

Examining the Challenges of Implementing Performance Management in Executive Agencies; A Case Study of the Office of Performance Management of Public Administration and Recruitment Organization Based on the Civil Service Management Act.

Mostafa Heidari¹, Mahdi Heidari Eshkejanpahlou², Seyyed Javad Kamali Moghadam³

^{1 & 2} Master's student in Islamic Studies and Public Administration, Department of Governance, Faculty of Islamic Studies and Management, Imam Sadiq University (AS), Tehran, Iran. mo.heidari@isu.ac.ir and Mahdi.Heydari.Ep@Gmail.com

³ Master student of Islamic Studies and Business Management, Faculty of Islamic Studies and Management, Imam Sadiq University (AS), Tehran, Iran. sj.kamali@isu.ac.ir

Abstract

Performance assessment in executive agencies is a vital tool for improving efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services. Inaccurate assessments based on subjective judgments and short-term assessments reduce the credibility of these assessments and fail to provide an accurate picture of the performance of executive agencies. The performance assessment of executive agencies, based on Articles 81 and 82 of the Civil Service Management Act, is conducted annually, and the results are announced in September during the "Shahid Rajaei Festival". This research examines the challenges of implementing performance management in executive agencies according to these articles. Initially, the theoretical foundations of performance management at the organizational level were studied, and selected sources were reviewed and categorized. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 experts in performance management from

public sector organizations. These experts were identified using the snowball sampling method, considering their scientific, experiential, and perceptual qualifications. The interview data were then subjected to inductive thematic analysis, leading to the identification and analysis of various challenges. The study identified and analyzed the challenges in three main layers: theoretical, legal planning, and implementation. The theoretical layer encompasses conceptual issues and the basic principles of performance assessment, which arise due to the complexity and difficulty of understanding performance across different levels of organizations, managers, and staff. This layer is deep-rooted and foundational, influencing the other layers. The legal and planning layer addresses the legal and planning challenges within executive agencies. The implemental layer involves factors that cause deficiencies or weaknesses in the execution of performance assessments. This research indicates that to improve performance assessments in executive agencies, substantial and coordinated reforms are necessary in all three layers: theoretical, legal, and implemental. Only through these reforms can more accurate and reliable assessments be achieved, thereby enhancing the overall performance of the agencies.

Keywords: Performance Management, Performance Assessment, Public Administration and Recruitment Organization, Thematic Analysis.

1 Introduction

The efficiency and effectiveness of a country's executive system are vital factors in achieving developmental plans and the prosperity and welfare of its people. However, the high cost of public organizations in delivering public services and the financial constraints of governments make it even more necessary to improve the performance and productivity of the country's executive agencies (Ghanizadeh et al, 2021). Additionally, the importance of increasing effectiveness and achieving results, continuously improving the quality of services and goods provided, and ensuring citizen satisfaction emphasizes the need for performance management and organizational assessment. As enhancing the efficiency and performance management of executive agencies creates numerous growth opportunities within organizations, both the government and organizations make significant efforts in this direction. Performance assessment can provide insight into the progress of performance improvements, thereby providing the motivation and opportunity needed to enhance the quality of agency performance (Ghanavati, 2022).

Neglecting performance management and assessment means lacking a clear strategy to align employees with the organization's actions and goals and to manage and plan performance. A performance management system can play a role in all organizational dimensions, from setting goals to utilizing resources and facilities, developing employees, and achieving objectives and strategies. Its absence is considered a sign of organizational dysfunction. As Talbot states, agreement on performance planning lays the foundation for performance management (Talbot, 2010, pp. 43-45). Through the performance assessment of employees and managers, organizations can, on one hand, identify, review, and continuously improve organizational goals, thereby enhancing the performance management cycle. On the other hand, employees, considering the resources and facilities at their disposal and the costs incurred, can collaboratively and consciously strive to achieve the organization's desired goals (Tabatabai, 2015).

According to Article 81 of the Civil Service Management Act, executive agencies are required to establish a performance management system at three levels: employees, managers, and the organization. They must annually submit the results of their performance assessments to the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization.

Based on Article 82 of the Civil Service Management Act, the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization is tasked with reviewing the process of establishing the performance management system in executive agencies and assessing these agencies under general and specific indicators. The results of these assessments are presented to the President and the Parliament and are reflected annually in the Shahid Rajaei Festival.

Each year, the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization assesses the performance of the executive agencies based on Articles 81 and 82 of the Civil Service Management Act, and the top-performing agencies are introduced at the Shahid Rajaei Festival. This report aims to examine the performance assessment process of executive agencies to identify and analyze its shortcomings. Specifically, it seeks to explore and analyze the extent and quality of the implementation of Articles 81 and 82, along with their related regulations and guidelines, by the Administrative and Employment Organization. This includes aspects such as the establishment of the performance management system, the accuracy of assessments in providing performance reports, and the interrelationship of performance assessments of managers, employees, and executive agencies.

2 Theoretical Basis of Research

2.1 The Concept of Performance Management

The concept of government performance management has been discussed since the formation of the first governments and is not a new thing. Perhaps the concept of performance management can be seen as far back as 2000 BC when Chinese officials began measuring the skills of government officials to assess their civil service (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen, 2011, p:23). According to the long historical background of the concepts related to performance management and different types of organization in terms of function and duty, various words have been established in this field. In the following table, an overview of some of these words has been tried:

Table 1; Key concepts in performance measurement

Word	Description
Performance	In general, performance refers to "completing, executing, fulfilling, and carrying out an assigned or committed task". Specifically, performance at the individual level is "the extent to which individuals contribute to the achievement of organizational goals," and at the organizational level, it is "the set of behaviors and outcomes that determine results" (Lalwani, 2020).
Assessment	This is a concept used to inform decision-makers about the nature and quality of performance, which is applied to ongoing government actions and their completed actions (Pour Ezzat, 2017, p: 58).
Control	Continuous comparison between what is and what should be (Rafizadeh, 2008, p: 39).
Performance assessment	The process of measuring performance in executive agencies is based on scientific management concepts to achieve organizational goals and objectives, within the framework of executive programs (Ronagh & Rafizadeh, 2018, p: 38).
Performance management	A systematic approach that, through the processes of setting strategic goals, measuring, collecting and analyzing data, reviewing performance data reports, and applying their results, leads to organizational performance improvement (Ronagh, Rafizadeh, 2018, p: 35).

Government performance in pursuing programs and actions is divided into several levels of the political-administrative system, ranging from macro-level policies to micro-level organizations. In this regard, government performance can be analyzed and examined at two levels:

Macro level: This typically involves general discussions about government performance in various policy areas. The key element of macro-level government performance is the policy areas (e.g., health or education) or the performance of a set of organizations within a network (e.g., organizations involved in an urban development project).

Micro level: This is defined as the performance of a single organization concerning the public and other organizations. In other words, government programs at the macro level become organizational goals at the micro level. However, it should be noted that due to various reasons such as the multiplicity of stakeholders with different goals, networks with diverse powers, and high conflict of interests, government performance has become a very

complex performance pattern (Bouckaert, Halligan & Dooren, 2017, p: 97). This complexity hinders the proper measurement of government performance using performance indicators. However, governments have relied on performance indicators to align their performance with ongoing programs. It is clear that the relationship between performance measurement and complexity is far from being resolved, but performance measurement can cover the entire planning chain from input to outcome (Pollitt, 2013).

2.2 Performance Management and Performance Assessment

There is a conceptual difference between performance management and performance assessment, and performance assessment is considered a part of the performance management process of an organization. Performance management is a process that aims to set goals and ensure that such goals are achieved at the organizational level, using performance assessment to monitor results for continuous performance improvement. Consequently, performance assessment can be considered a tool for the implementation and execution of performance management (Rezaeean & Ganjali, 2016, p: 68).

2.3 Performance Assessment Models in The World

Performance assessment models are used as tools to provide a picture of organizational performance. Models are abstractions of different components and relationships of the organization in reality that try to identify and display the dimensions of organizational performance with a systemic approach (Talbot, 2010, p: 65). Performance assessment in the private and public sectors is very different. This issue became more pronounced when governments, in the course of managerialism in the 1980s, tried to apply private-sector performance assessment models in the public sector. This issue has serious critics to this day, and some believe that the use of performance assessment in the public sector leads to organizations' efforts to data fabrication and divert from their core to non-core tasks. Changing models that were originally intended to examine the profitability of private organizations into models that are supposed to target public satisfaction will be difficult. The goals of these organizations are very different from the goals of commercial organizations and the private sector, and this can make performance management in the

public sector more complex (Ensslin et al, 2022). The following is a list of the most important models of public sector performance assessment:

Table 2: The most important performance management models in the public sector in the world

Models	Originators	Date, Location	Description
European Public Service Awards (EPSA)	European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)	From 2009 until now, the European Union	The European Public Sector Award (EPSA) is a Europe-wide award scheme for public sector entities at all levels of government. It has been organized biennially since 2009 by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA). The EPSA aims to recognize and reward innovative projects submitted by public administrations across Europe, under various overarching themes.
Common Assessment Framework (CAF)	European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)	From 2019 until now, used throughout Europe and 4100 organizations in other countries	The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a Total Quality Management (TQM) tool inspired by major Total Quality models, particularly the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). It's designed specifically for public-sector organizations, considering their unique characteristics. The CAF model serves as a self-assessment and performance assessment tool to introduce public administrations to the culture of excellence and TQM principles. It guides organizations through a full 'Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)' cycle, aiming to catalyze comprehensive improvement processes.

Models	Originators	Date, Location	Description
Management Accountability Framework (MAF)	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	From 2006 until now, Canada	The Management Accountability Framework (MAF) is a tool for assessing management excellence and performance within Canadian government departments and agencies. In Canada, it's used by the Treasury Board Secretariat to assess federal departments and agencies annually. The MAF covers areas such as financial management, human resources, information management, results and performance, risk management, and governance. It helps ensure that these entities are accountable for their management decisions and actions, aligning with policy implementation and government-wide practices.
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)	UK Government Audit Commission	From 2002 until now, UK	The CPA is a system used in the United Kingdom to assess the performance of local authorities and the services they provide. CPA classified local authorities such as Excellent, Good, Fair, Weak, or Poor based on their performance. This assessment aims to improve management and service delivery at the local government level by providing a clear and comprehensive assessment of their operations and outcomes.
Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)	Office of Management and Budget (OMB)	From 2002 until 2018, USA	PART was developed by the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a systematic method of assessing the performance of federal program activities. It was introduced by President George W. Bush in 2002 and was used to rate the

Models	Originators	Date, Location	Description
			effectiveness of all federal programs. PART was designed as a diagnostic tool to: -Improve program performance -Inform budget decisions -Identify actions to improve results. The tool consisted of a questionnaire that assessed a program's purpose, design, planning, management, results, and accountability to determine its overall effectiveness. The PART assessments were used to help drive improvements in federal programs by focusing on outcomes and results.

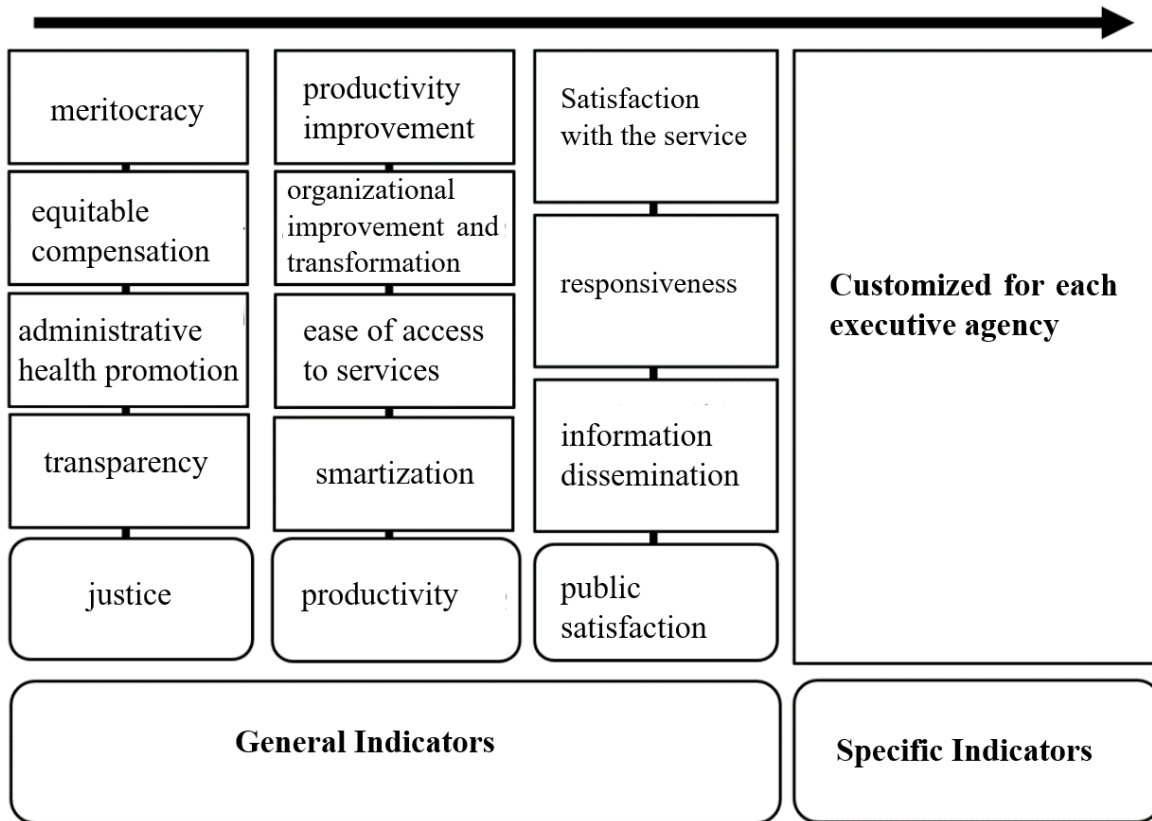
Source: Talbot, 2012, p. 312.

3 Performance Assessment Model in Iran

According to experts from the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization, this organization has been inspired by the EFQM model to assess the performance of executive

agencies, and its assessment model has changed and been localized over time. Currently, the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization uses the following model:

Figure 1: Performance assessment model of The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization



Source: The Office of Performance Management of Public Administration and Recruitment Organization

General indicators encompass the provisions of the Civil Service Management Act and its relevant regulations, guidelines, and circulars. Additionally, specific indicators are

customized based on the goals, programs, and upstream documents of the executive agency.

4 Assessment Process of The Performance of Executive Agencies

Chapter 11 of the Civil Service Management Act establishes a framework for performance assessment within executive agencies and the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization. It mandates the implementation of a comprehensive performance management system encompassing organizational, managerial, and employee assessments, performance measurement and assessment programs, and productivity assessments. Regular reports on the outcomes of these systems are required, and the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization is tasked with monitoring and supervising their implementation across all agencies. An annual report summarizing the performance of executive agencies and their assessment against specific and general indicators, as well as the implementation of the law's provisions, is prepared and submitted to the President and the Parliament. Additionally, the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization conducts an annual assessment of the country's position and progress in comparison to other nations using international indicators and reports received from relevant agencies. This assessment is aligned with the communicated vision, and the resulting report is submitted to the President and the Parliament. The findings of the performance assessment are utilized to inform the development of development program strategies.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of performance assessment as a tool for accountability, continuous improvement, and benchmarking against international standards. It ensures that performance management systems are implemented effectively across all executive agencies and that the results are used to guide strategic planning for development programs ¹.

¹ Chapter 11 - Performance Assessment

Article 81: Executive agencies are mandated to establish a performance management system encompassing organizational, managerial, and employee assessments, performance measurement and assessment programs, and productivity assessments within their units. This system shall be implemented in accordance with regulations approved by the Council of Ministers upon the proposal of the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization. Executive agencies shall prepare regular and systematic reports on the outcomes of their performance management systems and submit them to the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization.

Performance assessment of executive agencies, as per Article 3 of the Executive Regulations for Articles 81 and 82 of the Civil Service Management Act, commenced in February of the previous year. Since then, executive agencies have been submitting their proposed indicators, categorized into general and specific indicators, to the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization.

Subsequently, working groups comprising The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization specialists, representatives from the Planning and Budget Organization, executive agency representatives, and experts in the field of performance assessment, convene to review the proposed indicators. By the end of February, The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization will finalize and communicate the approved indicators.

Executive agencies have until the end of May to upload their self-assessment reports based on The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization's approved indicators onto the designated system. Starting in June, the performance assessment process commences based on the documentation submitted by executive agencies, and the assessment results are communicated to the agencies by the end of June.

A two-week window is provided for agencies to appeal their assigned scores, followed by another two weeks for reviewing these appeals and addressing any discrepancies in the assessment scores. Upon completion of these steps, the final results are announced by The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization in September during the Shahid Rajaei Festival, and the winners of the festival are recognized.

Article 82: The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization is responsible for monitoring and supervising the implementation of performance management systems across all executive agencies. Annually, the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization shall prepare a report summarizing the performance of executive agencies and their assessment against specific and general indicators, as well as the implementation of the provisions of this law. This report shall be based on regulations approved by the Council of Ministers upon the proposal of the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization and submitted to the President and the Parliament.

Article 83: The Public Administration and Recruitment Organization shall annually conduct an assessment of the country's position and progress in comparison to other nations using international indicators and reports received from relevant agencies. This assessment shall be aligned with the communicated vision. The resulting report shall be submitted to the President and the Parliament, and its findings shall be utilized to inform the development of development program strategies.

Throughout this process, agencies are informed of their assessment scores, and the assessment process is repeated similarly for subsequent years.

5 Literature Review

The field of performance assessment of executive agencies in Iran has witnessed a growing body of research over the past few decades. These studies have explored various aspects of performance assessment, including:

Table 2: Research conducted in the field of performance assessment in the public sector in Iran

the writer(s)	Title	Research sampling	research methodology	Findings and results
Ghanizadeh, Hasanpour, 2021	Pathology of Performance Management in Iranian Public Sector Organizations	Semi-structured interviews with 19 performance management experts in Iranian public sector organizations	The research methodology was qualitative, employing thematic analysis to identify the pathologies.	The identified pathologies were categorized into one overarching theme, six organizing themes, and 55 subthemes.
Motahari et al, 2021	Designing the performance management model of government organizations based on social approaches using a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data.	Interview with 16 senior and middle managers of government organizations by snowball method	The research employed both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. In the qualitative section, theoretical sampling was used from texts related to the social fields of the organization using the thematic analysis method. In the quantitative section, a survey method was used with a questionnaire distribution approach. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to	Presenting a Social Approach-Based Performance Management Model for Public Sector Organizations with 10 Dimensions, 39 Components, and 136 Indicators.

the writer(s)	Title	Research sampling	research methodology	Findings and results
			determine reliability, and the statistical analysis of the data was performed using SPSS software.	
Ghanavati, 2022	Aspects of performance measurement in public sector organizations	Examining reports and articles in the field of performance assessment of public sector organizations.	Systematic analysis of scientific reports	The Necessity of a Contingency Approach to Performance Assessment Systems in Public Sector Organizations Aligned with Missions and Approaches
Moghimi, Pour Ezzat, Latifi, Ebrahimi, 2021	Presenting a comprehensive model of the participation of experts and non-governmental organizations in the performance management of the public sector	Interviews with 21 assessors, assessment managers, and experts involved in the informal performance management process of public sector organizations	The research method is qualitative and the current state is modeled using the Glaserian approach of the grounded theory strategy.	Examination of the Effective Components of the Current State of Expert and NGO Participation in Public Sector Performance Management and Presentation of a Comprehensive Model of Expert and NGO Participation in Public Sector Performance Management
Bekdalo, Rahnavard, 2017	Measuring inter-organizational coordination and identifying factors affecting it in public organizations	A sample of 59 organizations using Morgan's table and systematic random sampling.	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)	Research shows that the influencing factors on inter-organizational coordination are as follows: willingness to cooperate, regulation of inter-organizational relations, mutual understanding and interests, alignment

the writer(s)	Title	Research sampling	research methodology	Findings and results and interdependence, and legal agreement.

Source: Research Findings

The results of the literature review emphasize that although performance assessment faces many challenges, the existence of this process is essential for increasing productivity and efficiency. Performance assessment, as a tool for improving the quality and efficiency of public services, plays a vital role in achieving strategic goals and improving services to the public. Addressing the identified challenges and striving to overcome them can lead to an improvement in assessment systems and ultimately improve the performance of the public sector. This chapter, by reviewing the studies conducted, will lay the groundwork for a more detailed analysis and the presentation of appropriate solutions in the subsequent chapters of this article.

6 Research Methodology

Thematic Analysis (TA): Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail. The thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text and moves on to identifying implicit and explicit ideas within the data. Codes are then developed to represent the identified themes and are applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis. Unlike many qualitative analytic methods, TA is distinct because it provides a methodological tool that is not bound by any theoretical framework (Clarke & Braun, 2016). In this research, thematic analysis was employed to understand the various issues associated with performance assessment in executive agencies and among managers and staff in the public sector. The analysis was conducted using the MAXQDA software, which facilitated the coding and categorization of interview data.

Research Implementation

1. Review of Theoretical Foundations:

Initially, the theoretical foundations of performance management at the organizational level were studied. Relevant sources were reviewed and categorized to establish a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 experts in performance management from various public sector organizations. These experts were selected through a snowball sampling method, considering their scientific, experiential, and perceptual qualifications.

3. Data Analysis:

The interview data were then subjected to inductive thematic analysis. This involved coding the data and identifying recurring themes and patterns. Through this process, various issues and challenges related to performance assessment were identified and categorized.

By using thematic analysis, this research systematically uncovered the underlying issues in performance assessment practices, providing a detailed understanding of the theoretical, legal, and operational challenges faced by public sector organizations.

7 Results and Findings

The present research concludes that the implementation of performance management in the executive agencies of the country based on Chapter 11 of the Civil Service Management Act faces two main and secondary categories of factors. According to the present research, the main factors are divided into three main layers: theoretical, legal, and planning and implementation.

Theoretical layer: These flaws relate to theoretical issues and fundamental concepts of performance assessment. The problems at this level are mainly due to the complexity and difficulty of understanding performance at different levels of organizations, managers, and employees. These flaws are deep and theoretical, and the root of many other problems lies in this layer. In other words, without a proper and clear understanding of performance and its criteria, assessments cannot be accurate and valid.

Legal and Planning layer: The next layer of flaws is legal and planning flaws, which describes the legal and planning problems at the level of executive agencies. These problems include several factors such as ambitious laws and policies, lack of appropriate enforcement mechanisms, lack of appropriate accountability mechanisms, and so on. Each of these factors can have a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of performance assessment. Weaknesses in this layer often lead to serious problems in the proper and fair implementation of assessments.

Implementation layer: Finally, implementation flaws include factors that cause performance assessment to be flawed or weak in implementation. This category of flaws includes a lack of appropriate training and development, a lack of financial and human resources, the use of inefficient information technology systems, the lack of appropriate systems for management and troubleshooting, and so on. These implementation problems make it difficult for the performance assessment process to be implemented effectively and efficiently, and the results of the assessments may not be reliable and valid. The following table describes these factors:

Table 3: Challenges of Implementing Performance Management in Executive Agencies

Main Factors	Secondary Factors
<p>Theoretical layer: This category includes issues related to the fundamental theories and concepts of performance assessment. The problems at this level are mainly due to the complexity and difficulty of understanding performance at different levels of organizations, managers, and employees.</p>	<p>1- Abstract Concept of Performance: Due to the multiplicity of stakeholders and the wide range of goals and functions of the government, it is not possible to provide a precise definition of the concept of performance. Performance, as an abstract concept, includes various dimensions such as efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and productivity, which makes it very difficult to define precisely and comprehensively. This leads to differences in interpretations and understandings of performance.</p>
	<p>2. Difficulty in Breaking Down Performance from Top to Bottom: Establishing a link between goals from the macro-planning level to the organization and employee level is very difficult due to the complexity, lack of clarity in the boundaries of performance outcomes of agencies, and unclear objectives. Each agency plays a different role in the implementation of macro-plans, and these roles are not easily modeled and defined.</p>
	<p>3. Multiplicity of Factors Influencing Performance Outcomes: Due to the nature of the public sector, there are a significant number of environmental</p>

Main Factors	Secondary Factors
	<p>factors that influence performance outcomes, and it is not possible to identify a specific person or entity responsible for the consequences. This issue prevents assessments from fully and accurately reflecting the actual performance of agencies and employees.</p> <p>4. Plurality of Values in the Public Sector: Due to the non-financial nature of most performance indicators and objectives, it is not possible to assess the performance of executive agencies based on the diverse values prevailing in society. Evaluating intangible outcomes requires specific approaches that consider qualitative factors and stakeholder perceptions.</p>
<p>Legal and Planning layer: This section describes the legal and planning problems at the level of executive agencies, which include several factors that can each have a significant impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of performance assessment.</p>	<p>1. Lack of Adequate Laws and Regulations to Support the Assessor: The laws and regulations are designed in such a way that assessment bodies do not have sufficient power to hold agencies accountable. If these laws are not sufficient, assessment bodies will not be able to properly perform their duties.</p> <p>2. Ambitiousness of Top-Level Laws and Policies: Many top-level laws and policies are highly ambitious and do not pay sufficient attention to existing implementation capabilities and resources. This issue prevents agencies from properly implementing these laws and achieving the set goals.</p> <p>3. Lack of Proper Prioritization of Goals in Top-Level Laws and Policies: Top-level laws and policies typically include a multitude of goals without prioritizing them. This causes confusion among executive agencies and prevents them from effectively allocating their resources and efforts.</p> <p>4. Insufficient Attention to Appropriate Enforcement Mechanisms in Laws and Regulations: Laws and regulations often lack adequate enforcement mechanisms, meaning there are no effective mechanisms to hold agencies and managers accountable if goals are not met.</p> <p>5. Lack of Link between Individual Performance Assessment and Executive Agencies: There is no direct link between the performance of managers and employees and the results of executive agencies. This issue prevents the performance of managers and employees from being assessed accurately and in proportion to organizational achievements.</p> <p>6. Failure to Adhere to the Principle of Feedback in Performance Management: There are no regular feedback processes to inform managers and employees about the results of assessments. This causes opportunities for improvement and development to be overlooked and assessments to have no positive impact on performance improvement.</p>

Main Factors	Secondary Factors
	<p>7. Lack of Legal Requirements for Annual Performance Plans: The legislature has not imposed any requirements on agencies to provide annual performance plans, and top-level laws cannot be converted into indicators due to their numerous ambiguities.</p>
<p>Implementation layer: This category includes factors that cause performance assessment to be flawed or weak in implementation.</p>	<p>1- Lack of Proper Training and Development: One of the major problems in the performance assessment process is that evaluators may not have received adequate and necessary training to conduct accurate and fair assessments. This leads to incomplete and inaccurate assessments.</p>
	<p>2. Use of Inefficient Information Technology Systems: Many agencies use outdated and inefficient information technology systems that cannot properly meet the needs of performance assessment. The use of advanced data analysis tools can help improve the accuracy and quality of assessments.</p>
	<p>3. Lack of Financial Resources: The lack of adequate financial resources to support assessment processes and develop the necessary tools leads to a decrease in the accuracy and quality of assessments.</p>
	<p>4. Lack of Belief Among Managers in the Importance of Performance Management in Executive Agencies: Perhaps the most significant obstacle to the implementation of performance management systems is the lack of belief among managers in the importance of assessment. The formality and impracticality of assessments make managers uninterested in developing performance management in their organizations.</p>
<p>5. Failure to Comply with the Legal Planning Timeline: In almost all periods of the Shahid Rajaei Festival, the performance assessment process and the determination of assessment indicators have not been carried out within the legal deadline. Executive agencies need to have access to the indicators announced by the Public Administration and Recruitment Organization from the beginning of the year in order to activate their programs; however, these indicators are generally announced to the agencies in the second half of the year.</p>	

Source: Research Findings

To improve performance assessment in executive agencies, managers, and employees, attention must be paid to three main layers. Theoretical improvements for a better understanding of performance concepts and criteria, strengthening laws and planning to create appropriate legal frameworks, and addressing implemental issues for accurate and precise implementation of assessments are all essential. By making these reforms, more

accurate and reliable assessments can be achieved, and the overall performance of agencies can be enhanced.

8 Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the literature review show that the performance assessment process in the public sector faces many challenges, but it is still recognized as a necessary process to increase the productivity and efficiency of public services. In this vein, the present paper builds upon past research with the aim of shedding further light on the performance assessment process. By conducting a more thorough examination, categorizing performance assessment challenges, and providing deeper analyses, this paper complements and enhances previous research, serving as a significant step towards improving performance assessment and addressing existing challenges.

Based on the findings of this research, the following practical recommendations are suggested:

To improve performance assessment in executive agencies, managers, and employees, attention must be paid to three main layers: theoretical reforms, legal and planning reinforcements, and practical executive enhancements.

1 .Theoretical Reforms:

- Comparative Studies: Conduct comparative research between performance assessment systems in different countries and examine best practices.
- Foster a deeper understanding of performance concepts and criteria among managers and employees.
- Create a comprehensive framework for performance assessment that includes both quantitative and qualitative criteria.

2 .Legislative and Planning Reforms:

- Strengthen legal frameworks to ensure the validity and reliability of performance assessment processes.

- Develop comprehensive performance assessment programs that align with organizational goals and objectives.
- Implement mechanisms for regular review and assessment of performance assessment policies and procedures.

3 .Implementation Reforms:

- Utilize robust performance assessment tools and technologies to streamline data collection and analysis.
- Provide adequate training and support to evaluators to ensure consistent and accurate assessments.
- Foster a performance-oriented feedback culture and continuous improvement throughout the organization.

By implementing these comprehensive measures, executive agencies can enhance their performance assessment practices, resulting in more accurate, reliable, and impactful assessments. This, in turn, will contribute to increased employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness.

The review of previous research shows that performance assessment in the public sector faces numerous challenges, yet it remains an essential process for increasing the productivity and efficiency of public services. In this vein, the present article, aimed at clarifying the performance assessment process of executive agencies in the country under Chapter 11 of the Civil Service Management Act, builds upon past research. By examining performance assessment challenges in greater detail and providing deeper analyses, this article complements and enhances past research, serving as a significant step towards improving the performance assessment process and addressing existing challenges.

In addition to confirming the findings of previous research, this study explores and challenges new dimensions of performance assessment in the public sector. For example, it emphasizes aligning individual and organizational goals to enhance assessment accuracy and accountability, the necessity of cultivating a culture and educating managers about the

importance of performance management for a better understanding, and the need to improve the precision of planning and strategic documents as solutions to the challenges of implementing performance assessment. By addressing these new aspects, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of performance assessment in public sector organizations and offers practical suggestions for improving the assessment process.

Ultimately, recognizing and addressing these challenges is crucial for strengthening trust, accountability, and effectiveness in public sector agencies, ultimately leading to better outcomes for the societies they serve. By directly confronting these obstacles, stakeholders can pave the way for more informed decision-making and improved governance in the social, political, economic, and public safety domains.

9 References

persian

1. Civil Service Management Act.
2. Executive Regulations of Articles 81 and 82 of the Civil Service Management Act.
3. Bikdello, F., & Rahnavard, F. (2016). Measuring inter-organizational coordination and identifying factors affecting it in public organizations. *Management and Development Process*, 30(2), 34-48.
4. Center for Research of the Council. (2021). Pathology of the country's planning system. (Prepared and compiled by H. Rajabpour).
5. Ghanavati, G. (2022). Aspects of performance measurement in public sector organizations. *Management and Accounting in the Third Millennium*, 5(6), 89-96.
6. Ghanizadeh, A., Nouri, R., Hasanpour, A., & Vakili, Y. (2021). Pathology of the performance management system of Iran's public sector organizations. *Management of Government Organizations*, 10(1, series 37), 47-66.
7. Moghimi, M., Pourezat, A. A., Latifi, M., & Ebrahimi, O. (2021). Presenting a comprehensive model of the participation of experts and non-governmental organizations in the performance management of the public sector. *Public Administration*, 3(2), 6-23.
8. Motahari, M., Soltani, I., & Emami, H. (2021). Designing the performance management model of government organizations based on social approaches using the combined method of quantitative and qualitative data. *Journal of Public Policy in Management*, 12(2), 56-63.
9. Pour Ezat, A. A. (2017). Assessment of government and governance. Tehran: Organization for the Study and Compilation of Humanities Textbooks of Universities.
10. RafiZadeh, A. (2008). Performance management of executive agencies. Tehran: Institute for Development and Improvement of Management.
11. Razaeyan, A., & Ganj Ali, A. A. (2016). Performance management: What, why, how. Tehran: Imam Sadeq (AS) University Publications.
12. Ronagh, Y., & Rafizadeh, A. (2018). Performance management and assessment: A scientific and applied approach. Tehran: Farmanesh.

13. Tabatabaei, S. A. (2015). Planning, assessment, and performance management, to measure the success of transformation programs in executive agencies. *Management Iran*, 5-7.

English

1. Bouckaert, Geert, John Halligan, and Wouter Van Dooren. 2017. *Performance Management in the Public Sector*. London, UK: Routledge Masters in Public Management.
2. Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2016). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 297–298. doi:10.1080/17439760.2016.12
3. Ensslin, Sandra Rolim, Welter, Larissa Marx, & Pedersini, Daiana Rafaela. (2022). Performance assessment: a comparative study between public and private sectors.
4. Fitzpatrick, Jody L., James R. Sanders, and Blaine R. Worthen. 2011. *Program Assessment: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*. New Jersey: Pearson.
5. Lalwani, Puja. 2020. Spiceworks. *Performance Management*. 8–10. <https://www.spiceworks.com/hr/performance-management/articles/what-is-performance-management/>.
6. Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. 2013. *Public Management Reform*. London: Oxford University Press.
7. Talbot, Colin. 2010. *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. New York: Oxford University Press.
8. Talbot, Colin. 2012. *The Evolving System of Performance and Assessment*. Independent Assessment Group 6-9.