Presenting an Organizational Training Model for Enhancing Policy-Making Capacities in the Agricultural Jihad Organization

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Abstract

Training and development of human resources within the human resource management system not only play a crucial role in increasing employees' knowledge and skills but also contribute to improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness and adapting to environmental pressures. The primary reason for developing employees' knowledge and skills lies in job requirements and addressing performance-related challenges. This study aims to present an organizational training model for enhancing policy-making capacities in the Agricultural Jihad Organization using a grounded theory approach based on three stages of coding: open, axial, and selective. The statistical population includes all managers and experts of the Agricultural Jihad Organization. Given the qualitative nature of the study, the sampling method was purposive and conducted using the snowball technique, allowing for in-depth investigation. Data collection was carried out through interviews with 17 experts and experienced professionals in the Agricultural Jihad Organization and the field of policy-making, reaching theoretical saturation. The study's findings identified 29 influential components categorized into causal conditions (6 components), contextual conditions (4 components), intervening conditions (4 components), strategies for implementing organizational training (8 components), and its outcomes (6 components), all revolving around the central phenomenon of organizational training.

Keywords: Training, In-Service Training, Policy-Making, Policy-Making Capacity.

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1.   Introduction

The current era, referred to by researchers as the postmodern era, is characterized by continuous change and structural complexity [1]. Under such conditions, due to technological expansion and advancement, the nature of work has shifted from traditional and manual to intellectual and cognitive. As a result, many businesses seek strategies to distinguish themselves from competitors through high-quality service delivery, flexibility, innovation, and faster responsiveness [2]. In alignment with these transformations, in recent decades, more than at any other time in human history, in-service training and employee empowerment workshops have gained a special status in various organizations [3]. Evidence indicates that among human resource management strategies, in-service training of human resources is one of the most important and effective ways to realize the lofty aspirations of society, achieve sustainable development goals, and implement policy directives [4].

From an organizational perspective, in-service training refers to education provided after an individual's employment in an organization, aiming to prepare employees for better performance of their responsibilities and enhance their abilities and skills (Mirza-Mohammadi & Qazizadeh, 2020). In other words, it is a fundamental and logical method for directing employees' efforts within the organization, facilitating the utilization of latent talents, activating imaginative capabilities, and fostering the necessary cognitive flexibility among employees [5]. Skill development through training has always been a powerful lever for improving individual opportunities and institutional competitiveness across the globe [6]. Therefore, one of the key issues on which most experts in educational management and planning agree is the effective use of in-service training mechanisms and employee empowerment workshops as the primary means to maintain balance in organizations. In this regard, reviewing and revising their training programs—both pre-service and in-service—is essential [7].

Policy is a fundamental principle in law enforcement and determines strategic direction [8, 9]. In essence, policy consists of guidelines, instructions, rules, regulations, and principles that govern organizational behavior. It specifies what needs to be done, who should do it, how it should be done, and how it should be managed. Generally, our world is filled with policies and policymaking at various levels [10]. Policies such as resistance economy, national production, and national development are among the slogans and policies at the national level (Iran), with their primary foundation being the realization of a knowledge-based economy. One of the fundamental tools for organizations to achieve this goal is the development of human capital, social services, and entrepreneurship [7]. The ability to attract, employ, develop, and retain talent is considered the sole competitive advantage of nations [11]. Consequently, the increasing focus on the type and extent of employee development and training has become an undeniable necessity. This necessity stems from the rapid pace of change in various economic and social domains, and neglecting it will ultimately create numerous constraints and challenges for societal growth and development [12].

In a knowledge-based economy, human capital is a significant asset of an organization and requires identification, measurement, and, most importantly, management. Therefore, in the current circumstances, competitive advantage, value creation, and long-term growth assurance increasingly depend on an organization's human capital—comprising employees' knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, competencies, and experiences. To achieve such a status, organizations must implement mechanisms for attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining this capital, referred to as human resource strategy. However, in the Agricultural Jihad Organization, there is a significant gap in this area. On the other hand, due to the crucial role of managers and employees of the Agricultural Jihad Organization in advancing the national economy, fulfilling their assigned duties at an optimal level is impossible without in-service training and familiarity with new methods. Employees' level of knowledge and insight regarding issues and challenges is a key factor influencing the quality of their job performance [13, 14].

Various studies have investigated the factors affecting capacity enhancement for policy implementation across various sectors. Haidari (2023) examined the determinants influencing the capacity to execute policies within the Road Maintenance Organization through interviews with policy experts, finding that reconstructing organizational structure and management had the most significant impact, whereas enhancements in training and participation exhibited minimal influence on other capacity indicators [15]. Angizeh Guds et al. (2022) employed a qualitative approach using open, axial, and selective coding to design a policy model for science and technology in knowledge-based organizations, ultimately identifying 106 overarching themes [16]. Tirandaz et al. (2021) applied a grounded

theory methodology to determine the components that enhance capacity in skill-based policy training on a national scale, revealing two core concepts: influential factors and components for capacity enhancement [10]. Abbassian et al. (2020) developed a mixed-method model for a guaranteed wheat procurement policy in Iran, identifying key constructs such as internal inputs, policy cycles, actors, contextual conditions, and outcomes, with subsequent quantitative validation of the relationships among these components [17]. Masoumi et al. (2019) proposed an effective health system policy implementation model based on data from senior health managers and university presidents, which yielded nine components and 46 indicators related to capacity enhancement in health policy execution [18]. Mohammadi Fath et al. (2016) designed a grounded theory model for improving policy capacity within the executive branch, highlighting institutional factors, infrastructural and policy-making capabilities, as well as participatory components and strategic policy content as central elements [19]. Hosseini et al. (2018) focused on developing a policy model for the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises by emphasizing innovation and leveraging internal and international experiences, thereby presenting a framework that incorporated influencing factors, development policies, policy institutions, and business performance [2]. Taheri (2016) offered an operational model for the effectiveness of organizational training based on experiences from customs organizations and the World Customs Organization, demonstrating that employee participation in professional development is influenced by organizational, job-related, and strategic training factors [20]. Abbasi et al. (2016) identified major barriers to policy implementation by linking the inherent nature of policies with issues related to policy actors, organizational attributes, various actions, pressure groups, and the overall policy environment [19]. Monavarian (2015) proposed a learning-based model for executing administrative reform policies, emphasizing that successful implementation is contingent on strong support from senior management, enhanced learning motivation among implementers, and prior resource preparedness [21]. Parsa Moin and Yazdani (2019) found a significant positive correlation between in-service training and both the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal employees in Tehran, suggesting that enhanced training is associated with improvements in work speed, coordination, and overall performance [22]. Mirkamali and Saadatitar (2015) reported moderate levels of stakeholder satisfaction with in-service training processes in the Iranian Industries Modernization Organization, noting that satisfaction levels were consistent across various process stages and demographic groups [23]. Haidari (2015) revealed that agricultural extension experts in the Azadegan region possessed insufficient knowledge to support the development of livestock townships [24], while Malek Saeedi et al. (2009) indicated that experts in the Agricultural Jihad Organization in Fars Province demonstrated low levels of organic agriculture knowledge, attributing this deficiency to ineffective in-service training programs [25]. In a related study, Monfared (2009) found that the short-term in-service training programs in Agricultural Jihad Organizations yielded effectiveness below the expected levels across several key performance areas [26]. Finally, Kotnik et al. (2020) examined public policy implementation in Slovenia and identified rapid governmental changes, inadequate performance evaluations, weak interdepartmental coordination, and inefficient governmental sessions as primary obstacles to successful policy execution [27].

These training programs aim to balance organizational needs with workforce requirements. However, Hajimirrahimi and Farimani (2016) demonstrated that the planning and implementation of training programs for Agricultural Jihad Organization employees have not been conducted effectively [13]. Through a comprehensive review of previous studies on in-service training in this organization, they found that these training courses have not been well-received by employees. In discussing the reasons for this issue, which may stem from improper planning, ineffective implementation, poor teaching quality, and inadequate learning methods, Hajimirrahimi and Farimani (2016) stated that in-service training requires methodological and structural reforms [13]. Therefore, designing a skill-based training model that enhances the Agricultural Jihad Organization's policymaking capacities appears to be essential. This study specifically seeks to answer the question: What are the characteristics of an organizational skill-based training model for enhancing policymaking capacities in a government organization such as the Agricultural Jihad Organization?

2. Methodology

This study is applied in terms of its objective and exploratory in terms of research orientation, employing a qualitative analysis method. The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews. The collected data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach based on

the method proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). In this strategy, identifiers, concepts, and categories—both subcategories and main categories—serve as key elements. These elements are organized through three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, where the informational categories are developed, interrelated, and classified based on a storyline. In this method, during the selective coding stage, the different conditions identified in the axial coding stage are integrated to form a comprehensive analysis, ultimately leading to the final research model [28].

The statistical population of the study included senior managers, deputies, and technical experts from the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, as well as university faculty members. The participants were selected based on the criterion of expertise (holding at least a master's degree, 10 years of work experience, and 5 years of managerial and research experience in the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad) using purposive snowball sampling. The sampling process continued until theoretical saturation was reached, concluding after 17 interviews. After the seventeenth interview, the responses became repetitive, and to ensure data reliability, the data collection process was extended to the twentieth interview.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) qualitative research evaluation method was employed, which corresponds to validity and reliability in quantitative research. The validity and reliability of the study were assessed using four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To establish credibility, sampling continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, and face validity was assessed by ten experts participating in the study. In this phase, the extracted codes related to the interview transcripts were presented to a panel of ten experts for review and verification, and discrepancies were examined and corrected. Transferability was ensured by selecting experts with diverse specializations and experiences from different organizational units and levels.

Dependability was reinforced by recording all interviews in full to allow for data re-examination and enable coding by a research collaborator. Finally, confirmability was achieved by keeping several expert panel members informed about the overall analytical process, data collection methods, and category extraction procedures, ensuring that the findings were validated and confirmed.

3. Findings and Results

The expert panel for this study consisted of 14 managers from the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad and 3 university professors. In the first stage of coding, a detailed analysis of the interviews was conducted, and initial codes and primary concepts were identified and extracted. After refining, merging similar codes, and eliminating redundant ones, 421 open codes were selected for the next stage.

In the second stage, axial coding was performed. At this stage, homogeneous open codes with perceptual similarities were evaluated, and concepts encompassing the meaning of multiple open codes were classified under a core category. Ultimately, 68 axial codes were derived and placed into categories related to causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes within the central phenomenon under investigation.

Table 1. Open and Axial Coding in the Causal Conditions Category

Source	Data	Basic Concepts	Axial Coding
M4-M9	When the organization has a developmental plan in a specific area, it must consider its internal resources in feasibility assessment.	Organizational development plans	Expected change
M5-M7	Changes in laws that employees are unfamiliar with.	Adaptation to new laws	
M13	In agricultural exports, local capacity and human resource capability become significant.	Entering new markets	
M2	Besides market dynamics, sometimes in a specific region, demand undergoes transformation.	Coordination with environmental changes (political, economic, social, etc.)	Trend formation
M4	A manager who can predict changes.	Change prediction	
M2-M6-M7-M14	If drought is not considered and crops are planted, they will be lost before harvest, wasting resources.	Change prediction	
M1-M2-M3-M10-M12-M16-M17	An organizational policy that fails to respond effectively to environmental changes.	Adaptation to environmental changes	Environmental dynamism
M4-M6-M9	Timely responsiveness requires quick access to information.	Rapid access to information	

M2-M6-M7-M14	If employees do not progress in their work and follow outdated routines, the organization will lag.	Organizational growth depends on employee growth	The role of human resources in the organization
M5-M6-M8-M15	A successful policy relies on trust in human resources.	Importance of human resources for the organization	
M1-M4-M5-M11-M12	Through training programs, employees' skill deficiencies can be addressed.	Enhancing employee skill levels	Employee performance optimization
M8	Over time, previous knowledge is forgotten, and new knowledge is needed.	Enhancing employee knowledge levels	
M13	With increased awareness, uncertainty in decision-making is reduced.	Increasing employees' decision-making power	
M4-M7-M10-M13	New employees gain better insight into the Agricultural Jihad Organization and its daily operations after training.	Acquiring environmental awareness	
M15	Employees improve their performance, feel more confident, and are more willing to take on responsibilities.	Enhancing self-esteem and confidence	
M1-M2-M3-M7-M11-M12-M14	An employee without agricultural knowledge cannot understand and address client issues.	Employees' specialized knowledge and skills	
M14	An informed manager prioritizes nurturing internal talent and addressing employees' higher-level needs.	Talent development	Talent management
M8	Training should prepare employees for change.	Readiness for change	Preventing future problems
M3	With task changes, employees' job challenges evolve.	Resolving job-related problems	
M4-M10	Over time, many of our skills become inadequate for solving new challenges.	Ineffectiveness of current skills	Obsolescence of skills and professional competencies
M7	If a manager sees no growth in the organization after years and existing issues persist.	Ineffectiveness of current policies	
M1-M3-M6-M12	Training significantly reduces costs associated with errors and mishaps.	Preventive measures	Workplace accident reduction policy
M5	Learning ensures correct execution.	Reducing errors and related losses	
M2-M9-M11	Organizational training benefits both the organization and individuals.	Opportunities for promotions	Career advancement
M7	Increases motivation for career development.	Motivation for new organizational roles	
M3-M4-M12-M14	A farmer who cannot use various machinery.	Ability to utilize modern technology	Diversity of expertise
M5-M8	Ignoring accessible modern technologies leads to energy waste and inefficiency.	Access to modern technology	
M10-M15	If virtual platforms allow better and more extensive learning, why not use them?	Importance of modern tools in education	
M10-M15	Requests are submitted online.	Online interactions	Diversity of organizational roles
M3	In the past, employees handled only a single task.	Increasing organizational complexity	
M8	Sometimes higher-level policies impose conditions that all employees must adapt to.	Legal and regulatory requirements	Organizational requirements
M1-M4-M5-M6-M10-M11	Investing in Agricultural Jihad human resources significantly enhances the organization's resilience to challenges.	Need for organizational resilience	
M3-M5-M8-M15	Determines what type of training should be implemented.	Training needs assessment	
M5-M9	Employees voluntarily participate in training.	Motivation for growth and progress in the organization	Individual requirements
M12	One reason for employee participation in training programs is financial incentives.	Employees' economic preferences	

In the final stage of selective coding, the different conditions identified in the axial coding stage were integrated for comprehensive analysis. The paradigm model was applied to establish a cohesive framework. At this stage, 29 selective codes were extracted.

Theoretical propositions describe generalized relationships between categories and their concepts. While hypotheses establish measurable relationships, grounded theory produces conceptual relationships rather than measurable ones. Therefore, the term "propositions" is preferred, as researchers can later convert these into hypotheses for quantitative research.

Table 2. Categorization of Axial and Selective Codes

Core Category	Selective Coding	Axial Coding

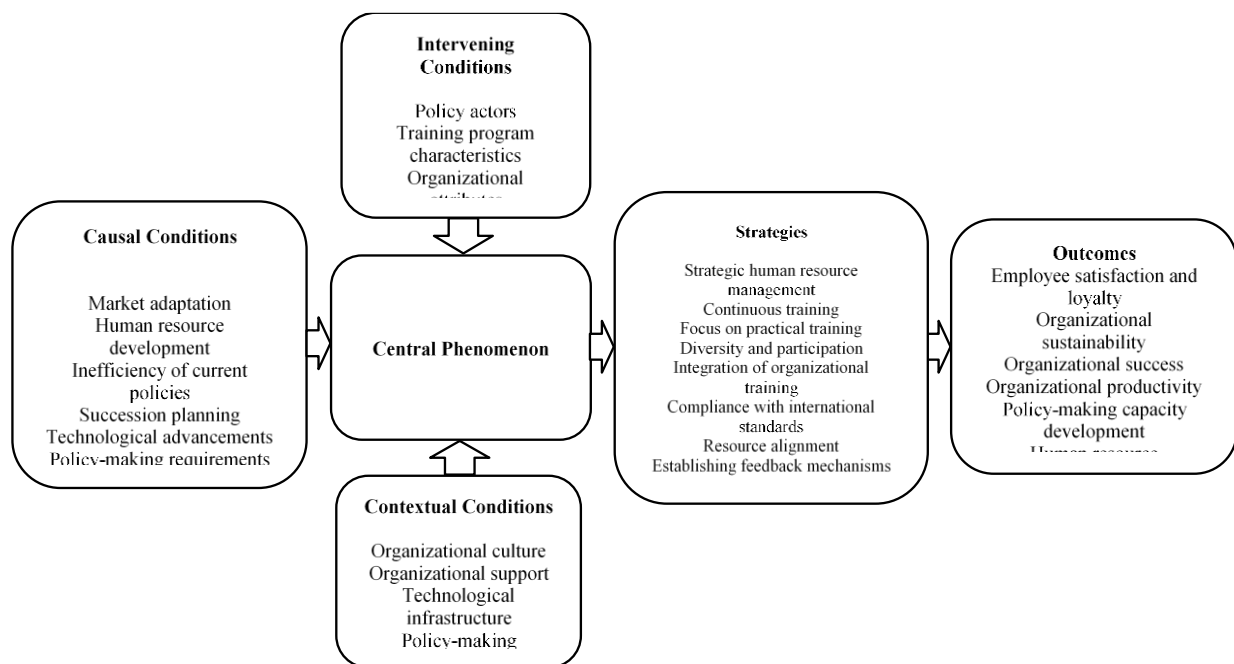| Causal Conditions	Market adaptation	Expected change
	Employee development	Human resources role
	Inefficiency of current policies	Preventing future issues
	Succession planning	Career advancement
	Technological advancements	Diversity of expertise
	Policy-making requirements	Organizational requirements
Contextual Conditions	Organizational culture	Learning culture
	Organizational support	Alignment of training with policy
	Technological infrastructure	Organizational financial resources
	Policy-making capabilities	Social capital
Intervening Conditions	Policy actors	Policy implementation
	Training program characteristics	Training type, content, evaluation
	Organizational features	Internal and external factors
Strategies	Strategic HR management	Employee motivation
	Continuous training	Lifelong learning
	Focus on practical training	Skill-based training
	Diversity and participation	Inclusion, innovation
	Organizational training integration	Internal cohesion
Outcomes	Employee satisfaction and loyalty	Meeting expectations
	Organizational survival	Resilience
	Organizational success	Growth and transformation
	Organizational productivity	Enhanced efficiency
	Policy-making capacity development	Effective policies
	Human capital development	Training, learning, development

Figure 1. Final Organizational Training Model for Enhancing Policy-Making Capacity

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to design an organizational training model for enhancing policy-making capacity in the Agricultural Jihad Organization. The study employed a grounded theory approach to identify model components, resulting in 431 key concepts, which were categorized into 68 axial categories and classified under six main categories: causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes. In the final stage of selective coding, after aggregation and integration, these 68 axial categories were consolidated into 29 selective codes, forming the organizational training model for enhancing

policy-making capacity in the Agricultural Jihad Organization.

According to the developed model, six factors—market adaptation, human resource development, inefficiency of current policies, succession planning, rapid technological advancement, and policy-making requirements and needs— were identified as causal conditions of organizational training. In today's rapidly changing world, characterized by technological advancements, organizations, especially the Agricultural Jihad Organization, must respond effectively to environmental changes to keep pace and adapt, ensuring they meet evolving customer needs. This adaptation is unattainable without training employees to understand new circumstances and utilize modern tools and technologies in the agricultural sector. Enhancing human resources through training ensures the organization's competitiveness. Purposeful training fosters smart policy-making capacity within the organization by strengthening human resource capabilities.

The study also found that organizational culture, organizational support, technological infrastructure, and policy-making capabilities provide the context for implementing organizational training to improve policy-making within the Agricultural Jihad Organization. A supportive organizational climate, governed by productive values and beliefs aimed at self-sufficiency and optimal agricultural production, facilitates effective policy selection and implementation. Additionally, support from employees and senior managers accelerates and facilitates policy implementation and organizational objectives. The feasibility of enhancing policy-making capacity depends on the technological infrastructure, financial resources, and human and social capital within the Agricultural Jihad Organization.

The findings further indicate that factors such as policy actors, organizational characteristics, training program features, and training attractiveness influence the design and execution of organizational training programs. Internal and external pressures, including policy environment dynamics and stakeholder expectations, affect the policy-making capacity and process within the organization. Resistance to change obstructs growth, progress, and innovation within the organization. Stakeholder demands force policy-makers to identify deficiencies in policy formulation and implementation and develop corrective strategies. Moreover, organizational size, complexity, and geographic location impact policy-making capacity, as Iran's diverse climatic conditions necessitate specialized knowledge and

training tailored to regional agricultural needs. The quality of training programs also plays a crucial role, as factors such as training objectives, types of training, scheduling, venue selection, and execution methods significantly impact the effectiveness of organizational training and its outcomes.

Another key finding was the identification of strategies for enhancing policy-making capacity through organizational training. Implementing strategies such as strategic human resource management, resource optimization, practical training, continuous education, integration of organizational training, diversity and participation, adherence to international standards, and feedback mechanisms can greatly contribute to training effectiveness. Strategic HR management aligns organizational resources with policies and strategies, ensuring cohesion across structural and procedural aspects. Encouraging diversity and participation in training programs, integrating training approaches, and emphasizing practical and specialized training for the Agricultural Jihad Organization highlight the need for continuous education to maintain preparedness for evolving challenges and improve individual and group performance. Adherence to international standards and the establishment of feedback mechanisms enable managers to assess whether existing organizational training should continue, be modified, or be discontinued.

Additionally, the findings suggest that structured planning by senior managers regarding organizational training programs can yield significant competitive advantages for the Agricultural Jihad Organization, making it difficult for competitors to replicate. The long-term benefits of quality organizational training include organizational survival, success, productivity, enhanced policy-making capacity, human resource development, and employee satisfaction and loyalty. Training enhances employees' specialized knowledge and skills, efficient resource management, and job creativity, leading to improved organizational productivity. Human resource development directly contributes to policy-making capacity, ensuring that the organization can fulfill its mission and respond effectively to stakeholders' needs, ultimately securing organizational survival. Employee growth and achievement of individual and organizational goals foster job satisfaction and organizational commitment, leading to higher employee loyalty and dedication.

The findings of this study align with previous research. Abbassian et al. (2020) identified organizational support, employee dissatisfaction, financial resources, policy actors,

self-sufficiency, and sustainable development as critical factors in designing a policy model for guaranteed wheat procurement in Iran [17], which corresponds to the findings of this study. Hosseini et al. (2018) highlighted infrastructure, organizational culture, access to resources, regulations, innovation, and policy alignment, similar to the current research [2]. Taheri (2016) emphasized educational characteristics, social responsibility, managerial support, meritocracy, and financial resources [20], which are consistent with the findings of this study. Ebrahimi et al. (2014) identified organizational culture, policy environment, financial resources, lack of practical training, poor cooperation among policy actors, limited knowledge, weak human resources, resistance to change, human capital, and inconsistencies [29], which align with the present study's conclusions. Esmaili Pour et al. (2016) underscored the importance of human resource development, technological advancements, e-learning, and virtual training [30], which match this study's findings on training infrastructure and knowledge acquisition. Parsa Moin and Yazdani (2019) found a significant positive correlation between in-service training and employee efficiency and effectiveness, including motivation, responsibility, goal-setting participation, adaptability, organizational commitment, creativity, and innovation [22], consistent with this study. Karimi and Salimi (2015) emphasized investment in human resources, modern approaches and tools, change preparedness, and in-service training to enhance organizational productivity [31], which aligns with the findings. Samiei Zafarqandi (2013) proposed an integrated training system focusing on goal-setting, needs assessment, curriculum design, execution conditions, and evaluation, emphasizing comprehensive training structures [32], which is in line with the results of this study. Harth Abadi et al. (2014) identified individual, organizational, professional, and training program factors [33], corresponding to the findings of this research.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can help the Agricultural Jihad Organization and similar government organizations develop organizational training programs to enhance policy-making capacity. These include utilizing the proposed model derived from expert opinions in the Agricultural Jihad Organization and public administration, incorporating all key model components to improve policy-making capacity. It is essential to prioritize training needs assessment, as overlooking this critical step can render training efforts ineffective and waste organizational resources. Organizations should use training programs as a transformative tool, allowing managers to identify performance gaps and initiate organizational improvements. Encouraging the adoption of modern agricultural techniques is also recommended, as traditional farming methods are no longer sufficient to meet population growth and agricultural demands. Investment in human capital is vital, recognizing that training and development are essential for organizational competitiveness and innovation. Establishing internal succession planning through training can enhance employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Senior managers should take organizational training seriously, aligning employee and organizational goals and fostering mutual benefits. Strategic and well-structured training policies should be developed to enhance organizational resilience, ensuring training programs are continuous and aligned with global standards. Future researchers are encouraged to examine the proposed training model in educational institutions and other sectors, comparing results with this study to validate the model's effectiveness. Investigating policy-making capacity models tailored to the Agricultural Jihad Organization could provide further insights.

This study has a few limitations. High turnover among managers in the Agricultural Jihad Organization may have influenced the reliability of findings. Additionally, traditional mindsets among experienced interviewees could have affected data interpretation and research outcomes, despite their extensive work experience.

Authors' Contributions

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Declaration of Interest

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Ethical Considerations

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