مجلة تنمية الرافدين

**اسم المقال:** تشخيص واقع تطبيق بند القيادة على نظام إدارة الجودة وفق المواصفة ISO9001:2015 – دراسة حالة في الشركة للسمنت الشمالية
**اسم الكاتب:** تبارك محمود شكر، نور صباح عيسى
**رابط ثابت:** https://political-encyclopedia.org/index.php/library/10154
**تاريخ الاسترداد:** 2026/11/01 07:19 +03

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Journal of
**TANMIYAT AL-RAFIDAIN**
***(TANRA)***
A scientific, quarterly, international, open access, and peer-reviewed journal

Vol.43 , No.144
Dec. 2024

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***Citation***: Shukur, Tabarak M. ; Issa, Noor S. (2024). "Diagnosing The Reality Of Applying The Leadership Clause To The Quality Management System According To ISO 9001:2015- Case Study in the Northern State Cement Company / Badoush Expansion Cement Factory in Nineveh Governorate". ***TANMIYAT AL-RAFIDAIN***, 43 (144), 114 -127 , https://doi.org/10.33899/tanra.2024.148765.1373

**P-ISSN: 1609-591X**
**e-ISSN: 2664-276X**
**tanmiyat.uomosul.edu.iq**

**Research Paper**

# Diagnosing the Reality of Applying the Leadership Clause to the Quality Management System According to ISO 9001:2015- Case Study in the Northern State Cement Company / Badoush Expansion Cement Factory in Nineveh Governorate

**Tabarak M. Shukur[1]; Noor S. Issa[2];**
[1]University of Baghdad – College of Law - Iraq
[2]University of Mosul- College of Administration and Economics - Iraq

**Corresponding author:** Tabarak M. Shukur, College of Law - University of Baghdad – Iraq
tabark.m@colaw.uobaghdad.edu.iq

**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.33899/tanra.2024.148765.1373

**Article History:** *Received*: 13/4/2024; *Revised*:5/6/2024; *Accepted*:19/8/2024; *Published*: 1/12/2024.

***Abstract***
*The research aims to estimate the effectiveness of the application of the leadership clause and determine the extent of its application by the ISO9001:2015 standard in the Northern State Cement Company/ Badoush Expansion Cement Factory, and to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership process within it by the quality management system, given the analysis of the contradictions and challenges in applying the leadership clause by According to the ISO 9001:2015. The research included the theoretical background of the subject (the concept of quality, the international standard ISO 9001:2015, and the concept of leadership) and the research methodology, conclusions, and recommendations. The results showed that the company continuously supports the Quality Committee and tries to achieve consistency between the company's strategic direction and quality objectives, in addition to seeking to provide all available resources for quality management. The conclusion showed that adopting quality practices and preparing for the international standard (ISO 9001:2015) in the company has a significant impact on the understanding and readiness of employees and management to implement this global standard. Based on these conclusions, the most important recommendations are to emphasize continuous communication with trainees after the end of training courses, evaluate daily performance, and increase documentation.*

**Keywords:**
**Quality Management System (QMS), ISO9001:2015, Leadership.**

مجلة

**تنمية الرافدين**

*(TANRA):* مجلة علمية، فصلية، دولية، مفتوحة الوصول، محكمة.

المجلد (٤٣)، العدد (١٤٤))،
كانون أول ٢٠٢٤

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***الاقتباس***: شكر، تبارك محمود وعيسى، نور صباح (٢٠٢٤). "تشخيص واقع تطبيق بند القيادة على نظام ادارة الجودة وفق المواصفة ISO 9001:2015 – دراسة حالة في الشركة العامة للسمنت الشمالية / معمل سمنت بادوش التوسيع في محافظة نينوى". ***تنمية الرافدين***، ٤٣ (١٤٤)، ١١٤-١٢٧، https://doi.org/10.33899/tanra.2024.148765.1373

**P-ISSN: 1609-591X**
**e-ISSN: 2664-276X**
**tanmiyat.uomosul.edu.iq**

ورقة بحثية

# تشخيص واقع تطبيق بند القيادة على نظام إدارة الجودة وفق المواصفة ISO9001:2015 – دراسة حالة في الشركة العامة للسمنت الشمالية/ معمل سمنت بادوش التوسيع في محافظة نينوى

**تبارك محمود شكر[١]؛ نور صباح عيسى[٢]**

[١]جامعة بغداد – كلية القانون

[٢]جامعة الموصل، كلية الإدارة والاقتصاد

**المؤلف المراسل: تبارك محمود شكر**، جامعة بغداد – كلية القانون
tabark.m@colaw.uobaghdad.edu.iq

**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.33899/tanra.2024.148765.1373

**تاريخ المقالة:** *الاستلام:*١٣/٤/٢٠٢٤؛ *التعديل والتنقيح:*٥/٦/٢٠٢٤؛ *القبول:*١٩/٨/٢٠٢٤؛ *النشر:* ١/١٢/٢٠٢٤.

**المستخلص**

*يهدف البحث إلى تقدير مدى فاعلية تطبيق بند القيادة وتحديد مدى تطبيقه وفق المواصفة ISO9001:2015 في الشركة العامة للسمنت الشمالية / معمل سمنت بادوش التوسيع وتحليل نقاط القوة والضعف في عملية القيادة داخلها وفقا لنظام إدارة الجودة، نظرا لتحليل التناقضات والتحديات في تطبيق بند القيادة وفقاً لـ ISO 9001:2015. وقد تضمن البحث الخلفية النظرية للموضوع (مفهوم الجودة، المواصفة الدولية ISO 9001:2015 ومفهوم القيادة) فضلاً عن منهجية البحث وكذلك الاستنتاجات والتوصيات. بينت النتائج ان الشركة تدعم وبشكل مستمر لجنة الجودة وتحاول تحقيق التوافق بين التوجه الاستراتيجي للشركة وأهداف الجودة، فضلاً عن السعي إلى توفير كافة الموارد المتاحة لإدارة الجودة. اما الاستنتاج فقد بين إن تبني ممارسات الجودة والاستعداد للمواصفة الدولية (ISO 9001:2015) في الشركة له تأثير كبير على فهم واستعداد الموظفين والإدارة لتطبيق هذه المواصفة الدولية. بناءً على تلك الاستنتاجات، فإن اهم التوصيات هي التأكيد على التواصل المستمر مع المتدربين بعد انتهاء الدورات التدريبية، وتقييم الأداء اليومي، وزيادة التوثيق.*

**الكلمات الرئيسة**

**نظام إدارة الجودة، ISO9001:2015، القيادة.**

## 1. Introduction

Organizations are becoming more aware of the importance of quality management systems, and customers are becoming more quality conscious. This also requires companies to attention the quality of the goads they produce to compete globally. Therefore, organizations must obtain international approval to prove that the products and systems they use meet the standards.

The constant and rapid evolution of businesses and industries has led to a growing importance of quality in the management of organizations in competitive markets. One of the most significant standards that has contributed to the improvement of organizations' performance and the quality of their products and services is the ISO 9001:2015 standard, This standard is considered one of the prominent international standards in the field of quality management, as it defines the requirements of quality management systems that organizations must follow to sustainably achieve their objectives. Among the clauses of this standard, the leadership clause is highlighted as a key element, as effective leadership is fundamental to fulfilling the organization's commitment to standard requirements and improving overall performance. Implementing the leadership clause according to ISO 9001:2015 requires a deep understanding of leadership requirements and effective practices to be adopted within the organization. However, the challenge lies in determining the effectiveness of implementing this clause in different organizations and analyzing the factors that may hinder the achievement of specified objectives for quality management systems according to the standard.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Quality Concept

(Crosby, 1979: 8) Defined quality as conformity to requirements, it is measurable accurately, it does not require making a mistake to achieve the laws of nature, and people now work as hard as they did before. Quality means those characteristics of products that satisfy customer needs and thus provide customer satisfaction. It is therefore income-oriented with the hope of increasing it. It also means freedom from defects or errors and therefore costs-oriented (Juran and Godfery, 1999: 26-27).

The concept of quality varies from one researcher to another, from one generation to another, according to time, place, field of work and specialization. Maximizing customer satisfaction is a basic need for any product or service, so it is essential that goads meet or exceed customer expectations, leading to improved market share and increased profitability (Luthra et al., 2021: 1). It must be related to achieving the result desired by the customer and not just standardizing product or service standards, and this will not be achieved according to an incomplete system. (Beckford, 2023: 4).

### 2.2. International Standard ISO 9001:2015

ISO first published the international standard ISO 9001 in 1987, since then it has become a key pillars of the quality and a key management framework for all types of organizations around the world. Although quality management system certification is not mandatory, it is a key element in international business and a very clear proxy for

the adoption of a (QMS). To keep up with the organization's environment, ISO issued the ISO 9001:2015 version, which was intended to provide organizations with greater benefit from quality management systems with less focus on documentation and new approaches (Fonseca and Domingues, 2016: 149). It is noticeable that the changes in the new edition have created a new task to look at different areas of the organization that still need improvement. Awareness of the upcoming changes will enable quality professionals to better prepare for the future. The change lies in integrating risk-based thinking into the management system by looking at the context of the organization. This means that processes are not equal for all organizations, the majority of them are more important than others, which leads to different levels of risk (Rumane, 2018: 128-131). This version is based on the following seven principles of quality management as shown in Figure No. (1):

**Figure No. (1) The Seven Quality Management Principles**

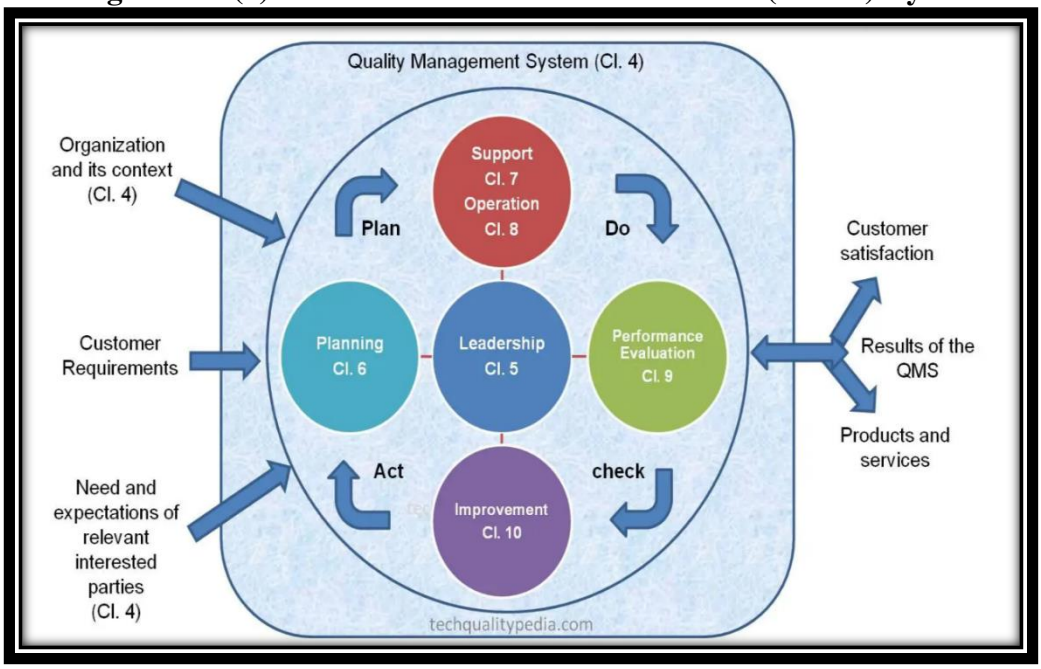



**Source:** Abu Al-Rub, Fahmi, Shibhab, Penelope and Abu Al-Rub, Safwan, 2020, Quality Management Systems (ISO 9001:2015), GAVIN eBooks, USA, p. 8.

The main drivers for adopting ISO 9001:2015 are classified into two main categories: internal and external. As for internal drivers, these are related to the goal of achieving internal management improvement; while external drivers are mainly related to promotion and marketing issues, customer pressures and improving market share (Bravi et al., 2019: 66). Figure No. (2) shows how the items of international standard ISO 9001:2015 (quality management system) from 4 to 10 are grouped in

relation to the (PDCA) loop that achieves both process management and system management as a whole.

**Figure No. (2) The Structure of ISO 9001:2015 in (PDCA) Cycle**




**Source:** Al-Azzawi, Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab Ahmad and Al-Azzawi, Karim Dhiyab Ahmad, 2019, Quality Management, Al-Dhad for Publishing and Distribution, Baghdad, Iraq, p. 240.

This standard helps organizations improve performance, meet customer requirements, and ensure customer satisfaction. This standard also uses the "High-Level Structure" (HLS) approach and can be adapted to different types of organizations and industries. Implementing ISO 9001:2015 brings many benefits such as increased efficiency, customer satisfaction, reduced risk, and compliance with contractual and regulatory requirements (Silalahi et al., 2023: 26).

The standard focuses on the approach of standardizing processes and interactions in order to guarantee that the processes are equipped with the necessary resources and are effectively managed, while recognizing potential improvements. According to clause (4-4) of this standard, it includes specific requirements that are necessary in order to implement the process approach that will lead to The organization having control over the interactions and dependent relationships between processes in the quality system, this will in turn lead to an improvement in the overall performance of the organization via (Aljboury, 2023: 265):

1) Understanding and consistency in meeting requirements.
2) Consider and think about processes in terms of their added value.
3) Achieving effective operational performance.
4) Improve processes based on data and information evaluation.

ISO 9001:2015 is implemented on the basis of the principles of quality management system certification or quality management system, which can

be used by top management to improve performance in the company. The application of these principles is based on the experience and knowledge of international experts who participate in the technical committee ISO/TC176, which is responsible for developing the ISO 9001:2015 certification standards. The following is a description of these seven principles (Ramese et al., 2024: 148), (Prihatmadji et al., 2024: 135):

1) Customer Focus: The main goal of quality management is to meet customer requirements and exceed their expectations.
2) Leadership: Leaders work to define goals for different levels and work to unify them, as well as provide the appropriate conditions that ensure the participation of all people in achieving the overall goals of the organization.
3) People Involvement: They are the people who have the competence at all levels of the organization in order to increase its ability to create and deliver value.
4) Process Approach: The integrated system and understanding of activities achieve desired and consistent results more effectively and efficiently.
5) Improvement: Improvement is the main focus of organizations.
6) Evidence-based decision-making: These are decisions made based on several topics, including the analysis and evaluation of data and information that have the greatest probability of achieving results.
7) Relationship Management: The goal is to achieve and maintain success with all stakeholders.

In addition, the ISO 9001:2015 quality management system must include the following (Anggraeni and Dwiridotjahjono, 2024: 12):

1) Emphasizing leadership involvement.
2) Structurally aligning the company's risks and opportunities.
3) Using common, simple language, structures, and terminology to facilitate the work of organizations using different management systems.
4) Guiding principles for more effective supply chain management.
5) Rules for service and knowledge have become easier for companies.

**2.3. Leadership Concept**

Leadership is the dynamic process that ensures that the individual is not completely responsible for the results of the group, but rather seeks to unite all individuals in the group to achieve specific goals. The dynamic process of leadership does not require that one method is the best, but rather to reach the appropriate state of balance between the needs of individuals and the task of work (Cole, 2014: 101).

Leaders at all levels work to establish unity of purpose and direction and create conditions that engage people in achieving the organization's specific goals (Tricker, 2016: 20). Leadership is the power of one leader to influence, change, and direct the behavior of other members in the organization, as well as the way they express their art of inspiring a group of workers to collaborate towards a common goal (Wolniak, 2019: 137). Leadership is the direction of the organization, so leaders must (Luthra et al., 2021: 177):

1) Understand the organization's vision and mission.

2) Discuss achievable goals.
3) Build and share trust among employees.
4) Empower employees.
5) Define employee responsibility and authority.

Leadership styles are linked to variables that enhance change, leading to excellence. Leadership is defined as personal characteristics that affect individuals in terms of pursuing goals and caring about the needs and expectations of their customers. This influence is dynamic and interactive between the leader and individuals (Silva et al., 2021: 5).

The leadership must be influenced by the Follow up and utilize information and communication technology, otherwise known as digital leadership, in order to improve the administration of the organization and to achieve the goals of the institution (Hassan and Hamed, 2022: 5), Today's society has emphasized the necessity of permanent development and alteration in the organization in order to address the internal and external environments (Sha'alan and Saaed, 2023: 6). Effective leadership is considered paramount to the success of an organization's goals and is one of the most important specifications that influence the achievement of quality, A leader is not simply someone who can influence their subordinates to perform tasks on a voluntary basis, but instead, they go beyond this by encouraging their followers to utilize their abilities and methods to accomplish the desired tasks (Tamemi and Mohammed, 2023: 30).

Leadership has several indicators (Persada et al., 2023: 404-405):

1. Directive leadership. It is the leader's guidance to his subordinates according to what is required of them.
2. Supportive leadership. It is the leaders' interest in and support for their subordinates.
3. Participative leadership. Sharing and using the opinions of subordinates.
4. Results-oriented leader. Encouraging subordinates to work.

For a long time, leadership has been at the forefront of people's attention as it refers to the attitude of individuals who lead victorious armies and large corporations (Abdullah and Saeed, 2024: 140). Therefore, leadership and performance are closely related, requiring leaders to motivate individuals to achieve the highest performance. If this is achieved, the working relationship between them will be excellent, thus improving the performance of the organization (Suprayitno, 2024: 87).

Leadership and performance are closely related, which requires leaders to motivate individuals to achieve the highest performance. If this is achieved, the working relationship between them will be excellent, thus improving the organization's performance (Suprayitno, 2024: 87).

The strength of management support indicates the level of importance of materials and other requirements. Conversely, weak top management support is the critical factor in the failure of the organization's activities. Support may be visible and is the maintenance of resources within the organization as well as maintaining focus and commitment to data and information from the organization's system. The

organization's top management must demonstrate leadership and commitment to customer focus by ensuring that (Riwayadi, 2024: 133-134):

1) customer requirements, as well as legal and regulatory requirements, are understood and consistently met.
2) risks and opportunities that could impact on the conformity of products and services and the ability to enhance customer satisfaction are identified and addressed.
3) customer satisfaction is developed and enhanced.

## 3. Methodology

The methodology was adopted a case study to address the research topic and study the reality of the surveyed company in order to achieve the research objective and the leadership item. To translate the data obtained from the checklists into quantitative expressions, and to obtain a more accurate analysis of the data therein, a Likert scale will be used to measure the actual implementation of the leadership requirement according to the International Standard (ISO 9001:2015) by assigning a specific weight to each item in the scale as in Table No. (1).

**Table No. (1) Seven-point scale items**

| The items of the Likert scale | Weight (Degree) |
|---|---|
| Total implemented, total documented | 6 |
| Total implemented, partial documented | 5 |
| Total implemented, not documented | 4 |
| Partial implemented, total documented | 3 |
| Partial implemented, partial documented | 2 |
| Partial implemented, not documented | 1 |
| Not implemented, not documented | 0 |

The answers provided in the checklists were converted into degree expressions using averages and the following ratios:

- Calculating the approximate average of compliance with the standard requirements in the study sample by extracting the weighted arithmetic mean through calculating the values of repetitions for each checklist and according to:

**Weighted arithmetic mean = Σ (weights × repetitions) / Σ repetitions**

- Calculating the percentage of actual implementation compliance with the standard according to:

**Percentage of compliance = (Weighted arithmetic mean / 6) × 100%**

- Calculating the gap size by subtracting the percentage of compliance from 100%

**Gap size for each checklist = 100% - Percentage of compliance**

## 4. Results

The requirements of (ISO9001:2015) cannot be achieved without the support and conviction of top management in implementing these requirements, which has a positive role in convincing all employees in the surveyed company to implement and fully commit to these requirements. The leadership requirement is divided into (3) three sub-requirements, each requirement contains a set of Questions and requirements will be addressed in the sequence stated in the checklist.

### 4.1 Leadership and Commitment (5.1)

In order to enhance institutional performance and achieve sustainable success, the surveyed company's management must ensure leadership and commitment to

establishing and developing the quality management system. With the aim of knowing the extent of compatibility of this requirement with the requirements of the international standard (ISO 9001:2015), it has designed (14) questions in a special checklist. With leadership and commitment that demonstrates implementation and documentation of this requirement.

Through the data in Table No. (2), it is evident that the surveyed company obtained an average of (4.14) points, and by rounding to determine the application and documentation status of this requirement compared to the weights used, the average is (4).

**Table No. (2) Checklist for driving requirements for the Iraqi surveyed company according to international standard (ISO9001:2015)**

| 5.1 **Leadership and commitment** | | The extent of conformity with the (ISO9001:2015) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | 5.1.1 general | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The surveyed company's top management provides evidence of leadership and commitment to establishing and developing the (QMS) and improving its effectiveness through: | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | It addresses the issue of the effectiveness of the (QMS). | | √ | | | | | |
| 2 | Ensuring the quality policy and objectives of the (QMS) are set in accordance with the surveyed company's context and strategic direction. | | | √ | | | | |
| 3 | Ensuring the integration of (QMS) requirements with the surveyed company's service operations. | | | √ | | | | |
| 4 | Use the process approaches and risk-based thinking | | | | | √ | | |
| 5 | Ensure that the necessary resources for the quality management system are available | | √ | | | | | |
| 6 | Effective quality management and compliance with the requirements of the (QMS) continues. | | | √ | | | | |
| 7 | Ensuring the (QMS) achieves the desired results. | | | | | √ | | |
| 8 | Involving, directing and supporting individuals to contribute to the effectiveness of the (QMS). | | | √ | | | | |
| 9 | Promote improvement. | | √ | | | | | |
| 10 | Support other relevant administrative roles to demonstrate leadership in their areas of responsibility. | | √ | | | | | |
| 5.1.2 Customer focus | | | | | | | | |
| Top management expresses leadership and commitment to customer focus by ensuring: | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Customer requirements, applicable legal requirements and regulatory requirements are consistently identified, understood and met. | | √ | | | | | |
| 12 | Updating and reviewing documents when necessary and re-certifying them. | √ | | | | | | |
| 13 | Risks and opportunities that could affect the conformity of products and services and the ability to enhance customer satisfaction have been identified and taken into account. | | | | | √ | | |
| 14 | Maintaining enhanced customer satisfaction. | | √ | | | | | |
| Duplicates | | 1 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Result | | 6 | 30 | 16 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Aerage | | 4.14 | | | | | | |
| Percentage of conformity | | 69% | | | | | | |
| The gap size of the requirement | | 31% | | | | | | |

## 4.2 Quality Policy (5.2)

This indicates that the surveyed company reaches the level of full implementation but lacks documentation for the leadership and commitment items of the International Standard (ISO 9001:2015), with an application and documentation rate reaching

(69%) of the total items. This indicates a gap of (31%) resulting from full implementation and lack of documentation in the mentioned requirement.

In accordance with the requirements of the international standard (ISO9001:2015), the surveyed company's top management must develop, implement and maintain the quality policy. (7) questions have been designed in the checklist for the quality policy requirement, which explains the extent of application and documentation of the quality policy requirement in accordance with what the international standard requires (ISO9001:2015) as in Table No. (3).

**Table No. (3) Checklist for driving requirements for the Iraqi surveyed company according to international standard (ISO9001:2015)**

| 5.2 **Quality policy** | | The extent of conformity with the international standard (ISO9001:2015) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | 5.2.1 Establish a quality policy | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The surveyed company's top management ensures that the quality policy is established, implemented, and maintained according to the following: | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Appropriate for the Centre's purpose and context and supports its strategic direction | | | √ | | | | |
| 2 | Provides a framework for established quality objectives. | | | | √ | | | |
| 3 | Includes a commitment to meet applicable requirements. | | | √ | | | | |
| 4 | It includes a commitment to continuous improvement of the quality management system. | | | √ | | | | |
| 5.2.2 Communicate the quality policy | | | | | | | | |
| The surveyed company's top management ensures that the quality policy is communicated according to the following: | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Available and maintained in the form of documented information. | | | | | √ | | |
| 6 | Understandable and applied within the surveyed company. | | | | | √ | | |
| 7 | Available to interested parties as needed. | | | | √ | | | |
| Duplicates | | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Result | | 0 | 0 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Average | | 3.14 | | | | | | |
| Percentage of conformity | | 52% | | | | | | |
| The gap size of the requirement | | 48% | | | | | | |

Through the data in Table No. (3), it is evident that the surveyed company obtained an average of (3.1) points, and by rounding to determine the application and documentation status of this requirement compared to the weights used, the average is (3) points. This indicates that the surveyed company reaches the level of partial implementation and full documentation for the quality policy items of the International Standard (ISO 9001:2015), with an application and documentation rate reaching (52%) of the total items. This indicates a gap of (48%) resulting from partial implementation and full documentation in the mentioned requirement.

### 4.3. Organizing Roles, Responsibilities, and Authorities (5.3)

This requirement aims to define the responsibilities and powers of employees who plan, implement and verify actions affecting the quality of services. In order to determine the extent of compliance with the requirements of the international standard (ISO9001:2015), (6) questions have been designed in the checklist for the requirement for Organizing roles, responsibilities, and authorities that clarify the amount Implement this requirement and document it with what is required by the international standard (ISO9001:2015) as in Table No. (4).

**Table No. (4) Checklist for driving requirements for the Iraqi surveyed company according to international standard (ISO9001:2015)**

| 5.3 Organizing roles, responsibilities, and authorities | | The extent of conformity with the (ISO9001:2015) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | 5.3 Organizing roles, responsibilities, and authorities | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | The surveyed company's top management ensures that responsibilities and authorities have been assigned, communicated, and understood within the surveyed company to carry out the required roles. | | | | | √ | | |
| 2 | Top management assigns responsibilities and authorities to: Ensure that the quality management system complies with the requirements of the international standard (ISO 9001: 2015). | | | | | | | √ |
| 3 | Ensuring that processes lead to achieving the required outputs. | | | √ | | | | |
| 4 | Ensuring enhanced customer focus throughout the surveyed company. | | √ | | | | | |
| 5 | Ensuring that the integrity of the quality management system is maintained when planning and implementing any changes. | | | √ | | | | |
| 6 | Reporting on the performance of the quality management system and opportunities for improvement, especially to top management. | | | | | √ | | |
| Duplicates | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Result | | 0 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Average | | 2.8 | | | | | | |
| Percentage of conformity | | 47% | | | | | | |
| The gap size of the requirement | | 53% | | | | | | |

Through the data in Table No. (4), it is apparent that the company's surveyed average was (2.8) points, with a rounding mechanism that determined the status of this requirement in relation to the weights employed, the average was (3) points. This implies that the company's surveyed implementation level is partial and full for the quality policy components of the International Standard (ISO 9001:2015), with a documentation and application rate of (47%) of the total components. This demonstrates a 53% gap caused by partial compliance and full documentation of the mentioned requirement.

### 4.4. Discussion of Results

1) Constant support from the company's manager for the quality committee and attempting to achieve alignment between the company's strategic direction and the quality goals of the surveyed company.
2) The company's management endeavors to provide all available resources for quality management at the company's current location.
3) The management follows the rules of law and regulations to achieve the trainee's goals in accordance with formal orders and relevant controls.
4) The company's management continues to devote effort to making sure the trainees are happy.
5) The management of the company surveyed has a policy regarding quality that is in line with the company's context and long term goals.

## 5.Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusions

1) The adoption of quality practices and preparation for the International Standard (ISO 9001:2015) at the studied company had a significant impact on the understanding and readiness of the staff and management at the studied company to implement the requirements of the International Standard.
2) The staff of the company surveyed has the experience and necessary skills to provide the highest quality services, they also ensure internal and external communication channels that lead to the goal of a timely manner in the

communication process. These channels are communication in both directions with the intended goal of reaching the intended results.

3) The company's management followed appropriate procedures to address non-validities, taking into account the nature of the situation and its effect on the training process, they also detected non-validities during and after the training process.
4) The company's top management relies on the quality committee to communicate and spread the quality policy across the company and raise awareness among stakeholders.

### 5.2. Recommendations

1) Make great use of the process approach and risk-based thinking in tasks and activities because lack of awareness of their importance leads to restricting the implementation of these processes.
2) Emphasizing continued communication with trainees after the completion of training courses.
3) Evaluating daily performance according to organizational performance standards according to the quality policy.
4) Increase documentation and Promote the culture of quality and disseminate its policy to all stakeholders, as well as adhere to standard procedures.

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