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The Extent of Availability of The Strategic Dimensions of Total Quality Management: An Exploratory Study of the Opinions of a Sample of Employees at the College of Administration and Economics, University of Mosul

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the extent to which the strategic dimensions of Total Quality Management (TQM) are available at the College of Administration and Economics, University of Mosul, by surveying the opinions of a sample of the college's faculty members and employees. The strategic dimensions under investigation include: top management commitment, employee participation, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction focus. The study employed the descriptive-analytical method and used a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of staff members, and the collected data were analyzed using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, in addition to assessing the reliability of the instrument through Cronbach's Alpha. The findings revealed that the strategic dimensions of TQM are available at a good too high level among the college's employees, with some variations among the dimensions. Continuous improvement and top management commitment were found to be the most strongly present dimensions, whereas employee participation received a relatively moderate evaluation, indicating the need to enhance the application of this dimension. The study concludes that adopting the strategic dimensions of TQM contributes to improving institutional performance, increasing job and academic satisfaction, and promoting institutional excellence. It recommends strengthening employee participation in decision-making, activating continuous improvement tools, and increasing attention to customer satisfaction within the academic environment to ensure the sustainability of TQM implementation at the institutional level.

KEYWORDS: Total Quality Management (TQM), Strategic Dimensions, Top Management Commitment, Employee Participation, Continuous Improvement, Customer Satisfaction, College of Administration and Economics, University of Mosul.

INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management (TQM) is considered one of the most significant contemporary management approaches adopted by educational institutions to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness, and to achieve high levels of satisfaction among customers and beneficiaries. Over the past decades, TQM has evolved from being a set oof operational tools aimed at improving processes into an integrated strategic froamework that guides organizations toward sustainable excellence and the achievement of long-term objectives. In this context, the concept of the strategic dimensions of TQM has emerged as both a theoretical and practical extension that links quality principles with institutional vision, competitive capability, and the creation of added value in academic and administrative performance. Universities, particularly in the Iraqi environment, face increasing challenges relatede to enhancing organizational efficiency, improving the quality of educational outcomes, developing the work environment, and keeping pace with rapid changes in management and education. Hence, adopting the strategic dimensions of TQM in Iraqi university colleges is of great importance, as it plays a central role in embedding a culture of quality, activating employee participation, developing academic and administrative processes, and achieving institutional excellence. The Collegee of Administration and Economics at the University of Mosul is one of the long-established academic institutions that continually works on improving its performance and developing its educational and administrative services, making it an appropriate environment for studying the reality of applying the strategic dimensions of TQM. Providing these dimensions contributes to enhancing the college's competitive ability, improving the quality of its outputs, and increasing the satisfaction of its customers (students, researchers, and the community). Based on the significance of this topic, this study aims to survey the opinions of a sample of the College of Administration and Economics' staff at the University of Mosul regarding the extent of availability of the strategic dimensions

of TQM, to assess their level of implementation, identify areas in need of improvement, and providing scientific recommendations to support the college's efforts in enhancing its performance quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of the Strategic Dimensions of Total Quality Management

The concept of the strategic dimensions of Total Quality Management (TQM) encompasses a set of long-term components and directions that support an organization's ability to implement the total quality philosophy systematically and sustainably. These dimensions translate quality principles into strategec plans, organizational policies, and coordinated operational processes that contribute to achieving competitive advantage. This concept emphasizes integrating quality within the organization's strategic viseon, building a culture that values continuous improvement, involving customers in shaping overall direction, and directing resources and capabilities toward achieving sustainable quality (Oakland, 2014; Goetsch & Davis, 2020). The literature also suggests that the strategic dimensions of quality extend beyond the scope of "process improvement" to encompass understanding the competitive environment, adapting quality to future changes, and informing decisions that foster long-term organizational capabilities (Evans & Lindsay, 2020). Thus, quality becomes an integral part of the strategic framewoork that defines the organization's path and ensures its continuity in delivering value to customers (DeJesus, Villamar, & Dionisio, 2021).

2. The Importance of the Strategic Dimensions of Total Quality Management

The importance of the strategic dimensions of TQM stems from their role as the foundation that ensures successful quality implementation and the achievement of measurable long-term outcomes. Their significance can be summarized as follows (Andreeva, Popova, Yashima, Babiana, Aksenova, & Netspeak, 2019):

- Aligning Quality with Organizational Vision: Strategic dimensions ensure that quality is embedded in the organization's philosophy rather than being limiteed to operational activities (Goetsch & Davis, 2020).
- Enhancing Competitive Advantage: Integrating quality into strategy improves the organization's market position, increases customer satisfaction, and sustains performance (Evans & Lindsay, 2020).
- Sustaining Continuous Improvement: By providing resources, leadership support, and fostering a supportive organizational culture, these dimensions enhance the organization's ability to evolve in a changing environment (Oakland, 2014).
- Increasing Innovation: Strategic dimensions provide a framework for developing new products and services that meet changing customer needs (Octavian & Mihai, 2014).
- Reducing Waste and Improving Operational Efficiency: Through the systematic application of quality principles, such as defect reduction and long-term cost minimization.

3. Strategic Dimensions of Total Quality Management

- Top Management Commitment: Top management commitment is considered one of the fundamental pillars of Total Quality Management (TQM) and represents the starting point for any project aimed at improving institutional performance. Administrative literature indicates that the success of quality programs largely depends on the extent to which top leaders are convinced of the quality philosophy and adopt a culture of continuous improvement (Evans & Lindsay, 2020). Commitment iis demonstrated through providing the necessary resources, supporting employees, adopting clear quality policies, and establishing a strategic vision aligned with the objectives of the educational institution. Studies also confirm that organizatioons led by highly committed leaders achieve higher levelse of customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and effective resource management (Goetsch & Davis, 2016). In the university context, leadership commitment manifests in supporting research, enhancing the learning environment, and providing continuous staff training, thereby fostering an organizational culture that supports quality.
- Employee Involvement: Employee involvement is a key factor in ensuring the success of TQM, as performance improvement cannot be achieved without active participation by employees in providing suggestions, assuming responsibilities, and contributing to decision-making. Juran (2018) emphasized that empowering employees is a pivotal factor in driving real organizational change. Employee involvement takes various forms, including participation in work teams, problem-solving, process design, and attendance in quality training programs. Literature indicates that organizations that promote employee involvement achieve better performance, experience fewer operational errors, and enjoy higher levelse of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Oakland, 2019). In academic institutions, employee involvement is particularly critical as it directly affects departmental performance, administrative service effectiveness, and interactions with students, thereby impacting the quality of educational outcomes.
- Continuous Improvement: Continuous improvement is a central principle of TQM, reflecting a systematic approach to the ongoing development of processes and services. Deming (2016) highlighted that continuous improvement is fundamental for building an effective organization that seeks to reduce errors and enhance efficiency. Continuous improvement involves several key practices such as data analysis, use of quality tools, process reviews, and adoption of modern performance management methods (Pheng & Hong, 2015). In academic institutions, continuous improvement is a strategic element because it contributes to curriculum development, enhancement of the learning environment, improvement of administrative services, and support for research activities (Thiagarajah & Thang Swamy, 2015). Recent literature indicates that organizations applying continuous improvement philosophies are better able to adapt to environmental changes and are moore capable of innovation and achieving institutional excellence (Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014).
- Customer Focus: Customer focus is one of the main dimensions of TQM, as organizations rely on measuring and analyzing customer needs and expectations to guide strategies for performance enhancement. In educational institutions, the concept of the customer includes students, the community, researchers, and potential employers. Kano (2017) emphasized that achieving customer satisfaction is a prerequisite for institutional success and sustainability. Customer focus involves practices such as measuring satisfaction levels, handling

complaints, improving servicess, and developing communication channels (Usadolo, 2020). Studies indicate that universities that adopt a clear methodology for measuring customer satisfaction achieve higher quality educational outcomes and enjoy a stronger academic reputation (Sila & Ebrahimpour, 2005). Strategic customer focus also contributes to curriculum development, improvement of university services, and increased competitiveness at local and regional levels.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section focuses on presenting the research findings by describing and analyzing the responses of the surveyed sample, with a detailed diagnosis of the primary data. Subsequently, the results are discussed and compared with existing literature to determine the extent of their consistency or divergence from previous studies. This section also includes the presentation of the hypothesis testing results using the statistical software SPSS, version 26, aiming to establish the statistical significance of the findings and too derive accurate and reliable research conclusions.

1. Description and Diagnosis of the Respondent Sample Data:

The current study relied on selecting a random sample of general staff memberse at the College of Administration and Economics, with a total of 110 respondents. Data were collected to identify the demographic characteristics of the sample, including gender, age, educational qualification, and years of service, as presented in Table 1.

Table (1): Characteristics and Attributes of the Respondent Sample (n = 110)

Variable	Category	Frequency
Gender	Male	44
	Female	66
Age	25–30 years	5
	31–40 years	41
	41–50 years	55
	51 years and above	9
Educational Qualification	Doctorate	3
	Master's	20
	Bachelor's	80
	Diploma	7
Years of Service	5 years or less	8
	6–10 years	10
	11–20 years	80
	21 years or more	12

Source: Authors' own preparation

2. Analysis and Diagnosis of the Sample Data

- Gender: The data indicate that the proportion of females (60%) exceeds that of males (40%), reflecting a higher female participation within the respondent sample.
- Age: The majority of respondents fall within the 41–50 years age group (50%), while the youngest group (25–30 years) represents only 4.5%, indicating that most participants have medium to extensive experience.
- Educational Qualification: The sample is dominateed by bachelor's degree holders (72.7%), whereas doctorate holders constitute a small minority (2.7%).
- Years of Service: Most respondents have long professional experience, ranging between 11–16 years (72.7%), reflecting a high level of occupational expertise.
- Conclusion: This analysis suggests that the sample provides a good representation of the age groups and work experience most relevant to the research topic, offering a solid foundation for proceeding to the analysis of the respondents' answers and testing the research hypotheses using the statistical software SPSS, version 26.

3. Description and Diagnosis of the Top Management Commitment Dimension:

To examine the status of the Top Management Commitment dimension in the studied college, the researcher analyzed the respondents' answers to the items representing this dimension, denoted by variables (X1–X5). The data presented in Table 2 indicate a high level of agreement among respondents regardiing the items of this dimension. The overall agreement percentage (Strongly Agree + Agree) reached 80.6% across all items, reflecting an excellent degree of consensus and coherence in the responses. The percentage of disagreement was 10%, while neutral responses accounted for 10.4%. The overall mean score was 4.11, which is higher than the hypothetical mean of the scale (3), with a standard deviation of 0.8252. These results demonstrate a clear and positive agreement among respondents concerning this dimension, according to the five-point Likert scale

.

Table (2): Frequency Distributions, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Top Management Commitment Dimension

Indicator / Item Code	Response Alternatives					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)		
Overall (X1–X5)	**%80.6**		**%10.4**	**%9.0**		**4.11**	**0.8252**

Source: Authors' own preparation

4. Description and Diagnosis of the Employee Participation Dimension Based on Respondents' Perceptions

To examine the status of the Employee Participation dimension, the researcher analyzed the responses of the surveyed individuals to the items representing this dimension, denoted by variables (X6–X10). Table 3 presents the frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations. The data indicate a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the items of the Employee Participation dimension, with an overall agreement percentage (Strongly Agree + Agree) of 73% across all items. This reflects a good degree of coherence and consensus in the responses, indicating a generally positive peerception according to the five-point Likert scale. The percentage of disagreement was 9.5%, while neutral responses accounted for 17.5%. The overall mean score was 3.684, exceeding the hypothetical mean of the scale (3), with a standard deviation of 0.7792. These results demonstrate a clear and positive consensus among respondents concerning this dimension.

Table (3): Frequency Distribution, Mean, and Standard Deviation for the Employee Participation Dimension

Indicator / Item Code	Response Alternatives					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)		
Overall (X6–X10)	**73%**		**17.5 %**	**9.5%**		**3.684**	**0.7792**

Source: Authors' own preparation

5. Description and Diagnosis of the Continuous Improvement Dimension Based on Respondents' Perceptions

To examine the status of the Continuous Improvement dimension, the researcher analyzed the responses of the surveyed individuals to the items representing this dimension, denoted by variables (X11–X15). Table 4 presents the frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations for each item. The data indicate a high levele of agreement among respondents regarding the items of the Continuous Improvement dimension, with an overall agreement percentage (Strongly Agree + Agree) of 83.8% across all items. This reflects a high degree of coherence and consensus in the responses. The percentage of disagreement was 6%, while neutral responses accounted for 10.2%. The overall mean score was 4.243, exceeding the hypothetical mean of the scale (3), with a standard deviation of 0.8194. These results demonstrate a clear and positive agreement among respondents regarding this dimension.

Table (4): Frequency Distribution, Mean, and Standard Deviation for the Continuous Improvement Dimension

Indicator / Item Code	Response Alternatives					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)		
Overall (X11–X15)	**83.8%**		**10.2%**	**6.0%**		**4.243**	**0.8194**

Source: Authors' own preparation

6. Description and Diagnosis of the Customer Satisfaction Focus Dimension Based on Respondents' Perceptions

To examine the status of the Customer Satisfaction Focus dimension, the researcher analyzed the responses of the surveyed individuals to the items representing this dimension, denoted by variables (X16–X20). Table 5 presents the frequency distributions, mian scores, and standard deviations for each item. The data indicate a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the items of the Customer Satisfaction Focus dimension, with an overalle agreement percentage (Strongly Agree + Agree) of 79.4% across all items. This reflects a good degree of coherence and consensus in the responses. The percentage of disagreement was 6%, while neutral responses accounted for 14.6%. The overall mean score was 3.853, exceeding the hypothetical mean of the scale (3), with a standard deviation of 0.7393. These results demonstrate a clear and positive agreement among respondents regarding this dimension.

Table (5): Frequency Distribution, Mean, and Standard Deviation for the Customer Satisfaction Focus Dimension

Indicator / Item Code	Response Alternatives					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)		
Overall (X16–X20)	**%79.4**		**%14.6**	**6.0%**		**3.853**	**0.7393**

Source: Authors' own preparation

7. Overall Percentages and Ranking Importance of the Dimensions

The overall response percentages were based on the statistical analysis of the research variable as a whole. The results presented in Table 6 indicate a clear agreemeent among respondents regarding the Strategic Total Quality Management variable and its four dimensions. The overall agreement percentage for the variable reached 79.2% across all items (X1–X20), reflecting a high level of consensus. Neutral responses accounted for 13.18%,

while disagreement represented 7.63%. The overall mean score was 3.973, exceeding the hypothetical mean of the scale (3), with a standard deviation of 0.791, indicating a clear and positive agreement among respondents regarding the dimensions of Strategic Total Quality Management. It can be concluded that the respondents demonstrated a clear consensus on the ranking of the Strategic Total Quality Management dimensions in terms of their importancee. The participants focus their work on the most influential dimensions, highlighting Continuous Improvement as the most important dimension, followed by Top Management Commitment, then Customer Satisfaction Focus, and finally Employee Participation. This indicates that the dimensions of Total Quality Management have a positive impact on strategic performance within the college and that respondents have a good understanding of the importance of each dimension in enhancing overall quality.

Table (6): Overall Percentages and Ranking of the Most Important Dimensions in the College

Strategic dimensions of Total Quality Management	Response rate			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
	Agreement (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagreement (%)			
Top Management Commitment (X1–X5)	**%80.6**	**%10.4**	**%9.0**	4.11	0.8252	2
Employee Participation (X6–X10)	**%73**	**%17.5**	**%9.5**	3.684	0.7792	4
Continuous Improvement (X11–X15)	**%.838**	**%.201**	**%.06**	4.243	0.8194	1
Customer Satisfaction Focus (X16–X20)	**%79.4**	**%14.6**	**%.06**	3.853	0.7393	3
Overall Variable Indicator (X1–X20)	**%79.2**	**%13.18**	**%7.63**	**3.973**	**0.791**	____

Source: Authors' own preparation

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results of analyzing the Strategic Total Quality Management variable in the studied college indicate a clear positive agreement among respondents regarding the four strategic quality dimensions. The data show that the Continuous Improvement dimension ranked first in terms of importance and agreement among respondents, reflecting a strong awareness of the significance of adopting continuous improvement policies in operational performance and achieving overall quality.

Top Management Commitment came in second place, confirming the pivotal role of senior management in guiding strategies and ensuring the effective implementation of total quality principles. The Costomer Satisfaction Focus dimension ranked third, indicating employees' recognition of the importance of meeting customer expectations, as customers are central to work and service delivery. Employee Participation ranked fourth, though it still falls within the positive agreement range. This may suggest a need to further enhance a culture of participation and interaction among staff in decision-making processes and the implementation of strategic initiatives.

These findings conferm that the four dimensions are integrated and form a strategic foundation for implementing total quality management within the college, and that respondents have a good understanding of the importance of each dimension in improving institutional performance. The differences between dimensions also highlight opportunities to strengthen certain aspects, such as Employee Participation, through training programs, incentives, and collaborative workshops to enhance their effective involvement in daily decisions and initiatives.

The results indicate that the general hypothesis is well-supported, with the overall variable indicator reflecting positive consensus among respondents above the average level. The sub-hypotheses were all achieved to varyiing degrees, ranging from good to high, with the Continuous Improvement dimension demonstrating the highest performance and Employee Participation the lowest, though still within the positive agreement range. This confirms that respondents recognize the importance of all strategic total quality management dimensions.

CONCLUSION

- Availability of Strategic Quality Dimensions: The results indicate that all four dimensions of Total Quality Management are present in the college to varying degrees, with respondents demonstrating a good awareness of their importance in enhancing institutional performance.
- Importance of Continuous Improvement: The Continuous Improvement dimension is considered the most important from the respondents' perspective, reflecting a strong recognition of its role in developing processes and achieving overall quality.
- Leadership Role of Top Management: Top Management Commitment emerges as a key element in ensuring the effective implementation of quality principles, highlighting the need for continuous support and guidance from leadership.
- Achieving Customer Satisfaction: The Customer Satisfaction Focus dimension is recognized as significant, indicating employees' awareness of the impact of quality on service beneficiaries.
- Enhancing Employee Participation: Although there is positive agreement regarding Employeee Participation, its fourth-place ranking suggests opportunities to further strengthen the culture of participation and engagement through practical initiatives, such as reward programs, workshops, and encouraging collective initiatives.

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