



Evaluation of Internal Organization Aspects of the Final Four Teams in the Kurdistan Region Premier Football League

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Submitted: 19 – 12 – 2024	<p>The research aimed to identify the level of internal organization (kinetic, social, and stability) among football players of the leading teams (Final Four) in the Kurdistan Region Premier League. The study aimed to identify the degree of difference in internal organization (kinetic, social, and stability) among the Final Four teams participating in the Kurdistan Region Premier League. Also, the study aimed to identify the variation in internal organization (kinetic, social, and stability) among the Final Four sports teams participating in the Kurdistan Region Premier League. According to the rank, the comparative descriptive method using the survey approach was employed. The research population consisted of the Premier League football clubs participating in the Kurdistan Region League, totaling 14 clubs, representing 350 players. The research sample was selected purposively, consisting of players from (Akre, Peshmerga Erbil, Sherwana, and Ranya), with a total of 100 players. This represents 28.57% of the original population. The pilot and reliability sample, consisting of 20 players, was excluded. Thus, the main sample size totaled 80 players. To achieve the research objectives, the Internal Organization Scale was utilized, covering its three dimensions: (social cohesion, kinetic cohesion, and team structure stability). In light of this, the following conclusions were reached: Most of the sports teams participating in the Final Four possess a good level of internal organization (kinetic, social, and stability). Players at higher athletic levels are characterized by a high degree of internal organization aspects (kinetic, social, and stability). The aspects of internal organization do not differ among the teams participating in the Final Four of the regional football leagues. As the team's level increases in achieving advanced results, the aspects of internal organization correspondingly improve.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Final Four, Internal organization, Kinetic, Stability</i></p>



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INTRODUCTION

The use of science in the sports field has had a significant impact on bringing the performance levels of sports teams closer in terms of skills and strategies. This has led to widespread development and study of psychological and social aspects due to their critical importance in determining the success or failure of a team or player. Team sports have also been part of this development, which was clearly reflected in modern playing methods, improving players' technical performance, especially in football (Reyes-Bossio, et al., 2022). Football has become one of the

most important team sports, where a team needs high-level psychological preparation to achieve achievement and excellence (Crawley, 2021), whether during training or competition. The team's superiority and unity come from the cohesion between team members as one entity and towards their coach. This is of significant importance in the field of small-group psychology (Crawley, 2021). This concept represents the bond that connects the group members or the strength of their relationships. It also represents the fundamental phenomena that ensure players remain on the sports team. Cohesion is the thread that connects team members and sustains their relationships. (Schei, 2023). Players on the same team come together willingly, forming a group with great enthusiasm, free from any external pressures or authority, and driven by their own spontaneity. All of this is fostered by sports cohesion. This interaction and desire will significantly contribute to athletic achievement, offering a positive impact based on collaboration with others within the group through interaction, spatial proximity, and a shared goal (Yiapanas, et al., 2024).

It can be inferred that team cohesion in sports "is the result of the forces that drive players toward the team and attract them to remain as members of the sports team." This perspective places significant focus on the player, considering the player the central figure in the sports team due to their impact on the strength of cohesion, rather than focusing on the sports group (the team) itself (Larsen, et al., 2013)

This perspective considers team cohesion as the result of driving forces that ensure the team's continuity and prevent it from falling apart. Therefore, it focuses on the strength of the bond between players during times of crisis and the team's resistance to forces that may lead to its disintegration, such as repeated defeats. (Rateb, 2000).

Building on the above and continuing diligent efforts in this field, the importance of the research lies theoretically in identifying the main issues in the study of sports teams. It aims to explore the factors that may lead to the cohesion of the sports team. Often, we observe a clear difference between various sports teams in terms of their members' cohesion, enthusiasm for training, regular participation in competitions, and achievement of set goals. How can we explain the phenomenon of a sports team's inability to maintain full cooperation among its members during several matches? What could explain the consecutive defeats faced by a sports team consisting of a relatively large number of excellent players while other sports teams with fewer excellent players still achieve better results? And its direction between the level of internal organization (kinetic, social, stability) of football players. It is unreasonable for a sports team that lacks cohesion, unity, and a shared goal to succeed. These teams are often characterized by boredom and division, which are alternative factors to cohesion, and they fail to maintain their formations due to frustration.

From a practical perspective, the importance of the research lies in evaluating the quality of interactions and social relationships among players within the same team. This evaluation can only come through a successful coach who is able to sense the nature of these interactions and relationships, whether during training sessions or in high-intensity competitions where situations change rapidly during matches (Jowett, 2017). This, in turn, affects the players' physical and technical abilities, requiring psychological traits and characteristics that team members must possess in order to handle competitive situations during matches (Liangqi, 2024). The lack of organization in kinetic, social, and stability in the team's structure leads to a decline in the players' performance, resulting in negative outcomes for the team (Avci et al., 2018).

Fawzi and Badr (2001) point out that the relationships within a sports team are not limited to those on the field. However, the continuity of players in the team and the experiences they go through during training and matches lead to the formation of social relationships among them off the field. These social relationships, in turn, affect their performance and results during matches. (Fawzi & Badr, 2001).

Based on this, the study of team cohesion in sports needs to address two types of cohesion: one is social cohesion, which involves the social relationships among team members, and the other is kinetic cohesion, which focuses on the mutual movement relationships between players during training and matches. This leads to the stability of the team's structure. This highlights the importance of applied research in integrating these domains to identify the primary factors in diagnosing the internal organization of sports teams participating in the Premier League of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The research problem focuses on three key questions: What is the level of internal organization—specifically kinetic, social, and stability aspects—among football players based on their team's ranking in the league? Does the level of internal organization differ among the Final Four teams in the Kurdistan Region? Additionally, are there variations in internal organization among the sports teams participating in the Region League?

This study aims to achieve three primary objectives. First, it seeks to assess the level of internal organization (kinetic, social, and stability) among football players from the top-ranking teams (Final Four) in the Premier League of the Kurdistan Region. Second, it aims to determine the extent of differences in internal organization among these Final Four teams. Lastly, it strives to analyze how internal organization varies among the Final Four teams based on their league rankings.

METHOD

This study employed a comparative descriptive method with a survey approach, which was deemed appropriate for addressing the research problem. The chosen methodology allowed for an objective analysis of differences in internal organization among football players based on their team rankings.

The research population consisted of 14 football clubs participating in the Premier League of the Kurdistan Region, representing a total of 350 players. A purposive sample of 100 players was selected from four teams: Akre, Peshmerga Erbil, Sherwana, and Ranya, accounting for 28.57% of the total population. However, 20 players who participated in the pilot and reliability study were excluded, resulting in a final sample size of 80 players.

The study utilized multiple data collection tools, including content analysis, personal interviews, and standardized scales measuring kinetic, social, and stability factors. Content analysis was conducted to ensure a thorough understanding of key concepts in physical education, measurement and evaluation, and sports psychology. Personal interviews, both direct and indirect, were conducted online with experts in measurement, evaluation, and sports psychology. These interviews aimed to assess the relevance and applicability of the research variables to football.

To ensure the validity of the Internal Organization Scale, internal consistency validity was assessed. The simple correlation coefficient (r) was calculated for each statement in relation to the total score of its respective axis within the scale. This analysis was based on data from the pilot study sample, as presented in Table (1).

Table 1. Internal Consistency Validity of the Scales of Internal Organization Aspects. (N = 29)

Social Cohesion				Kinetic Cohesion				Team Structure Stability and Interaction											
Item No.	AM	SD	Correlation coefficients	Item No.	AM	SD	Correlation coefficients	Role Clarity			Correlation coefficients	Role Acceptance			Role Performance				
								Item No.	AM	SD		Item No.	AM	SD	Item No.	AM	SD		
1	3.90	0.87	*0.60	1	4.12	0.82	0.45*	1	6.11	1.40	0.61*	1	5.70	2.00	0.56*	1	4.42	1.88	0.66*
2	3.86	1.10	*0.61	2	3.45	1.52	0.56*	2	5.05	1.82	0.53*	2	5.41	1.36	0.48*	2	5.31	1.45	0.59*
3	3.72	1.11	*0.42	3	3.53	1.32	0.71*	3	5.80	0.45	0.50*	3	5.65	1.24	0.86*	3	5.65	1.23	0.58*
4	3.85	1.12	*0.55	4	3.52	1.21	0.50*	4	5.33	1.19	0.49*	4	5.52	1.58	0.71*	4	5.23	1.75	0.71*
5	3.56	1.56	*0.53	5	3.12	1.23	0.52*	5	5.11	1.52	0.80*	5	5.28	1.45	0.56*	5	5.85	1.73	0.59*
6	3.45	1.52	*0.41	6	3.23	1.45	0.49*	6	5.42	1.44	0.56*	6	4.25	2.21	0.55*	6	5.42	1.65	0.56*
7	3.72	1.15	*0.54	7	3.85	1.20	0.71*	7	5.50	1.50	0.46*	7	5.63	0.12	0.60*	7	5.21	2.23	0.54*
8	4.23	1.63	*0.75	8	3.23	1.43	0.54*	8	4.45	1.63	0.56*	8	5.50	1.42	0.62*	8	5.53	1.56	0.58*
9	4.23	1.33	*0.61	9	3.45	1.23	0.85*	9	5.31	1.70	0.86*	9	5.42	1.53	0.49*	9	5.93	1.24	0.53
10	3.45	1.60	*0.55	10	3.63	1.12	0.52*	10	5.51	1.54	0.60*	10	4.13	1.65	0.86*	10	5.35	1.77	0.49*

*Significant at a significance level of 0.05

Table 1, shows statistically significant correlation coefficients between all statements and the total score of the scale or the dimension to which they belong within the scales of some aspects of internal organization among the pilot study participants. This indicates the scales' internal consistency validity.

Reliability was tested on a sample of 20 players from the original research population. The reliability was verified using the “Cronbach’s Alpha” and “Split-Half” methods.

Table 2. Reliability Values for the Scales of Internal Organization Aspects Using Cronbach’s Alpha and Split-Half Methods

Scale	Statistical Treatments	Item No.	Cronbach’s Alpha		Split-Half	
			Reliability coefficients	Correlation coefficients between two halves of items	Overall reliability coefficients (Spearman-Brown)	
Social Cohesion Scale		10	0.78	0.78	0.87	
Kinetic Cohesion Scale		10	0.76	0.64	0.78	
Team Structure Stability and Interaction Scale	Role Clarity	10	0.84	0.65	0.79	
	Role Acceptance	10	0.79	0.66	0.80	
	Role Performance	10	0.82	0.84	0.92	

Table 2, demonstrates the reliability of the Internal Organization Aspects Scale using Cronbach’s Alpha and Split-Half methods. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficients for the scale dimensions ranged from 0.76 to 0.84, while the Split-Half reliability coefficients ranged from 0.78 to 0.92.

The Internal Organization Scale consists of three key axes: social cohesion, kinetic cohesion, and team structure stability. The Social Cohesion Scale comprises 10 questions, each rated on a five-point scale, where 5 represents the highest score and 1 the lowest. The total score for an individual is obtained by summing their responses, with a maximum possible score of 50. A higher score indicates stronger social cohesion within the team. To determine the overall team cohesion score, the individual scores of all team members are summed and divided by the number of respondents. Similarly, the Kinetic Cohesion Scale follows the same format, measuring the level of kinetic attraction between team members. A higher score on this scale signifies greater kinetic cohesion among players.

The Team Structure Stability dimension, developed by Carron & Grand (1992), assesses the degree of team structure and interaction within sports teams. It is based on three components: role clarity, referring to the players’ cognitive understanding of their roles and responsibilities; role acceptance, which reflects players’ emotional agreement and satisfaction with their assigned roles; and

perceived role performance, which evaluates how well players believe they have fulfilled their responsibilities. Each component consists of specific items, with both positive and negative statements. Negative statements require reverse scoring, where higher scores are converted to lower values and vice versa. The individual player's score is determined by summing their responses for each dimension, while the overall team score is calculated by averaging the individual scores.

A pilot study was conducted from April 10, 2024, to April 14, 2024, involving a random sample of 20 players from both within and outside the main research sample. The objectives of the pilot study were to assess the suitability and validity of the measurement scales, ensure the clarity of instructions, identify potential difficulties in application, and calculate the scientific reliability of the scales. This preliminary phase helped refine the methodology and address any issues before the full implementation of the study.

Following the validation of the scales, the main study was conducted from April 25, 2024, to May 4, 2024. The finalized scales were distributed among the selected participants. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package, employing various methods, including arithmetic mean (AM), standard deviation (SD), correlation coefficient, analysis of variance (ANOVA), the least significant difference (LSD) test, and percentage analysis (Sabri, 2006). These statistical treatments ensured an accurate and reliable evaluation of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of statistical indicators for the research variables.

Table 3. AM, SD, and skewness coefficients for the research sample

Trams' sequence	Variables	AM	SD	Skewness coefficients
Akre	Kinetic	35.350	1.559	6.975
	Social	37.050	1.459	6.525
	Stability	129.850	4.369	19.540
Peshmerga Erbil	Kinetic	38.400	1.400	6.260
	Social	38.35	1.532	6.853
	Stability	139.550	3.094	13.839
Sherwana	Kinetic	35.600	1.294	5.789
	Social	35.950	1.558	6.969
	Stability	126.800	3.865	17.285
Ranya	Kinetic	34.000	1.181	5.281
	Social	35.100	1.256	5.618
	Stability	135.800	4.618	20.654

From Table 3, the highest mean for the three scales (Kinetic, Social, and Stability) was for the Peshmerga Erbil club, with values of (38.400, 38.35, and 139.550), respectively. The corresponding standard deviations were (1.400, 1.532, 3.094). Meanwhile, the lowest mean for the Kinetic and Social scales was for Ranya Club, with values of (34.00, and 35.100), respectively. The corresponding standard deviations were (1.181, and 1.256). Meanwhile, the lowest mean for Stability was for Sherwana Club, with a value of (126.800) and a standard deviation of (3.865).

Analysis of the differences in internal organization between the final four teams

Table 4. Number of players and the level of internal organization categories (Kinetic, Social, Stability) for the research sample

Teams	Scales	First category "33 and below"		Second category "33-36"		Third category "36 and above"	
		NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Akre	Kinetic	6	30	8	40	6	30
	Social	6	30	7	35	7	35
	Stability	3	15	8	40	9	45
	Internal Organization	15	19	23	29	22	28
Peshmerga	Kinetic	10	50	60	30	4	20
	Social	9	45	2	10	9	45
	Stability	7	35	4	20	9	45
	Internal Organization	26	43	12	15	22	28
Sherwana	Kinetic	5	25	8	40	7	35
	Social	10	50	8	40	2	10
	Stability	4	20	8	40	8	40
	Internal Organization	19	24	24	30	17	21
Ranya	Kinetic	7	35	3	15	10	50
	Social	6	30	5	25	9	45
	Stability	6	30	4	20	10	50
	Internal Organization	19	24	12	15	29	36

From Table 4, it appears that the highest percentage for the internal organization level in the category "33 and below" is for the Peshmerga Club, with a percentage of (43%). Meanwhile, the lowest percentage of internal organization for the same category was for Akre Club, with a percentage of (19%). Meanwhile, the highest percentage for the internal organization level in the "33-36" category was for Sherwana Club, with a percentage of (30%). While the lowest percentage for the same category was for Ranya Club, with a percentage of (15%). The highest level of internal organization in the "36 and above" category was for Ranya Club, with a percentage of (36%). While the lowest level for the same category was for Sherwana Club, with a percentage of (21%).

Analysis of variance in internal organization between the final four teams

Table 5. Analysis of variance for internal organization (Kinetic, Social, Stability) for the research sample

	Variance Source	Sum Square	DF	Means Square	F- value	Sig.
Kinetic	Between-group	204.737	3	68.246	1.829	.149
	Within group	2836.150	76	37.318		
	Total	3040.888	79			
Social	Between-group	118.737	3	39.572	.933	.429
	Within group	3224.250	76	42.424		
	Total	3342.987	79			
Stability	Between-group	1982.100	3	660.700	2.035	.116
	Within group	24675.900	76	324.683		
	Total	26658.000	79			

From Table 5, it appears that there are no statistically significant differences, as (sig) are (0.149, 0.429, 0.116) respectively, which are greater than the confidence level of 0.05. To identify the significance of the differences, the Least Significant Difference (LSD) method was used, as shown in Table (6).

Table 6. Least Significant Difference (LSD) between the research sample

Teams	Trams' sequence	Teams	SD	Standard error	Sig.
Akre	1	2	1.350	1.931	.487
		3	-3.050	1.931	.119
		4	-.250	1.931	.897
	2	3	-4.400	1.931	.026
		4	-1.600	1.931	.410
		3	4	2.800	1.931
Peshmerga	1	2	1.950	2.059	.347
		3	-1.300	2.059	.530
		4	1.100	2.059	.595
	2	3	-3.250	2.059	.119
		4	-.850	2.059	.681
		3	4	2.400	2.059
Sherwana	1	2	-5.950	5.698	.300
		3	-9.700	5.698	.093
		4	3.050	5.698	.594
	2	3	-3.750	5.698	.512
		4	9.000	5.698	.118
		3	4	12.750*	5.698
Ranya	1	2	1.342	5.862	.482
		3	2,769	5.862	.0841
		4	-1.418	5.862	.122
	2	3	3.045	5.862	.629
		4	-.730	5.862	.385
		3	4	1,540	5.862

From Table 6, it is clear that there are no statistically significant differences between the sports teams, as all (Sig.) values for the least difference in means are greater than the confidence level of 0.05.

From the presentation and analysis of the results, it is evident that there is a correlation between the level of the sports teams and their internal organization, as represented in their kinetic, social, and stability organization. This is demonstrated by their qualification to the final four and their achievement of good levels in the internal organization scales of the team. The study results confirmed that there are no differences in internal organization among the teams participating in the final four, despite the difference in ranking between the teams in the results. The differences in results are attributed to several factors influenced by match conditions, which may include tactical or technical variables or even the element of chance (Salumi, 2012, p. 34). This is consistent with what was confirmed by the study's results (Oh, & Yoo 2023, p. 8) that the organization of the team and the cohesion of its members play a positive role in achieving positive progress for all team members and its success.

This is attributed to the fact that most of the teams under study were elite among the tournament participants, despite the differences in their ranking in the final four. This indicates that the teams have achieved their goals, as the integration in preparation, from their perspective, reflects the continuous work of the team members to achieve the common goal of reaching the winner's podium. This is also attributed to the effectiveness of internal organization among team members, where each player works efficiently and contributes to the team's and coach's satisfaction by adhering to the team's teachings and standards. Individuals show happiness and cooperation through achieving the desired goals, which leads to what is called the "healthy team environment" (Barker, 1967). The healthy team environment reflects cohesion, which grants the group significant influence over its members. This is

evident in the high solidarity among individuals, where individualism fades within the group, friendships prevail, and the loyalty of each individual to the group increases (Barker, 1967: 69-70).

Abdul Wahab (1980) adds that group cohesion is “the result of all the forces influencing the group and its members to remain part of it and achieve its goals, whether these forces are internal or external. These forces may lead to either cohesion or lack of cohesion. Moreover, group cohesion is the reason for the group’s persistence and continuity, driving it to achieve its goals.”

This is confirmed by Alawi (1998), who states that players feel a strong sense of belonging to the team, talking about the team rather than about themselves. Team cohesion in sports refers to each player feeling friendly emotions towards their teammates, with loyalty and affection prevailing among them, all directed towards a common goal. It comes to mind that a cohesive sports team is one in which every player is ready to share the team's collective responsibility. Also, its members are characterized by high morale, as each player is willing to sacrifice personal interests for the team's benefit (Alawi, 1998 p. 52). In the same context, studies by (Eccles & Tran 2012; Salas et al., 2015; Ashford et al., 2023) have shown that successful sports teams rely heavily on coordination and team cohesion, which have been identified as critical qualities. These studies suggest that these qualities are best developed through deliberate planning and strategy that focuses on the collective behavior of players. By effectively coordinating their actions and fostering a cohesive team environment, teams can outperform and defeat their opponents, highlighting the importance of these elements in achieving victory in sports.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the researchers conclude the importance of factors affecting the team and its performance. The researchers found that the internal organizational factors, including kinetic, social, and stability factors, play a positive role in the teams’ performance and participation in the Final Four. A high level of performance distinguishes the players of these teams due to the internal organizational factors mentioned in the research, which played a positive role in achieving advanced positive results for the teams participating in the Final Four of the Regional Football League.

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