

Assessment of the Performance of Vocational Training Centers Affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Labor According to the Dimensions of the American- Malcolm Baldrige- Model

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Abstract

During the past decades, Total Quality Management (TQM) has received worldwide attention, and TQM has been promoted as a systematic approach to organizational improvement. The USA has a rich heritage of knowledge and experience in this field, and an American Studies approach allows analysis of the ways in which a U.S. model fits or does not fit within the Palestinian context. Because Palestinians made a decision to reform their Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system based on high standards, this study could introduce new knowledge so that TVET leaders can learn from and adapt best practices in the Palestinian context.

This study assessed the performance of Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Labour according to the framework of the Malcolm Baldrige Award, a model using TQM principles that was developed in the United States. The study focused on the perspective of the VTCs' employees using an adapted version of the Baldrige assessment tool. The questionnaire investigated the implementation of Total Quality Management according to the criteria of the Baldrige framework.

This is a quantitative study that uses sampling survey method to gather perceptions of one hundred and thirty-three employees working in 11 VTCs. The data collection tool utilized a five-point Likert scale. The impact of demographics on the responses was also investigated. Data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-20).

The results of the study revealed that the reality of the VTCs' quality according to the Baldrige model was high. The total scores achieved (76.8%) indicate that these centers are relatively effective and somewhat responsive to the overall requirements of the MBNQA criteria. The leadership criterion scored the highest level with an overall average of 81.4%. The lowest level of TQM implementation was realized in the measurement, analysis and knowledge management criterion; in this area the VTCs achieved the lowest score with an average of 72.8%. Finally, differences

between directors and deputy directors of the VTCs in the seven criteria were remarked.

The study findings have several practical and theoretical implications. The study demonstrated the importance of adopting a TQM philosophy and applying its principles in vocational education and training institutions, particularly in VTCs affiliated with the Ministry of Labor in the West-Bank, Palestine. The findings showed that VTCs must deal with all the elements of the framework in a systematic approach in order to attain excellence. Hence, implementing the MBNQA in the TVET system in Palestine needs modifications and adaptation to the local culture and needs. This is the first study to the author's knowledge that uses the MBNQA in relation to the vocational education and training field in Palestine.

Keywords: Performance, vocational training centers, Malcolm Baldrige- Model, Palestine.

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