

ISSN (ONLINE) 2598 9928



INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF LAW AND ECONOMIC
PUBLISHED BY
UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SIDOARJO

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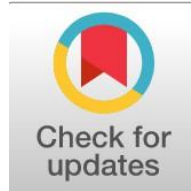
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Enhancing Future Competencies through Agile Human Resource Practices and the Mediating Mechanism of Diversity Management

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Abstract

General Background: Public sector institutions face increasing pressure to adapt to rapid technological shifts and dynamic organizational environments. **Specific Background:** Local government entities, such as the Baghdad Municipality, require enhanced administrative capabilities to drive digital transformation and service quality. **Knowledge Gap:** However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the combined mechanism connecting agile human resource management practices, diversity management, and future competencies in public-sector contexts. **Aims:** This study examines the impact of agile human resource practices on enhancing future competencies among administrative leaders while testing the mediating role of diversity management. **Results:** Statistical analysis of survey data from 186 administrative leaders reveals significant positive direct relationships among agile practices, diversity management, and future competencies, with diversity management demonstrating a significant partial mediating effect. **Novelty:** The findings provide novel empirical insights into how structural agility and workforce diversity interact within an Arab public-sector setting. **Implications:** Implementing agile frameworks alongside formal diversity policies provides a strategic pathway for building resilient workforce capabilities in modern public administration.

Keywords: Agile Practices, Future Competencies, Diversity Management, Public Leadership, Administrative Agility

Key Findings Highlights

Agile human resource practices exert a strong direct positive effect on enhancing future leadership competencies.

Diversity management functions as a statistically significant partial mediator within the organizational agility framework.

Digital competence and continuous self-directed learning emerge as the predominant capabilities among administrative personnel.

Published date: 2026-08-19

Introduction

The global and Arab governmental sector is in the process of rapidly evolving to become digital and agile organizations, two key elements to drive performance and improve quality of services. The digital development indicators indicate that the internet penetration rate in Iraq rose from (44%) in 2019 to (83%) at the end of 2024. However, Iraq still maintains a low ranking in the United Nations E-Government Development Index 2024 (145th among 193 countries). This is indicative of a significant mismatch between the readiness of digital infrastructure and human resources and administrative practices to effectively leverage it (United Nations E-Government Survey, 2024; Biometric Update, 2026).

Other key barriers to digital transformation in government institutions in Iraq identified in recent reports include compliance with digital skills of employees, resistance to change in the work environment, and the inadequacy of supportive legislation (Iraq Business News, 2025; Iraq Policy Brief, 2025). The Baghdad Municipality is one of the largest among the local service institutions and is one of the government institutions that has the closest direct relationship with citizens, and is a symbolic case of the challenges facing the institutions. As a result of its many facets, administrative leaders must have future-oriented competencies which can be used to guide digital transformation and meet modern management expectations. Hence, the objective of this study is to analytically examine the relationship between agile human resource practices as an approach to agile organizational responsiveness and agility and future competencies as a strategic objective and to test the mediation between the relationship between agile human resource practices and future competencies by diversity management.

This chapter lays the groundwork for the research by defining the theoretical framework. This chapter gives a theoretical background of the research.

First: Research Problem

Rapid changes in the work environment, the growing digitalization of society and the diversity of Iraqi workers in terms of gender, age, education, and experience are just some of the challenges Iraqi governmental organizations such as the Baghdad Municipality are facing. Given these changes, conventional HRM, which relies on formal processes and slow hierarchical decision-making, has been less and less able to respond to the need to build a workforce that has the adaptability and the ability to innovate and solve problems required for the future.

The gap has been detected through preliminary study of the relevant literature, and field observations of the current nature of work in the Baghdad Municipality, between cognitive, digital and adaptive competencies of administrative leaders demanded by the future nature of work, and the current traditional human resource management practices in the municipality that lack flexibility, responsiveness and empowerment. This is exacerbated by the lack of systematic diversity management policies, which may be a lever to increase the positive contribution to these practices.

Empirical indicators documented in recent reports contribute to the identification of this problem. In the international ranking of E-Government Development Index, Iraq is in a relatively low ranking in 2024, standing at 145th out of 193. Limited organizational and technological capacity to catch up with digital transformation and organizational agility is also attributed to interrelated organizational and technological factors, especially the rigidity of hierarchical organizational structures and slow decision-making cycles, limited training offerings in digital and future-oriented skills, and the lack of legislative and procedural frameworks for diversity management and organizational flexibility (Iraq Policy Brief, 2025; Iraq Business News, 2025). These are among the factors that account, at least in part, for the field-observed gap between existing practices and future needs, at the Baghdad Municipality.

Based on the foregoing, the research problem can be formulated through the following main research question: What is the effect of agile human resource management practices on enhancing future competencies among administrative leaders at the Baghdad Municipality, and what role does diversity management play as a mediating variable in this relationship? This main question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

1. What is the level of the research sample's perception of the current state of the three research variables—agile human resource management practices, diversity management, and future competencies and their sub-dimensions—at the Baghdad Municipality?
2. Are there statistically significant correlations among the three research variables—agile human resource management practices, diversity management, and future competencies?
3. Do agile human resource management practices have a statistically significant direct effect on future competencies?
4. Does diversity management mediate the relationship between agile human resource management practices and future competencies, and what is the nature of this mediation—full or partial?
5. What are the most prominent organizational and technological factors that hinder the Baghdad Municipality from adopting agile human resource management practices at the required level?
6. Which dimensions of agile human resource management practices can have the greatest impact on enhancing future competencies when diversity management is effectively implemented?

Second: Significance of the Research
Scientific Significance: The study helps fill the gap in the Arabic literature on agile human resource management practices which is still a new area in comparison with the Western literature. It also introduces a conceptual framework that connects three modern variables – agility, future competencies and diversity

management – in one context that has not been sufficiently studied in the Iraqi public-sector context. Additionally, it offers a repository of knowledge that could be used in future research in other government and service competencies.

2- Practical (Applied) Significance: The study presents a realistic picture to decision makers in Baghdad Municipality on how agile human resources management practices, diversity management and future competencies are in the administrative leaders of the municipality. It offers practical, implementable recommendations that may contribute to improving human resource management policies in local government institutions. The study also includes a conceptual model and measurement instrument that can be adapted and applied in other Iraqi governmental and local institutions beyond the Baghdad Municipality, such as health, municipal, and service departments. This gives the findings methodological transferability beyond the boundaries of the original research population, provided that the specific characteristics of each application context are taken into consideration.

Third: Research ObjectivesThe research objectives are as follows:

1. To diagnose the level of the three research variables among the research sample at the Baghdad Municipality: agile human resource management practices across their five dimensions, diversity management across its four dimensions, and future competencies across their five dimensions.
2. To measure the nature and strength of the correlations among the main and sub-variables of the research.
3. To test the direct effect of agile human resource management practices on future competencies.
4. To examine the mediating role of diversity management in the relationship between agile human resource management practices and future competencies and to explain the mechanism through which this mediation operates.
5. To utilize the results of statistical analysis and link them to relevant theoretical explanatory frameworks, such as the Resource-Based View, in order to develop a proposed model and practical recommendations that contribute to enhancing the future competencies of employees at the Baghdad Municipality.

Fourth: Research HypothesesMain Hypothesis One: There is a statistically significant positive correlation between agile human resource management practices and both future competencies and diversity management, as well as between diversity management and future competencies. The following sub-hypotheses are derived from this main hypothesis:

1. There is a statistically significant positive correlation between agile human resource management practices and future competencies.
2. There is a statistically significant positive correlation between agile human resource management practices and diversity management.
3. There is a statistically significant positive correlation between diversity management and future competencies.

Main Hypothesis Two: Agile human resource management practices have a statistically significant positive direct effect on future competencies.

Main Hypothesis Three: Diversity management partially and significantly mediates the relationship between agile human resource management practices and future competencies.

Fifth: Hypothetical Research ModelThe hypothetical research model is based on a dual theoretical foundation that provides a logical explanation of the hypothesized relationships among the three research variables. The study is based on the assumptions of the Resource-Based View (RBV) which considers rare, valuable, and difficult-to-imitate managerial practices, such as agile human resource management practices and diversity management by the organization as a strategic resource that can enable an organization to achieve sustainable competitive advantage when transformed into tangible resources in the form of future competencies of employees. Further, the study is based on Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which outlines how agility and other flexible resources can be converted into long-term capabilities to adapt to their environment by effective mediation processes, in this case, diversity management. This is what theoretically allows the assumption of partial mediation explored in this research, instead of a simple direct relationship. The relationships between the research variables are represented in figure (1). The independent variable (X) is agile human resource management practices which has five dimensions; future competencies (Y) has five dimensions; and diversity management (Z) has four dimensions.

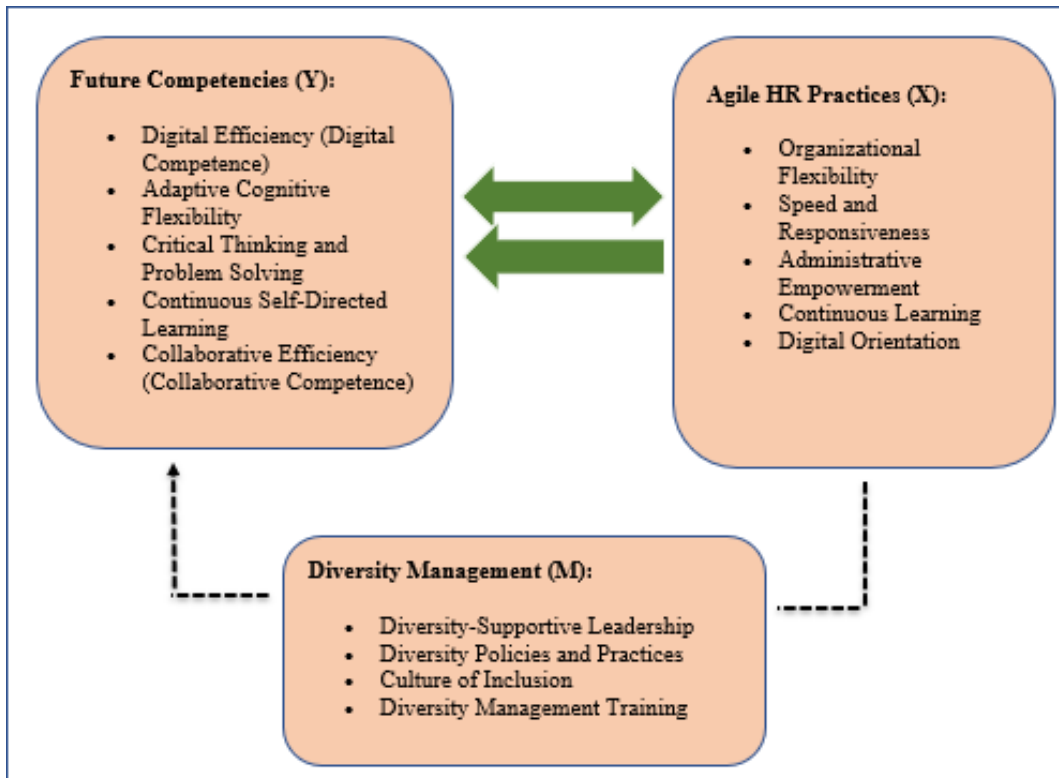


Figure 1.

Figure (1): Hypothesized Research Model

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

Sixth: Research Delimitations

1. Subject Delimitations: The study was limited to examining agile human resource management practices as the independent variable, future competencies as the dependent variable, and diversity management as the mediating variable.
2. Geographical Delimitations: The Baghdad Municipality, including its various departments and divisions.
3. Human Delimitations: General managers, department directors, their deputies, section heads, unit heads, and human resource and training officers.
4. Temporal Delimitations: The period required for field data collection and analysis, extending from March 5, 2026, to June 9, 2026.

Seventh: Research Population and Sample

The research population comprised all administrative leaders in Baghdad Municipality in the administrative levels under study, which are general managers, department directors, their deputies, section heads, unit heads and human resource and training officers. The total number of research population was 360 individuals according to official statistics of Human Resources Department of Baghdad Municipality. Using the sample size determination formula for finite populations, proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), at a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error, the minimum suitable sample size to be used in a population of 360 individuals is approximately 186 respondents. This was the sample size used in this study. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire at different administrative levels to make it possible for all the population categories to be fairly represented. 186 questionnaires were returned and validated for statistical analysis, which was about 100% of the target sample size.

Stratified random sampling rather than simple random sampling and purposive sampling was specifically chosen as the research population is heterogeneous in terms of composition and spread over six different occupations which varied in size from general managers to human resource and training officers. Thus, by using a stratification based on administrative level, a random and proportionate selection of respondents from the various strata can be made to give the various occupational categories the same representation in the sample as in the original population (see Table 1). This is because this method has more validity in generalizing the research results to the study population than non-probability sampling methods.

No.	Administrative Level	Population Size	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
1	Director General	18	9	4.8
2	Department Director	42	22	11.8
3	Deputy Department Director	26	13	7.0
4	Head of Section	90	47	25.3
5	Head of Division	98	51	27.4
6	Human Resources and Training Officer	86	44	23.7
Total			360	186

Source: **Prepared by the researcher based on official data from the Human Resources Department at Baghdad Municipality.**

Eighth: Data Collection Methods

1. Theoretical aspect: Secondary sources such as books, scientific journals, doctoral dissertations, master theses, and research articles published in major international databases (Scopus, Emerald, ScienceDirect, Frontiers, Springer) from 2018 to 2026 were used.
2. Practical Aspect: Primary data was used in the study and the tool used in data collection was a questionnaire. A series of informal personal interviews with some of the administrative leaders of the Baghdad Municipality were conducted to complement this and provide deeper insight into what the actual situation was in the phenomenon under study.

Ninth: Research Instrument (Questionnaire Description)

The research questionnaire was constructed with a five-point Likert scale as Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1. The questionnaire items were based on the literature and previous studies, with some modification to make it appropriate in the research context. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part comprised the demographic characteristics of the research sample, which included gender, age, educational level, job title, and years of service. The second part was divided into the three main research constructs as follows:

Table (2): Distribution of the Research Instrument Items by Variables and Dimensions
Table (2): Structure of the Research Instrument (Questionnaire)

Axis	Variable	Dimensions	Number of Items
First	Agile Human Resource Management (Independent Variable)	Organizational Flexibility; Speed and Responsiveness; Managerial Empowerment; Continuous Learning; Digital Orientation	20
Second	Diversity Management (Mediating Variable)	Diversity-Supportive Leadership; Diversity Policies and Practices; Inclusion Culture; Diversity Management Training	16
Third	Future Competencies (Dependent Variable)	Digital Competence; Cognitive and Adaptive Flexibility; Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving; Continuous Self-Learning; Collaborative Competence	20
Total	—	—	56

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the theoretical framework and previous studies.

Face validity of the questionnaire was determined by showing the questionnaire to an academic panel and incorporating recommended changes from experts in the human resource management field. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) was also used to test the instrument for reliability and gave an overall alpha of 0.958. This is a good value, greater than the statistically acceptable minimum of 0.70. More information is provided in Chapter Three (Practical Aspect).

Tenth: Statistical Methods Used

- **Frequencies and Percentages:** Used to describe the demographic characteristics of the research sample.
- **Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and Relative Importance:** Used to describe the level of the research sample's responses to the research variables and their dimensions.
- **Cronbach's Alpha:** Used to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the research instrument.
- **Skewness and Kurtosis:** Used to assess the normality of the data distribution.
- **Pearson Correlation Coefficient:** Used to test the correlation hypotheses.
- **Simple and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis:** Used to test the effect hypotheses.
- **Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures and the Sobel Test:** Used to examine the mediating role of diversity management. The Sobel Test provides an acceptable estimate of the statistical significance of the indirect effect.

Previous Studies

This section reviews the most prominent Arabic and international studies related to the three research variables, arranged chronologically from the earliest to the most recent, as a preliminary step toward identifying the knowledge gap that the present study seeks to address.

First: Al-Shammari's Study (2023), entitled "Agile Human Resource Management"

This study aimed to clarify the concept of agile human resource management and develop a conceptual framework identifying its principal practices and mechanisms for employee empowerment within the contemporary work environment. It was inspired by a lack of the integrated Arab conceptualization of this modern managerial approach. The study highlighted the significance of adopting the agile human resource management which is an approach that can help organizations cope with the faster changes that are happening in the business environment especially in enhancing the capability of employees to respond to such changes. The study was based on a theoretical analytical method by reviewing the related literature without doing a field study. It covered four key areas: Managerial trust, strategic goals and vision, teamwork and ongoing training. The results showed that employee empowerment via managerial trust, teamwork, and continuous learning is an essential element of the successful agile human resource management. The study suggested to create a culture of organization in which participation in decision making is encouraged, employees' ideas are respected and collaboration among work teams is encouraged.

Second: Bett's Study (2023), entitled "Agile Human Resources and Organizational Performance"

This study aimed to examine the impact of agile human resource practices on organizational performance, since some Kenyan companies have suffered a reduction in performance in comparison to the organizations that utilise the flexible management practices to a greater extent. The study highlighted the need for better understanding of the role of Agile HRM in the uplifting of the performance level in African business environment by quantifying the impact of a combination of agile practices on the performance indicators. The study was carried out on a sample comprising employees of firms operating in counties in Kenya that were classified under NOREB and the dimensions of flexibility, responsiveness, empowerment and teamwork were chosen. The results showed that the Agile Human Resource Practices have a positive statistically significant effect on the organizational performance. Therefore, the researcher suggested that the use of these practices be extended to other levels of administration so that organizations can be better equipped to meet change and realize higher levels of performance.

Third: Biron et al.'s Study (2021), entitled "Innovative Responses to Human Resource Challenges"

This study aimed to solve problems inherent in traditional organizational structures in meeting the challenges of the human resource department in this era by proposing a new organizational structure by applying the Skunk Works method as a flexible organizational structure that allows for quick response to organizational problems. The study's importance lies in its attempt to create an organizational model that will improve the innovation in the human resource function and improve its capacity to respond to the changing environment. The study was based on an in-depth analytical review of the literature and not on field implementation, with a focus on structural flexibility, autonomy and speed of experimentation and learning. The results showed that the creation of small teams, with semi-autonomous and extensive decision-making power, helped to improve the capacity of the HR function to innovate and to respond to complex challenges. The study suggested the creation of "flexible" work teams in big HR departments and a rise in autonomy for the teams to make decisions and experiment.

Fourth: Jooss's Study (2023), entitled "Talent Management and Strategic Agility"

This study was intended to create a skills-alignment perspective as a way to increase strategic agility in talent management to address the challenges of traditional talent management programs in relation to the changing business environment. The study highlighted the need to integrate skills alignment with the organisation's ability for swift strategic maneuvering and thus increase the organisation's readiness for the future. It took a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with some human resource managers of multinational companies. Skills, strategic flexibility and dynamic talent management were the focus of the study. Results showed that constant skills alignment is one of the most significant elements to support organizational strategic agility. The study suggested that the talent management programs need to be redesigned in a manner that aligns with future changes and the needs of a changing work environment.

Fifth: Elamin et al.'s Study (2024), entitled "Diversity Management and Innovative Behavior"

This study aimed to explore the influence of diversity management on employees' innovative behaviour and to test the mediation of work engagement, given that some emerging economies have low levels of the innovative behaviour of their employees despite having such diverse workforces. The study highlighted the need to leverage the diversity of people within an organisation to create a competitive advantage through better participation and employee engagement. It was carried out using a sample of employees from a number of organisations in the United Arab Emirates and focussed on the dimensions of diversity policies, inclusion culture and diversity supporting leadership. The results showed that diversity management had positive effects on innovative behavior, as well as that work engagement partially mediated this relationship. The study suggested incorporating diversity management programs in human resource strategies and increase training programs for building a culture of diversity and inclusion in organizations.

Sixth: Silva et al.'s Study (2024), entitled "Diversity Management and Organizational Performance"

The aim of this study was to shed light on the inconsistencies found in studies on the relationship between diversity management and organizational performance by examining the mediating role of organizational commitment and person-job fit and the moderating role of empowerment. The contribution of the study is its effort to give a more balanced account of the impact of diversity management on the performance of organisations. The study was carried out with a sample of employees from some Brazilian organizations, and used the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique to analyze the relationships between the variables. Results validated the positive impact of diversity management on organizational performance through organizational commitment and person-job fit, as well as the moderating effect of structural empowerment on enhancing the relationship. The study suggested that there is a need to develop integrated empowerment programs in conjunction with the diversity management policies to get the best possible results on the overall performance of the organization.

Seventh: Piowar-Sulej and Popowicz's Study (2024), entitled "Developing Future Competencies"

This study aimed to explore the role of human resource management practices in developing employees' future competencies under non-standard forms of employment, given the limited research addressing this issue from the perspectives of both employers and employees. The study sought to address the knowledge gap concerning the contribution of sustainable human resource practices to building future competencies and enhancing employees' adaptability to the requirements of the modern labor market. It employed a dual sample comprising employers and employees in Poland and focused on digital competence, continuous learning, and sustainable employability. The findings revealed perceptual differences between employers and employees regarding priorities for developing future competencies, indicating the need to reconsider the design of professional development programs. Accordingly, the study recommended involving employees themselves in designing and implementing competency-development programs to ensure alignment with their actual needs and the requirements of the future work environment.

Knowledge Gap

A review of previous studies indicates that most have addressed the research variables separately in pairs. Studies by Bett (2023), Biron et al. (2021), and Al-Shammari (2023) focused on agile human resource practices and their relationships with performance or empowerment without

linking them to future competencies. In contrast, studies by Elamin et al. (2024) and Silva et al. (2024) examined diversity management as an independent or mediating variable in relation to organizational performance or innovative behavior without linking it to agile human resource practices. Meanwhile, Piwowar-Sulej and Popowicz (2024) focused on future competencies independently of both agility and diversity. Accordingly, the knowledge gap that the present study seeks to address lies in two main areas: (1) integrating the three variables—agile human resource management practices, diversity management, and future competencies—within a single research model that tests the mediating role of diversity management, an approach not addressed by any of the previous studies reviewed by the researcher; and (2) testing this model within an Iraqi local public-sector context, namely the Baghdad Municipality, which has received insufficient attention in previous research, most of which has focused on private-sector environments or Western and Asian contexts.

Critical Comparative Discussion of Previous Studies

Taken collectively, the previous studies demonstrate general agreement that both agile human resource management practices and diversity management are positively associated with various organizational and behavioral outcomes, including performance, innovation, and commitment. This supports the direction of the hypotheses proposed in the present study (Bett, 2023; Elamin et al., 2024; Silva et al., 2024). However, these studies differ from one another in three principal respects.

First, regarding the nature of the mediator, Elamin et al. (2024) chose work engagement as the mediator, while Silva et al. (2024) did choose organizational commitment and person–job fit as the mediators. The present study differs from the two in focusing on diversity management as the mediating variable as opposed to being an independent variable. This is an important distinction which sets the contribution of the present study.

Secondly, regarding the statistical technique, Silva et al. (2024) used structural equation modeling (SEM), while Bett (2023) used simple regression. The present study is intermediate between the two studies in degree of statistical analytical sophistication, using regression analysis and Baron and Kenny procedures and the Sobel Test.

Third, regarding the research context, almost all the previous studies were carried out in private sector contexts or other than Iraq such as Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Brazil etc. The present study, by contrast, is distinguished by its application to an Iraqi local public institution, namely the Baghdad Municipality. This provides its findings with additional contextual value, although their direct generalizability to the settings of previous studies, and vice versa, remains limited.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework of the Research Variables

First: Agile Human Resource Management Practices

Concept of Agile Human Resource Management Practices

Agility is a concept originally borrowed from the literature on software development and production management before its application expanded to the human resource function, which is increasingly regarded as a strategic partner in achieving overall organizational flexibility (Denning, 2018). Agile human resource management practices refer to a set of approaches and policies adopted by human resource management to respond rapidly and flexibly to changes in both the internal and external environment. This is achieved through employee empowerment, process simplification, and the adoption of short work cycles that facilitate experimentation and continuous learning, rather than relying on rigid, long-term plans (Aghina et al., 2018).

Bersin (2020) argues that agility in human resources entails shifting from a rigid annual planning model to a flexible model based on continuous feedback and rapid decision-making. Similarly, Podgorodnichenko et al. (2020) define it as an organizational capability to reallocate human resources and rapidly adapt policies and practices in response to changes in the business environment without compromising long-term organizational sustainability.

The importance of agile human resource management practices can be summarized as follows:

1. **Enabling rapid organizational adaptation:** They enable organizations to respond quickly to environmental fluctuations and uncertainty, which have become defining characteristics of the contemporary business environment (Doz, 2020).
2. **Enhancing talent attraction and retention:** They strengthen the organization's ability to attract and retain talented employees by creating a flexible work environment that supports innovation (Jooss, 2023).
3. **Reducing response time to operational challenges:** They contribute to reducing the time required to respond to operational challenges through flexible, semi-autonomous work structures (Biron et al., 2021).
4. **Supporting digital transformation:** They support the digital transformation of the human resource function and improve the quality of data-driven decision-making (Moh'd et al., 2024).

Dimensions of Agile Human Resource Management Practices

The present study adopts five principal dimensions of agile human resource management practices based on Aghina et al. (2018), Podgorodnichenko et al. (2020), Al-Shammari (2023), and Moh'd et al. (2024), as follows:

1. **Organizational Flexibility:** The ability of human resource management to rapidly modify its structures, policies, and procedures in response to changing circumstances.
2. **Speed and Responsiveness:** The ability to make and implement decisions within a relatively short period without compromising their quality.

3. **Managerial Empowerment:** Granting employees broader authority to participate in decision-making and providing them with discretion to act within defined frameworks.
4. **Continuous Learning:** Fostering a culture of continuous learning, self-development, and periodic feedback.
5. **Digital Orientation:** Employing digital tools and technologies to simplify and accelerate human resource processes.

Second: Diversity Management

Concept of Diversity Management

Workplace diversity is the diversity of employees in terms of gender, age, cultural background, specialization, and experience. Diversity management, on the other hand, is a collection of policies and practices that organizations can implement to obtain the most expected benefits from workforce diversity and to use those benefits in achieving organizational goals (Elamin et al., 2024).

In the current management literature, diversity is regarded as a strategic asset and can be strategically managed to become a competitive advantage (Elamin et al., 2024). Silva et al. (2024) also suggest that diversity management goes beyond legal obligations to foster equality to the creation of an organizational culture of inclusion that boosts employees' feeling of belonging and fairness.

More recently, Grzesiak and Ulrych (2025) have further found that managerial leadership support for diversity is a key factor influencing employees' performance, especially in a digital work environment. The present study assumes that diversity management is positively related to future outcomes, such as the competencies studied in the present research, and that it can interact with positive relationships with digital orientation and flexible human resource management practices.

Importance of Diversity Management

1. **Enhancing creativity and innovation:** Diversity management enhances creativity and innovation by facilitating the exchange and integration of different perspectives within work teams.
2. **Improving the organization's understanding of diverse beneficiaries:** It enhances the organization's ability to understand the needs and expectations of diverse groups of beneficiaries and provide more inclusive services (Elamin et al., 2024).
3. **Strengthening organizational commitment and job satisfaction:** It contributes to enhancing organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and person–job fit among employees.
4. **Reducing discrimination risks:** It reduces the risks of discrimination and enhances the organization's image as a fair and attractive employer capable of attracting qualified talent (Silva et al., 2024).

Dimensions of Diversity Management

The present study adopts four principal dimensions of diversity management based on Elamin et al. (2024) and Silva et al. (2024), as follows:

1. **Diversity-Supportive Leadership:** The extent to which senior administrative leaders are committed to adopting diversity values and translating them into practice through day-to-day decision-making.
2. **Diversity Policies and Practices:** The existence of formal written policies governing recruitment, promotion, and training in a manner that ensures equal opportunities.
3. **Inclusion Culture:** The extent to which employees from diverse backgrounds feel a sense of belonging, recognition, and appreciation within the work environment.
4. **Diversity Management Training:** Training programs designed to enhance awareness of the value of diversity and develop the ability to manage it effectively.

Third: Future Competencies

Concept of Future Competencies

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), competency is more than simply knowledge or a skill; it involves the ability to meet complex demands by mobilizing multiple psychosocial resources, including skills and attitudes, within a specific context (Piwowar-Sulej & Popowicz, 2024).

Future competencies refer to the set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that individuals will require to succeed in a changing work environment characterized by increasing digitalization and uncertainty (Mruk-Tomczak & Jerzyk, 2024).

Tondeur et al. (2023) emphasize that future competencies are no longer limited to technical or digital aspects alone; rather, they encompass integrated cognitive, social, and personal dimensions. This perspective is also supported by Celume and Maoulida (2022), who classify future competencies into dimensions related to skills, character, and meta-learning, in addition to traditional knowledge.

Importance of Future Competencies

1. **Ensuring continued employability:** Future competencies are an essential prerequisite for maintaining employability in an increasingly dynamic and continuously changing labor market (Piwowar-Sulej & Popowicz, 2024).
2. **Supporting adaptation to the Fourth Industrial Revolution:** They enhance organizations' ability to respond to the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and digital transformation.
3. **Supporting flexible managerial decision-making:** They facilitate more flexible and rapid managerial decision-making in response to a volatile and uncertain business environment.

4. **Promoting continuous self-directed learning:** They contribute to strengthening individuals' ability to engage in continuous self-directed learning rather than relying solely on their initial academic qualifications (Tondeur et al., 2023).

Components of Future Competencies

- 1. **Knowledge:** The traditional and specialized knowledge base required to perform work effectively.
- 2. **Skills:** Practical and applied capabilities, such as problem-solving and critical thinking.
- 3. **Character:** Values and behavioral attributes such as flexibility, adaptability, and openness to change.
- 4. **Meta-Learning:** The ability to engage in continuous learning and adapt to new knowledge and skills (Celume & Maoulida, 2022).

Dimensions of Future Competencies

The present study adopts five principal dimensions of future competencies based on Tondeur et al. (2023), Mruk-Tomczak and Jerzyk (2024), Celume and Maoulida (2022), and the United Nations (n.d.), as follows:

- 1. **Digital Competence:** The ability to use digital tools and technologies effectively in performing administrative tasks.
- 2. **Cognitive and Adaptive Flexibility:** The ability to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances and shift between different modes of thinking.
- 3. **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** The ability to analyze complex situations and make sound and rational decisions in response to them.
- 4. **Continuous Self-Directed Learning:** The commitment to continuous self-development and keeping abreast of emerging professional and intellectual developments.
- 5. **Collaborative Competence:** The ability to work effectively within diverse teams and communicate effectively with their members.

Fourth: The Relationship Among the Research Variables and the Mediating Role of Diversity Management

The theoretical literature indicates a logical interrelationship between agile human resource management practices and future competencies. The adoption of organizational flexibility, empowerment, continuous learning, and digital orientation is expected to create a work environment conducive to employees' acquisition of the skills and competencies required for the future (Moh'd et al., 2024; Piwowar-Sulej & Popowicz, 2024).

In the same context, several studies highlight the potential role of diversity management as a mediating mechanism that strengthens the positive effects of human resource practices on various organizational and behavioral outcomes. Elamin et al. (2024), for example, demonstrated that diversity management contributes to enhancing innovative behavior through increased work engagement. In the same vein, Silva et al. (2024) determined that the relationship between diversity management and organizational performance is mediated by organizational commitment and person–job fit.

Based on this theoretical perspective, this study postulates that diversity management might have a similar mediating effect on the link between agile HRM practices and future competencies. A work environment that is effectively managed and recognizes and leverages individual differences – in terms of gender, age, experience, and specialization – offers broader opportunities to leverage the outcomes of organizational agility in developing future competencies that are more comprehensive and diverse in their sources of knowledge.

Chapter Three: Practical Aspect (Statistical Analysis)

First: Description of the Demographic Characteristics of the Research Sample
Table (3): Demographic Characteristics of the Research Sample

Demographic Variable	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	113	60.8
	Female	73	39.2
Age Group	40–49 years	70	37.6
	30–39 years	62	33.3
	50 years and above	31	16.7
	Less than 30 years	23	12.4
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	104	55.9
	Master's Degree	50	26.9
	Diploma	18	9.7
	PhD	14	7.5
Administrative Level	Head of Division	51	27.4
	Head of Section	47	25.3
	Human Resources and Training Officer	44	23.7
	Department Director	22	11.8
	Deputy Department Director	13	7.0
	Director General	9	4.8
Years of Service	5–10 years	56	30.1

Demographic Variable	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
	More than 15 years	54	29.0
	11–15 years	48	25.8
	Less than 5 years	28	15.1
Total	—	186	100.0

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

A. The data presented in Table (3) revealed a notable degree of diversity in the demographic composition of the research sample in terms of gender, age, educational level, job title, and years of service. This supports the potential generalizability of the research findings to the broader research population and provides a realistic basis for examining diversity management as a mediating variable directly related to the existing demographic diversity within the Baghdad Municipality.

Second: Reliability of the Research Instrument (Internal Consistency)

Table (4): Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the Questionnaire Dimensions

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Agile Human Resource Management Practices	20	0.944
Diversity Management	16	0.924
Future Competencies	20	0.927
Overall Instrument	56	0.958

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results generated using SPSS.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all dimensions presented in Table (4) indicate a high level of reliability exceeding the statistically acceptable minimum of (0.70), according to Cronbach's criterion (Cronbach, 1951). The values ranged from (0.924) to (0.944), while the overall coefficient for the instrument reached (0.958). This indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items and strengthens confidence in the results that will be derived from the analysis of its data.

Third: Descriptive Analysis of the Research Variables

1- Agile Human Resource Management Practices

Table (5): Descriptive Statistics of the Dimensions of Agile Human Resource Management Practices

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Importance	Level
Organizational Flexibility	3.56	0.76	71.2%	Moderate
Speed and Responsiveness	3.48	0.78	69.7%	Moderate
Managerial Empowerment	3.62	0.79	72.5%	Moderate
Continuous Learning	3.43	0.78	68.7%	Moderate
Digital Orientation	3.55	0.77	71.0%	Moderate
Overall Index of Agile Human Resource Management Practices	3.53	0.76	70.6%	Moderate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results generated using SPSS.

It is evident from Table (5) that the level of agile human resource management practices at Baghdad Municipality was generally moderate, with a mean score of (3.53 out of 5). The dimension of "Managerial Empowerment" ranked first among the dimensions, recording the highest mean score of (3.62), whereas the "Continuous Learning" dimension recorded the lowest mean score of (3.43). That means there is a need to improve the continuous learning and development programs which are relatively weak in the overall agility system at Baghdad Municipality.

1- Diversity Management

Table (6): Descriptive Statistics of the Dimensions of Diversity Management

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Importance	Level
Diversity-Supportive Leadership	3.46	0.76	69.2%	Moderate
Diversity Policies and Practices	3.29	0.75	65.7%	Moderate
Inclusion Culture	3.45	0.75	69.0%	Moderate
Diversity Management Training	3.30	0.76	66.1%	Moderate
Overall Index of Diversity Management	3.37	0.74	67.5%	Moderate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results generated using SPSS.

Table (6) shows that overall level of diversity management was considered as moderate with mean score of (3.37). This was relatively low compared to the agile human resource management practices and future competencies variables. Of the dimensions, the dimension of Diversity-Supportive Leadership had the highest mean score of (3.46) and the lowest mean score was the dimension of Diversity Policies and Practices with a mean score of (3.29). This suggests there is a basic level of commitment by managers to the values of diversity, but that this is not fully reflected in formal written policies and

procedures.

1- Future Competencies

Table (7): Descriptive Statistics of the Dimensions of Future Competencies

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Importance	Level
Digital Competence	3.72	0.66	74.4%	High
Cognitive and Adaptive Flexibility	3.63	0.65	72.5%	Moderate
Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving	3.57	0.68	71.5%	Moderate
Continuous Self-Learning	3.72	0.66	74.4%	High
Collaborative Competence	3.57	0.69	71.4%	Moderate
Overall Index of Future Competencies	3.64	0.65	72.8%	Moderate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results generated using SPSS.

Overall future competencies as shown in Table (7) were at moderate level and leaning towards high level with mean score of (3.64). Digital Competence and Continuous Self-Directed Learning were the first in size with the highest mean score (3.72). Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, on the other hand, had a mean score of (3.57) which is relatively low. This points to the importance of moving training initiatives into the future to focus on analytical capabilities and problem-solving of administrative leaders.

Fourth: Testing the Normality of Data Distribution

Table (8): Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients for the Main Research Variables

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Agile Human Resource Management Practices	0.044	-0.589
Diversity Management	0.070	-0.150
Future Competencies	-0.087	-0.249

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results generated using SPSS.

Fifth: Testing the Correlation Hypotheses

Table (9): Pearson Correlation Matrix among the Main Research Variables (n = 186)

Relationship	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level (Sig.)	Relationship Type
Agile Human Resource Management Practices × Diversity Management	0.526	0.000	Positive and Significant
Agile Human Resource Management Practices × Future Competencies	0.610	0.000	Positive and Significant
Diversity Management × Future Competencies	0.504	0.000	Positive and Significant

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results generated using SPSS.

The results presented in Table (9) indicate the existence of statistically significant positive correlations at the (0.01) significance level among all the main research variables. The correlation coefficient between agile human resource management practices and future competencies was (0.61), representing the strongest of the three relationships. This was followed by the correlation between agile human resource management practices and diversity management, which reached (0.526), and then the correlation between diversity management and future competencies, which reached (0.504). Based on these results, the first main hypothesis and its three sub-hypotheses are accepted.

Correlation Matrix Between the Dimensions of Agile Human Resource Management Practices and the Dimensions of Future Competencies

Table (10): Sub-Correlation Matrix between the Dimensions of Agile Human Resource Management Practices and the Dimensions of Future Competencies

Dimensions of X \ Dimensions of Y	Digital Competence	Cognitive Flexibility	Critical Thinking	Continuous Self-Learning	Collaborative Competence
Organizational Flexibility	0.605	0.550	0.609	0.577	0.582
Speed Responsiveness and	0.603	0.555	0.600	0.574	0.572
Managerial Empowerment	0.579	0.536	0.587	0.561	0.555
Continuous Learning	0.599	0.552	0.600	0.576	0.566
Digital Orientation	0.609	0.564	0.602	0.576	0.576

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS.

All correlation coefficients presented in the above table are statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

The sub-correlation matrix presented in Table (10) shows that all dimensions of agile human resource management practices are positively and significantly correlated with all dimensions of future competencies. The strongest sub-relationships were observed between the **Digital Orientation** and **Organizational Flexibility** dimensions, on the one hand, and the **Digital Competence** and **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving** dimensions, on the other hand. This reflects the logical interrelationship between adopting digital and flexible human resource management practices and developing digital and cognitive competencies among administrative leaders.

Sixth: Testing the Direct Effect Hypothesis

Table (11): Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Effect of Agile Human Resource Practices on Future Competencies

Coefficient	Value	Standard Error (t)	Significance Level
Constant (a)	1.795	–	–
Regression Coefficient (β)	0.523	10.431	0.000
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	0.372	–	–
F-value	108.81	–	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS.

Seventh: Testing the Third Main Hypothesis (The Mediating Role of Diversity Management)

To test the mediating effect presented in Table (12), the present study employed the **Baron and Kenny (1986) approach**, which consists of four sequential steps, supported by the **Sobel Test** to verify the statistical significance of the indirect effect.

Table (12): Results of Baron and Kenny's Four Steps for Testing Mediation

Step	Tested Path	β	T	Sig.	Result
1	X $\rightarrow$ Y (Total Effect, Path c)	0.523	10.431	0.000	Significant $\checkmark$
2	X $\rightarrow$ Z (Path a)	0.512	8.380	0.000	Significant $\checkmark$
3	Z $\rightarrow$ Y (Path b, without controlling for X)	0.444	7.909	0.000	Significant $\checkmark$
4a	X $\rightarrow$ Y (Direct Effect, Path c', controlling for Z)	0.409	7.189	0.000	Significant (reduced from c) $\checkmark$
4b	Z $\rightarrow$ Y (Path b, controlling for X)	0.223	3.821	0.000	Significant $\checkmark$

Table (13): Mediation Effect Summary and Sobel Test

Indicator	Value
Total Effect (c)	0.523
Direct Effect (c')	0.409
Indirect Effect (a $\times$ b)	0.114
Percentage Mediated (% Mediated)	21.8%
Sobel Test (Z)	3.476
Sobel Test Significance (Sig.)	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS.

The Four Conditions of Baron and Kenny (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

All Baron-Kenny (Baron & Kenny, 1986) conditions were met. In the first step, the importance of path (c) was determined, then the importance of path (a) in the second step and path (b) in the third step. In the fourth step, the direct effect of agile human resource management practices on future competencies was also statistically significant but it reduced from (c = 0.523) to (c' = 0.409) once the effect of diversity management was controlled. This finding indicates partial mediation, rather than full mediation.

The Sobel Test was also conducted to confirm the statistical significance of the indirect effect which resulted in a value of Z = 3.476 and a Sig. = 0.000 < 0.01. The mediated effect of diversity management accounted for about 21.8% of the total effect. Hence, the third main hypothesis which posits that diversity management fully and statistically mediates between agile human resource management practices and future competencies is accepted.

Eighth: Effect Size and Comparison of the Findings with Previous Studies

The findings are more important than simply being statistically significant (p < 0.05), but also being practically significant (Effect Size). Based on Cohen's interpretation of the effect size of the squared partial correlation coefficient (f^2), the direct effect of agile human resource

management practices on future competencies represents a large effect size ($f^2 \approx 0.59$). This means that the effect observed is statistically significant and practically important from a management perspective.

If one compares the mediation proportion in the current study (21.8%) with those of previous studies, apparently, the mediation proportion seems to be fairly close to the mediation proportion of organizational commitment reported by Silva et al. (2024) and person–job fit reported by Silva et al. (2024) but lower than the mediation proportion of work engagement reported by Elamin et al. (2024). This indicates that diversity management is a potentially important mediator, but not the only mediator that could be seen in this process. Hence, there is a need to explore complementary variables, like work engagement or organizational commitment, in addition to diversity management in the future.

Table (14): Summary of the Results of Testing the Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement (Brief)	Result
Main Hypothesis 1 / Sub-hypothesis 1	Correlation between X and Y	Accepted
Main Hypothesis 1 / Sub-hypothesis 2	Correlation between X and Z	Accepted
Main Hypothesis 1 / Sub-hypothesis 3	Correlation between Z and Y	Accepted
Main Hypothesis 2	Direct effect of X on Y	Accepted
Main Hypothesis 3	Partial mediation of Z in the relationship between X and Y	Accepted

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS.

Section Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

First: Conclusions

- The results of the study have confirmed that the choice of implementing agile human resource management practices is a strategic one that can help the organization to be ready for the future changes. To do this, however, there must be an equal focus on all practices, and not just the administrative ones which are more readily set up.
- Study showed that diversity management still is being carried out at an incomplete level, considering the potential benefits the management of diversity can bring to the organization. This suggests the need to shift from diversity's status as a general organisational value towards a disposition to diversity as an institutional practice with policies and procedures in place.
- The results show that having the right future competencies in an administrative body is not automatic; it is a result of integrated organizational practices that provide an environment for continuous learning and development and adaptation to new situations.
- The study revealed that the connection between agile human resource management practices and future competencies is not just one of a direct connection, but also one shaped by the presence of an organizational environment that positively leverages diversity. An environment like this improves employees' capacity to use their experiences and differences to create more sustainable future competencies.
- The result of this shows that training programmes are not the only factor that can be relied upon in achieving the success of governmental organizations in developing future competencies. Instead, it is linked to an integrated system which integrates organizational agility, empowerment, continuous learning and diversity management in a single managerial model.
- The study offers empirical evidence that diversity management is not only an administrative activity on its own but rather an organizational mechanism that can make agile human resource management practices more effective and more real, as development results, at administrative leadership level.
- The study emphasizes the need to take integrated strategic approach to human resource management in public sector through investing in human capital as a source of future capabilities. This helps build the organization's ability to deal with the increasingly fast speed of change in the organization and technology.

Second: Recommendations

- Implementing an integrated institutional program to develop agile human resource management practices focusing on the creation of a culture of continuous learning, knowledge sharing and flexibility in the management of work, thus assuring the sustainable development of the capabilities of the employees.
- Create a formal structure for diversity management with clear policies and procedures and periodic monitoring mechanisms so that diversity can become a source of added value and a force for the development of the institution.
- Redesign administrative leadership development programs to include development of future competencies, such as strategic thinking, innovation, decision-making and adaptation to digital transformation.
- Increase the digital transformation of HR management by introducing employee management systems and information systems in electronic form, which leads to faster procedures, better decision making and higher effectiveness of administrative services.
- Use indicators of diversity support, collaboration and participatory work as part of administrative leadership performance appraisal tools to increase leadership accountability for creating a more inclusive and sustainable workplace.
- Create a permanent working group in Baghdad Municipality to follow up the implementation of the organizational agility and diversity management, and to periodically measure its effect on development of future competencies, and adopt the results of the measurements in development policies and programmes.

The following table suggests an implementation mechanism, a recommended timeline and a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for each recommendation to improve the feasibility, implementation and monitoring of these recommendations.

Table (15): Mechanisms for Implementing Recommendations, Proposed Timeline, and Key Performance Indicators

Recommendation (Brief)	Proposed Mechanism	Implementation	Timeline	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)
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Recommendation (Brief)	Proposed Mechanism	Implementation	Timeline	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)
Enhancing continuous learning	Designing a short digital Micro-learning training pathway in partnership with the Secretariat's Training Institute		Within 6 months of approving the recommendation	Number of training hours per employee annually; percentage improvement in the mean score of the Continuous Learning dimension in the subsequent assessment
Adopting a Diversity Management Policy	Forming a joint working team (Human Resources + Legal Affairs) to draft the policy and submit it to the Secretariat Council for approval		Within 3–4 months of approving the recommendation	Date of official policy adoption; percentage of departments implementing the policy within one year of approval
Training in Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving	Conducting applied workshops based on real administrative case studies for targeted leaders		Two sessions annually, starting in the first year	Participants' average post-training assessment score compared with the pre-training assessment
Investing in Digital Orientation	Conducting a feasibility study and gradually adopting an electronic Human Resources Information System (HRIS)		Within 1–1.5 years	Percentage of HR procedures completed electronically out of the total HR procedures
Integrating Diversity Indicators into Performance Evaluation	Modifying the leadership performance evaluation form to include a specific diversity management criterion in coordination with the Performance Development Committee		At the beginning of the next annual evaluation cycle	Percentage of leaders achieving the minimum diversity management standard in their performance evaluation
Results Presentation Workshops	Conducting an introductory workshop for decision-makers and department leaders to present the findings and recommendations and discuss implementation mechanisms		Within two months of the official approval of the research	Number of participating attendees; number of recommendations actually implemented within six months of the workshop

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

Third: Scientific, Knowledge-Based, and Practical Contributions Scientific (Theoretical) Contribution

A theoretical model which integrated agile human resource management practices, diversity management as a mediator, and future competencies was developed. As far as the researcher knows, this relationship has not been comprehensively explored in previous research. The study thus helps in filling up the gaps in the knowledge that were earlier identified and create new research avenues for those operating in the field of human resource management.

Knowledge Contribution

The study contributes to the Arabic literature by offering an updated theoretical review of the concepts of agile human resource management, diversity management and future competencies, through Arabic and international sources published from 2018 till 2026. The study also prepared a measurement instrument (questionnaire) which can be adapted and applied in similar governmental environment.

Practical Contribution

The study gives a quantitative diagnosis to decision makers at Baghdad Municipality in terms of identifying strengths and weakness of agile human resource management practices, diversity management and future competencies. It also offers practical and implementable recommendations, which can help improve administrative leaders' future readiness.

Fourth: Knowledge Gaps, Their Analysis, and How They Are Addressed

Building upon the preliminary identification of the knowledge gap presented in the section on previous studies, this section provides a more detailed analysis of the major knowledge gaps related to the research topic and explains the mechanisms adopted by the present study to address each of these gaps.

Table (16): Knowledge Gaps and the Mechanisms Adopted to Address Them

Knowledge Gap	Analysis of the Gap	How the Current Study Addressed the Gap
Integration Gap among Agility, Diversity Management, and Future Competencies	A critical review of previous studies revealed that the three research variables have generally been examined separately or through partial bivariate relationships, such as agility–performance, diversity–innovation, and competencies–employability, without an integrated model explaining how these three variables interact within a unified research context (Bett, 2023; Elamin et al., 2024; Piwowar-Sulej & Popowicz, 2024).	The current study developed an integrated model positioning Diversity Management as a mediating variable in the relationship between Agile Human Resource Management Practices and Future Competencies. This mediating role was statistically tested using the Baron and Kenny procedures and the Sobel test, demonstrating a statistically significant indirect effect and thereby addressing the integration gap empirically rather than

Knowledge Gap	Analysis of the Gap	How the Current Study Addressed the Gap
		conceptually alone.
Contextual Gap: Limited Evidence from the Iraqi Local Government Sector	Most previous studies addressing the research variables have focused on private-sector organizations or on administrative and cultural contexts different from Iraq, including Kenya, the United Arab Emirates, Brazil, and Poland. In contrast, empirical studies integrating the three variables within Iraqi local government institutions remain limited, despite the distinctive organizational, legislative, and cultural characteristics of this sector.	The current study applied its proposed model to a sample of administrative leaders at the Baghdad Municipality , a major local governmental service institution. This provides preliminary empirical evidence from the Iraqi context and contributes to establishing a knowledge base that can support future comparative studies across Iraqi governmental institutions.
Methodological Rigor Gap in Testing Mediation	The critical review indicated that some previous studies relied solely on correlation or simple regression analyses without directly testing the mediation mechanism, whereas other studies employed more advanced techniques, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This methodological variation results in differences in the way mediating effects are tested and limits the comparability of findings across studies.	The current study adopted an explicit multi-step procedure for testing mediation, using the four-step Baron and Kenny approach supported by the Sobel test . It also acknowledged the limitations of this approach and recommended the use of Bootstrap, PROCESS, or SEM techniques in future studies, thereby providing a clearer methodological basis for further developing and testing the proposed model.

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

Fifth: Methodological Limitations of the Study

The study acknowledges a number of methodological limitations that should be considered when interpreting and generalizing its findings:

- Generalizability Limitations:** The study was conducted exclusively at Baghdad Municipality using a sample of its administrative leaders. This limits the possibility of directly generalizing the findings to other governmental institutions or sectors without taking into account the specific characteristics of each organizational context.
- Cross-Sectional Nature of the Data:** The study adopted a **cross-sectional design**, examining the relationships among the variables at a single point in time. Consequently, the design does not permit definitive causal inferences or the assessment of how these relationships develop and change over time.
- Potential Self-Report Bias:** The measurement instrument relied on respondents' **self-reported data** regarding the level of practices and competencies. This may introduce potential biases, including **social desirability bias** or overestimation arising from subjective self-assessment.
- Limited Validation Procedures:** The study relied on **face validity and reliability testing** without conducting construct validity tests, such as **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)** or **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**, as previously noted in Chapter One.

Sixth: Suggestions for Future Research

- Conduct comparative studies** between Baghdad Municipality and other local governmental institutions to assess the generalizability and applicability of the research model across different organizational contexts.
- Introduce additional mediating or moderating variables**, such as digital leadership or psychological flexibility, to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between organizational agility and future competencies.
- Employ advanced statistical techniques**, such as **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** using AMOS or the **PROCESS Macro** (Hayes, 2013), to provide a more comprehensive examination of the structural relationships among the research variables.
- Examine the impact of agile human resource management practices on future competencies using a longitudinal research design**, allowing changes in the relationships among the variables to be monitored over time rather than being limited to a single cross-sectional observation.

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