

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE AMONG STATE OFFICIALS**Ammar Mohsen Shather¹, Dr. Abbas Hanon Muhana Al Asadi²**

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The current era is characterized by phenomena, problems, and pressures that cause weak thinking about the future. Visions of thinking and its methods differed, and we found an emphasis on critical, creative, and deductive thinking. All of them are components of thinking about the future without referring to it, as this style includes a set of mental processes such as prediction, extrapolation, representation, and visualization to develop a strategy that helps to confront reality and the challenges of the future.

Keywords: Future, Thinking, State officials**Introduction**

The positive personality leaves an influence in itself, and in others especially when it is active in its social surroundings (Wurlitzer, 2000, p: 315). Far from passivity, or trying to mimic what is coming, or far from tradition, the prevalence of impractical patterns of thinking, and the absence of a future vision drives anxiety, especially with news statistics on our society, our citizens as poor parental respect, and the disintegration of families, Tanner 2000 revealed. 70% of human beings circumvent their dealings, use alcohol, and drugs, 50% steal things from shopping shops, and 25% lie for work (Tanner, 2000, p: 5). The Carnegie Corporation indicated that 25% assaulted others out of anger, and 24% carried weapons without a license (Reynolds, et al, 2000, p. 7).

Iraq is going through stressful circumstances that may cause turmoil in the individual's behavior with the severity of the changes, including the contradiction between conservatism and liberalism, the spread of consumerism, and negative aspects (Naseer, 2009, p. 163), weak mental flexibility, and the desire to keep up with everything new (Al-Faraji, 2015, p. 35), dependence on social media networks, family disintegration, fractured values, and weakness in mental processes by (29.65), problem-solving by (24.02), prediction by (23.45), and acting by (22.88) (Shamal and Al-Sidawi, 2022, p. 277). These are signs of weak thinking about the future, especially with the increasing number of government employees, and the need for people to visit departments to complete their transactions.

The current era is characterized by phenomena, problems, and pressures that cause weak thinking about the future. Visions of thinking and its methods differed, and we found an emphasis on critical, creative, and deductive thinking. All of them are components of thinking about the future without referring to it, as this style includes a set of mental processes such as

prediction, extrapolation, representation, and visualization to develop a strategy that helps to confront reality and the challenges of the future. This may cause tensions at work, and pressure, especially with the individual's ambitions to satisfy his needs, and his thinking about ways to achieve his goals (Mahmoud, et al., 1997, p. 2).

Poor thinking about the future causes a widespread negative outlook, and weak creative perceptions (Macleed, & Mitchen, 1997, p: 154). Smith 1993 points out that I do not care about what my children do, about what they study, rather I care about how to think about their future and make decisions for themselves (Smith, 1993, p: 9). Aziz (2018) study of a sample of university students about their thinking about the future found that (44%) of them lacked this pattern in their personalities, explaining this to the unstable conditions of Iraq, as well as incorrect parental treatment methods. (36%) of them limit themselves to thinking about wishes and dreams, (12%) of them only imagine and plan without implementing them, and (8%) of them only expect (Aziz, 2018, p. 5). The government employee may be more thinking about the future, as his feelings fluctuate, his psychology is unstable, and his goals are multiple, which has an impact on his balance, behavior, and personality traits. Learning to think about the future is a problem that deserves to be studied. Through his business work, the researcher explains to various State departments that the category of employees suffers from thinking about the future.

King 1992 emphasized that cognitive development is an indicator of the development of moral thinking (King, 1992, p. 36). The government employee faces personal and social requirements that push him to think about his future, especially since he lives in semi-stable conditions and is going through physical, psychological, and social changes. Thinking about the future supports planning by thinking about solutions, and prepares the individual for a changing world that requires mental flexibility to deal with developments, an optimistic outlook when facing problems, and making a comparison between the problems of the past, the problems of the present, and the problems that are expected to occur (Razouki and Nabil, 2019, p. 155). Accordingly, the need to think about the future is always present, and it is a basic requirement for organizations as it is a way of thinking that deals with what is expected to happen and precedes it with preparations, alternatives, and solutions (Shamal and Al-Sidawi, 2022, p. 281). The individual's interest in his future increases as he grows older, especially his professional one, as Fennem 1976 showed that there are differences between the sexes in thinking about the future when dealing with situations, as they attribute their success or failure in achieving what they plan to, to thinking about the future (Fennem, 1976, p. 21).

Thinking about the future takes many forms, starting with planning. What the individual does in the future must emerge from the present, taking into account the expected and unexpected changes in the future (Anthon, 2016, p: 119), and then the accumulation of events, with the difference between individuals over time, so the future is an extension of the past, of the present, and finally symmetry. Events are repeated from time to time (Cornish, 2003, p. 388). The absence of thinking about the future is a problem facing the individual and society, as interest has increased in studying the factors that help develop this style of thinking (Ibrahim, 1978, p. 53). For example, females think less about the future than males, as their response was weaker when surrounding circumstances changed, while males' thinking was higher despite changing circumstances. (Dweck, 1978, p. 22).

Thinking about the future causes anxiety for the individual until it becomes the center of his

attention to be reassured about his current and future situation. There are many factors, perhaps the most important of which are the methods of dealing inside and outside the home, and the resulting negative or positive effects that may affect thinking about the future, especially since we live in an era in which knowledge is increasing, science is flowing, and needs and challenges are increasing, especially since thinking about the future is a cognitive process and a reaction to a form of dealing with what is expected to happen, starting with internal or external pressure stimuli that are interpreted as threats to the individual (Abdulraqib, 1982, p. 15).

The reason for weak thinking methods may be due to social difficulties and upbringing methods, as thinking positively affects the individual's personality and behavior (Barker, 1987, p. 45).

There are many classifications of thinking about the future, but they are limited to prediction. It is divided into imposing hypotheses, identifying alternatives, distinguishing between alternatives, and visualization. It is divided into setting priorities, asking questions, extrapolating, and solving problems. It is divided into confirming observations, searching for information, seeking to access information, establishing standards, and representation. It is divided into organizing ideas, representing ideas, and modeling (Hines, & Bishop, 2015, p.: 282).

The current research aims to identify thinking about the future among state employees. Differences in thinking about the future are defined according to gender, age group (less than 45 years), and (over 45 years). It is determined by a representative sample of state employees in the Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Education, Interior, Industry, and Health, of both genders, in 2022-2023.

Thinking about the future is an appropriate response to events expected in the future. It is a variety of emotions about what will happen in the future, and what events it may bring that push the individual to think about them (Ali, 1988, p. 150). It is pleasant experiences that come from the individual's self when dealing with issues that will occur in the future (Muhammad, 1980, p. 146) and a subjective feeling that the individual perceives in the form of conflicting feelings with imminent expectation that things will happen in the future and various emotions that come to the individual's mind anticipating events that will take place in the future that arouse his interest in dealing with them (in the name of (1998, p. 19) and feelings of tension sweeping over the individual due to matters occupying his mind related to topics that are expected to occur in the future (Al-Qasim, 2000, p. 147) and feelings that anticipate dealing positively with the future (Al-Issawi, 2000, p. 53) and a positive ability to deal with life issues in the future (Al-Qasim, 2000, p. 147), the ability to deal with topics that are likely to occur in the coming days, the ability to imagine future changes, and consciously prepare plans to confront potential problems and address them (Abu Safiya, 2010, p. 44), and the ability to think about oneself and imagine what will happen to it in the future by planning what is expected by representing reality (Macleed, 2005, p. 357), and the process of recognizing problems, formulating appropriate hypotheses, and making connections between available information to arrive at possible solutions (Hafez, 2015, p. 29) and a type of thinking that takes place according to integrated mental processes such as generating ideas, raising questions about the available information, investing in visualization, brainstorming, and contemplating to solve problems (Razouki and Nabil, 2019, p. 293). Thinking about the future can be defined as an individual's ability to think about the issues of his future through prediction, visualization,

problem-solving, and representation.

Theoretical framework:

A person is anxious about the future, which prompts him to feel it through various means and methods, the first of which may be astrology, fortune-telling, divination, horoscopes, and others. This interest pushed him to spirituality in the hope of securing rituals in all their forms for his future. As a result of human evolution, the methods of dealing with the future have evolved, moving towards scientific methods such as the establishment of centers, and institutions to study the future, and dealing with it through the formulation of objectives, the development of strategies, forecasting, surveillance, and vision, as well as the emergence of new branches of knowledge represented in the study of future science (Al-Aasar, 1998, p. 45). Interest in the future has evolved from simply trying to know it, waiting for it to try to change it, and even making it. Research has been interested in studying the future, determining what it is, and its concept, and developing the means of its study to look at its image in various fields and disciplines (Abu Safiya, 2010, p. 83).

The future is a stage of time, as the past refers to what has passed, the present refers to what is being achieved now, and the future refers to what has not yet been achieved and still lacks existence (Al-Aasar, 1998, p. 45).

Researchers differed in defining the concept of the future. Some of them described it as an event that will come after the present, or events that will occur in the coming days. The future is not a variable independent of a person but rather depends on his ability to deal with the future. If you do not know where you are heading, you will reap failure. The future is not related to what the vision is, but rather to the values that enable us to reach this vision. The future is events that the individual predicts for different stages of time to achieve the desired goals (Shamal and Al-Sidawi, 2022, p. 277).

Man's interest in the future is due to his desire to know what events and various phenomena are taking place around him, as his fear of the unknown and the unknown events that await him have been worrying him since time immemorial. Therefore, he pays attention to observing the moon and stars and determining the days, months, times of rain, and wind blows to protect himself and secure his tomorrow (Barqi, 2005, p. 19). Aliven (1970) was the first to suggest a name for the study of the future, Mellontology. It is a term derived from a Greek word that refers to future events. With the advent of the information revolution, the problems facing the individual became more severe, and thinking about the future became indispensable.

The Babylonian, Pharaonic, Chinese, Greek, and Roman civilizations were interested in learning about the future, and they demonstrated various abilities in doing so (Shamal and Al-Sidawi, 2022, p. 282). As a result of the spread of religions and man's belief that the unseen is known only to God Almighty, Islamic civilization came to lay the foundations for knowing the future based on the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the noble hadiths of the Prophet, as it excluded superstitious means and methods and followed a scientific approach that paid great attention to the future. Many surahs spoke about it. Allah says: (We will show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth) (Surat Fussilat, verse: 53), and Almighty said: (And build the ark with Our eyes and Our revelation, and do not speak to Me regarding those who do wrong. They will surely be drowned) (Surat Hud, verse: 37), and Almighty [(Yusuf (Joseph))] said: "You will plant for seven years

consecutively; and what you harvest leave in its spikes, except a little from which you will eat. Then will come after that seven difficult [years] which will consume what you saved for them, except a little from which you will store. Then will come after that a year in which the people will be given rain and in which they will press [olives and grapes]." (Surat Yusuf, Verses: 49-47). These verses are nothing but a reading of the future, its importance, and what a person must take as necessary in the future. In the noble Prophet's hadith, there is an expression for the future, as the Prophet Muhammad (may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family) said: (Astrologers lie, even if they tell the truth). And said: "Before the Last Hour there will be commotions like pieces of a night in which a man will be a believer in the morning and an infidel in the evening, or a believer in the evening and infidel in the morning." And said: He said: (A time will come upon my nation in which there will be people who distort the religion just as an arrow is distorted from its target.) (Shamal, Al-Sidawi, 2022, p. 277).

The goal of the future is to detect problems before they occur, predict or prevent them, in the sense of early warning, and prepare for the future of the event (Hafiz, 2015, p. 65).

There were many areas of interest in the future, and many methods were used to study it, including planning, which is a process of thinking about the future as it expresses a future outlook that aims to predict needs in the present and reduce the gap between reality and what is required to be achieved in the future. It is characterized by comprehensiveness and the continuation of work as long as the plans are concerned with achieving future goals. Planning does not lead to the identification of risks, and impact of decisions, but helps to know the risks and opportunities inherent in the future (Shamal and Al-Sidawi, 2022, p. 288).

Prediction expresses the occurrence of a future event by making predictions or assumptions about what is likely to happen in the future. They are based on a scientific basis and are therefore close to reality. That is, whenever predictions are based on accurate statistics, they are practical and link the past to the present and the future. It is the feeling of future changes based on logical and scientific thinking that leads to wise expectations that have their reasons, orienting the future of the phenomenon that science studies, extracting images of the future based on certain historical events and precedents, and measuring what you did. The vision comes in the form of mental impressions, a future direction, and a level of excellence and uniqueness. It is a desirable state for the individual's future and reflects his ambitions, as it is a vision of the future that gives direction and a goal to any individual, as it is a mental image of what tomorrow will look like, and it emerges with intuition and is influenced by assumptions about others and society. Then comes the strategy, which represents a long-term future phase that works to mobilize the material capabilities to achieve the goals. It is the process of analyzing alternatives to choose the best in light of evaluating capabilities to achieve the set goals and developing a comprehensive and complete plan in the present that will lead to fundamental changes in the future. Perception comes, which is the ability to synthesize previous experiences into new matters that the individual has not experienced before. That is, it depends on remembering and recalling the past in a form that is linked to the present and extends to the future. Insight comes, which is a sensory ability in which the individual predicts future objective events through visual clarity or tracing. Then comes experience. The most courageous and best decisions are the result of the accumulation of personal experience with the standards, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, inclinations, and behavior that you have acquired. Through it, human behavior improves, as he remembers the concepts he has about

things, laws, and their existence. Memory and other concepts allow for organizing behavior in future situations (Hafez, 2015, p. 45).

Thinking about the future can be classified into objective thinking, which is called realistic, and it occurs in situations of expectation, or when things are lost, such as anticipating success or waiting for important news. Neurotic Thinking occurs when an individual feels vague, non-specific tension, especially when dealing with ambiguity. Egoistic thinking occurs when an individual feels in danger as a result of committing a mistake. Aroused thinking occurs when an individual responds to a shocking external situation, especially when the situation is sudden and unexpected. Thinking State occurs when an individual limits his thinking to a specific situation that he expects to happen soon (Ahmed, 1990, p. 13).

Thinking can appear on a person's features when he deals with situations that are expected to occur soon. For example, psychological symptoms appear that affect the individual, causing him to be in a state of preoccupation, such as distraction and weak interest in appearance. Physical symptoms appear that affect the individual, such as disturbed breathing, increased heart rate, paleness of the face, sweating, trembling of the extremities, and poor stability of the limbs of the body (Ahmed, 1973, p. 578).

Freud (1939) tried to study the internal forces that drive behavior and cause personality conflict. When the relationship between the Id, the ego, and the superego is balanced, the thinking styles dominate the conflict, but when the relationship is turbulent, the thinking causes various problems, especially when dealing with matters that are expected to happen later. Jung (1938) believes that the nature of the individual seeks to control difficulties, especially those that are expected to cause failure when dealing with life's challenges. Thinking is the product of cultural pressures, especially socialization methods, as society has a fundamental role in the individual's thinking patterns (Fromm, 1941, p: 9). Horny 1953 adds that an individual's continuous thinking may make him lose the ability to defend himself, especially with the things he expects to happen. Sullivan 1953 confirms that thinking is a state of stress that arises from dealing with ambiguity, weak acceptance of reality, and desirability of what is expected to happen later (Wood, 1974, p: 145). Adler 1966 attributes incorrect socialization methods to the individual's feeling of weak security in his family, which causes a major impact on his interactions in the later stages of his life (Wilson, & Kneisl, 1996, p: 378). Behavioral Theory has proven that behavior is learned from the environment in which the individual lives. Pavlov (1939) confirmed that behavior resulting from a conditional stimulus takes the same reaction that results from an unconditional stimulus. Thinking about things that are expected to happen later occurs as a result of conditional stimuli (Al-Issawi, 1989, p. 79). Skinner 1957 confirmed that the formation of human behavior occurs through reinforcement, as the reinforced response increases the possibility of it occurring again (Morgan, 1989, p. 105). Watson (1958) believes that stress is interconnected with the individual's learning history, and includes conditions and reinforcements that have previously occurred in his life, and have extensions in what will happen in the future (Hiligard, 1975, p: 603). Wolpe (1958) indicates that stress is a stimulus to behavior that leads to awareness of current and future situations and circumstances, such as potential threats, so the individual responds with thinking equal to the severity of the stimuli. Learned habits can be eliminated by removing them by reducing stress, that is, erasing learning and extinguishing the inappropriate learned response (Al-Tikriti, 1995, p. 63). Eysenck 1975 emphasizes the factor of heredity, as well as learned experiences when dealing with expected

matters (Eysenck, 1975, p: 204). Cognitive Theory focuses on the way an individual who suffers from stress thinks, as he tends to set unrealistic expectations for multiple situations. Stress is an emotion based on evaluating the threat, and the evaluation includes unspecified symbolic and situational factors. Kelly and Mandler add that an individual's effectiveness is nothing but emotional and emotional responses acquired from life experiences when interacting between situations, responses, and thinking, as the individual adopts non-specific ideas that make his future responses unpredictable. Humanistic Theory believes that an individual's thinking about the future and the events he experiences arise from his expectations of what will happen. Thinking about the future, according to Murray 1938, stems from the concept of need as a compound in the brain region that regulates perception, understanding, reasoning, inclination, and action, as the unsatisfied need turns into thinking about what is expected to happen, and the need is aroused as a result of internal factors, external factors, or both together. Its impact depends on the individual's style of thinking, and what will happen as a result of factors of individual abilities, fate, or the presence of others (Harris, & Halplin, 1985, p. 140). Maslow (1972) indicates that the growth and development of the personality depends on needs, and their progression to satisfaction according to their importance and necessity. The environment and the individual's abilities have a great influence on the process of dealing with situations, especially those that are expected to happen. When the environment is a source of threat and does not allow the satisfaction of needs, it hinders thinking, and the world perceives that it is hostile and threatening, and feels ill-adjusted (Maslow, 1972, p. 370). McClelland 1974 adds that three needs at different levels affect thinking and behavior: the need for power, the need for social affiliation, and the need for achievement (Coleman, 1974, p. 190). Existentialism Theory emphasizes that the individual's feeling of the weakness of things in his life, and the absence of clear stimuli, prompts him to think about the future, overcoming the tension he feels, as tension is a response to the weakness of existence and meaning (Vyas, & Ahuja, 1999, p. 251). Kierkegaard (1969) noted that stress is a human characteristic resulting from current and expected fears. Torrance (1974) called for developing the skills of thinking about the future systematically after he found that the characteristics of thinking about the future differ from other types of thinking according to the model of solving future problems that were built, which relied directly and primarily on mental perception, emotions, and intuition, making predictions of the challenges facing the individual in the future, and developing appropriate solutions to the expected challenges by relying on previous experiences, as well as using cognitive processes to achieve future goals. Thinking about the future is done by exploring the variables of the coming time based on reality, making predictions, perceptions, and innovations to find solutions to problems, and thinking about realistic or hypothetical issues that may occur in the future (Torrance, 1999, p. 6 - 9).

The futuristic thinker appears by processing information in a constructive manner that is subject to change and development because the future holds surprises that may be unexpected or rapid, which requires interaction between a set of mental characteristics of the individual, including prediction, imagination, perception, judgment, abstraction, inference, and problem-solving. Thinking about the future is not some kind of unseen world or superstition, but rather an organized, systematic mental process based on specific scientific methods and tools that facilitate monitoring the future to a greater extent than speculations and philosophical guesses by possessing several skills such as planning, forecasting, imagination, positivity, making

plans, and evaluating them (Torrance, 1980, p: 36). Torrance 2003 theory includes six areas for thinking about the future: Planning, which is the basis for thinking about the future and a source of moving forward. It is represented by the individual defining his goals, and establishing a plan that he seeks to achieve, which includes the nature of the goals, their size, their challenges, the available capabilities, opportunities for verification, and available time (Abu Safiya, 2010, p. 44). Expecting means developing the individual's expectations and ideas for a time that has not yet come, taking advantage of personal experiences and the experiences of others (Al-Khalaf, 2018, p. 59).

Imagination means producing unusual mental images by thinking outside the present time and going beyond it to the next time to produce future expectations (Abu Safiya, 2010, p. 44). Positive thinking is the individual's development of possible treatments in light of the available capabilities (Al-Khalaf, 2018, p. 58). Developing a Scenario means describing expected events and showing how they will affect reality. In evaluating Perspective, the individual needs a cognitive and emotional strategy to judge his orientation towards the future, and an awareness of the process of making judgments on the correctness of his future thinking (Abu Safiya, 2010, p. 45).

A person fears his present, just as he fears the future (Wilson, & Kneisl, 1996, p. 372), so he focuses on making meaning of his life through thinking, planning, and implementation to overcome the tension he suffers from (Qasim, 1984, p. 162). Heidegger 1958 added that stress is related to concerns, as life is a set of concerns, and the individual's concerns push him to think about his reality and future and move forward toward achieving what he wants (Hogan, 1976, p. 158).

Thinking about the future can be determined through multiple processes, including being a mental process, meaning understanding problems, imposing hypotheses, making new connections between the available and obtained information, and thinking about solutions and alternatives (Masini, & Eleonora, 1993, p. 57). It is a process of visualization, creating ideas, and questions about the information obtained, visualization, brainstorming, and contemplation to envision what things will be like in the future (Sardar, 1999, p. 35). It is a process of foresight, in the sense of an individual's discovery, examination, evaluation, suggestion of possible, or preferable, and predictive formulation. It is a process of anticipation, meaning forming a possible and diverse future picture of events, and thinking about what is likely to happen. It is a process of predicting, understanding, and perceiving events, and their development over a period of time, to know their direction, nature, or possibility of their change through the use of information from the present, and visualizing them. It is a process of solving problems, monitoring and tracking the path of the problem, proposing alternatives for what it could be in the future, and developing solutions. It is a creative process, meaning the individual is liberated from the constraints of reality towards a possible future, and directing goals by planning to achieve them by looking forward to implementing them (Bear, 1993, p: 76).

Thinking about the future has skills acquired from the environment, including expectation, as the individual can anticipate actions and things, and form a picture of events and their results according to his previous experience, that is, thinking about what will happen, which includes exploratory expectation, computerized expectation, and standard expectation. Including predicting, in the sense of using the mind, what will happen in the future. It includes identifying alternatives, verifying them, imposing hypotheses, and distinguishing between possible and

impossible hypotheses, including visualization to create a picture of future events. It includes setting priorities, identifying different viewpoints, analyzing them, and asking questions, including problem-solving, meaning developing strategies aimed at solving a specific problem by collecting information, establishing observations, setting standards, applying procedures, evaluating alternatives, and issuing judgments (Al-Hafiz, 2015, p. 356).

Those who think about the future have various goals, including sensing problems, exploring variables, setting expectations and perceptions to find possible solutions, thinking about issues of reality, or those expected to occur, as well as planning and decision-making. They are engaged in forming mental representations according to their processing of information that is subject to change, development, and transformation. Thinking about the future is a set of features and characteristics that utilize mental processes mixed with emotions and intuition, and is based on a method and scientific tools that facilitate monitoring the future to a degree that goes beyond philosophical speculation (Torrance, 2003, p. 72). Torrance sees in planning the individual's organization of plans related to his future and the goals that he seeks to achieve. Planning is an organized process that has cognitive inputs, and links between available ideas and its cognitive structure, which constitute its knowledge accumulations and stored experiences, which are processed to arrive at those plans that represent the final output. Planning is based on thinking and exploration (Al-Huwaiti, 2018, p. 85).

Expectation means the ability to develop predictions, knowledge, probabilities, and guesses about what is expected to happen in the future. It is characterized by fluency, meaning producing multiple, complex expectations around an idea or expected event, and it is also characterized by flexibility, meaning diversity. It is also characterized by originality, in the sense of presenting unusual expectations, investing in brainstorming and various mental strategies in dealing with future possibilities, and monitoring potential developments objectively to obtain knowledge characterized by diversity, novelty, and complexity in the coming time. Developing an individual's expectations enables him to anticipate future events easily (Al-Khalaf, 2018, p. 59).

Positive thinking means the ability to provide several effective strategies for a situation that causes tension and choose the most effective one. The process of selection allows the individual to deal with exciting situations and overcome them. Developing alternatives and options helps to find quick and correct solutions to problems. These positive expectations bring gains to the individual in various areas of life, as well as an increased level of optimism, and the positive results he or she expects in his or her personal and professional life help to visualize appropriate, useful trends and develop a knowledge asset that will benefit the future. The love of learning and cognitive openness are positive trends that help put forward expectations and possible scenarios. Positivity makes the individual more tolerant of future issues (Abu Safiya, 2010, p. 45).

Developing a scenario means the individual's ability to formulate several sequential scenes anticipating a specific event in the future, expressed through a set of written words, shapes, mind maps, or a concept map. The individual must have sufficient communication skills that enable him to explain the scenario so that it is clear to others, with the skill of writing research focused on the future, and formulating possible responses to future challenges. Conceptualization is the ability to think outside the context of the past, to go beyond the time ahead, to think outside the context of the ordinary, to think in-depth without borders, to make

extraordinary speculations, to involve emotional aspects and to think emotionally easier for an individual to practice thinking about the future. Perception is based on prior mental perceptions, but it provides the individual with products and knowledge, whether they are present in the mind, absent from it, or absent from the field of sensation. It is worth noting that perception does not need to be logical thinking, and its outcomes cannot be judged as correct or wrong. It is characterized by not being stagnant, and by generating several original creative ideas as they pass through the individual's mind as if they were part of a movie. The individual who can imagine embarks on a journey of imagining the future, relying on several special events that include beliefs, perceptions, and scenes related to the future as if he is describing something that he perceives in its precise details. The visualization can be audio, visual, or kinetic. It may also include solutions, inventions, and innovations that become a reality in the future. The richness of perception usually appears through written expressions that allow the individual to have an unusual view of things. Torrance sees in evaluating a future perspective an individual's ability to launch correct judgments on his or her thinking investing strengths, overriding errors, deriving specific criteria for evaluating his or her perspective, evaluating his or her vision and expectations, and evaluating the projection relationship to the expected event, and their relevance to place each on a list of criteria free from stagnation and dependency. These criteria include time, originality, place, acceptance, and capabilities, and it also evaluates the impact of expectations on future events (Mustafa, 2014, p. 20).

A group of indicators can be identified that indicate thinking about the future, including that it is objective behavior, as its sources are known to the individual and it occurs as a result of events that exist in reality, not imaginary. It is linked to the individual's present and future and arises as a result of the bad conditions in which he lives. It targets areas of tension, weak stability, and ambiguity regarding topics or situations. Expectation plays an important role in thinking about the future. Thinking about the future increases as the individual gets older as a result of increasing needs, especially self-realization, and increases as a result of balancing the individual's abilities and expectations. The ambiguity of the future attracts the individual's interests and is linked to his goals, ambitions, and future dreams (Borba, 1994, p: 56).

Bassem conducted a study in 1996 on thinking about the future, its relationship to the locus of control, and satisfaction with life goals, aiming to identify thinking about the future, the direction of the locus of control, and the level of satisfaction with life goals. The researcher prepared three measures that he built, and the research sample consisted of (125) individuals who graduated from the university in Baghdad. He concluded that the sample members thought greatly about the future, and their center of control was external, with satisfaction with life goals (Bassem, 1996, p. 86). Mahmoud 1999 conducted a study on thinking about the future among university graduates, aiming to test a set of hypotheses, including the prevalence of thinking about the future among college graduates to a high degree, its prevalence among males, more than females, and its prevalence among those with an average economic level more than others. The researcher prepared a measure of thinking about the future and applied it to a sample of (250) male and female graduates in Baghdad. It appeared that graduates have a high level of thinking about the future and that it is a psychological state that affects the individual regardless of his gender and economic level, as it did not appear above statistical significance at the level of (0.05) for the variables of gender and economic level (Mahmoud, 1999, p. 85). Al-Akaishi conducted a study in 2000 on thinking about the future and its

relationship to some variables among university students, aiming to identify thinking about the future among university students and revealing the significance of the differences according to gender, academic specialization, and place of residence. The researcher prepared a scale for thinking about the future, consisting of (26) items, and applied it to a sample consisting of (230) male and female students from the finishing stages in the colleges of Al-Mustansiriya University, including two scientific colleges and two humanities colleges. Thinking about the future among university students appeared high, with significant differences in favor of males, significant differences in favor of those living in urban areas, and no differences according to academic specialization. Al-Ugaili conducted a study in 2000 on thinking about the future and its relationship to work motivation, aiming to define thinking about the future and revealing the correlation between thinking about the future and work motivation, he revealed differences according to the variables of gender and age, using the measure of thinking about the future that he prepared in 1996 and applied to a sample consisting of (278) male and female employees in the city of Baghdad. It appeared that thinking about the future was common among the sample, along with work motivation, and there was a positive correlation between thinking about the future and work motivation. Al-Hashemi conducted a study in 2001 on thinking about the future and its correlation to the anti-social tendency among university students, and the differences in thinking about the future according to the variables of gender and academic specialization are identified, and the differences are defined in the level of the anti-social tendency using the scale of thinking about the future prepared by Al-Akaishi 2000 and applied to a sample consisting of (350) male and female students from the colleges of the University of Baghdad. It appeared that thinking about the future was widespread among the research sample, and there were no differences between males and females in this, differences appeared according to scientific specialization, which was higher than human specialization, and there was no relationship between thinking about the future and anti-social tendencies (Al-Hashemi, 2001, p. 78). Al-Mahdi 2001 conducted a study on the effect of a counseling program in raising the level of thinking about the future among sixth-grade female students, aiming to determine the effectiveness of the program in raising the level of thinking about the future in the city of Baghdad. The researcher prepared a scale for thinking about the future and applied it to a sample of (30) sixth-grade female students. Statistically significant differences emerged between the average scores of the experimental group and the control group on the scale for thinking about the future in favor of the experimental group.

Thinking about the future depends on the individual's effort to achieve his goal and his style of thinking. Negative thinking leads to underestimating abilities when facing life's demands, while positive thinking leads to investing abilities in meeting those requirements as best as possible (Bandar, & Wood, 1989, p. 805). Adler pointed out that a person is driven, according to his expectations, to achieve an acceptable future due to the impact of this on his present behavior. Thinking is an appropriate response to various duties, such as preoccupation with achieving or modifying future goals (Al-Jubouri, 1990, p. 41).

Enrolling in university studies and specializing in a branch of science is a way to think about the future, as the individual's ambitions and hopes increase, and the level of his abilities in dealing with difficulties and obstacles that may stand in his way increases, especially among those working in data entry and analysis (Mustafa, 1991, p. 321).

Abu Saree and Ramadan 1993 confirmed the difference between females and males in thinking

about the future, as differences appeared in grades between the sexes, in favor of males. Aziz 2018 found that there is thinking about the future among university students at an average level, and in favor of males (Aziz, 2018, p. K). Shutb 2018 concluded that there is the ability to think about the future among university students in favor of males (Shutb, 2018, p. Y). Atanceh 2018 found that adults tend to think about the future, specifically about achieving fatherhood, compared to youth.

Thinking is one of the basic concepts of psychology, as it has been widely used for a long time, and it is considered a criterion against which an individual's personality and behavior can be evaluated (Mahmoud, 1994, p. 23). Abid's study (1990) showed that bullying and neglect methods have a negative role in the individual's thinking style, while the educational method has a positive role in that. It is noted that most of the theories that dealt with the concept of thinking indicated that it dealt with the events that would occur (Bassem, 1996, p. 26).

Thinking about the future among workers stems from the individual's anxiety about what he has, what he has achieved, and what he seeks to achieve, and it may have a negative impact in the form of weak stability and tension. The individual who feels that he will achieve his goals responds in a balanced manner, while the individual who feels that he has not achieved anything, or that he faces various difficulties that prevent him from achieving his goals, responds in an unbalanced manner (Kamal, 1997, p. 39).

The individual's ambitions increase to get married, start a family, build a house, buy a car, travel, and enjoy life. Mahmoud 1997 indicated that whoever earns a financial return feels a kind of stability and begins to look forward to the future (Mahmoud, 1997, p. 2).

Capelin 1981 confirmed that thinking about the future affects mental processes such as perception and memory and is reflected in behavior (Faraj, 1998, p. 98). Mahmoud's 1999 study showed that thinking about the future haunts all individuals, regardless of their gender and economic level (Mahmoud, 1999, p. 85).

The employee may be more thinking about the future, as his feelings fluctuate, his psychology is unstable, and his goals are multiple, which has an impact on his balance, behavior, and personality traits. The individual's thinking increases when he seeks to find a goal for his life. This leads the individual to think about the future, overcome the threats it entails, and prepare for those threats. Thinking about what is expected to happen in the future is a powerful impetus for reducing tension and overcoming poor psychosocial security.

Thinking about the future is based on investing in unsaturated needs and the tension they cause to drive behavior and guide it toward building and innovation. It is a positive ability that invests what is available to achieve what is not available by preparing the individual with various possibilities to achieve goals (Al-Mahdi, 2001, p. 4). The future is an urgent topic. Studies have shown that man has a sense of the future when contemplating the past, and auditing the present to know the future. The ruins of Babylon revealed the establishment of the Ashurbanipal Library, which is part of the Beit Mummi Academy, meaning the House of Knowledge, which included research that addressed the problems of the individual and society. Islam came with a scientific methodology that included thinking about the future, as the Holy Qur'an focused in some verses on thinking about the future, as God Almighty says: (They said, "O Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are [great] corrupters in the land. So may we assign you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier? He said, "That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength; I will make between

you and them a dam) (Surat Al-Kahf, verses: 94, 95). And God Almighty says: (Joseph, O friend, give us advice regarding seven fat cows eaten by seven lean ones, and seven green ears of corn and other dry ones, so that perhaps I may return to the people, so that they may know. He said, "You will sow for seven years a bush, and whatever you reap, leave it in its ears, except a little of what you eat.") (Surat Yusuf, verses: 46, 47). The question is what life will be like in the future, and such a question contains deep within an issue that worries humanity. When a person is afraid, he begins to wander and imagine, and when he is excited, he begins to think in search of the reason, which is evidence of the person's thinking about the future to overcome the present and its problems (Al-Azzawi, 2005, p. 9). This prompted researchers to think about the future as a set of capabilities and skills that contribute to creating the future, and develop alternatives and perceptions to be compatible with reality (Hassan, 2014, p. 8).

Research procedures

The descriptive research method is most appropriate for studying the correlational relationships among variables, as it is used in studying tendencies, traits, skills, and trends, and it depends on studying problems as they are in reality, as they are accurately described and analyzed in light of causes and results (Dawoud and Abdel Rahman, 1990, p. 185). The descriptive approach deals with many studies, including correlational studies that attempt to study possible relationships, and discover, and describe the relationship between various variables. The current research community is determined by state employees in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, and the Ministry of Health. The sample was classified according to academic achievement, age, gender, and marital status, as it reached the size of the original community. When determining the community the researcher has to choose a sample of the original society that suits his research, and it is conditional on it being fully represented.

The researcher must take some important steps to obtain a representative sample of the community, including identifying the study community, preparing an accurate list of the community's vocabulary, withdrawing all the vocabulary from the framework he prepared, and obtaining an appropriate sample that is representative of that community (Al-Kubaisi, 2011, p. 298). The sample of the current research included (400) male and female employees, distributed equally by (50%) for males and (50%) for females, chosen randomly. Each topic has a tool that suits it. To achieve the objectives of the current study, the researcher prepared a measure of thinking about the future in the English language and found various scales but unfortunately, they are not valid for the sample of the current research as they are intended for high school students, or university students, with the small number of paragraphs, and it contains some paragraphs that are not appropriate for the Iraqi environment. There were Arab and Iraqi standards developed for school and university students, with a large number of paragraphs. Therefore, the researcher decided to review foreign, Arab, and Iraqi studies that dealt with thinking about the future to choose the appropriate items for the sample of the current research, so the scale of thinking about the future in its initial form consists of (6) domains, and each domain has (5) items, so the scale in its initial form consists of (30) items, and (5) alternatives according to the Likert method, and then answer instructions were prepared. The scale was submitted to a group of experts and arbitrators. The purpose of the study was

explained, the theoretical definition was established, and the sample to which it would be applied. They were asked to review the scale and make appropriate comments. The percentage was used to determine the validity of the items with an agreement rate of 80% or higher. Four paragraphs were deleted for various reasons, and (26) paragraphs were adopted, as well as linguistic modifications being made to some paragraphs. The researcher conducted construct validity, which means determining the degrees of the scale according to the psychological structure of the phenomenon to be measured, or in light of a specific psychological concept (Stanley, & Hopkins, 1972, p. 11). It was achieved in two ways: the method of the two extremist groups. The calculation of discriminatory power is defined as the extent to which the item can distinguish between respondents on the same scale who obtained a high score, and their peers who obtained a low score in answering the scale (Stang, & Wrightsaman, 1982, p: 51). The importance of the distinction lies in the strong relationship between the accuracy of the scale and its discriminatory power. The best percentage for determining the upper and lower groups in samples with a normal distribution is (27%) (Ebel, 1972, P: 385). The ideal point for both equilibrium states is (27%) for the upper and lower groups (Anastasia, 1988, p: 213). The researcher chose the analysis sample from the research population, which amounted to (400) individuals randomly from five ministries to meet the sample size requirement set by Nunnally 1970 which indicates that the minimum permissible is five to ten individuals for each item of the scale. The scale was applied, then the total score for each individual was determined, and the examinees' questionnaires were arranged in descending order according to the scores from the highest score to the lowest score, then a percentage (27%) was determined for the highest questionnaires, and a percentage (27%) was for the lowest questionnaires. The number of people examined in the upper and lower groups was (216) individuals, with (108) individuals for each group. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the scores in each group for each item of the scale were extracted from the upper and lower groups. Then, we identify the discriminatory power of each paragraph by keeping the distinctive paragraphs and excluding the non-distinctive ones by applying the t-test for two independent samples to test the significance of the differences between the upper and lower groups, and for each paragraph. The T-value reached (1.96) with a degree of freedom (214) at a significance level of (0.05), which means that the test items have high discriminatory power.

Table of discriminatory power for the items of the Thinking about the Future Scale

Item	upper group		lower group		Calculated T	Significance 0.05
	Average	deviation	Average	deviation		
1.	4.11	0.71	3.09	0.81	8.62	Sig.
2.	4.64	1.21	2.68	0.74	4.86	Sig.
3.	4.39	0.60	2.62	0.76	6.80	Sig.
4.	5.60	0.61	2.70	0.82	7.79	Sig.
5.	3.97	0.72	3.40	0.44	4.61	Sig.
6.	3.33	0.78	2.32	0.89	8.44	Sig.
7.	4.56	0.70	3.79	0.77	3.34	Sig.
8.	3.47	1.33	2.14	0.66	7.03	Sig.
9.	2.77	1.42	1.75	0.62	4.09	Sig.

10.	3.90	1.41	2.17	1.03	5.30	Sig.
11.	3.90	1.21	2.22	0.82	10.70	Sig.
12.	3.83	0.81	2.21	0.81	10.21	Sig.
13.	2.95	1.35	1.44	0.67	3.63	Sig.
14.	3.88	0.66	3.66	0.81	6.22	Sig.
15.	2.65	1.34	1.99	0.80	3.15	Sig.
16.	3.90	1.29	3.24	1.41	2.55	Sig.
17.	3.95	0.82	3.44	0.90	3.88	Sig.
18.	3.32	0.58	4.08	0.66	3.73	Sig.
19.	2.84	1.21	1.61	0.55	4.26	Sig.
20.	3.59	0.61	4.27	0.80	2.19	Sig.
21.	2.93	0.80	2.61	0.72	7.84	Sig.
22.	3.44	0.58	3.06	1.08	10.48	Sig.
23.	3.83	0.81	2.21	0.81	10.21	Sig.
24.	3.97	0.72	3.40	0.44	4.61	Sig.
25.	2.77	1.42	1.75	0.62	4.09	Sig.
26.	3.90	1.29	3.24	1.41	2.55	Sig.

The correlation coefficient values between the score of each item and the total score of the scale were calculated using the Point Pie Serial coefficient, and the correlation coefficients of the items were all statistically significant, as the tabular value reached (0.09) and with a degree of freedom (398) at a significance level (0.05).

Table of the correlation coefficient of the item score with the total score of the thinking about the future scale

Item	Correlation	Item	Correlation	Item	Correlation
1	0.45	10	0.42	19	0.47
2	0.46	11	0.41	20	0.43
3	0.41	12	0.45	21	0.48
4	0.43	13	0.48	22	0.44
5	0.54	14	0.46	23	0.49
6	0.57	15	0.41	24	0.45
7	0.48	16	0.41	25	0.40
8	0.46	17	0.56	26	0.42
9	0.54	18	0.42		

Reliability was extracted in two ways: the retest method, which was applied to a sample of (50) individuals who were chosen randomly, with a time interval of (two weeks) between the first and second applications. The reliability coefficient was extracted by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between the two applications, so the overall reliability coefficient for the four fields after summing and dividing them reached (0.81), which is a reliability coefficient that can be relied upon, and is close to the reliability coefficient of some previous studies. The split-half method, and the test reliability index, can be evaluated by applying the test once using

the split-half method, as the test is divided into two equal sections, meaning that each section is similar to the other section in terms of the content it measures. Therefore, the basic assumption of this method is that every two adjacent items are similar, that is, they measure the same content. This method also requires finding the correlation coefficient between the two parts of the test, and the resulting coefficient represents the consistency between the two parts. The reliability coefficient between the two parts of the test was (0.83), which is a good coefficient that can be relied upon, and is close to the coefficient of some previous studies. After verifying the standard characteristics, the scale became in its final form, consisting of (26) items, and the total score of the scale was (130) points, with a minimum of (26) points with a hypothetical average of (78) points, so the scale became ready for application. The results appeared after applying the future thinking scale to the current research sample of (400) male and female employees. The arithmetic mean is equal to (99.2), with a standard deviation equal to (15.7). The hypothesized mean was equal to (78), and when comparing the current arithmetic mean to the hypothesized mean of the scale using a one-sample t-test, the results were as they are currently.

T-test table for the arithmetic mean and the hypothesized mean for the thinking about the future scale

Sample	Mean	deviation	hypothetical mean	Freedom	T value	Tabular t	Significance
400	49.6	7.8	78	399	9.3	1.96	Sig.

It turns out that the arithmetic mean is less than the hypothesized mean at the level of (0.05), and that the calculated T-value is greater than the tabulated T-value, meaning weak thinking about the future among the sample of the current research. The current result differs from the result of the study of Al-Ukaili 2000, which showed the prevalence of thinking about the future, along with work motivation, and the result of the study of Al-Hashemi 2001, which showed the prevalence of thinking about the future, and no differences between males and females (Al-Hashemi, 2001, p. 78). Jan 1997 showed the effect of thinking about the future on the individual's personality, psychological and social compatibility, activities, and suffering. The researcher can explain the current result by the accumulation of crises and the weakness of hope. The employee lives his day and leaves the future to the Almighty Creator to manage matters due to low expectations of the possibility of relying on the promises of society's institutions, coupled with doubt about everything he hears or sees. Life for the Iraqi employee consists of promises that do not come true, and it is the result of the accumulation of frustrations associated with false promises, which generate negative expectations. A two-way analysis of variance was used to identify differences in thinking about the future according to the variable of gender and age group. Means and standard deviations for each variable appeared.

Table of arithmetic means and standard deviations for gender and age group

Gender	Age group	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Number
Female	Under 45 years old	48.1	7.1	100
	Over 45 years old	51	8.8	100

	Total	49.5	8.1	200
Male	Under 45 years old	48.4	7.8	100
	Over 45 years old	50.9	7.3	100
	Total	49.6	7.5	200
Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Squares mean	F value
Gender	4	1	2	0.016
Age group	1468.8	1	1468.8	12.07
Interaction	5.445	1	5.4	0.04
Error	48176.4	396	121.6	-
Total	49654.6	399	-	-

The results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in thinking about the future among state employees according to gender, as the calculated F-value was (0.016), which is less than the tabular F-value (3.86) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom (1-396). The result of the current research differed from the result of the Al-Akaishi study in 2000, in which thinking about the future appeared high, with significant differences in favor of males. The study of Al-Ukaili 2000 showed the prevalence of thinking about the future, along with the motivation to work, and the study of Al-Hashemi 2001, showed the prevalence of thinking about the future among males and females alike. As a result of Mahmoud's 1999 study, which showed that thinking about the future haunts all individuals, regardless of their gender. The current result can be explained by saying that the Iraqi employee, whether male or female, is going through the same difficult circumstances, and both are striving as much as they can to accomplish what is required. Females and males in Iraqi society face repeated frustrations, the first of which is the loss of years of life in pursuit of achieving rosy goals. There are statistically significant differences in thinking about the future according to age group, as the calculated F-value was (12.07), which is greater than the tabulated F-value (3.86) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom (1-396). When comparing the two age groups according to the arithmetic averages, the general arithmetic average for the category under 45 years was (48.4) and that over 45 years (50.9), i.e. the result is in favor of the category over 45 years, meaning that they are more thinking about the future. The current result is consistent with that of the Fennem 1976 study, which showed an individual's growing interest in his or her future, especially in the career. The researcher can explain the current result by the role of maturity and the accumulation of experience in thinking about the future, as emotions begin to stabilize, some goals are achieved, and the mature individual seeks to distinguish his realistic goals from rosy ones. There is no interaction between gender and age group in thinking about the future, as the calculated F value was (0.04), which is less than the tabulated F value (3.86) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom (1-396). Given the results reached by the current research, the researcher recommends calling on governmental and non-governmental institutions to use the moral effectiveness scale in job interviews to detect job applicants and asking the media to include thinking about the future in their programs and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that dreams require striving and effort to achieve them, and calling on official institutions and political entities to strengthen confidence

between them and the citizen by fulfilling promises to work on the cohesion of society and strengthen its social fabric to establish harmony and cooperation among its components. Thus, to complement the requirements of the current research, the researcher proposes to conduct studies that address thinking about the future among election candidates and university students.

Areas of the future thinking scale and its items:

Planning: An individual defines his goals, and establishes a plan that he seeks to achieve, which includes the nature of the goals, their size, their challenges, the available capabilities, the opportunities for verification, and the available time and its paragraphs (I enjoy when I plan what I want to implement later. Life's problems push me to contemplate and plan. I plan well what I want to achieve in the future. I avoid imposing my beliefs on others. I respect the rights of others, no matter how difficult they are.). **Expecting:** The individual's development of guesses, expectations, and ideas related to a time that has not yet come, taking advantage of experiences, personal experiences, and the accumulated experiences of others. Its paragraphs (When watching a movie, I focus on anticipating what will happen next. I appear clear when expressing my feelings. For me, the future means achieving ambition. I can talk about my future expectations. I adapt to business changes quickly.). **Imagination:** producing unusual mental images by thinking outside the present time and going beyond the future time to produce unusual future perceptions, expectations, and guesses. Its paragraphs (I imagine the future when making decisions. I can imagine more than one solution to a single problem. I believe that people's behaviors will change in the future for the worse. I deduce from people's behavior their true nature. I verify the information before sharing it with others.). **Positive Thinking:** The individual develops possible treatments in light of the abilities and potentials available. Its paragraphs (I seek achievable goals when determining what will face in the future. I feel that the future is better than the present. I look at life events positively. I feel optimistic when I think about the future. I control my temper when others provoke me). **Developing Scenario:** Writing a scenario for expected events and their effects on reality through sequential scenes that can be understood. Its paragraphs (I make my judgments according to my experiences and what I understand of the situation. I strive to make the future that I will live in better than the present. I work hard and diligently to ensure a secure future. I take care of my social relationships, as they are the basis for the future. I encourage others to seek knowledge in preparation for the future). **Evaluating Perspective:** a cognitive and emotional strategy to consciously judge his orientation towards the future, and awareness to make judgments on the validity of his future thinking through strengths and overcoming mistakes. Its paragraphs: (My way of thinking is focused on my past experiences. When I meet others, I am busy talking about what will happen later in life. I deal with various life situations by carefully examining their details. My skills help me in achieving my plans. I define my goals in light of my capabilities.).

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