

The Effect Transformational Leadership on Total Quality Management in Oil and Gas Industry

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ABSTRACT

Leadership style and quality management are fundamental drivers of success in today's highly competitive oil and gas industry. In the UAE, the sector faces unique challenges when implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) practices and transformational leadership, due to industry-specific factors, constraints in organizational learning, and hierarchical workplace cultures. This study addresses a gap in the literature by examining the interrelationships among transformational leadership, organizational learning capability, and TQM within ADNOC, a leading oil and gas firm in the Middle East. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design will be adopted. The minimum required sample size, determined using Yamane's formula, is 355 respondents from a total population of 3,100 ADNOC employees at various operational and managerial levels. To improve the accuracy and reliability of findings, a larger number of questionnaires will be distributed. Data will be collected via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS and AMOS, with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as the primary analytical technique. Reliability and validity will be assessed through Cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis. The study is expected to provide empirical evidence on how transformational leadership influences TQM practices both directly and through organizational learning capability. Practical recommendations will be offered for leadership development, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and employee empowerment within ADNOC and similar organizations. Limitations such as focus on a single company and the use of a cross-sectional research design will be acknowledged. Future research directions include comparative studies across the GCC region and the investigation of additional leadership styles or mediating variables. This research aims to contribute original insights to the limited body of empirical work on leadership and quality management integration in the UAE oil and gas sector, supporting organizational excellence and sustainability.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, TQM, Organizational Learning, Oil and Gas Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological advancement and increasing global competition have significantly transformed modern business environments, particularly within the oil and gas (O&G) industry. Organizations operating in this sector are under continuous pressure to improve operational efficiency, maintain high quality standards, enhance sustainability, and remain competitive in dynamic markets. In response to these challenges, leadership has become a critical organizational factor that influences strategic direction, employee performance, and long-term organizational success (Fareed & Su, 2022). Among various leadership approaches, transformational leadership has gained considerable attention due to its ability to inspire employees, encourage innovation, and facilitate organizational change within complex industrial environments such as the O&G sector (Khoso, Jamali, & Iqbal, 2021). Transformational leadership emphasizes motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational influence, enabling leaders to create a culture that supports creativity, commitment, and continuous improvement (Bharadwaj, Chauhan, & Raman, 2015). Previous studies have highlighted that transformational leaders play an essential role in improving organizational effectiveness by fostering adaptive cultures and supporting strategic initiatives aimed at achieving sustainability and organizational resilience (Nasir, Zakaria, & Zien Yusoff, 2022; Madi Odeh, Obeidat, Jaradat, Masa'deh, & Alshurideh, 2023). In the O&G industry, where operational complexity and technical challenges are substantial,

transformational leadership is increasingly recognized as an important driver for improving management practices and enhancing organizational quality performance.

At the same time, Total Quality Management (TQM) has emerged as one of the most important management philosophies for improving organizational performance and achieving continuous improvement. TQM focuses on customer satisfaction, employee involvement, process management, integrated systems, fact-based decision-making, and continuous improvement to enhance organizational efficiency and competitiveness. Effective implementation of TQM requires strong leadership support, strategic commitment, and a workplace culture that encourages employee participation and innovation. Ahmed and Idris (2020) argued that leadership alignment with TQM practices enables O&G organizations to achieve long-term operational and infrastructural benefits. Similarly, recent studies indicate that the integration of leadership and TQM practices contributes significantly to organizational competitiveness, operational excellence, and sustainable performance (Naidoo & Govender, 2023).

Organizations with strong learning capabilities are more capable of acquiring, sharing, and utilizing knowledge to improve processes and support innovation. Transformational leadership has been found to enhance organizational learning by promoting trust, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovative thinking among employees (Hakkak, Nawaser, Vafaei-Zadeh, & Hanifah, 2021; Idris, Suyuti, Supriyanto, & As, 2022). Moreover, TQM practices have also been associated with improved organizational learning processes, which contribute to better operational performance and organizational adaptability (Tortorella et al., 2020). Despite the growing body of literature on transformational leadership and TQM, limited empirical research has examined the interrelationship among these variables within the O&G industry, particularly in the context of Middle Eastern organizations. Existing studies have largely focused on manufacturing and service industries, while research addressing the unique operational and managerial challenges of the O&G sector remains insufficient. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between transformational leadership and TQM in O&G organizations. The study aims to explain how transformational leadership contributes to the successful implementation of TQM practices through effective leadership style, thereby supporting organizational competitiveness, operational excellence, and sustainable development in the O&G industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership

James introduced transformational leadership in 1973 and Burns extended it in 1978. Bass developed the idea in 1985 to incorporate transformational leadership success metrics. Many papers and books on transformational leadership followed (Bass, 1995; Bass and Avolio, 1990). These studies have established transformational leadership as a valued leadership style. Many effective companies focus on inspiring and encouraging people to reach their potential (Bass, 1990). Research and literature suggest that transformational leadership promotes creativity, cooperation, and a healthy company culture. Transformational leadership boosts employee engagement and corporate success. Companies that adopt this leadership style find higher production, employee happiness, and performance. Transformational leaders foster development and achievement by empowering and growing their teams. Thus, transformational leadership is essential to high-performing organisations (Benson, 2023). Transformational leadership inspires and motivates workers to reach their potential (Peng, Li, Wang, & Lin, 2021). Such leaders are charismatic, energetic, and able to convey a clear future vision. They may also develop strong team ties and encourage team members to own their job (Muliati, Asbari, Nadeak, Novitasari, & Purwanto, 2022). Transformational leaders create a great, supportive workplace where people feel appreciated and driven to achieve well. Transformational leaders promote trust and cooperation to inspire team innovation and creativity. They question the existing quo and encourage creative thinking in their staff (Phong & Thanh, 2023). Transformational leadership in O&G organizations inspires and motivates staff to embrace change and innovation to promote development and success (Marzooqi, Samsudin, & Aziz, 2022). These leaders can convey the company's vision and objectives while encouraging their employees to take charge and flourish. Transformational O&G leaders may achieve positive change and lasting outcomes by promoting cooperation and continual improvement (Joseph, 2023). They adapt well to a fast-changing sector and solve problems creatively. Transformational leaders in O&G firms may create a vibrant, inventive workplace where people feel encouraged

to share their ideas and knowledge by promoting a proactive and forward-thinking approach. These leaders shape the company's future and position it for long-term success in the competitive energy market (Almaamari, Ali, & Almeer, 2022).

According to Alshehhi, Jano, and Kudus (2023), transformational leadership will help O&G enterprises in the UAE in a number of ways, including better operational efficiency, increased employee engagement, and a stronger competitive edge. UAE O&G enterprises may remain ahead in technology adoption, sustainability, and market trends by adopting transformational leadership. This proactive strategy will boost corporate development and promote these enterprises as regional leaders, creating a new industry standard (Hemmatipanah, 2024). O&G firms may build a culture of innovation and adaptation via transformational leadership, enabling them to react swiftly to shifting market circumstances and new possibilities. These organizations may stand out from rivals and lead their industries by encouraging staff to be innovative and take strategic risks (Almuharrami & Aziz, 2022). Companies working in the O&G industry in the UAE may ensure long-term success and establish themselves as forward-thinking, sustainable industry leaders by prioritising transformational leadership (Meng, 2023). Global economic development and energy security depend on oil and gas corporations. These firms harvest, refine, and distribute resources that power industry, transportation, and homes worldwide (Almarri, 2024). It has been reported that O&G companies' performance affects energy supply, pricing, geopolitics, and environmental sustainability. O&G enterprises are crucial to contemporary society and the global economy (Asal et al., 2022). Due to environmental impacts including carbon emissions and oil spills, their operations are regularly monitored. Oil and gas price variations influence inflation and stock markets worldwide (Agbaji, 2021). Despite these obstacles, oil and gas businesses continue to innovate and enhance technology to fulfil the world's energy demands. These enterprises must invest in sustainable practises and renewable energy for a more secure future to reconcile economic development with environmental concerns by adopting the right leadership style (Naja & Ungku Ahmad, 2024).

In sum, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in the success of O&G companies by promoting a shared vision and inspiring employees to work towards common goals (Badrinarayanan, 2024). This leadership style encourages adaptability and agility in an industry that is constantly evolving, allowing companies to stay ahead of the curve and respond effectively to market changes. Additionally, transformational leaders are able to build strong relationships with employees, creating a sense of loyalty and commitment that can drive employee engagement and retention (Khudhair, Rahman, Adnan, & Khudhair, 2022). Overall, transformational leadership contributes to the long-term sustainability and growth of O&G companies by fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. By empowering employees to take ownership of their work and develop their skills, transformational leaders can cultivate a culture of continuous improvement within the organization (Logendran & Ayakanu, 2023). By embracing transformational leadership, O&G companies can drive positive change, drive growth, and secure their position as industry leaders for the long haul (Ekemezie et al, 2024). This not only enhances the company's overall performance but also boosts employee morale and job satisfaction. Ultimately, the combination of a motivated workforce and a forward-thinking leadership approach positions O&G companies for success in an increasingly competitive market (Abdulridha & Fathi, 2024).

Total Quality Management

To satisfy customers, Total Quality Management (TQM) improves processes and products continuously. It requires company-wide collaboration to increase quality and reduce waste (Wheaton & Birgit, 2018). TQM promotes customer input and data-driven decision making to enhance all business sectors. Companies can improve quality, efficiency, and customer loyalty by using TQM (Grossu-Leibovica & Kalkis, 2022). TQM reduces costs and boosts profits by stressing quality throughout production. TQM encourages creativity and collaboration, which boosts employee happiness and retention. TQM aims to sustain a competitive advantage by exceeding customer expectations and providing excellent products and services (Grossu-Leibovica & Kalkis, 2022). Through TQM, companies can build a reputation for excellence and long-term client connections. Meeting and exceeding client expectations builds confidence and loyalty, leading to repeat business and favorable word-of-mouth recommendations (Aljuhani, 2019). This can generate regular revenue and a market advantage. TQM emphasises continual improvement and customer satisfaction to help firms succeed and grow (Xu, Peng, Pavur, & Prybutok, 2020).

TQM helps O&G organizations achieve and exceed customer expectations by providing a framework for continuous improvement (Ladewski & Al-Bayati, 2019). Through quality at every level of the business, TQM helps develop a reputation for reliability and excellence, which can attract and keep customers. TQM also promotes staff collaboration and communication, improving procedures and decision-making (Ladewski & Al-Bayati, 2019). TQM helps O&G organizations compete and adapt in today's fast-paced, ever-changing industry. TQM also helps O&G firms spot and fix issues before they escalate (Permana, Purba, & Rizkiyah, 2021). A proactive strategy saves time and resources and boosts productivity and profitability. O&G enterprises may thrive in the dynamic energy market by promoting continuous learning and innovation with TQM (Bastas & Liyanage, 2018). O&G firms can establish reliability and excellence by prioritizing quality in all aspects of their operations. This can boost client loyalty and give you an edge over competitors (Horvat & Filipovic, 2020). O&G firms can also quickly adjust to regulatory, technological, and market changes by monitoring and assessing their operations (Chen, Wang, & Lee, 2018). In an increasingly competitive and difficult environment, TQM helps O&G companies survive and prosper (Chen et al., 2018).

TQM is a systematic way to identify and enhance an organisation, thus researchers should focus on it (Brata & Soediantono, 2022). Researching TQM principles and practices can help firms implement quality management techniques to meet their business goals. Researchers can also advise organizations on improving quality management by examining TQM's effects on different industries and sectors (Ramlawati, 2018). TQM research can help organizations innovate, stay competitive, and adapt to market demands. This research can also uncover typical TQM implementation issues and help firms establish solutions and best practises (Tayyab, Awan, & Bukhari, 2020). Researchers can improve quality management across sectors by sharing this knowledge with industry professionals and organisations (Baker, 2019). The ongoing research and analysis of TQM principles can improve company efficiency and effectiveness, benefiting both organizations and consumers (Baker, 2019). In the context of O&G, companies use a systematic approach to quality improvement and customer satisfaction (Agyapong, Asuah, & Nyamah, 2023). It ensures products and services meet or exceed customer expectations through continual improvement, staff involvement, and customer focus. TQM ensures safety, dependability, and efficiency in O&G operations and keeps companies competitive globally (Lim, Lee, Ooi, Foo, & Tan, 2024). O&G companies can improve their reputation, customer loyalty, and industry growth by adopting TQM. TQM also streamlines O&G processes, reduces waste, and reduces errors, saving money and increasing profitability (Abdulridha & Fathi, 2024). TQM increases employee engagement and satisfaction by promoting quality and responsibility, which boosts productivity and innovation. TQM drives quality and sustainability in the O&G industry, making it essential for success in today's competitive market (Abdulridha & Fathi, 2024).

O&G companies' global economic impact shows their importance. Global industry, transportation, and homes depend on oil and gas (Drewniak & Drewniak, 2022). O&G enterprises must be stable and reliable to offer energy to modern civilization. O&G firms' creativity and technology have improved drilling, extraction, and environmental sustainability. This constant evolution is needed to address the energy needs of a growing population while limiting environmental effect (Mbonu & Amahalu, 2023). As the world population grows, energy demand will rise, making O&G companies increasingly more important. Research and development help O&G firms enhance efficiency, reduce emissions, and investigate alternate energy sources. Innovation is essential to securing a sustainable energy future for future generations (Jaya, Ramadhani, Istikarani, Prabowo, Charles, & Fitri, 2024). TQM contributes to O&G companies by providing a framework for continuous improvement and a focus on customer satisfaction. By implementing TQM principles, companies can streamline processes, reduce waste, and increase efficiency. This leads to cost savings, higher quality products and services, and ultimately, a competitive advantage in the market (Afghah, Sajadi, Razavi, & Taghizadeh-Yazdi, 2023). Additionally, TQM encourages a culture of accountability, transparency, and open communication within the organization, which fosters innovation and drives overall business success (Afghah et al., 2023). By embracing TQM, O&G companies can adapt to changing market conditions, meet customer expectations, and stay ahead of the competition. This commitment to quality and continuous improvement also helps build trust and loyalty with customers, leading to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals (Grozovski, Levina, Noskova, & Ershov, 2024). TQM not only benefits the company internally but also enhances its reputation externally, attracting new customers and business opportunities. Overall, by focusing on TQM principles, O&G companies can ensure long-term success and sustainability in the dynamic and competitive market landscape (Grozovski et al., 2024). To that understanding the effects of transformational leadership influence TQM should provide a fresh empirical report on the factors that contribute to high degree of quality in energy production.

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on TQM

Transformational leadership and total quality management are two management approaches that have gained significant attention in recent years for their ability to drive organizational success. Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating employees to achieve their full potential, while total quality management emphasizes continuous improvement and customer satisfaction. When these two approaches are combined, they can create a powerful synergy that leads to higher levels of employee engagement, improved quality of products and services, and ultimately, greater overall organizational performance. By fostering a culture of empowerment, innovation, and continuous learning, transformational leaders can create an environment where employees are motivated to actively participate in quality improvement initiatives and contribute to the organization's success. In this regard, Chen, Lee, and Wang (2020) found TQM and sustainable competitive advantage through the serial mediation of transformational leadership. Their study highlighted the importance of effective leadership in implementing TQM practices and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within an organization. While Khattak, Zolin, and Muhammad (2020) associated transformational leadership and continuous improvement inside the organization with higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance. By focusing on the development of strong leadership skills and promoting a culture of innovation and collaboration, companies can enhance their competitive advantage and achieve long-term success in today's dynamic business environment. Thus, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in driving organizational change and ensuring sustainable growth by implementing TQM. In the same context, Trofino (2000) reported that transformational leadership is essential for moving TQM to world-class organizations. Whereas Rahimi, Rahman, Yusoff, Nor, Lail, Wahab, and Suliman (2020) reported the relationship between educational transformational leadership and teacher quality at secondary school, and TQM as mediator. In this regard, Portela, Tarí, and Molina-Azorín (2020) found that transformational leadership is linked to the European Foundation for quality management model in five-star hotels, indicating that effective leadership is essential for implementing TQM practices in various industries. Furthermore, studies have shown that transformational leaders are able to inspire and motivate employees to embrace change and strive for continuous improvement, leading to enhanced organizational performance and competitiveness. Therefore, it is evident that transformational leadership plays a key role in driving organizational success through the implementation of TQM principles.

In the same context Rahman, Nor, Wahab, and Mansor (2020) reported the influence of TQM and transformational leadership on teacher quality in Malaysian secondary school. Likewise, Argia & Ismail (2013) suggested that transformational leadership has a significant effect on the level of TQM implementation in the higher education sector, indicating a strong relationship between leadership styles and the successful implementation of quality management practices. This highlights the importance of effective leadership such as transformational leadership in promoting a culture of quality and continuous improvement within educational institutions. By fostering transformational leadership behaviors, organizations can enhance the quality of their services and ultimately improve student outcomes. While Aryoko, Pramurindra, and Randikaparsa (2023) claimed that transformational leadership and TQM are linked to each other in a significant relationship, it is important to note that the success of quality management practices also relies on various other factors such as organizational culture, employee engagement, and continuous training and development. Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in driving these factors and creating a conducive environment for the successful implementation of TQM. Therefore, educational institutions must prioritize developing transformational leaders who can inspire and motivate their teams to strive for excellence and innovation in all aspects of their work. By doing so, they can not only meet but exceed the expectations of their stakeholders and achieve sustainable success in the long run. Likewise, Tassanaekjit & Akkawanitcha (2022) reported that effects of employee perception of transformational leadership, total quality management and knowledge sharing towards organizational effectiveness in manufacturing companies. In sum, the literature review reveals that transformational leadership has a significant effect on total quality management practices within organizations. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their employees to strive for continuous improvement and excellence, which aligns well with the principles of total quality management. By fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and employee empowerment, transformational leaders can help drive the successful implementation of total quality management initiatives. Ultimately, the relationship between transformational leadership and total quality management is crucial for achieving organizational success and sustained competitive advantage. Based on the previous arguments and finding, this study will evaluate the following hypothesis in O&G industry.

“Transformational leadership has a positive and significance effect on TQM practices”

METHODOLOGY

A review of the literature is conducted to understand the relationships between transformational leadership and TQM in UAE O&G sector. Quantitative methodology was applied to validate the proposed conceptual framework. questionnaire was administered to collect data from a sample of employees in ADNOC. Simple random sampling technique was applied in the survey procedure. SPSS and AMOS software was utilized to conduct data analysis in this study. SEM is the principal data analysis approach. The researcher has distributed questionnaires to a sample from a population of 3100 employees (operational) level and managers (high/medium/low) levels in the headquarter of ADNOC.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of data analysis reveal the findings that answer research questions of this study. Testing the hypotheses should answer the research questions by providing an evidence on existence of effects and the strength of such effect. This analysis is conducted in several steps, starting with path analysis to assess the significance of direct relationships between transformational leadership, organizational learning capability, and TQM. To that end, the unstandardized coefficients are used to validate and accept the hypotheses, while standardized coefficients (Beta) are used to measure the strength interrelationships between the aforementioned constructs within the structural framework. Reading the output data in Table 4.10 reveals the scale of relationships between transformational leadership and TQM (beta = 0.47), transformational leadership and organizational learning capability (beta = 0.73), finally between organizational learning capability and TQM (beta = 0.60). Reading the values and magnitudes of beta between the constructs, as well as between the constructs and their related dimensions reveal a moderate strength of associations between them.

Table 1: Standardized regression coefficients and significance of relationships

Hypothesis Statement	Directions of effects	Beta	C.R	Sig.	Result
Transformational leadership has a significant effect on TQM	Transformational leadership → TQM	0.47	3.14	0.00	Supported

Based on this result, Transformational Leadership exerts a significant positive effect on TQM practices in ADNOC, with a moderate standardized regression coefficient indicating a substantial influence. The high Critical Ratio and p-value < 0.05 confirm that this relationship is statistically robust, aligning with theoretical expectations that transformational leaders, through behaviors like articulating a compelling vision (loading 0.89) and building trust (loading 0.91), drive TQM practices such as customer-focused feedback (loading 0.92) and ISO-driven management improvements (loading 0.95). Critically, this finding suggests that leadership behaviors fostering inspiration and commitment are pivotal in embedding TQM principles within ADNOC’s operations. However, the moderate Beta (0.47) indicates that while Transformational Leadership is influential, other factors, such as organizational culture or resource constraints, may also affect TQM adoption, suggesting potential implementation challenges like resistance to change or inconsistent leadership across departments. For ADNOC, this result highlights the need to strengthen Transformational Leadership through targeted training programs to enhance TQM implementation, addressing issues like uneven quality adoption by ensuring leaders consistently promote quality standards. Theoretically, this supports the integration of leadership and quality management frameworks, contributing to a novel model for high-stakes industries. Practically, ADNOC can overcome TQM challenges by fostering leaders who inspire quality commitment, ensuring alignment with ISO standards and improving operational excellence in the oil and gas sector.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper explains the relationship between transformational leadership and TQM within the oil and gas industry, particularly in the context of ADNOC in the UAE. The study highlights that transformational leadership plays a vital role in encouraging employee motivation, innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement, all of which are essential for successful TQM implementation. At the same time, leadership is identified as a key

mechanism that enables organizations to acquire, share, and apply knowledge effectively in response to changing market and operational conditions. The review of literature demonstrates that organizations with strong learning capabilities are better positioned to implement quality management practices and achieve higher operational performance. The paper further argues that transformational leadership does not only influence TQM directly. Overall, the proposed relationship contributes to the existing literature by integrating transformational leadership and TQM. The study offers practical implications for managers and policymakers by emphasizing the importance of leadership development, employee learning, and continuous quality improvement as strategic tools for achieving long-term organizational excellence and sustainable growth. The study contributes to the existing literature by integrating transformational leadership, and TQM into a unified model within the context of the UAE oil and gas sector, an area that has received limited empirical attention. It also provides practical insights for managers and policymakers regarding the importance of leadership development and organizational learning in improving quality management practices and operational performance. Based on the findings, the study recommends that ADNOC and similar organizations invest in transformational leadership training programs, promote a culture of continuous learning, and encourage employee participation in decision-making processes to strengthen TQM implementation and achieve sustainable organizational excellence.

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