

Attitudes of Directors towards Governance Practices in Government Institutions and Companies in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aimed to examine the attitudes of directors towards governance practices in government institutions and companies in Jordan. The investigated governance practices included the following pillars: legal and institutional frameworks, strategy and performance management frameworks, human capital management frameworks, resource management frameworks and operational management frameworks. The examined pillars of governance practices were measured by developing and distributing a 5-point scale questionnaire to directors who are responsible for institutional development in government institutions and companies listed in the Budgets Law of Government Units for the fiscal year 2019, the number of which was 57 government institutions and companies. The response rate was 79%. The results of one-sample t-test indicate that the attitudes of directors towards governance practices and related pillars are well above the average level. Results of correlation test indicate that there are statistically significant correlations between the five pillars of governance practices at the 0.01 significance level. The research concluded that governance practices include adherence to specifications and compliance with frameworks, guidelines and standards, thus improving the quality of service delivery and at the same time improving the use of resources, which enhances people's trust in government institutions and companies.

Keywords: Directors, Governance, Governance pillars, Governance practices, Government institutions and companies, Jordan.

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اتجاهات المديرين نحو ممارسات الحوكمة في المؤسسات والشركات الحكومية في الأردن

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ملخص

هدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة اتجاهات المديرين نحو ممارسات الحوكمة في المؤسسات والشركات الحكومية في الأردن. وتضمنت ممارسات الحوكمة التي تمت دراستها الركائز التالية: الأطر القانونية والمؤسسية، وأطر إدارة الاستراتيجية والأداء، وأطر إدارة رأس المال البشري، وأطر إدارة الموارد، وأطر الإدارة التشغيلية. وقد تم قياس ركائز ممارسات الحوكمة من خلال تطوير وتوزيع استبانة على المديرين المسؤولين عن التطوير المؤسسي في المؤسسات والشركات الحكومية المدرجة في قانون موازنات الوحدات الحكومية للسنة المالية 2019، وعددها 57 مؤسسة وشركة حكومية، حيث بلغت نسبة الاستجابة 79%. وتشير نتائج اختبار t للعينة الواحدة إلى أن اتجاهات المديرين نحو ممارسات الحوكمة بشكل عام وفي الركائز ذات الصلة تتجاوز المستوى المتوسط. كما تُظهر نتائج اختبار الارتباط وجود علاقات ارتباط ذات دلالة إحصائية فيما بين الركائز الخمس لممارسات الحوكمة بمستوى دلالة إحصائية مقداره 1%. وخلص البحث إلى أن ممارسات الحوكمة تتضمن الالتزام بالمواصفات والامتثال للأطر والإرشادات والمعايير، وبالتالي تحسين جودة تقديم الخدمات وفي الوقت ذاته حسن استخدام الموارد، مما يعزز ثقة الناس في المؤسسات والشركات الحكومية.

الكلمات الدالة: المديرين، الحوكمة، ركائز الحوكمة، ممارسات الحوكمة، المؤسسات والشركات الحكومية، الأردن.

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INTRODUCTION

Like many management concepts, there is no common standard definition of governance in literature. Based on a literature review and for the purpose of this research, governance is operationally defined as a set of frameworks and related practices that govern institutional work to ensure efficiency in managing resources and effectiveness in achieving goals. Governance practices apply to all sectors regardless of the nature of roles, business and functions.

Governance is the frameworks, policies, systems, processes and practices concerned with ensuring the overall direction, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of an institution or a company. Governance is the foundation of clear responsibilities, supervision, transparency, integrity and excellence. Institutions and companies adopt governance practices to ensure sustainable performance and enhance stakeholders' confidence. Examining the governance practices based on the perceptions of concerned directors is essential to identify the potential practical and literature contributions. This study derives its importance from the fact that it attempts to examine institutional governance practices in the public sector, specifically the government institutions and companies.

This study examines comprehensively the attitudes of directors towards governance practices at the institutional level throughout the whole institution or company. The study incorporates the set-up, frameworks, structure, systems and machinery of the institution and touches key engines, drivers and catalysts that constitute the good governance of all of these enablers and ensure efficiency and effectiveness as well as the overall institutional performance in general.

Research Problem

The problem of this research can be summarized in

answering the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of directors towards governance practices in government institutions and companies in Jordan?
2. What are the attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the legal and institutional frameworks?
3. What are the attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the strategy and performance management frameworks?
4. What are the attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the human capital management frameworks?
5. What are the attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the resource management frameworks?
6. What are the attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the operational management frameworks?
7. Are there statistically significant correlations between the attitudes of directors towards the five pillars of governance practices?

Research Objectives

This research aimed to investigate:

1. The attitudes of directors towards governance practices in government institutions and companies in Jordan.
2. The attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the legal and institutional frameworks.
3. The attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the strategy and performance management frameworks.
4. The attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the human capital management frameworks.

5. The attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the resource management frameworks.
6. The attitudes of directors towards governance practices related to the operational management frameworks.
7. Whether there are statistically significant correlations between the attitudes of directors towards the five pillars of governance practices.

Literature Review

Aggarwal et al. (2007) found that minority shareholders would benefit from investment in governance. Chen & Shapiro (2011) argued that boards of directors are not independent to controlling shareholders. Othman & Abdul Rahman (2014) highlighted the role of the leadership in supporting governance practices. Mohamed (2016) found significant differences in practices of corporate governance between Islamic banks and conventional banks. Ali et al. (2016) indicated the impact of governance on knowledge management system. Madhani (2016) mentioned that corporate governance provides the context for the decisions taken by the top management and addresses the agency problem between shareholders and managers.

Dipendra (2016) referred to how governance contributes to accountability. Padachi et al. (2016) found that the governance framework, reporting and conduct and rewards are the key factors that influence the corporate practices of companies listed in the Stock Exchange of Mauritius (SEM). Said et al. (2016) concluded that the Malaysian public sector achieves an effective integrity system through developing a good governance system. Thangaru & Kinyua (2017) found that organizational competence has a positive influence on corporate governance practices in the National Industrial Training Authority in Kenya. Maheshwari & Meena (2017) concluded that the degree of corporate governance compliance is good in SBI (Public Sector Bank). Chimbari (2017) suggested a rule-based legislative solution that will impose stringent regulatory oversight on

Zimbabwe's public sector.

Anttiroiko (2017) showed that Singapore is a revolutionary case with an array of institutionalized anti-corruption measures providing a fast track to good governance. Aguilera et al. (2018) mentioned that applying a deviant governance practice is contingent on the governance regulatory environment and a company's governance capacity. Endris & Nura (2018) revealed that local government administration lacked the courage to enforce the law and policies to enhance good governance in Jimma town. Kanchana & Samarakoon (2018) revealed that the adoption of e-governance enhances transparency and accountability of public-sector activities and thereby efficiently delivers services to the public. Arniati et al. (2019) indicated that governance mechanism incorporates structure of ownership, commissioner board and audit committee. Findings indicated that commissioner board structure, internal audit function and internal control activity have partially a significant effect on earnings' quality.

Paterson et al. (2019) focused on the critical analysis of policy and practice in the fight against corruption and on the interactions between public sector companies, accounting and the socio-economic and political environments.

AlHares et al. (2019) investigated the level of compliance and disclosure of corporate governance mechanisms in Middle East and North Africa countries and found that voluntary compliance with and disclosure of governance mechanisms among MENA countries are low and vary substantially across countries. Asumadu (2019) indicated that good governance is an imperative factor in explaining the performance of commercial banks in Ghana. Agnihotri & Gupta (2019) found that among the corporate governance factors, a smaller board size

and a higher ratio of block ownership consistently seem to have better efficiency. Awadallah (2020) showed that board independence, CEO duality and audit committees have a significant association with the quality of the audit process, whereas institutional investors and managerial ownership have no significant influence on audit quality. Beshi & Kaur (2020) found that transparency, accountability and responsiveness had greater trust in the local administration. Mohammed & Hassan (2020) mentioned that the Codes of Good Governance Practice is a powerful tool to understand the latest developments in corporate governance practice and the principles of transparency and good management.

In general, previous studies mentioned above examined governance practices in several sectors from different countries with more focus on private-sector companies (Mohamed, 2016; Padachi et al., 2016; Maheshwari & Meena, 2017; Suwaidan et al., 2018; Abdeldayem & Aldulaimi, 2018; Abu Khalaf and Al-Tarawneh, 2019; Asumadu, 2019). Many of these previous studies investigated the nature of associations between governance and other management concepts and practices, such as quality, transparency, accountability and anticorruption. The focus on top management level was obvious in many of previous studies (Chen & Shapiro, 2011; Othman & Abdul Rahman, 2014; Madhani, 2016; Arniati et al., 2019; Agnihotri & Gupta, 2019; Awadallah, 2020). Some of them highlighted key success factors, such as management independence from ownership, protection of the rights of minority shareholders, participative leadership, proper appraisal systems and avoiding conflict of interests.

Based on that, investigating the attitudes of directors towards institutional governance practices will be a significant contribution to knowledge and at the same time, the findings can be used by similar institutions and companies to enhance governance practices at the overall institutional level.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Based on literature review and previous studies mentioned above (Chen & Shapiro, 2011; Othman & Abdul Rahman, 2014; Madhani, 2016; Mohamed, 2016; Padachi et al., 2016; Maheshwari & Meena, 2017; Suwaidan et al., 2018; Abdeldayem & Aldulaimi, 2018; Abu Khalaf and Al-Tarawneh, 2019; Asumadu, 2019; Arniati et al., 2019; Agnihotri & Gupta, 2019; Awadallah, 2020), this research attempts to investigate the attitudes of directors towards institutional governance practices. As shown in Figure 1, the overall institutional governance practices consist of the following pillars:

1. Legal and Institutional Frameworks LIFs: this pillar includes the key components and attributes related to the legal frameworks, such as focus on core functions of the institution, comprehensiveness, clarity, relevance, applicability and implementation with no overlapping or duplications in roles and functions with other institutions. This pillar also includes the key components and/or attributes related to the institutional frameworks, such as relevance of endorsed structure and organization in terms of size and structure, integrated functions, effective supervision and effective governed communication and reporting channels.
2. Strategy and Performance Management Frameworks SPMFs: this pillar includes the key components and attributes related to the strategy management frameworks, such as implementation of approved manuals or guidelines, participative approach for policy-making, factual approach for decision-making, alignment, cascading, clear implementation responsibilities, specific timeframes, identified milestones, follow-up and impact analysis and evaluation. This pillar also

includes the key components and attributes related to the performance management frameworks, such as performance indicators, related international indicators, monitoring and evaluation system and processes, internal administrative and financial control units, transparent reports and publications and accountability.

3. Human Capital Management Frameworks HCMFs: this pillar includes the key components and attributes related to the human capital management frameworks, such as functions, plans, processes, alignment with strategy, empowerment, performance appraisal, merit basis and codes of conduct.
4. Resource Management Frameworks RMFs: this pillar includes the key components and attributes related to the financial management frameworks, such as fiscal policy, budgeting, financial system and processes, expenditure review, reporting and corrective actions.

This pillar also includes the key components and attributes related to the other resource management frameworks, such as partnership, procurement system and processes, facilities and equipment management, preventive maintenance, utilization, storing management, technology management and knowledge management.

5. Operational Management Frameworks OMFs: this pillar includes the key components and attributes related to operational management frameworks, such as simplified accessible endorsed procedural manuals, communicated process and service standards, auditable automated and digitalized operations and seamless integration and cooperation between and within institutions.

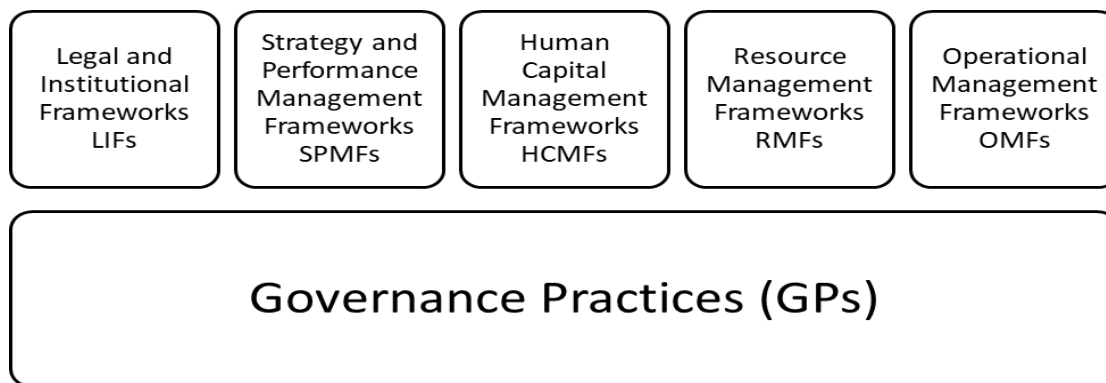


Figure (1)
Research model (source: developed by the author)

The attitudes of directors towards governance practices were measured by developing and distributing a questionnaire to the directors who are responsible for institutional development in government institutions and companies listed in Budgets Law of Government Units for the fiscal year 2019 (Law no. 2 for the year 2019), the number of which is 57 government units.

The questionnaire contained a set of questions (5-10

questions) for each of the five pillars of governance practices mentioned above. The measurement scale consisted of five points: 1 (poor), 2 (below average), 3 (average), 4 (above average) and 5 (excellent).

The following hypotheses were developed and tested using appropriate statistical analysis techniques:

The First Hypothesis

H01: Governance practices are not statistically different from the average level according to the attitudes of directors at the significance level of ($\leq 0.05\alpha$).

The Second Hypothesis

H02: Governance practices related to each of the five pillars (legal and institutional, strategy and performance management, human capital management, resource management and operational management frameworks) are not statistically different from the average level according to the attitudes of directors at the significance level of ($\leq 0.05\alpha$).

The Third Hypothesis

H03: There are no statistically significant correlations between the attitudes of directors towards the five pillars of governance practices at the significance level of ($\leq 0.01\alpha$).

To ensure the validity of the measuring instrument and

thus measure what it is assumed to measure, a draft questionnaire was distributed to a number of experts and then developed based on the feedback, comments and suggestions received.

The final format of the questionnaire was distributed to all directors who are responsible for institutional development function in government institutions and companies listed in Budgets Law of Government Units for the fiscal year 2019 (Law no. 2 for the year 2019). The population of the study consisted of all directors of institutional development in 57 institutions and companies. The response rate was 79%.

As shown in Table 1, the outputs of dimension reduction (factor analysis) support the extraction of one component (Legal and Institutional Frameworks LIFs).

Table (1)
Output of factor analysis (LIFs)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.308	73.079	73.079	7.308	73.079	73.079
2	0.631	6.307	79.386			
3	0.541	5.413	84.799			
4	0.343	3.428	88.226			
5	0.269	2.687	90.913			
6	0.249	2.491	93.405			
7	0.214	2.140	95.545			
8	0.179	1.787	97.332			
9	0.154	1.540	98.872			
10	0.113	1.128	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

As shown in Table 2, the outputs of dimension

reduction (factor analysis) support the extraction of

one component (Strategy and Performance Management Frameworks SPMFs).

Table (2)
Output of factor analysis (SPMFs)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.465	68.314	68.314	5.465	68.314	68.314
2	0.632	7.905	76.219			
3	0.535	6.687	82.906			
4	0.470	5.875	88.781			
5	0.301	3.768	92.549			
6	0.223	2.789	95.337			
7	0.212	2.645	97.982			
8	0.161	2.018	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

As shown in Table 3, the outputs of dimension component (Human Capital Management reduction (factor analysis) support the extraction of one Frameworks HCMFs).

Table (3)
Output of factor analysis (HCMFs)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.540	70.801	70.801	3.540	70.801	70.801
2	0.535	10.694	81.495			
3	0.434	8.680	90.175			
4	0.265	5.309	95.484			
5	0.226	4.516	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

As shown in Table 4, the outputs of dimension component (Resource Management Frameworks reduction (factor analysis) support the extraction of one RMFs).

Table (4)
Output of factor analysis (RMFs)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.682	66.821	66.821	6.682	66.821	66.821
2	0.780	7.797	74.618			
3	0.572	5.718	80.336			
4	0.470	4.699	85.034			
5	0.400	3.997	89.031			
6	0.290	2.905	91.936			
7	0.225	2.249	94.185			
8	0.214	2.142	96.327			
9	0.201	2.008	98.335			
10	0.167	1.665	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

As shown in Table 5, the outputs of dimension reduction (factor analysis) support the extraction of one

component (Operational Management Frameworks OMFs).

Table (5)
Output of factor analysis (OMFs)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.725	74.509	74.509	3.725	74.509	74.509
2	0.489	9.779	84.288			
3	0.336	6.725	91.013			
4	0.240	4.799	95.812			
5	0.209	4.188	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Reliability was tested for every single pillar of governance practices using SPSS and the test outputs are shown in Table 6. As shown in Table 6, Cronbach's alpha

equals more than 0.90 for nearly the five pillars of governance practices. This means that the reliability of responses to the questionnaire is high.

Table (6)
Cronbach's alpha

Governance pillars	Cronbach's alpha
Legal and Institutional Frameworks LIFs	0.957
Strategy and Performance Management Frameworks SPMFs	0.937
Human Capital Management Frameworks HCMFs	0.897
Resource Management Frameworks RMFs	0.944
Operational Management Frameworks OMFs	0.913

Research Findings

The descriptive statistics results for institutional governance practices and related pillars are shown in Table 7. As shown in Table 7, the mean of governance practices equals 3.6853, which is more close to "above average = 4" than to "average = 3". Means of all pillars of governance are more close to "above average = 4" than to "average = 3" as well. The standard deviations for governance practices and all related pillars are less than 0.78.

Table (7)
Descriptive statistics

Governance pillars	Mean	Std. deviation
Legal and Institutional Frameworks LIFs	3.6800	0.72945
Strategy and Performance Management Frameworks SPMFs	3.6444	0.73656
Human Capital Management Frameworks HCMFs	3.7289	0.68643
Resource Management Frameworks RMFs	3.6178	0.73710
Operational Management Frameworks OMFs	3.7556	0.77329
Governance Practices (GPs)	3.6853	0.69575

The results of one-sample t-test are shown in Table 8. As shown in Table 8, Sig. (2-tailed) for the governance practices and the five pillars is 0.000. This indicates that the first and the second null hypotheses have been rejected and

the alternative hypotheses have been accepted. Therefore, the institutional governance practices and related pillars exceed the average level.

Table (8)
One-sample t-test results (test value = 3)

One-sample t-test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
LIFs	6.253	44	0.000	0.68000	0.4609	0.8991
SPMFs	5.869	44	0.000	0.64444	0.4232	0.8657
HCMFs	7.123	44	0.000	0.72889	0.5227	0.9351

RMFs	5.622	44	0.000	0.61778	0.3963	0.8392
OMFs	6.554	44	0.000	0.75556	0.5232	0.9879
GPs	6.608	44	0.000	0.68533	0.4763	0.8944

The results of correlation test are shown in Table 9. As shown in Table 9, Pearson correlations > 0.79 and Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000. This indicates that there are statistically significant correlations between the attitudes of directors towards the five pillars of governance practices at the 0.01

level (2-tailed). This supports the rejection of the third null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. The findings support the associations and linkages between these pillars of governance practices.

Table (9)
Correlation results

Correlations						
		LIFs	SPMFs	HCMFs	RMFs	OMFs
LIFs	Pearson Correlation	1	0.942**	0.874**	0.951**	0.890**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	45	45	45	45	45
SPMFs	Pearson Correlation	0.942**	1	0.797**	0.904**	0.825**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	45	45	45	45	45
HCMFs	Pearson Correlation	0.874**	0.797**	1	0.864**	0.869**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	45	45	45	45	45
RMFs	Pearson Correlation	0.951**	0.904**	0.864**	1	0.857**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	45	45	45	45	45
OMFs	Pearson Correlation	0.890**	0.825**	0.869**	0.857**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	45	45	45	45	45
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Discussion of Results

The directors' responses and research findings indicate that the legal and institutional frameworks satisfy most of the key components and attributes mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study. However, the findings also indicate that the legal frameworks are not periodically

reviewed in order to revise them if/when needed. In addition, the size and contents of organizational structures are unfit as more weight is given to support functions in terms of number of people and budgets on the account of core functions.

The findings also showed that the strategy and

performance management frameworks align with the majority of key components and attributes mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study. However, there is a clear need to invest more efforts in analyzing and evaluating the impact of policies and strategies, as they cost money and consume time, in addition to the need to pay more concern to scientific research to support the decision-making process. Some of the internal control units practice all types of control (financial, administrative and technical), while others practice only financial control. The missing part is effective accountability and the immense necessity to follow up the related international indicators and take the required actions to improve the country's ranking and grades in these indicators and thereby enhance its competitive advantage at the international level.

Participating directors indicated that the human capital management frameworks match many of the key components and attributes mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study. The alignment between human capital and corporate strategy is a vital matter and needs more concern in most of institutions and companies.

The results revealed that the resource management frameworks partially comply with the components and attributes mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study. The budgeting mechanism and process are still traditional at the time that there are some directives and initial attempts to move to result-oriented budgeting system. Reviewing expenditures is crucial for the future of these institutions and companies. Partnership initiatives are still at the beginning. More efforts are needed in the field of knowledge management.

Respondents indicated that the operational management frameworks are largely similar to the components and attributes mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study. There are initial attempts for electronic and smart services and processes. The key challenge is the legal requirements of such transformation to automation and

digitalization. Ensuring the applicability of audit process in automation and digitalization initiatives is an issue to deal with and find a way to solve.

The strong positive correlations between the five pillars of institutional governance practices support the logical association and integration between these pillars and reveal their pivotal role in creating and contributing to the culture of governance. Governance practices are not useful if there is any weak link, irrespective of its type and level, in the complete circle.

In general, the findings of this study are largely aligned with the results of previous studies that focused on some practices of governance as mentioned in the literature review.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research concludes that governance practices incorporate conforming to specifications and complying with frameworks, guidelines and standards, thereby improving the quality of delivering missions and services and at the same time optimizing the use of the available resources. This means spending public money to serve citizens in a responsible, wise way. In fact, all of these practices enhance the people trust in government institutions and companies.

The investigated pillars of governance practices may form a sound model for institutional governance practices that can be used by similar institutions or companies to assess governance practices and then bridge the gaps or undertake further enhancements accordingly. In addition to that, this model can be reviewed and enhanced in future research and studies.

Government institutions and companies can enhance their governance practices, values and culture at the institutional level through adhering

more to the principle of the rule of law and ensuring the separation of control and regulatory activities from execution. Enforcing accountability as well as improving monitoring and evaluation systems and the related tools and processes contribute a lot to its culture and practices. Activating risk management, resilience and agility concepts

is essential in creating the culture of governance. In addition to all of the recommendations mentioned above, investing wisely in accreditation, quality and excellence systems and programs, as well as anchoring the culture of integrity, equality and transparency are highly recommended.

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