"THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN HEALTH GOVERNANCE"

Research Paper

Eyong-Echaw Marvin Nso, Doctorate Candidate, Swiss School of Business and Management (SSBM), Geneva, Switzerland, marvineyongn@gmail.com

Ivica Katavić, PhD, Swiss School of Business and Management (SSBM), Geneva, Switzerland, ivica@ssbm.ch

"Abstract"

This paper is aimed at exploring the role of strategic leadership in the implementation of TQM initiatives in the African hospitals as a means of optimum global health governance. Its main purpose is to summarize / synthesize orient areas for further studies and identify knowledge gaps in various aspects of health governance in Africa. A systematic review approach was used to examine the role of strategic leadership in the implementation of TQM in the African hospitals. This involved the exploration of 34 articles published between the years 2018 and 2024. The study findings clearly indicated that strategic leadership improves institutional healthcare governance, achieve healthcare quality outcomes, and enhances TQM implementation in the African hospitals.

Key words: African hospitals, Global health governance, TQM, Strategic leadership.

1. Introduction

In our world today, the effective governing of health and healthcare activities is imperative for quality assurance in our hospitals (Kheir-Mataria et *al*. (2024). With the coming of the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy and its successful implementation in healthcare institutions; the visions of global health governance could be attained with the improvement of quality through continuous patient satisfaction, process maintenance and competitiveness (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023). All these could be made possible if healthcare leaders plan, align and implement TQM initiatives within the Strategic Framework. Strategic leadership is recon as a key factor in the successful implementation of TQM initiatives (Palladan, 2018).

Global Health Governance (GHG) could be defined as the use of institutions (be it formal or informal), policies and processes by state and non-state structures to fight against challenging health issues that warrant cooperate involvement for effectiveness (Abu et al., 2024). According to Pyone and Swaminathan (2023), the insurgence of Covid-19 demonstrated the significance of GHG and its importance in health system resilience preparedness and response. An effective excellent intrinsic governing of health with states is representative of an effective extrinsic GHG since GHG is involved with policy development, thread management, solidarity and leadership. Hence, the planning, aligning and implementation with strategic framework within institutions and states is a win to developing an effective GHG system and ensuring quality and continuous work process improvement (Pyone and Swaminathan, 2023).

According to Thanasas et *al*. (2023), the governance in health sector could be separated into health policy or system governance and the organizational or clinical health governance. The health systems could be described as the measure that are established by both state (for example the ministries of health) and non-

state institutions to better promote the health status of the general population. Thanasas et *al*. (2023) argued that the organizational or clinical health governance is involved with the functional unit of health supporting delivery of healthcare services to the general public for health promotion, disease prevention and rehabilitation. These functional units (hospitals) are supposed to determine the patient's general outcomes. The strategic leadership of health organizations uses TQM to assure quality standards in health service delivery (Iqbal et *al*., 2022). This review study is based on the organizational or clinical health governance in the African societies.

In the context of the African health governance, hospitals are supported by state or non-state institutions to fight against health challenges while maintaining efficiency and quality in healthcare (Abu et *al*., 2024). These challenges are related to the health policies, health financing, resource allocation, service delivery systems, health information system and community engagement. All aforementioned elements serve to fight against health challenges while maintaining efficiency and quality in healthcare (Abu et *al*., 2024). Though health governance in Africa has largely advanced over-time, though there are still some experienced weaknesses based on available data with respect to certain shortcomings tight to inadequate alignment, planning and implementation of TQM initiatives within the strategic framework (Pyone and Swaminathan, 2023).

Due to government regulations, clients' influence, and healthcare management initiatives, one of the top priorities became quality. As a result, the role of strategic leadership in health sector governance has changed. The patient is becoming a customer for the healthcare organizations, or more likely a direct strategic partner who participates in the decision making process (Abdulsattar, 2014). To maintain quality assurance, the TQM tools are used. TQM is a philosophy used to enhance quality through ensuring work process maintenance, clients' satisfaction, continuous improvement and competitiveness (Wassan et *al*., 2022). This is done by the right use of its principles and analysis tools. The integration of the TQM philosophy in the healthcare organizations could be seen as advancement towards optimum quality standards. Quality attainment is the goal of every healthcare institution. This philosophy can be seen as the quality culture driven initiative by which healthcare organizations can use to ensure client (patient) satisfaction and continuous work process improvement (Prestiadi, 2019).

The African society experiences a significant problem of health governance especially in organization of functional health units like hospitals where leadership lacks the ability to plan, align and implement TQM initiatives within a strategic framework (Moulin et *al*., 2019). Health plights happens to be the phenomenon of highest level of social incidence worldwide and is often inadequate and of poor quality in most developing countries in the African continent (Cazorla, 2022). Most African countries manifest deplorable statistics in matters of poor patient outcome, low levels of patient satisfaction, inefficient use of resources and the increasing cases of disease outbreaks. This insufficiency in African health governance led to the need for strategic leadership in order to ensure the effective implementation of TQM.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to achieve a deeper understanding on how strategic leadership influence implementation of TQM in the African health governance, how this implementation contributes to employee and organizational performance, and customer satisfaction, productivity gains and sustainability in the African healthcare organizations. The following research questions guided this research.

RQ1. How do strategic leadership practices enable the successful implementation of TQM initiatives?

RQ2. How TQM impacts employee and organizational performance in the African health organizations?

RQ3. How the relationship between strategic leadership and TQM ensure clients / patients' satisfaction, process maintenance, quality standards attainment and continuous service improvement?

2. Literature review

2.1. Strategic leadership and TQM in health care organization

With the increase in healthcare emergencies and insurgence of diseases, strategic leadership in healthcare cannot be overemphasized. This is the ability of healthcare (hospital) leaders to align, plan and implement TQM initiatives in healthcare within a strategic framework, taking into consideration the external and internal environments and re-adjusting patterns to ensure the meeting of the hospital's objectives in the most efficient manner (Syarifudin, 2023).

Strategic leadership involves the development of patterns which are frequently being renewed and re-adjusted in order to enhance work process harmony and meet up with the organization's need per time (Syarifudin, 2023). A strategic leader is known to perform analysis of a hospital's external and internal environment so as to position the healthcare facility at great competitive heights through innovations and designing of strategies that would enable the effective implementation of TQM (Riaz et *al*.; 2023).

The strategic leader develops strategies that ensure the adherence to TQM principles for quality assurance hence effective health governance is achieved through the following practices; vision and goal setting, comfort with change, communication, collaboration and feedback, influence and commitment, creating of quality-focused goals, ensuring personnel commitment, planning, aligning and implementing TQM within a strategic framework (Pasaribu et *al*., 2021; Prestiadi et *al*. 2019; Madu et *al*., 2023; and Deshmukh, 2023).

According to numerous literatures, strategic leadership plays a significant role in the establishment of effective governance in healthcare (Yas et *al*. 2023; Nahak and Ellita, 2022; Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Madu et al., 2023; Bytyçi et *al*., 2023; Hackman, 2018; Nandy, 2022; and Abdulkadir, 2023). Strategic leadership enabled the integration of TQM initiatives in the African hospitals. Some areas of influence include hospital innovations, ensuring work process maintenance and culture of quality (Syarifudin, 2023; Madu et al. 2023; Kartika, 2024; Owusu-Boadi, 2019; Moulin et *al*., 2019; Riaz et *al*., 2023; Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Riaz et *al*., 2023; and Ahmed and Sajid, 2023).

According to Abu-Salim et *al*., (2019), TQM philosophy and strategic leadership are aimed at hospital growth and quality attainment, even though their individual approach may appear different. Strategic leadership for-sees the future, takes predispositions and clearly plans required action to the achievement of a particular objective (Kartika; 2024). This would entail the cautious use of available resources, implementation of strategies to enhance added value on existing services (or products) and regularly testing new patterns of service (or product) delivery methods while constantly monitoring the patients' feedback (Alnuaimi and Yaakub, 2020). Whereas TQM in same light involves effective use of available resources to ensure clients (patients) maximum satisfaction, continuous overall improvement, work process maintenance and quality attainment through its principles, techniques and analysis tools; hence, the successful attainment of effective health governance for the summation of the successes of these functional units of health determines the overall success of institutional governance of health (Bolatan and Akgul, 2019).

To summarize, effective healthcare governance is proof of an effective TQM implementation in health institutions. Most authors express the fact that strategic leadership positively influences health governance (Bouranta, 2020). The leadership factor is appreciated by numerous publications in the light of quality and management in health care based on good governance attainments with the key being an effective implementation of TQM initiatives at institutional levels (Ahmed $ Sajid, 2023).

2.2. The transformational leadership theory

In the act of using the transformational leadership theory to explain the role of strategic leadership in the implementation of TQM in the African health governance, the leadership style expresses the need for the strategic leader to work along with the team of organizational personnel at the hospitals in developing new orientation based on the hospital's need, after an inclusive need assessment (Campos, 2024). This permits an easy sell-out of the healthcare vision to the personnel, favoring adherence by the personnel to ensure alignment to the dictates to TQM initiative for quality attainment at all levels. This theory bases on the four I's which are abbreviations for *inspirational motivation (*strategic leader shares organizational (hospital's) vision with the personnel*); individual consideration (*leader influences the culture of quality*); idealized influence* (strategic leader allows the personnel to apply intuition and contribute in decision making), *intellectual stimulation (*capacity of the strategic leader to encourage improvement and productivity*)* (Prestiadi, 2019; Madu et *al*. 2023; Ajayi and Osunsanmi, 2019; Cortes and Herrmann, 2022; Yas et *al*. 2023).

3. Methodology

This paper made use of a systematic review approach to examine the role of strategic leadership in the implementation of TQM in the African hospitals. This involved the exploration of comprehensive literature from several relevant published articles.

Data collection was made from 34 articles published between the years 2018 and 2024. Certain criteria for articles selection were used, including: (a) publication of the article in English language, (b) articles from 2018 to 2024, (c) articles are peer-reviewed, and (d) empirical research on strategic leadership, TQM and health governance.

Every study involved the use of a standard process of selection from research sites like; Google Scholar, Scopus and ResearchGate, which included: (a) characteristic of the paper (Author, year, title, methodology and journal), (b) TQM and healthcare organizations, and (c) strategic leadership in the healthcare organization

Data analysis was done using a thematic analysis approach which involved the grouping of articles into themes based on their findings. Within each theme, the articles were analyzed and summarized with the aim of identifying knowledge trends and patterns that showcase the role of strategic leadership in the implementation of TQM for health governance.

4. Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to achieve a deeper understanding on how strategic leadership influence implementation of TQM in the African health governance, how this implementation contributes to employee and organizational performance, and customer satisfaction, productivity gains and sustainability in the African healthcare organizations. The study used transformational leadership theory as the theoretical framework because strategic leadership and TQM initiatives are central concepts associated with quality attainment at all levels (Campos, 2024). Three research questions were used as a descriptive framework for gathering qualitative data from secondary sources as well as for data analysis and reporting results. This framework was developed to organize the case study and to present findings in a sufficient way (Yin, 2009). The case study results came from a careful examination of the data to derive themes in response to the research questions. The data collection process resulted in 34 relevant articles.

5. Coding materials

The purpose of the qualitative coding activities was to reduce collected data (Yin, 2009). The coding activities were performed to organize the data based on the theoretical interests guiding the research questions. Table 1. Shows codes, themes, the article sources, and frequency.

	Codes	Themes	Major themes	Sources	Frequency
RQ 1	Clear vision	Provides direction and purpose	Improvement of institutional healthcare governance	1. Abu et al. (2024), 2. Alnuaimi& Yaakub (2020), 3. Pyone& Swaminathan (2023 4. Moulin et al. (2019), 5. Moullin et al. (2019), 6. Kheir-Mataria et al (2024), 7. Cazorla (2022), 8. Thanasas et al. (2023).	8
	Communication collaboration and feedback	Mutual communication and collaboration with stakeholders			
	Quality focus goals	Improve the quality of life.			
RQ 2	Employee motivations and job satisfaction	Employee and organizational performance	Achieve healthcare quality and outcomes	1. Wassan, et al. (2022), 2. Syarifudin (2023). 3. Yas et al. (2023), 4. Pasaribu et al. (2021), 5. Palladan (2018). 6. Owusu-Boadi (2019), 7. Nahak et al. (2022a), 8. Madu et al. (2023), 9. Kartika (2024), 10. Nandy. (2022), 11. Deshmukh, (2023), 12. Carvalho et al. (2021), 13. Bytyçi et al. (2023), 14. Bouranta, (2020), 15. Bolatan et al. (2019), 16. Ashkevari&Ghasemi. (2023), 17. Alnuaimi et al. (2020), 18. Ahmed & Sajid, (2023), 19. Abu-Salim et al. (2019), 20. Iqbal et al. (2022).	20
	Hospital innovations	Strengthen health governance and promoting compliance with TQM standard			
	A culture of quality	Improve health governance sustainability			
RQ 3	The patients' and health market feedback	Corrective actions to improve health sector performance	Enhance TQM implementation in the African hospitals	1. Riaz et al. (2023), 2. Prestiadi et al. (2019), 3. Hackman(2018), 4. Bisho, & Mohd. (2022), 5. Abdulkadir (2023), 6. Syarifudin (2023).	6
	Effective use of available resources	Strategic framework for utilizations of available resources			
	Communicable disease control	Collective action across countries in research, standards, and communication about diseases.			
Total					34

Table 1: From Codes to Themes for RQs and Frequencies per Result Category

5.1.   Evaluation of findings

This section contains an evaluation of findings from 34 relevant articles. These findings were compared against the relevant information from among these articles. Using data from selected articles derived empirical evidence on the role of strategic leadership in implementation of TQM in the African health sector.

Evaluation of findings for RQ1. *How do strategic leadership practices enable a successful implementation of TQM initiatives in the African hospitals?* The RQ1 was focused on understanding how *strategic leadership practices contribute to implementation of TQM initiatives in the African hospitals.* Using data from selected articles, the RQ1 was intended to derive empirical evidence on how strategic leadership practices enable a successful implementation of TQM initiatives. As a result, the following initiatives appear:

-    The setting of a clear vision by the strategic leader
-    The flexibility / comfort with change
-    Ensuring of an environment that favours communication, collaboration and feedback
-    Influencing personnel with the culture of commitment to TQM
-    Creating of quality-focused goals
-    Ensuring personnel commitment
-    Planning, aligning and implementing TQM within a strategic framework

Evaluation of findings for RQ2. *How TQM impacts employee and organizational performance in the African health organizations?* Using data from selected articles, the RQ2 was intended to derive empirical evidence on how TQM principles (customer focus, employee commitment, process approach, continues improvement, fact-based decision making) impact employee and organizational performance in the African health organizations? As a result, research shows that TQM methods have a good effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn boosts employee and organizational performance. In addition, hospital innovations, work process maintenance, and establishment of a culture of quality lead to better employee and organizational performance.

Evaluation of findings for RQ3. *How the relationship between strategic leadership and TQM ensure clients / patients' satisfaction, process maintenance, quality standards attainment and continuous service improvement?* Using data from selected articles, the RQ3was intended to derive empirical evidence on how relationship between strategic leadership and TQM ensure clients / patients' satisfaction, process maintenance, quality standards attainment and continuous service improvement. As a result, research shows that the relationship between strategic leadership and TQM in health organizations is seen in various areas as they exhibit a positive correlation. It is evident especially when strategic leadership makes use of available resources, implements strategies to enhance added value on existing services (or products) and regularly testing new patterns of service (or product) delivery methods.

While constantly monitoring the patients' feedback anticipates the future, the leaders of African health sector take necessary predispositions and plan actions. TQM makes effective use of available resources to ensure clients / patients' satisfaction, process maintenance, quality standards attainment and continuous service improvement. To achieve reasonable improvements, a key structural element of quality improvement in the African health sector is execution of a strategic plan. The execution of this plan requires an appropriate strategic framework which includes resources, activities, patients, processes, leadership, policy and strategy, society, and expected performance results.

In summary, the evaluation of the research questions leads to the conclusion that strategic leadership plays a vital role in the implementation of TQM in the African health governance, specifically in improving of institutional healthcare governance, achieving of healthcare quality and outcome, and enhancing TQM implementation in the African hospitals.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

According to available literature, not much is published about the counter effect; that is, the impact of health governance (institutions, policies and processes) on Strategic leadership (Bouranta, 2020).The significance of strategic leadership in effective health governance cannot be overemphasized as a failure in health governance is most often tied to a dysfunction in the leadership role (Ahmed $ Sajid, 2023). However, it is evident that strategic leadership occupies a significant role in governance of hospital organizations and the hospital's strategic leader plays a vital role in the governing process. The practical implications of these finding are related to:
- TQM integration in the process of strategic leadership
- Assuring the setting of clear visions
- Establishing and maintaining a culture of quality among personnel
- Ensuring effective allocation of resources and use
- Orienting patient-focused care and maintaining continuous process improvement.

Therefore, this study contributed to:

Healthcare Leaders: To encourage healthcare leaders to get strategic in the implementation of TQM initiative in hospital through fore-sight planning, alignment and implementation of TQM initiative within a strategic framework.

Policy makers: To raise awareness on the importance of viewing health and healthcare as a whole; understanding that the dysfunction of governance of the smallest functional health units could combine to a global malfunctioning in health governance. Also, the effective governance of healthcare facilities by the strategic implementation of TQM initiative could enhance efficient hospital governance.

Researchers: This study opened potential new orientations for future search to aid the development of new findings.

The results of this study suggest that strategic leadership is pivotal for effective health governance. It enhances the improvement of institutional healthcare governance, aids the achieving of healthcare quality and strengthens TQM implementation in hospitals. The future research on how strategic leadership influences implementation of TQM in the African health governance can be used to contribute to the community in the form of sustainable healthcare development and it could employ quantitative methods. Since this case study identified a number of leadership factors that influence implementation of TQM, it is recommended that these factors could be cast in a questionnaire. A large-scale survey can be used to attempt to measure the influence of these factors on health governance.

In conclusion, the findings of the content analysis of the secondary sources indicated that the main role of strategic leadership in the implementation of TQM in the African health sector is to address all elements of the triple bottom line – economy (cost-effective healthcare governance), society (primarily for patient care and hospitals' personnel), and environment (eco sustainability). They also indicated that appropriate governance helps healthcare organizations to integrate TQM within its practices and contributes to implementation of TQM actions.

It was noticed that effective strategic leadership in healthcare (that bears a specific and clear vision, effective communication / collaboration, considers resource allocation and a regular employees training and development) establishes quality assurance, patient satisfaction, process maintenance, competitiveness and continuous improvement in the hospitals service delivery thereby ensuring an effective governing of the smallest functional units of health hence a successful global health governance attainment for health societies and Africa at large.

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