



EVALUATION OF TRAINING COURSES FOR AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES CONDUCTED BY THE TRAINING AND REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT BELONGING TO THE EXTENSION AND TRAINING OF AGRICULTURAL IN IRAQ

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to evaluate the training courses for agricultural employees conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Directorate belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural in Iraq from the point of view of the trainees through the axes (trainers, training methods, training content, Duration and timing of the course and trainees, training environment). The research community composed of all agricultural employees enrolled in the training courses conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural, who their number amounted to (331 employees). The study was conducted on a random sample, with a ratio of 40% from the study community with 133 employees. Data were collected using the questionnaire. The results of the study showed that the respondents' opinions on all the axes were positive. The trainees were ranked in the first rank with a weighted Mean amounted to (3.22 degree), with a percentage weight amounted to (80.52%) while the Axis of the training environment came at the last rank with a weighted mean amounted (2.93) and an average percentage amounted to (74.43%). The researchers recommended that the results of the research be adopted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural in order to improve the training process for the agricultural employees.

Key words: training courses, agricultural employees, extension.

Introduction

Training in all government organizations and institutions is considered highly important, where it is considered a key element in the development of human resources through imparting the skills, knowledge and trends required to achieve the objectives of the Organization (Abdullah, 2016; 23). There is an increasing trend towards focusing on training and developing human resources by considering it one of the most important strategic axes to support the skills and expertise of the employees in the Organization, which in turn aims at continuous improvement of performance (Al-Mahasnah, 2004; 17). Training is considered one of the priorities of the organization. It shows the extent of its conviction that the continuation of training will have a positive impact on the results of the organization, which will effect on the continuation and development of the organization (Mahapatro, 2010; 45). As well as its main objective in

increasing the knowledge of trainees and expand their possibility to achieving a positive change in the behavior of employees and giving them the flexibility necessary so that they can address the problems of work (Al-Srifi, 2009; 32). It is essential that the organizations do not conduct training programs without being convinced by their usefulness, because training is a means, not an aim and the goal is the good performance which is reflected in the developing the performance levels of their employees to allow them to increase their abilities to achieve the organizational goals (Qaryuti, 2010; 27). Therefore, Training is occupied an important place among administrative activities aimed at raising the efficiency and skill of the employees of the organizations and improving the working methods by increasing individual and collective skills and acquiring knowledge (Dessler, 2010; 78). Based on the importance of training, it is necessary for different organizations to conduct an evaluation process for the training programs that they

conduct in order to know their quality and their ability to achieve the objectives through their role in improving the performance of the employees properly and thus increasing the effectiveness of these organizations and improving the quality of their outputs (Badir, 2011; 5). Where the evaluation of the training programs consider the important administrative work to know the importance of those programs that have been training and trying to detect the imbalance and treatment and the training is an administrative process it needs to evaluate programs designed to achieve the objectives set by the organization, through the identification of training programs for employees and studying the Available physical possibilities and time to implement those programs and how they are implemented (Abdullah, 2009; 67). The main purpose of the evaluation of training programs is to attempt to understand and reveal the extent to which the objectives of training programs are achieved through a series of processes in which weaknesses and strengths points are identified in training programs (Leopold, 2002; 122). Although, the many benefits for the evaluation process of the training programs, it is considered the most neglected part by the organizations, Where 10% of the training budget is allocated for evaluation (Al-Rifa'i, 2003; 22), while others believe that the problem is not the inability to evaluate but the unwillingness to take by the Scientific analysis methods for conducting this process (Tawfiq, 2002; 13). In the light of what has been mentioned, the importance of evaluating the training courses and for the scarcity of previous guidance studies dealing with the evaluation of training courses. The need for a more accurate study to evaluate the effectiveness of the training courses established by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural for agricultural employees while in service to provide them with the knowledge, skills and trends required in their agricultural work. Therefore, this study answers the following question:

1. What is the reality of the training courses conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural from the viewpoint of the trainees?

Aim of the study

The main aim of the research is to evaluate the training courses conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural from the viewpoint of the trainees represented by the following axes (trainers, training methods, training content, Duration and timing of the course and trainees, training environment).

Materials and Methods

Research Method

The descriptive approach is used in this research because it is considered diagnostic research which falls within this approach where it is appropriate to arrive at detailed facts and information about the subjects at a particular time (Al-Asadi, 2008; 20).

Research community

The research community included all the agricultural employees who participated in the training courses conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural in 2017. Their number amounted to (331 employees).

The research sample

A stratified random sample was selected with a percentage amounted to 40% from each of the conducted courses by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural in Abu Ghraib district which their number amounted to (14), with a rate of (133 employees), as shown in table 1.

Preparing the search questionnaire

The questionnaire was chosen as a tool for collecting research data since it is appropriate for the research methodology used. A questionnaire is a suitable tool for obtaining information, data and facts and because it gives more objective data than other methods of data collection used in research (Melhem, 2010; 21). The process of preparing and developing the questionnaire has gone through several stages:

- First stage: Preparing the questionnaire in its initial form.

In the light of the literature and previous studies related to the subject of research and opinions of experts in the field of agricultural extension and training, a questionnaire was prepared for the evaluation of training courses for agricultural employees conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural in its initial form which included (63 paragraph) to evaluate the training courses implemented by the Center distributed over (6 axes) as following: (13 paragraph for the trainers' axis, 10 paragraph for the training methods, 10 paragraph for the training content, 12 paragraph for the trainee's axis, 12 paragraph for the training environment, 6 paragraph for the duration and timing of the training course).

- Second stage: Developing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was presented in preliminary form to a group of professors in the field of extension and

Table 1: Training courses conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural.

No.	Course title	Number of participants	The sample
1	Building biosecurity and biosafety capabilities	20	8
2	Applications of geographic systems	29	12
3	Manufacture of organic fertilizers	24	10
4	Veterinary guidance and its role in the protection of livestock	17	7
5	Agricultural Mechanization	21	8
6	Applications of geographic systems	17	7
7	Breeding and improvement of field crops	22	9
8	Desertification control	28	11
9	Biological control (Integrated control)	30	12
10	Breeding and improvement of ruminants	28	11
11	Iraqi soil administration	21	8
12	Agricultural Risk Management	19	8
13	Agricultural extension and its role in increasing production	28	11
14	Examination and certification of seeds	27	11
	Total	331	133

training of agricultural at the College of Agriculture, University of Baghdad, to indicate the degree of their agreement on the axes and paragraphs included in the questionnaire in the light of the approval scale with three levels: (approval, approval with modification, Non Approval). In order to verify the validity of the questionnaire, where the validity is the extent to which the measure is achieved for the objective for which any measure is to be measured (Al-Sarraf, 2012; 39). So the validity indicates that a sincere test measures the function that should be measured and does not measure anything else instead of it (Melhem, 2005; 33).

- Third stage: Determination of the threshold cut (the criterion of expert approval on the axes and paragraphs of the proposed scale for its final form).

The threshold cut is considered mainly to judge the survival or disappearance of the axes and paragraphs of the scale. The threshold cut is identified with a percentage of 75% and more for the approval of the experts to the

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their opinions on the main axes to evaluate the training programs.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	Trainees	3.22	80.52
2	Duration and timing of the course	3.19	79.83
3	Trainers	3.04	76.05
4	Training methods	2.98	74.6
5	Training content	2.94	73.69
6	Training environment	2.93	73.43

survival of the axes and the proposed scale paragraphs in its final form. An agreement was obtained from experts between 75% and more about the validity of the questionnaire (Darwazah, 2005; 15).

- Fourth stage: Calculating the averages scores of experts' approval on the components of the questionnaire.

A numeric value for each term was given to the scale of expert approval on the axes and paragraphs of the questionnaire as follows:

(2 degrees) for approval word, (1 degree) for approval word with modifications, (0 degrees) for non-approval word,

- The fifth stage: Preparing the questionnaire in its final form.

In the light of the comparison of the threshold criterion with the average scores of the experts' approval on the components of the questionnaire (the axes and paragraphs) to prepare the questionnaire in its final form, all axes and paragraphs achieved the threshold cut and more. Where the threshold cut for the evaluation scale of training courses amounted to (90.5%) degree. Thus, all the axes and paragraphs of the scale remained in their final form, where the total number of paragraphs amounted to (63) paragraph distributed on (6) axes that mentioned above.

Checking the stability of the questionnaire

Stability means that the scale gives close results if the measurement is repeated on the same individuals after a period of time and under the same conditions (Kaufha, 2010; 54). In addition, stability means objectivity in the sense that the individual obtains the same degree

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the paragraphs of the trainers' axis.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	Allowing to trainees to discuss training topics.	3.38	84.5
2	Uses understandable terms from the environment during lectures.	3.36	84
3	The trainers' commitment to the specific framework of the subjects covered by the training.	3.27	81.75
4	It creates an atmosphere of interaction between trainees during lectures.	3.22	80.5
5	The efforts of the trainers are directed towards achieving the training objectives.	3.20	80
6	Trainers will present realistic positions related to training.	3.15	78.75
7	The trainers have sufficient experience in the subjects of the course.	3.10	77.5
8	Has the ability to explain the scientific material in a sequential and Interconnected.	3.09	77.25
9	Works to create excitement and enthusiasm during presenting of training material.	3.04	76
10	Summarizes the main points of the topics at the end of the lecture.	2.88	72
11	The trainer works to take into account the individual differences of the trainees.	2.84	71
12	Trainees can transform theoretical ideas & information into practical procedures & practice.	2.75	68.75
13	Trainers have the ability to plan and design tests for trainees.	2.27	56.75

regardless of the researcher who applies the test (Abdelhafeez, 2000; 11). In order to measure stability, a pre-test was conducted for the questionnaire at 2/1/2018 on a random sample from outside the research sample consisting of (20) employees, The Alpha-Cronbach coefficient was used to measure the stability, where the Alpha-Cronbach test is considered one of the important statistical stability tests for data analysis where the values of the Cronbach amounted to 0.80 which are acceptable and indicate the stability of the form (Mark, 2009; 17). The Stability coefficient for the axes of evaluation of training courses amounted to (Trainers = 0.88, Training methods = 0.85, Training Content = 0.82, Trainees = 0.87, Training environment = 0.86, Course duration and timing = 0.81). This amount is a good indication of the Stability of the scale paragraphs.

Data collection

The research data were collected using a questionnaire prepared for this purpose and with a personal interview with the 133 respondents on 26/2/2018.

Data analysis

After the data collection, it was manually analyzed and the statistical analysis program (SPSS) was used for statistical processing. After giving the weights (4, 3, 2, 1) to the levels of the Evaluation scale of training courses (highly agreeable, moderately agreeable, slightly agreeable, disagree), respectively. The most important statistical methods used in the analysis of the research data are the Alpha-Cronbach equation and the weighted mean and weight percentage.

Results and Discussion

It included the results obtained in accordance with

the objectives of the research by analyzing the obtained data from the respondents and discussing them in order to evaluate the training programs conducted by the Training and Rehabilitation department. The Hypothetical mean for each efficient paragraph is (2.5). The results will be discussed as follows:

- First: identifying the opinions of the respondents on the main axes to evaluate the training programs.

The results of the study showed that the respondents' answers for the 6 axes of evaluation of the training programs which obtained a weighted mean between (2.93 - 3.22) and a weight percentage between (73.43 - 80.52%). The weighted mean for the degree of the respondents' approval on any axis is higher than the Hypothetical mean of (2.5) degrees, as shown in table 2.

Table 2, shows that all the axes for the evaluation of training programs were higher than the Hypothetical mean. However, the trainees ranked first in terms of importance and approval of the respondents, where achieved a weighted mean amounted to (3.22 degree) and a weight percentage amounted to (80.52%), which is higher than the weighted means for other axes. The reason may be due to the fact that trainees have personal characteristics that enable them to properly evaluating the training programs, they are an extension for their needs. While the axis of the training environment ranked in the last order in terms of the level of importance and approval of the respondents, where achieved a weighted mean amounted to (2.93 degrees) and a weight percentage amounted to (73.43%), which is less than the weighted means of other axes. This reason may be due to the availability of an appropriate training and

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the paragraphs of the axis of the training methods.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	Allowing to trainees to discuss training topics.	3.38	84.5
1	Relevance the approved training style with the topic of the course.	3.22	80.5
2	The training methods adopted in the training course are commensurate with the nature of the trainees, their attitudes, and their educational and cultural levels.	3.13	78.25
3	Relevance the approved training style with the objective of the training program.	3.06	76.5
4	Most trainers depend on one training method.	3	75
5	The teaching aids used in the training course help to instill ideas and information in the trainees.	2.98	74.5
6	The teaching aids used in the training course are commensurate with the number of trainees.	2.97	74.25
7.5	Trainers have full knowledge of how to use Audio and visual aids.	2.95	73.75
7.5	The training methods used in the training course helped to develop the spirit of creativity and thinking among the trainees.	2.95	73.75
9	The use of training methods by trainers helped shorten the time for the topic of the lecture.	2.88	72
10	Using modern training methods in the course.	2.70	67.5

educational environment at the place of the training courses in terms of halls, lighting, warming, conditioning, seating and others.

- First: Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the paragraphs of each of axes of evaluating the training programs.

1. Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the placed paragraphs for the axis of trainers

It is clear from table 3, that regarding the axis of the trainers that the opinions of the respondents in all the paragraphs are positive, except for the paragraph (the trainers have the ability to plan and design tests for the trainees) because it obtained a weighted mean for the degree of approval lower than the Hypothetical mean (2.5 degrees).

Table 3, show that a paragraph (Allowing to trainees to discuss training topics) came in the first order with a weighted mean amounted to 3.38 and a percentage amounted to (84.5 %). This may be attributed to the high interest of the trainers in providing the trainees with the opportunity to discuss the training topics in order to convey information and knowledge to them and to develop their attitudes in the manner of question and discussion and to reach an integrated and convergent vision on the subject through exchange of opinions and experiences between him and the trainees. As for the paragraph (Trainers have the ability to plan and design tests for trainees) came in the last order with a weighted mean amounted to (2.27) and a percentage amounted to (56.75). This may be

attributed to the weak role of trainers in the preparation and design of trainees' tests, as well as the lack of awareness of the manager or officer of the training center of the importance of the participation of trainers in the preparation of training tests.

2. Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the placed paragraphs for the axis of training methods

It is clear from table 4, that regarding the axis of the training methods that the opinions of the respondents in all the paragraphs are positive because it obtained on the weighted mean for the degree of approval greater than the Hypothetical mean (2.5 degrees).

Table 4, show that a paragraph (Relevance the approved training style with the topic of the course.) came in the first order with a weighted mean amounted to (3.22 degree) and a percentage amounted to (80.5 %). The reason may be due to the good scientific and practical experience of trainers, which enabled them to choose the appropriate training method with the topic of the course, where the success of the trainer in explaining the material to the trainees depends on the choice of the appropriate training method. As for the paragraph (Using modern training methods in the course) came in the last order with a weighted mean amounted to (2.70 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (67.5 %). The reason may be due to the lack of the training center to modern training methods for the inability of the officials of the training center to buy because of the lack of financial allocations for the training center.

3. Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the placed paragraphs for the axis of training content.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the paragraphs of the axis of the training content.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	Correlating the training topics with the needs of trainees.	3.13	78.25
2	Topics of training are presented according to the objectives placed for them.	3.10	77.5
3	The issues involved contribute to the achievement of the placed objectives set.	3.09	77.25
4	Matching the theoretical part with the practical part.	3.04	76
5	There is a sequence and connecting of course topics.	3.02	75.5
6	Training topics should include sufficient practical experience.	2.97	74.25
7	The placed Topics are related to the course title.	2.85	71.25
8	Training topics contain adequate theoretical information.	2.72	68
9	The volume of information to be covered is commensurate with the duration of the course	2.61	65.25

It is clear from table 5, that regarding the axis of the training content that the opinions of the respondents in all the paragraphs are positive because it obtained on the weighted mean for the degree of approval greater than the Hypothetical mean (2.5 degrees).

Table 5, show that a paragraph (correlating the training topics with the needs of trainees) came in the first order with a weighted mean amounted to (3.13 degree) and a percentage amounted to (78.25%), The reason may be due to the focusing the attention of the training officials in the training center on the preparation of the content of the training programs according to the training needs of the trainees because it is an important and decisive process for the success of the training programs. As for the paragraph (The volume of information to be covered is commensurate with the duration of the course) came in the last order with a weighted mean amounted to (2.61 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (65.25 %). The reason may be due to the lack of awareness of the training center officials by the importance of the size of the information to be covered with the duration of the training course.

4. Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the placed paragraphs for the axis of Duration and timing of the course.

It is clear from table 6, that regarding the axis of the

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to the paragraphs of the axis of the Duration and timing of the course.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	There are break times between lectures and others	3.61	90.25
2	Course time is suitable for trainees	3.34	83.5
3	Do not waste time on side effects for trainees	3.22	80.5
4	The number of daily lectures and the duration of each lecture was appropriate	3.18	79.5
5	The duration of the course was sufficient to cover the course topics	2.93	73.26
6	Absence of absenteeism in lectures	2.88	72

Duration and timing of the course that the opinions of the respondents in all the paragraphs are positive because it obtained on the weighted mean for the degree of approval greater than the Hypothetical mean (2.5 degrees).

Table 6, show that a paragraph (There are break times between lectures and others) came in the first order with a weighted mean amounted to (3.61 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (90.25 %), The reason may be due to the interest of those responsible for the training program to allocate time for the trainees to rest their attention and focus during the training sessions. As for the paragraph (Absence of absenteeism in lectures) came in the last order with a weighted mean amounted to (2.88 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (72%). The reason may be due to the lack of regularity of some trainees in the presence of lectures because they feel that the management of the training center does not follow their presence, as well as the administration's negligence in the accountability of trainers in shortening their duties.

5. Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the placed paragraphs for the axis of trainees

It is clear from table 7, that regarding the axis of the trainees that the opinions of the respondents in all the paragraphs are positive because it obtained on the weighted mean for the degree of approval greater than

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to the paragraphs of the axis of the trainees.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	Mutual respect between the trainees and the trainer	3.65	91.25
2	The trainees have the freedom to discuss the practical problems they face in order to benefit from the experiences of the trainers and their colleagues in the course	3.52	88
3	Keeping trainees away from the problems that may occur between them or between them and the trainers, which contribute to the lack of benefit from the training	3.5	87.5
4	The regularity of the trainees and their keenness to attend training sessions	3.47	86.75
5	There are a difference and variation in experience among trainees	3.40	85
6	The aim of the trainees to attend the course is to obtain agricultural information that contributes to the performance of their work as best as possible	3.36	84
7	Clearing the objectives of the training program for trainees	3.22	80.5
8	Provide care and mental readiness of trainees for learning	3.20	80
9	There is a convergence in the educational and cultural level of trainees who participated in the training course	2.92	73.25
10	Lack of lateral speech among the trainees during the trainer's explanation of the lecture	2.88	72
11	The aim of attending trainees for the training course is to get the promotion	2.83	70.75
12	The trainees feel bored and grumble about course topics	2.69	67.25

the Hypothetical mean (2.5 degrees).

Table 7, show that a paragraph (Mutual respect between the trainees and the trainer) came in the first order with a weighted mean amounted to (3.65 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (91.25%), The reason may be due to the fact that most of the trainers are academic and research institutions and have high experience and great potential in how to deal with trainees, which created a state of mutual respect between the parties. As for the

paragraph (The trainees feel bored and grumble about course topics) came in the last order with a weighted mean amounted to (2.69 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (67.25 %). The reason may be due to the trainees' satisfaction with training subjects and their lack of boredom towards them because they express their needs in their agricultural work.

6. Identifying the opinions of the respondents on the placed paragraphs for the axis of the training environment.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to the paragraphs of the axis of the training environment.

Sort according to the importance	Paragraphs	Weighted mean	Weight percentage
1	The presence of a supervisor to follow the course of the training course and follow-up trainees	3.65	91.25
2	Provide training supplies (stationery, printing lectures, etc.).	3.43	85.75
3	An appropriate learning environment is available from the halls, lighting, ventilation, air conditioning and comfortable seats where the course is conducted	3.31	82.75
4	Physical and moral incentives for trainees	3.29	82.25
5	The existence of food-related matters (restaurant) suitable for trainees	3.27	81.75
6	Appropriate and modern equipment for practical application.	2.97	74.25
7	Provide transport modes for trainees	2.94	73.5
8	The training venue is not suitable for practical application and does not help to conduct training activities effectively	2.93	73.25
9	the place of the training course far from the working place of trainees	2.70	67.5
10	The existence of suitable places to accommodate trainees	2.68	67
11	There is a suitable library for reading at the training center	2.63	65.75
12	The adequacy of references and scientific resources in the library of the training center	2.58	64.5

It is clear from table 8, that regarding the axis of the training environment that the opinions of the respondents in all the paragraphs are positive because it obtained on the weighted mean for the degree of approval greater than the Hypothetical mean (2.5 degrees).

Table 8, show that a paragraph (The presence of a supervisor to follow the course of the training course and follow-up trainees) came in the first order with a weighted mean amounted to (3.43 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (85.75%), The reason may be due to the high interest of the training center in the need for a supervisor to ensure the implementation of the training plan properly and to address any defect that may interfere with the progress of the plan in order to achieve the final objectives of the training process. As for the paragraph (The adequacy of references and scientific resources in the library of the training center) came in the last order with a weighted mean amounted to (2.52 degrees) and a percentage amounted to (63 %). The reason may be due to the lack of awareness of the training officials in the training center to the importance of resources for trainees, as well as their interaction with educational institutions and research to provide them with modern sources in all agricultural specialties. The results of the research showed that the views of the respondents on all the axes mentioned above were positive, as the axes of evaluation of the training courses are the interaction between the majority of its interlocutors in order to achieve the performance of the trainee. So it is one of the main axes in the evaluation of training programs, while the focus of the training environment at the last rank, Therefore, it is considered by some trainers of unnecessary axes when evaluating the training programs. The researchers recommended that the results of the research be adopted by the Training and Rehabilitation Department belonging to the Extension and Training of Agricultural in order to improve the training process for the agricultural employees.

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