

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, TOTAL
QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF AL HEJAZ RAILWAY IN JORDAN

TARIQ ABEDALLH ALI AL'ZOUBI

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ABSTRACT

From Jordanian perspective, it has witnessed several challenges at the economic and social level, such as the rapid increase in the population and the difficult political conditions (Arab Spring). Such challenges have led to noticeable pressures on the different sectors, particularly the transportation sector, especially under the current budget limitations which prompt the Jordanian government to take a serious steps and actions toward developing the transportation sector. Al Hejaz railway in Jordan is facing several challenges concerning deficiency of performance in terms of non-existence of quality management principles, which affects the performance and competitions among the transportation sectors. Previous studies also reported that among the major issues faced by Jordanians, the poor culture of railway, insufficient knowledge management and absence of favorable organizational culture. Therefore, this study aimed at examining the effects of TQM and KM on organizational performance in the Al-Hejaz railway, and the mediating effect of organizational culture on these relationships. Using self-administered questionnaire, the study was applied on a sample chosen from the top administrative sections of Al Hejaz railway directorates. A total of 196 questionnaires of the questionnaire were distributed randomly. However, 179 questionnaires were retrieved, giving a response rate of 91% of the original sample. The research model was empirically tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The finding revealed a positive and significant relationship between TQM, knowledge management, and organizational culture with organizational performance of Al Hejaz railway in Jordan. Meanwhile organizational culture was found to mediate the relationship between TQM and organizational performance. While, organizational culture did not mediate the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance. The study recommends that managers should develop information systems, by offering better assurance and reliability to Al Hejaz Railway users.

ABSTRAK

Dari perspektif rakyat Jordan, ianya telah menyaksikan beberapa cabaran di peringkat ekonomi dan sosial, seperti peningkatan pesat penduduk dan keadaan politik yang sukar (Musim Kebangkitan Arab). Terutamanya di bawah batasan anggaran saat ini yang mendorong pemerintah Jordania untuk mengambil langkah dan tindakan serius untuk mengembangkan sektor transportasi. Keretapi Al Hejaz di Jordan menghadapi beberapa cabaran mengenai kecekapan prestasi dari segi tidak adanya prinsip pengurusan kualiti, yang mempengaruhi prestasi dan persaingan di antara sektor pengangkutan. Kajian terdahulu juga melaporkan bahawa antara masalah utama yang dihadapi oleh rakyat Jordan ialah budaya pengurusan kereta api yang lemah, pengurusan pengetahuan yang tidak mencukupi dan ketiadaan budaya organisasi yang baik. Menyedari cabaran ini, kualiti yang berfokus pada daya saing dan peningkatan prestasi adalah merupakan faktor utama. Oleh itu, kajian ini dilakukan untuk mengkaji kesan pengurusan kualiti menyeluruh, dan pengurusan pengetahuan terhadap prestasi organisasi di landasan kereta api Al Hejaz di Jordan. Kajian ini juga mengkaji peranan mediasi budaya organisasi dalam kerangka kajian. Dengan menggunakan kajian soal-selidik yang dikendalikan sendiri, kajian ini diterapkan pada sampel yang dipilih dari bahagian pentadbiran atas landasan kereta api Al Hejaz dan jabatan lain di kementerian pengangkutan di Jordan. Sebanyak 196 salinan borang soal selidik diedarkan secara rawak (tidak ada yang sistematik). 179 borang soal selidik telah diambil, memberikan kadar respons 91 peratus daripada sampel asal. Model kajian diuji secara empirikal menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). Penemuan SEM mendedahkan hubungan positif dan signifikan antara TQM, pengurusan pengetahuan, budaya organisasi dan prestasi organisasi kereta api Al Hejaz di Jordan. Hasil kajian ini memberikan pelbagai implikasi kepada pengamal dan penyelidik.

CONTENTS

TITLE	i
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABSTRAK	v
CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the study	1
1.3 Problem statement	4
1.4 Research objectives	11
1.5 Research questions	12
1.6 Scope of the research	13
1.7 Research gap	14
1.8 Scope of the study	16
1.9 Contribution of the study	16
1.10 Definitions of key terms	17
1.10.1 Total Quality Management (TQM)	17
1.10.2 Continues improvement	17
1.10.3 Leadership commitment	18
1.10.4 Training	18
1.10.5 Rewards and recognition	18
1.10.6 Knowledge Management (KM)	19
1.10.7 Knowledge identification	19
1.10.8 Knowledge acquisition	20
1.10.9 Knowledge storage	20
1.10.10 Knowledge sharing	21
1.10.11 Knowledge application	21
1.10.12 Organizational culture	21
1.10.13 Involvement	22
1.10.14 Consistency	22
1.10.15 Mission	23
1.10.16 Organizational Performance (OP)	23
1.10.17 Innovation	24
1.10.18 Flexibility	25
1.10.19 Responsiveness	25
1.10.20 Employee satisfaction	25
1.11 Conclusion	26

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW 28

2.1	Introduction	28
2.2	Organizational Performance (OP)	28
2.3	Definition and measurement of OP	30
2.4	Total quality Management (TQM)	34
2.4.1	Definition of TQM	37
2.4.2	The relationship between TQM and organizational performance	40
2.4.3	Total Quality Management practices	42
2.4.3.1	Continuous Improvement (CI)	47
2.4.3.2	Leadership commitment	48
2.4.3.3	Training	49
2.4.3.4	Rewards and Recognition (R&R)	50
2.4.4	TQM in service sector	51
2.4.5	The need for TQM in Al Hejaz Railways	52
2.5	Knowledge Management (KM)	53
2.5.1	Definition of KM	59
2.5.2	Importance of KM	61
2.5.3	KM in railway organization	62
2.5.4	Processes of KM	63
2.5.4.1	Knowledge identification	66
2.5.4.2	Knowledge acquisition	67
2.5.4.3	Knowledge storage	68
2.5.4.4	Knowledge sharing	69
2.5.4.5	Knowledge application	69
2.5.5	The relationship between KM and organizational performance	70
2.6	Organizational Culture	72
2.6.1	Definition of organizational culture	72
2.6.2	Overview of organizational culture	74
2.6.3	Importance of organizational culture	76
2.6.4	Measurement of organizational culture	78
2.6.4.1	Involvement	78
2.6.4.2	Consistency	79
2.6.4.3	Mission	79
2.7	Al-Hejaz Railways “The largest and greatest project of its time”	80
2.8	Underlying theories	86
2.8.1	Resource-Based View (RBV)	86
2.8.2	Contingency theory	92
2.8.3	Hypotheses Statement	99

2.8.4	Research framework	100
2.9	Summary	102

CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 104

3.1	Introduction	104
3.2	Research design	105
3.2.1	Data collection, population and sample design	106
3.2.2	Pilot study	108
3.3	Operational definitions and measurement instrument	110
3.3.1	Total Quality Management	111
3.3.1.1	Continuous improvement	111
3.3.1.2	Leadership commitment	112
3.3.1.3	Training	112
3.3.1.4	Rewards and Recognition	113
3.4	Knowledge management	113
3.4.1	Knowledge identification	114
3.4.2	Knowledge acquisition	114
3.4.3	Knowledge storage	114
3.4.4	Knowledge sharing	115
3.4.5	Knowledge application	115
3.5	Organizational culture	116
3.6	Organizational performance	117
3.7	Data analysis	117
3.7.1	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	118
3.7.2	Measurement model by PLS	120
3.7.2.1	Internal Consistency	121
3.7.2.2	Indicator reliability	121
3.7.2.3	Convergent validity	121
3.7.2.4	Discriminate validity	121
3.7.3	Structural model using PLS	123
3.7.3.1	Structure model for co linearity issue	123
3.7.3.2	Significance and relevance of structure model relationship	124
3.7.3.3	Assessing the level of R^2 (Coefficient of Determination)	124
3.7.3.4	Assess the level of f^2 (Effect Sizes)	125
3.7.4	Mediating relationship	125
3.8	Summary	126

CHAPTER 4 : FINDINGS AND RESULTS	127
4.1 Introduction	127
4.2 Data screening and descriptive statistics	127
4.3 Multicollinearity	130
4.4 Analysis of the sample's demographic data	131
4.5 The Common Method Bias	134
4.6 Estimation path model results using the PLS software	136
4.6.1 Evaluating the goodness of measurement model	137
4.6.1.1 Convergent validity	138
4.6.1.2 The discriminate validity	140
4.6.2 Assessment of structural model	143
4.6.3 Path coefficients and hypothesis testing	146
4.6.3.1 Results of testing the first main hypothesis	148
4.6.3.2 Results of testing the second main hypothesis	148
4.6.3.3 Results of testing the third main hypothesis	149
4.6.3.4 Results of testing the fourth main hypothesis	149
4.6.3.5 Results of testing the fifth main hypothesis	149
4.6.4 Testing the mediation effects	150
4.7 Conclusion	154

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	155
5.1 Introduction	155
5.2 Synthesis on the objectives of the study	156
5.2.1 Objective one: To examine the relationship between TQM and organizational performance	156
5.2.2 Objective two: To investigate the relationship between KM and organizational performance	157
5.2.3 Objectives three and four: To examine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between TQM, KM and organizational	158

	performance.	
5.3	Summary of the study	159
5.3.1	Summary of the hypotheses results	162
5.4	Implications of the study	163
5.4.1	Theoretical implication	163
5.4.2	Implication for research methodology	164
5.4.3	Practical implication	167
5.5	Research contribution and novelty	168
5.5.1	Contribution to theory	168
5.5.2	Contribution to methodology	169
5.5.3	Contribution to practice	169
5.6	Research impact on railway managers, administrator & policy maker	171
5.7	Limitation of the study	172
5.8	Suggestions for future research	174
5.9	Conclusion	175

REFERENCES

177

APPENDICES A

237

APPENDICES B

246

APPENDICES C

259

VITA

269



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LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Studes on OP measures	33
2.2	Initial TQM core elements	45
2.3	Summary of TQM core elements	46
2.4	KM Gurus and their contributions	56
3.1	Samples size	109
3.2	Rules of thumb	120
3.3	The measurement of convergent	125
4.1	Items Descriptive statistics	130
4.2	Descriptive statistics constructs	131
4.3	Multi statistics collinearity	132
4.4	Respondents demographic characteristics	132
4.5	Total variance	137
4.6	Outer loadings measurement model	141
4.7	The fornell-larcker discriminant	142
4.8	The discriminant validity	143
4.9	Heterotrait- monotrait ratio	144
4.10	Values of the (R^2)	145
4.11	The effect size (F^2)	147
4.12	Results of standardized path coefficients	148
4.13	Results of standardized path coefficients	149
4.14	The results of mediation effect	152
4.15	Summary results	154
5.1	Summary of the hypotheses results	162
5.2	Summary of the hypotheses (mediation test)	163

LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Accidents ratio in al Hejaz railway	7
1.2	Passenger volumes	8
1.3	Freight transport volumes	8
2.1	Knowledge management processes	66
2.2	Theoretical framework	102
3.1	Research design steps	107
4.1	Representation of the gender	133
4.2	Representation of the job position	134
4.3	Representation of the aAge	134
4.4	Representation of the education level	135
4.5	Representation of the experience	135
4.6	Measurement model	138
4.7	The standardizes items of each construct and AVE	139
4.8	Values of the coefficient of determination	146
4.9	Indicates the mediation analysis	152
5.1	Chapter five outline	157

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TQM	-	Total quality Management
KM	-	Knowledge Management
OC	-	Organizational Culture
OP	-	Organizational Performance
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Science
PLS	-	Smart Partial Least Square
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modeling
CA	-	Cronbach's alpha
CR	-	composite reliability
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
HTMT	-	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
CI	-	confidence interval
CR	-	Composite Reliability
R^2	-	Coefficient of Determination
f^2	-	Effect Sizes

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces an overview of the current study which contains background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and the related objectives, signification of the study, operational definitions of the study's variables, namely total quality management, knowledge management, organizational culture and organizational performance and finally scope of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

Nowadays, managing of the organisations is considered a highly complex process, such complexity is because that the organisations operate in a highly uncertain and changing environment (Teece, 2018). Recently, the intensity of competition and the challenges between organizations have been increased, particularly with globalization and technological revolution. Among the major current challenges that face organizations is their ability to cope with fluctuations, particularly in developing countries characterized by the fragility of their economies (Qawqzeh, 2021), in addition to their inability to effectively cope with and adopt rapid change. Human element is considered as one of the most important elements in productivity in the organization. Therefore, several organizations have started to think strategically for developing organization performance in order to face the challenges and continue in the market. In this regard, knowledge management is the basic strategic thinking when knowledge is seen like the axis process for various function areas in the

organization and decisions making. Thus, the investigation in such issues have become necessary for the administration to a sophisticated performance (Alomari, 2020).

Today, organizations are driven by competitiveness and competitive advantage. However, in order to achieve competitive advantage, organizations must strategically manage their resources (Alomari, 2020). Generally, success of any country in achieving its goals can be attributed to the ability of its organizations to perform their tasks successfully, and the ability of these organizations to identify and address the factors that affect the employees' performance and their productivity, as well as the efficiency levels. In this regard, if the Jordanian organizations want to succeed, they have to provide more attention to their employees and try to achieve a balance between the inputs and the outputs (Al-A'wasa, 2018).

Construction of the railway played an exceptional role in the history of Europe and in the history of the entire world. However, the construction of Al Hejaz railway; was the most significant economic and investment project in the Ottoman state at the time of its downfall, it was nearly a mythical symbol of the states' sustainability, or at least thus it was presented both at home and in the World (Hasanović & Efendić, 2020).

In the Jordanian context, which is currently experiencing a significant reforms, as most managers would prefer a traditional styles over the modern ones (Alnoaimi, 2018), as a result of the development of globalization and technology and the increasing the level of competition, several of the Jordanian organizations faces many challenges especially with the conflicts and non-stable situation in countries around Jordan. Consequently, a lot of the skilled and expert managers specialized in management techniques have migrated outside (Alomari, 2020). Therefore, organizations started to think seriously in developing managerial strategies in order to find the solutions that meet the challenges of the globalization and competitors.

Once an ambitious project to unite the Middle East, the antique Hejaz Railway is a relic of that bygone dream before wars, borders and more advanced modes of transport rendered its services obsolete. Now, the narrow-gauge tracks remain, but the railway's mainline crosses three countries — Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Railways play a crucial role in sustainable development of transport systems contributing to the economic growth of every country. To maximize their potential,

railways management must monitor their progress towards sustainability, and introduce a new approach to their analysis. Key performance indicators are a tool for assessing the sustainability of railways (Djordjević *et al.*, 2021).

The Hijaz Railway was built to transport the hajj pilgrims to Medina and Mecca (Winterburn, 2021). The construction of the railway had an impact on the areas that passed through, the societies, and the local people. These impacts represent in commercial and economic renaissance -in that time- in many cities in Jordan from Mafraq Governorate in the north to the south; (2) the emergence of new urban communities across the Jordanian territory, especially around the locations of the main stations of the railway; and (3) strengthening the social links between the cities located alongside the railway, especially around the stations. Today, most of the railway stations are stand-alone, but a few of them are in the capital that are active places for the local community and touristic visits, which affect the railway performance. Nowadays, the Railway suffering from the weak performance. Thus, it is very necessary to shed light on the weakness of the performance in the Alhijaz Railway (Alasmar, 2021). The investments in the Hejaz railway and improve its performance can provide more job opportunities and activities, and support the economy (Alasmar, 2021)

Recently, the functions of the TQM and knowledge management have gained significant attention as important managerial mechanisms (Alaoun, 2018; Rawashdeh, 2018; Shafiq *et al.*, 2019; Kunz, 2021). Total quality management (TQM) considered as one of the common management ways in several developed economies, while in the developing countries, it's considered as an entirely new approach. Despite of the TQM practices can lead to contribute the firms' sustainable development; it is challenging to adopt such approach efficiently. Several elements play significant roles within TQM system, such as continuous improvement, leadership commitment, training, and, rewards and recognition. Every element has its function regarding the firms' performance (Pham, 2020; Abbas, 2020). Furthermore, TQM practices have a significant interaction with the knowledge management processes (Yusr *et al.*, 2017). The current study suggests that the Jordanian firms should possess a strict commitment in order to place the philosophy of the TQM system and knowledge management processes in the consideration at this early stage of the TQM implementation to gain considerable benefits in the long-term

development, due to the organizations through implementing the TQM practices alongside KM processes are not only able to manage their activities effectively, but also they have the ability to efficiently perform in an innovative manner (Samawi *et al.*, 2018; Honarpour *et al.*, 2018).

Furthermore, in terms of the current rapid changes, organizational culture is considered as an important tool to making the required changes for maintaining the motivation toward production and performance. There is a lack of studies regarding the aspects of organizational culture (Pradhan *et al.*, 2017; Sahoo, 2021). Based on the importance of the TQM system, knowledge management, and organizational culture as a foundation for the investigation, this study considers the role of the TQM and knowledge management, and their influence on the organizational performance, as well as the mediating effect of the organizational culture on the relationship between the TQM, knowledge management and the organizational performance in the Jordanian transportation sector. Since the organizational culture has a significant importance which have been receiving high attention by several parties due to its significant influence on the effectiveness of the organizations and the individuals.

1.3 Problem statement

Today, organizations are driven by competitiveness and competitive advantage. However, in order to achieve competitive advantage and high performance, organizations must strategically manage their resources (Zehir *et al.*, 2016; Elrehail *et al.*, 2019; Alomari, 2020). Furthermore, in today's highly turbulent, intensely competitive and changing business environments with their high degree of uncertainty, survival and growth of several organizations has become an unavoidable challenge for their leaders. It can be inferred that the survival and growth of the organizations lead to economic prosperity (Liu, 2018; Hassanabadi, 2019). In addition, the management technique that is appropriate in one country is not necessarily appropriate in another (Al-Sarayrah *et al.*, 2016). Recently, the roles of the TQM and knowledge management, as significant management tools, have drawn more attention among scholars (Kunz, 2021).

In the last few years, Jordan has witnessed significant economic and social changes that led to serious challenges in the transportation sector. Railways have

proven their efficiency in social and industrial development over the years, and have many advantages over the other modes of land transportation, as it is the safest, cheapest, and easiest, not to mention the largest carrying capacity of cargo and people. The railway system in Jordan is one of the oldest transit systems. Despite the fact that railways in Jordan have been constructed more than one century ago, it has not been used effectively. Railway in Jordan are represented by two main organizations (which include more than 820 employees): Al- Hejaz Railway Corporation, and Aqaba Railway Corporation. The existing railway line extends from the Syrian borders in the north, to Aqaba Port in the south. The line is divided according to ownership (Al-Najjar *et al.*, 2018).

Recently, in the Jordanian context it has witnessed several challenges at the economic and social level, such as the rapid increase in the population and the difficult political conditions (Arab Spring) which affected the Middle East. All sectors of the Jordanian economy have been negatively affected by the regional conflicts and the instability in the Middle East. Consequently, the markets were lost, unemployment rate increased and the economic growth slowed (Samawi *et al.*, 2018). Such challenges have led to noticeable pressures on the different economic sectors, particularly the transportation sector, especially under the current budget limitations which prompt the Jordanian government to take a serious steps and actions toward develop the transportation sector. One of the significant strategies that can be applied to face such challenges is the improvement of the railway performance (Al-Najjar *et al.*, 2018). Over the last few years, Jordanian organizations have adopted various standards of the quality management such as TQM. The emphasis on the TQM system as a new approach to manage the organization, and to enhance the competitiveness and the overall performance has increased significantly in the Jordanian context. Various stream of the previous studies revealed the significant influence of TQM on the organizational performance, while the conclusions were inconsistent (Al-Damen, 2017).

Jordan Hijaz Railway is considered one of the heritage urban landmarks in Jordan. The importance and performance of Al Hejaz railway have declined as while as its active role in tourism development incorporation with the local community. The railway campus is attacked by residents due to a lack of interaction with the area and a lack of awareness of how to invest it, which lead to reduce its performance.

There were a few types of research regarding the Jordan Hejaz railway stations but without considering its performance, the possibilities to improve it, and the factors affecting al Hejaz railway performance, as well as its relation to the community (Alasmar, 2021).

Railways are complex systems consisting of interconnections and interactions of several subsystems (e.g. track, rolling stock, operation). The composition of each subsystem and their behavior makes it even harder to predict the overall performance of a railway network. To ensure that the railway delivers desirable results, all system components need to be carefully examined, including infrastructure, timetable, rolling stock, crew, etc. Typical outputs expected from the railway include Safety; Capacity; Train performance; Availability and Quality of service (Network Rail *et al.*, 2014).

The usual way railways manage their performance is through carefully designed plans of operations, followed by real-time policies to manage disturbances. Railway planning involves a number of steps from the prediction of traffic demand to the control of daily operations. In this process, trade-offs are required to balance traffic demand and provide services, to achieve both high customer satisfaction and smooth operations (Yu, 2008).

There is a lack of supervision and the awareness regarding that the development of the railway will enhance the social life through providing more job opportunities and will support the economy through encouraging the tourism sector. Thus, development of the railway performance -which considered a significant issue- can give an opportunity to get more contribution in the economic and touristic development, hence, this will generally reflect additional benefits to the country (Alasmar, 2021).

Railways in Jordan have proven their effectiveness and efficiency in the social and industrial development in the past, it also have several advantages comparing to other land transportation modes, it is considered the safest, the cheapest, and the easiest, as well as the largest carrying capacity of cargo and people, but now the railways in Jordan facing deterioration in the construction materials of the railway body because of the human and the natural factors (Almasri & Al-Waked, 2016; Al-Najjar *et al.*, 2018). Generally, the railway projects in the MENA regions need to robust technical solutions in order to guarantee an effective railway

performance. The competences to develop the railway industry - which is traditionally developed in Jordan - must be provided in order to face the various challenges and to develop the railway performance. Both of the railways and the rolling stock are prone to be damaged because of the sediment sand, arid environments, as well as the mechanical operations to remove sand. In addition, the sediment sand is expected to influence on the operability (Bruno *et al.*, 2018). In addition, AL Hejaz Railways corporation reported an increase in the number of accidents in the institution, which indicating a weakness in development procedure, as shown in figure 1.1. As shown in the figure, the years 2016 and 2017 were have the higher ratio of accidents in the AL Hejaz Railways Corporation.

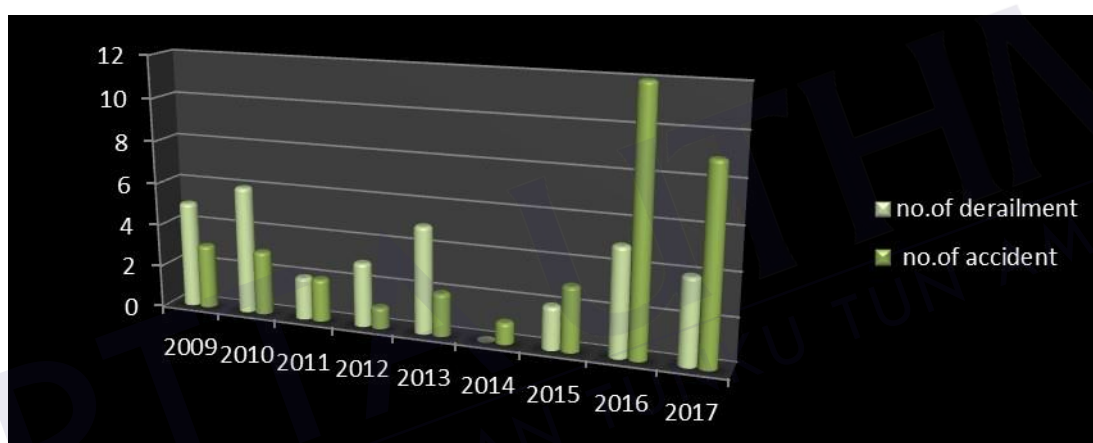


Figure 1.1 Accidents ratio in Al Hejaz Railways (2018)
(Jordan Al Hejaz Railway 2018)

Al Hejaz railway suffers from weakness performance, due to various reasons, the most important of which is the lack of movement of freight and passengers. Due to the modest budget and lack of the governmental support, the railway was seriously affected in terms of implementing the TQM elements. But, in terms of knowledge management, lack of movement of freight and passengers weren't a barrier against the rail to reach the high level of Technological Knowledge. Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3 showed the volumes of the freight and passengers through the last seven years.

Furthermore, the railways in Jordan experienced several defects and challenges which also influenced its characteristics and performance, such as poor maintenance and wearing out of the rail sides because of the weather conditions

which led to limitations on train speed. The current speed of the train does not exceed 10 to 35 km/h. Currently, the southern part of the Al- Hejaz Railway suffers from the corrugation in the rails (Al-Najjar *et al.*, 2018). However, all of these challenges reverberate on the overall performance of the railway system.

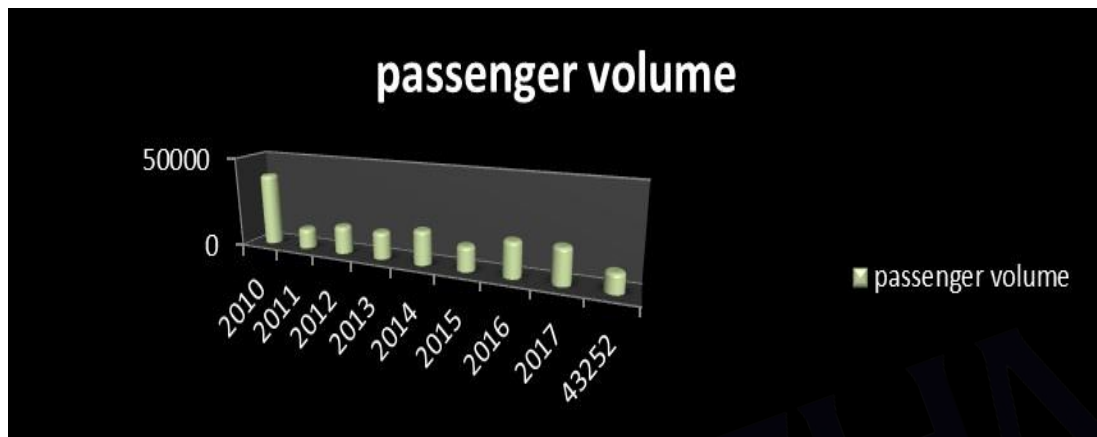


Figure 1.2 Passenger volumes Al Hejaz Railway statistical Report (2018)
(Jordan Al Hejaz Railway 2018)

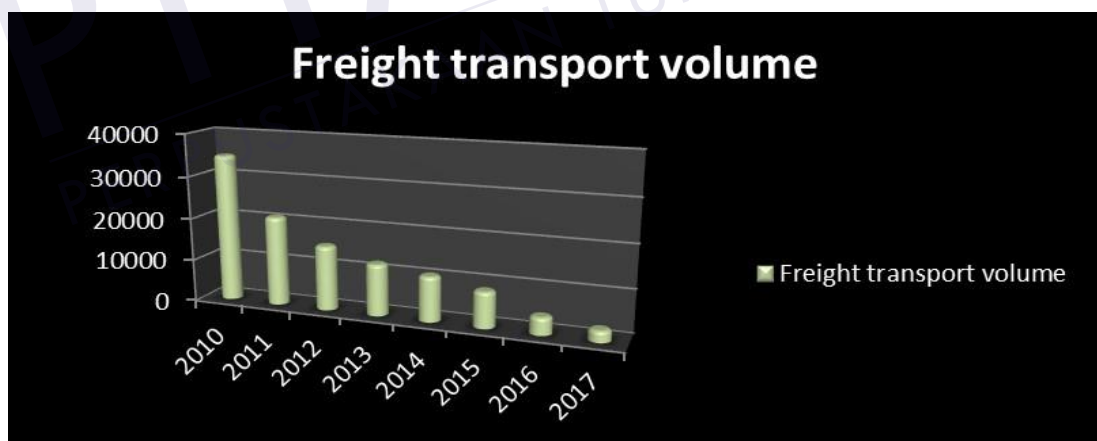


Figure 1.3 Freight volumes Al Hejaz Railway statistical Report (2018)
(Jordan Al Hejaz Railway 2018)

According to the data published by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and Ministry of Transport 2019-2020, the transport sector was responsible for approximately 6.2% in contributions to GDP. The ministry of transport indicated that

one of the most important issues facing the transport sector is the lack of integrated planning for the sector, the lack of studies and evidences related to transport, and the low level of public transport services (Ministry of Transport, 2021). Thus, reduce the railway services costs and develop its performance through the rehabilitation instead of establishing a new railway track is considered an important issue that need more investigation. Therefore, the current study investigates the influence of some managerial techniques, namely; TQM and knowledge management on the organizational performance in the Jordanian transportation sector, and applying it on the railways system (Al-Hejaz Railway) to face the increasing demand on both of the passengers and freight transportation.

Over the last few years, several projects have proposed develop of the railways in Jordan, namely Al-Hejaz Railway, such as “National Jordan Railway” project. However, the limited sources in Jordan have been an obstacle that facing the actual implementation of such projects, and prevent developing the railways sector. Jordan have a relatively weak and low transit level of service, as it is revealed a shortage in achieving a satisfactory level of the service. This issue will lead to serious traffic problems in the future (especially with high rates of population growth) in Jordan unless a radical solution is applied (Al-Najjar *et al.*, 2018).

To date, in spite of the fact that several Jordanian organizations began to implement and adopt the TQM practices in the last few years, the existing studies on the TQM and its influence on the Jordanian organizations' performance, especially the public organizations, are still limited (Al-Damen, 2017). In addition, there has been little empirical research regarding the organizational performance in the Jordanian context. Furthermore, the railway service have been widely ignored in the previous studies (Al-Najjar *et al.*, 2018; Abuzaid, 2018). Thus, further researches to study TQM implementation from different viewpoint have been suggested. The current study provides a proposed solution of rehabilitating the existing railway lines in order to enhance and develop the level of its service and to become effective as an important means of transport both of the passengers and freight in Jordan, since it is considered an important solution for the traffic problems.

As among the most popular strategies, TQM strategy (Douglas & Judge, 2001), knowledge management (KM) (Durst & Edvardsson, 2012), and organizational culture (OC) (Cooper, 2000), have been confirmed by researchers to

be very important strategies that help organizations to create and sustain their competitive advantage. Theoretically, the literature of organizational performance showed that the research conducted in exploring the effects of TQM practices, knowledge management (KM) and organizational culture (OC) on organizational performance even extensive yet confusing, Due to high-cost application processes, especially in developing countries. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the current relevant literature shows that there have been many theoretical gaps that could be addressed by the study, such as: Lack of studies on the subject of railways in Jordan. Weakness in the application of total quality management and knowledge management. Few studies have taken the organizational culture because of its importance to the transport sector.

For an organization to be able to provide better services, innovative and ahead of others, they need to improve their innovation capabilities, enhance flexibility and adoption, empower their employees and continuously create new knowledge, share and learn. Therefore knowledge has been accepted as crucial resources in an organization (Drucker, 1993) in obtaining, growing and sustaining intellectual capital in organizations (Marr & Schiuma, 2001). Organizations have acknowledged that managing knowledge is very crucial and an important activity (Kingston & Macintosh, 2000). The effort of continuously updating organizational knowledge resources could keep organizations stay competitive and improved the performance (Harrison & Leitch, 2000).

Also, TQM is based on a set of principles that seek to increase stakeholders' satisfaction through the best use of organizational resources. But the impact of each of quality management principles on organizational effectiveness is still debated. Several studies have investigated the impact of applying TQM principles on overall organizational effectiveness and performance. Many studies have found a strong and positive relationship with performance, there is a general agreement that a successful TQM implementation is leading to improve organization effectiveness (Kaynak, 2003). The successful implementation of TQM in the industry has encouraged transportation leaders to study whether it can be implemented in the transportation sector. Studies indicate that TQM activities leads to improve job satisfaction, increased productivity, increase profitability, and improved transportation organizational performance (Hendricks and Singhal, 2001).

Addition, organizational culture plays an important role in shaping values and behavior of organizational members. According to Deal and Kennedy (1982), performance improvement in an organization is associated with deliberate efforts by management towards developing an organizational culture. In a related piece, Bennett *et al.* (1994) argue that organizational success depends on achieving a good fit between strategy, structure, and culture. Giberson *et al.* (2009) consider culture as an integrating mechanism that guides organizational behavior. Once established, culture tends to become self-reinforcing.

Consequently, this study could help to bridge such gap through investigating the relationships between some of the important issues, namely, TQM practices, knowledge management, organizational culture and organizational performance. The current study aims to examine the structural relationship between TQM, knowledge management and the organizational performance, and investigate how the TQM practices and knowledge management can lead to facilitate organizations to achieve high performance. The study also analyses the influence organizational culture in the relationship between TQM and knowledge management with organizational performance. In addition, the current study aims to overcome the previous mentioned limitations of the previous studies and to enhance the understanding of the significance of the TQM practices, knowledge management and organizational culture regarding the organizational performance in the Jordanian context as a developing economy.

1.4 Research objectives

This study includes four objectives (three models) in order to cover the study scope. The first objective covers the first model which represents the influence of the TQM and knowledge management on the organizational performance. The second objective covers the second model which represents the influence of the TQM and knowledge management on the organizational culture. While the third objective represents the third model which represents the mediating effect of the organizational culture on the relationship between the TQM, knowledge management with the organizational performance.

1. To examine the relationship between TQM and organizational performance.
2. To investigate the relationship between KM and organizational performance.
3. To examine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between TQM and organizational performance.
4. To examine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between KM and organizational performance.

1.5 Research questions

The current study developed four research questions to address the research objectives. Each question is related with one objective. The first question associated with the effect of the TQM and knowledge management on the organizational performance. The second question associated to the effect of the TQM and knowledge management on the organizational culture. While the third question is associated with the mediating effect of the organizational culture on the relationship between the TQM and knowledge management with organizational performance.

- 1) What is the relationship between TQM and organizational performance?
- 2) What is the relationship between KM and organizational performance?
- 3) Does OC mediate the relationship between TQM and organizational performance?
- 4) Does OC mediate the relationship between KM and organizational performance?

1.6 Significance of the study

The railways in Jordan have several advantages, such as it is one of the strategies to improve the public transportation and face the ever increasing traffic problems, contribution to the integration between the different markets which making the connections faster, dynamic, functional, cheaper, more effective, and facilitating the national and international freight flows, as well as creating business opportunities,

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VITA

The author was borne in OCTOBER 23, 1987, in SALT, a city near AMMAN, in JORDAN. He went to Salt Secondary School in 2005, and graduated in Business Administration from Balqa Applied University in 2009. He pursued his Master in Business Administration degree at Balqa Applied University in 2016. Then he served Middle East Pharmaceutical Industries, and served in Madinah Company for Employment, In 2012, Then he joined of Jordanian Ministry of Transport. In OCTOBER 2018, author joined UTHM to peruse his doctoral degree in Faculty of Technology Management and Business under the supervision of PROF. MADYA Ts. Dr Rosmaini Tasmin. He published 2 Scopus indexed paper during his doctorate degree. He intends to continue his efforts and services in education to contribute to society and humanity, especially the next generation through teaching and research. Author loves reading books.

