

**IMPLEMENTING TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT A PUBLIC SERVICE
INSTITUTION: THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

by

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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Dr C Combrinck.

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation/thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Education in Assessment and Quality Assurance of Education and Training at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



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DEGREE AND PROJECT

MEd

Implementing total quality management at a
public service institution: The role of
organisational culture

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Ethics Statement

I hereby declare that I have received approval for this dissertation from the relevant research ethics committee. In accordance with the University of Pretoria's Policy Guidelines for Responsible Research and Code of Ethics for Researchers, I adhered to the ethical standards set forth by the Research Ethics Committee.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my dear grandmother, **Selina Helena Mabentsela**, who always encouraged me when we talked about education. She used to say, "I was a teacher 'mntan'omntanam', (loosely translated as 'my daughter's child'), and then I eventually got promoted to the position of school inspector. I would then ride on a horse and inspect teaching in schools." She laid the foundation for my prayer and belief in God, and I am grateful to God every day for her prayers, which continue to sustain me even today (may her soul rest in peace). My interest in quality stems from her commitment to ensuring high standards in education; this has seen me holding various roles in quality assurance and writing this total quality management (TQM) dissertation. I will always be thankful to her for raising me with unconditional love. She was a strong, kind, and God-fearing woman who helped to mold who I am today.

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I would like to express my gratitude to the authority of the selected public service institution for permitting me to conduct this research, and a special thanks to the individual participants who dedicated their time to this project. This would not have been possible without your contribution.

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Lastly, I would especially like to thank Ms. Anetha de Wet, my language editor, for editing and proofreading my dissertation.

Abstract

There is ample research on organisational culture and Total Quality Management (TQM) in various industries, but more studies need to be done in the South African educational context. The current study investigated the role of organisational culture in effectively implementing TQM within the education, training and development context. The competing values framework (CVF) was used to investigate the clan, adhocracy and hierarchical cultures as components of TQM adoption. A qualitative case study approach was utilised as the method. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, managers aged 38 - 65 from five business units from the institution. The current study collected data from semi-structured interviews and analysed it using a content analysis strategy. The adhocracy culture was less evident within the selected public service institution due to low staff morale caused by the COVID-19 lockdown and other underlying issues. The hierarchy culture, a more controlling form of TQM and negatively associated with it, was evident. Participants desired a more flexible culture with less rigidity and resistance to change. Participants articulated the need for solid foundations and getting the basics right to improve the organisation's culture and quality management efforts. The current study found that encouraging a collaborative culture is essential and that promoting cross-functional cooperation would improve TQM.

Key Terms: Total Quality Management (TQM), organisational culture, change management, qualitative methods, public service institution

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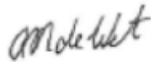
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List of Abbreviations

CVF	Competing Values Framework
ETD	Education Training and Development
HEIs	Higher Educational Institutions
HR	Human Resource Planning
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISO	International Organisation For Standardisation
OC	Organisational Culture
QA	Quality Assurance
QM	Quality Management
QMS	Quality Management System
TQM	Total Quality Management

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This current study examined the role of culture in effectively implementing total quality management (TQM) in a selected public service institution. This study was conducted on a few business units of the selected public service institution and one business unit from the institution's academy.

A public service institution is any organisation or body that the government or a governmental authority founded and runs to offer the general public necessary services (Jackson et al., 2020). Usually, these organisations work in the fields of social welfare, education, healthcare, transportation, and public safety. Their main goal is to serve the needs and interests of the broader public rather than making money (Morelli et al., 2010). In order to guarantee fair access, quality, affordability, and accountability in the provision of services, public service organisations frequently follow particular rules, guidelines, and precepts. Government-run social assistance programmes, public schools, train and bus companies, hospitals, and police and fire departments are some examples.

The current study further explored quality control challenges and found they had substantial implications on organisational performance and learning and development provision. Organisational culture (OC) is a set of common ideas, precepts, and presumptions that are viewed as the proper way to think and behave in an organisation (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

A quality-adapted organisational culture backed by senior management commitment and participation are needed for TQM (Alghamdi, 2018). Organisational learning and entrepreneurship, teamwork and joint effort, and the willingness to take risks are key features to ensure a quality adapted OC as the implementation of TQM takes shape (Tortorella et al., 2019). A culture of open communication with all relevant stakeholders also leads to continual improvement in the quality management process (Zelnik et al., 2012). Hence, according to Vijayakumar (2013), a culture that promotes customer-centredness (internally and externally), sound supplier relations, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of quality practices is required in TQM.

Organisational culture has a tremendous influence as it can either be a driver or a roadblock to meaningful change in implementing TQM. Hence, according to Zhu (2013), understanding organisational traits and how they affect the acceptance of the TQM philosophy is crucial for fostering educational reform. Transforming the organisation's culture is the most beneficial approach to implementing TQM, implying a change in OC, practices, and values. Performance, effectiveness, and an organisation's ability to compete in its environment are all significantly impacted by its culture. To attain the organisation's performance excellence, OC and TQM must work effectively together (Lapiņa et al., 2015).

The significance of OC in determining an organisation's overall performance has been acknowledged (Beytekin et al., 2010). This acknowledgement is essential as it paves the way to a meaningful change process for all required all-round performance improvement efforts. Hence, Gimenez-Espin et al. (2013) also opine that OC is critical to successful TQM adoption.

An organisation needs to understand its dominant culture before putting a TQM approach into practice because the effectiveness of TQM implementation depends heavily on it. Understanding a dominant culture will present a chance to introduce programmes that bring in a culture change suitable for the successful implementation of TQM. Total quality management programmes that have gained popularity in the United Kingdom (UK) to transform the culture and deliver desirable performance to higher education institutions (HEIs) have presented an instance of TQM implementation success (Imran et al., 2018).

1.2 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality management is a systematic approach utilised by organisations to ensure that their products or services consistently meet or exceed customer expectations (Sadik, 2018). It involves all activities and processes within an organisation aimed at maintaining and enhancing the quality of products or services delivered to customers. The implementation of quality management is crucial for various reasons. Firstly, it is essential to ensure customer satisfaction by meeting or surpassing customer expectations, leading to increased customer loyalty (Zhang et al., 2012). Secondly, quality management provides organisations with a competitive advantage by differentiating them from competitors through high-quality products or services

(Borkhoff et al., 2010). Additionally, quality management contributes to cost reduction by identifying and eliminating defects and errors, thereby enhancing efficiency and reducing costs in the long term (Seyfried, 2019). Moreover, quality management helps organisations ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and standards, reducing the risk of legal issues and penalties (Pfaff et al., 2021).

Furthermore, quality management fosters a culture of continuous improvement within organisations, leading to enhanced efficiency, productivity, and innovation (Movahedi et al., 2013). Quality management offers numerous benefits to organisations, including enhanced customer satisfaction, improved reputation, increased efficiency, better decision-making, and greater employee engagement (Huynh & Monteleone, 2021). However, there are challenges associated with quality management implementation, such as cost, resistance to change, complexity, time consumption, and overemphasis on documentation (Alzafari & Kratzer, 2019). Despite these challenges, quality management plays a vital role in ensuring organisational success by focusing on meeting customer needs, improving efficiency, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Organisations must be aware of these challenges and complexities and strive to address them effectively to reap the full benefits of quality management (O'Mahony & Garavan, 2012).

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Every organisation has a corporate culture that reflects attitudes toward how work is done and how members of the organisation should conduct themselves. Unfortunately, some public service organisations and learning institutions still display the culture that was formed prior to 1994, which includes traits like:

- A focus on regulation and adherence to procedures that are established in advance;
- A keen sense of hierarchy and a hesitancy to challenge those in positions of authority.
- A preference for formal education and seniority over other kinds of knowledge and experience; and
- A tendency to overlook and devalue the opinions and ideas of people who don't belong to the dominant group (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997).

Verma (2021) opines that being heavily influenced by the unique institutional history of a school, negative school culture might take many years to improve. Having a plan in place and adopting the right mindset to deal with toxic cultures is crucial.

Organisations must be able to self-organise to achieve and maintain a specific degree of the desired culture for the management of quality, but this ability is dependent on elements of OC such as pre-existing beliefs, behavioural norms, and values. As a result, according to Lapiņa and Kairisa (2015), a significant role in achieving organisational excellence is allocated to implementing quality management principles in the operations of learning institutions.

Total quality management was initially established for manufacturing organisations; “later on, it became useful to other business organisations, including the bank, insurance, non-profit organisations, and health care” (Harris, 2012, p. 164).

Total quality management has migrated strongly to the education sector; hence, integrated quality management systems (IQMS) are being advocated in South African schools. The education district office is responsible for advocacy, training, and proper implementation of the IQMS (Education Labour Relations Council [ELRC], 2003). The same is valid in the sector education and training authority (SETA) skills development environment; no training provider or learning institution gets accreditation without presenting evidence of a quality management system. One of the core criteria for education and training providers proposed according to the QMS guidelines for education and training providers is that no accreditation will be possible if the QMS is not in place (Kawshala, 2017).

The desired revisions to the organisational culture should be consistent with the public service institution's quality policy and closely aligned with the direction of strategic development selected by the institution. Hence, according to Lapiņa and Kairisa (2015), for the organisation to progress, more attention should be placed on the institution's goals, encouragement of employee development, motivation of employee performance, and a quality work culture.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Much research has been conducted on OC and total quality management TQM separately and combined in other sectors and industries. However, the reviewed literature indicates that there may be a lack of studies in the South African context (Al-Jalahma, 2012; Sukdeo et al., 2017). The TQM application has seen many difficulties due to cultures that do not match the process. There is little reliable data to demonstrate the impact of culture on TQM adoption. Most papers focus only on the traditional categorisation of the OC. Mugenyi et al. (2017) emphasise that while the primary teacher training colleges in Uganda have adopted TQM practices, these practices have not been incorporated fully into the quality assurance framework for tertiary and HEIs. As a result, the successful implementation of TQM has faced several challenges.

Although many scholars have undertaken studies in this area, none specifically focused on the role of OC in the effective implementation of TQM within the education, training, and development (ETD) context (Lapiņa et al., 2015; Sukdeo et al., 2017). The potential lack of a quality-oriented culture among organisations has been listed as one of the most persistent reasons for TQM failure (Mosadeghrad, 2015). According to Prajogo and Sohal (2002), TQM presents a vision of organisational change to ensure a standardised approach to implement TQM values and principles in an organisation (Mosadeghrad, 2015). Mosadeghrad (2015) states that there is a need to change organisational structure and culture to obtain longer-lasting improvements in quality services or products. He adds that organisational structure and culture changes develop and maintain standardised organisational changes. Implementing techniques and instruments incompatible with the organisation's culture leads to most failures of TQM implementation. Lack of supportive leadership, organisational structure and culture are also reasons for failure to implement TQM (Mosadeghrad, 2015). Various TQM representations and frames have been created, but none of these probed the role of OC in effectively implementing TQM in the education, training, and development environment. Hence, there is a need to investigate the role of qualifying endeavours in achieving effective TQM implementation (Al-Jalahma, 2012).

1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to examine the role of OC in the implementation of TQM at the selected public service institution. The study's objectives were:

- a) To investigate the perceived cultural practices best suited for effective TQM implementation at each of the five selected business units of the institution;
- b) To identify the types of cultures that exist within the selected institution and the selected business units;
- c) To investigate any perceived limitations or obstacles that may be hindering the effective implementation of TQM; and
- d) To explore perceived solutions to challenges in the implementation of TQM.

1.6 RESEARCH RATIONALE

The competitive nature of higher education and the aim to increase student enrolment may affect the quality of instruction (Shams, 2017). Hence, it is essential to adopt effective approaches to quality management, such as TQM. The TQM philosophy focuses on senior management, who should be attentive to quality challenges because they must provide leadership for change. Senior management should also drive OC change initiatives because they are accountable to the organisation and all internal and external stakeholders.

Managing quality and the associated ongoing advancement has become a survival mechanism for organisations striving to be better than their rivals (Kenyon & Sen, 2014). Most institutions aim for consistency and adjustments to the demands of digital systems necessary to cope after a global pandemic. In other studies, quality management has been reported as having a remarkable performance result due to continuous quality improvements and increased value creation (Kenyon & Sen, 2014).

According to Sadikoglu and Olcay (2014), institutions that properly manage all facets of TQM practices have experienced enhanced institutional performance in various areas. They add that TQM variables collaborate to improve business performance significantly or exceptionally. To apply TQM successfully, organisations should enhance employee involvement, organisational skills, and resource allocation (Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014). Zakuan et al. (2012) indicate that TQM significantly impacted the organisation's goals and added to its economic value. According to Zakuan et al. (2012), some organisations and institutions have already recognised the positive effects of TQM implementation on their organisational performance, and they

think that this strategy will increase their chances of success. Total quality management is a management philosophy and a way of questioning that has assisted HEIs in their quest for excellence in educational delivery (Gupta et al., 2020).

However, according to some reports, only a handful of organisations have achieved quality advancement, productivity, and competitiveness with quality management capabilities due to serious doubts about management's willingness to invest in human capital training (Oakland, 2004). Suwandej (2015) also opines that inadequate training affects TQM and its implementation. Mishra and Pandey (2013) add that the entire organisation's thinking must change to implement TQM. All personnel can be trained strategically and systematically to do this (Mishra & Pandey, 2013). In a total quality environment, all personnel needs ongoing training aligned to their needs in terms of their jobs, skills, and knowledge. The training provided should be designed to advance the organisation's objectives about quality, competitiveness, and productivity (Steenkamp, 2012). When there is more focus on quantity in the value chain, and human capital training is not prioritised, there will be areas that bring the level of quality down.

Quality management challenges have substantial implications for learning and development in learning institutions. Therefore, creating a culture that compliments the TQM system is crucial. According to Romle et al. (2016), when a culture that compliments TQM implementation is not created, the implementation strategy might move slowly.

Effective quality management requires an environment that promotes a quality work culture. Aziz and Morita (2013) have found that the clan and adhocracy cultures offer a working environment conducive to the successful implementation of TQM. The main topic of interest for the research is the organisational and cultural barriers that may prevent the implementation of TQM. There is high pressure to change the culture and practices in public service organisations as they strive to set initiatives and interventions to enhance workers' responsiveness to the needs of citizens. There may be a need to investigate and pursue more ways of embracing change that comes with innovation demands. The innovation strategies needed to strengthen digitisation in

performance, learning, and development should be evident in implementing a TQM process for monitoring and evaluation purposes to ensure continuous improvement.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study examined the role of OC in the implementation of TQM, and the research questions which were explored, are as follows:

Primary research question

What is the perceived association between OC and the implementation of total quality management at the selected public service institution?

Secondary research questions

- (i) What cultural practices do stakeholders view as best suited for effectively implementing total quality management within the public service institution's selected business units?
- (ii) What OCs exist about quality management at the business units of the selected public service learning institution?
- (iii) What OC obstacles could hinder the effective implementation of total quality management within the selected business units?
- (iv) What perceived solutions are there to the challenges related to implementing total quality management?

Concept clarification

The concepts defined for this study are reflected in Figure 1.1



Figure 1.1: Concepts

Quality is defined as work of a high standard from inception to the end. In the current study, quality is also about the product or service that meets the needs of the students and/or employees. Quality support is required in each student's social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.

Total quality management is an organisation-wide attempt to have and make a permanent culture for continuous improvement to deliver high-quality products and services to customers. The breakdown of TQM is depicted in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Clarification of Concepts

TQM term	Definition
Total	Everyone is involved in continuous improvements: senior management, employees, suppliers, and students. In the current study, employees include management (middle-lower), teachers/educators as internal stakeholders, and suppliers, governments, foundations, community, etc., as external stakeholders.
Quality	The degree of excellence is defined as the quality of work, processes, organisation, product, or service. In the current study, quality of education is defined as total quality management, a way to acquire, implement and retain quality excellence.
Management	Management is defined as the designated personnel handling, controlling and directing the management task of quality across all units/departments of the organisation with the total commitment of senior management, promoting teamwork, and the ability to learn. In the current study, quality management is reflected by a requirement for meaningful work, quality work culture, and the development of the economy, which improves both the educational institution's overall performance and the knowledge that students acquire and later apply to problems they encounter daily (Manojlović et al., 2013).
Education Institution or Public Service Learning Institution	In the current study, this refers to an organisation generally split into faculties, academic departments/business units, schools/academies, etc. This organisation manages TQM practices and adopts a quality work culture to the

TQM term	Definition
	satisfaction of personnel and, in turn, satisfies students with quality educational support and living conditions.

Shared values and standards reflected in how work is done and how effectively interactions between co-workers occur define OC. In the current study, the culture of the public service institution was identified by its role in the implementation of TQM. Senior management should support the organisational strategy and culture more comprehensively. An OC change occurs when the organisation moves from a traditional to a team-oriented organisation. The culture in an organisation can be identified in decision-making, communication, and stakeholder treatment.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

The current study only included only the senior and middle management of the selected public service institution. The results cannot be generalised across all public service learning institutions. This study excluded other personnel from other public service institutions situated within the city. The study's completion time would have been extended if additional personnel from other public service institutions within the city had participated. Some other limitations included insufficient literature within the South African ETD context on the role of OC in the implementation of TQM.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria's ethics committee before undertaking data collection from the selected public service learning institution. No risk, harm, or injury of any type was posed to participants. Participants' identities were kept private using pseudonyms, and neither their names nor their details were ever revealed to the study's other participants or researchers. Participants' personal information was never made public or shared with anyone. Participants were sent emails informing them of the study and its purpose and invited to the first meeting, where their consent to participate was obtained. The email included information that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time during my interaction with them. The clause that participation was voluntary was also added to the consent letters. Participants gave consent by completing and signing the consent form.

Pseudonyms were used to ensure participant anonymity, and I maintained the confidentiality of all data obtained from participants. Participants' names were withheld from the research reports to preserve their identity. Participants received guarantees that the information they contributed would be handled in absolute confidence and that their right to privacy would be upheld to maintain confidentiality. All hard copy data was collected and stored in a secured facility at the University of Pretoria. Computerised data was password-protected. Under the University of Pretoria standards, the data will be kept there as long as determined by the University's record-keeping guidelines before being destroyed.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGNATION

I employed a descriptive qualitative method in this investigation. Qualitative research approaches, according to Dyba et al. (2011), aid in the understanding of individuals as well as their social and cultural environments, which advances our knowledge of human behaviour.

Since human behaviour is typically influenced by the demographic circumstances or context in which it occurs, I chose a descriptive qualitative approach for this study to investigate and comprehend the phenomenon of the role of organisation in the implementation of total quality management (Zhang et al., 2012).

1.11 DESIGN OF RESEARCH

The study's chosen methodology is qualitative, and it applies an epistemological standing design to a case study. As stated by Astalin (2013), grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and other qualitative research approaches and case studies offer a flexible framework for comprehending the goals, functions, phases, and techniques of data analysis in research.

A qualitative case study research design focuses on comprehending how individuals create meaning from an event, action, or phenomenon through in-depth description and analysis of a single limited system (Merriam, 2010).

1.11.1 Sampling Strategy

In qualitative research utilising interviews, sampling entails determining the sample universe, choosing a sampling approach, determining sample size, and locating participants (Robinson, 2014). To choose participants for this study who would be most likely to supply me with the data I needed to address the research objectives, I

used stratified purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is appropriate for a study in which the researcher is focusing on specific individuals with particular attributes and personalities, as Maree (2011) explains.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The structure of the dissertation is reflected in Figure 1.2 below.

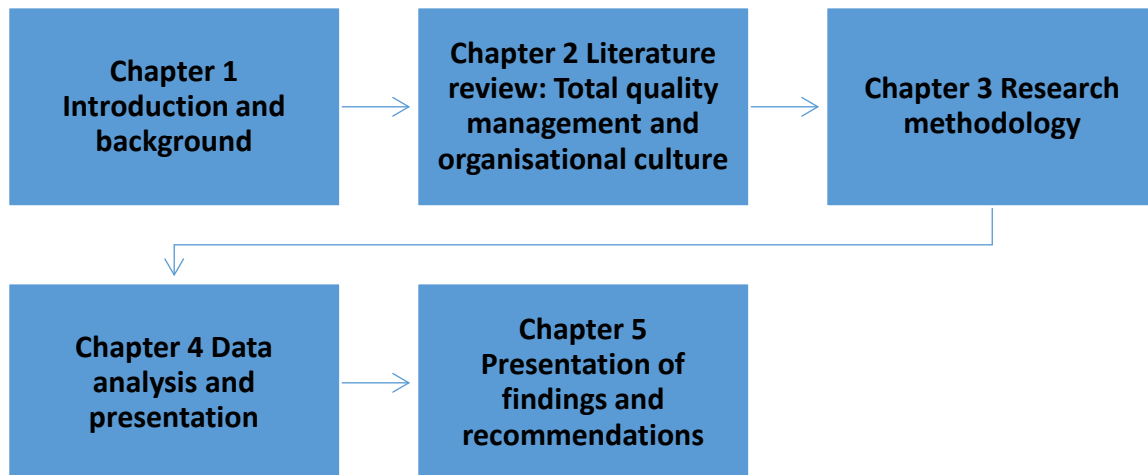


Figure 1.2: Structure of the dissertation

The current chapter introduced the reader to the topic and background, research aims and purpose statement, problem statement, the study's rationale, research questions and ethical considerations. Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literature on the role of OC in implementing TQM. Chapter 3 covers the research methodology and design, data collection procedures, sample methodologies, and participants. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of all the information gathered through semi-structured interviews and the findings. Finally, Chapter 5 offers the study's conclusions, recommendations, and findings.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Organisational culture has tremendous influence as it can either be a driver or a roadblock to meaningful change in implementing TQM. Every organisation has a corporate culture that reflects attitudes toward how work is done and how members of the organisation should conduct themselves. An organisation needs to understand its

dominant culture before putting a TQM method into practice because the effectiveness of TQM implementation depends heavily on it. Understanding its dominant culture will allow the organisation to introduce programmes to change the organisation's culture to support the successful implementation of TQM. The main topic of interest to the research is the organisational cultural barriers that may prevent the implementation of TQM. There is tremendous pressure to change the culture and practices in public service organisations as they strive to set initiatives and interventions that contribute to making workers responsive to the needs of citizens. There may be a need to investigate and pursue more ways of embracing change that comes with innovation demands. The innovation strategies needed to strengthen digitisation in learning and development should be evident in implementing a TQM process for monitoring and evaluation purposes to ensure continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisations in different industries, locally and globally, have adopted quality management practices to maintain competitiveness and meet quality standards. Total quality management is a strategic management approach utilised for quality enhancement and enhanced organisational performance. Walter A. Shewhart originally designed the concept of TQM in 1923; it was launched in 1926 at Western Electric Company's Hawthorn plant (Cengage, 2018). Sohel-Uz-Zaman and Anjalin (2016) state that in education, training, and development (ETD) environments, some educators believe that a philosophy developed for business may not be suitable for service organisations like educational institutions. Rosa et al. (2012) argue that implementing quality management in HEIs is challenging due to the strong and resistant academic culture, which is reluctant to modify its beliefs, principles, and practices. She adds that the resistance to change begins with terminology where terms such as product, client, empowerment, strategy, not to mention TQM, and re-engineering, do not easily resonate in HEIs. Hence, Sony et al. (2020) denote a strong emerging need for a deeper understanding of quality management.

Figure 2.1 below investigates the evolution of quality and tracing ideas back to their inception:

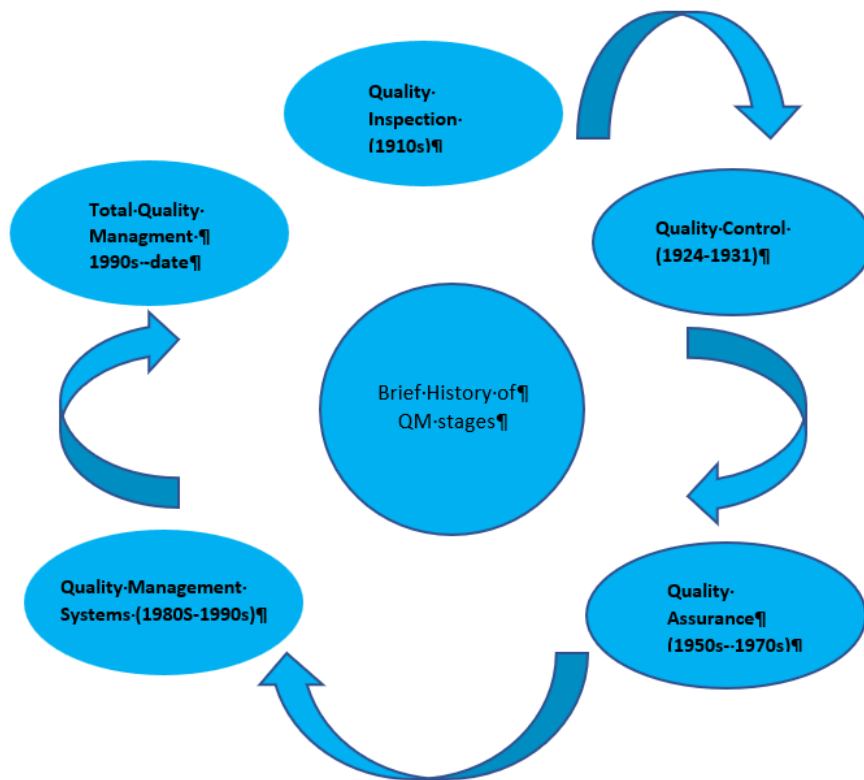


Figure 2.1: A brief history of quality management

(Montgomery & Borrer, 2017)

As can be seen in Figure 2.1, the history of quality management has been made possible through the contributions of various gurus, such as Shewhart and others, which took shape in five stages as follows:

- Quality inspection in the 1910s started with inspectors testing the products by production and delivery to separate poor from acceptable product quality. This stage monitored variations in production, process, and delivery.
- Quality control from 1924 – 1931 used a control chart to observe process variation by random and special causes to determine when to interact with the process.
- Quality assurance involved inspection and control, which stressed a change from detection to preventing poor quality. This change was introduced as a standards-based method.
- QMS includes quality and process manuals, software, and QA standards, such as ISO 9000/14000, which most organisations still use.

The above history portrays how quality was managed, and it extends to TQM, which demands understanding and implementation of QM principles and has to be applied at every level and every stage in every department of the organisation. The application of futuristic quality management techniques can enrich TQM. Futuristic quality management techniques can also be referred to as modern quality management, which entails customer satisfaction and continuous improvement of organisation-wide performance. In an educational setting, this would mean that a prerequisite for success is customer satisfaction. A learning institution that focuses on ongoing improvement efforts stands a chance of always being a learning institution of choice. Siddiquah and Kirmani (2014) opine that if HEIs are to survive, they must always strive to improve the quality of their offerings, including digital programmes and learning materials.

2.2 TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The researcher notes that different authors have significant and consistent definitions of TQM. Kumar and Sharma (2017) define TQM as a complete philosophy leading to enhanced organisational performance. Imran et al. (2018) describe TQM as a process whereby senior management takes full responsibility for involving employees in the approach, which could result in optimum performance. This approach means that transparency and the advocacy of teamwork are crucial.

According to Militaru et al. (2013), TQM is pivotal in education, enabling teachers and lecturers to advance what and how students learn. He adds that the need for quality in higher education should involve everyone concerned, as it is a global warning signal requiring decisiveness and continually improved processes. Creating a quality culture is essential for implementing the principles of TQM in a university and any other educational institution. The senior management is responsible for initiating such a culture to achieve the desired quality of education, training, and development packages. Management could accomplish this through well-capacitated and functioning interventions to elevate the services offered (Militaru et al., 2013). Total quality management is recognised as one of the best methods for achieving educational goals and objectives. However, because TQM practices are still challenging, they have not been generally used in school administration (Ajayi & Oyeniyi, 2017). Issues with implementing TQM include the lack of a guiding

framework, a lack of strategic direction, insufficient human resources, and the image of TQM as a programme rather than a continuous improvement culture.

Learning institutions may need to maximise efforts to give them a competitive advantage. Organisational advantages can be gained by continuously improving personnel, processes, products, and services. Due to the competitive nature of higher education, quality is increasingly becoming a required standard for students who want to enrol in institutions of learning (Kumar et al., 2018). It is also becoming a norm to observe customer reviews about institutions of learning or businesses before taking up any of their offerings. In maintaining quality standards and HEIs striving to be institutions of choice, Mishra and Pandey (2013) suggest that TQM can be a comprehensive model for running an institution that aims to continuously improve performance through addressing quality at all levels. Total quality management is a comprehensive strategy that consists of three crucial elements, as shown in Figure 2.2 below:



Figure 2.2: Stakeholder-Centric Participation Model

Source: Burke.com

As can be seen in Figure 2.2, education institutions need to create a culture that is success-driven and focused on the customer. Customers include suppliers, employers, and all who pay for the learning institution's goods or services. In continuous improvement initiatives, stakeholder participation is crucial. It encourages cooperative ties with pertinent partners and stakeholders inside and outside an organisation. The stakeholder participation process benefits from openness during

encounters (Usadolo & Caldwell, 2016). Collaborative relationships, particularly those between internal parties, are necessary to improve the synergy between the institution's divisions and execute TQM effectively across the entire organisation. Additionally, these relationships keep a positive reputation with outside stakeholders, which helps the institution stand out to its customers as a quality partner of choice and promotes it on its own. Putting the customer's needs first and encouraging staff engagement has the long-term benefit of preserving the highest standard in quality management implementation. It allows stakeholders to stand independently for the long term.

The process begins with a problem or programme evaluation to improve the quality. All staff members must be involved at all levels to develop confidence, two-way communication, and improved performance. Ongoing development includes continual improvement in education, training, learning, teaching strategies, curricula, learning environments, developing better citizens, and many other areas (Mishra & Pandey, 2013).

2.2.1 Key Principles and Concepts of Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) aims to enhance organisational processes and results, providing a competitive edge as a strategic tool (Fauzi, 2021).

Total Quality Management (TQM) is characterised by the efficient management of both internal and external organizational influences to support ongoing enhancements. (Oakland et al., 2020). One of the essential principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) lies in the emphasis directed towards internal processes, given their significant impact on external services and overall quality standards (Putra & Lestari, 2023). The effective execution of Total Quality Management in academic institutions relies on factors such as leadership, communication, and the evaluation of education (Zubair, 2013). Quality management pioneers like Deming, Crosby, and Juran have suggested that the principles of TQM are universally applicable even in education, training and development (Billah & Karim, 2021). Total quality management (TQM) is not merely a set of concepts but a holistic system that engages both managers and employees in driving continuous performance improvement (Tabe et al., 2013). Employee engagement and improvement are particularly important in TQM, especially in sectors

like public health institutes (Hrgović et al., 2020). Total Quality Management (TQM) is paramount in the field of education as it has the potential to drive ongoing enhancements, elevate student contentment, and ensure competitiveness (Mahmood et al., 2018). The effective execution of Total Quality Management in academic institutions relies on factors such as leadership, communication, and the evaluation of educational quality (Zubair, 2013). Total quality management (TQM) methodologies, including prioritising customer needs and promoting teamwork, have been associated with enhanced employee productivity and job fulfilment within educational environments (Fatimah et al., 2016). However, the full potential of TQM in higher education often remains unutilised as the emphasis tends to be on non-academic activities rather than essential aspects like designing curriculum and enhancing the competence of teaching staff (Kemenade et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the adoption of Total Quality Management principles in the area of education encourages a culture that focuses on excellence and continual progress and ultimately leads to enhanced academic achievements for students (Zanqar et al. 2019).

2.2.2 Criticisms and Challenges of Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management is a widely accepted managerial philosophy designed to improve organisational efficiency and customer satisfaction (Kalogiannidis, 2021). That being said, it is not without criticisms and obstacles. One critique of Total Quality Management is its potential cost barriers for small and medium-sized businesses. Furthermore, the implementation of TQM necessitates substantial time and resources, posing a challenge for entities with constrained budgets and workforce. Another objection to TCM is its propensity to engender excessive red tape and documentation. Critics contend that the emphasis on formalising processes and protocols may curtail adaptability and promptness in decision-making. Additionally, encountering resistance from personnel during TQM implementation is plausible (Kulkarni, 2016). Employees may oppose novel processes and protocols, especially if they perceive a threat to their job roles and independence (Battistelli et al., 2013). Evaluating the impact of TQM on organisational performance is yet another challenge, given its potential to influence performance either positively or negatively (Al-Qahtani et al., 2015). While the enhancement of performance and customer gratification is the objective of total quality

management, quantifying the direct effect on profitability and competitiveness can be intricate (Thompson et al., 2016). Furthermore, TQM mandates a cultural transformation within the organisation. Both management and employees must espouse a quality-centric mentality and be committed to continuous advancement (Thompson et al., 2016). This requirement could pose a challenge, as it may entail overcoming resistance to change and cultivating a sense of ownership and answerability among all staff. To sum up, Total Quality Management faces several criticisms and hurdles, such as excessive implementation expenses, an excess of bureaucracy, employee opposition to change, difficulties in impact assessment, and the necessity for a cultural shift (Thompson et al., 2016).

2.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture has the attributes of shared experiences and an understanding of societal morals and standards (Baumgartner, 2009). Schein (2004) describes organisational culture (OC) as a framework of collective explanations to distinguish one organisation from another. The statement above means that each organisation is characterised by its culture. It is implied that the foundation of the organisation's innovative initiatives is its OC. According to previous research, organisational learning and innovation are positively correlated (Aragón-Correa et al., 2007; Pérez López, 2004). The relationship between OC, learning, market orientation and innovation demonstrates that being receptive to innovation is crucial to innovativeness (Halim et al., 2019). Organisational culture influences innovation and may extend to other divisions of the organisation, according to Shahrifirad and Ataei (2012). Therefore, each organisation requires a review of OC in quality management improvement interventions.

The notion of OC aids in investigating and comprehending the factors that cause educational institutions to become structured, develop, and function according to their established objectives and quality standards. It also enables educational institutions to recognise various strategies for implementing continuous quality improvement programmes and assessing their organisational performance using the competing values framework (CVF) (Lacatus, 2012). The Robert Quinn CVF categorises four corporate cultures, which will be covered in more detail in a separate chapter of this

study. The CVF's four quadrants are known as the adhocracy, clan, hierarchy and market cultures (Lacatus, 2012).

2.3.1 Definition and Significance of Organisational Culture

Organisational culture can be defined as the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape the behaviour and attitudes of individuals within an organisation (Dirisu et al., 2018). The significance of organisational culture lies in its ability to create a cohesive and unified workforce. This culture helps to establish a sense of identity within the organisation and influences how employees perceive and interpret their work environment. This sense of identity, in turn, affects their behaviour, decision-making, and overall performance. A strong and positive organisational culture can lead to increased employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. It also plays a crucial role in shaping the organisation's reputation and attracting and retaining top talent. Organisational culture is an extremely important aspect of an organisation as it shapes the behaviour and attitudes of employees, influences decision-making and performance, and contributes to the overall success and effectiveness of the organization (Yıldız, 2014). It sets the foundation for how things are done within the organisation and provides a framework for decision-making and problem-solving. Additionally, organisational culture can impact the management of safety within an organisation. For example, a strong safety culture that prioritises and promotes safe practices can help reduce accidents and create a safer work environment. Furthermore, organisational culture can create a sense of belonging and unity among employees, fostering teamwork, collaboration, and innovation (Tsai, 2011). Overall, organisational culture has a profound impact on employee behaviour and attitudes, organisational performance, safety practices, and the overall success of an organisation

2.4 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

When it comes to methodology, the TQM approach broadly concentrates on the attributes of customer fulfilment. Organisational culture, leadership, strategy, and structure also play a crucial role in analysing the need for TQM in the organisation (Kumar et al., 2018). Hence, when a learning institution decides to embark on the journey of the TQM approach, it should be part of the organisational strategy. According to Zu et al. (2010), an appropriate OC has to be realised for the progressive

implementation of TQM since corporate culture is one of the principal factors for the success or failure of TQM. A deficient quality-oriented culture, among others, has been listed as one of the most persistently mentioned reasons for TQM failure (Mosadeghrad, 2015). Employee attitude, resistance to change, and zero communication become barriers to TQM implementation. A change in organisational structure and culture ranks high in acquiring longer-lasting quality improvements of services and products (Mosadeghrad, 2015). This approach means that when a positive culture is adopted, there are increased levels of productivity. Mosadeghrad (2015) also adds that the standardisation of processes and procedures is attributed to organisational structure and culture changes. The lack of supportive leadership and conflicting OC are reasons for TQM's failure (Mosadeghrad, 2015). The absence of committed senior management that supports quality management efforts coupled with a deficient OC can cause problems in having effective TQM.

Ogbari and Borishade (2015) assert that TQM practices have demonstrated benefits for developing an overall quality culture within an organisation. TQM and most quality management systems strongly emphasise enhancing customer satisfaction and instilling a commitment to continually exceeding stakeholders' expectations. Total quality management emphasises the need for an organisation to communicate to stakeholders precisely what the organisation will deliver and at what quality to avoid misunderstandings. Shenawy et al. (2007) advance OC as a critical ingredient in the progressive implementation of TQM. In education, it means that the progressive adoption of TQM must consider OC.

In education, training, and development environments, quality and reliability have become overriding factors for the students who are the customers of learning institutions in choosing where they want to pursue their studies (Mitic, 2020). Like businesses, education institutions need to meet the needs of various stakeholders, particularly the learning needs of their students, as they form part of their core customers. This assumption means that what the institutions offer should be fit for purpose, meaningful and active, and ensure value for money. The delivery must be swift, a differentiating feature for organisational success (Sockalingam & Liu, 2020). In an education setting, value for money is when the learning institution commits to a continuous improvement plan aligned to innovation. Through continuous improvement

efforts, there is value for money for students as they receive education benefits in study achievements and later as responsible future workforce contributing to the betterment of the economy (Lapiņa et al., 2015).

A layout of a favourable environment that introduces the path for successfully implementing TQM is believed to be a supportive OC (Alghamdi, 2018). The prevailing argument is that organisations that are mindful of culture or support a culture change are more likely to improve their quality (Alghamdi, 2018). It should be noted that Alghamdi (2018) conducted the study in public organisations in the Al Baha Province in Saudi Arabia, and one of the limitations was that the study only included high school students from the nation's capital in the sample; therefore, conclusions about the entire nation should not be drawn from the research. Talib and Rahman (2015) highlight that effective leadership is essential in adopting TQM. They assert that strong leadership commitment to overseeing personnel and providing essential training and facilitation is crucial for achieving effective implementation of TQM. According to Kosgei (2014), the implementation of TQM relies on the effective leadership of senior management. They have a significant influence on improving the quality of services and the overall performance of the institution. Similarly, Kosigei's case study of Eldoret East district in Kenya on challenges facing the implementation of TQM in secondary schools found that senior management in the institution needs to understand the importance of a quality culture as a strategic tool and deal with OC change. The quality of education is important in a competitive world.

There is a need to embrace change in the educational processes to develop and keep the strength required to influence continuous improvement efforts (Mishra & Pandey, 2013). There is a belief that some academic institutions are slow to embrace a change that brings in TQM; as a result, they lose out on the prospect of leading change and notably face the danger of becoming less relevant to the corporate world (Mishra & Pandey, 2013). The view above may result from quality, which has become crucial to success and strategic responsibility in organisations. Providing high-quality service and products has been recognised as a key element for success by most authors in the literature reviewed. However, the current thesis reviewed most literature from the United States and Europe due to limited literature that deals with the role of OC in

TQM implementation within the education, training, and development space in South Africa.

As a philosophy, TQM involves internal and external stakeholders to strengthen the quality culture (Zabadi, 2013). Total quality management refers to structures of applications with orderly outcomes based on organisational practices and not tradition, where institutions believe that they can determine quality by their internal resources, as stated by Zabadi:

Faculty with an impressive set of degrees and experience detailed at the end of the institute's admission brochure, number of books and journals in the library, an ultramodern campus, and size of the end of the endowment, etc., or by its definable and assessable outputs, viz., efficient use of resources, producing uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates.
(Zabadi, 2013, p. 42-60)

Zabadi's (2013) opinion indicates that organisations sometimes rely heavily on their internal strength in ensuring quality management and less on checking the impact on external stakeholders' (who might be their customers, potential employers of students, or society) satisfaction. I am aware that student representative bodies are gradually receiving recognition in different South African HEIs; however, it is unclear if they are part of strategic plans that call for improvement in quality management.

There is a need to unpack the advantages and disadvantages of TQM for education (Pourrajab et al., 2011). In education, TQM is a comprehensive quality management system that needs to be supported by a system-based mindset in which people are required to collaborate with others and share a common understanding of how to produce, manage, and deliver quality. Total quality management aims to establish a quality culture where lecturers, teachers, and educators strive for useful teaching and learning practices and where the institutional framework supports this goal (Mishra & Pandey, 2013). A culture that promotes quality makes an organisation more appealing, well-known, and distinctive from competitors.

The disadvantages of using TQM include issues and difficulties with:

- An all-encompassing transition to a TQM culture;

- Obtaining and preserving employee support for and acceptance of TQM principles;
- Establishing and fostering long-term, mutually beneficial connections with suppliers and customers to facilitate virtual integration and
- TQM could be costly in terms of time, as a good TQM system could take time to implement fully, especially if there is a lack of commitment and resources.

The advantages include:

- Establishing dependable and powerful relationships with suppliers and customers which is essential for success, as customers' demands for implementing quality methods are frequently crucial.
- Through cooperation and information sharing, partial vertical integration is accomplished.
- Participating with suppliers and customers in strategic planning activities, programme design, process improvement initiatives, and cross-training programmes, which strengthens partnerships.
- The competitive advantage that partnerships with suppliers and customers give an institution makes it the institution of choice for internal and external stakeholders, such as staff, students, communities, and potential customers (students), among others.
- An organisation's desired culture is created when senior management commits to TQM early on and works to adopt it across the whole organisation.

2.5 EXISTING BARRIERS TO TQM IMPLEMENTATION

Johnson and Kleiner (2013) indicate that the main barriers were the absence of benchmarking, employees struggling to accept transformation, and unwillingness to move from their comfort zone. The key obstacles were identified as the absence of benchmarking and employees' reluctance to accept change. The majority of the workforce in higher education comprises professionals who traditionally demand independence and academic freedom. It might not be pleasant to ask academic professionals to reconsider their methods of teaching (Mishra & Pandey, 2013).

Mishra and Pandey (2013) also add that teaching professionals may be more passionate about their craft than TQM practitioners. Senior management has also

been indicated as a barrier due to a substantial lack of support for quality, commitment, and communication, which has been highlighted (Talib & Rahman, 2015). Meher and Baral (2019) indicate that although research has shown that TQM is a way to enhance quality, the following common obstacles must be overcome for TQM to be successfully implemented:

- Insufficient commitment from the management
- Lack of ability to alter the organisational culture
- Poor planning
- Insufficient ongoing training and education
- Inadequate assessment methods and restricted access to information and outcomes
- Insufficient attention to internal and external customers
- Insufficient use of empowerment and collaboration.

Meher and Baral (2019) found that for the schools where they conducted their research, insufficient commitment from management, insufficient ongoing training and use of empowerment collaboration, a resources and equipment shortage, and a scarcity of awards and acknowledgement were the four biggest confirmed obstacles in the implementation of TQM.

Therefore, as per the views of Suwandej (2015), there is a direct relationship between the OC and the concept of TQM. When the culture is implicit and generated at different levels of the interaction, they benefit more in terms of cultural factor consideration. The culture process needs to be more focused on the organisation, which can help the teachers, principals, heads of the department, and policymakers in education understand the cultural factors of influence for the betterment of the quality improvement process. The OC can be improved by implementing a proper strategy that leads to the organisation's overall development. This strategy should include proper training for the employees to understand and align their personal goals with the organisation's objectives. Total quality management can be behavioural with the organisation's culture focusing more on the beliefs, attitudes, and situational interaction.

The organisation's culture can be improved by enhancing innovation, as maintaining quality in education in this technological digitisation era requires internal stakeholders in the different faculties to be innovative. The diversification in culture creates different

opinions among people regarding the development of organisational success. Nevertheless, a heterogeneous culture might increase the probability of disputes. Senior management must prevent such occurrences by providing training that focuses on collaborating and communicating well with multicultural teams. Senior management should instruct staff to attend seminars focused on team-building activities and promote engagement with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Diversity must be represented in all departments of the organisation to avoid the development of separate cultural groups (Gaikar, 2020).

This approach should lead to the multicultural teams pulling a strategy formulation based on the quality management system together, which will facilitate the creation of adequate system maintenance for proper system control and an efficient workflow. Consequently, the culture changes will lead to a diverse quality work culture, which will cause productivity and change the overall institutional performance. Honarpour et al. (2015) state that in this manner, the OC and the TQM service are associated with each other, as shown in Figure 2.3 below.



Figure 2.3: The association between OC and TQM

Source: Mosadeghrad (2015)

Figure 2.3 illustrates the need to establish an appropriate OC that fosters collaboration across departments and the formation of functional teams to accomplish particular tasks. This is crucial for facilitating ongoing evaluation and ensuring the delivery of high-quality programme offers. Interfaculty quality management committees operate to ensure quality programme development and delivery to satisfy the end user. Additionally, education institutions' performance and accomplishments must be assessed annually for quality sustainability and improvement to be successful and productive in this competitive environment being digitised. These proposed strategies support Mosadeghrad's (2015) opinion that the increase in demand for market

competition, globalisation, mergers, and acquisition has generated a greater demand for staff development and the need to enhance efficiency.

2.6 LITERATURE GAP

The current study could provide insight into OC's role in implementing TQM, specifically within the ETD environment. The literature review found that very few studies linked the relationship between OC and TQM in HEIs. Some studies examined the quality of education being aligned to an academic culture but still lack a holistic approach (Pandita & Kiran, 2020). The role and consequence of OC and the implementation of TQM in further education institutions require more research. According to Mosadeghrad (2006), the connection among diverse cultures, cultural depth, and TQM have rarely been examined. According to Jasti and Kodali (2015), the success rate of a manufacturing strategy in every industry depends on a variety of tools, techniques, concepts, and execution strategies.

Problematic implementation of TQM could cause financial and other losses for organisations. The various factors which influence the successful implementation of TQM are also not sufficiently highlighted in the previous studies, but there are only suggestions to have TQM frameworks in place to ensure continuous improvement. Thus, the lack of investigation of the role of OC in effectively implementing TQM has created a research gap in the existing research. The practical application of TQM within the ETD space and the data analysis of the success rate has not been fully explored in previous studies. The current study suggests more research should be focused on this gap.

2.7 PUBLIC SERVICE LEARNING INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The vision outlined in the 1997 white paper on public service education and training guides the current public sector's education and training policy.

The primary objectives of the White Paper on Public Service Training and Education (WPPSTE) of 1997 are:

- It seeks to establish a distinct vision and framework for policies.
- This framework guides the adoption and execution of new regulations, guidelines, and laws.
- Public service education and training are intended to be transformed by these adjustments.
- It should be dynamic and need-responsive.

- Proactiveness is another vital aspect.
- Building a new public service requires this transformation as South Africa is changing into a democratic society.
- In this process, the education and training system ought to be strategically involved (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997).

The white paper calls for the establishment of a dedicated, efficient, and citizen-focused public service consisting of well-trained public employees. Such a public service will achieve its highest level of performance and fully realise its potential through the provision of comprehensive, appropriate education and training at all levels (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997). The government promotes the development of diverse educational and training institutions that compete on an equal basis in the market, with the aim of providing education and training opportunities. These include both internal entities, such as state academies and provincial training agencies, as well as external public educational institutions, such as universities, Technikons, NGOs, and private training groups.

As the overseer reporting to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), the Public Service Education and Training Authority (PSETA) ensures world-class education and training in the public service, accommodating the requirements of all parties involved. These stakeholders specifically include those involved in government, such as government departments like DIRCO, DPSA, Home Affairs, the legislature, provincial legislatures, and transversal skills across other government departments, public entities and parastatals.

According to the Skills Development Act (SDA), PSETA performs essential tasks such as creating a sector skills plan, ensuring the quality of training supplied to the public, accrediting training institutions like state academies and colleges, and developing qualifications and skills development programmes, among others.

The selected public service institution where the research was conducted is one of the state academies accredited by the PSETA. The provision of training by state academies is dedicated mostly to upskilling public service employees in their different areas of function.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Creating a quality culture is essential for establishing the TQM principles in education and any other institution of learning. An appropriate OC has to be realised for the

progressive establishment of TQM since OC is one of the principal factors for the success or failure of TQM.

The absence of committed senior management that supports quality management efforts and a deficient OC can cause problems in the process of effective TQM. Some of the challenges facing the implementation of TQM in secondary schools seem to be due to senior management in the institution who have little understanding of the importance of a quality culture as a strategic tool. The challenges require senior management to be able to create an environment for all concerned stakeholders to buy into OC change efforts.

The current thesis reviewed primarily literature from the United States and Europe due to limited literature dealing with OC's role in TQM implementation within the education, training, and development space in South Africa. The culture process needs to be more focused on the organisation, which can help the teachers, principals, heads of the department, and policymakers in education understand the cultural factors of influence for the betterment of the quality improvement process. An institution's culture can be improved by enhancing innovation and maintaining the quality of education in this technological digitisation era that requires internal stakeholders in the different faculties to be creative.

Very few studies linked OC and TQM in HEIs. The various factors influencing the successful implementation of TQM are also not sufficiently highlighted in the previous studies, but there are only suggestions to have TQM frameworks in place to ensure continuous improvement. Thus, the lack of investigation of the role of OC in effectively implementing TQM has created a research gap in the existing research.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three discusses the methodology that I have used, including the paradigm, method, and strategies applied in this research. The research orientation employed includes the research philosophy, approach, and strategies. Furthermore, I discuss the research design, the methods, the site, and the sample used in my study. I describe the qualitative research approach, a case study research design, and a justification for why I chose these for my study. I then describe the data collection method, which was through semi-structured interviews. I also discuss the sampling procedures and the methods used to establish the trustworthiness and credibility of my study. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the data analyses and summarise the chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In this current research study, I followed the interpretivism philosophy through semi-structured interviews with participants to understand different viewpoints in the social context. The participants' beliefs and opinions were important in identifying patterns. Attention was given to participants' experiences in TQM as individuals are believed to experience and understand the same reality differently. This means that their experience of TQM may not be the same. An in-depth insight was required to understand how participants' organisational culture (OC) experience influenced the implementation of TQM in their work lives.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study used a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative approach sought to collect detailed views, experiences, and perceptions of participants, allowing the researcher to make sense of participants' experiences regarding the study phenomena in a given context (Austin & Sutton, 2014). The advantage of employing a qualitative research approach is that it allowed me to access rich and detailed information about the thoughts and experiences of the sampled participants and put me in a position to analyse their responses (Schmidt, 2022).

In this study, a qualitative approach is used to understand if there is a perceived association between TQM and OC (Flick, 2018). As shown in Table 3.1., the current

study shows us that there are many advantages and disadvantages to consider while doing qualitative research on the part OC plays in implementing TQM.

Table 3.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of the Qualitative Approach

Advantages of the qualitative approach	Disadvantages of the qualitative approach
<p>It provides independence from pre-defined variables, and in my study, it enabled an in-depth investigation of each participant's individual experiences, perceptions, and behaviours.</p>	<p>It could require more time. My study could be held virtually due to the department not being comfortable having external people interviewing in person at the time of the research. This cut down unnecessary movement and/or travelling, though there was a threat of load shedding.</p>
<p>It helps in the creation of exploratory research, which added to my study because one acquired a thorough awareness of the complexity of organisational culture and how it affects the use of TQM.</p>	<p>It can be labour intensive, which I found to be true, because transcribing and analysing the audio interviews was indeed labour intensive.</p>
<p>It gives a deep understanding as I discovered that It enables researchers to identify the social, cultural, and historical influences that define organisational culture and impact the use of TQM.</p>	<p>Unlike quantitative research, the technique is less popular, and the specific OC or TQM implementation factors become difficult to quantify and measure as a result. Because of this restriction, it was challenging to reach precise findings or establish cause-and-effect correlations.</p>
<p>It allows the use of subjective data to comprehend diverse points of view. Qualitative research offered me a deep contextual understanding of the study.</p>	<p>It does not allow the generalisation of the findings; furthermore, the analysis and interpretation of data for qualitative research took longer.</p>

As per the views of Lee and Saunders (2017), various new concepts can be established using this research design. Semi-structured interviews are considered the most popular method for data collection in studies of an exploratory nature. The main advantage of using semi-structured interviews in this research is their flexible nature, ability to ask follow-up questions and the provision of voluntary information by participants related to the subject matter. It allows the researcher to contextualise how research participants perceive their functions and environment.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The selected method for the study is qualitative, with an epistemological standing applied in a case study. Barkley (2007) indicates that case studies have often been orderly based on the available data and the applied field in subjects where generalisation is not required for the records, such as specific industry practices and business development (Barkley, 2007). The current study used a single case study approach Yin (2014) describes as a practical probe exploring a recent phenomenon within its existing context, particularly when there are no evident divisions between the phenomenon and context. A case study approach provides explanations and supplementary material (Yin, 2014). This research was a single case study of implementing TQM in a public service learning institution and its association with OC.

3.4.1 Sampling Strategy

Although this sample methodology is subject to bias and factors outside the researcher's control, it is a recognised research technique suitable for this study.

A purposive sampling strategy has been used to select the participants who were most likely to provide data to address the research questions. In support of the purposive sampling used, Maree (2011) opines that the researcher needs participants with specific attributes to address the research question. The heads or managers of the selected business units from the selected public service learning institution were invited to participate in the study. Their ages ranged from 25 – 65 years. The Institution selected them following a request sent by the researcher to the head of the institution. The head of the institution approved the request, and the HR planning unit selected the business unit and managers available for the research. Emails were sent to the selected participants, inviting them to participate in the research study. A total of ten participants from ten business units participated in the study.

3.4.2 Data Collection and Interpretation

The procedures used to collect and interpret the data are reflected below:

Data collection procedure

Data was elicited and collected from semi-structured interviews for this study. The current study utilised semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data and documents selected for analysis as the secondary source of data. Although the interviewer creates a list of questions before the interviews, new questions may be raised during the interview, presenting a chance for participants to voice their thoughts. The probing questions are included as part of the interview (Jameel et al., 2018).

Content analysis of semi-structured interviews

The data collected from individuals who participated in semi-structured interviews were analysed to make sense of it using a content analysis strategy. Content analysis is a systematic method for identifying, analysing, and summarising the substance of the data obtained (Maree, 2011).

It was possible to learn how various participants understand quality management and the role of OC in implementing TQM using content analysis. The recordings of the semi-structured interviews had to be transcribed to analyse the data collected. Transcribing includes transferring recordings of the interviews into text data. As part of stakeholder checking, the interview transcriptions were made available to the participants to verify the accuracy of their responses.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

I used content analysis to make sense of the data gathered from specific individuals. The type of qualitative data analysis the research used was Thematic Content Analysis, which is descriptive in its presentation. Content analysis is important if a researcher wishes to be descriptive, which means interpreting the currently prevalent practices in education (Parveen & Showkat, 2017).

Policy and framework documents from the business units willing to provide documents without limits were analysed using content analysis. All of these materials pertain to the quality management of the particular business unit or units that took part in the research project. The OC now in place concerning the function of the business unit's quality management, handling of related policies and framework documents, sharing,

and understanding internally within and across the organisation was identified. The interview transcripts were analysed to group different units of the interviews and the same or similar units. Microsoft Word was used for this thematic content analysis.

3.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework proposed for the study employs the types of culture adapted from Cameron and Quinn’s (2011) competing values framework (CVF), and it shows the cultural elements with strategic direction. The cultural elements of TQM implementation are described according to Cameron and Quinn (2011) in terms of how they align with the OC types.

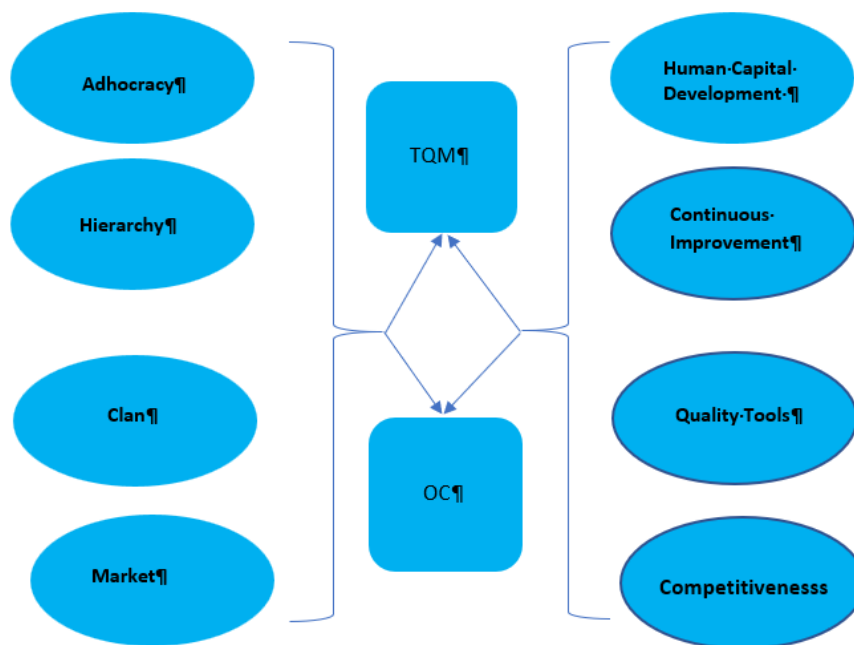


Figure 3.1: Cameron and Quinn’s Conceptual Framework (2011)

Source: Cameron and Quinn (2011)

- The CLAN Culture: In terms of OC, the clan culture positively aligns with TQM with its focus on human capital development, commitment, and communication. The human resource training, a commitment by senior management, and open lines of communication should be clear to have the TQM strategy communicated at all levels for adequate implementation. This type of culture was identified in some areas as being promoted within the areas of jurisdiction and, in certain aspects, identified as the desired culture within the business unit and/or organisation-wide.

- The adhocracy culture advocates creativity and communication and encourages innovation with a positive role for TQM. The organisation motivates independent dynamism and freedom (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). This leads to continuous quality improvement, establishing a quality work culture and improving organisation-wide performance. This culture was widely identified as a culture that used to exist but is suddenly disappearing due to low staff morale in the organisation, and the result is the existence of some grey regions regarding the implementation of quality management. In some instances, some participants indicated that the COVID-19 lockdown also contributed in a way.
- The hierarchy culture is deemed controlling and aligns with TQM because of the focus on the process (the quality tools), but it is still negatively associated with TQM. The culture advocates for a well-defined and structured working environment with well-defined procedures. Most participants agreed that this type of culture was prevalent as there is nothing you can do within the organisation without a submission; this document needs to be signed by senior management to approve all the organisation's projects, big and small. They indicated that sometimes delays and even difficulties in effectively executing specific projects are attributed to this culture. The participants expressed a desire for this kind of culture to be diluted with a more flexible culture (clan and adhocracy), especially for smaller projects to work effectively.
- The market culture is aggressively competitive and focuses on the bottom line. It is negatively associated with TQM (Gives birth to sales & marketing war rooms). The people in this culture are passionate and dedicated, and the leaders are ambitious and motivated competitors. Ambitious innovation is adopted as a workplace culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Most participants indicated that this culture does not exist in their environment, though there is competitiveness regarding managing projects.

3.6.1 Reasons for Choosing the Conceptual Framework

For a number of reasons, selecting a conceptual framework is essential when implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) in a Public Service Institution: The role of organisational culture research. First off, by viewing an organization's cultural orientation as a critical success factor, a conceptual framework aids in understanding the relationship between TQM and innovation (Hung et al., 2011). Through the integration of diverse theories, it facilitates the investigation of the influence of organizational culture on the adoption of contemporary management systems, (Jackson et al., 2011). Furthermore, the utilization of a conceptual framework facilitates the resolution of issues related to the integration of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the healthcare sector by pinpointing obstacles, crucial success

factors, and advantages of TQM execution, (Papanthymou et al., 2017). Last but not least, it strengthens the theoretical foundation of Total Quality Leadership (TQL) in a TQM setting by highlighting the significance of leadership pillars, (Luburic et al., 2014).

3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

In this study, the researcher endeavoured to keep the process of conducting the research and collection of data as authentic as possible. This process included progressive subjectivity, where there are checks and balances in verifying responses with participants. Persistent observation, where the researcher may arrange additional visits with the participant's consent, was used to recap previous questions and responses to ensure consistency in the data provided. The notes and verified viewpoints later assisted the researcher in analysing the recorded data. The research utilised stakeholder checking to explore credibility by giving the participants the results to check the accuracy of their responses. Peer debriefing was used to check that peers had the same interpretation and understanding and offered other possible interpretations. A specialist inspector (supervisor) examined the coding and themes as part of the criteria.

3.7.1 Credibility and Trustworthiness

I used member checks to make sure the data was credible and accurate. Member checking allows research participants to engage actively in the analytical process while ensuring the validity of the findings to demonstrate credibility and reassure external parties that the results are noteworthy and credible. (Zeron Lopez et al., 2021). Participants were given the interview transcripts to verify their responses as part of stakeholder verification.

In addition, according to DeCino et al. (2018), participant verification can improve the validity of findings, provoke thought, and bring about change in qualitative research. While also in agreement, O'Reilly and Kiyimba (2015) opine that in qualitative research, member checks ensure validity by allowing participants to correct mistakes.

Lastly, a specialist inspector (supervisor) examined the coding and themes to enhance the credibility of the results.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter three discusses the methods I have used for this research, including the paradigm, method, and strategies. The research orientation employed, including the research philosophy, approach, and strategies, have also been discussed. Furthermore, I discussed the research design, methods, site, and sample used in the current study. I described the qualitative research approach, a case study research design, and a justification for why these research options were chosen for my study. In this current research study, the researcher followed the interpretivism philosophy through participant semi-structured interviews with participants to understand different social context perspectives and viewpoints. The qualitative approach sought to collect detailed views, experiences, and perceptions of participants, allowing the researcher to make sense of participants' experiences regarding the study phenomena in a given context (Austin & Sutton, 2014). According to Maree (2011), purposive sampling is useful in a study where the researcher is looking for certain participants with specific attributes that will help answer the research question. The current study utilised semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data and documents selected for analysis as the secondary source of data. Qualitative data analysis is flexible as data collected data (Ngulube, 2015). Interview transcripts collected from the research participants formed the qualitative data and the documents described earlier in the chapter.

The interviews covered the topics of teamwork and challenges, specifically:

- a) Motivation and purpose;
- b) Organisational culture challenges and acceptance;
- c) Structure for quality management;
- d) Teamwork and obstacles; and
- e) The positives and solutions to change.

The key topics raised in the interview on the interviewee's job, the organisation's quality management strategy, teamwork, motivation, support systems, and the culture of quality management and learning inside the organisation are summarised using these themes in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the role of culture in the effective establishment of TQM in the selected public service institution. This chapter presents the collected data and a data analysis. This chapter indicates participant biographies and the themes developed from the data gathered by semi-structured interviews to address the study objectives.

Figure 4.1 below represents the original data of *the* participants invited and those who became the final respondents to the semi-structured interviews conducted.

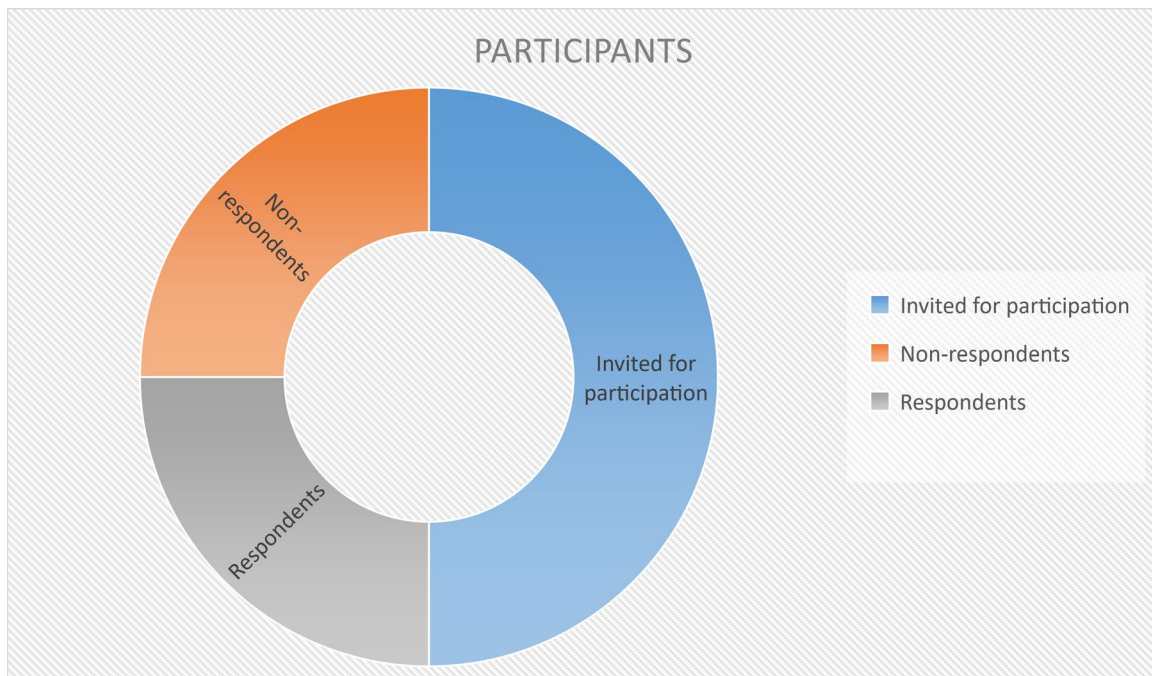


Figure 4.1: Participant data

Figure 4.1 depicts the number of participants initially invited to participate in the research study. Only five participants out of the ten invited responded to the invitation to participate in this research study.

4.2 PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The section presents the participants' demographics, including their role, age, and gender. Table 4.1 below indicates the participants' demographics.

Table 4.1: Participant demographics

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-39	0	0
40-59	5	100%
Gender		
Female	3	60%
Male	2	40%
Ethnicity		
African	3	60%
Asian	1	20%
White	1	20%
Work position		
Director	1	20%
Deputy Director	4	80%
Work experience		
0-4	0	0%
+5	5	100%

Table 4.1 above indicates that all the participants were aged 40 to 59 years and had over five years of experience working with the organisation. In terms of gender, three of the participants were female, while the other two (2) were male. The participants were of mature age, and the study endeavoured to stay gender sensitive.

In terms of work positions, all the participants, four (4) deputy directors and one (1) director were in senior positions at the organisation. In terms of diversity, a majority (three) of the participants were Africans, while the rest were comprised of (one) White and one (1) Asian participant.

4.3 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the data collected on the research objectives, including a) the cultural practices that stakeholders perceive as best suited for effective implementation of TQM within the selected business units of the public service

learning institution, b) the organisational cultures about quality management existing at the business units of the public service learning institution; c) the OC obstacles that can hinder the effective implementation of TQM within the selected business units; d) the perceived solutions to the obstacles related to TQM implementation at the public service institution.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of thirteen questions. The participants' answers were categorised into major themes and sub-themes that represented the ideas, perceptions, experiences, and observations each participant reported, as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Themes emerging from data

Major Themes	Sub-themes
1. Diverse experiences of organisational culture ranging from positive to a perception of rigidity	Diverse organisational culture due to age, for example - Willing, dynamic, quick execution by younger employees Slow but polished execution delivering quality by older employees Different approaches to task execution Inclusivity and sharing ideas - Openness to change to a flexible culture Open-door policy, communication, and constructive criticism Rigid and outdated rules - Acknowledging the existence of a hierarchical culture Importance of embracing 4IR
2. Risks associated with inconsistent policy execution and the importance of quality management in continual organisational improvement	Significant quality management throughout the functions of each business unit Management committee and technical team support of quality management processes Inspiration is drawn from understanding the vision. Everyone plays a role in quality management and continual improvement.

Major Themes	Sub-themes
<p>3. Bureaucratic procedures challenge the innovative and efficient implementation of quality management when resources are low.</p>	<p>Lack of unified articulation of South African foreign policy</p> <p>Aggrieved employees due to inconsistent implementation of policies</p> <p>A highly regulated environment and hierarchy stifle innovation.</p> <p>Lack of implementation and progression opportunities</p> <p>Projects started and ended prematurely.</p> <p>Use of the institution's traditional procedures</p> <p>Snail's pace toward technological developments</p>
<p>4. Stakeholders are dedicated to identifying workable solutions to promote collaboration, quality management practices, and ongoing development.</p>	<p>Focus on ways of enhancing the current QMS.</p> <p>Use of technological innovation with set requirements of ISO 9001 and optimise the use of technology</p> <p>Workable solutions which fit with turnaround times</p> <p>Envision a culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing and empowerment; increased trust enhances productivity and morale.</p> <p>Capacity building opportunities with platforms to address organisation's challenges</p>
<p>5. The COVID-19 pandemic affected organisational culture, training, support, and other underlying variables that go into quality management and efforts at continuous improvement in both positive and negative ways.</p>	<p>COVID promoted innovation and leadership trust</p> <p>Exposed micro-management</p> <p>Time management challenges post-lockdown</p> <p>Competitiveness and silos instead of collaboration and open information exchange are encouraged.</p>

Table 4.2 above reflects the themes that emerged from the data, with associated sub-themes where participants shared their personal experiences and views about the challenges and potential opportunities they experienced while working to enhance

quality management. The themes are not in any specific order; all the themes shown were discussed by the five participants. The first and second themes show what the researcher considers a crucial finding: that strict and inflexible hierarchies damage the quality culture. The sub-themes are derived from the coding process and are shown to provide the reader with more depth and understanding of the themes generated.

Theme 1 – Diverse experiences of organisational culture ranging from positive diversity to rigidity

The participants reported distinct and different experiences of the OC. The age differences were strongly felt, with participants noting how dissimilar younger employees are from older ones. Participant 3 stated: *“As the older employees prefer to adhere to established techniques, the young have the willingness and dynamism to take quick actions.”* As older employees invest time in polishing and delivering good quality, younger employees are more willing to supply research and knowledge on a given topic since they can easily access essential information. The findings in this section confirm Goel’s (2018) conclusions that workforce diversity can boost employee morale and performance and provide business units with a competitive edge. Mosadeghrad (2015) also indicated that supportive leadership and collaborative OC are the reasons for the success of TQM because managers can use employee diversity to learn new skills and methods for fostering team unity.

Participants also reported an aspect of inclusivity, where employees are encouraged to share their ideas. The open-door communication and constructive criticism demonstrate a high degree of employee cooperation, trust, and respect between the management and employees; for example, Participant 2 stated, *“Supervisor offers a chance for employees to share their views on things and does not repress their thoughts.”*

At the same time, participants also reported outdated, rigid rules that had negative consequences for the perceived OC. An example of this comes from Participant 1, who said: *“The only thing I can think of that can impact negatively will be the rigid prescripts by the mother department, in this regard, because you'll find that as we move with time their guidelines are still 1990 and we are now in 2022.”* These findings also reflect the evidence of hierarchy culture, which is a more controlling form of TQM and is negatively associated with it. Participants desired a more flexible culture with

less rigidity and resistance to change. Hence Ahmadi et al. (2012) state that “A high degree of specialisation and regulation in an organisation are some of the antecedents of a hierarchical cultural orientation”.

Theme 2 - Risks associated with inconsistent policy execution and the importance of quality management in continual organisational improvement

Participants agreed on the requirements of quality management. Each participant described their views on introducing substantial quality management into each business unit. Participant 2 stated that *“total quality management is significant throughout the function process led by my business unit, including both individual and committee-based quality assurance to verify adherence to policies, procedures, and quality standards.”*

Ola Ibrahim (2013) opines that everyone in the organisation, regardless of function, ought to be involved in the process of improvement. They make clear how crucial evaluation is to achieve ongoing progress.

Participant 3 also reports:

We need to check; we need to qualify for whatever that we quality assure. You will need all those things, uh, including how then do you go about it as far as going to the quality assurance aspect of each with your supervisor and also further with your panel committee. (Participant 3)

Participants also reported inconsistencies in policy implementations, which leads to the perception that some colleagues are not treated fairly. An example comes from Participant 1, who reported:

It should not be that uh, when Ms. X comes, and she wants something because you know Ms. X then you don't apply the policy. You give whatever Ms. X wants which is actually against the policy. And then when Mr Y comes, you say, no, but the policy says, therefore, we're not gonna get there.

Then there's inconsistency; ultimately, you will, you'll be sitting with aggrieved employees. (Participant 1)

Participants also touched on the importance of having a unified voice when speaking on foreign policy to maintain consistency. Participant 5 reported: *"When we talk about foreign policy, we talk about foreign policy from a different voice ... there is no single voice that articulates its foreign policy."*

These findings also reflect that the care we take in properly articulating and implementing our organisational policies will also enhance the quality of articulation for the SA foreign policy with understanding. These findings confirm the recommendations by Klaaren and Halim (2020), who state that South Africa should define a set of enduring norms and principles founded in the constitution to guide its future actions and decisions in its international affairs to build a cohesive and effective forward-looking foreign policy.

The findings in this section establish that using panels to evaluate the work represents better quality assurance. The employees apply TQM in their work, evaluation, conduct, and performance. The findings support Ogbari and Birishade's (2015) conclusions that the leading benefit of practising TQM cultural practices is improving the organisation's overall quality. Shenawy et al. (2007) justify that TQM emphasises enhanced commitment to sustained improvement in stakeholder expectations, employee-client satisfaction, and better communication (avoiding misunderstandings).

Theme 3 - Bureaucratic procedures challenge the innovative and efficient implementation of quality management when resources are low

Participants feel frustrated by the barriers and potential inefficiencies that, in their view, might lead to an environment that is not conducive to the effective implementation of TQM. Participant 2 indicated that there will always be frustrations in any organisation, and they said:

I was part of a project for two years, which would've changed the way we dealt with, for example, medical services abroad. And after two years, it was just pushed off the table. The hierarchy is a definite yes; we are very regulated in that sense; maybe too regulated. It also then actually hampers innovation in a certain sense, uh, doesn't allow you to be too innovative. (Participant 2)

They also feel frustrated by the hierarchical mindsets and long list of bureaucracy that includes approval of documents by a list of people, which they feel delays progress and hampers innovation. Participant 3 said, *“You know, it kills the approach, there's a list of people that are supposed to be consulted and now there is a lot of bureaucracy”*.

Participant 1 also indicated that with whatever document is developed, there is a long list of people to be consulted, which becomes a restriction to the process and adds another restriction in time management. The participant said:

There was an ethics and culture survey done a couple of years ago, and a lot of things came out of that. But the thing is, nothing happened with it. So you had facts on paper, but nobody resolved it and turned it around and that's the sad part. (Participant 1)

The participants contend that much has changed, but they must still follow the department's conventional procedures despite technological developments and the digitalisation of government operations. Participant 5 added, *“We are talking of the fourth industrial revolution and all those nice things, but when it comes to the government, they're still operating as if they were in 1999”*.

Hence, Gwala and Mashau (2023) opine that adopting sophisticated technology can also greatly assist governments by a) making it easier for users to access multi-level platforms that offer digitalisation and accelerate the speed at which information is accessed, disseminated, and responded to by end users., and b) cutting bureaucracy and other obstacles to internal processes for all projects that should encourage efficiency and enhance technological developments empowering individuals to be innovative.

Theme 4 - Stakeholders are dedicated to identifying workable solutions to promote collaboration, quality management practices, and ongoing development.

The institution's academy uses the Quality Management System (QMS) – ISO 9001:2015. Although they note the difficulties encountered during the switch to the 2015 standard from 2009, they claim that the QMS is generally well-understood and well-accepted. Participant 4 reported:

The system is there; it's well received. Things are smooth, and there is understanding. However, it is highlighted when there are changes because that's how it is. You train, and you know, you'll have everything in place, and when it's time for those colleagues to go for assignments abroad, then you know, it starts from scratch. (Participant 4)

Though the institution itself used to have QMS, it is now utilised only by the institution's academy. Participant 2 said:

There is a branch or a chief directorate that used to have ISO back then, but I think at the moment, I'm not sure about its status but um, truly speaking, if the, if ISO or quality management system in totality could be adopted at [an] organisational level, it would work and it would assist in, I mean, different areas. (Participant 2)

The participants reported their vision for the organisation's culture, highlighting the value of information sharing and fostering a culture of collaboration and empowerment. Participant 5 reported:

Getting the job done, that cooperation, communication, coordination I think it's important, especially if you're doing events and things like that, that is critical. But I think broadly, in this institution, there's a lot [that] should be changing. There are pockets of passion, and goodness and drive, but I think it's going to be a process. (Participant 5)

My participants described programmes to promote knowledge sharing and the conviction that the institution may undergo constructive change and technological development. As part of the knowledge-sharing drive, Participant 3 also added:

A group of us in the department, at our levels, tried to create something because we want to make it not a bad thing to share information. Because if I'm working on this space, why shouldn't I? If you want it, I should tell you the outcome because it's only gonna empower you. We're working on encouraging the culture of "this thing doesn't belong to me. (Participant 3)

The participants highlighted the importance of supporting information exchange and the belief that change brings benefits, provides a strong basis for quality management,

and makes training investments in human resources to enhance competencies. Participant 4 reported:

There is value and need for programs to promote knowledge sharing and the conviction that the institution may undergo constructive change. The institution academy is currently using the QMS – ISO 9001 – 2015 because it is still working well and approved as per SABS standards. The Academy is content without a quality management approach and without plans to adopt it for the entire Institution. (Participant 4)

Thanks to this all-encompassing strategy, the institution should be more prepared and effective in applying quality management practices. Participant 3 stated in agreement, *“There is a need to build a solid foundation before applying total quality management systems and procedures for prompt answers and monitoring of project development.”*

Participant 5 added, *“There is value in human resources training under the direction of senior management. Capacity development is investing in human capital to improve talents and skills.”*

The findings above establish the solutions for institutions to reflect on their past and conduct a comparative analysis to enhance the quality management process. Institutions must build their employees' capacity using strategies like potential collaborations and exploiting international and national partnerships. The results indicate that an emphasis on capacity building and delivery of possibilities for employee advancement helps address organisational difficulties and raise employee morale. The results confirm Gaikar's (2020) conclusion that institutions must embrace multifaceted strategies incorporating human resources and employee and organisational development. Mosadeghrad (2015) also contends that increasing managerial interest in employees helps determine the appropriateness of TQM and other quality management methodologies.

Theme 5 - The COVID-19 pandemic affected organisational culture, training, support, and other underlying variables that go into quality management and efforts at continuous improvement in both positive and negative ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected individuals and organisations differently; those willing to embrace the change and put the necessary technology in place had

positive experiences. For this public service institution, the participants experienced a bit of both. Participant 4 reported:

The only times when there will be challenges, for example, during the COVID times, you can imagine as the training academy, and we are used to being in class. So the changes during that time, you know, moving to training online and all of that disrupted the entire process but, um, everyone was learning. We were all learning together. (Participant 4)

The participants also felt that the pandemic affected the morale of staff. Participant 5 reports that *“it’s normal when one comes back from abroad that it takes a bit of time to get used to this new organisational culture; it’s something that always happens.”* Participant 5 added: *“There are people that, I mean, give and all of that, but the culture doesn’t seem to be the same. Broadly speaking, I think it’s for a multitude of reasons emanating from various levels of officials and management within the department.”* One participant said: *“We don’t have shared values, you know? Because there are values that we have as a department, besides the vision and mission, those values exist, so yeah.”*

The involvement of Human Resource Management as a partner is also cited, with Participant 1 reporting, *“I think the diagnostic that should come out of our organisational development team and experts, they should have more than just reminding people what their values are.”*

Participants also cited that the values of Ubuntu and Bathopele principles seemed to have faded because Participant 2 reported:

It’s staff morale you get, really, people just wanna do the bare minimum. They come late to work; they leave early. They complain if they need to complete projects, and it requires a little bit of extra effort. So the morale is really low. (Participant 2)

According to Eke and Onuoha (2020), institutions should educate staff members and provide them with opportunities to raise morale to enhance working conditions. They add that employees' opinions on the political climate at work impact their emotions,

employer, co-workers, and workplace, impacting their intent, productivity, and level of satisfaction.

The results above indicate that participants perceive the institution as paying little or no attention to people's contributions to the organisation. Organisational challenges surface because people lack the motivation to advance and/or add the employees are convinced the management does not value their contributions. The inability to realise the fundamental needs of employees' presence at work and fulfilling their duties may defeat the Director-General's and high-level executives' efforts to assert the effectiveness of TQM and the organisation. The findings above collaborate with Mishra and Pandey's (2013) deductions that Senior management does not support employee commitment, communication, and quality. Talib and Rahman (2015), as well as Meher and Baral (2019), have also identified the main obstacles to the successful implementation of TQM to include insufficient managerial commitment, inability to alter organisational culture deprived planning, employee education and training, inadequate methods of assessment and limited access to outcomes and information. Both the participants and the literature review indicate that insufficient employee attention, collaboration, and empowerment reduce the effective *implementation of TQM*.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

There were challenges with the OC at the institution, including underlying factors attributed to low employee morale and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants also indicated that low morale impacts productivity poorly and reduces motivation. Participants were aware of the challenges in transitioning abroad as a new entrant and understanding the department's dynamics by individuals due to premature participation in overseas missions. My participants mentioned the need for a strong foundation and getting the basics right to improve the organisation's culture and quality management efforts for effective implementation of TQM.

As much as the participants acknowledge these challenges, they also have good things to report about the institution as follows:

- They recognise the value of the organisation's emphasis on providing high-quality services and offerings.

- They testify of passionate and driven individuals within the institution who want to bring positive change.
- There is a culture of learning and opportunities for improvement to enhance the quality of offerings at the Institution's academy.
- The existing quality management system (QMS) – ISO 9001: 2015 is well-received and implemented across different levels of the institution's academy.
- Subject matter experts from both internal and external sources contribute to the training offerings.
- There is an open and supportive work culture motivated by the managers of different business units to create a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives contribute to improving quality management practices.
- The institution's academy's training programmes are strengthened by the contributions of subject matter specialists from internal and external sources, and it also includes quality awareness programmes.

In the implementation of the existing QMS and quality management in general, there is alignment and efficient communication promoted by the presence of panel committees, and management review committees made up of directors and representatives from several directorates, as well as by the restoration of the technical team at a lower level ensuring representation of everyone.

The organisation has pockets of zeal, compassion, and ambition, and many people still feel deeply committed to the institution's mission. Their business unit has an open and supportive work culture where employees are encouraged to express their views and ideas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation's academy had to transition to online training, but overall, everyone learned and adapted together. Their tips for other business units or the organisation include having standard operating procedures, consistent policy implementation, and clear business processes to minimize inconsistencies and improve efficiency. Subject matter experts from both internal and external sources contribute to the training offerings.

The participants expressed the following challenges during the interviews:

- The organisation's high level of regulation and process-driven nature stifles creativity and innovation.
- There is a lack of communication, reluctance to change, and low employee morale.

- Although there are training opportunities, interest in and relevance to the work are low.
- The organisation lacks a conducive foundation for implementing total quality management.
- The organisation's culture lacks flexibility, innovation, recognition and rewards.
- Employee morale is low, leading to decreased productivity and motivation.
- External hindrances, such as partner departments and missions, create challenges and hinder the team's ability to produce quality results.
- The organisation lacks a quality-oriented culture and flexibility.
- The organisation does not prioritise coaching and mentoring.
- Recognition and rewards are limited in the organisation due to regulations and lack of funds.
- The organisation is process-driven and highly regulated, which hampers innovation and creativity.
- New entrants in the organisation often go on missions without fully understanding the work and culture of the organisation, leading to challenges and instability.
- There is competition and a lack of support among stakeholders, which can hinder the success of projects and initiatives.
- The organisation's culture of caring may not always be reflected in the actions and attitudes of individuals.

All of the challenges present opportunities to capitalise on the value of flexibility, teamwork, and an innovative approach to quality management and ongoing development within organisations. Organisations can enhance their commitment to quality and adaptability to new challenges and trends by recognising and tackling the obstacles and possibilities linked to varied cultural backgrounds, implementing policies, bureaucratic processes, and the constantly shifting external landscape. Putting these suggestions into practice will support the development of a culture of constant improvement, which can foster competitiveness and long-term success. The next chapter contains a summary of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The current research study investigated the implementation of TQM and its association with the OC in a selected public service institution through the experiences and perceptions of managers. The participants' responses were collected using a descriptive qualitative method and semi-structured interviews. The research focused on investigating role of OC in the effective implementation of TQM. In addition, the research explored barriers and obstacles to the successful implementation of TQM and potential solutions. Moreover, the findings were compared to the reviewed literature to understand TQM and OC. The literature also analysed the TQM and OC in public sector institutions. There was a lack of literature, especially concerning South African public service institutions. The review found more TQM and OC literature concerning the service industries of other countries and some on HEIs in Britain. Effective TQM implementation optimises a standard culture, and strategic implementation planning assists leadership, communication, and transparency in shaping OC to ensure TQM performance. The findings indicated the existence of barriers, including unwillingness to change, lack of support, and little or no employee engagement. Recommendations to address the challenges include improvement in staff collaboration and policy, digitisation, problem-solving, support and commitment, skills development, innovation, and pre- and post-COVID-19 management.

5.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY AND ANALYSIS

This study reflected on the role of culture in applying quality management in the selected public service institutions and domains. According to Zabadi (2013), organisations significantly focus on their internal quality assurance instead of prioritising the satisfaction of external stakeholders, including consumers, potential employees and/or students, or society. Communication is a key that is required to establish relations with the stakeholders for the effective implementation of TQM with the support of senior management. Implementation of TQM methods has been shown to be advantageous in developing a holistic culture of quality assurance. Most quality management systems focus on improving customer satisfaction and fostering a commitment to exceeding stakeholders' expectations. Total quality management underscores the requirement of an organisation to communicate effectively by

conveying to stakeholders the specific deliverables and the level of quality that will be provided to prevent misunderstandings or misconceptions (Ogbari & Birishade, 2015). An open communication environment with all necessary stakeholders also fosters ongoing enhancement in the quality management process.

Furthermore, to address Question 2, it was found that OC includes shared experiences and a collective comprehension of social morals and standards (Baumgartner, 2009). Total quality management outlines the framework of shared justifications that serve as a culture to set one organisation apart from another (Schein, 2004). The relationship within OCs, including learning, market values, and innovation, illustrates the significance of accepting innovation as a fundamental aspect of being innovative. Sanz-Valle et al. (2011) found that organisational learning is positively associated with technical innovation and can foster both organisational learning and technical innovation. Aboramadan et al. (2020) demonstrated that OC is a significant predictor of both marketing and technology innovation, lending support to the importance of OC in driving innovation. Additionally, Ogbeibu et al. (2021) highlighted the challenges to OC in promoting employee creativity, further emphasising the critical role of culture in fostering innovation when implementing TQM.

These findings collectively underscore the essential role of OC in promoting innovation, thereby supporting the assertion that accepting innovation as a fundamental aspect of being productive is crucial within continuous organisational quality performance management. The findings also point out that setting up an effective strategy to maintain consistent quality in education and learning provision could be challenging, hence the importance of promoting innovation.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF DATA FINDINGS

The participants' responses in this study stress the significance of an OC that pays great attention to employee respect, trust, and participation in TQM. The contention in the responses is that much has evolved, especially the fourth industrial revolution, that requires revising the institution's conventional strategy and procedures towards TQM. Technological developments and the digitalisation of all government operations compel institutions to embrace modern organisational operations and employee recruitment approaches.

The results indicate that the leading challenge to TQM implementation at the institution is the dependence of government departments on traditional and manual processes. The participants experienced the institution as continuing to practise negative and archaic assessments of its employee attitudes, OC, and career growth prospects. From an employee perspective, the organisation's inability to support meaningful development and changes creates a lack of employee incentives and rewards and negatively impacts career advancement.

Participants reported a wide range of experiences of OC, from inclusive diversity to rigidity. A key diversity is the different age groups, which were distinctly perceived since participants observed considerable variations between younger and older employees. Based on the findings obtained from the interview, older employees tend to prefer traditional approaches, whereas younger employees have the potential and energy to make rapid decisions. My review of the literature found that OC comprises shared experiences and a collective understanding of social attributes and standards (Baumgartner, 2009). Older employees may focus on improving and generating high-quality work, according to the participants (who were older and therefore viewed themselves through this lens). Younger employees are more focused on providing concise information and knowledge about the specific subject due to their convenient access to information, according to the participants. Participants also shared their negative experiences due to inflexible regulations established by the regulatory department. They felt the guidelines were outdated, as they still reflect practices from the 1990s. Considering the TQM, it is a major element that promotes customer satisfaction. The partner departments within this particular public service institution with which participants collaborate are considered external customers. In contrast, the organisation's staff members are considered internal customers if we examine the institution's academy training offerings or the business unit that handles organisational development. The analysis of the requirement for TQM in an organisation is sustainability determined by factors such as OC, leadership, strategy, and structure (Kumar et al., 2018). A lack of quality-driven culture has been recognised as one of the major triggers for the frequent failure of TQM, including the employees' perceptions, inability to adapt, and lack of communication, which creates obstacles to the successful implementation of TQM. The quality of services and products depends upon the organisation's structure and culture. Total quality management is extremely

effective in achieving persistent improvements (Mosadeghrad, 2015). Total quality management practices depend upon the leadership style in an organisation and the presence of committed senior leadership that can proactively encourage initiatives for quality management. Meanwhile, the lack of a positive OC can lead to a decrease in the quality and performance of employees.

While comparing the findings from data analysis and the literature review, I found that TQM and OC are interrelated. The interview findings include the supportive aspects of implementing quality management and its effect on the overall performance of each business and organisational domain.

Total quality management represents a systematic strategy in which senior management maintains the overall responsibility to connect with their staff members, which could result in enhanced performance and transparency in teamwork required to foster a positive culture in an organisation (Imran et al., 2018). My findings from the interviews also reflected that even while outside factors could impact how well a team performs, platforms that encourage the exchange of ideas and information are considered beneficial for improving cooperation and teamwork. As one participant stated succinctly, it promotes transparency and a culture that says, *“This thing doesn’t belong to me; instead, the information belongs to everyone and empowers the whole organisation.”*

Quality assurance attributes include guidance on how to approach the senior management, supervisor, and panel committee, which are mandatory to follow for better outcomes. These findings help identify the significance of quality management and progressive improvement in the organisation’s culture and the impact of potential risks that can be developed due to the lack of implementation of the policies. For instance, participants also witnessed the differences emerging due to the inadequate implementation of policies, resulting in unequal treatment of individuals. Total quality management is also crucial in education since it allows educators and lecturers to enhance both the content and methods of student learning. Additionally, the imperative for excellence in higher education should include all relevant stakeholders involved in developing the ongoing enhancements in the education system. Also, fostering a culture that prioritises quality is essential for effectively implementing the principles of

TQM in the education system, including organisations or universities (Militaru et al., 2013). The senior leadership is accountable for fostering a developing culture to achieve the desired level of quality in education, training, and development programmes (Ajayi & Oyeniya, 2017).

The overall findings and analysis of the literature include the prominent role of management, which has the potential to optimise the overall quality of the performance and quality strategies. However, TQM can be decreased due to the implementation of inadequate policies or a lack of the latest technologies. I found that risks are associated with inconsistent policy execution and the poor implementation of quality management.

Participants shared their personal experiences of the challenges to ensure continuous improvement. They experienced frustration due to the centralised mindsets and extensive administration, which involves obtaining approval from multiple domains before any document submission. From the participant's viewpoint, this process is time-consuming and can hinder progress and restrict innovation. One participant said, *"This approach is unfavourable due to the presence of a complicated list of individuals involved in the approval process, resulting in excessive administration processes"*. Similarly, another finding from the interviews reflected the respondents' experience with the concept of a long list of developed documents that need to be evaluated, which delays the process and creates an additional restriction on time management.

However, participants also believed that technological advancements and the digitisation of government activities can enhance their overall performance and efficiency. In a similar context, the insights of the literature review stated that the primary obstacles identified include the lack of monitoring and the unwillingness of employees to accept the change and transformation that result from their unwillingness to go out of their comfort zone (Johnson & Kleiner, 2013). Another key barrier that can be observed is the perceived absence of assistance from senior management for quality, commitment, and communication, which has been observed as a significant obstacle. The barriers reported by participants include a perceived lack of commitment from the management, modification of the OC, insufficient planning, and lack of training and education. Participants felt that the assessment methods,

restricted access to information and outcomes, a lack of focus on internal and external customer engagement, and discontinuous collaboration with stakeholders led to problems within the organisation.

The participants believed implementing ISO or a quality management system at the organisational level would be efficient and beneficial in different domains. On the other hand, Participant 4 shared an opinion about the quality of the QMS in the institution and stated that implemented systems are well accepted. Furthermore, another finding from the interview included opinions about the significance of communicating and coordinating with their employees in the different business units and other partner departments to address their issues completely.

The above findings are about the analysis of data and literature review based on the TQM implementation, focusing on the challenges, obstacles, and solutions to resolve these issues. The major barriers that can be experienced include the lack of senior management support, technology and training, which can lead to decreased outcomes.

The findings highlight the significance of recognising the reliability of quality management and continuous enhancement in company culture. Meanwhile, several positive attributes could be observed while interviewing participants, which showed that TQM can serve as a potent instrument for effectively controlling and cultivating a suitable company culture. The positive aspects reported include the diversity and inclusivity representing the multi-team work concept, including collaboration with other staff members, senior management, and stakeholders. Total quality management implementation helped to optimise the significance of diversity within the workforce and its ways to improve employee satisfaction and productivity. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges the importance of inclusivity in the workplace. Moreover, inclusivity helped participants accept different viewpoints through their shared ideas by establishing open-ended discussions. Inclusivity can facilitate both innovation and improved decision-making. Furthermore, I found that the role of leadership and transparency about the responsibilities of senior management in fostering a positive culture to encourage their team members enhances overall performance.

I also observed negative aspects from the data analysis and literature review, including inflexibility in the regulations, such as time-consuming and complex processes. Participants felt frustrated by the resistance to advancement by their workers, which kept employees in their comfort zones. They felt that staying in their comfort zone could hamper the implementation of TQM and digitisation of the technology.

5.4 REFLECTION ON LITERATURE AND FINDINGS FROM THE CURRENT STUDY

The literature focused on TQM as a crucial methodology for optimising overall organisational performance and culture. The significance of leadership is explained in both the literature and the data findings, as it plays an important role in optimising a growing corporate culture and achieving comprehensive TQM implementation. Furthermore, the overall analysis also focused on several potential challenges and barriers that arose during the implementation of TQM, such as resistance to change and time-consuming and complex documentation processes.

Streamlining and digitising the job evaluation process is in line with the findings of (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012), which emphasise the importance of consistency and accuracy in job evaluations. Additionally, the need for clear guidelines and transparency in job evaluations is supported by the study of Baird et al. (2011), which highlights the significance of teamwork and respect for people in enhancing TQM practices. The recommendation to foster a culture of collaboration and empowerment is also supported by the findings of Rad (2006), which emphasise the role of cultural variables in driving TQM success. Furthermore, establishing a change management unit to facilitate the adaptation to modern practices and technologies aligns with the challenges and propositions for research in quality management identified by Fundin et al. (2018). The recommendation to encourage employee involvement in suggesting and implementing modern technologies is in line with the findings, which highlight the significance of top management leadership in TQM commitment and impact.

Moreover, the need to provide flexibility within the framework of government regulations is supported by the positive effects of TQM practices on job satisfaction identified by Durairatnam et al. (2019). The recommendation to implement a rewards and recognition programme aligns with the study investigating the soft side of TQM and its impact on job satisfaction. Additionally, the need to expand the range of training

programmes for skill enhancement and professional development is supported by the research of Durairatnam et al. (2019), which emphasises the importance of people-related TQM practices and OC for quality performance. The literature further reinforces these recommendations, providing a robust foundation for enhancing TQM practices within the public service institution.

Organisations may provide the framework for effective TQM implementation by understanding and handling the issues, leading to improved quality, increased customer satisfaction, and improved organizational performance. The following additional recommendations are based on the data and literature findings:

- **Senior management commitment to leading cultural transformation**

Senior management should commit to a complete strategic function that embraces hierarchy and ensures the appropriate integration of cultures that benefit teams. The organisation should commit to a culture of inclusivity, flexibility and polished execution in delivering quality. Improved employee engagement will benefit the public service institution if clan and adhocracy are introduced to enhance diversity and collaboration, encourage an open and flexible culture, and fully embrace the 4IR and policies. Total quality management requires the development of perceptions that focus on processes and design strategies (For instance – implementation of ISO and training about the concept of Six Sigma), which should be based on feedback from internal or external stakeholders. ISO helps deliver consistent performance and quality delivery to foster a work environment reflecting continuous improvement (Riaz et al., 2022).

- **Implementation of the technology (Digitisation)**

This implementation requires constant development of technology and the introduction of new ideas with the potential to reshape the environment and enhance the delivery of quality management. The traditional documentation approach is insufficient to meet the desired outcomes for modern organisations.

- **Mitigate risks by ensuring consistent and quality execution of policies and procedures**

The employer should encourage employee participation in all continuous quality management improvement programmes. Management must implement mechanisms for interdepartmental collaboration and constructive criticism to eliminate barriers between different areas of the organisation and foster a culture of ongoing

enhancement through regular workshops, meetings, and frequent on-the-job training (Budayan & Okudan, 2022). An innovative approach that will raise the standard of both performance and workplace culture is the execution of change strategies per the reports produced following employee change surveys.

- **Implement workable quality management solutions within turnaround times**

The organisation should embark on ongoing development and capacity-building opportunities with platforms that allow staff participation in addressing the organisation's challenges. Make a culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing and empowerment a focus within the organisation. Such a culture could increase trust to enhance productivity, and make high employee morale a reality. Organisations should optimise the use of technology by focusing on enhancing the current QMS.

- **Adaptation to the condition after COVID-19**

My study found that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted every business unit and domain but that it also presented opportunities that promoted innovation and trust where micro-management was exposed. Organisations should take full advantage of the presented opportunities to pursue collaboration and open exchange of information. they should use available technological tools to communicate for enhanced productivity and continuous quality improvement to improve customer satisfaction and manage time through set turnaround times for enhanced productivity to improve organisational performance.

Therefore, TQM practitioners should aim to ensure customer satisfaction through effectively coordinating operational activities such as education, training and development. The education system was adapted to visual bibliometric analysis instead of fingerprints during classes and examinations to enhance the implementation of TQM during the pandemic. Therefore, this method helped them to acquire detailed insights and an understanding of the present situations and limitations of TQM implementation. Consequently, it enabled them to identify valuable research areas and evolutionary pathways for TQM for future research. For instance, bibliometric techniques are more likely to be effective for quantitative analysis of TQM's key qualities, conceptual framework, and social aspects (Xiao et al., 2022).

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDIES

This section reflects on the limitations of the study. A total of ten participants were originally selected, but the researcher only interviewed five participants due to availability – the current study only included management at the middle-management level of the one selected public service institution. However, the data quality was judged to be adequate to address the research questions. The current study only examined one public service institution; therefore, the results cannot be generalised across all public service institutions. This study excluded other levels of personnel from the selected public service institution, and no other public service institutions within the city were involved. The study could have received a broader range of views if it was extended to include the participation of additional personnel from other public service institutions within or outside the city, though the budget constraints would have been another limitation in terms of conducting research outside the city.

I also did not have control over the choice of participants that I wanted regarding expertise around quality management and OC. Some other limitations included insufficient literature within the South African ETD context on the role of OC in the implementation of TQM. The last limitation was not having more participants in the selected public service institution's academy, where more learning and development occurs.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS EMANATING FROM THE STUDY

Figure 5.1 below depicts a summary of the recommendations emanating from the research study linked to the findings.



Figure 5.1: Graphical depiction of recommendations

Several recommendations can be made to improve the public service institution's TQM practices and organisational culture (OC) based on the summary of the interview findings. The recommendations, which centre on job assessment, quality assurance procedures, organisational culture, difficulties, and quality management tactics, are based on the major conclusions and insights offered by the respondents.

1. Improving the Process of Job Evaluation (aligned to 4IR)

It is advised to formalise and streamline the job evaluation process to serve its purpose in terms of progression. This can be accomplished in the following ways:

- a. The outcomes brought forward should be actioned by introducing a systematic digitised training programme for job analysts to guarantee uniformity and precision in job assessments supported by citing uniformity as a strategic agenda for future actions in TQM (Singh & Shrivastava, 2012). This review can offer insights into the latest developments and research directions of TQM practices.
- b. Adequately maintain the rules so that the committee responsible for evaluating jobs can match job evaluations with the principles of complete quality.
- c. Establishing a feedback system that allows employees to offer suggestions regarding the job evaluation procedure, encouraging openness and equity (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012).

2. Strengthening

- a. Commit to supporting the desired culture that will lead to true organisational change management. With senior management commitment and employee engagement, I believe nothing is impossible. As envisaged by the participants, the desired culture should not only focus on a hierarchy. According to Panuwatwanich and Nguyen (2017), organisations dominated by clan and hierarchy, clan and adhocracy, or not dominated by any particular culture, could offer a successful environment for TQM implementation. Hierarchy culture is the only one that is hazardous for the application of TQM.
- b. Conduct regular cultural assessments to better understand the dynamics and potential areas for improvement within the OC, given the diverse OC influenced by factors like age, gender, religion, and global operations.
- c. As recommended by the interviewees, promote a collaborative, idea-sharing, and empowerment-focused culture through forums and talks (Ansah, 2015).

3. Expanding the range of training programmes with opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development

Organisations should consider the following actions to promote continuous learning and capacity development (Obeidat et al., 2018):

- a. Put mentoring and coaching programmes into place to help staff members develop and close any gap in leadership development.
- b. Expand the range of training programmes, both online and through external institutions, to provide employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development.
- c. Introduce a structured rewards system that offers opportunities for participation in programmes or meetings as a form of recognition for quality work, as suggested by the interview findings.

4. Addressing challenges and external influences

The following recommendations can be considered to address the challenges identified, particularly in adapting to modern practices and overcoming rigid prescripts:

- a. Establish a change management unit to facilitate the adaptation to modern practices and technologies, aligning with the era of the fourth industrial revolution.
- b. Strengthen collaboration with partner departments to mitigate external influences impacting teamwork and operational efficiency.

5. Promoting Continuous Improvement

It is recommended to promote a culture of continuous improvement and innovation:

- a. Encourage employee involvement in suggesting and implementing modern technologies and practices to enhance efficiency and reduce turnaround times.
- b. Balance compliance with established directives with the adoption of innovative solutions, as emphasised in the interview findings.

6. Enhancing quality management and competitiveness

The following recommendations can be considered to address the challenges related to quality management and competitiveness:

- a. Provide flexibility and discretion within the framework of government regulations to promote internal strengthening and competitiveness.
- b. Develop a comprehensive quality management plan encompassing specific requirements and annual plans for internal audits and management reviews, as suggested by the interview findings.

7. Improving Employee Morale and Motivation

It is recommended to address the challenges related to low staff morale and limited career advancement opportunities:

- a. Implement a rewards and recognition program that acknowledges and incentivises high performance, aligning with the interviewee's emphasis on the importance of recognition and rewards.
- b. Develop career advancement opportunities and personal development plans to motivate employees and support their professional growth.

8. Strengthening capacity development

It is recommended to enhance capacity development and boost morale within the organisation through the following actions:

- a. Expand the range of training programs, both online and through external institutions, to provide employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development.
- b. Introduce a structured rewards system that offers opportunities for participation in programmes or meetings as a form of recognition for quality work, as suggested by the interview findings.

These recommendations are aligned with the key findings from the interviews and aim to address the identified challenges while leveraging the strengths and opportunities within the public service institution. By implementing these recommendations, the

organisation can further enhance its TQM practices, improve employee satisfaction, and foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

The following recommendations for enhancing TQM practices within public service institutions are supported by various research studies as per the literature review.

5.7 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several recommendations are made to improve the public service institution's TQM practices based on the thorough summary of the interview findings. The recommendations, which centre on job assessment, quality assurance procedures, OC, and quality management tactics, are based on the major conclusions and insights offered by the respondents.

1. Technological enhancement of the process of job evaluation
 - a. It is advised to formalise and streamline the job evaluation process further so that it serves its purpose in terms of progression. This can be accomplished in the following ways:
 - b. The outcomes brought forward should be actioned through a systematic digitised training programme for job analysts to enhance uniformity and precision in job assessments supported by (Singh & Shrivastava, 2012), citing uniformity as a strategic agenda for future actions in TQM. This review can offer insights into TQM practices' latest developments and research directions.
 - c. Adequately maintain the rules so that the committee responsible for evaluating jobs can match job evaluations with the principles of complete quality.
 - d. Establish a feedback system that allows employees to offer suggestions regarding the job evaluation procedure, encouraging openness and equity (Dixon-Woods et al., 2012).
2. Strengthening organisational culture
 - a. Conduct regular cultural assessments to understand the dynamics and potential areas for improvement within the OC better, given the diverse OC influenced by factors like age, gender, religion, and global operations.
 - b. Promote a collaborative, idea-sharing, and empowerment-focused culture through forums and talks, as recommended by the interviewee (Ansah, 2015).

3. Expanding the range of training programmes to provide employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development, promoting continuous learning and capacity development (Obeidat et al., 2018)
 - a. Put mentoring and coaching programmes into place to help staff members develop and close any gap in leadership development.
 - b. Expand the range of training programs, both online and through external institutions, to provide employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development.
 - c. Introduce a structured rewards system that offers opportunities for participation in programmes or meetings as a form of recognition for quality work, as suggested by the interview findings.

4. Addressing challenges and external influences

The following recommendations can be considered to address the challenges identified, particularly in adapting to modern practices and overcoming rigid prescripts:

 - a. Establish a change management unit to facilitate the adaptation to modern practices and technologies, aligning with the fourth industrial revolution era.
 - b. Strengthen collaboration with partner departments to mitigate external influences that may impact teamwork and operational efficiency.

5. Promoting continuous improvement

It is recommended to promote a culture of continuous improvement and innovation:

 - a. Encourage employee involvement in suggesting and implementing modern technologies and practices to enhance efficiency and reduce turnaround times.
 - b. Balance compliance with established directives with the adoption of innovative solutions, as emphasized in the interview findings.

6. Enhancing quality management and competitiveness

The following recommendations can be considered to address the challenges related to quality management and competitiveness:

 - a. Provide flexibility and discretion within the framework of government regulations to promote internal strengthening and competitiveness.
 - b. Develop a comprehensive quality management plan encompassing specific requirements and annual plans for internal audits and management reviews, as suggested by the interview findings.

7. Improving employee morale and motivation

It is recommended to address the challenges related to low staff morale and limited career advancement opportunities through the following initiatives:

- a. Implement a rewards and recognition programme that acknowledges and incentivises high performance, aligning with the interviewee's emphasis on the importance of recognition and rewards.
- b. Develop career advancement opportunities and personal development plans to motivate employees and support their professional growth.

8. Strengthening capacity development

It is recommended to enhance capacity development and boost morale within the organisation through the following initiatives:

- a. Expand the range of training programmes, both online and through external institutions, to provide employees with opportunities for skill enhancement and professional development.
- b. Introduce a structured rewards system that offers opportunities for participation in programmes or meetings as a form of recognition for quality work, as suggested by the interview findings.

These recommendations are aligned with the key findings from the interviews and aim to address the identified challenges while leveraging the strengths and opportunities within the public service institution. By implementing these recommendations, the organisation can further enhance its TQM practices, improve employee satisfaction, and foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

The recommendations for enhancing TQM practices within the public service institution are supported by a variety of literature.

Based on participants' perceptions, the conclusions drawn from the research findings and discussion is that an ideal OC prioritises TQM practises, which include the following elements:

- 1 Flexible leadership, including commitment/team trust, which links to Theme 1, where participants acknowledge diverse experiences of an inclusive culture with a significant element of a rigid hierarchical culture. The bureaucracy that is coupled with the culture of hierarchy also aligns with Theme 3 as well as the conceptual framework. A rigid culture advocates for a well-defined and structured working environment with procedures and can be experienced as more controlling. The participants indicated that the hierarchical culture

hampers innovation. According to Panuwatwanich and Nguyen (2017), implementing TQM in an environment with a hierarchical culture is not advisable since it does not create an optimal quality assurance environment. Participants articulated the need for solid foundations and getting the basics right to improve the organisation's culture and quality management efforts. The current study found that encouraging a collaborative culture essential and promoting cross-functional cooperation would improve TQM.

- 2 Strategic planning is crucial and links to Themes 1's and 2's subthemes. Participants reported that within their business unit, they have some element of control that encourages planning, communication and cooperation; there is openness to change, a flexible culture, and an open door policy coupled with constructive criticism. They also indicated that the above has resulted in significant quality management throughout the business units.
- 3 Customer satisfaction and quality performance instruments are needed and linked to Theme 2, where participants acknowledged risks associated with conflicting policy execution. Customers are disadvantaged when policies are inconsistent; in this case, customers refer to internal stakeholders who are employees and are located in partner departments. In the case of the institution's academy, customers are employees who are learners within the institution or externally from partner departments.
- 4 The participants viewed employee engagement and collaboration as a potential solution. The participants were encouraged to share ideas and provide constructive criticism for continuous improvement. An important way to assist customers is to have a technical team in place and tools to support quality management efforts.
- 5 Continuous learning, acknowledgement, and incentives link with Theme 4. These aspects are part of the subthemes and lead to workable solutions to promote collaboration. Another finding is that the enhancement of the currently used QMS - ISO 9001:2015 with technological innovation would help to optimise the implementation of quality practices.

The participants envisioned a culture of empowerment and cooperation that aligned with the needs for training rather than just taking any available training because it was offered. Capacity-building opportunities with well-working

platforms are needed to address the organisation's challenges adequately. Change management surveys must be utilised regardless of whether the results are pleasing; the key is to create an environment that promotes a quality work culture.

- 6 A fair portion of the hierarchy with clan/adhocracy cultures, shared vision, and values linked to the themes 1 – 5 subthemes was found. Workable solutions for a quality environment are created when empowerment is fore fronted and a unified articulation of the South African foreign policy is implemented. According to Qobo et al. (2015), the foreign policy of South Africa has changed over time, moving from a strong normative expression to a more pragmatic approach in line with emerging powers, yet there aren't enough principles to guide actions and decisions.

Additionally, higher leadership ambition in Africa, institutional cooperation, synergies between corporate plans and government objectives, and strategic international priorities are all necessary for SA's foreign policy approach to be more effective (Qobo et al., 2015).

Increased trust should be a focus point for the organisation as it could enhance productivity and morale. More trust between employees could also lead to continued promotion of innovation and stronger leadership relationships. Organisational leaders need to embrace collaboration and open information exchange and do away with competitiveness, silos, and micro-management.

- 7 Continuous quality management and performance improvement are linked to Themes 1, 3, and 4. There should be platforms, like Imbizo's, to discuss solutions of how the high level of regulation can be used positively and only when necessary to ensure that innovation is not stifled. Organisations must embrace the 4IR more fully if they want to stay relevant. Participants emphasised the need to make a swift move to take advantage of all the technological projects launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. New technological projects require adequate resources to implement quality management efficiently and continuous improvement efforts to optimise the public service institution's performance. Hence, Dlamini et al. (2010) indicate that the development of e-government in Africa should embrace multicultural

perspectives, balance infrastructure and necessities, and prioritise national development goals and user satisfaction.

Thakur et al. (2012) note that a more robust advocacy role is required to encourage e-government initiatives by all stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and civil society, to support ongoing quality improvement in the South African public service.

Table 5.1 below contains themes and sub-themes that emerged from the findings linked to the conceptual framework.

Table 5.1: Themes informed by the research findings linked to the conceptual framework

Themes and sub-themes	Conceptual framework	No. of respondents	Recommendations
<p>Theme 1 Diverse experiences of OC ranging from positive to rigid</p> <p>Sub Theme 1 Diverse organisational culture</p> <p>Sub Theme 2 Willing, dynamic, quick execution by younger employees</p> <p>Sub Theme 3 Slow but polished execution delivering quality by older employees</p>	Aligns with the competing values framework's focus on collaboration and teamwork	Two out of the five interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Embrace Diversity – Encourage Cross-Generational Collaboration¹
<p>Theme 2 Risks associated with senior management support and inconsistent policy execution and the importance of quality management in continual organisational improvement</p> <p>Sub Theme 1 Quality management practices are consequential throughout the functions of each business unit.</p> <p>Sub Theme 2 Management Committee and technical team support of quality management processes</p> <p>Sub Theme 3 Everyone plays a role in quality management and continual improvement</p>	Aligns with the competing values framework's focus on adaptability and external focus	Two out of five interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Senior Management Support – Cross-Functional Support – Employee Engagement – Continuous Learning and Improvement

¹ Imbizo is an interactive governance and form of communication adopted to promote increased dialogue between the government and/departments and people without mediation.

Themes and sub-themes	Conceptual framework	No. of respondents	Recommendations
<p>Theme 3 Bureaucratic procedures challenge quality management's innovative and efficient implementation when resources are low.</p> <p>Sub Theme 1 Highly regulated environment and hierarchy stifle innovation</p> <p>Sub Theme 2 Projects started and ended prematurely.</p> <p>Sub Theme 3 Use of the Institution's traditional procedures</p> <p>Sub Theme 4 Snail's pace toward technological developments</p>	<p>Aligns with the competing values framework where a balance between stability and flexibility is essential for organisational effectiveness</p> <p>Focuses on achieving results and effectiveness and with the adhocracy culture within the CVF, emphasising innovation and adaptability</p>	<p>Three out of five interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implement a Balanced Approach: – Foster a Culture of Innovation. – Enhance Project Management.
<p>Theme 4 The COVID-19 pandemic affected OC, training, support, and other underlying variables that go into quality management and efforts at continuous improvement in both positive and negative ways.</p> <p>Sub-theme 1 COVID promoted innovation and leadership trust.</p> <p>Sub-theme 2 Exposed micro-management</p> <p>Sub-theme 3 Time management challenges post-lockdown</p> <p>Sub-theme 4 Encouraged competitiveness and silos instead of collaboration and open information exchange</p>	<p>Aligns to CVF and TQM with regards to the adhocracy elements of innovation and the TQM element of continuous improvement</p>	<p>Three out of five interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Foster a culture of innovation. – Address micro-management. – Time management training – Promote collaboration and open information exchange.
<p>Theme 5</p>	<p>Aligns to the CVF and TQM elements of</p>	<p>Four out of 5 interviews</p>	<p>Continuous Improvement of QMS</p>

Themes and sub-themes	Conceptual framework	No. of respondents	Recommendations
<p>Stakeholders are dedicated to identifying workable solutions to promote collaboration, quality management practices, and ongoing development.</p> <p>Sub-theme 1 Focus on ways of enhancing the current QMS.</p> <p>Sub-theme 2 Use of technological innovation with set requirements of ISO 9001 and optimise the use of technology</p> <p>Sub-theme 3 Workable solutions which fit with turnaround times</p> <p>Sub-theme 4 Envision a culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing and empowerment; increased trust enhances productivity and morale.</p> <p>Sub-theme 5 Capacity-building opportunities with platforms to address the organisation's challenges</p>	<p>integration of clan, adhocracy and hierarchy elements: innovation collaboration happening through developed human capital and continuous improvement</p>		<p>-Technological Innovation and ISO 9001 Compliance</p> <p>-Agile Solutions for Turnaround Times</p> <p>-Fostering a Collaborative Culture</p> <p>-Capacity Building and Problem-Solving Platforms</p>

As per themes and subthemes informed by the findings, the recommendations below are suggested for the elements of TQM and their association with the competing values framework (CVF),

The recommendations include the need to embrace diversity and emphasise the value of a distinct OC, leveraging the unique perspectives and experiences of employees to drive innovation and adaptability. This recommendation aligns with the competing values framework's emphasis on diversity and adaptability.

Another recommendation is to encourage cross-generational collaboration and thereby foster an environment that encourages collaboration between younger employees, who are known for their dynamic execution, and older employees, who are valued for their polished execution. The recommendation aligns with the competing values framework's focus on collaboration and teamwork and the clan and adhocracy cultures in the CVF.

Linked to Theme 2 is negating the risks associated with a lack of senior management support and inconsistent policy execution. Here I recommend that management encourage and be visible in their support of quality management practices throughout the organisation. Management playing a more active and positive role aligns with the competing values framework's emphasis on leadership and strategic direction. Support for the QA processes needs to be derived from all stakeholders, including the management committee and employees at other levels. Participants also strongly endorsed continuous learning and improvement to drive organisational excellence which is aligned to the CVF's focus on adaptability and human capital development.

1. Theme 3 dealt with bureaucratic procedural challenges to the innovative and efficient implementation of quality management when resources are low. In this regard, the CVF framework was used to recommend a balance between stability and flexibility for organisational effectiveness and to encourage the integration of clan, hierarchy and adhocracy cultures. The adhocracy culture within the CVF emphasises innovation and adaptability, as discussed by the participants, as a requirement for individual and collective growth.

2. In Theme 4, I explored how the COVID-19 pandemic affected OC, training, support, and other underlying variables in quality management. Based on the CVF framework as a lens to interpret participant inputs, I recommend that organisations foster a culture of innovation. Beyond COVID, other challenges will arise. Therefore, organisations must be agile, using the initiatives that emerged during the pandemic and leveraging the positive impact on innovation and leadership trust. Management should emphasise the importance of maintaining and nurturing this culture of innovation. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed micro-management issues, emphasising the need for trust, autonomy, and empowerment within the organisation. These issues align with CVF and TQM regarding the adhocracy elements of innovation and the TQM element of continuous improvement.
3. Theme 5 revealed that stakeholders are dedicated to identifying workable solutions to promote collaboration, quality management practices, and ongoing development. Based on the CFV, the recommendations that emerged include technological innovation, agile solutions for quicker turnaround times and increased trust-building between stakeholders. The competing values framework emphasises collaboration and employee well-being which links well with the findings and recommendations.

The conceptual framework served as a guideline on the extent and approach to analyse and interpret the outcomes of the data gathered. I used Cameron and Quinn's (2011) competing values framework (CVF) as a conceptual underpinning to investigate if the implementation of TQM is associated with the OC in the selected public service institution. The management of quality and continuous improvement efforts could be enhanced by integrating the hierarchy culture with clan and adhocracy cultural types. The conceptual framework illustrates the association of OC with TQM and their elements, which are the types of culture and the elements of TQM. The findings show that focusing on hierarchy as the main culture negatively aligns with TQM. Participants indicated that the rigid, hierarchy culture that exists needs more integration with clan and adhocracy. The CVF and TQM frameworks aligned well with the emerging themes and helped structure the recommendations logically and informatively.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The research findings emphasised the significance of quality management that can help foster innovative and developing culture during the implementation of TQM. During the

research, I observed that good implementation of TQM is based on adequate commitment by senior management. Also of importance is dealing with the obstacles that arise with the implementation of TQM in association with well-structured leadership plans, open-ended communication, employee collaboration, and regular customer engagement.

During the interviews, it emerged that the participants wanted to collaborate more with internal and external stakeholders for better implementation of projects, adopt new perspectives, and reduce heavy reliance on hierarchical culture. They also expressed a desire to integrate the clan and adhocracy culture into the hierarchy culture as it would benefit the organisation. Clan and adhocracy are more suitable for the implementation of TQM, according to participant perspectives. It also emerged that 4IR needs to be embraced, and innovation through technological systems and platforms must be fully utilised to encourage employee innovation and productivity.

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6.0 Appendices

6.1 Appendix A: Public Service Learning Institution Request for Permission to do Research



LETTER TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE LEARNING INSTITUTION

April 2022
The Director-General
Academy

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Request for permission to conduct research study at your institution

My name is Mrs Nosiphiwo Tamara Ntombela, a Master's student at the University of Pretoria. The title of my research study towards MEd in Assessment and Quality Assurance of education and training is: *Implementing total quality management at a public service learning institution: the role of organisational culture.*

The current study aims to examine the role of organisational culture in the implementation of total quality management (TQM) at the selected public service learning institution and to investigate perceived limitations, obstacles and solutions to the challenges of total quality management (TQM) implementation. I am working under the supervision of Dr Celeste Combrinck from the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria.

I hereby request your permission to interview participants for my research study from the business units of the Academy. The research has two components, which are semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

The interviews will be scheduled at approved times by the Head of the Institution and according to the availability of the participants. An appropriate venue will be used. The interviews will take approximately 30 – 60 minutes for each participant. Follow up interviews may be arranged where required and may possibly be virtual. In my study I



would like to request senior managers and/or managers of the business units within the Academy to participate in the study.

The participants will have the opportunity to access transcribed interviews to verify accuracy. Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential. The participants can withdraw any time during data collection with no explanation. All decisions will be respected. Confidentiality and anonymity will be observed. None of the participants' real names will be used during transcribing, analysing data and reporting stage of the research study.

All the data collected during interviews will be safely kept at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor and I will retrieve the audio recordings and transcriptions. All data collected will only be used for academic purposes.

1. DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER

- 1.1 I, Nosiphiwo Tamara Ntombela, declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and correct.
- 1.2 I will submit a copy of the research report to the Institution upon completion of my studies.

SIGNATURE:

DATE: April 2022

2. DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

- 2.1 I declare that Nosiphiwo Tamara Ntombela is enrolled for the MEd: Assessment and Quality Assurance of Education and Training degree at the University of Pretoria.
- 2.2 I will ensure that after completion of the research degree a copy of the research report is submitted to the Institution.



2.3-Name:	Celeste Combrinck
2.4-Title:	Dr
2.5-Institution:	University of Pretoria
2.5-Faculty/Department:	Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education
SIGNATURE:.....DATE:.....	

Should you agree to give me permission to conduct research at your Academy, please sign the form below.

Yours Sincerely

Nosiphiwo Tamara Ntombela

Email: tamara.ntombela@gmail.com

Contact Number: 0825563279

Supervisor: Dr Celeste Combrinck

Email: celeste.combrinck@up.ac.za

Contact Number: 012 420 5680/4175

0843423372

6.2 Appendix B: Consent Letters, Participants



Faculty of Education

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

14/102022

Public Service Learning Academy

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Masters student at the University of Pretoria conducting a study on the role of organisational culture in the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM). I want to investigate limitations/obstacles as well as explore perceived solutions to challenges in the implementation of TQM. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Combrinck from the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education at the University of Pretoria.

I hereby invite you to participate in this study. The interview will be scheduled at an agreed date and time that will be convenient to you as a participant in line with your availability. The interview will take approximately 30 – 60 minutes at your premises.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. You have the right to withdraw at any time during the period of this application as well as the period of data collection with no explanation needed. You can be assured that your decision will be respected. Confidentiality and anonymity will be observed and your name will not be used during the transcribing, analyses of data and reporting stage of the research study. Your name as a participant will not be mentioned in any of the research findings.

I also request your permission to audio record the interview. The purpose is to transcribe the interviews for analysis of data. The recording will be kept safely at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor and I will have access to the recordings. All data collected will only be used for academic purposes.

You will have access to the transcribed recording to verify and confirm that what is in the transcription is exactly what you meant.

We would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria and, where relevant, project funders. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Should you accept this invitation to participate in this research study, please sign the consent form below.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact myself or Dr. Combrinck, our details are below.

Yours Sincerely

Nosiphiwo Tamara Ntombela

Email: tamara.ntombela@gmail.com

0825563279



Faculty of Education

Supervisor: Dr Celeste Combrinck

Email: celeste.combrinck@up.ac.za

0843423372

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the section below.



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

I, _____, hereby give consent to NT Ntombela to include me as a participant in her research on Implementing total quality management at a public service learning institution: the role of organisational culture.

I understand that the interview will be recorded, and I give permission for the audio recording to be made.

Name and Signature: _____ Date: _____

6.3 Appendix C: Approval Letter from Institution



[Redacted]
[Redacted]
Department: [Redacted]
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Director-General
Date: 2020/07/22

Ms. Nosiphiwo Tamara Ntombela
Masters Degree in the Department: Science Mathematics and Technology Education - University of Pretoria
tamara.ntombela@gmail.com
PRETORIA
Republic of South Africa

Dear Ms. Ntombela

Research study: Implementing total quality management at a public service learning institution: the role of organisational culture

The Director-General of the Department of [Redacted] approved your request to utilise [Redacted] whilst conducting research for the fulfilment of the Masters Degree at the University of Pretoria in the Department: Science Mathematics and Technology Education.

Yours sincerely

Director-General
Date: 2020/07/22