

## **The Applicability of Total Quality Management in Employees' Performance Development in Private Universities**

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed to identify the Applicability of Total Quality Management in Employees' Performance Development in Private Universities, the study sample included (100) male and female employees from private universities in Sultanate of Oman, the researcher used the descriptive approach as a method for the study, and used the questionnaire as a tool for the study, among the results, the most important of which are: the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private universities about the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities with a response degree (high), and the availability of the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities with a response degree (high), the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities with a response degree (medium), and the study recommended the necessity of encouraging university leadership to apply total quality management in developing the performance of employees, and holding training courses for employees to train them on the tools and applications of total quality management.

**Key words:** Total quality management, Employees performance development, Private universities.

### **Introduction**

The world has recently witnessed rapid changes and developments in all educational, social and political fields, which reflected themselves on the nature of administrative work in universities, which compelled them to strive for competition and maintain their position by applying total quality, which has come to represent the culture of the times.

Total quality is referred to as an organized methodology that ensures the progress of activities that were planned in advance, where total quality represents the best method that helps to prevent problems by motivating and encouraging optimal administrative behavior in performance and the use of human resources efficiently and effectively (Radi and Arabi, 2016; 25)

The application of total quality management is of great importance in universities; Al-Sarhan (2021; 23) indicated that the universities aim, behind the application of total quality, to raise the performance of university employees, including administrators and academics, and to develop study plans, laboratories and libraries, which makes the university distinguished in

providing educational services, and thus achieving the best university results.

The dimensions of total quality management also include: commitment from senior management to fully agree on the importance of the application of total quality management, and the institutional structure that is the framework through which the institution works to achieve its goals, empowering employees by focusing on their role in achieving the goals of the institution, and promoting training and development of skills and their human competencies, continuous development in all areas of institutional work to keep pace with changes in the internal and external environment, focusing on those concerned with the institution, especially customers and employees to meet their needs, and managing reality in fact-based on decision-making (Msallam, Al Shobaki & Abu-Naser, 2020, P.P. 75 – 77)

Therefore, private Omani universities were keen to apply the principles of total quality in all its fields, such as: the commitment of senior management to quality and the dissemination of a culture of quality, participation of employees and continuous improvement, independence in decision-making, in addition to making decisions based on facts, and comprehensiveness in the implementation of quality management, which in turn achieved quality Job performance in Omani private universities (Al-Farsi and Al-Jabali, 2018, pp. 48-49)

The application of total quality is linked to the job performance of the employees in the organization, the pursuit of employee performance development and continuous improvement has become the main feature of administrative work in the current era. The application of total quality in universities has become aimed at improving the performance of employees, as job performance is a reflection of the performance of the organization as a whole and an expression of its degree of efficiency. Therefore, many higher education institutions have attached great importance to developing the performance of employees through the application of total quality mechanisms (Al-Ahmari and Abdel-Qader, 2022, p. 157)

The performance of employees in universities means the extent to which they achieve specific institutional goals, implement duties and responsibilities, and adhere to policies and procedures within the university (Kinyamu, 2021:11). The performance of employees is one of the important aspects and is of fundamental importance in any organization through the optimal use of its human resources, and it is a tool for fair and objective diagnosis of the performance of employees and not a tool for imposing control over them, in order to assist employees to support senior management in making appropriate decisions (Al-Malkawi, 2021, 69)

The Sultanate of Oman has aspired to carry out continuous and systematic work in order to succeed in its plans to support the Sultanate's scientific capabilities in a way that serves the public interest and elevates the status of the country. The comprehensive educational renaissance in the structure of university education that the Sultanate wants to create requires the development of human resources in universities to play their roles in the required manner (Al-Shabibi, 2015), so accordingly, the current research came to know the possibility of applying total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities in Sultanate of Oman.

### ***The study Problem***

Due to the need for Omani higher education institutions to keep pace with the developments of the times, it was required to apply the principles of total quality as a guaranteed way to achieve the desired goals, however, some defects appeared in the commitment of Omani universities to the application of total quality.

Al-Shabibi study (2015) concluded that the leaderships in Omani public and private universities adhere to the traditional methods of management, and the ambiguity of the concepts and objectives of total quality for them, this is in addition to the administration's failure to use the results of self-evaluation to develop the performance of employees in universities, and the topics of training programs are not related to the basic needs of employees, consequently, the processes for developing standards for evaluating the performance level of employees were all moderate degree.

This was confirmed by the results of the Al-Shuaili study (2017), which concluded that the degree of application of total quality management in some colleges affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education in Sultanate of Oman came to a medium degree, and the effectiveness of the application of the total quality system in developing performance was at an average level.

The study of Al-Qasimiya and Al-Omariya (2018) found deficiencies in professional development methods and the content of training programs held by Sohar University for its employees. Al-Qasimi's study (2019) indicated the weak development of human resources at Sohar University in light of the standards of the Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation in the areas of career development, performance planning and its evaluation.

Thus, it is possible to determine the problem of the current study in the extent of the possibility of applying total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities in the Sultanate of Oman.

### ***Study questions***

The study seeks to answer the following main question: What is the possibility of applying total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities? From this branch the following sub-questions.

- 1-What is the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private universities about the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities?
- 2-What are the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities?
- 3-What are the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities?

### ***The importance of study***

#### ***Theoretical importance***

- The current study gains its importance from dealing with one of the most important modern approaches, which is total quality management.
- The current study acquires its importance as it is concerned with one of the most important categories of Omani society, namely the university employees.
- It is hoped that the current study will be the nucleus of many literature on this important subject.

#### ***Practical importance***

-The study gains its importance as it is a field study that deals with the possibility of applying total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities.

-It is hoped that the results and recommendations of the current study will benefit officials in Omani private universities to develop the performance of their employees and achieve total quality in all their operations.

### *Objectives of the study*

The study seeks to achieve the following main objective: To identify the possibility of applying total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities, and from this branch the following sub-objectives;

- 1-Recognizing the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private universities about the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities.
- 2-Identifying the availability of the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities.
- 3-Identifying the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities.

### *The limits of the study*

**Objective limits:** The objective limits of the current study included the possibility of applying total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities.

**-Human limits:** The human limits of the current study included the employees of private Omani universities (University of Technology and Applied Sciences - German University of Technology - Majan University College)

**--Spatial limits:** The application was implemented in some private Omani universities, namely (University of Technology and Applied Sciences - German University of Technology - Majan University College)

**Time limits:** The application was implemented in the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022.

### *Terminology of study*

#### ***Total Quality Management-***

Sharif (2014, pp. 19-20) defined total quality management as “a modern management philosophy that takes the form of a comprehensive management approach or system based on bringing positive changes to everything within the organization to include thought, behavior, values and organizational beliefs, in order to improve and develop the components of the organization to achieve high quality outputs at the lowest cost.

Total Quality Management can be defined procedurally as the collaborative approach to carry out business through the skills and competencies of employees and the available management, to achieve continuous improvement in productivity and quality.

#### ***Employee performance***

Kinyamu (Kinyamu, 2021, P. 11) defines the performance of university employees as the extent to which employees achieve specific institutional goals, implement duties and responsibilities, and adhere to policies and procedures within the university.

Staff performance can be defined procedurally as what the employee performs at the university of the roles and responsibilities entrusted to him by the organization related to his work, and performance also refers to the results and goals that the employee has achieved in the field of the job he occupies.

### ***Theoretical framework***

#### ***Importance of Total Quality Management***

Total quality management is one of the administrative concepts that works to achieve excellence in the aspects of the organization to obtain and maintain high quality outputs, with a focus on continuous maintenance to protect the organization from failure, and meet the expectations of the service beneficiary, The main objective of the application of total quality management is to develop a competitive advantage and maintain it by increasing efficiency, reducing cost, enhancing satisfaction,

and designing strategies that ensure quality improvement (Firman & Thabrani, 2018, p. 164)

***Obstacles to the application of total quality management:***

Sohel-Uz-Zaman (Sohel-Uz-Zaman, 2016, P. 212) indicates that there are a set of obstacles and challenges that face the application of quality management in higher education institutions, such as: the incompatibility of the philosophy of total quality management that was developed for service institutions with educational institutions, the different type of academic institutions, the inconsistency of total quality management terminology such as product, customer, empowerment or strategy with the concepts of higher education institutions, and the difficulty of senior management commitment to the educational system, which negatively affects total quality management efforts.

***The role of total quality management in developing the performance of university employees:***

Total quality management promotes quality improvement in all functions and processes in all different organizations, taking into account the interactions between organizational elements, in order to enhance the organizational performance of workers (Tortorella, et al., 2019, p. 525); The total quality management approach in educational institutions is not only limited to achieving high quality, but also affects the segments of the educational process such as organization, management, interpersonal relations, material and human resources and the promotion of team spirit, and this indirectly encourages employees to play an active role in providing quality education, and enables employees to know the obstacles they may encounter and ways to overcome them (Khurniawan, et al., 2020, p. 49)

***Previous studies***

***First: Arabic Studies***

The study of Rasmi, El-Sayed and Ibn Osman (2018) sought to identify the concept of total quality management, and to identify the requirements for the application of total quality management in Libyan university education, the researchers used the analytical method as a method for the study, and the researchers reached many results, the most important of which are: It was found that the concept of total quality management is a modern trend in management that seeks to develop administrative performance by focusing on beneficiary satisfaction, continuous improvement and excellence, which when adopted by management can reach the best level of for its use for administrative performance, and the application of total quality management affects educational institutions, and the requirements for applying total quality management in education were to strengthen decentralization, time management in a sound scientific manner, participation in management, and urging to continuous training.

The study of Al-Fadhli (2017) aimed to identify the obstacles that face the application of the culture of total quality management in the performance of human resources, the study sample included (131) members of the teaching staff who are entrusted with administrative work in colleges, institutes, and deanships, the researcher used the descriptive survey method as a method for the study, and he used the questionnaire as a tool for the study, and the researcher reached many results, the most important of which are: The obstacles facing the application of the culture of total quality management in the performance of human resources came to a high degree.

***Second: Foreign Studies***

The study of "Absah and others" (Absah et al., 2019) aimed to reveal the role of quality management practices in enhancing institutional performance in higher education institutions and to examine the role of human elements and the work environment in enhancing performance in Indonesian universities, the study sample included (212) academic employee, the study used the quantitative and survey method, and the study used the questionnaire as a tool for the study, and the



study reached many results, the most important of which are: Quality management practices enhance institutional performance in universities, and human elements and the work environment play a mediating role in strengthening the relationship between quality management practices and institutional performance in universities.

### *Commenting on previous studies*

Most of the previous studies agreed with the current study in the aim of the study, which is to deal with total quality management and performance, such as the study of "Absah et al., 2019", and it was dominated by the descriptive approach, such as the study of Al-Fadhli (2017), and most of them used the questionnaire, such as The study of "Absah and others" (Absah et al., 2019), while the current study differed from previous studies in the sample of the study in that it included employees, as most studies included faculty members, such as the study of Al-Fadhli (2017), and the current study was distinguished as the only study within the limits of the researcher's knowledge that addressed the possibility of applying total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities, the researcher benefited from previous studies in formulating the study problem, building the study tool and discussing the results of the study.

## **Study Procedures: Methodology**

### *Study Approach*

The study relied on the descriptive approach.

### *Study population and sample*

The study population consisted of all male and female employees at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, the German University of Technology, and Majan University College, and the study sample consisted of (100) male and female employees.

**Table (1) Distributed and retrieved questionnaires that are valid for statistical analysis.**

The percentage recovered and valid for statistical analysis of the distributed questionnaires	Questionnaires recovered and valid for analysis	Distributed resolutions
96%	96	100

### *The characteristics of the study sample*

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the study sample, which includes;

### *Distribution of the sample members according to the study variables*

**Table (2) Distribution of the sample members according to the study variables.**

Percentages	Frequencies	Type
%52.1	50	Male
%47.9	46	Female
%100	96	Total
Percentages	Frequencies	Qualification
%4.2	4	Less than Bachelor
%81.3	78	BA
%8.3	8	Master's
%6.3	6	PhD
%100	96	Total
Percentages	Frequencies	Years of Experience
%36.5	35	less than 5 years
%29.2	28	From five to 10 years
%34.4	33	More than 10 years
%100	96	Total

It is clear from the previous table: that the largest percentage obtained by the distribution of the sample members by gender is (%52.1), which is related to (male), and the largest percentage obtained by the distribution of the sample members by qualification is (%81.3), which is related to

(Bachelor's), and that the largest percentage obtained by distributing the sample members according to years of experience is (%36.2%), which is related to (less than 5 years)

### ***Study tool and procedures for verifying its validity and reliability***

The researcher built a questionnaire to reveal the applicability of applying total quality in developing the performance of employees in private universities.

### ***Description of the study tool (the questionnaire)***

The questionnaire consisting of (30) phrases were identified and distributed according to the specified axes, and they were applied to a survey sample of (30) items to determine the validity and reliability of the tool.

### ***Validity of the tool***

#### ***-The veracity of the arbitrators: 1***

After completing the preparation of the questionnaire and building its phrases, and presenting it to a group of specialized arbitrators to verify the extent to which each of its phrases is related to the axis to which it belongs, and the extent to which each phrase is clear, its linguistic formulation and its suitability to achieve the goal for which it was set, and thus the questionnaire became in its final form after making sure from its apparent validity, it consists of (30) statements divided equally into three axes.

### ***The validity of the internal consistency of the study tool***

The internal consistency validity was calculated by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient between the degrees of each phrase and the total score of the axis to which the phrase belongs from among the axes of the questionnaire, all of which were statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01)

### ***Tool reliability***

The values of the reliability coefficients for the questionnaire axes ranged between (.855 - .933), and these values of the reliability coefficients indicate the validity of the questionnaire for the application and its reliability.

### ***Statistical methods***

Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviations, Pearson correlation coefficient, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and range equation were used to describe the arithmetic mean of the responses to each statement as follows: The degree of response was determined so that it gives the degree strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), somewhat agree (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5), and the degree of verification for each axis is defined as follows;

$$\text{Category length} = \frac{\text{Maximum} - \text{minimum}}{\text{Number of levels}} = \frac{5-1}{5} = 0.80$$

1 from 1 to less than 1.80 is responsive (very low), from 1.80 to less than 2.60 is responsive (low), 2.60 to less than 3.40 is responsive (medium), 3.40 to less than 4.20 is responsive (High), from 4.20 to less than 5 represents a (very high) response score

## **Study results and discussion**

***First: Presentation and analysis of the results of the first question, which states: What is the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private universities about the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities?***

To answer this question, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated for the phrases of the first axis: the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private

universities for the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities, and then arranging these phrases in descending order according to the arithmetic mean of each phrase, and the following table shows;

**Table (3): Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses of the sample members about the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private universities about the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities.**

Degree of response	Order	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean,	Phrase	S/N
High	1	1.270	4.14	University employees and leaders are aware of the importance of having an executive plan that contributes to developing employee performance.	1
High	3	1.235	4.03	University employees and leaders know the extent of continuous improvement in the training programs provided to university employees to increase the quality of their performance.	2
High	6	1.256	3.98	University employees and leaders see university leaders seeking to form work teams to improve employee productivity.	3
High	10	1.448	3.86	University employees and leaders understand that encouraging university leaders for employees to self-development contributes to improving performance.	4
High	9	1.409	3.88	University employees and leaders are aware of the availability of appropriate technology for training programs in order to increase the accuracy of employee performance.	5
High	5	1.298	4.00	University staff and leaders know the extent to which the university administration uses research to improve the quality of employee performance.	6
High	2	1.264	4.04	University employees and leaders are aware of the extent to which the university administration employs the suggestions of the beneficiaries of its services for continuous improvement and development of staff performance.	7
High	7	1.268	3.95	University employees and leaders are aware of the importance of encouraging and motivating employees in improving performance.	8
High	8	1.349	3.90	The university staff and leaders have sufficient knowledge with the role of incentives in increasing the volume of work done.	9
High	4	1.231	4.02	University employees and leaders have sufficient awareness of the importance of identifying training needs to prepare training programs for improving employee performance	10
High		1.240	3.98	Overall average	

It is evident from the previous table: The general average of the first axis: the level of awareness of employees and leaders in private universities for the role of total quality management in developing the performance of employees in private universities came with an arithmetic mean (3.98), a standard deviation (1.204), and a response degree (high), and this is due to the realization of employees and leaders of private universities with the role of total quality management and its importance in developing the performance of employees in private universities. University employees and leaders realize the importance of the university administration's use of proposals from beneficiaries of its services to improve and continuously develop the performance of employees, and they are aware of the benefit of appropriate technology for training programs in order to increase the accuracy of performance of the employee, and the importance of identifying training needs to prepare training programs to improve employee performance.

The result of the current study agreed with the result of the study of Rasmi, Al-Sayed and Ibn Osman (2018), which indicated that the concept of total quality management is a



modern trend in management that seeks to develop administrative performance by focusing on beneficiary satisfaction, continuous improvement and excellence, which when adopted by management can reach to a better level than its use of administrative performance, and the application of total quality management affects educational institutions.

**Second: Presentation and analysis of the results of the second question, which states: What are the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities?**

To answer this question, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the phrases of the second axis: the availability of the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities, and then arranging these phrases in descending order according to the arithmetic mean of each phrase, and the following table shows:

**Table (4): Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses of the sample members on the availability of the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities.**

Degree of response	Order	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean,	Phrase	S/N
High	5	1.363	3.88	There is an accurate information system for the administrative operations carried out by the university.	11
High	4	1.320	3.94	The culture of the organization encourages the application of quality in the services it provides to achieve the satisfaction of the beneficiaries	12
High	2	1.294	3.99	Employees are involved in giving opinions about the problems they face at work and suggesting how to solve it.	13
High	6	1.431	3.84	The university seeks to focus on customer satisfaction by developing employee performance	14
High	7	1.331	3.78	The university administration seeks to continuously improve the services it provides.	15
High	1	1.256	4.02	The university administration conducts continuous examination and analysis to prevent errors before they occur.	16
High	9	1.483	3.68	The university administration instills a culture of total quality in all employees in the university	17
High	8	1.474	3.74	The university administration encourages its employees and beneficiaries of its services to submit proposals to develop its quality level	18
High	10	1.614	3.43	The university works to continuously improve its services and employee performance by providing tools and methods for education related to quality.	19
High	3	1.301	3.95	The university is working on using measurement methods to monitor problems and the extent of improvement and quality	20
High		1.179	3.82	Overall average	

It is evident from the previous table: The general average of the second axis: the availability of the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities came with an arithmetic mean (3.82), a

standard deviation (1.179), and a response degree (high), and this is due to the success of the university administration and its effectiveness in providing the basic requirements for the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities, and the continuous improvement of its services and employee performance through the provision of tools and methods of good education, and the use of measurement methods in monitoring problems and the extent of improvement and quality.

The result of the current study agreed with the result of the study of Rasmi, Al-Sayed and Ibn Osman (2018), which indicated that the requirements for applying total quality management in education are in strengthening decentralization, managing time in a sound scientific manner, participating in management, and urging to the continuous training.

**Third:** Presentation and analysis of the results of the third question, which states: What are the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities?

To answer this question, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the phrases of the third axis: the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities, were calculated, and then arranged these phrases in descending order according to the arithmetic mean of each phrase, and the following table shows;

**Table (5):** Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the responses of the sample members about the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities.

Degree of response	Order	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean,	Phrase	S/N
Medium	10	1.529	3.02	Resistance to change towards the application of total quality management in the development of employee performance.	21
Medium	1	1.471	3.34	Lack of human capabilities to apply total quality management in developing employee performance.	22
Medium	7	1.574	3.17	Weakness of the culture of continuous development towards the application of total quality management.	23
Medium	2	1.457	3.34	Lack of university leadership encouragement to apply total quality management in developing employee performance.	24
Medium	8	1.591	3.13	Lack of proper planning for the application of total quality management in the development of employee performance.	25
Medium	6	1.477	3.20	Weak involvement of employees in making decisions related to them and in university policy	26
Medium	5	1.425	3.23	Lack of appropriateness of training programs for the application of total quality management.	27
Medium	4	1.487	3.25	Weakness of the budget allocated to the implementation of total quality management and training programs.	28
Medium	3	1.540	3.33	Weak training of employees on the tools and applications of total quality management.	29
Medium	9	1.398	3.11	Weak cooperation and human relations among university employees.	30
Medium		9.22	3.21	Overall average	

It is evident from the previous table: The general average of the third axis: the challenges facing the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities came with an arithmetic mean (3.21), a standard deviation

(.922), and a response degree (medium), and this is due to the presence of some obstacles in the application of total quality management to develop the performance of employees in private universities, but it did not significantly affect the application of total quality management, as the university administration seeks to compensate for the lack of human capabilities to apply total quality management in the development of employee performance through the training of human elements.

The result of the current study partly differed with the result of Al-Fadhli study (2017), which indicated that the obstacles facing the application of the culture of total quality management in the performance of human resources came to a high degree.

## **Study recommendations**

-The necessity of activating the material and human capabilities that support the application of total quality management standards and that affect on the job performance

-Holding training courses in the field of total quality for all employees and raising their awareness of its importance in improving performance and raising their productivity.

-The necessity of focusing on actual performance, comparing it with the plan, identifying strengths and weaknesses, correcting deviations, in order to implement total quality and improve job performance.

-The necessity of using highly qualified human cadres to apply total quality management in developing employee performance.

-Allocating part of the universities' general budget to implement total quality management and training programs.

-The necessity of holding training programs for employees to train them on the tools and applications of total quality management.

## **Study suggestions**

-Conducting a future study on the role of the application of total quality management in enhancing institutional performance in private universities.

-Conducting a future study on the impact of applying the total quality management strategy on human resource management practices in private universities.

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