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**Barriers to implementing Total Quality Management in Saudi
Sectors: Impact on Employee efficiency, productivity, and
organizational performance in the context of vision 2030.**

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Acknowledgment

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Appreciation

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, wife, and children for their unwavering support, encouragement, and motivation throughout my academic journey. Their belief in me was the reason I enrolled in this program, and their support has been the foundation of my personal and professional growth.

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Abstract

This study emphasizes the key barriers for implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) across various sectors in Saudi Arabia, and evaluate their impact on employee efficiency, productivity, and overall organizational performance. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data was collected through questionnaires distributed to employees and managers, while qualitative insights were gathered from interviews with senior leaders and quality experts. These indicate that common obstacles such as lack of leadership support, resistance to change, inadequate training. These barriers negatively affect employee performance and limit the achievement of quality standards aligned with the strategic goals of Saudi Vision 2030. The study concludes with practical recommendations to enhance quality culture, strength leadership commitment, and align organizational practices with national transformation objectives.

تتناول هذه الدراسة العوائق الرئيسية التي تعيق تنفيذ إدارة الجودة الشاملة في مختلف القطاعات داخل المملكة العربية السعودية، كما تدرس تأثير هذه العوائق على كفاءة الموظفين، وإنتاجيتهم، وأداء المنظمات بشكل عام. تم استخدام منهجية البحث المختلط، حيث جُمعت البيانات الكمية من خلال استبيانات مغلقة موجهة إلى الموظفين والمديرين، في حين تم جمع البيانات النوعية من خلال مقابلات مع قادة إداريين وخبراء جودة. أظهرت النتائج أن من أبرز العوائق عدم دعم القيادة، ومقاومة التغيير، وضعف التدريب، وسوء التواصل بين الإدارات. كما تبين أن لهذه العوائق تأثيراً سلبياً على أداء الموظفين وتحقيق معايير الجودة المتوافقة مع أهداف رؤية المملكة 2030. وتختتم الدراسة بتوصيات عملية لتعزيز ثقافة الجودة، وتأكيد التزام القيادة، ومواءمة الممارسات المؤسسية مع أهداف التحول الوطني

Introduction

Total Quality management is a process that involves all organizational employees and their commitment to quality for reaching high customers & stakeholders' satisfaction rate. Continual improvement plays a crucial role on Total quality management and must be prioritized for the quality culture spirit. Implementing total quality management can increase employee performance, productivity and organization performance in Saudi sectors whether its educational, healthcare, business, and semi-government start- up. The vision of Saudi 2030 is to deliver high quality of life in general and one of those qualities is to spread the soul of quality in Saudi sectors to reach high performance and services. Despites benefits and advantages of applying total quality management system in Saudi sectors, sectors face challenges in adopting the total quality management system practice in their system. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 emphasis on delivering a high quality of life for its citizens.

One of the keys of this vision is to cultivate a culture of excellence and quality within all various sectors, thereby raising performance, service delivery, and operational transparency aligns directly with national goals by fostering a performance-driven, accountable, and customer-focused work environment. many Saudi organizations continue to face substantial barriers when attempting to adopt and sustain TQM practices. These challenges may include a lack of leadership commitment, employee resistance to change, insufficient training, and a weak understanding of quality systems.

This study is important in identifying these obstacles and understanding their influence on employee efficiency and organizational outcomes. By analyzing these factors in the context of Vision 2030. The research will contribute to developing strategies that help to overcome these challenges and fully realize the potential of implementing total quality management system.

Problem Statement

While the total quality management system offers a high ton of benefits once implementing with correct approach and continual improvement, many Saudi Sectors struggle to applying it successfully and have the right approach/ process. This is due to various barriers, including cultural resistance (specifically employee), lack of training and involvement, insufficient leader commitment, and inadequate resources. The Saudi vision 2030 aims to drive the overall country to better economy and huge transformation to have better quality of life, economy and all sectors. Therefore, those barriers must be investigated and studied as they play a crucial role on employee efficiency and productivity in overall organizational performance and support the quality culture.

Importance of study

While the total quality management system offers a high ton of benefits once implementing with correct approach and continual improvement, many Saudi Sectors struggle to applying it successfully and have the right approach/ process. This is due to various barriers, including cultural resistance (specifically employees), and lack of training and limited management support. Understanding these barriers is essential in the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which emphasizes sectors excellence, development, and service quality enhancement. The importance of this study focuses on identifying the root causes that hinder the successful implementation of TQM in Saudi sectors and evaluating their impact on employee efficiency, productivity, and overall organizational performance. This research is especially timely and relevant as many organizations across Saudi Arabia are undergoing transformation to meet Vision 2030's strategic objectives. The outcomes will also support practical reforms that can lead to measurable improvements in organizational performance across various sectors.

Objectives

The main objective of the research is finding challenges that Saudi Sectors is facing while applying the total quality management to organization. Also, to analyze the impact of those challenges on employee efficiency and productivity. Those goals would affect the total organization performance in different sectors to provide better quality products/ services within the context of vision 2030. Raising quality culture through different sectors in Saudi such as healthcare, education, semi government company start-up.

Furthermore, another objective is to analyze the impact of these challenges on employee efficiency, productivity, and engagement. By doing so, evaluation will take place on how internal resistance, lack of training, and leadership gaps influence staff performance and operational outcomes.

Also, assessing how these barriers affect overall organizational performance and the delivery of high-quality products and services. These insights will be framed within the broader context of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasize quality-driven growth and excellence services, products across Saudi sectors and life in general.

Study Questions

Main Question:

What are the key barriers to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) in Saudi sectors, and how do these barriers impact employee efficiency, productivity, and overall organizational performance within the context of Vision 2030?

Sub- Questions:

- What are the most commonly barriers to implementing TQM in selected Saudi sectors?
- How do total quality management obstacles affect employee efficiency and productivity in the workplace?
- How do TQM barriers influence organizational performance?
- How total quality management implementation aligned with the strategic objectives of Saudi Vision 2030?

Pervious Historical Study

- “**Alkhatib and Alkhatib (2016)** mentioned that shortage in resources of financial, shortage in a fit coordinate of output education, absence of skilled manpower required for application, lack of professional manpower necessary to the application, the resistance of change, misinterpretation of the needs of beneficiaries, lack of commitment leadership to implementation, shortage in evident cultural values are the main obstacles that facing TQM implementation in higher education included universities.”(**AlOqlah 2021**).

The above quote explored barriers in a public university context, identifying issues like top-management support, financial constraints, human resources, and organizational culture as major obstacles from faculty perspectives

- (**Alsughayir 2014**) found out “The most significant barriers to implementation were frequent employee turnover, resistance to change among employees, and a lack of understanding about TQM and a shortage of motivation among management. The results provide new impetus for findings from previous studies and offer human resource practitioners, quality managers, and professionals an opportunity to develop plans that addresses the challenges they face when implementing TQM.” (**Alsughayir 2014**).

The study highlights that organizational readiness, especially leadership support and staff involvement, is a prerequisite for effective TQM implementation. this study focuses on the cultural and operational gaps that related to quality progress in Saudi sectors. These findings explore the employee-level impacts of TQM barriers, such as reduced efficiency and misalignment with national quality standards.

- (**Aljuhani 2019**) stated “The main barriers to TQM implementation in Saudi higher education institutions are poor managerial commitment, lack of staff involvement, and rigid organizational culture. Stakeholders highlighted that inadequate training and limited

understanding of quality principles hindered continuous improvement efforts.” (Aljuhani 2019)

These findings emphasize that leadership and culture are critical in TQM adoption. The emphasis on managerial commitment and staff engagement as primary barriers aligns in various sectors. One reason that TQM Implementation is facing during implication is inadequate training underscores. As Vision 2030 emphasizes skill development and national competitiveness, addressing training gaps becomes a strategic national imperative.

- (Almutairi et al. 2024) mentioned “However, the implementation of TQM in Saudi hospitals is often inadequate, despite growing recognition of its importance. Key barriers include moderate levels of patient satisfaction, low job satisfaction among nurses, and poor work-life balance for healthcare professionals.” (Almutairi et al. 2024)

While Saudi healthcare sector demonstrates awareness of TQM’s strategic value, implementation remains apparent. The identified barriers, especially low satisfaction and work-life imbalance, directly prevent or stop employee efficiency and productivity, which is related to overall organizational performance which is one of importance factor of Saudi Vision 2030 strategic goals.

- (All Muaydh & Alawi, 2024) stated “The result revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of TQM on the organizational performance of construction companies. Implementing the TQM approach would enhance the overall performance of construction.” (All Muaydh & Alawi, 2024, p. 110).

The study shows systematic implementation of TQM significantly boosts organizational performance. While the study focuses on the construction industry, and the strategic potential of TQM to enhance service quality, operational efficiency, and productivity. Some obstacles prevent organizations from realizing potential Vision 2030 gains, contributing to Saudi Vision transformation goals.

- According to (Alsalamah, 2023) “Customer focus, continuous improvement, process management, employee involvement, leadership, good vision, communication, and integrated systems are positively and significantly linked with employee satisfaction. The higher the level of TQM practices, the more the employees’ satisfaction level has increased by 0.204%.” (Alsalamah, 2023, p. 139).

This study shows strong implementation of TQM practices significantly enhances employee satisfaction and, by improving efficiency and organizational outcomes. Also, define TQM dimensions from leadership to integrated systems. The quantifiable effect (0.204% increase per unit increase in TQM practice) is particularly valuable and suitable study case in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030.

- (Alofi & Younes, 2019) Observes “The paper highlights that the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 9000 is the most implemented model within the manufacturing sector. However, this sector is still facing numerous challenges in the adoption of TQM such as; the disagreement as per the importance of TQM, the difference in the professional and

technical know-how, weaknesses in the training and development systems, and the limitations that plague the institutional frameworks. Furthermore, there is a lack of financial resources to invest in the TQM processes, as well as the negative implications of the development model.” (Alofi & Younes, 2019, p. 42).

The study identifies both human capital and structural barriers such as insufficient technical capacity and underdeveloped institutional frameworks. There is lack of financial commitment underscores connection to Saudi Vision 2030 goals, especially in sectors striving for quality and efficiency improvements.

- (Aichouni et al., 2023) stated “Total quality management is a management philosophy adopted by successful organizations to achieve sustainable business performance. The statistical results also showed that TQM practices have a significant positive impact on OSH performance in the surveyed organizations. “ (Aichouni et al., 2023).

This study shows the importance strategic value of Total Quality Management (TQM) in achieving operational excellence and sustainable organizational outcomes in the context of Saudi Vision 2030 which aims to elevate the performance, transparency, and efficiency of both public and private sectors, It shows also how to overcome barriers on TQM implementation.

- (Alghamdi, A. K. H, 2024) reported “This study explores the implementation of the total quality management (TQM) approach in education in Saudi as a step towards school improvement. The research was undertaken primarily because there is a paucity of written material that examines (TQM) practices in Saudi Arabian school contexts. The study’s significance is in harmonising with substantial changes in the education context in Saudi; it is an attempt to understand, evaluate, and assess the existing practice of (TQM) in some Saudi institutions.” (Alghamdi, A. K. H, 2024)

What we understood from Alghamdi Abstract is that his research focuses on how TQM is used to enhance school performance under Vision 2030 education. Barriers include cultural resistance, and low engagement with quality practices.

- (Vision 2030, 2021) stated “Vision 2030 is a promise of continuous growth and development, creating lasting impact that will continue to evolve far beyond 2030. In the five years since its birth, Vision 2030 has built the foundations for continuing economic and social growth, setting the Kingdom on a journey of success.” (Vision 2030, 2021)

In the context of TQM implementation, they highlight why overcoming barriers such as leadership disengagement, training deficits, and organizational resistance—is not just an internal concern but a national imperative. Effective TQM practices are critical to fulfilling Vision 2030’s promise of sustainable growth and performance.

Research Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between the presence of barriers to Total Quality Management implementation and employee efficiency in Saudi sectors. These barriers to the total quality management implementation (such as lack of leadership support, resistance to change, insufficient training) affect negatively the organization performance, customer satisfaction, and quality of services align with strategic objectives of Saudi vision 2030.

Moreover, these obstacles contribute to a decline in service and product quality, ultimately affecting customer satisfaction and stakeholder trust. The persistence of such barriers prevents organizations from aligning with the strategic objectives outlined in Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasizes excellence, innovation and quality. Overcoming these barriers is critical for enhancing workforce capabilities, improving public and private sector performance.

Theoretical premises of the study

This study has theoretical frameworks that support the barriers to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) and its impact on organizational and employee performance. Total Quality Management Theory principles focus on top management commitment, continual improvement, and employee involvement. These principles are mandatory to reach high levels of efficiency and productivity in any organization, and this leads to an increase in overall organization performance.

Next is the Organizational Change Theory; old behaviors should be stopped and implement new behavior which is (accept changes), as there is resistance in general for changes especially to total quality management as changes in total quality management shall be as cultural and structural rigidity. Performance of the organization, especially on total quality management, depends on resources capabilities such as leadership, training, and compliance with requirements.

Finally, the study of organizational & employee practices, performance, has direct relation with national Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 development goals. In this case total quality management consider as strategic mechanism to achieve Saudi vision of 2030 transformation through improved service quality, work development, and organization & employee efficiency.

Methodology and research tool

To evaluate the barriers to implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) in various Saudi sectors and their impact on employee efficiency, productivity, and organizational performance within the context Saudi Vision 2030, both methods approaches will be used quantitative and qualitative research methods.

A descriptive design will be used to capture both measurable outcomes and contextual insights. A closed-end questionnaire is used to gather quantitative data from employees, quality managers, and supervisors across sectors. Quantitative data is analyzed using reliability tests, correlation and analysis through any program that can support. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of TQM barriers aligned with employee performance, efficiency and knowledge.

Qualitative data is collected through interviews with senior managers, TQM consultants, and department heads including their goals and alignment with Saudi vision 2030. These interviews give adequate insights knowledge about the organization and the total quality management berries and how it is affecting the organization performance in the framework of Saudi Vision 2030. Random Sampling takes place as a survey with reasonable participants and ensuring covers all sectors. This methodology will cover and align with the Saudi Vision of 2030, report, guidelines from national regulatory, and organizational records if any can be studied, then analyze and provided if it is available.

Study limitations

The research of barriers to implement total quality management in Saudi sectors is limited to selected sectors in Saudi Arabia, such as healthcare, education, private, and public sectors. All sectors are critical in the context of Saudi Vision 2030 objectives and to all organizations in early stages of quality transformation. The study relies on data through questionnaires and interviews, which can introduce response bias. The sample size of the quantitative method survey will take place and will not be limited to gaining more data to analyze and to take adequate knowledge and response. Interviews will be limited due to the nature of the topic and confidently that might take place. Therefore, interviews depend on the approval and nature of the place and culture of the interviewer.

Moreover, access to internal audit reports, company performance reports and confidential quality data might be restricted, however data can be taken verbally, and during the interview. Knowing employee's awareness and understanding of the quality by both quantitative and qualitative method.

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