

# The relationship between TQM and business performance: The mediating role of innovation performance and organizational learning culture: A pitch

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## Abstract

This pitch research letter (PRL) is shaped by the pitch mold initiated by Faff (2015, 2019), for the proposed research project on the relationship between total quality management (TQM) and business performance: The mediating role of innovation performance and organizational learning culture (OLC) in developing countries. The beginning includes the antecedents enforcing my pitch motivations for doing pitch work. This PRL shows that pitch template is a modern style of researching as it starts from the proposal and has the power of dissertation defense. This PRL will shadow some of my research work and some personal reflections about the importance of the pitch template.

**Keywords:** Pitch Research Letter, TQM, Microfoundations of institutional theory

**JEL codes:** L1, L15

## 1. Introduction

A PRL is the set of parameters developed by Faff (2015, 2019) to cover a real-time problem in an academic research project. My interest in pitching research started when Professor Robert Faff introduced the tool during a webinar in a business course in the first semester of my PhD program. Since that time, I have considered

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the template an essential inclusion in my research. Applying the pitching research assisted me to understand literature, structure, and design the research, and to provide a clearer picture of the approach to follow when writing. Although many researchers understand and use literature search appropriately, others have a limited understanding of the process. Such individuals become overwhelmed quickly as underscoring by their off-topic ideas. Such challenges can be eliminated by using the template, which makes it easier to navigate literature and determine the essential ones. The pitch will make it easier for me to do research systematically to highlight the issues that should be addressed. The pitch template is a standard structure in writing the introduction. By the time a person is done with the template, the introduction is complete. I am sharing this pitch research to allow researchers to take advantage of the tool.

Further, this PRL is divided into the following parts. In part 2, I have presented a brief review of my pitch. Some personal reflections of doing PRL are shown in part 3, and Part 4 concludes the whole exercise of PRL

## **2. A brief reflection on the pitch**

The completed PRL arranged in Table 1, the adoptive face of pitch template of Faff (2019), which is so simple and easy for all researchers. Table 1 presents the completed pitch on the topic “The relationship between EFQM enablers and business performance: The mediating role of innovation performance and organizational learning culture” (item A). The primary research question (item B) is 'Do micro-foundations of institutional theory explain the development of OLC through EFQM enablers?' The key papers (KPs) (item C) relevant to the primary research? are by Cardinale (2019), Kafetzopoulos *et al.* (2019) and Powell & Rerup (2017). These KPs are based on the three selection criteria advised by Faff (2017): 1) recently published, 2) in top-ranked journals 3) by the experts in the relevant field. The last part (item D) 'answers' to all the queries asked by Faff (2017) template: Idea, Tools, Data, So What, What is New, Contribution, and Other Considerations.

## **3. Brief personal reflections**

Work can be efficiently completed if particular follow-ups follow it, but it is difficult as one has to make one's outlines to complete the work (Ali, 2016). I had to face this as I completed my PhD thesis work in a year. However, my views are similar to those of Faff (2019), who says that work is difficult before you take the step to start it.

Table 1. Completed 2-page pitch template on relationship between TQM and business performance

Pitcher's Name	Hafiz Ahmad Ashraf	FOR category	TQM	Date Completed	25-08-2020
(A) Working Title	The relationship between <u>TQM</u> and business performance: The mediating role of innovation performance and organizational learning culture				
(B) Basic Research Question	Following research questions are addressed through the current study: Does TQM enhance Business performance(BP)? What is the role of Innovation performance (IP) between TQM and BP? What is the role of OLC between TQM and BP? Do micro-foundations of institutional theory explain the development of OLC through TQM?				
(C) Key paper(s)	Cardinale, I. (2019) <u>Microfoundations of institutions and the theory of action</u> , <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 44(2), 467-470. <u>Kafetzopoulos, D., Gotzamani, K. &amp; Skalkos, D.</u> (2019) The relationship between EFQM enablers and BP: The mediating role of innovation. <i>Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management</i> , 30(4), 684-706. <u>Powell, W. W. &amp; Rerup, C.</u> (2017) Opening the black box: The <u>microfoundations</u> of institutions, <i>The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism</i> , 311-337.				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	Developing countries do not fully realize the benefit of TQM practices for the achievement of competitive advantage and higher performance. (Anil & Satish, 2019; Sija, 2018). Pakistan Textile sector contributes more than 50% in total Exports of the country (Mahmood <i>et al.</i> , 2015) and after few years textile exports reduced to 33% (Hafeez <i>et al.</i> , 2018). There may be several reasons behind the poor performance of those firms including poor TQM practices, and lack of innovation and learning culture				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project, i.e. the "IDeIS" guide				
(E) Idea?	The purpose of the current study is to analyze the influence of <u>TQM</u> on the business performance with mediating roles of an organizational learning culture and innovation performance. Furthermore, this study empirically examined the micro-foundations of institutional theory concerning the development of OLC				
(F) Data?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country: Textile sector of Pakistan, because Textile sector employs 40 per cent of the industrial <u>labour</u> force</li> <li>Sampling frame and sample size: All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) total in numbers <u>254</u>, considered as the sampling frame. Cluster Sampling will be chosen based on provinces. According to (Thornhill, Saunders, and Lewis;2009) sample size should be 151 For a population size of 250. Current study based on 254 population so 153 sample size would be sufficient</li> <li>Unit of analysis: individuals.</li> <li>Data source: data will be collected through previously accepted research instruments; Research assistance needed?: "minor" assistance; Funding/grants?: no.</li> <li>Standard data – nothing novel, high-quality data collected from the questionnaire</li> <li>The scales used for the current study will be analyzed in terms of their reliability and validity by running "confirmatory factor analysis" (CFA) to assess whether items measured the respective variable or not. For this purpose, <u>unidimensionality</u>, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability will be analyzed. To analyze the <u>unidimensionality</u> of scales, CFA will be used, and</li> </ol>				

Pitcher's Name	Hafiz Ahmad Ashraf	CoR category	TQM	Date Completed	25-08-2020
	<p>it will be ensured that the value of the "comparative fit index" (CFI) should be greater than 0.9. To check the reliability of scales, the value of "Cronbach's alpha" will be considered, which must be &gt;0.7. Furthermore, the convergent validity of constructs will also be evaluated based on the "factor loadings" because all factors loadings should have significant values for their respective variables. The discriminant validity will be ensured by ensuring the value of AVE &gt; 0.5 (Fornell &amp; Larcker, 1981). After checking reliability and validity, the hypotheses will be tested through SEM in which direct effects, total effects, indirect effects, and significance level mainly consider to decide on the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses</p>				
(G) Tools?	<p>The quantitative data collected through questionnaires will be analyzed through SPSS and AMOS by running "structure equation modelling" (SEM).</p>				
TWO	<p>Two key questions</p>				
(H) What is New?	<p>The current study is the first one to empirically examine the <a href="#">microfoundations</a> of institutional theory with particular reference to the development of OLC. Therefore, the current research is expected to make significant contributions in the theory and practice by proving empirical evidence about the phenomenon through which TQM can improve BP along with the mediation of OLC and IP. This study will fulfil the gap found in the current literature regarding the empirical investigation of "<a href="#">microfoundations</a> of institutional theory."</p>				
(I) So What?	<p>Findings of this study will help the textile sector of Pakistan to know the reason behind the fall in exports and gaining sustainable competitive advantage in the international market.</p>				
ONE	<p>One bottom line</p>				
(J) Contribution?	<p>The current research is expected to make significant contributions in the theory and practice by proving a piece of empirical evidence about the phenomenon through which TQM can improve BP along with the mediation of OLC and IP. This study will fulfil the gap found in the current literature regarding the empirical investigation of "micro-foundations of institutional theory", and it will enable the researchers to explain the linkage among QM theory, institutional theory. Furthermore, broader viewpoints of the IP described through "product innovation, organizational innovation, process innovation, and marketing innovation" (<a href="#">Kafetzopoulos et al., 2019</a>; <a href="#">Kafetzopoulos et al., 2015</a>; <a href="#">Javassoli &amp; Karlsson, 2015</a>). BP described through "financial performance, market performance, and non-financial performance" (<a href="#">Kafetzopoulos et al., 2019</a>). OLC has been considered in the current study with the TQM (people, processes, leadership, partnership &amp; resources, and policy &amp; strategy), which make the current study more significant and unique. In this way, it would be easy to understand how vital this TQM, OLC, and these dimensions of IP can be, in the enhancement of three types of BP</p>				
(K) Other Considerations	<p>Collaboration: Not required                      Target Journal(s)?                      1. The TQM Journal                      2. Management Science Letters                      "Risk" assessment: "no risk attached with this research"</p>				

### **3.1 Hearing about pitch templates**

I heard about pitch templates when I attended the webinar of Robert Faff. I was about to complete my PhD course work and to start my preparations for my final PhD proposal. I developed a first pitching draft of my research idea and presented it in a Pakistan pitching research competition (APPRC 2017-2018) my idea was among the top 20 pitches, and I was honored to receive my appreciation letter and prize from Robert Faff. Finally my research supervisor Prof. Ishtiaq motivated me to follow Faff (2019), Ashraf and Manzoor (2017) and Iqbal and Ashraf (2017), which was my 2nd step in the pitch valley. I faced several problems in doing my research work, but Faff's (2019) guidelines acted as a motivator to me in that one cannot be clear about the research unless one has a firm grip on the theory and literature of the desired work.

### **3.2 Venn Diagram**

A diagram is a hacking code used to simplify challenging ideas into concise and easy way to the reader. Often a diagram can serve as a sort of communication where words are limit, bridging the difference between vocal and non-vocal language and converting the multilingual into the unilingual. While visiting Japan, I saw Japanese people in the silent mood and following different diagrams and charts at stations, factories, auctions, malls, and public places. This led me to see Japan as 'the valley of diagrams' as I did not initially understand the Japanese language and use diagram to communicate with people. My Japanese teacher always carried a diary and a pen, and he taught me Japanese by drawing different characters, according to him 'the base of Japanese kanji is just a picture'. When I started pitching exercise, I recognized that the Venn diagram theory by Faff (2016) and Japanese character based writing system were very similar. So due to my practical exposure I was able to quickly grasp the essence and usage of charts and graphs. My understanding of the further cleared when in Disney Land I saw people associating the theme park with Mickey Mouse due to his unique and ionic character. Keeping these ideas in view, I drew a Venn diagram of my research idea shown in Figure 1.

### **3.3 Process usage of "Pitch Research letter"**

According to my exposure, PRL is not just an essential, meditational, or final step as it covers and can assist the whole research process. As PRL is not merely a template the research idea, it also guides the nascent researcher in the selection and refining of their research idea (Ali, 2016). Based on my practical experience, I am providing the research work in the field of pitching, namely PRL (Pitch Research Letter).

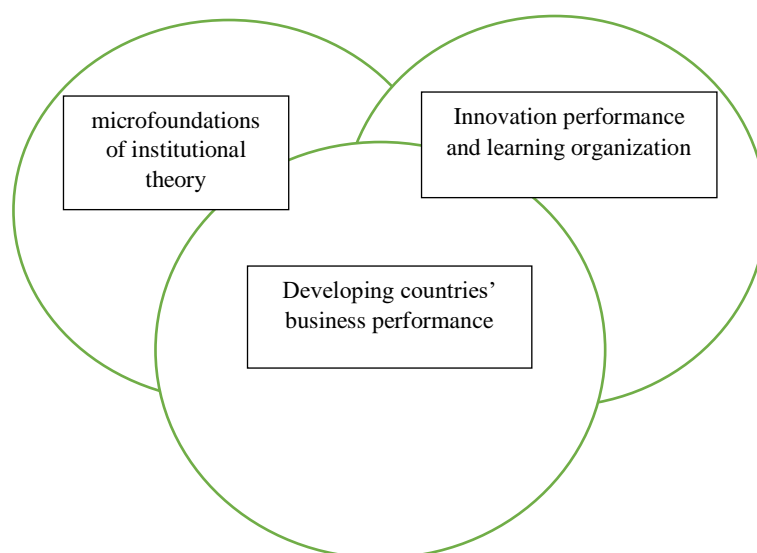


Figure 1. Mickey Mouse Venn Diagram

#### 4. Conclusion

This PLR exercise has given me the chance to cover the research ideas in the form of pitch, on the topic “The relationship between TQM and business performance: The mediating role of innovation performance and organizational learning culture”. This pitching exercise serves as an outline for me in the whole research process as PRL provides me with a system from start to end. So I recommend all researchers to use this opportunity provided by Faff (2019).

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