health services [6,7]. Despite all the efforts made to develop health organizations and improve health care services, they still face many challenges represented in not obtaining clear results for the services provided, causing dissatisfaction for patients and the responsible parties in health organizations [8]. In the health sector, governance has been dealt with as: a set of tasks or functions that health organizations are supposed to perform or under their supervision [9]. This is what the World Health Organization explains in the model of building blocks of the health system, describing one of the basic building blocks as "leadership and governance"[6].

From the perspective of the relationship between governance and its elements, the foundations and controls of its application, and its role in improving the performance of organizations and institutions, the current study comes to anticipate the impact of applying governance standards in improving the performance of health organizations by applying it to government hospitals in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

The design of this study is a cross-sectional study design study to assess knowledge, attitude and practices on the prevention of VAP among nurses working in intensive

care units at governmental hospitals in Saudi Arabia. This study was conducted in the period between Sep to Oct 2024.

Study Participants and Sample Size

This study included all health administration and medical records management personnel in government hospitals. The study participants were randomly selected and formed the study population. Administrators who had been working in different positions in the hospitals for at least one year prior to the survey period were included in the study. The minimum required sample size was calculated using a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (significance $\alpha = 0.05$) with a 50% response distribution. It was found to be 357 respondents.

Instruments of the study

A web-based questionnaire was the primary research instrument. The instrument was adapted from a previous study and modified to suit the objectives of this study [10,11]. The questionnaire comprised two sections consisting of 29 questions and was framed, where the first included demographic data with three items. The remaining 24 questions were used to assess the Governance and employ Performance. Literature review was the primary source of secondary data since the researcher compared the primary data findings with those of previous scholars on a similar topic. The final questionnaire underwent a face validity assessment to ensure the effectiveness of the questions in aligning with the study's objectives. The questions were measured on a Likert scale. The internal consistency in the scale was assessed in the previous study using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which was found to be .956. The Arabic version showed good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data by himself and by trained assistants using self-administered questionnaires after obtaining consent from the study participants from the hospitals within a duration of one month.

Data Management and Data Analysis

The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26) for data entry and analysis. The research checked all data to avoid any discrepancies. Data examined for coding and entry error. Descriptive data expressed as frequency, mean, standard deviation (SD), and percentages. Inferential statistic tests used as well as independent sample t test, and regression.

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table (1) shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. Out of 357 respondents, (72.1 %) were male and (27.9%) were female. According to the age group, about (43.8%) of the respondents were in the group of 25 to 30 years-old and (8.8%) were aged more than 40 years old. Regarding education level, most common of them (63.8%) had bachelor's degree, and (29.4%) had master's degree. Regarding Job position (30.2%) had Department manager and (40.2 %) had administrative and

(40.4%) had Medical Records Technician. About (40.7%) of the participants had experience between 1 to 3 years, while (35.4%) of nurses have more than 7 years.

Table 1. demographic traits of participants (n=357)

	Categories	Frequency	Percent %
Age (years)	< 25 years old	81	22.60%
	25-30 years old	156	43.80%
	31-40 years old	89	24.80%
	> 40 years	31	8.80%
sex	male	257	72.10%
	Female	100	27.90%
Educational level	Diploma	24	6.80%
	Bachelor's degree	228	63.80%
	MSc	105	29.40%
Occupation	Department manager	108	30.20%
	administrative	144	40.20%
	Medical Records Technician	144	40.40%
Years of experience	1-3 years	145	40.70%
	4-6 years	85	23.90%
	≥ 7 years	126	35.40%

The impact of applying governance standards on employee job performance

Table (2) shows that the sample members' approval degrees on the paragraphs of the first axis "Application of Governance Principles" ranged between (79.53% - 86.61%), and the total score on this axis reached 84.13%, which indicates a very high level of approval by the sample members on the paragraphs of this axis. The paragraph that stated "Governance principles contribute to facilitating work procedures" came in first place according to the relative weight of 86.61%, and the paragraph that stated "Governance principles contribute to improving job performance" came in second place according to the relative weight of 85.98%, while the paragraph that stated "Governance works to ensure the independence of employees when making their decisions" came in last place according to the relative weight of 79.53%.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, and R II% for the statement on the axis "Impact of governance standards on employee job performance"

Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	R II%	p-value
Governance principles contribute to improving job performance	4.30	0.749	85.98%	.000
Governance principles contribute to facilitating work procedures	4.33	0.655	86.61%	.000
Governance principles are characterized by discipline in work procedures	4.27	0.750	85.35%	.000

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Governance principles are relied upon in making administrative decisions	4.13	0.739	82.68%	.000
Applying governance principles contributes to improving performance	4.28	0.731	85.51%	.000
Governance works on the independence of employees when making their decisions	3.98	0.913	79.53%	.000
Applying governance principles contributes to fair accountability	4.19	0.753	83.78%	.000
Applying governance principles contributes to achieving justice among employees	4.18	0.801	83.62%	.000
The Average	4.21	0.76	84.13%	

Adopting governance principles in hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Table (3) shows that the degrees of approval of the sample members on the paragraphs of the second axis "Adopting the principles of governance in Riyadh hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" ranged between (79.53% - 86.14%), and the total degree on this dimension reached 82.43%, which indicates a high level of approval by the sample members on the paragraphs of this axis. The paragraph that stated "The principles of governance are adopted as one of the elements of administrative decisions" came in first place according to the relative weight of 86.14%, and the paragraph that stated "The administrative bodies urge workers on the importance of having a full sense of the importance of the task assigned to them" came in second place according to the relative weight of 83.62%, while the paragraph that stated "The administrative bodies allocate appropriate time to educate and train workers" came in last place according to the relative weight of 79.53%.

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and R II% for the statement on the axis " Adopting governance principles in hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia "

Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	R II%	p-value
The hospital's administrative bodies seek to spread awareness of the importance of governance and its principles	4.00	0.917	80.00%	.000
The administrative bodies urge employees to have a full sense of the importance of the task assigned to them	4.18	0.728	83.62%	.000
The administrative bodies believe that applying the principles of governance reflects positively on both the work and the employees	4.17	0.656	83.46%	.000
The application of the principles of governance contributes to increasing	4.31	0.661	86.14%	.000

the degree of trust of employees towards the administrative bodies				
The principles of governance are adopted as one of the elements of administrative decisions	4.16	0.791	83.15%	.000
The administrative bodies allocate appropriate time to educate and train employees	3.98	0.930	79.53%	.000
The Average	4.06	0.911	81.10%	

The relationship between adopting governance principles on improving performance in Riyadh hospitals

Table (4) shows that the sample members' approval ratings on the paragraphs of the third axis "The role of governance in improving job performance" ranged between (81.89% - 86.77%), and the total score on this dimension reached 83.78%, which indicates a high level of approval by the sample members on the paragraphs of this axis. The paragraph that stated "Governance seeks to improve the level of service provided by employees" came in first place according to the relative weight of 86.77%, and the paragraph that stated "Applying governance principles achieves tangible positive results in improving job performance" came in second place according to the relative weight of 85.35%, while the paragraph that stated "Applying governance principles helped to find fair foundations for employee incentives, which had a positive impact on improving performance" came in last place according to the relative weight of 81.89%.

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation, and R II% for the statement on the axis " relationship between adopting governance principles on improving performance in Riyadh hospitals"

Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	R II%	p-value
Governance seeks to improve the level of service provided by employees	4.34	0.693	86.77%	.000
The application of governance principles achieves tangible positive results in improving job performance.	4.27	0.684	85.35%	.000
Governance principles contribute to positive changes in current work methods and systems	4.20	0.759	84.09%	.000
The application of governance principles helped to find fair foundations for employee incentives, which had a positive impact on improving performance	4.09	0.849	81.89%	.000
The current administrative organization of the organization's	4.13	0.797	82.52%	.000

units helps me to speed up performance				
The administrative bodies in the organization motivate employees to submit their proposals for improving performance	4.13	0.749	82.68%	.000
Governance principles focus on improving performance	4.17	0.794	83.31%	.000
Governance principles move away from authoritarian methods in following up on performance improvement	4.11	0.758	82.20%	.000
Governance principles depend on continuous performance improvement	4.26	0.726	85.20%	
The Average	4.19	0.76	83.78%	

Relationship between Support sound and effective practices in clinical governance and Employee Performance.

Results related to the study hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences between applying governance principles and improving the performance of health organizations Table (5) shows the results related to the hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences between applying governance principles and improving the performance of health organizations. To verify the validity of the previous hypothesis, a Pearson correlation matrix (person correlation matrix) was extracted between governance principles and job performance.

Table 5. Pearson's correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between the application of governance principles and improving job performance among employees in Riyadh hospitals

Model	p-value	R	R-Square
Application of governance principles and improving the performance of health organizations	0.000	0.811**	.657

Discussion:

This study aims to explore the impact of applying governance standards on improving employee performance in government hospitals in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The results of the study show the importance of adopting and applying governance principles in hospitals, such as transparency, accountability, and decentralization, which play an effective role in improving job performance by facilitating administrative procedures, facilitating data and patient records, maintaining privacy, and achieving justice in accountability, which is positively reflected in employee performance. This is consistent with many literatures that have emphasized the role and importance of governance in improving operational efficiency and the quality of health services [12,13]. The study shows a high level of participants' agreement (84.13%) regarding the application of governance principles in improving job performance, which is

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consistent with the study of Hijazi, which emphasized the role of governance dimensions (transparency, justice and equality, accountability, participation, and integrity) in job satisfaction and increased productivity [14].

Emphasizing the role of governance in facilitating administrative procedures and enhancing employee performance. However, these results show limited employee autonomy in decision-making, indicating that there are some restrictions in granting employees the freedom to make decisions, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [15,16]. Regarding the adoption of governance principles in hospitals, the study showed that 81.10% of participants agreed that governance is part of the administrative decision-making process in hospitals, which is consistent with the study by Muriithi (2020), which confirmed that governance contributes to improving administrative decision-making and enhances employee confidence in management [17].

Regarding the relationship between governance and improving job performance, the study showed a strong correlation (0.811) between the application of governance and improving performance, which supports what previous studies have stated about the direct relationship between governance and employee performance in the health sector [18]. However, the study also showed a need to improve aspects of employee training and provide independence in decision-making, which requires more focus on developing these areas in the future.

Overall, the findings of this study are generally consistent with the existing literature on governance in healthcare organizations, which emphasizes that implementing governance standards leads to a more organized, transparent, and efficient healthcare system, which ultimately benefits employees and patients.[19,20].

Conclusion:

Implementing governance standards has a significant impact on improving the performance of healthcare organizations, especially in government hospitals in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. By adopting governance principles such as transparency, accountability, and decentralization, hospitals enhance performance, improve service delivery, and foster a positive organizational culture. However, challenges remain in ensuring full employee autonomy in decision-making processes and providing adequate training for employees on governance practices. Future research could explore the longitudinal impact of governance reforms and investigate specific barriers to effective implementation in healthcare settings.

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