

Management by walking about in achieving organizational excellence: The role of total quality management

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Abstract

Purpose: This study evaluated the influence of Total Quality Management (TQM) on the relationship between Management by Walking Around (MBWA) and its dimensions on organizational excellence (OE).

Research Methodology: This study adopted a detailed review of conceptual and empirical articles from high-impact journals related to the topic and authors' experience.

Results: A review of relevant studies reveals that management practices by walking around (MBWA) and its dimensions positively lead to organizational excellence. TQM mediates the relationship between MBWA and OE.

Limitations: This study is limited to TQM, MBWA, and their dimensions in achieving organizational excellence.

Contribution: This study provides a framework that can be used by corporate organizations, entrepreneurs, researchers, policymakers, community leaders, and governments to develop predictive models and empirical research to evaluate the influences of MBWA mediated by TQM in achieving organizational excellence. Therefore, providing quality products and services will improve the lives of people.

Originality: This study addresses calls for further study of MBWA and TQM in achieving organizational excellence. This research provides further understanding of the TQM nexus by exploring its influence on the relationship between the dimensions of MBWA and organizational excellence within the context of developing countries. This study is the first to use TQM as a mediator between MBWA and OE. The originality of this study comes from the researcher's ability to pinpoint how an organization can adopt the practices of MBWA complemented by the long-standing innovative tradition of Japanese management to achieve quality and excellence.

Keywords: *Management by Walking Around/about (MBWA), Total Quality Management (TQM), Organisational Excellence*

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1. Introduction

The world has recently witnessed numerous fundamental changes, which are continually evolving and have largely impacted management practices worldwide. Globalization has made the world a global village, in light of technological advancements in communication, socialization, creativity, and knowledge. This led to the emergence of modern management concepts and practices to keep up with these changes. Hence, there is the universality of management concepts and practices.

The world today is witnessing rapid changes at the commercial, economic, organizational, technological, and individual levels (Al Shobaki & Naser, 2016). However, in the midst of these changes, businesses and corporate bodies are striving to achieve excellence in improving organizational abilities to achieve continuous, long-term success and ensure that all organizational systems are compatible (Nenadál, Vykydal, & Waloszek, 2018). To effectively manage evolution and ensure organizational flexibility, managers of organizations and entrepreneurs must encourage a culture of excellence. Achieving excellence is necessary because rapid changes in the global markets and environment have also come with different challenges to the organization (Abasi & Esmaeeli, 2012).

In achieving organizational excellence, the concept of management by walking around also called management by walking about (MBWA) has emerged in literature to help managers, leaders, heads of business organizations, and entrepreneurs to achieve quality and excellence. MBWA is a concept that requires direct interaction between departments and leaders of an organization (Hamouda, 2024). MBWA is a phylogeny of management with an emphasis on human relations, open assessments, and knowledge, which are essential for the development and excellent performance of employees in an organization (Ali & Kudus, 2022).

The practices of MBWA help an organization's top management and entrepreneurs to obtain first-hand information and the current situation in the organization. They remain in direct contact with employees as they discuss with employees to identify their needs and hear different opinions for improvement in a dynamic environment. MBWA breaks the limits that may hinder communication between them and their workers by continuously interacting and meeting with workers, thus implying to workers the interest and commitment of the organization manager towards employees' well-being. MBWA works to realign the beliefs, views, thoughts, opinions, and ideas of employees about their organizations and encourages them to be productive, thus creating an environment or atmosphere for teamwork. Managers walking around help assess the behaviors and performance of employees, identify trends, employees' productive capacities and skills, put a system of rewards to promote employees' positive behavior (Al-Rawashdeh, 2012), and enhance managerial capability and capacity to control teams and their members (Kwon, Park, Hahn, Lee, & Kwon, 2018). MBWA enabled managers and leaders develop managerial and leadership capabilities and be aware of the daily operations and the job steps for following up on their achievements (Durrah, Eltigani, Gharib, & Hannawi, 2020; Obeidat, 2016; Shra'ah, Rumman, Hamour, & Sha, 2013).

In addition, a review of previous research (for example, Katopol (2018); Obeidat (2016); Rubin and Stone (2010); Ugochukwu, Chigozie, and Ukwuani (2018)) shows consistent positive relationships between management by walking around (MBWA) and organizational excellence. Although the link between MBWA and OE is well established, it still requires more attention (Durrah et al., 2020) to determine why consistent positive relationships exist by introducing a mediator. Hence, there is a need for Total Quality Management (TQM) as a mediating variable in this study to determine why a consistent relationship exists. Scholars call for more studies on Management by Walking Around and organizational excellence in other sectors (Durrah, Eltigani, & Bilal, 2018). A study was also carried out on MBWA in the media sector (Durrah et al., 2020) and recommended that future researchers examine the link between the dimensions of MBWA and organizational excellence in other sectors, such as education, industry, banking, health, and hospitality.

Therefore, this study introduces Total Quality Management (TQM) as a concept to mediate the relationship between the dimensions of MBWA and organizational excellence. TQM is a prerequisite for pursuing business excellence (Lisiecka & Czyż-Gwiazda, 2012). TQM is universally recognized as a management philosophy for improving organizational performance and customer satisfaction (Wanjiru, 2016). TQM is considered a major innovation in management (Akanmu et al., 2023) to achieve quality (Abimbola, Oyatoye, & Oyenuga, 2020), and organizational excellence (Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020; Lisiecka & Czyż-Gwiazda, 2012; Toma & Naruo, 2017).

Therefore, this study attempts to evaluate and fill this knowledge gap by providing conceptual and empirical evidence of the mediating influence of TQM on the relationship between MBWA and organizational excellence (OE).

1.2 Statement of the problem

The central problem to be researched is the lack of organizations, employees, and managers' understanding of the nature and relationship between management by walking about (MBWA) and organizational excellence (OE). Many organizations and businesses lack a clear sight to apply management by walking around (MBWA) in strengthening employees capacity to innovatively perform work effectively and efficiently to achieve organizational excellence in an evolving complex world. The problems of inappropriate managers-employees working relationships, lack of employees' dedication to work, poor employees' participation in problem solving even though they know the solutions to the problems, and employees' lackadaisical attitudes to work, among others, all impede organizational quality and excellence. This tends to hurt organizations.

Despite the consistent positive relationship between the dimensions of MBWA and organizational excellence, many businesses still lag behind in terms of quality and excellence. Hence, this study needs to be conducted on MBWA and TQM to achieve organizational excellence.

This problem has much to do with organizational excellence, which can be achieved through management by walking around and Total Quality Management (TQM). As a basis for this study, the researcher identified the problems of poor relationships between managers and employees, lack of feedback from employees, employees' lackadaisical attitude toward work, and lack of organizations' ability to adopt TQM practices that all affect organizational excellence. Employees often see their managers or leaders as highly superior (although a method of eye services) and hence distance themselves from them, which in turn negatively affects the organization. These are the reasons for this study in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

2. Literature review

2.1 Conceptual review

2.1.1 The Concept of Management by Walking Around

Management by walking around (MBWA), also called "management by walking about" by scholars (Al-Rawashdeh, 2012; Rubin & Stone, 2010; Shra'ah et al., 2013; Ugochukwu et al., 2018) refers to a management style which involves managers walking about, in a spontaneous and non-planned interaction, at random, through the workplace(s), in an unstructured manner, to relate and check with employees, equipment, or on the status of ongoing work.

Similarly, Mohamed Abdelrahman and Fawzi El-boudy (2023) defined Management by wandering around (MBWA) as managers spending time walking around the workplace and listening to staff concerns and suggestions. MBWA provides the opportunity to obtain an unfiltered, unsanitized look at what is happening (Sharma & Mandhanya, 2015).

MBWA, called the "technology of the obvious" (Rubin & Stone, 2010), is not an "open-door policy" open-door policy that breaks down barriers and facilitates interaction between organizational managers and leaders with frontline workers. The emphasis here is on the word 'walking around' in an unplanned, unstructured, or unscheduled manner within a workplace. It is a system where managers make informal visits to the workplace and pay rapid attention to employees to unofficially supervise their work while they are performing it.

Additionally, MBWA is a style of management in which managers, supervisors, and leaders directly participate in their subordinate activities by informally spending time interacting with subordinates in an unstructured, unplanned, unscheduled, casual, and friendly manner [Luthra as cited in Luria and Morag (2012)]. According to Ali and Kudus (2022), MBWA is a management style that concentrates on human relations and open assessments, which are essential for the development and excellent performance of employees within an organization. Management by walking around (MBWA) is a

strategy of communication between managers and employees that relies on informal contacts by adopting a decentralized management style to encourage teamwork (Shra'ah et al., 2013). MBWA enhances department, leaders, and managers' direct interaction with the reality of work in an organization (Hamouda, 2024).

MBWA helps a good manager to better understand the issues, ideas, and concerns of subordinates. A crucial part of being a good manager is being in contact with subordinates (Ugochukwu et al., 2018), and the manager must also ensure that the work is directed to areas directly under his or her command. MBWA helps proactive managers carefully listen to employees' suggestions and concerns, gather useful unfiltered, real-time information (mostly left out of formal communication channels), solve challenging situations, and avoid potential crises.

The concept of management by walking about (MBWA) has been practiced by many managers of organizations, although unknowingly by some managers. This concept of management was recently and practically demonstrated by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Jos Professor Sebastian Maimako on the 21st of May 2021 by his unceremonious surprise visit to class when some MSc class 2018/2019 session were making a term paper presentation (as depicted in Fig. 1). Even the course lecturer in class Dr. Sunny Edwin Echu was not aware of his coming and was so surprised that the VC surprisingly came to class with the Head of the Department Dr. Vem and lecturer Dr. Samuel Olutuase.

Thus, this type of leadership and management style motivated employees to do more for the organization as was seen on the face of Dr. E S Echu who was very happy by the VC's surprise visit which he also expressed in words as saying "This is first of its kind, I am very happy that this happens during my lecture time". On the part of the students (MSC 2018/2019 set), everybody was happy and eager to snap pictures with the vice chancellor, as shown in Fig. 1.

Below is a picture depicting his visit on 21/05/2021.



Figure 1. pictures with vice chancellor professor S. Maimako

According to Al-Rawashdeh (2012); Durrah et al. (2018); Durrah et al. (2020); (Shra'ah et al., 2013); Ugochukwu et al. (2018) there are five dimensions of MBWA: discovering facts, communication, motivation, creativity, and feedback.

1. **Discovering Facts:** One of the dimensions of MBWA is an organized step aimed at diagnosing problems to obtain information that helps managers solve problems. Discovering facts refers to managers' ability to walk around the workplace to identify problems and obtain comprehensive information about them, judge the quality of implementation, and see the cases of employees (Durrah et al., 2020).

2. **Communication:** Communication is the core of management; therefore, managers cannot perform their basic managerial functions without it (Durrah et al., 2018; Shra'ah et al., 2013). The practice of MBWA provides an opportunity for spontaneous communication between managers and subordinates, which is more effective than planned communication in achieving results. (Durrah et al., 2020) advised managers, supervisors, and leaders to avoid hard criticism by subordinates during walking in order to avoid negative effects.
3. **Motivation:** MBWA encourages employees' positive attitudes toward work and propels leaders to face work challenges through direct communication with employees (Durrah et al., 2020). Walking around effectively encourages top management to leave their desks and spontaneously walk about the workplace, thereby building relationships with employees, connecting directly to activities, and recognizing employees' needs to contribute to the success of the organization (Buckner, 2008). According to Durrah et al. (2018), motivation is an important dimension of MBWA that helps enhance high-quality performance. Muliyanto, Indrayani, Satriawan, Ngaliiman, and Catrayasa (2023) described motivation as a positive mental attitude that strengthens employees to maximally achieve organizational objectives.
4. **Creativity:** The extant literature emphasizes the need to appreciate creative ideas and suggestions by employees (R. B. Tucker, 2002). It is a vital factor in transforming the way things are performed (Cropley, 2016; Durrah et al., 2018). Creativity leads to innovation and continuous development (A. L. Tucker & Singer, 2015), improve efficiency in production (Yeh-Yun Lin & Liu, 2012), and improve performance (Doran & Ryan, 2012; Tariq, Nadir & Chinglerrtham, 2019; Roach, Ryman, & Makani, 2016)
5. **Feedback:** The main aim of the feedback is to improve performance. Managers and leaders should be constructive when discussing their subordinates (Durrah et al., 2018; Ugochukwu et al., 2018). When managers correctly engage with subordinates, they help improve employee engagement. Employees' understanding of feedback is related to their trust in and belief in managers (Tzafrir & Gur, 2007).

2.1.2 The Concept of Total Quality Management

TQM originated in 1949 from the UNION of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE), which created a committee of scholars, Engineers and Government officials that produces a "managerial innovation" dedicated to improving Japanese productivity and Japanese post-war quality of life (Powell, 1995). Influenced by Americans W. Edward Deming, Joseph M. Juran, and Crosby, American firms began to take serious notice of TQM around 1980 (Powell, 1995).

In a recent study, Meirani and Intania (2023) related the concept of quality to standards and customer satisfaction. That is, 'the concept of total quality management (TQM) deals with how an institution achieves customer satisfaction by setting standards that are tailored to its requirements. Meirani and Intania (2023), therefore, defined total quality management as a series of guidelines that contain established standards and adhere to the principle of continuous improvement to achieve customer satisfaction.

Similarly, according to Abimbola et al. (2020), theory provides quality products and services to satisfy customers through the continual involvement of everyone in the organization. TQM evaluates the needs of organizations and individual requirements and expectations through continuous improvement (Meirani & Intania, 2023), and is considered an important innovative tool in management (Akanmu et al., 2023) to have quality products and services and to achieve organizational objectives.

An effective and quality management practice is needed by the organization to integrate quality management processes (Akanmu et al., 2023) to achieve organizational excellence. TQM is a viable and sustainable possibility that can contribute to the consolidation of an organization's capacity to offer new, attractive, and high-quality products and services at competitive prices to customers (Androniceanu, 2017).

Since 1948, the concept of total quality management has been considered a modern term and one of the essential applicable managerial strategies and philosophies to improve organizational positioning

(Akanmu et al., 2023). As quality is a basic prerequisite for pursuing business excellence (Lisiecka & Czyż-Gwiazda, 2012), organizations (top management and employees) must fully understand the principles of TQM and be committed to achieving organizational excellence. The entire workforce of an organization (from the top management and all employees) must be involved in a continuous shared commitment to improving quality in the organization. TQM can be applied in manufacturing functions, with potential applications in service and non-profit organizations (Powell, 1995).

Total Quality Management (TQM) principles [**Deming's 14 points** (constancy of purpose, adopt the philosophy, do not rely on mass inspection, do not award business on price, constant improvement, quality, leadership, drive out fear, break down barriers, eliminate slogans and exhortation, eliminate quotas, pride of workmanship, education and workmanship, plan of action), **Juran trilogy** (quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement), and **Crosby's 14 quality steps** (management commitment, quality improvement teams, quality measurement, cost of quality evaluation, quality awareness, corrective action, zero defect committee, supervisor's training, zero defect day, goal setting, error cause removal, recognition, quality councils, do it again)] can be used to achieve quality and excellence in an organization.

2.1.3 The Concept Of Organizational Excellence

The concept of excellence is defined as the underlying principles that form the foundation for achieving sustainable excellence in any organization [International Standard Organisation] [International Standard Organization (ISO), 2015]. Although the concept of "organizational excellence" is difficult to define, it relates to profitability, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and product innovation (Durrah et al., 2020). Quality is an important component of organizational excellence that signifies the pursuit of 'perfection' (Hamouda, 2024).

Organizational excellence, according to Hijjawi (2021), is the outcome of collaboration and teamwork. Collaboration between organization management, leaders, and subordinates to achieve set goals. It is a set of strategies and practices, not just the ultimate objective to achieve sustainability performance through innovation (Akanmu et al., 2023).

Organizational excellence provides an objective approach for managing an organization to meet and exceed stakeholder expectations. The concept of OE forms the cornerstone for the unending cycle of continuous improvement of an organization, a process by which people start where they are and continuously work to improve their organization over a period of time. The concept of excellence is often related to business organizations, although organizational excellence is attributed more to public sector firms, while business excellence is attributed to those in the private sector, as cited in Al-Darmaki and Al-Dhaafri (2017).

The concept of organizational excellence is deeply rooted in proper communication between providers, partners, and contractors. Excellent organizations carefully assess the results of their activities and use feedback from beneficiaries to make their activities effective. Excellent organizations perform numerous activities but are not limited to ensuring intimate working relationships between managers and employees, empowering their employees, and measuring every result related to their employees. An excellent organization is one that deliberately adds value to society and considers itself as a member of society; it takes necessary actions to meet expectations to prove its citizenship role. Organizations that practice an excellent culture have a valuable impact on society because they operate and generate returns.

Studies have shown the importance of organizational excellence by giving the organization a quantitative, qualitative, and preferential advantage over competitors, as it makes the organization superior in its performance and in providing services together that contributes to a positive impact on the perceptions of workers and customers, and also stimulates them for continuous development, which contributes to their long-term continuity (Hijjawi, 2021). Excellent managers are actively involved in organizational affairs, and their ideas, through innovation and creativity, become interesting. Studies show that an organization that maintains a culture of excellence does have a positive impact on the

economy of the world by ensuring a balance between organizational performance in terms of profits and social and environmental sustainability within the community they operate (Akanmu et al., 2023).

According to scholars (Abasi & Esmaeeli, 2012; Durrah et al., 2020), there are many models for organizational excellence, such as the Deming Prize (Japan), Juran trilogy, Crosby 14 points, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (USA), European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model, Dubai Government Excellence Program, King Abdullah II Center for Excellence (Jordan), and Bahrain Center of Excellence.

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM, 2012), as cited in the International Organization for Standardization (2015), provides eight principles for achieving sustainable excellence in any organization: sustaining outstanding results, succeeding through talent, managing agility, inspiration, and integrity, leading to vision, adding value to customers, creating a sustainable future, developing organizational capability, and harnessing creativity and innovation.

To achieve excellence in organizations, leaders must commit to the fundamental principles of quality management (QM) (Els & Meyer, 2024), which entails that leaders must foster a culture of continuous quality improvement, employee involvement, and allocate necessary resources to actively support TQM efforts.

2.2 Theoretical Review

After careful consideration of the various theories related to motivation and management, this study is anchored in McClelland's theory of needs, supported by Ouchi's theory.

2.2.1 David McClelland's Theory Of Needs

This study is anchored in McClelland's Theory of Need. This motivational theory, also known as the Acquired Needs Theory, famous as the Three Needs Theory, was established in the 1960s by American Psychologist David McClelland, who advocated the Need Theory, rally around three significant aspects, namely, needs for achievement, needs for power, and needs for affiliation. The theory states that the needs for achievement, power, and affiliation significantly control the behavior and actions of an individual, which is useful for understanding in a managerial context (Ugochukwu et al., 2018). Moreover, despite our age, sex, race, customs, demography, culture, and wealth, all of us possess and are driven by one of these needs. An individual is not born with these specific needs, but is acquired and shaped over time, driven by real-life experiences he has had in life and the views of their nation. Motivators are not inherent but develop through our culture and life experiences.

According to McClelland; the Need for Achievement is the motivation to excel, the Need for Power is the desire to cause others to behave in a way that they would not have behaved otherwise, and the Need for Affiliation is the desire for friendly, close interpersonal relationships and conflict avoidance. McClelland associates each need with a distinct set of work preferences and managers can help tally the environment to meet these needs. People are motivated by specific job situations that involve certain personal responsibilities.

Need for power: Power, according to Shoraj and Llaci (2015), is the desire to control and influence other people's behavior or to be responsible for other people and their work. People who are motivated by the need for power have the desire to influence others to achieve a certain objective. These people are influential leaders or managers who value discipline and do not like being on the losing side, such as recognition, personal prestige, better status, reputation, self-esteem, or collaboration for achievement. They desire that their ideas, views, and opinions be acknowledged and implemented over others; they are at best in leading others (teams or groups) to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization. Group or team goals can become a zero-sum, meaning that for a person to win, another must lose. These people help achieve group or team objectives and also help other members of the group feel competent.

Need for affiliation: Affiliation is the desire to establish and maintain friendly and close relationships with other people (Shoraj & Llaci, 2015). Individuals motivated by the need for affiliation have a strong

need for social interactions, interpersonal relationships, and friendships with others. They like working in an environment that encourages collaboration, groups, or teamwork that creates friendly lasting social relationships, and has the urge to be liked, loved, and accepted by others.

Need for achievement: Achievement, in the words of Shoraj and Llaci (2015), is the desire to effectively do better than other people, solve problems, and master difficult tasks. Individuals motivated by the need for achievement are highly risk-calculated people who like to achieve their goals and objectives by avoiding both high- and low-risk situations. They are result-oriented people who appreciate feedback (the MBWA dimension).

Therefore, McClelland's theory can be used by an organization to manage teams of people by identifying and categorizing every member of a team among the three needs (achievement, power, and affiliation), knowing fully well that their quality may help to manage their expectations and efficiently run the team to achieve excellence. Based on the explanation above, the main theory for this study is McClelland's theory of needs.

2.2.2 Theory Z

Theory Z, developed by Dr. William Ouchi and popularized in the 1980s during the Asian economic boom (Aithal & Kumar, 2016; Ansho, 2024), emphasized employee loyalty to the organization by providing a job for life with a strong focus on employees' well-being both on and off the job (Aithal & Kumar, 2016). Ouchi Theory Z shows the level of commitment Japanese companies value their employees' welfare (Ansho, 2024; Pantelides, 2019).

Japanese managers believe in the philosophy of humanism (humanists) and demonstrate their ultimate concern for human beings. They concentrate their efforts on motivating all workers (not minding their background and ways of thinking) to harmoniously work together, thus, the Japanese term "**wa**" (Pantelides, 2019). Japanese management ensure that "**wa**" (harmony) is maintain at all cost. That is, 'employees work in harmony at all costs. The Japanese understood the philosophy of teamwork well and excelled as a result of making use of it (Abimbola et al., 2020).

William Ouchi examine theory Z principles by comparing and contrasting Japanese (Type J), and American (Type A) organisations. Type A organizations offer short-term employment, specialized careers, rapid promotion, individuals' decision-making, and responsibility. Type J organizations mirrored the ethos of Japanese management, such as collectivism and stability, rather than individuality. Thus, organizations that share type J and type A characteristics were described by William Ouchi as type Z (theory Z).

Therefore, William Ouchi theory Z is a managing style with a strong emphasis on company philosophy, long-range staff development, distinct corporate culture, and consensus decision-making. The theory assumes that workers tend to build a happy and intimate working relationship with those they work for and with (Aithal & Kumar, 2016). Employees have high expectations that they will receive support from the company.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Premised on the literature review, a model of conceptual framework is developed below to investigate the mediating role of total quality management (TQM) in the relationship between management by walking around/about (MBWA) and organizational excellence (OE) (see Figure 2)

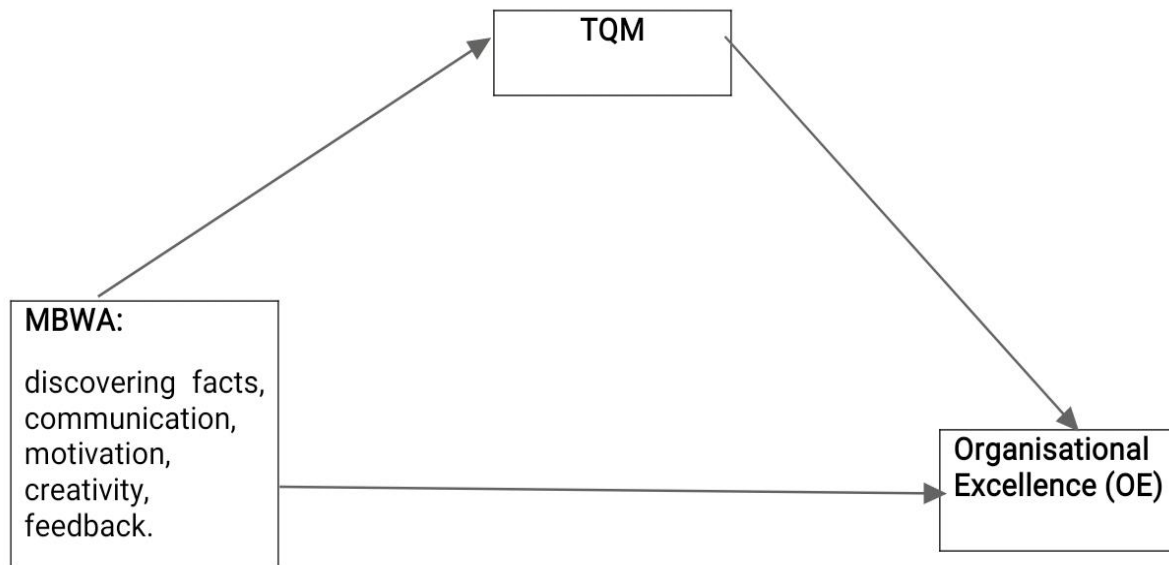


Figure 2. Model of Conceptual Framework
Source: Author's (2024)

The model in Figure 2 depicts the relationships between MBWA, TQM, and OE.

A review of the extant literature reveals a significant positive relationship between MBWA and organizational excellence (for example, Durrah et al. (2020); Hamouda (2024); Martinez-Jerez, Casas-Arce, and Moran (2019); Shra'ah et al. (2013)). Moreover, there is a relationship between MBWA and TQM (Mohamed & Zaroug, 2018; (Yadav, 2013)) between TQM and OE (Al-Dhaafri and Alosani (2020); Toma and Naruo (2017)). Therefore, it is necessary to introduce the concept of TQM as a mediator between MBWA and OE and to understand why a consistent positive relationship exists.

Furthermore, Akanmu et al. (2023) called for more studies on the impact of TQM. Durrah et al. (2018) called for further studies on Management By Walking Around (MBWA) and organizational excellence (OE) in other sectors, while in a more recent study (Durrah et al., 2020) on MBWA in the media sector, the study recommended that future researchers examine the link between the dimensions of MBWA and organizational excellence in other sectors, such as education, industry, hospitality, banking, and health.

3. Methodology

This study reviewed relevant articles related to management by walking around, TQM, and organizational excellence. A total of 62 relevant articles were reviewed and used for the study, consisting of 38 empirical articles, 15 conceptual reviews, five textbooks, and four conference proceedings. The articles and materials sourced and reviewed for the study were limited to high-impact journals, books, periodics, and others published under the following resources: Research Gate, Academy of Management, Semantic Scholars, Taylor and Francis, JSTOR, Emerald, Wiley, Elsevier, Sagepub, and MDPI. The keywords for the search were management by walking around, management by walking about, organizational excellence, business excellence, quality, total quality management, David McClelland's theory of planned behavior, and Theory Z, among others. The timeframe of the published articles, books, and periodicals reviewed and included in this study covered articles published from the period to 1995-2024. With an emphasis on materials published between 2018-2024. Therefore, 27(44%) materials published in 2018-2024, and 24(38%) materials published in 2011-2017, while 11(18%) materials published between 1995-2010 were reviewed and used.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Empirical Review

4.1.1 Management by Walking Around and Organizational Excellence

People continually seek ways of life that are meaningfully easy and less complicated; this new lifestyle impacts employee motivation and management (Long, Perumal, & Ajagbe, 2012). Some of this lifestyle motivating and managing employees makes organizations and managers adopt practices such as management by walking around the workplace (Hamouda, 2024) and Total Quality Management (Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020; Wanjiru, 2016) to achieve excellence.

Many scholars have examined the relationship between MBWA and various management concepts related to organizational excellence (OE). Many scholars have indicated a positive relationship between management by walking around (MBWA) and trends that stimulate excellent organizations, including but not limited to government and non-governmental businesses, profit, and nonprofit organizations. For example, Hamouda (2024) positively relates MBWA to job performance. Martinez-Jerez et al. (2019) revealed a positive relationship between MBWA and sales productivity. Yuliana (2020) positively related two of the dimensions of MBWA; innovation and creativity to increases e-commerce. While Muliyanto et al. (2023) also submitted that motivation is positively related to self-efficacy

Ugochukwu et al. (2018) established a positive relationship between MBWA and employees' performance, increased motivation, and ability to work. Ugochukwu et al. (2018) further revealed that applying management by Walking about has a significant positive effect on employee's positive attitude toward their work, increases employees' motivation, improving communication, development, commitment and creativity of the employees as managers, supervisors and heads of departments walk around the workplace showing that every work is essential and that each worker in the organization is a reliable and important asset in achieving the goal and objectives of the organization effectively and efficiently in a changing world.

In a more recent study, Mohamed Abdelrahman and Fawzi El-boudy (2023) found that MBWA significantly correlated with organizational excellence (OE), and work engagement among nurses. In their study, they further stated that the effective use of MBWA by nurse leaders improves the performance of healthcare organizations and nurse satisfaction. Mohamed Abdelrahman and Fawzi El-boudy (2023) in a study also found a highly significant positive relationship between MBWA and organizational excellence, and with work engagement among nurses. Durrah et al. (2020) conducted a study on management by walking around as an approach to improve organizational excellence in media institutions. The study established a significantly positive relationship between the three dimensions of MBWA (i.e., discovering facts, communication, and feedback) and organizational excellence (OE) in media institutions. Al-Dhaafri and Alosani (2021) in a study using data obtained from employees of Dubai Police Force in the United Arab Emirates, in their analysis anchored on the resources based view (RBV) theory of the firm revealed significant positive role of MBWA in the relationship.

Shra'ah et al. (2013) carried out a study among doctors and nurses in Jordanian hospitals. The results of their study show a significant positive impact of MBWA on organisational commitment (OC) of nurses and doctors in Jordanian Hospitals. Shra'ah et al. (2013) study submitted that providing employees with the needed training programs will help improve employees skills in practicing MBWA which enhances relationship based on the mutual respect and trust between the manager and the employees. This study encourages nurses and doctors to practice MBWA, and cooperation between managers, nurses, and doctors is necessary for successful work.

The term MBWA has been used differently by the author as an independent variable; for example, Durrah et al. (2020) and Al-Dhaafritors Al-Dhaafri and Alosani (2021). However, in this study, the term MBWA was used as an independent variable (IV), establishing a positive relationship between MBWA and organizational excellence (OE).

Furthermore, a review of relevant studies clearly shows a consistent positive relationship between MBWA and organizational excellence (for example, Durrah et al. (2018); Durrah et al. (2020); Shra'ah

et al. (2013)). Hence, there is a need to know why consistent positive relationships exist between MBWA and OE. Scholars have also called for many studies on MBWA dimensions and organizational excellence in other sectors, such as education, hospitality, health, banking, and industry (Durrah et al., 2018; Durrah et al., 2020). Therefore, this study seeks to contribute both empirical and conceptual evidence on these relationships by examining the impact of the dimensions of MBWA on organizational excellence (EO) via total quality management (TQM). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of MBWA (discovering facts, communication, motivation, creativity, and feedback) and organizational excellence (OE).

4.1.2 MBWA and Total Quality Management

MBWA is an important tool for successful leadership and employee engagement, is crucial for TQM, and is critical in improving managers' efficiency (Sharma & Mandhanya, 2015). Yadav (2013) in a study, revealed significant positive influences of MBWA dimensions (discovering facts and feedback) on service quality

Durrah et al. (2018) established the importances of practicing MBWA in the Omani banking sector and determine the impact of its dimensions (namely; discovering facts, communication, motivating, creativity, and feedback) on service quality. The study revealed a significant positive impact of the dimensions of MBWA (discovering facts and feedback) on service quality. These results according to Zaroug are attributed to the importance of MBWA in establishing the predominant atmosphere in the work, determining the problems faced by employees in the Omanis banking sector, and taking appropriate decisions thereon. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H₂: There is a significant positive relationship between MBWA dimensions (discovering facts, communication, motivation, creativity, and feedback) and Total Quality Management (TQM).

4.1.3 Total Quality Management and Organisational Excellence

Total quality management (TQM) is universally recognized as a managerial philosophy for improving organizational performance and customer satisfaction (Wanjiru, 2016). The application of TQM principles is the best way to compete, excel, and achieve the best quality (Jumady, Sugiarto, & Latief, 2021). The extant literature confirms the positive and significant effect of Total Quality Management (TQM) on organizational performance (OP) (Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020). Total quality management is employed as part of an organization's goals to improve customer satisfaction, competitiveness, and performance (Amegayibor & Korankye, 2021; Baron & Robles, 2023).

Toma and Naruo (2017) emphasize the relationship between total quality management (TQM) and business excellence (BE) at Toyota Motor Corporation (a leader of the automotive industry). The results revealed that Toyota Motor Corporation best practices is connected to the practices of total quality management (TQM) and business excellence (BE) derive from the Toyota Production System, and these practices are found in the quality of business excellence. The automotive industry (e.g., Toyota Motor Corporation) is an example of an organization that incorporates quality at the core of its production system to achieve business excellence (Toma & Naruo, 2017).

Lisiecka and Czyż-Gwiazda (2012) submitted that Quality compose necessary requirements to pursue excellence, and that quality management practices in organization composes a way to business excellence that can be achieve if the entire organization from top management to the least person in the organization understand and are totally committed to the practices of total quality management (TQM). That is, quality is achieved when an organization's top management, line managers, and frontline workers (entire organization's workforce) clearly understand and correctly apply the concept of TQM practices.

In a study conducted by Samawi, Abu-Tayeh, Yosef, Madanat, and Al-Qatawneh (2018), total quality management (TQM) practices have a positive effect on organisational excellence (OE) of private sector firms offering specialized services, focusing on the King Abdullah II Award for Excellence for the Private Sector. They submitted in their study that for private service firms to achieve excellence, the

leaders of such a private firm must make the right managerial decision by committing to the practices of total quality management (TQM). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H₃: There is a significant positive relationship between Total Quality Management (TQM) and Organisational Excellence (OE).

4.1.4 The Role of Total Quality Management

There is a positive relationship between MBWA and Total Quality Management (TQM) (Durrah et al., 2018; Yadav, 2013), total quality management (YQM), and organizational excellence (OE) (Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020; Toma & Naruo, 2017). Therefore, it is imperative to introduce TQM as a mediator between MBWA and OE.

Total Quality Management is an important variable in management and business, and has been widely used by different scholars. Akanmu et al. (2023) used quality management practices as an independent variable Akanmu et al. (2023) to predict the sustainability of Malaysian food and beverage companies. Jankalová and Jankal (2020) and Akanmu et al. (2023) indicated that respect for the basic principles of total quality management (TQM) practices is the important foundation to achieve business excellence (BE) and that business excellence (BE) also related to the dimensions of sustainability. An organization must incorporate and prioritize innovative ideas to grow, survive, and achieve excellence in an environment (Akanmu et al., 2023). Akanmu et al. (2023) showed that total quality management practices have become essential factors for organizations to achieve business performance, competitive advantage, and sustainability. Quality is one of the ingredients of customer satisfaction (Nofrianto & Basri, 2024; Sikder, Rana, & Polas, 2021). Akanmu et al. (2023) confirm that total quality management (TQM) practices require human resource management. Akanmu et al. (2023) recommended further studies on the impact of total quality management (TQM).

According to Chletsos et al. (2019), the proper functioning of any public or private organization Chletsos, Saiti, Chletsos, and Saiti (2019) requires the formulation of a competitive framework that responds to basic parameters related to strategic issues, organizational models, and processes. This competitive framework can be formulated using TQM, which has been confirmed as a viable and sustainable option that contributes to the consolidation of an organization (Androniceanu, 2017). Hence, the need for TQM in this study is to formulate a competitive framework that responds to the basic business parameters related to business strategic issues, models, and processes in a dynamic complex environment. Therefore, we hypothesized the following in an alternate form:

H₄: Total Quality Management (TQM) mediates the relationship between dimensions of MBWA (discovering facts, communication, motivation, creativity, and feedback) and organizational excellence (OE).

4.2 Research Gap

A review of the extant literature reveals a consistent positive relationship between MBWA and organizational excellence (Al-Rawashdeh, 2012; Durrah et al., 2020; Hamouda, 2024; Martinez-Jerez et al., 2019). To the best of our knowledge, no study has focused on the links between MBWA and OE using TQM as a mediator. Durrah et al. (2018) recommended future studies on Management by Walking Around and organizational excellence in other sectors. A study was also carried out on MBWA in the media sector (Durrah et al., 2020) and recommended that future researchers evaluate the link between MBWA (and its dimensions) and organizational excellence in other sectors, such as hospitality, industry, health, education, and banking. Akanmu et al. (2023) recommended further studies on the impact of total quality management (TQM).

Despite research on the direct relationship between MBWA and OE, a review of relevant literature revealed that no study has investigated the mediating role of TQM in this relationship. This shows that the mediating role of TQM in the relationship between management by walking around and organizational excellence has received less attention. Hence the need for TQM as a mediator in this study. This is the knowledge gap that this study intends to fill.

5. Conclusion

This study presents a detailed summary and support for the role of TQM in achieving organizational excellence. The study began by explaining the concept of MBWA and its dimensions, the concept of TQM, followed by the concept of organizational excellence. A theoretical view of the study was provided using McClelland's theory of needs and Ouchi's theory Z, which was followed by the research methodology. A careful review of related studies showed that the link between MBWA and organizational excellence is visibly and consistently positive, which has influenced and guided the development of the conceptual framework using TQM as a mediator (as depicted in Figure 1). Thus, we established a relationship between MBWA and its dimensions, TQM and Organizational Excellence.

5.1 Contributions and Implication of The Study

This study highlights four key contributions. First, to academicians and researchers, this study responds to the lack of empirical research on the mediating role of TQM in the relationship between management by walking around and organizational excellence in the context of developing countries and contributes value to the current body of literature by providing both conceptual and empirical evidence for the level of implementation of the influences of TQM on management by walking around (MBWA) by organizations and businesses to ensure organizational excellence. It also serves as a reference guide for future researchers and academicians on management by walking around and TQM to achieve excellence.

Second, it evaluates the impact of the dimensions of MBWA and TQM on organizational excellence (OE) using quantitative methodology and contributes important evidence from around the world to the current MBWA and TQM in organizational excellence literature in the context of developing countries. Third, it evaluates the impact of MBWA and TQM on OE in Nigeria using a conceptual framework developed. Anchored David McClelland's theory of needs and with Theory Z as supportive theory. Thus, providing justifiable means and useful insights for managers, SME's, corporate businesses, and governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world to facilitate the use of MBWA practices and TQM as a means to enhance organizational excellence.

Fourth, this study will help policymakers formulate policies and programs that will enhance organizational excellence. This enables both public and private organizations to produce quality products and services that will improve people's lives.

Finally, the simplified model in Figure 1 extends the usefulness of management by walking round/about and TQM in achieving organizational excellence, thereby providing a predictive model and framework for achieving excellence.

5.2 Suggestion/Recommendations

This study suggests that for an organization to achieve excellence, it must correctly implement and practice the philosophy of MBWA, which enables organizations to consider themselves members of a community to prove their citizenship role by identifying social expectations and having positive impacts on such a community.

To achieve excellence in an organization, leaders must commit to the fundamental principles of quality, which emphasize that leaders must foster a culture of continuous quality improvement, employee involvement, and resource allocation to support quality management practices. Organizations must continuously evaluate and improve their performance in all areas and provide exceptional value to achieve excellence.

Organizational managers must ensure outstanding communication between customers, employees, and organizations to achieve organizational excellence.

Therefore, based on the findings of our study, we suggest that entrepreneurs, top management, organizations, and policymakers integrate the practices of MBWA and TQM to achieve organizational excellence.

5.3 Limitations and direction for future studies

This study is limited to the mediating role of TQM in the relationship between MBWA and its dimensions (discovering facts, communication, motivation, creativity, and feedback) in achieving organizational excellence. Using articles from high-impact journals and books from 1995-2024 to.

With regard to future studies, a quantitative methodology could also be used by future researchers to examine the validity and efficacy of the theorized model (MBWA-TQM-OE). Using longitudinal studies to determine causal relationships between the dimensions of MBWA to achieve organizational excellence (OE) in emerging economies would also be appropriate.

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