

# Top Management Commitment and Dynamic Leadership: A Human Resource Imperative for Total Quality Management

Zahed Mannan<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Because of its emphasis on customer satisfaction or even exceeding the customers' expectations through continuous improvement of the quality of everything that an organization does, total quality management (TQM) requires, *inter alia*, total commitment of management and a progressive, dynamic leadership especially at the top level. This paper examines the roles of top management commitment and dynamic leadership in the successful implementation of TQM program in organizations. It specifically identifies the leadership challenges related to TQM implementation. The paper argues that implementation of TQM needs dynamic, transformational leadership at the top level, and a total commitment of management at all levels beginning from the top down to the operating level. Finally, it provides directions for future research.

**Keywords:** Total quality management, Leadership, Human resource

## Introduction

It is now widely believed that Total Quality Management (TQM) is not a destination, it is a journey, a way of corporate life. This means that TQM is continuously ongoing. This, in turn, means that the ongoing, unending journey must be strongly led by somebody so that the journey becomes smooth, undaunted and obstacles-free. This is a question of leadership – a kind of leadership that can ensure total commitment as well as total involvement of management from the top, a kind of leadership that is progressive, visionary, entrepreneurial and transformational. The organizations that have evidently performed the best in implementing and continuing TQM programs have done so primarily because of total commitment and direct involvement of the top leaders, especially the CEOs.

If we look at the organizations that have failed or even could not start implementing TQM, we see a dismal, ineffective and lackluster leadership at the top. TQM obviously requires large-scale organizational change – change of culture and many other facets of the organization and, such change requires competent leadership to lead the change. The research of Kotter (2012) substantiates the absolute necessity of competent leadership in a culture change process, ensuring that the organization's purpose and mission are established and articulated, developing multiple programs and initiatives that are clearly linked to values that will help to guide the implementing of the change, and communicating all of these are some of the primary leadership acts that are necessary to bring about organizational change (Warner, 1995, p.162). In addition, the unsuccessful organizations have been gripped with either lack of total commitment on the part of leaders or having commitment but no direct involvement of the top leader(s). Commitment produces no results unless accompanied by leader's personal involvement. Thus, leadership can be said to be the single most important factor that determines the success or failure of TQM in an organization. The purpose of this paper is to indicate how TQM is interlinked with top management commitment and leadership in an organizational setting. It examines the leadership dynamics vis-à-vis TQM, integration of leadership styles with the total transformation of the organization and explores the leadership challenges for TQM implementation. Prior to synthesizing insights from the leadership and TQM literatures,

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, School of Open Learning and Management, Bangladesh Open University.

we briefly review pertinent elements of these literatures, including conceptual clarification for setting the stage for discussion.

### **Objectives and methodology**

This paper examines the roles of top management commitment and dynamic leadership in the successful implementation of TQM program in organizations. It specifically explores the dynamics of leadership for TQM organizations and identifies the leadership challenges related to TQM implementation.

In order to fully review and analyze the findings of previous research studies of a particular topic or research area, a methodical analysis of publications in academic journals is necessary (Tsai and Wen, 2005). In this regards, a similar three stage search process adopted by Yi and Wang (2013); Hong et al (2012) was employed to conduct a content analysis of the success factors of leadership related papers published from 1960 to 2016 (both years inclusive). The three stages are the identification of academic journals, selection of target papers and examination of the target papers.

### **Top management commitment**

By definition, “top management commitment is a commitment of corporate resources, including the executives’ own time, to the improvement of process. In fact, substantial amounts of executive time, particularly that of the CEO, are necessary to successfully implementing TQM” (Jablonski, 1994, p. 81). That TQM must be embraced with total commitment and direct involvement of top management is an absolute for success. Top management commitment facilitates TQM success in several ways:

1. It mentally prepares the senior executives (top leaders) of the organization to be ready for involving themselves directly with the initiation and implementation of TQM (Kotter, 2012).
2. It stimulates the top leaders to train up the people to develop their new skills required for undertaking the new challenges in the changed environment (Juran, 1989).
3. It inspires the managers and employees down the organizational levels to devote for executing the quality initiatives (Warner, 1995).
4. It develops among the employees a feeling of ‘we will not be frustrated; our seniors are with us’ (Jablonski, 1994).
5. It facilitates transformation of the existing culture to a TQM culture, with a “shift to customer defined quality, the primacy of teams and teamwork, the empowerment of employees, an emphasis of cooperation rather than competition, a preference for two-way communication, and a focus on structures scientific/analytical decision making” (Martin, 1993, p. 80).
6. It acts as a boost to maintaining a long-term perspective of TQM. Nothing but top management’s unqualified commitment can help implementing TQM efforts for a considerably long period of time – around six years, according to Quality Guru Joseph Juran (Juran, 1989).
7. Top management commitment, along with dynamic, self motivated leadership paves the way to eliminate, from among the employees, the worries about the prospects of control caused by ‘self-directed work team concept’ (Martin, 1993).
8. Top management commitment for employee empowerment – efforts to move power, information, knowledge and rewards downward in the organizational hierarchy – helps overcome the oppressive weight and negatives of stagnant bureaucracy in the organization. And we know bureaucracy is the number one enemy of any change program like TQM (Kotter, 2012).

It will be a utopian thinking to implement TQM effectively without top management commitment. In fact, explicit commitment of all managers is essential throughout the organization, from top to the lowest level. The commitment must, however, start at the top and transcend down to the operating level. All managers have to believe in TQM, be committed to it and demonstrate their commitment so that others in the organization are imbued with it.

It is not a good idea (rather a wrong notion) to make TQM everyone's responsibility. Theoretically it may sound good but practically everybody's responsibility is nobody's responsibility and therefore TQM efforts may falter even if good intentions prevail. Experience of the successful TQM organizations, for example, the Baldrige Award Winners, from 1998 to 2001, succinctly suggest that the top person of the organization – the CEO (and his/her senior colleagues) must take the lead with whole-hearted commitment and personal involvement (Martin, 1993). The leading responsibilities can never be delegated; if so done, TQM efforts are likely to deliver a dead child.

In the words of the CEO of Forum Corporation (quoted by Evans & Deans, 2000, p. 279): "It (role of CEO) goes far beyond simply being a cheer leader and handing out an occasional award. Top management has to provide the proper focus for the organization. This is not something that can be delegated."

Merely having commitment of the top leaders is not sufficient for TQM to succeed; the leaders must demonstrate their commitment. But the question is: how to demonstrate commitment? What are the behaviors of the leaders that demonstrate commitment?

Brown, Hitchcock & Willard (1994) reported six behavioral characteristics of leaders that are indicators of executive commitment. These are:

- a) Considerable time is spent with customers and suppliers, rather than spending most of the leaders' time on strategic and financial issues.
- b) Maintaining a partnering relationship with suppliers.
- c) Building rapport with employees; spending time regularly in the workplace where day-to-day work is done.
- d) Attending by leaders in TQM-related education/training programs and meetings in full session.
- e) Spending time in reviewing customer satisfaction and quality data, along with financial and operational results.
- f) Allocating adequate organizational resources (money and others) for TQM, and viewing the expenses as investment in the future. Leaders can provide adequate funding for quality efforts so TQ will not be the poor 'cousin' to other business issues (Tenner & Detoro, 1992).

In addition, the leaders can practice improvement processes by themselves such as in capital budgeting. The CEO 'must routinely voice support and enthusiasm for TQM, play a decisive role in recognizing contributors to the implementation process, participate in manager training, and create a proactive, positive image of TQM in the minds of everyone in the organization' (Jablonski, 1994, p. 82).

### **Dynamic leadership**

Leadership of any kind – political, social, religious, and organizational – begins with people. It starts with influencing the behavior of others, progresses towards inspiring them to work hard, and matures with having the things done by those people effectively and efficiently (Hitchcock & Willard, 1994). Great leadership lies in a belief in people – people's ingenuity,

talents and skills (Ciampa, 1992). Believing that people have unique qualities makes one confident in leading people, enthusiastic in guiding people to apply their talents and skills in the workplace, optimistic about building commitment in the people, and a strong believer in having the objectives accompanied by people.

Organizational leadership is concerned with creating and articulating a bright and compelling vision for the organization. It disseminates the vision among all stakeholders, and especially inspires the employees to achieve the vision. Leaders in the organizations bring out powerful emotions that can spur people on to accomplish things they didn't think they were capable of doing (Ciampa, 1992, pp. 113-114). In the context of TQM, leadership is thought of by some as 'the ability to inspire people to make a total, willing and voluntary commitment to accomplishing or exceeding organizational goals (Goetsch & Davis, 2003, p. 212). This definition emphasizes on 'inspiring of people' rather than traditionally used 'motivation of people'. While motivation is a temporary response to external stimuli, inspiration is internalized motivation springing up from within a person. Consequently, inspired employees take up the organizational goals as their own goals in contrast to motivated employees who simply commit to the goals (Mannan, 2015).

Leadership is partly a function of skilful deployment of personal qualities but probably more of the interactive processes between leaders and their followers and the more general processes through which purpose and commitment are generated and sustained within an organization (Pettgrew, 1979, p. 578). Leadership is sometimes aligned with heroism (Barnes & Kriger, 1986), and the impact of heroes in business is explained in several dimensions (Deal & Kennedy, 1988, p. 39-41) such as (a) making success attainable and human; (b) providing role models; (c) symbolizing the company to the outside world; (d) preserving what makes the company special; (e) setting a standard of performance; and (f) motivating employees. Leadership is also seen as a set of personal attributes (Barnes & Kiser, 1986). Researchers have tried to identify leadership traits but failed to arrive at a consensus. Referring to 5000 research studies and monograph, Bejerke (1999) observed that there exists no common set of factors, traits or processes that identifies the qualities of effective leadership. However, based on several studies, Koontz & Weihrich (2015) identified four major ingredients of leadership skill. These are:

- (i) The ability to use power effectively and in a responsible manner;
- (ii) The ability to comprehend that human beings have differing motivation forces at different times and in different situations;
- (iii) The ability to inspire;
- (iv) The ability to act in a manner that will develop a climate conducive to responding to and arousing motivations.

On the other hand, Bennis & Nanus (2012) suggested that leaders have four competencies: (i) the ability to draw attention of others through a vision, (ii) the ability to make dreams apparent to others and to align people with them through communicating their vision, (iii) the ability to develop trust through reliability, and (iv) the ability to deploy the leaders' skills effectively. Weiss (2000) emphasized on three competencies for leaders to be able to lead effectively and dynamically: (a) the skill of diagnosing – being able to understand the situation they are trying to influence; (b) the skill of adapting – being able to adjust or fit their behaviors and other resources to meet the contingencies of the situation; and (c) the skill of communicating clearly – being able to communicate in a way people can easily understand and accept.

Organizational leadership assumes changed dimensions in different societies, cultures and time in response to the expression of existing societal values. We have crossed along medieval

society, and industrial society. In the former case, leadership was built into social institutions and religion; and in the latter case, leadership had a major role in planning and supervising work – technological rationalism was combined with patriarchal values (Bjerke, 2000, p. 62). We are now passing through information society where people look for charismatic, transformational and visionary leadership that can face unprecedented challenges (uncertainties) in the modern globalized, turbulent world economy walking on the super-information highway. In the subsequent pages we will discuss about visionary, charismatic, transformational, and transactional leaderships in the implementation of TQM. Before that we throw light on the distinction and relationship between leadership and management. This is important in the TQM-context in the sense that initiation and continuation of TQM requires leadership, not management; and implementation of TQM requires an orchestrated blending of leadership and management.

### **Organizational leadership versus management**

There was a time when organizational/business leadership and management were considered synonymous. But with the increase of complexity and diversity in managing organizational affairs, combined with rapid changes in the external environment embedded with uncertainties, today leadership is viewed as something different or something of ‘higher order or capability’ (Byars, 1987) than management. As Byars puts it: ‘A leader is an individual within an organization who is able to influence the attitudes and opinions of others within the organization; a manager is merely able to influence their actions and decisions’ (p. 159). ‘Manager’ implies that an employee has been placed in an organizational position of legitimate authority over others; in this definition management is institutional (Bass, 1981). While management concerns itself with using ‘systematic and logical tools such as goal setting, problem solving, analysis, and effective ways to communicate or to process information’ (Ciampa, 1992, p. 114) or ‘the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the use of resources to accomplish performance goals’ (Schermerhorn, 2014, p. 8), leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles (Kotter, 2012, p. 25). This shift in organizational role makes it explicit that modern complex organizations need not merely managers but managerial leaders. This has become more important and will continue to be much more important in the twenty-first century because of increasing growth in *virtual organization* that are able to operate even world-wide with minimum number of employees through use of computer networks, and growth in cross-functional taskforces and *self-directed or self-managed teams*. The cross-functional task forces are constituted with members from different functional areas of the organization for problem-solving and operational coordination. The members of the self-directed teams manage their own activities with no control from others, and the teams are empowered to independently make decisions in their areas of operations. Thus, the twentieth century management concepts will gradually wither away and will be replaced in the new millennium by *managerial leadership* concepts. Emphasis only on management and absence of managerial leadership lead to bureaucracy, inward focus, and non-learning-of-leading environment which eventually make any transformation efforts (such as TQM) very difficult. However, the fact should not be lost sight of that management and leadership are distinctive but at the same time complimentary to each other.

TQM requires changes in many aspects of the organization including culture, structures and processes. And, change obviously requires management and at the same time leadership. There should this be a well-blended of both for any transformation to take place and expected results to be achieved. If an organization is overmanaged but underled or overled but undermanaged, that would simply bring harms to the organization. In an organization where change program

is overmanaged and underled, there is a lot more pushing than pulling (Kotter, 1996, p. 29). An effective way to ensure the blending is to make a balance between push and pull energy. Since many elements of TQM require management, the push tools (mission statement, policies, strategic plans, budgets, work processes) can be established to align energy of employees through setting guidelines and thereby ensuring consistency and predictability. Push tools are related to management, not to leadership. We can never ignore the importance of the management of change. *Managing change* is essential; ineffective and inefficient management is very perilous, as things can go out of control. While we give importance to managing change, and also for getting the routine things in control, we need to be seriously concerned with *leading change*. Leading change requires 'pull energy'; pull tools (such as a common vision) create a future state of the organization in such a way that sparks imagination, and enable people to establish their own boundaries and to drive themselves from within to a greater degree. In fact, both push and pull tools are necessary to create alignment (Ciampa, 1992, p. 116). The managerial leaders create both to strike a desired balance between management and leadership. They ensure that component management is in place to keep things in control, on the one hand, and dismantle the organizational inertia, develop a sense of dedication among employees, create an environment to release the creative energies of people, and oversee that management actions are on the right track, on the other.

The above discussion points to the fact that leadership is a broader and more encompassing process than management. Management is a special kind of leadership in which the achievement of organizational goals is of most importance (Weiss, 2000), while leadership is of the spirit compounded of personality and vision, management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, statistics, methods, time-tables, and routine (Bennis, 2007, p.44). In reality, the most successful managers in a total-quality setting will be those who can appropriately combine the characteristics of both managers and leaders (Goetsch & Davis, 2003, p. 229).

## **Types and perspectives of leadership for TQM organizations**

### **Types of leadership in organizations**

Researchers have identified various types of leadership exercised by managers in different organizations – each has its own merits and pitfalls. Organizational leadership can be autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic or participative, collegial, or even laissez-faire. It can also be visionary, charismatic, transformation, or transactional.

An *autocratic leader* centralizes power and decision making authority, dictates the employees with strict supervision of their activities, and generally ignores the human side of the enterprise. However, there can be benevolent autocrats who sometimes sympathize the employees on different occasions. Autocratic leadership may work in the short-run or in isolated instances; in the long run it is not effective. It is also not appropriate in a total quality setting. A *bureaucratic leader* goes by the rules, policies and procedures. A chain of command is strictly adhered to; authority passes down vertically; and no compromise is made as to the abiding with the established rules. A *democratic* or *participative leader* empowers the employees, encourages them to fully participate in decision-making, and decentralizes authority. There are also criticisms of participative leadership. Critics say, the most popular decision is not always the best decision and that participative leadership by its nature can result in making of popular decisions as opposed to right decisions. This style can lead to compromises that ultimately fail to produce the desired result. Another criticism is that consensus building is time consuming and works only if all people involved are committed to the best interests of the organization.

A *supportive leader* treats group members as equal, shows concern for the well-being of employees, and in a friendly and approachable manner do the things to make work more pleasant. A *collegial leader* provides freedom to the members of the work-team and lends supports whenever asked for. Collegial type of leadership is especially suitable in research organizations where the members of research teams are well-qualified to guide themselves and require little directions. A *laissez-faire leader* exercises no control over the followers who make decisions on their own. Laissez-faire leaders delay and appear indifferent to what is happening. They avoid taking stands on issues, do not emphasize results, refrain from intervening, and avoid making decisions. They also abdicate responsibilities, divert attention from hard choices, refuse to take sides in a dispute, are disorganized in dealing with priorities and talk about getting down to work, but never really do (Bass, 1998; Avolio & Bass, 1991). Laissez-faire leadership may instill in the employees a sense of autonomy but may also invite anarchy in managing the affairs of the organization. Such leadership has been connected with the reason for low productivity, lack of innovation, more conflict, and lack of cohesion among subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Laissez-faire leaders do not show that they care about what their subordinates do with their autonomy and do not heighten subordinates' sense of self-efficacy and reciprocal trust between the leaders and the subordinates.

In fact, autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, collegial, and laissez-faire leaderships are different styles of leadership depicted in the behaviors of the leaders. Some of these styles involve concerns for task (such as autocratic, bureaucratic) and some others involve concerns for people (such as participative, collegial and laissez-faire). Leader-behavior researchers suggest that effective organizational leaders will be good at participative leadership that is high in both task and people concerns.

Organizational leadership literature indicates various approaches to the study of leadership: trait, behavioral, contingency, and charismatic. The trait approach focuses on leader's personal characteristics that separate effective and ineffective leaders (Stogdill, 1948; Ghiseli, 1971, Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). However, the early leadership researches unsuccessfully searches for a definitive set of personal traits that differentiated successful and unsuccessful leaders; although certain traits are considered important as personal foundations for leaderships success such as drive, desire to lead, motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence, knowledge and flexibility, consistency in words and actions (Drucker, 1988), dominance, extroversion, and achievement motivation (McClelland & Boyzatis, 1982; Bass, 2005). A recent leadership-traits study concludes that four traits constitute a leader's credibility: honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The behavioral approach, on the other hand, focuses on the patterns of leader's behavior leadership styles that enable leaders to effectively influence others. This approach suggests that leaders are made, not born, and that leader behaviors can be systematically improved and developed. It further implies that there is no best style of leadership – the situation a leader faces determines the effectiveness of a leadership style. The contingency approach focuses on match between leader behavior and situational characteristics. The contingency leadership theories proposed by Fred Fiedler (contingency theory), Robert House (path-goal theory), Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (situational leadership theory), and Victor Vroom and Arthur Jago (leader-participation theory) generally reveal that the effectiveness of a particular style of leader behavior depends on the situation. As situation, change, different styles become appropriate; thus challenging the idea of one best style of leadership (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007, p. 561). There may be at least three decision-making methods for any problem situation: (i) authority decision made by the leader and communicated to the employees; (ii) consultative decision made by leaders after

consultation with the employees, and (iii) group decision made by the leader and the employees collectively.

### **Perspective of leadership**

The contemporary leadership approaches have identified four types of competing but related perspectives of leadership: (i) visionary leadership, (ii) charismatic leadership, (iii) transactional leadership, and (iv) transformational leadership. After having examined the essence of each perspective of leadership, we would explore which type of types is/are appropriate for a TQM organization.

#### **(i) Visionary leadership**

An organization cannot effectively survive without a sound and pragmatic vision – a dream of the future. Vision is a term used to describe a clear sense of the future. It inspires people to achieve excellence in performance in order for the goal to be accomplished. It provides a sense of shared purpose, and the stimulus to properly translate it into results through effective leadership intervention. It depicts a ‘picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future’ (Kotter, 2012). The right (opposite to wrong) vision unleashes human potential by attracting commitment, energizing workers, creating meaning in employees’ lives, establishing a standard of excellence, promoting high ideals, and bridging the gap between an organization’s present problems and its future goals and aspirations (Gardner & Avoolio, 1998). The primary concern of a visionary leader is, as conceived by Sashkin (1986; 1988), the transformation of an organization’s culture in line with the vision that he/she articulates of where the organization should be heading. An organizational leader is viewed as visionary when he/she can create a “good vision” and lead the people to turn the vision into results. Also, the visionary leaders take care that a ‘wrong vision’ is not in place, which can be much more damaging than not having a vision.

#### **(ii) Charismatic leadership**

A charismatic leader has unrelenting drive, is hard-driving and pragmatic, has the ability to engage the emotions and intellects of his/her colleagues, and has the hearts and minds of the people at his/her organization. Charismatic leaders in an organization transform employees to pursue organizational goals in lieu of self-interests by creating changes in their goals, values, needs, beliefs and aspirations (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007). A study of Waldman & Yammarino (1999) concludes that charismatic leaders are able to influence organizational culture – reinforces the core values of an adaptive culture and helps to change dysfunctional aspects of culture that develop over time. They can also positively influence individual outcomes, group outcomes, and organizational outcomes. As long as in the late nineteenth century the famous German sociologist Max Weber provided a definition of charisma as ‘a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities’ (Weber, 1968). He further added that these are such as not to be accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a ‘leader’ (Weber, 1968).

#### **(iii) Transactional leadership**

In transactional leadership the leader adjusts tasks, rewards and structures to help followers meet their needs while working to accomplish organizational objectives (Bass, 2005; Burns, 1978). Interpersonal transactions between managers and employees are the focus of transactional leadership. It is characterized by two factors: (i) leaders use contingent rewards to motivate employees, and (ii) leaders exert corrective action only when subordinates fail to obtain performance goals. A transactional leader directs the subordinates what to do to achieve a desired reward for their efforts, and intervenes in their activities only if standards are not met (i.e., management by exception). Although transactional leadership has been found effective in

many cases (Hunt & Schuler, 1976; Podsakoff, Todor & Skov, 1982), its effectiveness is marginal and can even be counterproductive. Transactional leaders can manage emergencies with structures that have already been set up. They can supply solutions for immediate needs perceived by their followers.

#### **(iv) Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership motivates followers to work for transcendental goals and to perform beyond their expectation. It is defined as ‘including not only charisma but individualized follower consideration and intellectual stimulation as well’ (Hunt et. Al., 2013). Truly effective transformational leadership is based on transactional leadership, which is an turn, based on traditional leaders-follower exchange relationships. Transactional leaders use charisma and related qualities to raise aspirations and shift people and organizational systems into new high-performance patterns (Schermerhorn, 2014). In today’s dynamic environment, transactional leadership is thought of crucially essential to achieve extraordinary performance. A leader who is transformational not only possesses leadership traits and understands the leadership behaviors and contingencies, but also knows how to inspire employees with compelling personality.

### **Leadership challenges for TQM implementation**

In an organization which cherishes to implement TQM, leading and managing change in many aspects of the organization including culture, structures, established rules and procedures – in fact, a total transformation – is the crying need. In order to respond to the needs, the organizational leaders have to perform a variety of roles reflecting visionary, transactional and transformational leadership attributes. However, the attributes need to be exerted based on situation.

Organizational leaders endeavoring to implementing TQM have to take care of not pursuing either top-down or bottom-up process for transforming the organization, rather they need to follow both simultaneously. This can be done by creating a ‘ground-swell, which is guided by middle managers, who are directed and coached by senior managers, who are led by the CEO...it is working for and with the middle’ (Oden, 1999). This approach will ensure commitment for effecting transformation.

In order to be successful in bringing about change in the organization, leaders may be needed to deliberately create crises to bring the attention of employees that change is but essential. This is often important because people do not generally like to go for change if any crisis is not visible. They need to convince the employees that maintaining status quo- the current state – is absolutely undesirable and harmful to the survival of the organization, and therefore, they must create dissatisfaction with the status quo. The people must also be convinced that the desired changes will bring about clear opportunities to grab. This way unfreezing the people’s inertia may occur which is essential for enlisting their support to change. Leaders can create a crisis in many ways; a few examples include setting very high standards that that are not possible to achieve by maintaining status quo, willingly incurring financial loss to show that the organization is going to be financially weal, inspiring employees to regularly talk to disgruntled customers, suppliers and other stakeholders which will help surface many problems, allowing errors to blow up instead of being corrected at the last minutes. Simply making employees convinced of the need for change is not enough, they need to be infused with the sense of urgency for implementing the change as immediately as possible. Leaders must convince the employees that changes must be initiated without delay if ‘we are to catch the train’.

## **Discussion**

This paper argues that implementation of TQM in an organization needs dynamic, transformational leadership at the top level, and a total commitment of management at all levels beginning from the top down to the operating level. As TQM requires organizational change in several dimensions including organizational culture and boundaries, the importance of the dynamic role of the leaders can hardly be overemphasized. Initiation of any fundamental change effort inevitably leads to conflict and tension because of the challenge in the old ways of thinking and doing things. Thus, a different set of leadership roles will be needed, as Senge (2006) maintains, with more emphasis on leaders as teachers, stewards, and designers. These leaders articulate a clear and challenging vision for their organization; encourage learning that involves identification, acquisition, and application of information that enables an organization and the people within that organization to reach their goals (Rahim, 2001); focus on developing the people around them and lead in ‘unlearning’ – the conscious effort to challenge traditional assumptions about the company and its environment (Slater, 1995); and encourage their employees to engage in critical and innovating thinking, which is needed for solving the right problems. All these attributes of leaders are ingrained in transformational leadership. Thus, transformational leadership, endowed with charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, is appropriate for TQM implementation through successfully bringing in organizational transformation.

Opting for transformational leadership does not, however, preclude the necessity of transactional leadership. In reality, both should have an overlap. Transactional leadership needs to transcend through the transformational leadership, as the former effectuates the direction-setting provided by the latter. A blending of both ushers in a bright environment congenial for TQM.

For TQM organizations we recommend transformational type of leadership, at least at the top level, as it works on top of transactional leadership, and is also blended with charisma (Avolio & Bass, 1987). Our recommendation is in line with the research evidence that supports the view that transformational leadership must build on transactional leadership; that transformation leadership cannot be effective if it stands alone; that transformational leaders need to have the ability to effectively manage the day-to-day mundane events in the organization (Tosi, 1982). Transactional leadership skills are vitally important for making transformational leadership successful. The most important managerial implication of the leadership studies is that the most successful leader must be both transactional and charismatic, and must avoid laissez-faire style of leadership, which is ‘most ineffective’ (Bass, 2005).

We can derive lessons from the leadership experiences of the Baldrige Quality Award winning companies. Drawing upon the experiences of three early winners succinctly put together their leadership experiences. The companies are driven by the quality zealotry of their senior executives, leaders who meet with employees frequently to inspire and recognize their best efforts, who visit with customers regularly to find out what they need and expect, who track quality improvements religiously, who take and teach quality courses, who demand excellence (100% customer satisfaction 100% time), and who teach quality to every audience that will listen. They are of the view that a clear, consistent leadership is a must for sound and efficient management; else the company’s continuous improvement efforts will eventually be replaced by an intriguing new management fad.

Dynamic organizational leadership is required for transforming the organization in order to make it TQM-adaptive. Transformation or changes are needed in organizational culture, structures, learning attitudes of people and many other aspects of the organization.

### **Directions for future research**

Disagreements exist regarding the use of transformational leadership at all levels in the organization. There prevails an apprehension that such leadership at all levels is more likely to bring chaos because of the thinking in every manager that 'I am the best' or 'my ideas are unparallel', which may lead to disregarding the senior leaders. Also, resources and situations may not permit an organization to employ transformational leaders at all levels. Does this mean that those organizations having few or no transformational leaders at all levels or at one or two levels should not go for TQM? What if only the CEO is transformational but not others at the top level? Or, will TQM efforts flounder in such organization where only a few of the senior leaders are endowed with transformational leadership qualities? All of these issues need to be empirically investigated. This is a challenging area to be taken up in future research.

Future work should also consider type of organization (manufacturing, service, education, public sector, non-profit sector) for leadership studies in the context of TQM. It is possible, for example, that leaders in educational organizations might report an organizational environment more supportive of TQM efforts than in the manufacturing companies.

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