Exploring the Impact of Total Quality Management on Organizational Behavior: A Comparative Study of Local Firms

**ABSTRACT:**

This study aims to examine the influence of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices and strategies on organizational behavior within local companies. TQM is understood as a strategic approach focused on delivering high-quality products and services that meet customer needs and enhance overall satisfaction. The research specifically investigates the implementation of TQM within the local cases of Kurdistan Region of Iraq and explores the relationship between effective TQM application and organizational behavior. The findings suggest that TQM positively influences organizational behavior by supporting the achievement of organizational goals, enhancing performance, and improving service quality. However, the study also reveals that TQM practices in the Kurdistan Region remain significantly underdeveloped. The analysis shows a negative correlation between TQM implementation and organizational behavior due to several challenges: a lack of customer-centric approaches, absence of structured quality plans, insufficient employee training and involvement, and limited resources. Furthermore, participating companies often lack mechanisms for tracking and assessing organizational behavior, potentially reflecting broader developmental challenges in Iraq, where TQM remains a relatively unfamiliar concept. The study concludes by expressing hope for future progress in adopting and refining TQM practices to enhance organizational outcomes in the region.

**KEYWORDS:**

Total Quality Management, Organization Behavior, Local Companies, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Labor Market

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past two decades, the importance of total quality management (TQM) has

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commitment, supplier management, process management, employee involvement,

continuous improvement and innovation, and employee involvement as the some

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Over the past two decades, the significance of Total Quality Management (TQM) has grown substantially in both theoretical and practical contexts. Numerous studies have sought to identify and develop key practices for TQM implementation, though these practices often vary among scholars. Nonetheless, the literature commonly emphasizes core elements such as top management commitment, supplier and process management, employee involvement, continuous improvement, and innovation as essential components of effective TQM (Aziz & Aivas, 2025; Talib et al., 2013). Scholars like Aquilani et al. (2017) have approached the subject from various angles, offering multiple definitions and management tools for quality assurance. Despite these differences, a shared limitation among most studies is their predominant focus on leveraging quality management for gaining competitive advantage through enhanced customer satisfaction and organizational performance. In emerging business paradigms, such as value co-creation, quality management retains a central role. While traditional quality management principles remain relevant, they must be reinterpreted to support a customer-centric, experience-driven model. Given the increasingly competitive global labor market, organizations must continuously enhance the quality of their products and services to sustain their position. As a result, many businesses have adopted TQM practices aimed at boosting organizational performance and improving customer satisfaction.

Total Quality Management is grounded in the belief that all employees, across all levels of the organization, should collaborate to deliver high-quality products and services that meet customer expectations. Delivering consistent quality fosters customer loyalty, strengthens brand reputation, and attracts new customers through positive referrals. Quality improvement has thus become a fundamental strategy for achieving long-term competitive advantage. One effective approach to minimizing production errors, for example, is the control and optimization of manufacturing processes (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). To remain viable, businesses must operate based on a clear set of values that not only promote the brand but also build trust among customers. Quality, as a multi-dimensional concept, encompasses factors such as reliability, functionality, usability, timely delivery, and affordability. Its perception may vary among customers, but it universally contributes to a company’s reputation—a vital yet fragile asset. TQM, defined as a customer-centered and process-oriented strategy, promotes continuous improvement in business operations. It emphasizes employee engagement and collective effort toward the shared goal of enhancing product and service quality. By fostering a participatory culture, TQM encourages employees to take active roles in decision-making related to their work, thus improving job satisfaction and the overall organizational image. This approach is often operationalized through voluntary quality circles and improvement teams. TQM integrates three fundamental principles: commitment, involvement, and continuous improvement. Commitment refers to a sustained pledge to enhance quality and customer service; involvement emphasizes the active participation of all team members from top management to frontline workers; and continuous improvement requires ongoing efforts to detect and eliminate defects or inefficiencies in real time (Talib, 2000). Despite its potential benefits, TQM remains a relatively new philosophy in many developing countries. Its principles and tools are still unfamiliar to a considerable number of organizational managers and employees. Furthermore, existing theoretical research on TQM remains insufficient for fostering a comprehensive understanding of the concept, especially in under-researched contexts. As globalization reshapes business strategies, quality concerns have become particularly pressing for developing economies, where customers increasingly demand high-quality goods and services. These global shifts have generated renewed interest in quality management across various industries. While previous research has explored the relationship between TQM and performance, this study seeks to define specific TQM practices and techniques and assess their impact on organizational behavior and performance within local companies in post-conflict regions. For that reason, the primary objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to explore key TQM practices and techniques; (2) to examine the effects of TQM implementation on organizational performance; and (3) to develop a guideline for the effective adoption of TQM. The motivation for undertaking this research lies in contributing to the academic literature by identifying key factors that influence the impact of TQM on organizational behavior. Unlike prior studies that have focused solely on performance outcomes or managerial strategies, this research investigates the specific relationship between TQM and organizational behavior in the unique context of the study area. The ultimate aim is to demonstrate how effective implementation of TQM can enhance performance, promote profitability, and foster sustainable organizational development. This study is vital for the scientific community as it provides a sporadic empirical study into the connection between Total Quality Management (TQM) practices and organizational behaviour within the background of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq a region with incomplete previous study in this area. By emphasising both the positive impacts and the structural challenges of TQM implementation.

1. **RESEARCH THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this study, the following section provides an overview of the theoretical foundations of Total Quality Management (TQM) and organizational behavior within the context of local companies.

### 2.1 Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a structured and comprehensive approach to organizational management that emphasizes the integration of quality principles, tools, and techniques across all operations. It is regarded as a systematic model for improving organizational behavior and development (Ho et al., 2001). In addition, Gharakhani et al. (2013) define TQM as an enterprise-wide strategy for continuous quality enhancement aimed at improving organizational performance. Widely acknowledged as a key innovation in contemporary management practices, TQM initially emerged in the manufacturing sector but has since demonstrated applicability across various industries. It promotes long-term, sustainable change over short-term fixes by fostering a unified and strategic perspective on systemic improvement. TQM encourages organizations to map and continuously monitor their production processes, evaluate performance metrics, and use empirical data to implement incremental improvements. A central tenet of TQM is the involvement of all employees and organizational departments in quality enhancement processes. This inclusive philosophy is designed to empower personnel at every level, fostering an organizational culture of sustained improvement, productivity, and adaptability. Importantly, TQM also seeks to alleviate employee resistance to change by promoting engagement, transparency, and shared responsibility. Another crucial component of effective TQM implementation is the optimization of supply chains, enhancement of customer service, and the establishment of ongoing employee training programs. In this context, training refers to a process through which employees acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to perform specific functions and respond effectively to organizational needs. Before transitioning to self-managed teams, comprehensive training is essential to ensure employees are prepared for increased autonomy and responsibility. Team members must develop strong interpersonal skills, adaptability, and a collaborative mindset. Successful teamwork requires mutual understanding, motivation, and a shared commitment to organizational goals. Training programs should aim to clarify team responsibilities, foster cohesion among members, and instill a sense of collective accountability. Organizational development experts widely recognize training as a key driver in the success of planned change initiatives. According to a 1991 Conference Board survey of companies implementing TQM, the most frequently utilized strategies were the use of problem-solving teams and large-scale employee training initiatives. Scholars such as Bowen and Lawler (1992) have underscored the indispensable role of training in facilitating TQM by aligning employees with its goals and principles. Training serves not only as a means of skill development but also as a vehicle for reinforcing organizational values and strategic objectives. Tippet and Waits, writing in *Industrial Management*, highlight that the success of TQM programs relies heavily on employee motivation and empowerment—two factors often overlooked in long-term implementation strategies. Their model demonstrates how empowering employees can directly enhance motivation, which, in turn, supports effective project management and contributes to the overall success of TQM efforts. Worker empowerment is thus essential for maintaining employee satisfaction, performance, and organizational cohesion.

Key principles underlying TQM practices are illustrated in Figure No: 01, which delineates the foundational components essential for successful implementation. Numerous techniques have been developed to support quality management (QM) practices, positioning it as a strategic approach to enhance the quality and efficiency of products and services across various industries. Total Quality Management (TQM), in particular, incorporates a wide range of quality tools, techniques, and guiding values that are collectively embraced by all members of an organization (Gharakhani et al., 2013). TQM can be conceptualized as a holistic strategy designed to facilitate the delivery of more efficient and higher-quality services by fostering collaboration among all organizational units. Recognized globally as a prominent quality improvement approach, TQM emphasizes cross-functional cooperation to effectively address customer needs and to realize organizational objectives. It encourages active engagement from all personnel in meeting customer expectations by applying systematic problem-solving methodologies to enhance the quality of both products and services. At the core of the TQM philosophy is the integration of all organizational staff and functional areas to ensure continuous improvement, long-term progress, and the consistent quality of outputs—ultimately contributing to customer satisfaction. This management approach places a strong emphasis on enhancing organizational performance by promoting employee participation in decision-making processes. It leverages mechanisms such as quality improvement teams and quality circles to facilitate collaborative problem-solving and innovation (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). The central objective of TQM is to improve the overall quality of an organization’s outputs—both goods and services—through the sustained refinement of internal processes. It assigns accountability to all stakeholders involved in the production process for ensuring the quality of final outputs. TQM principles advocate for continuous enhancement in areas such as customer orientation, process optimization, and inclusivity in organizational practices. Core elements of TQM include leadership commitment, employee education and training, supportive organizational structures, open communication, recognition and rewards systems, and the use of performance metrics. The successful implementation of TQM is largely contingent upon key managerial and strategic factors that organizations must integrate into their quality management frameworks.



Fig 1. The eight total quality management principles

One of the most critical dimensions of TQM success is employee empowerment. Gatchalian (1997) asserts that empowering employees is fundamental to the effectiveness of TQM; without granting employees the autonomy to plan and execute their own tasks, meaningful engagement in quality improvement initiatives is unlikely. Empowered employees are capable of applying their knowledge and experience to make informed decisions and demonstrate accountability in their roles. Ultimately, the effectiveness of TQM in enhancing organizational performance relies on its intangible and behavioral dimensions, particularly: (1) strong top management support, (2) empowerment of employees, and (3) active employee involvement in the quality management process.

### 2.2: Top Management Support

Managers achieve organizational objectives by directing human resources, allocating necessary resources, and making strategic decisions that ensure sustainability. Effectively managing organizational behavior amid rapid changes is a critical responsibility of managers. They must develop and implement effective strategies to lead and support employees in adapting to these changes to succeed within a competitive business environment (Sharma, 2018). Traditional managerial mindsets, particularly resistance to delegating authority, are significant barriers to the success of empowerment initiatives. Organizational success is not accidental but rather a deliberate outcome. Managers often equate success strictly with meeting predefined organizational goals, showing reluctance to deviate from established plans or explore alternative paths (Amirkabiri & Mediyan, 2011). Besides, managers acknowledge training as a vital means to enhance employee job satisfaction and performance and recognize the importance of investing in such developmental activities. However, some managers perceive training as a burdensome task that diverts attention from immediate objectives. To prepare employees for higher responsibilities and to equip them for emerging challenges, continuous skills development is essential. Effective managers understand that educating their staff is among their most crucial responsibilities.

### 2.3 Employee Empowerment

Innovation flourishes in environments where collaboration occurs, which is most effective when teams are empowered (Aivas, 2017). Empowerment links individual strengths, competencies, and proactive behaviors to broader social policies and change, connecting personal well-being with the wider socio-political context. The successful implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) largely depends on transforming employee attitudes and behaviors. Studies involving 113 employees prior to TQM implementation and 73 post-implementation revealed significant improvements in role clarity, job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover intentions, although no significant change was found in role conflict, task characteristics, or career satisfaction. TQM managers are expected to cultivate employee trust, encourage problem-solving, and foster interdepartmental cooperation. Many foundational TQM elements focus on people: teamwork, participative management, creativity, innovation, reward systems, comprehensive training, effective communication, reducing job insecurity, continuous improvement, leadership commitment, customer feedback, employee involvement, and empowerment. These contribute to improved communication, flatter organizational structures, and faster decision-making. Importantly, empowerment does not diminish management’s responsibilities; rather, management must continuously assess team competencies and provide support when teams encounter challenges.

### 2.4 Employee Involvement

Advocates of TQM argue that transitioning to more participative management systems, which actively involve employees in problem-solving, decision-making, and strategic planning, enhances organizational performance (Rao et al., 1996). Research consistently demonstrates a strong interrelationship between employee involvement and the success of TQM programs. Engagement at all organizational levels—from senior executives to frontline employees—is crucial for identifying and implementing improvements. Organizations committed to employee involvement tend to be equally committed to quality management (Lawler, 1994). Conversely, the absence of either element undermines TQM efforts. Involving employees as key stakeholders fosters improved organizational performance and nurtures positive employee-organization relationships, creating mutually beneficial outcomes.

### 2.5 Organizational Behavior

Performance measurement is fundamental to effective organizational management. An organization’s performance is closely linked to its capacity to meet strategic and financial objectives (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). Organizational behavior (OB) systematically examines the actions, attitudes, and functions of individuals within organizations (Ton & Huckman, 2008). It encompasses the study of human thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in work environments. Management’s role involves understanding and anticipating behavioral responses to different managerial actions to optimize organizational processes. Organizational performance is a multifaceted concept, often assessed relative to internal and external benchmarks. It encompasses both financial metrics—such as return on investment, sales growth, and market share—and operational factors like customer satisfaction, product quality, delivery efficiency, cost minimization, and process productivity (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). Despite the importance of performance measurement, prior research has often overlooked its comprehensive evaluation.

### 2.6 Total Quality Management and Organizational Behavior

Total Quality Management (TQM) is an integrative management philosophy engaging all employees in pursuit of enhanced organizational performance and quality. TQM aims to harmonize functional activities across the organization to improve product and service quality and increase customer satisfaction. Its implementation positively impacts employee job satisfaction, attitudes, productivity, cost-efficiency, knowledge management, and strategic outcomes. However, managing the human element during TQM implementation is challenging due to varied employee values and attitudes. Active participation and commitment from employees are vital for TQM success, as they play an integral role in quality initiatives. Numerous studies confirm a positive relationship between TQM practices and organizational performance. In response to growing demand for high-quality products and services, organizations have increasingly adopted TQM practices to reduce costs and enhance product quality. Customer focus is central to TQM, emphasizing continuous process improvements to meet or exceed customer expectations (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). Continuous improvement involves defect elimination and incremental enhancement of products and services, driving business performance. Performance measurement, encompassing cost and quality, is essential in management and is directly influenced by TQM practices such as training, process management, and customer management (Aivas, et al., 2025; Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014; Gharakhani et al., 2013). Research also highlights the positive effects of TQM on financial performance. Irrationally, various studies have identified tensions between senior and middle management regarding TQM implementation. Soltani and Wilkinson (2010) highlighted four core TQM propositions related to quality affirmation, individual roles, firm functions, and managerial responsibilities. They noted that TQM is still emerging as a strategic approach, with quality control remaining the primary implementation method. Central to TQM and most quality management systems is a focus on customer satisfaction through consistent fulfillment of customer expectations (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). Hackman and Wageman (1995) observed that obtaining customer feedback is among the most widely practiced TQM techniques. Likewise, customer satisfaction is recognized as crucial for organizational success, with customer focus being a fundamental TQM principle that fosters organizational development. In addition to effective TQM implementation, which enhances customer satisfaction and overall organizational performance by continuously aligning processes with customer requirements (Society & Society, 2014). Employees are critical assets in this regard, as their skills and competencies drive productivity and competitiveness. Consequently, ongoing employee training is essential to support TQM efforts and improve organizational outcomes. Based on these insights, this study hypothesizes:

**H1: Total Quality Management is positively related to organizational behavior.**

1. **RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION**

This section outlines the methodological framework adopted in the study, including the data collection approaches, data types, sampling procedures, and the development of the research instrument (questionnaire).

### 3.1 Research Design

This research employs a **quantitative research design**, which is centered on the collection and analysis of numerical data. Quantitative methods are particularly effective for examining measurable and stable variables, making them suitable for assessing the impact of **Total Quality Management (TQM)** on **organizational behavior**. The study aims to quantify the relationship between TQM practices and organizational outcomes using structured, numerical analysis. For this peruse, the research data was collected through a **self-administered online questionnaire**, allowing respondents to complete the survey remotely via the internet. This method is beneficial in ensuring standardized responses across participants and efficient data handling.

### 3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was gathered through the online questionnaire, which targeted employees in manufacturing and service-based organizations within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). Secondary data was obtained by reviewing relevant academic literature, including journal articles, books, and previously published research. In this context, the survey was distributed between January and March 2022 to employees from two local companies: Bahar Company, an Iraqi Kurdish brand operating in the oil engineering and food production sectors; Asiacell, a major Kurdish telecommunications provider in the region and beyond. The sample consisted of 50 employees, including both managerial and non-managerial staff, based in Sulaimani city. The data collection instrument was adapted from an earlier study conducted by Faisal Talib, Zillur Rahman, and Qureshi (2013), which served as a foundation for designing the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Measures and Questionnaire Development

The key variables investigated in this study were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 01 (strongly disagree) to 05 (strongly agree). This scale is widely recognized for its clarity and reliability in gauging respondent attitudes and perceptions. The items included in the questionnaire were adapted from validated academic sources to ensure content validity and minimize ambiguity for participants. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a widely used software for quantitative data analysis in the social sciences. SPSS was employed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the model and to perform relevant statistical tests. The questionnaire development process was informed by an in-depth review of the literature on Total Quality Management. Specifically, ten items were designed to assess TQM practices, while five items focused on organizational behavior factors. Moreover, the questionnaire underwent several rounds of revision to enhance its clarity and relevance.

1. **RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION**

This section presents the demographic analysis of the sample population used in the study.

**4.1 Personal Information**

The research involved a total of 50 employees, representing 100% of the sample. Among them, 30 participants (60%) were male, while 20 participants (40%) were female. In terms of age distribution:

* 22 participants (44%) were aged between 18 and 26 years,
* 14 participants (28%) fell within the 27 to 35 years age range,
* and 14 participants (28%) were aged between 37 and 44 years.

All respondents were employees of the selected companies and held at least a bachelor’s degree or higher, ensuring that the sample consisted of individuals with sufficient educational background to provide informed responses.

### Table No: 1

### Gender percentage

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Frequency | % |
| Female | 25 | 50.0 |
| Male | 25 | 50.0 |
| Sum | 50 | 100.0 |

Table No: 1 shows that the respondents are divided equally, with females accounting for 50 percent of the total number of respondents. Equally, the male response rate is also 50 percent.

### Table: No: 2

### Age percentage

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Frequency | % |
| 18-26 years old | 20 | 40.0 |
| 27-35 years old | 21 | 42.0 |
| 36-44 years old | 8 | 16.0 |
| 45-53 years old | 1 | 2.0 |
| Sum | 50 | 100.0 |

Table No: 2 presents the age distribution of the study's participants. The largest proportion of respondents belonged to the 27–35 age group, accounting for 42.0% of the sample. This was followed by the 18–26 age group, which represented 40.0% of the participants. The 36–44 age group constituted 16.0%, making it the third-largest category. Lastly, the 45–53 age group had the lowest representation, comprising only 2.0% of the total sample.

###

### Table No: 3

### Job position

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Frequency | % |
| Volunteer  | **12** | **24.0** |
| Employee | **29** | **58.0** |
| Manager | **9** | **18.0** |
| Sum  | **50** | **100** |

Table No: 3 illustrates the job positions of the participants in the study. The data indicate that the majority of respondents were employees, comprising 58.0% of the sample—significantly higher than the other categories. Volunteers represented 24.0% of the participants, while managers accounted for 18.0% of the total respondents.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table No: 4****Resolution Tests** |  |
| ­­Variables | **Mean** | **SD** | **OB** | **TQM** |
| Organization behavior | 3.68 | 0.895 | 1 | 0.050\*\* |
| Total quality management | 3.51 | 0.769 | 0.050\*\* | 1 |

As shown in Table No: 5, Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. This statistical measure was applied to evaluate the internal consistency of the scale and ensure the stability and accuracy of responses provided by the research sample. Based on the computer-generated analysis, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to be 0.818 for the overall scale, which encompassed both Total Quality Management and Organizational Behavior variables. A coefficient of 0.818 indicates a high level of reliability, confirming that the questionnaire demonstrates strong internal consistency.

### Table No: 5

### The value of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Value(a) | Number of class | Variables  | Number |
| Independent variable |
| 0.834 | 10 | **Total Quality Management** | **1** |
|  Dependent variable |
| 0.802 | 5 | **Organization behavior** | **2** |
| 0.818 | **15** |  **Total** |

Notes: \*\*p<0.01

The collected research data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix of the study variables are presented in Table 5. The correlation coefficients between the independent variable, Total Quality Management, and the dependent variable, Organizational Behavior, are also displayed. Results indicate that Total Quality Management exhibits a negative and statistically insignificant correlation with Organizational Behavior (r = -0.050, p > 0.01). This study further examines the path coefficients and their statistical significance. Initially, t-values were calculated for each hypothesized path. As shown in Table No: 6, the results reveal that the proposed paths within the model are statistically insignificant. Specifically, the findings indicate a negative impact of Total Quality Management on Organizational Behavior (B = -0.058, t = 0.349, p > 0.01). These results do not support the first hypothesis (H1: Total Quality Management is negatively related to Organizational Behavior), and suggest a negative relationship between the variables in the context of this study. According to the data presented, the p-value for the independent variable Total Quality Management is 0.729, which exceeds the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Additionally, the coefficient for the independent variable is 0.834, while the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.058, implying that approximately 34.9% of the variance is attributable to random error.

### Table No: 6

### Results of regression analysis

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hyp. No. | Hypothesis Statement | Beta Coefficient | Standard Error | T-Value | P-Value |
| H1 | TQM 🡪 OB | 0.058 | 0.168 | 0.349\*\* | 0.729 |
|  Notes\*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.000 |

1. **RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

This study examined the influence of Total Quality Management (TQM) as the independent variable on Organizational Behavior. Numerous previous studies have highlighted a positive relationship between effective TQM implementation and enhanced organizational performance across various dimensions. In today’s competitive environment, organizations increasingly emphasize quality management as a strategic tool to attract and retain customers, maintain competitive advantage, and improve service delivery. However, the findings of this study revealed a negative and statistically insignificant correlation between TQM and organizational behavior within the context of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This result may be attributed to several contextual challenges, including the underdeveloped state of TQM practices, limited customer-centric approaches, lack of formal quality planning, insufficient employee training, minimal employee involvement, and inadequate organizational resources. Moreover, the participating companies lacked reliable mechanisms to assess organizational behavior, reflecting the broader issue that quality management remains a relatively novel concept in the region. These limitations suggest a need for greater investment in building organizational capacity for quality management. Additionally, while this study focused specifically on the relationship between TQM and organizational behavior, it did not consider other influential variables such as organizational size, culture, and level of innovation. Future research is encouraged to adopt a more comprehensive approach by incorporating these additional factors to gain deeper insights into the dynamics influencing organizational behavior. Moreover, the data collection process posed significant challenges. Securing permission to distribute the questionnaire among employees in manufacturing firms proved time-consuming, which limited the size and diversity of the sample. As such, future researchers are advised to use a combination of online surveys and interviews from the outset to enhance response rates and data quality. Exploring other sectors beyond manufacturing may also yield broader insights and increase participation. Overall, this study provides a foundation for understanding the current limitations and opportunities for TQM implementation in developing regions, and highlights the importance of organizational commitment to adopting systematic quality management practices.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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