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A PROPOSED VISION FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION WORK IN IRAQ

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ABSTRACT

The current research was aimed to a proposed vision for strategic planning in agricultural extension work in Iraq, and includes the following fields: (the field of job description for employees, the field of employee training, the field of infrastructure, the field of objectives, the field of applied technologies, the field of vision, the field of mission, and the field of evaluation). The research methodology was classified as a descriptive approach, and the research population included functional and research categories in the fields of agricultural extensional, management, economics, agricultural development programs, and specialists in agricultural extensional, numbering 950 respondents. A proportional stratified random sample was selected at a rate of 3% from the research community, and thus, the total number of the research sample reached 29 respondents. The research included a number of recommendations that contribute to improving the level of performance of the agricultural extension organization, its growth, continuity, and the effective achievement of its objectives. These include spreading awareness of the importance of strategic planning, whether within the agricultural extension organization or the targeted development agencies, in the process of transferring modern agricultural technologies. It is one of the most important elements for achieving sustainable development, and the failure to provide all areas and sections of strategic planning leads to weak performance and effectiveness of the organization due to their interconnectedness and integration with each other.

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INTRODUCTION

Agricultural work is one of the important and essential areas of any country because of its contribution to the national income and the proportion of workers in Iraq (30%) of the total population (Central Statistical Organization, 2023). Agricultural extension work is one of the keys and often a critical element in achieving self-sufficiency in agricultural production and achieving national food security, as the educational apparatus of farmers and their families, which is responsible for delivering technologies, practical recommendations, and solutions to agricultural problems, and convincing them of the importance of adopting them. and the behavioral changes (knowledge, trends and skills) necessary to apply them in their fields, and integrate them in their farm systems to increase productivity and

agricultural production and is represented in improving and increasing the productivity and production of the agricultural system and developing the knowledge, skills and capabilities of farmers, as well as preserving natural resources and reflecting positively in improving their economic resources and their social and living standard appropriately and following international specifications for agricultural products, as it is one of the important aspects of development, survival and growth. Its constituent organizations continue to provide the best services (Taha and Ridha, 2023), (Hameed and Sawicka, 2023), (Khamis *et al*., 2025). The level of performance and effectiveness of the extension organization (central and local) is influenced by many different internal and external factors (within the organization itself) and external factors (from the environment in which the organization operates). The foremost of these factors is the strategic planning of the extension work, as specialists from writers and researchers in the fields of management and extension agreeing on the importance and contribution of strategic planning to the success and improvement of the level of performance and effectiveness of agricultural extension work in the process of transferring agricultural technologies and achieve the efficient use of resources (inputs) available to the organization and development, This has been confirmed in many literature and scientific studies, (Kaplan and Beinhocker, 2023) stated that it is a tool that helps in making the right decisions at the right time. it is a tool that helps the organization to diagnose its strengths and weaknesses and their causes, as well as to identify its environment (internal and external) (Shaleka and Abdullah, 2018). Stated that strategic planning is the basis for improving the organization's performance. In addition to the importance of strategic planning in the success of an organization, since the second half of the eighties of the last century, this is a contemporary approach to an organization's vision and its importance in achieving its objectives. In the field of agriculture and agricultural extension work in Iraq, there are many studies and agricultural statistics, which shows the weakness of the performance of the agricultural extension organization, especially concerning the transfer of agricultural extension techniques, which is one of the reasons for the weakness or limited adoption and application by the rural family is the absence and weakness of strategic planning These activities include but are not limited to (Hasan, 2021). The weakness of the mechanism of transferring modern technologies to the field level. (Hussain and Naji, 2015) Mentioned the limited and limited extension activities in the transfer of protected agricultural technologies for vegetable grower (Kumar and *et al*., 2023) stated that there is an urgent and necessary need to plan the educational extension programs and activities related to the technology transfer process, as well as many studies that indicated the weak application and adoption of technologies, practices and scientific recommendations in the field level of many crops (plant, livestock, domestic (whether in previous years or later) but not limited to (Mohammed *et al*. 2009), (Saleem and Al-Hafidh, 2014), (Almahdawi, 2018), (Khalaf *et al*., 2019), (Naji and Taha, 2020), (Dawood *et al*., 2021), (Salman *et al*., 2022), (Qader and Shekha, 2023), (Al-Hilphy *et al*., 2024), (Hameed *et al*., 2025). As well as that Iraq comes in the last sequences in terms of productivity and agricultural production compared with neighboring countries, and is described as of food deficit, In addition to keeping pace with changes in knowledge, emerging technologies and the growing needs of rural populations, agricultural extension management must

provide specialized guidance by agricultural extension workers who are able to deal with these changes in agricultural aspects (plant, animal and domestic) (Taha *et al*., 2019).

Research Problem

The agricultural extension organization suffers from a clear weakness in performing its tasks and duties related to providing services to the rural family. This can be observed through a group of Studies and statistics that point to weak management of extension work. Extension organizations cannot effectively perform their tasks and activities unless they can address the underlying weaknesses, diagnose their causes, and develop the necessary solutions. This will contribute to improving the management of agricultural extension work. Therefore, the research concludes with a proposed vision for strategic planning in agricultural extension work in Iraq.

Research Objective

1. General Goal

   A proposed vision for strategic planning in agricultural extension work in Iraq.
2. Sub-Goals

   Sub-goals include a set of goals related to the following fields :

(The field of job descriptions for staff, The field of staff training, The field of infrastructure, The field of objectives, The field of applied technology, The field of vision, The field of mission, The field of evaluation).

Research Importance

1. Identify the reality of the strategic planning process.
2. Provide a database that contributes to the development of extension and training programs that meet rural families' cognitive, skill, and emotional needs.
3. Emphasize the principles of agricultural extension work in providing extension services for all agricultural work areas, including strategic planning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Current research is categorized as opinion or exploratory research, which falls within the descriptive approach. This type of research is useful in providing data on respondents' opinions, approval, and reactions to the vulnerability diagnosis in the Agricultural Extension Organization, identifying its causes and proposing solutions to address them. Accordingly, the research methodology included the following steps:

Research population

The research population includes functional and research categories in the fields of agricultural extension, management and economics, agricultural development programs, and specialists in agricultural extension. It includes faculty members and experts in the fields of agricultural extension, the Ministry of Agriculture, and faculty members in the departments of Business Administration and Operations Management, which numbered 950 in person.

The research sample

A proportional stratified random sample was selected at a rate of 3% from the research population; thus, the research sample reached 29 persons.

Data collection

The tool used the questionnaire to collect data from the research sample. Data were collected from 29 individuals working in agricultural extension, management, economics, agricultural development programs, and agricultural extension specialists between 2022 and 2023.

Validity test

The extent to which the scale achieved the goal for which any measurement should be made, which got the most expert agreement, face validity, and content validity, was assessed, as shown in Table (1).

Reliability test

collection instrument preliminary test of the data collection tool (questionnaire) was conducted on a random sample of **20**(outside the sample) in order to verify the clarity of the items by split – halves reliability method, the value of the correlation coefficient Pearson (0.87) degree, factor was rooted and the coefficient (0.93) was a good indication of the consistency of the scale. Statistical methods were used to analyze and process the research data, the percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

Building framework

It included the building of a strategic planning framework for the transfer of agricultural extension technologies from the initial stage through the following stages: First Stage: Identify the components of strategic planning from the fields and items through the following: Literature in the fields of management and strategic planning and management extension, Theoretical perceptions, opinions and views of researchers (experts) on strategic planning, experiences of some countries in strategic planning. These include but are not limited to (Al-Dulaimi and Naji, 2016), United Nations, 2016; Jameel, 2018), which, although varied in the fields and items in terms of number, ranking, or designations.

Table (1): Expert opinions to finalize the fields and Items of strategic planning explaining face validity and content validity

Alternative	Fields		Items	
	No.	%	No.	%
Valid	7	77.78	6	66.67
Valid with modification	1	11.11	2	22.22
Not valid	1	11.11	1	11.11
Total	9	100	9	100

The researchers adopted a cut-off threshold of two to ensure that the items remain within the field initially. Note that the cutting threshold is a commonly used term in research, social studies, and extension, and was taken from the views of experts through the amendment of the field and items. Use of a tri-scale consists of the following levels: disagree, agree with modification, and completely agree. The scores for each level are as follows: disagree one degree, agree with modification two degrees, completely agree three degrees, bringing the minimum score for one scale

degree, and the highest grade of the scale is 3 degrees, with an average of 1.5 degrees. The alternatives were classified into levels as shown in Table 2.

Table (2): Levels of the Scale

Alternatives	degrees
disagree	1 – 1.4
agree with the modification t	1.5 – 2.4
complete agree	2.5 – 3.0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Goal: A proposed vision for strategic planning in agricultural extension work in Iraq.

The results showed that the averages of the respondent's approval of the fields of the strategic planning in agricultural extension work in Iraq, which numbered (8) fields, ranged between (2.37-2.64) degrees, according to an approval scale whose highest degree was (3) degrees, and its lowest degree was (1) degree, with a total average of approval for the areas of the model amounting to (2.50) degrees. All fields fall within the level of agreement towards completely agree, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3): A proposed vision for strategic planning in agricultural extension work in Iraq.

Fields	weighted mean
Job Descriptions	2.46
Training for Employees	2.49
Infrastructure	2.37
The objectives	2.54
Applied Technology	2.45
The vision	2.59
The Mission	2.44
The Evaluation	2.64
Total mean	2.50

From Table (3), the respondents indicate the importance of the proposed fields and their application under the current conditions of extension work to improve the quality of agricultural extension services provided to farmers.

Sub-Goals

First: The field of job descriptions for employees

Usually includes two main aspects that the management of the extension work should take when developing the job description, where the first aspect includes the full description of the tasks of the extension duties that should be performed by the incumbent of the agricultural extension worker, which is the term (job description). The second aspect includes the scientific qualification of the agricultural extension worker, which includes the university degree, specialization, knowledge, skills and trends required to carry out these extension tasks and duties, which is termed (specification) (Al-Easkari and AL-Dalawi, 2017). An important element or condition in the safety of other magazines, as shown in Table (4).

Table (4): Job descriptions

Field	Items	weighted mean
Job descriptions	existence description	2.1
	integrated staffing	2.4
	academic qualifications	2.6
	knowledge staff description	2.5
	application of the job description	2.7
	Total mean	2.46

Table (4) shows the items in the field of job descriptions, which obtained an average score of 2.1-2.7 degrees, which is above the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees; therefore, all remain finalized. It follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Second: The field of training for employees

The training process aimed at providing agricultural extension workers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to perform current and future educational extension tasks better to achieve the organization's objectives. In light of their participation in training courses, There are many types of training including functional training including pre-service training, academic diploma or bachelor degree through theoretical and applied sciences, in-service training that includes orientation training to familiarize new employees with the objectives, tasks, laws and regulations of the organization, and refresher training focused on providing staff with the necessary information and skills for the work of new sites later, and an evolutionary training focused on dealing with oblivion or weaknesses in the level of staff performance (Mamaqi, 2023). As shown in Table (5).

Table (5): Training for Employees

Field	Items	weighted mean
Training for Employees	specialized extensional topics	2.31
	provide all types of training	2.39
	external participation	2.44
	multiple and varied methods	2.53
	provide an opportunity to apply	2.59
	apply the curriculum	2.66
	Total mean	2.49

Table (5) shows that the items in the field of job descriptions obtained an average score of 2.31 - 2.66 degrees, which is below the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees. Therefore, all remain finalized. This follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Third: Infrastructure

The field of infrastructure is one of the most important objective factors related to the agricultural extension organization, influencing the transfer of modern agricultural extension technologies. It encompasses a wide range of economic and social aspects, or often both (Abu Tabikh, 2016). One of the most important factors

is improving the quality of service provided to the target (Abdulah, 2006), as shown in Table (6).

Table (6): Infrastructure

Field	Items	weighted mean
Infrastructure	Adequacy of the requirements	2.22
	availability of modern teaching	2.29
	presence of means of transport	2.38
	provide a building appropriate	2.45
	areas to testing technologies	2.51
	Total mean	2.37

Table (6) shows that the items in the field of Infrastructure obtained an average score of 2.22 - 2.51 degrees, which is above the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees; therefore, all remain finalized. It follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Fourth: The objectives

The field of objectives represents all human efforts made and directed towards available inputs for effective investigation (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2024). One of the agricultural extension organization's most important strategic objectives is to assist in applying technologies, recommendations, and solutions to agricultural and productive problems and to help integrate them into farming systems, as shown in Table (7).

Table (7): The objectives

Field	Items	weighted mean
The objectives	existence of written objectives	2.4
	appropriateness to solve problems	2.48
	order according to the initial solution	2.54
	possibility of verification (measurement)	2.58
	Focus on behavioral aspects	2.69
	Total mean	2.54

Table (7) shows that the items in the field of objectives obtained an average score of 2.40 - 2.69 degrees, which is below the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees. Therefore, all remain finalized. This follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Fifth: Applied technology

The field of applied technology represents all the means or aspects (behavioral and material) used by the agricultural extension organization or the rural family to use the inputs available to them to suit their agricultural production practices (Rogers, 2004). Technology is one of the most important areas in the strategic planning process because it represents the most important means to achieve increased production and productivity of the farming system (Ali and Khalf, 2015). As shown in Table (8).

Table (8): Applied Technology

Field	Items	weighted mean
Applied Technology	suitable for the beneficiaries	2.34
	success within the region	2.39
	clarity and speed of their product	2.47
	Reinforce and support the previous experiences	2.58
	Total mean	2.45

Table (8) shows that the items in the field of applied technology obtained an average score of 2.34 - 2.54 degrees, below the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees. Therefore, all remain finalized. This follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Sixth: The vision

The field of vision of transferring represents the first steps of the strategic planning process not only for the provision of services and activities, but as a unit that gives importance and value in the environment in which it operates, not only its physical dimension or beyond its future as a moral case (Alhadaruy and Mohammed. 2013), if no organization can meet the need of the target has money that has no future vision that meets those needs and make the right decision for them in order to ensure its survival, growth and continuity (Kazem., 2014). As shown in Table (9).

Table (9): The vision

Field	Items	weighted mean
The vision	focusing on future aspects	2.51
	clear and knowledgeable of all employees	2.58
	promoting the innovation of employees	2.68
	Total mean	2.59

Table (9) shows the items of the field of vision obtained an average score of 2.51 - 2.68 degrees, which is above the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees; therefore, all remain finalized. It follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Seventh: The mission

The field of mission represents what distinguishes an organization from others in its objectives and activities, the framework or form, the activities and performance of the organization, and it represents the reason for the existence of the organization, as shown in Table (10).

Table (10) shows that the items in the field of Mission obtained an average score of 2.33 - 2.56 degrees, which is above the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees; therefore, all remain finalized. This follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

Table (10): The Mission

Field	Items	weighted mean
The Mission	Nature of the current role of extension	2.33
	promoting social values	2.42
	promoting the participation	2.56
	Total mean	2.44

Eighth: The evaluation

The field of evaluation It is an educational process aimed at verifying scientifically the feasibility and importance of strategic planning of the extension organization and to detect address the weaknesses therein, determine the level of effectiveness (achieving its objectives) and the reasons that hindered the achievement of any of its objectives in order to provide data and information serve decision makers objectively to develop the performance of the extension organization, in the practical transfer of agricultural technologies. This should comprehensively evaluate all the elements contributing to its work in terms of the feasibility of the activity, entities, and contribution, as well as the results achieved. As shown in Table (11).

Table (11): The Evaluation

Field	Items	weighted mean
The Evaluation	Criteria for evaluating activities	2.58
	focusing on behavioral outputs	2.64
	diagnosing the reactions (feedback)	2.71
	Total mean	2.64

Table (11) shows that the items in the field of vision obtained an average score of 2.58 - 2.71 degrees, below the cut-off threshold of 2 degrees. Therefore, all remain finalized. This follows from the consistency of the respondents' opinions on the necessity and importance of the proposed items.

CONCLUSIONS

To improve the performance and effectiveness of the agricultural extension organization in Iraq through: Diffusing and developing awareness of the importance of strategic planning, whether the extension organization or developmental and targeted entities, in the process of transferring modern agricultural technologies, as one of the most important elements to achieve sustainable development. Providing all fields and items of strategic planning is crucial because the absence of one or all of them leads to a weak level of performance and effectiveness of the organization, due to their interdependence and complementarity with each other. Doping the methodology (mechanism) to build strategic planning followed in the current research as an effective means to improve the performance of specialized agricultural extension work.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

رؤية مقترحة للتخطيط الاستراتيجي في العمل الإرشادي الزراعي في العراق

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الخلاصة

هدف البحث الحالي إلى صياغة رؤية مقترحة للتخطيط الاستراتيجي في العمل الإرشادي الزراعي في العراق ، وتضمن المجالات الاتية : (مجال التوصيف الوظيفي للموظفين، مجال تدريب للموظفين، مجال البنى التحتية، مجال الأهداف، مجال التقنيات المطبقة، مجال الرؤية، مجال الرسالة، مجال التقويم). وقد صنفت منهجية البحث ضمن المنهج الوصفي، وشمل مجتمع البحث الفئات الوظيفية والبحثية في مجالات الإرشاد الزراعي والإدارة والاقتصاد وبرامج الانمائية الزراعية والمتخصصين في الإرشاد الزراعي والبالغ عددهم 950 مبحوثاً، وقد تم اختيار عينة عشوائية طبقية متناسبة بنسبة (3%) من مجتمع البحث وبذلك بلغ العدد الإجمالي لعينة البحث (29) مبحوثاً. تضمن البحث عددًا من التوصيات التي تساهم في تحسين مستوى أداء المنظمة الإرشادية الزراعية ونموها واستمراريتها وتحقيق أهدافها بفعالية، ومن بينها نشر الوعي بأهمية التخطيط الاستراتيجي سواء داخل المنظمة الإرشادية الزراعية أوالجهات التنموية المستهدفة في عملية نقل التقنيات الزراعية الحديثة، اذ تعد من أهم عناصر تحقيق التنمية المستدامة، وأن عدم توفير جميع مجالات وفقرات التخطيط الاستراتيجي يؤدي إلى ضعف أداء وفعالية المنظمة نظرًا لترابطها وتكاملها مع بعضها البعض.

الكلمات المفتاحية: رؤية مقترحة، التخطيط الاستراتيجي، الارشاد الزراعي.

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