



**Moderating effect of teacher's professionalism between the relationship of administrator's public leadership behaviors and universities educational performance of Iraq public sectors universities**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The primary objective of this study is to examine the moderating effect of teacher professionalism on the relationship between administrator public leadership behaviors and university education performance in Iraq's public universities. The report is based on quantitative research methodology with a sample of 305 professors from public university sectors in Iraq. In this article, the researchers employed Partial Least Square (PLS)-Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to investigate the presented research hypothesis.

The regression results indicate that public leadership has a favorable and statistically significant effect on the educational performance of colleges. The professionalism of teachers has a favorable and significant impact on the educational performance of universities. The indirect moderating effects suggest that teaching professionals have a favorable and significant moderating effect on the relationship between public leadership and university education success. With the existence of these findings, the current research acknowledges the gaps in the prior literature. It enables us to understand the significance of public leadership in influencing educational performance through teachers' professionalism as moderators.

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## Introduction

In educational administration, a centralized model is utilized within the educational system (Jaafar & Anderson, 2007). The Higher Education Commission coordinates, executes and supervises all of the nation's public universities (Zapata et al., 2013). Because the state provides financing and oversees educational institutions, university administrators have limited choice in determining academic priorities, overseeing curriculum implementation, and evaluating the impact of spending (Çokgezen & Terzi, 2008). This is why state institutions continue to dominate the educational scene despite the recent expansion of private educational institutions (Çokgezen & Terzi, 2008). Coban, Ozdemir, and Pisapia (2019) report that most students enroll in public institutions before private colleges.

In contrast, Arslan, Satici, and Kuru (2007) found that the educational opportunities and class sizes provided by private educational institutions result in a superior teaching and learning environment compared to universities in the public sector. Superior facilities, creative applications of technology, and forward-thinking approaches to education are other features that make private educational institutions more desirable to parents (Akhan, 2009). While previous research has demonstrated that public sector universities become problematic due to the leadership of public sector universities, which hinders the career development of students and the educational performance of institutions (Abdurrezzak, 2015; Karataş, 2020), this study aims to examine the relationship between public sector university leadership and educational performance.

As one of the responsibilities of institutions is to provide quality education, one way to improve the performance of institutions is to provide students from all socioeconomic backgrounds with quality education (Çokgezen & Terzi, 2008). For this reason, the quality of public educational institutions is crucial to both the ability of people to attain their educational goals and national advancement as a whole (Nussbaum, 2006). This demonstrates that educational institutions should devote their full attention to maintaining the quality of their education to boost the quality of their education, which could assist students in enhancing their financial situation (Darling-Hammond, 2013). In light of this, the effectiveness of educational institutions is a key topic of discussion in numerous countries, including Iraq. Previous research determined that effective public leadership (PUL) played a crucial role in enhancing the young's educational performance (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). In other words, Bass (2000) stated that when the PUL of organizations is strengthened in favor of educational institutions, the institutions' performance likewise improves. In other words, the professionalism of teachers aids institutions in improving their performance, which is the correct method to aid in their PUL (Connell, 2009). This is further confirmed by the fact that overemphasis has been placed on aspects such as institution leadership and teacher professionalism (TEP) in the context of research conducted over the past 15 years to boost school performance by developing an effective school environment (Ainley & Carstens, 2018; Blyth & Velissaratou, 2018). To establish an efficient learning environment in classrooms around the world, the concepts of school autonomy and responsibility have also been overemphasized (European Commission, 2018). Despite the global privatization trend, most education is still administered by public entities. Because education is considered a public

good, states can determine any measure that promotes children's academic performance (Czyzewski, Polcyn, & Hnatyszyn-Dzikowska, 2016). Therefore, it is thought that the success of public educational institutions is contingent on the leadership of persons who can defend the values of public administration while simultaneously adjusting to the demands of the current administration.

Previous empirical investigations have demonstrated that PUL had a favorable and statistically significant relationship with university educational performance (Schwarz, Eva, & Newman, 2020). At the same time, other research indicated a significant and detrimental impact on university performance (Wahab et al., 2016). In other words, teachers' professionalism has a positive and statistically significant effect on the educational performance of institutions (Khan, Khan, & Khan, 2017), and it may also serve as a moderating or mediating variable (Maritasari et al., 2020). Previous research has primarily focused on the direct effect but has paid little attention to the indirect effect with moderating role of university educational performance; thus, the TEP has been used as a moderating variable in this study. Furthermore, previous research was primarily focused on schools (Altbach, 2003) and other countries, while university education institutions received little attention; hence, this study focuses mainly on Iraq's public sector universities, whose education performance is declining due to PUL and teachers' professionalism (Nixon, 2008).

With the study's findings, the present research has significance from a body of literature in the existing literature. It could be considered a pioneering study because, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, it examines the moderating effect of TEP on the relationship between PUL and UEP in university education. Prior studies focused mostly on the direct influence of PUL on UEP, whereas the literature on the indirect moderating effect link between PUL and UEP was scant. In other words, PUL indirectly contributes to academic achievement by enhancing teacher competency and commitment. Consequently, our study contributes to the body of knowledge about the moderating effect of TEP. While leadership has numerous benefits, one of the most significant is that it can help an organization compete globally and boost its reputation by improving student academic achievement. Based on the study's findings, it is proposed that regulatory bodies and practitioners give adequate attention to building professionalism to enhance their leadership qualities, which could raise UEP.

## Literature Review

### University Education Performance

There is a great deal of literature on university educational performance, yet it is a concept that spans exceedingly broad aspects of educational institutions. Effective educational institutions are viewed as organizations committed to learning, with strong educational institution leaders, inclusive and fair administration, an active learning environment, as well as stakeholders committed to the academic achievement of students, educators committed to challenging students to reach their full potential, an effective assessment and evaluation system, and a collaborative relationship between the educational institution and its stakeholders (Matthews & Sammons, 2005). To provide a general definition, however, effective educational institutions are those in which students'

cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth is realized, and resources are utilized most efficiently through an appropriate physical learning environment (Cubukcu & Girmen, 2006). Another definition of university educational performance focuses on the institution's educational goals and its ability to assist students in accomplishing them (Arslantas & Ozkan, 2014). In addition, it emphasizes the necessity of viewing the performance characteristics of effective educational institutions from the standpoint of the system's stability, which includes the student, management, instructor, process, parent, and environment (Teodorović, 2009). On the other hand, student achievement is regarded as one of the most important performance indicators for educational institutions and is the result of a range of inputs, including the methods set by administrators, instructors, and educational institutions (Coleman, 1968).

In contrast, the effectiveness of educational institutions has been intensively researched since the 1960s, when pioneering research was conducted. (Coleman, 1968) investigated this area, examining how various factors in educational institutions affected student performance. The key components of institutions' education performance are "teacher satisfaction and participation, teachers' professional competencies, and leader-teacher corporation as a result of leadership traits" (Reagle, 2006). Reynolds et al. (1996) determined that the performance of an institution is based on where students pursue career advancement after receiving their degree. These variations in terminology indicate that prior studies have not examined the correct meaning of an institution's performance, suggesting that additional research is warranted. In this study, a dependent variable that may be affected by PUL and teacher professionalism, which are addressed in the following section, has been employed.

### **Public Leadership in Education**

Public leadership (PUL) is a role in which an individual serves and directs the entire community from a public office. The mayor's post is an example of a PUL position. Power is the capacity to direct the activities of others (Bozkurt et al., 2021) Leadership is the ability to inspire others to gladly comply with your directives and oversee the completion of the project without resorting to coercion. Traditionally, leadership was believed to be the source of power (2016). Leadership is especially important in public sector universities since it influences not only the efficiency of government and public agencies but also the job performance and job satisfaction of individuals. Strong leadership is necessary for efficient public governance, which involves effective planning, efficiency, transparency, and accountability (Bozkurt et al., 2021). Thus, by the end of the 1980s, public management focused on efficiency and effectiveness became the primary priority. As a result, concepts such as effective communication, openness, and responsibility, as well as rules and regulations imposed by bureaucracies, gained importance as strategies to enhance the performance of institutions(Bozkurt et al., 2021). Competition, accountability, parent preference, performance, and efficiency, all of which are changing our concept of contemporary public administration, have risen to the forefront in educational institutions due to the shift in how we evaluate the efficacy of public institutions (Koçak & Bozkurt, 2020). These modifications permitted the formation of a distinct form of leadership called PUL. Tummers and Knies (2016) outlined PUL and the essential responsibilities of a public administrator.

Consequently, leadership in the public sector is entwined with complex social, cultural, and political networks extending well beyond any single organization's boundaries. This is because leadership in the public sector is connected to more than simply the hierarchical structure of government institutions. It is the consequence of a method of thinking in which all relevant parties are consulted throughout the administration, a vast network is developed, and the organization's limits are tested. This understanding results from this leadership style and the hierarchical structure, policies, and protocols that govern the organization (Sotarauta, 2019). In addition, PUL consists of both shared and distributed leadership tactics.

Furthermore, leaders should advocate and support any actions that align the aims, methods, and initiatives of their businesses with public values and promote innovative problem-solving (Brookes, 2011). In light of the evidence presented to this point, the concept of PUL encompasses a vast array of leadership styles, including political loyalty leadership, network governance leadership, accountability leadership, and rule-following leadership (Tösten, Şahin, & Bünyamin, 2018). With the relevance of PUL being crucial to performance. The PUL in the present study is operationalized by four aspects "accountability, rule-following leadership (RUFL), policy realism, and network governance," derived from a prior study (Tummers & Knies, 2016).

### **Teacher Professionalism**

One of the essential characteristics of good educational institutions and greater student achievement is the degree to which teachers' behaviors fit with teaching standards. defines teacher professionalism (TEP) as the required values, qualities, and competencies for the teaching profession. Professionalism in education cannot be reduced to a single factor; rather, it encompasses a wide range of endeavors, including the development of in-class and extracurricular activities, the alignment of theory and practice, the generation of education following the developmental characteristics of students, and the effective execution of these endeavors (Carlgren & Klette, 2008). Professionalism should be examined in terms of pedagogical, individual, and social competency since it is studied from many sides, including behavioral, attitude, and intellectual (Wardoyo & Herdiani, 2017). Being a professional educator entails having high expectations for students, being responsible for their individual and group competencies, having professional autonomy in the classroom, possessing professional knowledge and expertise, and being accountable for their development (Furlong, 2002). In addition, professional competencies, efficient assessment and evaluation systems, and the use of instructors to enhance learning inside and beyond the classroom are all characteristics of an experienced teacher (Hoque, Alam, & Abdullah, 2011).

### **Empirical Review**

Multiple investigations have demonstrated that educational leadership significantly impacts student achievement (Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011). It has been shown that the leadership and professionalism of educational institutions have an important influence on improving educational performance (Koşar, 2015). According

to Peña-López (2016), teacher mentoring, professional development opportunities, and professional networks are vital for encouraging the evolution of good classroom performance. Ozmen and Sentürk (2018) found that leadership plays a crucial role in boosting university performance. It was also noted that leadership styles significantly impact the educational effectiveness of universities (Krasnoff, Leong, & Siebersma, 2015). According to findings from prior research, the leadership style and characteristics of an institution's administration play a substantial role in determining the quality of its educational achievement (Boonla & Treputtharat, 2014). Effective educational institution executives consider the new ideas that have emerged alongside their knowledge of contemporary public administration techniques, such as accountability and networking (Erdağ & Karadağ, 2017). Several studies have also demonstrated that excellent leadership in educational institutions indirectly affects student achievement by enhancing teachers' knowledge, practices, and connections with one another and students (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

In other words, university educational achievement is affected by various factors, including TEP (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017). Teachers who focus on perfecting their approaches and exhibiting behaviors encourage them to generate the most successful learning environments (Kincheloe, 2011). It has been demonstrated that educator professionalism is a powerful indicator of educational institution improvement (Kilinç, Cemaloğlu, & Savaş, 2015). In addition, professional teacher characteristics were recognized as a major factor in student performance (Cheng & Wong, 1996). This demonstrates that in addition to leadership, experienced teachers played a significant impact in improving the performance of educational institutions.

Furthermore, past research has primarily focused on the influence of PUL and professional teachers on educational performance. Still, it has paid little attention to other moderating factors, despite the argument in the existing literature that strong educational institutions' leadership indirectly affects educational performance by improving teachers' knowledge and practices (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Therefore, an indirect analysis of the link between PUL and educational performance is possible. It is also suggested in the extensive research that teacher professionalism could promote PUL styles, which could improve the educational success of institutions (Onorato, 2013). In Iraq, where the government controls most educational institutions, PUL development is viewed as functional leadership within the context of new public administration. Hence Iraqi educational institutions have received minimal attention in earlier research. Teacher performance data will be collected to determine if TEP works as a link between PUL and educational institutions. All variables described previously are predicted in Figure.1 below. In Figure.1's anticipated variables, PUL consists of four indicators accountability, RUFL, policy reality, and network governance, which is the independent variable. Teacher professionals are the moderating variable, and university educational performance is the dependent variable.

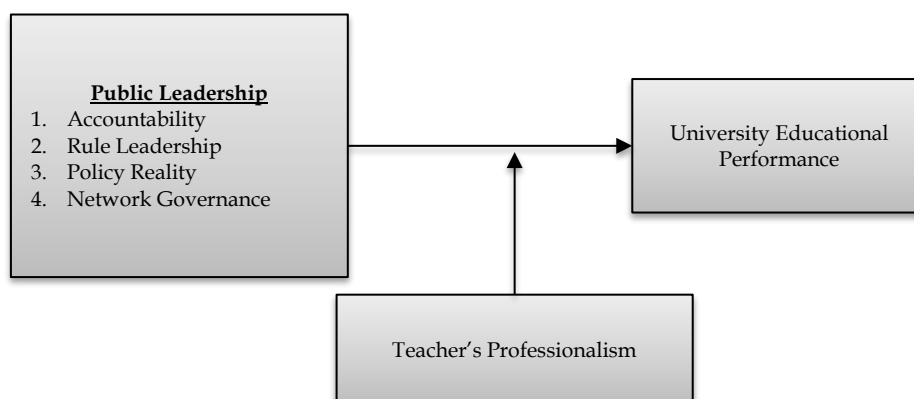


Figure.1: Research Framework

### Research Design

The present study investigates the influence of PUL on the educational performance of universities in Iraq, with the moderating effect of teacher professionalism. Because quantitative research is more acceptable and dependable than qualitative research, the purpose of the study influenced the decision to utilize quantitative research rather than qualitative research (Pluye et al., 2009). Consequently, it has been established that this method is worthy of research. For comparison, there are two distinct types of study designs, longitudinal and cross-sectional. Cross-sectional research designs collect data only once, whereas longitudinal research methods collect data at multiple periods throughout the study (Kothari, 2004). This study collected data via a self-administered questionnaire that was collected in its entirety at one time. As a result, a cross-sectional methodology was adopted for this study. Using a self-administered survey questionnaire, data were obtained from university instructors in the public sector. Due to restricted resources, the easy sampling strategy was utilized (Vehovar, Toepoel, & Steinmetz, 2016).

### The Research Instrument and Hypothesis Development

This study's research instrument was derived from prior studies in which questionnaires had been utilized and tested. The operationalization of public leadership involved four dimensions: accountability (ACC), rule-following leadership (RUFL), political reality (POR), and network governance (NEG). These dimensions were evaluated using 21 items derived from a study (Koçak & Bozkurt, 2020; Tummers & Knies, 2016). In addition, the educational performance of universities was derived from a study (Demirkasimoğlu & Taşkin, 2015) that examined instructors' perceptions of university performance. This was determined by measuring eight objects. The final measure of teacher professionalism (TEP) was derived from the eight-item Cerit (2012) study. Respondents' responses were compiled using the seven-point Likert scale. Previous research reveals a link between PUL, TEP, and UEP, detailed in the literature review section. Consequently, the research hypotheses are stated below.

- H1:** Public leadership has a significant effect on universities' educational performance.  
**H2:** Teachers' professionalism significantly affects universities' educational performance.  
**H3:** Teachers' professionalism significantly moderates the relationship between public leadership and university educational performance.

### Data Analysis

For the statistical analysis in this study, the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method was applied using Smart PLS (Hair et al., 2017). PLS-SEM is regarded as the most effective technique for this type of quantitative analysis (Hair Jr et al., 2017). Researchers must consider the outer loadings of the items and the average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha to determine the measurement model's convergent validity. In contrast, the suggested cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker criterion as two methods for demonstrating discriminant validity. Heterotrait-Monotrait was a further criterion for evaluating the discriminant validity. Regarding the structural model, the path coefficients and the coefficient of determination (R2) will be examined (Hair Jr et al., 2017; Hussain et al., 2018).

### Results and Interpretation

The sample demonstrates the responses collected from 337 Iraqi public university teachers. After removing outliers and missing numbers, however, 305 genuine responses remain. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants. We can observe that just 26% of the data was collected from male teachers, whereas 74% was collected from female teachers. Moreover, 79 percent of the sampled teachers, or the majority, are between the ages of 25 and 35. 41% of the students are from the department of management studies, followed by 35% from the department of languages, 17% from the department of engineering, and 7% from the department of corporate law. The projected descriptive values are shown in Table.1 below.

**Table.1**

*Demographic profile*

	Values	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	26
	Female	227	74
Age	25 to 35	242	79
	35 to 45	35	12
	Above 45	28	9
Discipline	Language	106	35
	Management studies	125	41
	Engineering department	53	17
	Corporate law	21	7

### Reliability and validity

It is required to quantify the factor loading to evaluate each item's reliability. A valid threshold value for each item's loading is equal to or greater than 0.70. The Cronbach's Alpha and composite dependability values must be equal to or greater than 0.70.. Table 2 demonstrates that every item is reliable and satisfies the requirements. In addition, the



average variance extracted (AVE) is a common metric for determining convergent validity; it is defined as the grand mean of the squared loadings of the items linked with the concept. When the AVE is at least 0.5, the construct explains more than fifty percent of the variance of its parts (Hair Jr et al., 2017). According to Table 2, Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability values are greater than 0.7, and the AVE values are greater than 0.5. As a result, the convergence validity of the constructs is demonstrated.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted
<b>network governance</b>	NEG1	0.856	0.880	0.909	0.599
	NEG 2	0.843			
	NEG 3	0.811			
	NEG 4	0.782			
	NEG 5	0.783			
<b>accountability</b>	ACC1	0.889	0.893	0.912	
	ACC2	0.826			
	ACC3	0.883			
	ACC4	0.882			
	ACC5	0.902			
<b>rule-following leadership</b>	RUFL1	0.825	0.834	0.867	0.632
	RUFL2	0.893			
	RUFL3	0.892			
	RUFL4	0.895			
	RUFL5	0.912			
<b>politic reality</b>	POR1	0.722	0.812	0.842	
	POR2	0.833			
	POR3	0.933			
	POR4	0.782			
	POR5	0.890			
	POR6	0.782			
<b>Universities Education Performance</b>	UEP1	0.783	0.920	0.937	0.714
	UEP2	0.881			
	UEP3	0.808			
	UEP4	0.760			
	UEP5	0.867			
	UEP6	0.926			
<b>Teacher's professionalism</b>	TEP1	0.788	0.873	0.922	0.797
	TEP 2	0.894			
	TEP 3	0.795			
	TEP 4	0.852			
	TEP5	0.825			
	TEP6	0.809			
	TEP7	0.873			

Fornell-Larcker, Cross loadings, and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio must all be examined to demonstrate the discriminant validity. To satisfy the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of AVE in diagonal values for each variable must be bigger than the correlation of latent variables (Hair Jr et al., 2017). Regarding cross-loadings, the loading of each indicator should be bigger than the loadings of the indicators for its associated variables (Hair Jr et al., 2016). Verify that the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) result is less than 0.85. (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). In the measuring model for discriminant validity, all conditions were met, although three of the reported results deviate from HTMT. Table 3 suggests that the HTMT requirement is met, indicating that the discriminant validity has been established.

**Table.3**

*Discriminant Validity*

	NEG	ACC	RUFL	POR	UEP	TEP
NEG						
ACC	0.219					
RUFL	0.425	0.634				
POR	0.409	0.547	0.540			
UEP	0.151	0.12	0.081	0.165		
TEP	0.266	0.164	0.339	0.733	0.327	

### Hypothesis Testing and Conclusion

The failure of traditional public administration to suit current needs and promote organizational success has given rise to a new viewpoint on public leadership based on new public administration (Bessant, Robinson, & Ormerod, 2015). As a result, diverse innovations in public education administration based on the new public management concept, which has adopted a consolidated management technique (Karatas, 2020), have occurred. As a new perspective, research should not be limited to government organizations alone but should include educational institutions. To improve university performance, university presidents must function as public leaders. Consequently, public leadership consisting of four aspects, accountability (ACC), rule-following leadership (RUFL), political reality (POR), and network governance (NEG), has acquired significance for enhancing university performance.

Consequently, the goal of this study is to investigate the direct effects of public leadership on universities' educational performance (UEP) and the indirect moderating influence of teachers' professionalism (TEP) in Iraq's public sector institutions. For this goal, the data was collected from university lecturers from various departments or specialties who are more knowledgeable about the institution than others. The data was examined using the statistical technique PLS-SEM.

The results of the PLS-SEM reveal that public leadership has a favorable and substantial effect on UEP. This demonstrated that as PUL increased, UEP increased as well. As a result, every teacher is responsible for adhering to the instructions and

curriculum, which is only achievable with effective leadership and could immediately improve the UEP (Hassan, DeHart-Davis, & Jiang, 2019). It has been determined that PUL is the most important determinant of UEP (Koçak & Bozkurt, 2020). Other scholars have also stated that leadership directly affects UEP through a range of managerial procedures, such as human resource management, appropriate communication, following the rules, and accountability. This presents a viable explanation for the direct effects of university principals as public leaders, as the conditions under which principals can produce UEP (Bozkurt et al., 2021). Therefore, it might be argued that the rule-following behaviors of university administrators in Iraq facilitate instructors' orientation to rules and procedures during the orientation phase, thereby supporting TEP.

The second premise of the study is to examine the direct relationship between teacher professionalism (TEP) and student achievement (UEP). The most important data demonstrate that TEP has a beneficial and significant effect on UEP. This indicates that when the TEP is increased, so is the UEP. This finding is also supported by several studies (Bottery, 2006; Sam & Van Der Sijde, 2014), which contend that when teachers are more professional in their academic activities, educational institutions have a greater capacity to improve their performance compared to universities in which teachers are untrained and do not practice proper professionalism in their daily lives. This demonstrates that colleges in the public sector of Iraq pay adequate attention to training their employees to retain their educational performance.

In contrast, the third hypothesis examined the moderating influence of TEP on the link between PUL and UEP. The indirect influence key outcomes demonstrated that PUL also has a favorable and substantial effect on the UEP through the moderating effect of TEP. A previous study has shown that high-quality PUL has a knock-on effect on UEP by encouraging improved professional practices (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Particularly, through professionalism, university administrators could build a learning- and business-oriented culture in their institutions, thereby contributing to UEP (Hallinger, 2011). This demonstrates that professionalism is a significant signal that could enhance leadership quality, increasing the UEP. The projected outcomes of the discussion mentioned above are shown in Table.4 and Figure.2 below.

**Table.4**

*Hypothesis Results*

	Beta	Mean	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
PUL -> UEP	0.164	0.17	0.054	3.037	0.0000	Accepted
TEP-> UEP	0.461	0.468	0.043	10.627	0.0000	Accepted
PUL*TEP -> UEP	0.783	0.791	0.114	6.892	0.0000	Accepted

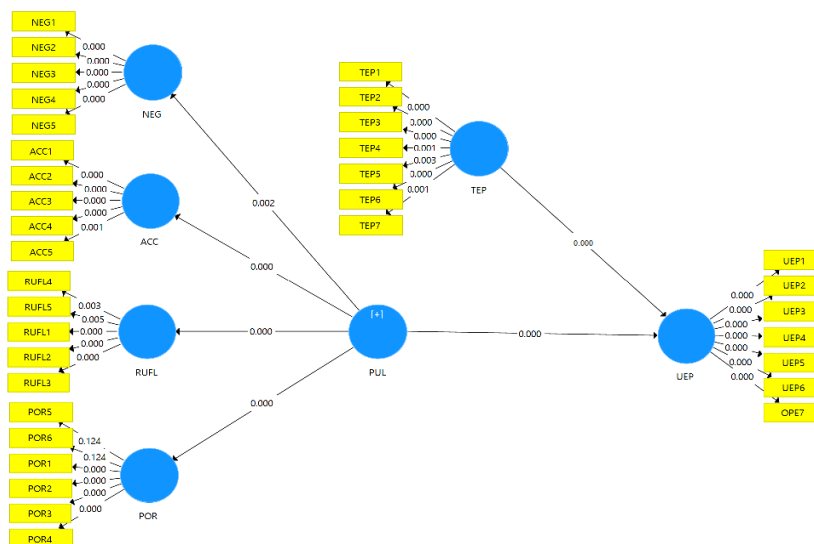


Figure.2: Structural Model

The findings of this study indicate that PUL and TEP are significant markers for increasing the UEP of organizations. Therefore, colleges should place a greater emphasis on PUL, which could enhance their UEP and competitive edge. The current study added to the existing literature a body of literature that might be called a pioneering study due to the moderating influence of TEP on the link between PUL and UEP in university education. Prior studies focused mostly on the direct impact of PUL on UEP, but the literature on the indirect link between PUL and UEP was scant. In other words, public leadership indirectly improves academic attainment by enhancing teacher competence and commitment.

Consequently, our study contributes to the body of knowledge about the moderating effect of TEP. While leadership has numerous benefits, one of the most significant is that it can help an organization compete globally and boost its reputation by improving student academic achievement. Based on the study's findings, it is advised that regulatory bodies and practitioners give due attention to improving professionalism to enhance their leadership qualities, which could raise UEP. On the other hand, educational leadership and administration of public universities share important similarities. Providing efficient communication through a network, establishing an accountable system based on performance, ensuring that students receive programs that comply with regulations and procedures, and developing an authoritative educational structure are characteristics shared by educational leadership and the administration of public universities. Therefore, it is acknowledged that strong public leadership contributes to maintaining a traditional educational institution and indirectly influences student accomplishment by encouraging more TEP. This research could provide insight into PUL's direct and indirect impacts on UEP. It is also recommended that colleges create legal regulations that provide university administrators the authority to implement the public leadership practices that will make their institutions more effective.

In addition to numerous implications and recommendations, evaluating several limits of the most recent research is necessary to strengthen its reliability. This study was limited to Iraq, a country with cultural and demographic traits distinct from those of wealthy nations. Consequently, the conclusions cannot be extended to other developed markets. The generalizability of the study could be improved by conducting additional research in other developed economies. Second, the moderating influence alone was investigated. The relationship between PUL and UEP may also be altered by other exogenous and mediating factors, such as environmental suitability or cultural considerations. Thirdly, the study was limited to a cross-sectional technique in which data was collected at a certain time; the longitudinal approach would have helped boost the study's dependability. Future research can therefore focus on longitudinal study design.

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