

DETERMINANTS THAT FACING THE TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT APPLICATION IN TRAINING EXTENSION CENTERS

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to investigate facing the total quality management application in training extension centers of Iraq. This study was conducted on all Iraqi governorates except the Kurdistan Region, A random sample was withdrawn from them by 50% (8 governorates). The sample included agricultural managers and extension employees working in the training extension centers and their affiliated farms in the governorates included in the research sample, included 149 respondents. Data were collected from the respondents by personal interview method during the period 9/7/2023- 5/9/2023. The results showed existence of could be determinants that face the application of total quality management in the training extension centers, as the financial determinants came in the first place with a weighted mean (4.135) degrees and a percentage weight (82.69) degrees, and the determinants related to employees in the extension centers training, came in the last order with a weighted mean (3.46) degrees and a percentage weight (69.188) degrees, and the researchers recommended the need to take these determinants into account by the Department of Extension and Agricultural Training to reduce and address them To facilitate the process of applying total quality management in training extension centers.

Key words: capacity development, quality of extension service, administrative determinants, financial determinants.

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INTRODUCTION

Attention to rural development has become a necessary requirement that most countries, whether developed or developing, seek to achieve. The rural development is one of the most important means of promoting the agricultural sector (Naji and Ibrahim, 2020). Agricultural extension is one of the main pillars towards achieving rural development, as it represents the active factor in the occurrence the desired changes (Lamloum and Karimed, 2024), and to bring about behavioral changes in the components of the human behavior of the guides, as well as the transfer of modern agricultural technologies and innovations and their application in their farms (Majd et al., 2022). It works as a link between them and research centers, as it transfers their problems to research centers to

find solutions to them and then transfers the results of research (solutions) to them (AL-Mashhadani and Sbeih, 2022). The training extension centers are one of the formations affiliated to the Agricultural Extension and Training Department that work to develop the capabilities of farmers, livestock breeders, and agricultural employees through holding training courses in various agricultural topics according to plans prepared and implemented for this purpose (Abdul Rahman, 2017). Despite the importance of training extension centers in Iraq and their role in achieving rural development, but the reality indicates the weakness of this role .The weakness of the role of the extension system in general .As many studies have indicated that there is a weakness significant and insufficiency in their performance, as Reda

and Hassouni (2015) indicated that there is a weakness in the level of performance of training extension centers. In order to improve the reality of training extension centers and improve the quality of their services, a number of approaches must be applied, including the approach to total quality management. As Al-Taiy (2014) confirmed that one of the proposed strategies for agricultural extension form in Iraq is to spread the culture of total quality, its importance, and the need for it in the agricultural sector in general and its extension system. In particular. Both Al-Jubouri (2022), and Ridha et al. (2020) recommended in their studies the need to pay attention and improve the work of training extension centers. Al-Taiy et al. (2021) summarized that one of the most important basic requirements for improving the quality of extension service is developing or adopting quality standards and applying them in every element or process in the extension system or the service it provides. Al-Taiy (2014) stated that agricultural extension is an appropriate field for the application of total quality management in order to improve its services in all its fields and achieve the satisfaction of farmers, rural people, and their organizations. In their study Naji and Jouhi (2014) concluded that there are necessary qualifications to apply the total quality management approach in extension management at its various levels. Total quality management is a common philosophy and culture, and it is part of an integrated, total and interconnected process that requires all employees in the organization to carry out their responsibilities to the fullest (Sharif and Mohieddin, 2021). Many studies have confirmed the quality, including a study by Researchers Abdel Dayem (2021), Kamal Al-Din and Inas (2024), Harzallah (2022), Jaber (2022), Kazem (2024), they stated that the application of total quality management has positive repercussions on the performance of the organizations that apply it .All these studies have confirmed that applying the total quality management method in organizations contributes significantly to their survival and continuity in providing services. Satisfactory and distinguished services, with regard to the application of total quality management in the

training extension centers. There are a set of benefits that accrue to the extension centers as a result of their application, the most important of which are improving the competitive position of the extension centers, strengthening relations with research centers and colleges, raising the degree of satisfaction of the extension, improving the quality of services provided, and reducing the cost of the services provided (Majd et al., 2022). This research was aimed to Identify the determinants facing the application of total quality management in training extension centers in Iraq.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, the descriptive approach was used, which aims to study a specific phenomenon as it exists in reality and is interested in describing it accurately, so this approach is suitable to reach detailed data and facts about (the determinants facing the application of total quality management in training extension centers in Iraq).

Research population and samples

The research population included all the governorates of Iraq(15 governorates) except for the Kurdistan region and all training extension centers in these governorates,16 extension centers, and all extension farms affiliated with these centers59, and Agricultural Extension and Training Organization. A random sample of 50% was chosen from the governorates of Iraq, with a ratio of 8 governorates are: Kirkuk, Baghdad, Diyala, Holy Karbala, Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf, Al-Qadisiyah, Dhi Qar, and Basra. The research was limited to all employees in training extension centers in the governorates included 16 directors of training extension centers and 37 agricultural extension employees. All employees in the extension farms affiliated with the extension centers, represented by 29 extension farm officials, and all agricultural extension employees (48 agricultural extension employees). Employees in the Agricultural Extension and training Directorate ,represented by (the manager General of the organization and his assistant, and the heads of departments of each department Developing the workforce, managing extension centers and farms, planning and monitoring, and their assistants), (8respondents), in

addition to all the agricultural extension employees in these departments,(11 agricultural extension employees), and thus the total number of respondents became 149 respondents.

Data collection tool

The questionnaire was prepared as a tool for collecting data from respondents. The process of building the scale went through a series of stages:

A- Preparing the scale in its initial form: In light of the literature related to the subject of the research, previous studies, a scale was prepared for the determinants in its preliminary form, which included five fields: and the items constituting these fields amounted to (44) items.

B- Development of the scale: the fields and items were presented in their initial form to a group of experts specialized, numbering (27) experts , to indicate the degree of their approval of the fields and items of each field in the light of the scale of approval be of three levels: agree, agree with the amendment, disagree.

C-Determining the criterion of expert approval (cutting threshold) on the fields and items of the scale: the threshold of cutting was determined by 75% or more in the degree of expert approval for the fields and items of the proposed questionnaire to remain in its final form.

D- Calculating the averages of the degrees of the experts' approval on the fields and items of the scale: estimated weights were given to the levels of the approval scale as follows : (Agree = 2), (Agree with amendment = 1), (Disagree = 0), and thus the degree of the scale ranged between (0-2) degrees, and the averages were calculated by calculating the total degrees obtained on the number of experts.

E- Preparing the scale in its final form: In light of comparing the average degrees of expert approval on the fields and items of the questionnaire with the threshold of cutting to prepare the questionnaire in its final form, all fields and items have achieved (75%) %) and more, as the

threshold of cutting for the scale of determinants facing the application of total quality management reached (94.83%).As the number of items of the scale became (42) items distributed over (5) fields. Thus, the determinants facing the application of total quality management in the training extension centers were finalized.

Using the Alpha Cronbach coefficient to measure the reliability of the determinants scale, which reached a value of (0.86).Weights (1,2,3,4,5) were given to the levels of the scale of determinants facing the application of total quality management in the training extension centers (very large, large, medium, few, very few) respectively, and to arrange the fields and items in descending order, from the point of view of the respondents, the weighted mean and percentage weight were used.

Statistical methods

The statistical methods used in analyzing the research data are:

-Weighted mean: The weighted mean was used to find the average of each item of the scale of determinants of implementing total quality management in training extension centers.

-Percentage weight: The percentage weight was used to describe each item of the scale for the determinants of total quality management implementation

-Alpha Cronbach equation: The alpha Cronbach equation was used to find the reliability coefficient for a measure of the determinants facing the implementation of total quality management in training extension centers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Administrative determinants

The determinants related to the 11 field (administrative determinants) obtained weighted means located between 3.427-3.805 degrees, and percentage weights between 68.53-76.1 degrees, (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to the items related to the field of administrative determinants

Item number in the form	items	Weighted mean	Percentage weight	sequence
2	Centralization in decision-making by the departments of training extension centers.	3.805	76.1	1
3	The desire of the higher management of the extension organization to achieve quality without financial or human obligations on its part.	3.724	74.48	2
1	Weak conviction and support of the higher management of the extension organization to apply total quality management in the training extension centers.	3.638	72.76	3
9	Weak or insufficient powers granted to the managers of training extension centers to apply total quality management.	3.616	72.31	4
4	The absence of vision and strategic planning for total quality management among the higher management of the extension organization and the management of training extension centers.	3.592	71.84	5
7	Weak or lack of mechanisms to evaluate the performance of training extension centers.	3.581	71.62	6
11	Weak coordination between training extension centers and the authorities related to total quality management.	3.559	71.18	7
6	Continuous change in the departments of the extension organization, especially the departments of the training extension centers, which results in a change in strategies and in the methods and procedures of work, and the difficulty of controlling what is required by total quality management.	3.461	69.22	8
10	Weak communication between the administrations of training extension centers and other administrative levels (higher and executive) of the extension organization.	3.455	69.1	9
8	The weak ability of the management of the training extension centers to set clear and specific goals for quality management in them.	3.428	68.56	10
5	The managements of extension training centers are not convinced to train their employees in the field of total quality management.	3.427	68.53	11
General rate		3.571	71.427	

With regard to the arrangement of the items related to the field of administrative determinants, it can be revealed from **Table (1)**

that there is convergence between the weighted means of the items related to this field, however, the item Centralization in decision-making by the

administrations of training extension centers came in the first order with weighted mean of 3.805 degrees, and a percentage weight of 76.1 degrees. The reason for this may be attributed to most of the departments of the extension department, including the training extension centers, have a central decision-making authority, which often constitutes a major obstacle to the work and activities they practice. They could be constitute a large determinant of the application of total quality management. As for the item the lack of conviction of the departments of the training extension centers to train their employees in the field of total quality management, it came in the

last order with weighted mean of 3.427 degrees, and a percentage weight of 68.53 degrees .The reason for this may be attributed to the respondents' belief that the weakness or lack of conviction of the departments of the training extension centers in the application of total quality management will lead to their lack of conviction in all procedures and matters related to By applying.

Environmental determinants

The determinants related to the 8 environmental determinants got weighted means located between 3.261-3.468 degrees, and percentage weights located between 65.21-79.36 degrees, (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to items related to environmental determinants

Item number in the form	Items	Sequence		
		Weighted mean	Percentage weight	
8	Weak financial capabilities (devices, equipment, etc.) necessary to implement total quality management in training extension centers	3.468	79.36	1
5	The lack of an appropriate organizational climate in training counseling centers to implement total quality management, which affects the of employees in the extension center	3.829	76.58	2
6	Inability to change the organizational culture (values, habits, norms, organizational beliefs) prevailing in training extension centers for the application of total quality management	3.733	74.66	3
1	Inflexibility of government laws and regulations that limit the freedom to apply total quality management in training extension center	3.659	73.17	4
7	The absence of competition between the training extension centers and other extension units, which does not give an incentive for these centers to develop their work in accordance with total quality standards.	3.596	71.91	5
4	Lack of an efficient database for training extension centers for the application of total quality management.	3.5	70	6
3	Weak relationship between training extension centers and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.	3.4	68	7
2	Weak relationship between training extension centers and the rural community to which services are provided.	3.261	65.21	8
General rate		3.556	72.362	

With regard to the order of the items related to the field (environmental determinants), it is revealed from **Table (2)** that there is convergence between the weighted means of the items related to this field, however, the item came [Weak material capabilities (devices, equipment, etc.) necessary to implement total quality management in training extension centers]. In the first order with a weighted mean of 3.468 degrees, and a percentage weight of 79.36 degrees, and the reason for this may be due to the lack of financial allocations distributed by the Agricultural Directorate to the training extension centers, which reflects negatively on the provision of devices, equipment and all the requirements required by the process of applying total quality management. For the weak relationship between training extension

centers and the rural community to which they provide services, it ranked last with a weighted mean of 3.261 degrees, and percentage weight of 65.21 degrees. The reason for this may return to the respondents' belief in the ease of overcoming this determinant by holding meetings or periodic meetings with the targeted audience from the rural community, listening to their opinions, suggestions and requirements, solving all the problems facing them and providing services that meet their needs, and thus this will contribute to strengthening the relationship with them.

Financial determinants

The determinants related to the 5 financial determinants got weighted means located between 4.022-4.254 degrees, and percentage weights between 80.43-85.07 degrees (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to the items related to the field of financial determinants

Item number in the form	Items	Weighted mean	Percentage weight	Sequence
1	Weak financial support from local, Arab and regional organizations.	4.254	85.07	1
5	Lack of financial support for the incentive system in training extension centers, especially for employees who have distinguished performance.	4.248	84.95	2
4	Lack of financial allocation necessary to coordinate with universities and research centers specialized in the field of total quality management.	4.088	81.75	3
2	Lack of financial allocation necessary to establish communication networks within the training extension centers.	4.063	81.25	4
3	Weak financial support necessary for the implementation of training programs for total quality management for employees in extension centers	4.022	80.43	5
General rate		4.135	82.69	

Regarding the ranking of the items related to the field of (financial determinants), **Table (3)** revealed a convergence between the weighted means of the items related to this field. The item of weak financial support from local and Arab regional bodies and organizations came in first place with a weighted mean of 4.254 and percentage weight 85.07 degrees, and the reason for this may be attributed to the Weak relationship and cooperation between the training extension

centers and those organizations, especially in the financial aspect, and the dependence of the extension centers to a large extent on the financial appropriations allocated to them by the Agricultural Extension and Training Directorate to conduct their work. For the weak of financial support necessary to implement training programs for total quality management for workers in extension centers, it ranked last with a weighted mean of 4.022 degrees and percentage weight of

80.43 degrees. The reason for this may be attributed to the respondents' belief that the financial support allocated for the implementation of the activities of the training extension centers is weak in general, especially in the field of implementing training programs for total quality management.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to the items related to the field of determinants related to employees in training extension centers

Item number in the form	Items	Weighted mean	Percentage weight	sequence
1	The fear of some employees in the training extension centers to take responsibility and adhere to total quality standards	3.667	73.34	1
7	The misconception of employees in the training extension centers that the application of total quality management is through the issuance of instructions and directives.	3.635	72.69	2
2	The lack of employees in the training extension centers with a broad horizon and the ability to absorb the developments resulting from the application of total quality management in the focus of their work.	3.602	72.03	3.5
6	Lack of knowledge of some employees in the training extension centers of the requirements for the application of total quality management.	3.602	72.03	3.5
5	The resistance of some employees in the training extension centers to the change that TQM will bring about because they feel that the change may reduce some of the benefits they were getting, or increase the effort required to work in a way that is not commensurate with their salaries.	3.518	70.35	5
3	Lack of sufficient expertise, information and skills among employees in training extension centers in the field of total quality management.	3.492	69.83	6
4	Lack of interest of training extension centers to develop the capabilities of employees in the field of total quality management.	3.466	69.32	7
10	Lack of sufficient opportunity for employees in the training extension centers to express their opinions and suggestions on the development of the work of these centers.	3.325	66.5	8
9	The weakness of the positive relationship and mutual trust between the employees of the training extension centers on the one hand and their managers on the other.	3.16	63.19	9
8	Lack of a spirit of cooperation among employees in training extension centers.	3.13	62.6	10
General rate		3.46	69.188	

With regard to the arrangement of the items related to the field (determinants related to employees in training extension centers), **Table (4)** stated that there is a convergence between the weighted means of the items related to this field, however, there was an item (the fear of some employees in

Determinants related to employees in training extension centers: The determinants related to the field determinants related to employees in training extension centers of (10) determinants obtained weighted means located between 3.13-3.667 degrees, and percentage weights located between 62.6-73.34 degrees (**Table 4**).

the training extension centers of taking responsibility and adhering to total quality standards.) In the first order with a weighted mean of 3.667 degrees, and a percentage weight of 73.34 degrees. The reason for this may be attributed to the feeling of employees in the training extension

centers their inability to adhere to these standards, because they believe that these standards are difficult to achieve or apply, especially since their level of knowledge of total quality management is weak, which makes them feel afraid of failure to adhere to and apply them. For the lack of a spirit of cooperation among employees in training extension centers, it came in the last order with weighted mean of 3.13 degrees, and a percentage weight of 62.6 degrees. The reason for this may be attributed to the belief of some respondents that the

spirit of cooperation between employees in the training extension centers is one of the routine things in accomplishing the tasks entrusted to them to achieve the goals of these centers.

Determinants related to the target audience

The determinants related to the (8) determinants of the target audience field obtained weighted means located between 3.17-3.638 degrees, and percentage weights located between 63.4-72.76 degrees (**Table 5**).

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to the items related to the field of Determinants related to the target audience

Item number in the form	Items	Weighted mean	Percentage weight	Sequence
4	The difficulty of solving all the problems facing the targeted by the training extension centers, which leads to their lack or lack of satisfaction with the quality of services provided by these centers.	3.638	72.76	1
3	The large number of targeted people and their spread in separate geographical areas, makes it difficult to provide satisfactory services to them (meet their needs).	3.584	71.67	2
6	The diversity of target groups in rural society (youth, women, youth... and others) makes it difficult to satisfy all of these groups to the same extent.	3.561	71.21	3
5	The difficulty of setting standards for the quality of services provided by the training extension centers in a way that corresponds to the needs and requirements of the targeted.	3.547	70.93	4
1	Lack of opportunity for the targeted to participate in the process of developing and improving the extension services provided to them by the training extension centers.	3.465	69.29	5
2	The weakness or lack of interest of the training extension centers in identifying the needs and requirements of the targeted will not give any return to the application of total quality management in these centers.	3.397	67.93	6
7	Weak relationship based on respect and mutual trust between employees of training extension centers and the targets.	3.378	67.55	7
8	The lack of an effective communication system in the training extension centers to know the reactions of the targeted people about the services provided by these centers.	3.17	63.4	8
General rate		3.468	69.343	

With regard to the order of the items related to the field determinants related to the target audience. **Table (5)** stated that there is a convergence between the weighted means of the items related to this field however the difficulty of solving all the problems facing the targets audience of training counseling centers, which leads to their dissatisfaction with the quality of services provided to them by these centers, came in the first place with weighted mean of 3.638 degree, and percentage weight of 72.76 degrees. The reason for this may be attributed to the weakness of the material, financial and human capabilities of the training extension centers, which prevent solving all the problems facing the targeted, but work is done to solve the most important problems and have a great and direct impact on them, and thus will lead to their dissatisfaction or lack of satisfaction with the services provided to them by

the extension centers. The lack of an effective communication system in the training extension centers to know the reactions of the targeted audience about the services provided by these centers, came in the last order with weighted mean of 3.17 degrees, and a percentage weight of 63.4 degrees; and the reason for this may be attributed to the belief of some respondents that there is a good connection between the training extension centers and the targeted to know their reactions to the services provided by those centers, so this item occupied the last ranking. As for the arrangement of the fields of the determinants facing the application of total quality management in the training extension centers (5) fields, the results of the research showed that the weighted means of the fields of the determinants ranged between (3.46-4.135) degrees, with percentage weights ranging between (69.188-82.69) degrees (**Table 6**).

Table 6. Distribution of respondents according to the determinants facing the application of total quality management in the training extension centers

Field number in the form	Items	Weighted mean	Percentage weight	Sequence
3	Financial determinants.	4.135	82.69	1
1	Administrative determinants.	3.571	71.427	2
2	Environmental determinants.	3.556	72.362	3
5	Determinants related to target audience.	3.468	69.343	4
4	Determinants related to employees In training extension centers.	3.46	69.188	5
General rate		3.638	73.002	

Table (6) revealed that the field (financial determinants) came in the first order with a weighted mean of (4.135) degrees, and a percentage weight of (82.69) degree The reason for this may be attributed to the respondents' belief that the financial determinants are the most hindering when it is to improve or develop any work in the organization, especially the training extension centers, especially since the financial allocations they receive are few, as well as the lack or absence of other sources of funding for these centers other than the funding they receive from the Agricultural Extension and Training Directorate. For the field determinants related to employees in training extension centers, it came in the last order with weighted mean of 3.46

degrees, and a percentage weight of 69.188 degrees, and the reason for this may be returned to the respondents' sense of the possibility of overcoming all the determinants related to employees through holding seminars, workshops and meetings that encourage, support, and urge employees in training extension centers to apply total quality management, as well as the implementation of intensive training courses for them in the field of total quality management to develop their capabilities and enable them to solve all the problems they face in this field. The weighted means of the sample members' answers to the determinants facing the application of total quality management, we accept the hypothesis that there are some determinants facing the application

of total quality management in training extension centers in Iraq, represented by the following fields: administrative determinants, environmental determinants, financial determinants, determinants related to employees in training extension centers, determinants related to the target audience.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF FUND

The authors declare that they have not received a fund.

AUTHOR/S DECLARATION

- We confirm that all Figures and Tables in the manuscript are original to us. Additionally, any Figures and images that do not belong to us have been incorporated with the required permissions for re-publication, which are included with the manuscript.

- Author/s signature on Ethical Approval Statement.

- Ethical Clearance and Animal Welfare.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Ihsan Radhi Hassuny worked on formulating the introduction and the research problem, as well as preparing the research method and collecting data, while researcher Bayan Abdul Jabbar Ridha worked on conducting statistical analysis and interpreting the results.

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المحددات التي تواجه تطبيق إدارة الجودة الشاملة في المراكز الإرشادية التدريبية

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المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة التعرف على المحددات التي تواجه تطبيق إدارة الجودة الشاملة في المراكز الإرشادية التدريبية في العراق. أجريت هذه الدراسة على جميع محافظات العراق باستثناء إقليم كردستان، وتم سحب عينة عشوائية منها بنسبة 50% (8 محافظات) شملت عينة البحث جميع المديرين الزراعيين والمرشدين الزراعيين العاملين في المراكز الإرشادية التدريبية والمزارع التابعة لها في المحافظات التي شملتها عينة البحث، وبلغ عددهم 149 فرداً. وتم جمع البيانات من أفراد العينة بطريقة المقابلة الشخصية خلال الفترة 7/9/2023- 5/9/2023. أظهرت النتائج وجود محددات تواجه تطبيق إدارة الجودة الشاملة في المراكز الإرشادية التدريبية، حيث جاءت المحددات المالية في المرتبة الأولى بوسط مرجح (4.135) درجة وزن مئوي (82.69) درجة، والمحددات المتعلقة بالعاملين في المراكز الإرشادية التدريبية، جاءت في الترتيب الأخير بوسط مرجح (3.46) درجة وزن مئوي (69.188) درجة. وأوصى الباحثان بضرورةأخذ هذه المحددات بنظر الاعتبار من قبل دائرة الإرشاد والتدريب الزراعي ومراقباتها والحد منها ومعالجتها لتسهيل عملية تطبيق إدارة الجودة الشاملة في المراكز الإرشادية التدريبية.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: تطوير القدرات، جودة الخدمة الإرشادية، المحددات الإدارية، المحددات المالية.

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