INTERCATHEDRA

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LEADERSHIP PAVING PATHS FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Abstract. The study is conducted with the purpose to identify the relationship between leadership and Total Quality Management (TQM). In order to elaborate the multiple outcomes of transformational leadership with reference to TQM, previously published articles from a variety of journals were reviewed. Evidence from the literature show that there is a strong relationship between leadership and the effective implementation of TQM. Without appropriate leadership, organizations can fail as they are far from achieving their quality objectives. It is also noted that various styles of leadership play a vital role in promoting various TQM practices. The literature shows that transformational leadership is more effective for the successful implementation of TQM but the level of efficacy can be influenced by variations in cultural, regional and organizational contexts.

Keywords: leadership, quality management, Total Quality Management, transformational leadership

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, organizations and customers have been more conscious about the quality requirements than they were in the past. The notion of maximum utility, efficiency and effectiveness has caused the concept of quality to move from theory to practice. In this regard, different applications and methods are introduced with time, to aim continuous improvement both at the organizational and personal levels (Sadeh and Garkaz, 2015; Weckenmann et al., 2015). The inclusion of quality at every level is indispensable for organizational success and survival, and they are more diverted to the concept of quality improvement. In recent studies, the term Total Quality Management (TQM) has been used interchangeably with quality improvement. TQM is a sequential management concept which aims to achieve continuous improvement and success in the long run,

through customer satisfaction which is possible only if all of the organizational team members are committed to it (Imran and Raziq, 2020). Regarding the content of TQM, contradictions are found among investigators but there is an agreement among them with regard to the impacts of leadership on TQM.

Leadership influences behaviors and actions of the followers (employees in the case of an organization), which supports the achievement of successful TQM strategy execution (Cho and Jung, 2014; Sfakianaki, 2019). In organizations where TQM strategy fails, it is usually attributable to weaker management or leadership which is not supportive (Dilawo and Salimi, 2019; Krajcsák, 2019; Tripathi et al., 2020). So, it can be said that leadership is an integral part of TQM (Kaufman, 1992; Weckenmann et al., 2015), providing the main measures and indicators that can assist in promoting overall quality (Feigenbaum, 2002; Foster, 2002).

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In recent years, researchers have been elaborating on metrics for TQM, suggesting soft and hard metrics for successful TQM implementation. Soft metrics rely more on management philosophy, concepts and mainframe principles, while hard metrics are more about management practices, tools and techniques. According to contemporary researchers, leadership falls into the category of soft metrics and the type of leadership can have an impact on TQM, depending on its nature.

The current study will shed light on the importance of leadership in promoting the concept of TQM, in view of the existing literature. The study is unique as it provides a comprehensive description of how and in what areas of TQM, a specific leadership style, can play a vital role. Furthermore, each leadership style can be assessed on the basis of its contribution to a specific component of TQM. The study will also elaborate on why recent studies have favored transformational leadership as more effective in the successful implementation of TQM. Initiation of the study is essential as little attention is paid to the impact of leadership in managing quality (Lakshman, 2006).

The organization of the article is as follows: the first part is the introduction which presents the main theme of the study. The second part is the literature review which provides evidence from literature about the relationship between leadership and TQM, and also shows the impact of various leadership styles on TQM. This part also elaborates on the multi-dimensional contribution of transformational leadership towards effective TQM implementation. The third part defines the objectives of the study while the fourth part explains why this study is worth to be carried out. The fifth part presents the methodology while the sixth part provides the conclusion of the whole study. The last part of the article shows the limitations of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality Management (QM) is an approach solely dedicated to achieve and sustain high-quality outputs (Flynn et al., 1994) while TQM is a holistic management philosophy that is concerned about continuous improvement in all dimensions of an organization and can be achieved through the concepts of extensive quality (Kaynak, 2003). It is important not to interchange the two terms, as both of them differ in terms of scope and quality perception. TQM is an effective concept because it is more focused on the process, caring about both internal and external customers, involving employees in decision making by empowering them and adopting best practices (Tan and Shen, 2000). TQM cannot be implemented ifemployees are not empowered (Salazar et al., 2010) and they can be empowered only if organizations are decentralized; and this can be ensured with the use of various types of leadership (Al-Dhaafri et al., 2013). Organizations can fail if their managers lack leadership qualities that can encourage empowering, supporting and leading the subordinates (Hodgkinson, 2009).

The concept of continuous improvement and quality enhancement can be realized trough various crucial factors and leadership is one of them (Ignore, 2009) as it plays a pivotal role in achieving organizational success through effective TQM implementation (Osseo-Asare et al., 2007). The logic is that leadership influences the behaviors of organizational members which leads them to be motivated to achieve higher quality of performance (Waldman, 1994). Leadership is the primary element in promoting the culture of quality(Kaya et al., 2010; Pereira-Moliner et al., 2012).

According to Wang and Cheng (2010), the five leadership styles – transformational leadership, transactional leadership, visionary leadership, charismatic leadership and culture-based leadership – can have impacts on TQM in different dimensions. For instance, transformational leadership increases the optimism of employees regarding positive outcomes in the course of implementing a TQM strategy and can easily embed the prevailing environmental changes (McCleskey, 2014). Transactional leadership provides clearly drafted guidelines along with the resources required to effectively complete the scheduled tasks, ensuring smooth routine operations to achieve the planned quality (Al-Dhaafri et al., 2013). Visionary leadership focuses on effective communication, linking present commitment with future goals, clarifying the vision and mission of the firm and helps in promoting quality performance (Dhammika, 2014). Charismatic leadership is effective in promoting novelty and creativity in subordinates which are the basic elements of the effective implementation of TQM (Salaheldin et al., 2015). The deliverables of culture-based leadership are productive in terms of bringing balance and synergy among the tasks and also help in the resolution of conflicts (Lührmann and Eberl, 2007), and all of these outcomes are important for the successful implementation of TQM (Al-Dhaafri et al., 2013).

The optimal utilization of resources enables firms to achieve efficiency and effectiveness which is a significant contribution to quality improvement and it can become reality with the help of an appropriate leadership style (Shewhart and Deming, 1986). Leadership along with a commitment to quality can be fruitful in managing quality because this combination clarifies the vision of the firm, providing employees with clear clues as to which directions to follow (Endres, 2000). The famous rewards for quality such as The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) also concluded that the presence of leadership and commitment of top management is indispensable to bring forth quality in different shapes (Wilson and Collier, 2000). Various empirical investigations of MBNQA concluded that the presence of proper leadership is essential not only for quality embedding but also for overall organizational success (Wilson and Collier, 2000). Initially, leadership was investigated from the perspective of top management and it was concluded that if top management is supportive, the quality and performance of the firm can be increased (Sousa and Voss, 2002).

Some researchers, such as Crofton and Dale (1996), came up with the idea that employee involvement is more important for quality promotion. They asserted that employee involvement is supported only if there is an appropriate leadership style in the organization and the ultimate outcome will be the effective implementation of TQM. Therefore, it can be noted that leadership is the founding pillar for the successful management of quality (González and Guillén, 2002) because leadership molds behaviors, roles and responsibilities of a firm's

employees and this decides about the success of quality management (Cho and Jung, 2014).

IS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP A BEST-FIT FOR TQM IMPLEMENTATION?

Among the various leadership styles, Transformational Leadership (TL) is proactive, most flexible and has been appreciated as the main contributor to successful TQM implementation (Yee et al., 2013). In the recent years, numerous empirical studies have shown that the numerous dimensions of transformational leadership can have significant and positive impacts on TQM practices (Argia and Ismail, 2013). In the education sector, leadership style can achieve the main purpose of TQM in the form of robust organizational performance, i.e. strategic planning, faculty and staff focus, pupil and stakeholder focus (Pounder, 2003). Another study in Indian firms showed that the leadership style is more effective in the manufacturing industry; it is productive in problem-solving and promotes TQM practices in the form of continuous improvement, creativity and innovation (Kumar and Sharma, 2018). In the same manner, an investigation in the Thai manufacturing industry concluded that organizations adopting transformational leadership can effectively implement TQM practices (Das et al., 2011).

Transformational leadership combined with management communication can positively influence the TQM dimension, i.e. management control systems (Doeleman et al., 2012). Likewise, a study carried out by Huang et al. (2010) suggested that such areas of TQM
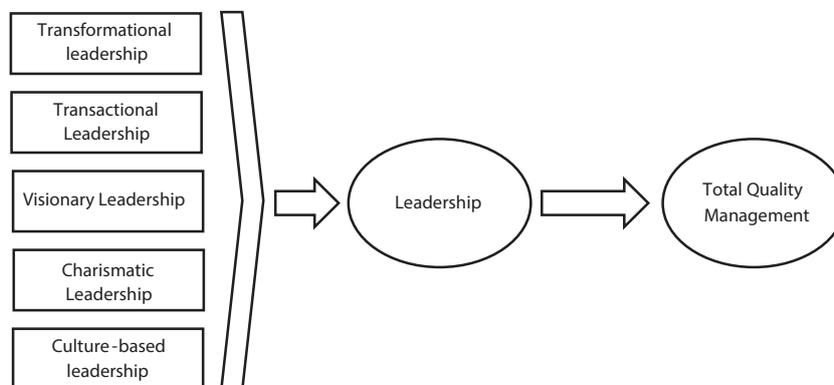

Fig. 1. Theoretical Model
Source: designed by the author based on the available literature.

as teamwork, trust, creativity and innovation, leading to greater employee commitment, are positively influenced by the transformational leadership style. Reliability and responsiveness which are the founding areas of service quality are positively affected by transformational leadership (Lee et al., 2011). One of the investigations demonstrated that strategic planning, customer focus, process management, human resource management and analysis of information, which are all TQM practices, are positively affected by this leadership style (Cho and Jung, 2014). Transformational leadership, based on the evidence from literature, can be a well-suited leadership strategy for the desired TQM implementation but it might not always be the case, as national culture plays an important role in determining the efficacy of a leadership style (Cho and Jung, 2014).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- to investigate the existing literature and find the relationship between leadership and Total Quality Management (TQM) practices.
- to know how the various leadership styles can have impact on TQM practices.
- to find whether Transformational Leadership is an effective leadership style for promoting TQM practices.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Due to the higher pace of urbanization, technological advancement and demanding dynamics in the current environment, quality is required in products, services, procedures and operations. Quality is a key to access to efficiency and effectiveness which cannot be achieved without proper guidelines. The required guidelines can be obtained from appropriate leadership which can embed the essence of quality in every component of the organization and its deliverables. The current investigation is an initiative to highlight the importance of various leadership styles in different dimensions of quality improvement. Unlike previous researches; which focus on a specific dimension of TQM, the current study provides a comprehensive overview of how various leadership styles contribute to different areas of TQM. Furthermore, the study also looks into literature with the purpose to find if transformational leadership is more effective than other leadership styles in the field of quality management.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a survey of the existing literature where the focus was to retrieve information concerning the relationship and impacts of various leadership styles on Total Quality Management (TQM) practices. The information used in the study is secondary in nature and is collected from previously published articles, websites and online databases.

DISCUSSION

Quality management is a indispensable strategy that makes an organization successful by satisfying both internal and external customers, bringing competitive advantage, efficiency and success to the organization. Organizations may fail if they lack proper leadership (Kumar and Sharma, 2018; Dilawo and Salimi, 2019; Krajcsák, 2019). Based on the available literature, it has been shown that there is a significant link between the presence of appropriate leadership and TQM (Cho and Jung, 2014; Sfakianaki, 2019). Nowadays, as there are different leadership styles (Wang and Cheng, 2010), each style of leadership can contribute to a specific area of TQM practices. The various leadership styles and their contribution to quality management is illustrated in the following table:

Table 1 clearly indicates that no matter what the style of leadership is, it will contribute to TQM practices in one way or another. It depends on the respective organization which area it wants to improve in quality and can adopt a leadership style based on its quality requirements. The literature shows that among the presented leadership styles, transformational leadership seems to be the most effective as its contributions towards quality improvement are more diverse and broader. But the application of transformational leadership might be not as fruitful as expected because cultural context plays an important role in determining the efficacy of a leadership style (Cho and Jung, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The current study evaluated the importance of leadership in promoting the concept of TQM by reviewing articles published in various journals. The literature reveals that previous works mostly focused on specific outcomes related to TQM. The novelty of the current

Table 1. Leadership Styles and their contribution to TQM

Leadership style	Contribution to an area of TQM	Study Carried out by
Transformational Leadership	Optimism in employees Flexibility to adjust to Changes	McCleskey, 2014
	Organizational performance Strategic Planning Stakeholder's focus	Pounder, 2003
	Problem-solving Creativity and innovation	Kumar and Sharma, 2018
	Effective management of Control systems	Doeleman et al., 2012
	Teamwork Trust Employees commitment	Rui et al., 2010
	Reliability and responsiveness	Lee et al., 2011
	Process management Human resource management Information analysis	Cho and Jung, 2014
Transactional Leadership	Efficiency Smooth routine operation Achieving planned quality	Al-Dhaafri et al., 2013
Visionary Leadership	Quality performance Effective communication Goal achievement	Dhammika, 2014
Charismatic Leadership	Novelty Creativity	Salaheldin et al. 2015
Culture-based Leadership	Balance and synergy within the organization Effective conflict resolution	Lührmann and Eberl, 2007

Source: table designed by the author on the basis of available literature.

investigation consists in the adoption of an integrated approach, showing multi-faceted outcomes of leadership with reference to the promotion of TQM ideology at both individual and organizational level. It was noted that leadership, regardless of its type, can contribute to quality dimensions in one way or another. Furthermore, evidence from literature support assumption that among the available leadership styles, transformational leadership seems to be more effective as it can yield multi-dimensional positive outcomes. In the contemporary competitive environment, organizations should consider transformational leadership not only to achieve TQM objectives but also to be proactive, innovative and to gain competitive advantage.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study is theoretical in nature and no empirical data is used, therefore the findings might be biased due to differences in the context of culture and industry in which the previous studies were carried out. Furthermore, the comparison of various leadership styles and their outcomes concerning TQM is retrieved from previous studies which were carried out in diverse cultures and industries which is why it cannot imply the superiority of one leadership style over other styles. An empirical study can be carried out in one specific cultural context to compare the various leadership styles and their outcomes in the field of quality management.

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PRZYWÓDZTWO WYTYCZAJĄCE ŚCIEŻKI DO ZARZĄDZANIA JAKOŚCIĄ

Abstrakt. Artykuł ma charakter rozważań teoretycznych, a badanie prowadzone jest w celu określenia związku przywództwa z systemem zarządzania jakością Total Quality Management (TQM). Aby poznać wielorakie efekty przywództwa transformacyjnego w odniesieniu do TQM, dokonano przeglądu wcześniej opublikowanych artykułów z różnych czasopism. Z literatury przedmiotu wynika, że istnieje silny związek pomiędzy przywództwem a skutecznym wdrażaniem TQM. Bez odpowiedniego przywództwa organizacje mogą ponieść porażkę, gdyż są dalekie od osiągnięcia celów jakościowych. Zauważa się również, że różne style przywództwa odgrywają istotną rolę w promowaniu różnych praktyk TQM. Literatura wskazuje, że przywództwo transformacyjne jest bardziej skuteczne w skutecznym wdrażaniu TQM, ale na poziom skuteczności mogą wpływać różnice w kontekstach kulturowych, regionalnych i organizacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: przywództwo, zarządzanie jakością, Total Quality Management, przywództwo transformacyjne