

An Analytical Study of the Challenges of Change in Clubs Participating in the Premier Football League from the Perspective of Their Administrative Bodies

Surod Yaseen Ali ⁽¹⁾ , Mohammed Qusay Mohammed Jameel ⁽²⁾

srud.Ali2204m@cope.uobaghdad.edu.iq , mohammed.jameel@cope.uobaghdad.edu.iq

⁽¹⁾ College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences / University of Baghdad, Iraq.

⁽²⁾ College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences / University of Baghdad, Iraq.

Abstract

This research presents an analytical study of the challenges of change in sports clubs participating in the Premier League, from the perspective of their governing bodies. The research focuses on the challenges clubs face in adapting to structural and administrative changes that affect their sporting and administrative performance. The study centers on resistance to change, financial and organizational challenges, infrastructure, and technological challenges, clarifying the impact of these challenges on club stability and success.

A descriptive approach and a survey methodology were used to collect data from 109 members of the governing bodies of the participating clubs. A change challenges scale was developed, consisting of 41 statements distributed across five main areas: resistance to change, financial challenges, organizational challenges, infrastructure, and technology and innovation. The results showed that challenges related to resistance to change were the most prominent, followed by financial and organizational challenges, significantly affecting the clubs' ability to achieve success.

Keywords: Challenges of Change, Administrative Bodies, Premier League, change management, sporting performance.

Introduction:

Sports clubs around the world are an essential part of the sports system, contributing to the development of players and the achievement of sporting accomplishments that are a source of pride for society. In this context, the Premier League is one of the most prominent sporting competitions, featuring the strongest and most influential clubs in the sporting arena. Despite the numerous achievements of these clubs, change remains a major challenge they face in their development and adaptation to the evolving landscape of sports.

Change processes within sports clubs, whether at the administrative, organizational, or even technical performance levels (Al-Shetaihi & Futouh, 2019), require effective strategies to ensure continued success and mitigate negative impacts. These challenges include changes in administrative bodies, which can significantly influence strategic decision-making and the implementation of sports policies.

This research aims to conduct an analytical study of the challenges of change in clubs participating in the Premier League, from the perspective of their administrative bodies. The focus will be on exploring the difficulties faced by sports administrations in dealing with structural and administrative changes, and how these changes affect the overall performance of the clubs. The research will also offer insights and recommendations to help clubs address these challenges and develop effective strategies for improving both sporting and administrative performance. This research aims to highlight the importance of management analysis in addressing challenges and adapting to the ongoing changes in the sports environment, as well as the interaction between

administrative bodies and the evolving demands of the football world (Mahdi, M. Y., Abees & Radi, 2019)

This study is significant because it provides in-depth insights into how changes in the administrative bodies of sports clubs affects administrative and technical stability. The research also enhances understanding of sports management in the face of internal and external challenges that can weaken the overall performance of clubs, especially given the high level of competition in the Premier League.

By analyzing these challenges from the perspective of administrative bodies, the research will contribute to strengthening their ability to adapt to structural changes, with a focus on improving administrative work strategies. It also aims to highlight the importance of informed decision-making by management to ensure the stability and sustainable progress of sports clubs.

Sports clubs participating in the Premier League face numerous challenges related to administrative change and organizational development, which directly affect their sporting performance and internal stability. While change is a necessary element of development and innovation, managing it ineffectively can lead to negative outcomes that affect clubs' competitiveness and the sustainability of their success.

One of the most prominent problems many clubs face is frequent changes in their governing bodies, which leads to conflicting visions and strategic directions. This constant turnover in leadership can weaken coordination between different departments within the club, affecting the implementation of sporting policies and long-term planning. Furthermore, these changes erode player and fan confidence in management, potentially hindering the achievement of desired goals.

Moreover, clubs face challenges in adapting their governing bodies to the ever-changing football environment, whether in terms of legal, economic, or even socio-cultural requirements. These challenges necessitate an analytical study that highlights the negative effects of administrative changes and offers practical solutions to improve change management strategies within clubs.

Research Objectives

To identify the challenges of change for clubs participating in the Premier League.

Research fields:

- Human field: The administrative bodies of the sports clubs participating in the Premier League.
- Time field: (1/7/2025) to (29/9/2025)
- Spatial field: The headquarters of the sports clubs participating in the Premier League.

Terminology

Challenges of Change: The difficulties and obstacles faced by administrative bodies when attempting to implement structural, administrative, or cultural changes within a sports organization. These challenges include employee resistance, resource scarcity, weak leadership, divergent goals, and external environmental pressures (Hubbart, 2023).

Procedures and Tools:

The researchers adopted a descriptive approach using a survey method in this study, as it is suitable for the nature of the research problem, which focuses on an analytical study of the challenges of change in clubs participating in the Premier League from the perspective of their administrative bodies. The research population was selected from the administrative bodies of the sports clubs participating in the Premier League, comprising (168) administrative body members from (24) clubs. The research sample consisted of (109) individuals, representing (64.8%) of the original population. Nine members of the committee were selected for the pilot study. The sample members were chosen purposively due to their suitability to the research requirements and their direct relevance to the research problem under study.

Table (1) shows the sample distribution.

No.	Administrative Bodies	Research Population	Research Sample	Pilot Sample	Construction Sample	Main Experiment Sample
1	Administrative Bodies	168	109	9	109	109
2	Percentage	100%	64.8%	5.357%	64.8%	64.8%

Steps for Developing a Change Challenges Scale for Members of the Administrative Bodies of Clubs Participating in the Premier Football League:

To develop a measurement tool for studying the change challenges faced by the Administrative Bodies of clubs participating in the Premier Football League, the researchers reviewed a range of relevant scales. After studying these scales, it was determined that a scale specific to this research was necessary. The scale was then developed to suit the research problem and its sample.

Next, the scientific foundations of the scale, such as validity and reliability, were established. The researchers presented the scale to a group of specialists in sports management, testing, and measurement, and their feedback was sought on modifying some of the items. After reviewing the modifications, (41) items were approved, as shown in Table (2). Thus, a scale suitable for the research population was developed.

Table (2) shows the distribution of items across the scale's domains.

No.	Domain Name	Number of Items
1	Resistance to Change	11
2	Financial Challenges	7
3	Organizational Challenges	8
4	Infrastructure Challenges	9
5	Technology and Innovation Challenges	6
Total	—	41

The scale items were scored by assigning an appropriate weight to each item according to the participants' choice of the rating scale. Likert's method was used in constructing the scale. Weights (1-5) were assigned to each item based on the participants' evaluation.

Validity:

The researchers used two types of validity, one of which was face validity, to verify the suitability of the scale items for measuring the phenomenon under study. Face validity is an important type of validity in constructing tests and scales, as it indicates the extent to which the scale is suitable for measuring the desired characteristic. This is achieved by evaluating the clarity and validity of the items based on appropriate responses according to the opinions of experts. This type of validity reflects the degree to which the items relate to the variable being measured. According to (Freeman, 1962), this indicator is achieved "when an expert in the subject decides that the scale is suitable for measuring the target characteristic." The researchers achieved this by presenting the scale items to a group of eleven experts in the field and conducting the necessary statistical procedures. A score of 75% or higher was adopted as the acceptance criterion. Forty-one items were presented to the experts, and after statistical analysis of their opinions, all forty-one were retained.

Discriminatory Power of Statements

Discriminatory power is the second type of validity adopted by the researchers. It refers to the ability of a statement to distinguish between individuals who exhibit a high degree of the trait or concept being measured and those who exhibit it to a lower degree. In this study, the trait to be measured was "Challenges of Change." According to the questionnaires were arranged in descending order. "Then, two extreme groups were selected, each comprising 27% of the total sample that underwent measurement: an upper group containing the individuals with the highest scores, and a lower group containing the individuals with the lowest scores" (Al- Samadi & Al-Darabi, 2003).

Accordingly, the 109 questionnaires from the research sample were arranged in descending order. The two extreme groups in each category were identified as (27%), totaling (29.4), which is approximately (29) forms. Thus, the number of forms representative of the sample became (29) forms in the upper group and (29) forms in the lower group, while the middle group comprised (51) forms.

Using the t-test to determine the significance of the differences in means between the upper and lower groups, all items were found to be statistically significant, with the significance level being less than the required significance level (0.05) and the degrees of freedom (17), as shown in Table (4).

Table (4) shows the discriminatory power of the items on the constructed scale.

Item No.	Lower Group	Upper Group		level sig	Type
----------	-------------	-------------	--	-----------	------

	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Calculated t-Value		sig
1.	5.0000	0.00000	1.5926	.49597	50.486	.000	sig
2.	4.8148	.39210	1.5741	.49913	37.520	.000	sig
3.	4.5185	.50435	1.0000	0.00000	51.266	.000	sig
4.	4.5370	.50331	1.0000	0.00000	51.642	.000	sig
5.	4.9815	.13608	1.4815	.50435	49.235	.000	sig
6.	4.9259	.26435	1.3333	.47583	48.500	.000	sig
7.	5.0000	0.00000	1.7222	.76273	31.579	.000	sig
8.	4.8519	.35858	1.7407	.44234	40.149	.004	sig
9.	5.0000	0.00000	1.6852	.57705	42.213	.000	sig
10.	5.0000	0.00000	1.5370	.53950	47.169	.000	sig
11.	5.0000	0.00000	1.6296	.48744	50.811	.000	sig
12.	5.0000	0.00000	1.4444	.50157	52.092	.000	sig
13.	4.7963	.40653	1.5370	.50331	37.019	.000	sig
14.	5.0000	0.00000	1.6852	.63911	38.114	.000	sig
15.	4.7778	.41964	1.5556	.50157	36.207	.000	sig
16.	4.7407	.44234	1.4630	.50331	35.947	.000	sig
17.	4.9815	.13608	1.6667	.47583	49.219	.000	sig
18.	4.5370	.50331	1.2037	.40653	37.860	.000	sig
19.	5.0000	0.00000	1.5370	.53950	47.169	.000	sig
20.	5.0000	0.00000	1.6296	.48744	50.811	.000	sig
21.	5.0000	0.00000	1.4444	.50157	52.092	.000	sig
22.	4.7963	.40653	1.5370	.50331	37.019	.000	sig
23.	5.0000	0.00000	1.6852	.63911	38.114	.000	sig
24.	4.7778	.41964	1.5556	.50157	36.207	.000	sig
25.	4.7407	.44234	1.4630	.50331	35.947	.000	sig
26.	4.9815	.13608	1.6667	.47583	49.219	.000	sig
27.	4.5370	.50331	1.2037	.40653	37.860	.000	sig
28.	4.6111	.49208	1.0000	0.00000	53.927	.000	sig
29.	4.9259	.26435	1.3519	.48203	47.774	.000	sig
30.	4.8148	.39210	1.5741	.49913	37.520	.000	sig
31.	4.5185	.50435	1.0000	0.00000	51.266	.000	sig
32.	5.0000	0.00000	1.4444	.50157	52.092	.000	sig
33.	5.0000	0.00000	1.6852	.63911	38.114	.000	sig
34.	4.7778	.41964	1.5556	.50157	36.207	.000	sig
35.	4.7963	.40653	1.5370	.50331	37.019	.000	sig
36.	4.5370	.50331	1.2037	.40653	37.860	.000	sig
37.	4.9259	.26435	1.3519	.48203	47.774	.000	sig
38.	4.7778	.41964	1.5556	.50157	36.207	.000	sig
39.	4.7407	.44234	1.4630	.50331	35.947	.000	sig
40.	4.7963	.40653	1.5370	.50331	37.019	.000	sig
41.	4.9259	.26435	1.3519	.48203	47.774	.000	sig

Significant < (0.05)

Internal Consistency Coefficient:

Internal consistency is demonstrated by the simple correlation between the score of each item and the total scale score. Internal consistency refers to using Pearson's correlation coefficient to verify the relationship between the scale items and the total scale score, based on the responses of the construct sample (109 forms), it was found that all items were statistically significant, as the true significance (significance level) shown by the statistical results for these items was less than (0.05). Therefore, all items were retained, as shown in Table (5).

An Analytical Study of the Challenges of Change in Clubs Participating in the Premier Football League from the Perspective of Their Administrative Bodies

Table (5) shows the correlation coefficient of the scale items with the total scale score

Item No.	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	level sig	Type sig	Item No.	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	level sig	Type sig
1	.537**	.000	Significant	22	.426**	.000	Significant
2	.457**	.000	Significant	23	.298**	.000	Significant
3	.476**	.000	Significant	24	.360**	.000	Significant
4	.505**	.000	Significant	25	.481**	.000	Significant
5	.605**	.000	Significant	26	.305**	.000	Significant
6	.469**	.000	Significant	27	.502**	.000	Significant
7	.483**	.000	Significant	28	.413**	.000	Significant
9	.489**	.000	Significant	29	.284**	.000	Significant
10	.571**	.010	Significant	30	.504**	.000	Significant
11	.499**	.000	Significant	31	.603**	.000	Significant
12	.581**	.000	Significant	32	.569**	.000	Significant
13	.505**	.000	Significant	33	.393**	.000	Significant
14	.532**	.000	Significant	34	.476**	.000	Significant
15	.477**	.000	Significant	35	.567**	.000	Significant
16	.376**	.000	Significant	36	.568**	.000	Significant
17	.467**	.000	Significant	37	.498**	.000	Significant
18	.368**	.000	Significant	38	.336**	.000	Significant
19	.398**	.000	Significant	39	.491**	.000	Significant
20	.436**	.000	Significant	40	.513**	.000	Significant
21	.291**	.000	Significant	41	.384**	.000	Significant

Significance < 0.05

Reliability

The researchers confirmed the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results showed that the correlation coefficient for the "Challenges of Change" scale was (0.907), a high value reflecting a high degree of reliability.

Scale Application

After establishing the scientific basis of the scale, the researchers applied it to the sample group to determine the level of change challenges among the research sample between August 6 and 16, 2025. A visit was made to the Iraqi Football Association in Baghdad, and social media platforms and Google applications were used to contact some members of the sample. The data collection process took 11 days, during which the sample was contacted by phone beforehand to schedule meetings. The researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data and arrive at the study's findings.

Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results:

Presentation, analysis, and discussion of the level of change challenges among Baghdad clubs participating in the Premier League football tournament.

Table (5) shows the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, calculated t-value, true significance, and type of difference for the scale as a whole.

Variables	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	level sig	Type sig
Change Challenges	41	205	131.98	123	0.014	30.132	0.000	Significant

Significant $\leq (0.05)$ at 108 degrees of freedom

Discussion of Results:

1. Resistance to Change:

Resistance to change is one of the biggest obstacles facing sports clubs (Othman, & Ahmed, 2025). The researchers believe that in some clubs there is a desire to maintain the status quo and a reluctance to accept changes that might harm internal stability. For example, in some major clubs, such as Al-Ahly SC in Egypt, when a decision was made to change the administrative system or organizational structure, this change was met with resistance from some long-standing members of the administration and players who were accustomed to the previous management style. As a result, administrative conflicts occurred within the club, affecting the stability of athletic performance.

Another example: In some Iraqi clubs, when new administrations were appointed or technical directors were changed suddenly, internal resistance emerged from players who were accustomed to a particular training style. This resistance can lead to a decrease in player morale and negatively affect overall performance in competitions.

2. Financial Challenges:

Sports clubs face enormous financial challenges, especially those lacking consistent financial support or significant sponsorship. (Al-Awfi, 2024) argues that financial challenges create a difficult environment for change, as clubs may be unable to fund necessary infrastructure upgrades or technological development.

Practical Example: In Egypt, Zamalek SC faced a significant challenge in securing the financial resources to sign new players or improve sports facilities due to the financial crises the administration experienced. This lack of resources hampered their ability to compete effectively in local and continental championships. In this case, the lack of resources limited the club's capacity to implement administrative or organizational changes that could enhance performance stability and achieve success.

Local Example: In Iraq, some clubs suffer from a lack of funding, rendering them unable to purchase necessary equipment or develop their sports facilities, thus hindering progress in implementing required change strategies.

3. Organizational Challenges:

Organizational challenges within clubs stem from the absence of a flexible administrative structure capable of adapting to the rapid changes in the sports environment. (Al-Arzi & Ben Ammar, 2024). argue that administrative bodies are often unable to adopt new strategies due to structural rigidity within clubs.

A practical example: Manchester United underwent significant organizational changes after the departure of legendary manager Sir Alex Ferguson in 2013. Although it was expected that the club would be able to adapt to the changes, the lack of a clear strategic vision within the club's administrative structure resulted in a series of unsuccessful managerial changes, affecting team stability. This type of organizational change within clubs can create chaos in decision-making processes and negatively affect performance (Abdul-Samie, 2024)

A local example: In some Iraqi clubs, technical and administrative managers are appointed abruptly based on political or social decisions, leading to a leadership vacuum and poor coordination between different club departments. This type of organizational problem hinders the effective implementation of change plans (Sabah & Jassim, 2023).

4. Infrastructure Challenges:

Infrastructure is a crucial factor in supporting sports clubs to implement necessary changes. Clubs lacking modern sports facilities struggle to keep pace with advancements in training and technology (Mahrous & Salem, 2024)

Practical Example: At Real Madrid, despite being one of the world's largest clubs, investing in infrastructure improvements was essential after the challenges faced in developing which required significant upgrades to keep up with technological advancements in football. The club needed to equip its stadiums and training facilities with state-of-the-art equipment to enhance athletic performance, requiring substantial investment (Al-Shetaihi & Futouh, 2019).

Local Example: In some Iraqi clubs, players face significant challenges due to a lack of modern sports facilities, such as poor-quality stadiums that lack the advanced technology necessary for

sports analysis. In some cases, clubs do not have specialized training centers, which hinders their ability to develop players or improve their technical skills.

5. Challenges of Technology and Innovation:

Technology is a crucial element in improving organizational performance (Al-Thubaiti , 2023). Organizations that lack the ability to leverage the latest technologies struggle to keep pace with developments in the work environment (Salem, 2020).

Practical Example: At Manchester City Football Club in England, the use of technology in analyzing player performance is part of the club's overall strategy. By using advanced analytics and big data, training is optimized, and players are guided toward continuous development. This technology gives the club a significant competitive advantage, while clubs that fail to keep up with this technological advancement find themselves lagging behind.

Local Example: In some Iraqi clubs, sports management faces challenges in using technology to evaluate player performance or even to improve training methods. Technologies such as video analysis or sports data are not used sufficiently, which limits the capacity for development and innovation (Hammoud, 2014).

References:

- Abdul-Samie, M. A. H. M. (2024). Proposed mechanisms for activating organizational change management practices in sports institutions in light of administrative excellence standards. *Scientific Journal of Sport Sciences and Arts*, 78(2), 89–114.
- Al-Arzi, I., & Ben Ammar, S. (2024). Leadership challenges under organizational change in business organizations: Strategies and success factors. *Economic Notebooks Journal*, 15(2), 703–728.
- Al-Awfi, M. B. A. (2024). Human resource management in light of digital transformation: Between the challenges of change and opportunities for development. *Arab Journal of Informatics and Information Security*, 5(17), 133–160.
- Al-Samadi, A., & Al-Darabi, M. (2003). *Psychological and educational measurement and evaluation: Between theory and practice*. Dar Wael.
- Al-Shetaihi, A. M., & Futouh, A. A. (2019). The role of change management in developing administrative performance in sports clubs. *Assiut Journal of Physical Education Sciences and Arts*, 49(3), 193–263.
- Al-Thubaiti, A. A. (2023). Challenges facing change leadership in secondary schools in Al-Qway'iyah Governorate from the perspective of school principals. *Arab Studies in Education and Psychology*, 147(3), 287–312.
- Freeman, F. S. (1962). *Theory and practice of psychological testing*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Hammoud, J. W. (2014). Challenges of shaping a culture of change in Iraq: The internal constraints of the media role. *Albahith Alalami*, 6(23), 138–152.
- Hubbart, J. A. (2023). *Organizational change: The challenge of change aversion*. MDPI.
- Mahdi, M. Y., Abees, S. S., & Radi, A. L. M. N. (2019). The effect of (SQ3R) strategy on learning some basic skills among football halls female students. *Sciences Journal of Physical Education*, 12(8).
- Mahrous, Y. F., & Salem, I. M. (2024). Change from the perspective of John Kotter's model for developing the sports system in major sports clubs. *Scientific Journal of Physical Education Sciences*, 33(6), 112–130.
- Othman, R. M., & Ahmed. (2025). Design models for exploring the dynamics of change management in sports institutions. *Scientific Journal of Physical Education and Sports Sciences*, 53(1), 17–35.
- Sabah, A. A., & Jassim, Z. K. (2023). Responsibility among football coaches from the perspective of Iraqi Premier League players. *Journal of Physical Education*, 35(3).
- Salem, A. A. (2020). Administrative leadership and its role in confronting the challenges of change and development in business organizations: A theoretical analytical study. *Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, 4(2), 74–99.