

# Transformational leadership and the European Foundation for Quality Management model in five-star hotels

Model in five-star hotels

99

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This work analyses quality management (through the European Foundation for Quality Management-EFQM-model) and transformational leadership in hotels in Spain.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The study analyses 102 5-star and 5-star large luxury hotels that answer a questionnaire on transformational leadership and the EFQM model. It analyses the degree of importance of quality and transformational leadership in hotels, the significant differences between groups of hotels (according to stars, size, modality and type of product) and the association between transformational leadership and quality.

**Findings** – The results show the levels of quality and transformational leadership, minor significant differences between groups and an association between the two variables. In general, chain-affiliated hotels have a higher level of leadership and a more advanced employee and process management than independent hotels. Also, those hotels that focus on a vacational product show a lower attention to the strategy dimension in the EFQM model. The number of employees is not an important factor to adopt quality. Finally, transformational leadership allows hotels to advance in the development of quality management.

**Originality/value** – Although there are studies on quality management that show the importance of leadership for quality, there are few studies that examine transformational leadership and quality in the same study, mainly in the tourism industry, and especially in the case of the hotel industry.

**Keywords** Transformational leadership, EFQM model, Quality management, Five-star hotels

**Paper type** Research paper

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## 1. Introduction

Leadership is a key element for developing a quality culture (Koc, 2006; Pereira-Moliner *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2012), and transformational leadership is the most appropriate type of leadership to adopt quality management practices in a successful way (Dean and Bowen, 1994; Waldman, 1994; Yee *et al.*, 2013). This is because of the fact that transformational leadership has been associated with the success of organizations to a higher extent than other leadership styles and because it facilitates quality commitment, employee motivation (Masi and Cooke, 2000), improved relationships between followers and leaders, improved effectiveness of teams, improved work processes and employee satisfaction (Brown *et al.*, 1996; Guillespie and Mann, 2000; Avolio and Bass, 2004). Although there are studies in tourism on transformational leadership (Jovicic *et al.*, 2018) and on quality management (Liu and Ko, 2018), there are few works that analyze quality management and transformational leadership in the same study, mainly in the tourism industry and, especially, in the case of the hotel industry.

The tourism industry in Spain is the main engine of the Spanish economy. The contribution to the Spanish GDP of the tourism activities is 11.2 per cent, and it creates 2.6 million jobs and 13 per cent of total employment [Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2016]. The positive balance of tourism amounted to 3.5 per cent of GDP in 2017 (Bank of Spain – Banco de España, 2018). During 2017, 81.8 million international tourists visited Spain, which is 8.6 per cent more than the previous year [Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2018].

The aim of this study is to analyze the level of implementation of transformational leadership and quality management and the association between the two variables in Spanish five-star hotels. For that purpose, the work analyzes the importance of transformational leadership and quality, the existence of differences regarding these issues between groups of hotels and the association between the two variables.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Transformational leadership

A transformational leader identifies the needs of his/her followers and motivates them (Burns, 1978), encouraging them to go beyond their own personal interests for the benefit of the entire group (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Yukl (1999) defines a transformational leader as a leader that develops actions that empower his/her followers and makes them involved in the way to attain organizational goals, by using different behaviors according to the situation (advice, support, intellectual stimulation, etc.). Based on this prior research, the definition of transformational leadership for this work can be considered as follows: transformational leadership is the art of influencing and driving people by encouraging them to work in an enthusiastic way toward a common goal. Transformational leadership is composed of four dimensions according to the literature (Avolio and Bass, 2004; Laohavichien *et al.*, 2011; Lee *et al.*, 2011), which will be considered for this research:

- (1) Idealized influence. This dimension has two perspectives:
  - *As a personal attribute*: the leader is charismatic and is perceived by the followers as a person with great ethics and integrity.
  - *As a behavior*: it considers that the leader heads the problem-solving process and shares the success with his/her followers.
- (2) Intellectual stimulation. The leader makes his/her followers think by themselves and develop their own skills.

- (3) Inspirational motivation. The leader encourages his/her followers to achieve a higher performance and attains an extra effort from them.
- (4) Individualized consideration. The leader is a good communicator and listens to his/her followers, because he/she shows empathy with them.

2.2 Quality management

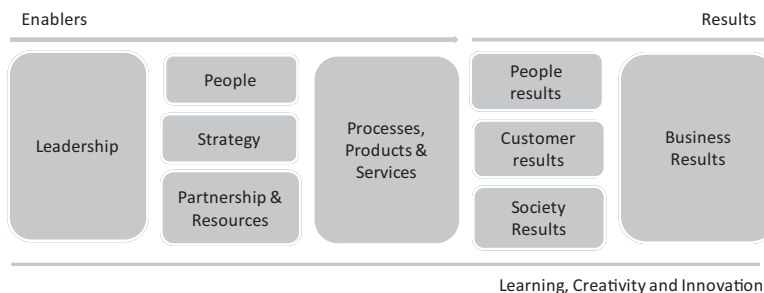
Quality management is a business management system that organizations can develop. Companies can use different models to adopt quality management such as, amongst others, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model and the ISO 9001 standard. The EFQM model is a quality model that reflects the quality management principles suggested by the literature and is a tool for management allowing them to measure the satisfaction of customers, employees and other stakeholders (Black and Crumley, 1997; Larsen and Häversjö, 2001; Pérez, 1998; Abella, 1998; Gómez *et al.*, 2015; Liu and Ko, 2018; Simancas Cruz *et al.*, 2018).

For the success of this model, the involvement of employees and top management is required. This model is composed of nine dimensions (see Figure 1) that show quality management dimensions suggested by the literature. Also, this model can be successfully adopted by tourism organizations in general and hotels in particular (Wang *et al.*, 2012; Álvarez-García *et al.*, 2016).

2.3 Leadership in the European Foundation for Quality Management model

According to the EFQM model, quality management requires that leaders adapt, react and gain commitment with all stakeholders to ensure the success of the organization (EFQM, 2010a). In the EFQM model, leadership contributes to achieve the strategy, to understand what is important to do as a leader and to develop a quality culture where excellence is the standard (EFQM, 2010b). The leader has to act as a model in its implementation (Sandbrook, 2001).

According to EFQM (2013) model, excellent organizations have leaders that shape the future and make it happen, acting as role models of their values and ethical principles and inspiring confidence at all times. They are flexible, allowing the organization to anticipate and react in a timely way to ensure continuous success. The dimension leadership of the EFQM model has five subcriteria related to mission, improvement, external stakeholders and excellence culture (Table I).



Source: EFQM (2013)

Figure 1. EFQM model

Issues related to vision and values, continuous improvement through employees and change management are typical of leadership according to the EFQM model and of transformational leadership. This suggests similarities between the characteristics of transformational leadership and appropriate leadership in the EFQM model. This idea suggests that an association may exist between transformational leadership and the EFQM model.

Regarding the adoption of quality management in organizations, some works show that large organizations are used to having more resources to apply certain practices such as those related to quality (Sun and Cheng, 2002; Diaz de Cerio, 2003; Haar and Spell, 2008). Nevertheless, other studies find that there are no differences in the degree of development of quality management according to size (Powell, 1995; Ghobadian and Gallerar, 1996; Zu *et al.*, 2008; Berrios and Campos, 2016). This shows that both large and small hotels could develop quality management successfully. This discussion in the literature also exists in relation to other organizational variables. For example, in general terms, some works show that the hotels with a higher category (Abrate *et al.*, 2011; Orfila-Sintes *et al.*, 2005) and size (Mak, 2011; Iglesias *et al.*, 2018) can adopt quality initiatives to a higher extent than those hotels with lower category and size. Similarly, relationships may exist between the adoption of quality practices and non-urban hotels (Iglesias *et al.*, 2018). Although prior literature shows inconclusive results, it can be said that some differences in the development of quality and leadership can exist according to organizational characteristics. This idea makes it possible to propose the following hypothesis:

- H1.* Significant differences exist between the level of development of transformational leadership and quality management according to organizational characteristics (category, modality, type of product and size).

Regarding the association between transformational leadership and quality practices, the literature shows that leadership is a key factor to develop quality management and the enablers of EFQM (Table II). The literature also shows the positive effects of transformational leadership on employees, as well as the fact that certain characteristics of leaders are needed for quality improvement and the success of organizations. In this regard, some works show the importance of transformational leadership to develop quality and continuous improvement (Table II). These ideas make it possible to propose the following hypothesis:

- H2.* An association exists between transformational leadership and quality.

Criteria	Subcriterion
Leadership	Leaders develop mission, vision, values and ethical principles and act as a reference model Leaders define, monitor, review and drive both the improvement of the organization's management system and its performance Leaders engage with external stakeholders Leaders reinforce an excellence culture among the people in the organization Leaders ensure organization is flexible and manages change effectively

**Table I.**  
Subcriteria in the leadership criterion in the EFQM model

Source: EFQM (2013)

Authors	Main results
Waldman (1994)	Leadership needed for an effective quality management program is transformational leadership
Pheng and May (1997)	Leadership style plays an important role in quality management. The ideal manager must meet the following characteristics: have a high position, good interpersonal relationships, understand the operations of the company, etc.
Eskildsen and Dahlgaard (2000)	Leadership affects people, strategy and partnerships and resources
Podsakoff <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Transformational leadership increases employee satisfaction and the organizational environment
Lebracher <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Top management commitment and initiative, under the transformational leadership of the CEO, is essential to build and maintain a continuous improvement program
Soltani <i>et al.</i> (2004)	Leadership encourages employee participation in quality improvement in companies applying the EFQM model
Yeung <i>et al.</i> (2005)	The person responsible for managing quality in the company must be on the first hierarchical line, as well as exercise leadership within his/her team
Fisher <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Leadership is essential to establish a continuous improvement program or quality management, along with cooperative learning and process management
Osseo-Asare <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Leadership is one of the success factors in quality and performance improvement as long as it is included in the company's policy and strategy. Effective leadership clearly involves communicating the mission, the vision and fundamental values
Calvo-Mora <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Leadership has a positive influence on people management
Davies (2008)	Leadership has a clear effect on the effectiveness of model application, on promoting the use of various levels of the model and its use in strategic planning and performance
Hai Chin and An Lin (2009)	There is a strong and positive relationship between leadership style, quality management and organizational commitment
Castro <i>et al.</i> (2009)	Leadership is shown as one of the important variables of the EFQM model and has a decisive influence on enablers of the EFQM model
Laohavichien <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Transformational leadership makes it easier for employees to exceed the minimum levels required by the organization. Therefore, a transformational leader is likely to influence the company's quality results by implementing quality practices
Álvarez-García <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Leadership influences customer results, people results, society results and business results
Kara <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Transformational leadership has positive effects in the hospitality sector. This means that managers must be trained to use a transformational leadership style to improve employee well-being
Mendoza <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Transformational leadership develops the potential in followers and improves the team's values and motivation. This type of leadership motivates followers to work together, change their goals and beliefs and look beyond their personal interests to achieve organizational interests
Doeleman <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Leadership is a driver of quality improvement and is needed for an effective EFQM model implementation
Yosia (2015)	Transformational leadership has positive effects on performance. The interpersonal skills of leaders and sincerity impact on quality management
Álvarez-García <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Leadership impacts on partnerships and resources, strategy, employees and learning

Source: Portela (2016)

**Table II.**  
Studies on leadership and quality

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Population and sample

The hotel industry is a critical sector for the Spanish economy, as has been indicated in the introductory section. According to the Spanish National Institute of Statistics [Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2016], the number of five-star hotels increased by 20.8 per cent during the 2008-2014 period. However, the rest of categories have suffered a generalized decrease. This is because of the increase in tourism quality in Spain. For example, five-star hotels have showed a growth of 27 per cent in the average stay during the 2008-2014 period [Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2016]. This group of hotels offers a service with a higher quality level compared with lower category hotels and they are hotels that have improved their results during the past years of economic crisis. Profitability data of these hotels support these ideas. In addition, previous works focus on the analysis of hotels of different categories and there is a lack of studies focused on this group of hotels (five-star hotels).

These data show the importance of five-star hotels within the hotel industry in Spain. Also, there are few works that analyze the relationship between transformational leadership and quality management in the hotel industry, and more specifically in five-star hotels.

Thus, the population are five-star hotels and five large luxury star hotels, because they are hotels that can offer a service with a high level of quality and can have higher profitability compared to establishments with lower categories. Based on this idea, a database according to information available in the Turespaña website (Turespaña, 2015) was created: a census of 162 five-star hotels and five large luxury star hotels. A structured questionnaire with closed questions was sent online to these hotels in three waves, between January and March 2016. A total of 102 answers were received.

#### 3.2 Measures

The questionnaire begins with general questions to identify a profile of the establishments:

- category;
- number of rooms;
- modality of the establishment (chain-affiliated hotel or independent hotel);
- type of tourist product that the hotel offers (vacational, urban or mixed); and
- number of employees last year.

In addition, the questionnaire shows questions on transformational leadership and quality management that the quality manager or person with a quality responsibility, or failing this, the top manager, answers on the leadership style in the hotel and the importance of enablers and results of the EFQM model. Managers answered the questionnaire using a five-point scale (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree). To measure transformational leadership, four dimensions and 12 items are used (see Table III) based on Laohavichien *et al.* (2011) and Lee *et al.* (2011). To measure quality management, 16 items (see Table IV) are considered based on Bou-Llusar *et al.* (2009) and Gómez *et al.* (2015). To analyze the impact of enablers of EFQM on performance, 18 items are used (see Table V) based on Pereira-Moliner *et al.* (2016). As these variables are perceptual, reliability and validity analyses are performed as shown in Tables III-V.

	Mean	Factor
<i>Idealized influence</i>	4.37	
1. Engages employees in his/her future vision	4.29	0.911
2. Expresses his/her their most important values and beliefs to employees	4.40	0.797
3. Inspires loyalty to the establishment in employees	4.43	0.841
Eigenvalue per factor		2.173
% of variance explained		72.426
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.650
Barlett's significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach's alpha		0.809
<i>Inspirational motivation</i>	4.32	
1. There is a strong communicative culture in all areas of the establishment	4.18	0.844
2. His/her behavior allows the integration and mobilization of teams	4.44	0.853
3. They are consistent between what they say and what they do	4.34	0.815
Eigenvalue per factor		2.104
% of variance explained		70.126
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.701
Barlett's significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach's alpha		0.785
<i>Individualized consideration</i>	4.30	
1. Takes into account the personal feelings of his/her employees before acting	4.21	0.845
2. Encourages employees to think about the best way to do things	4.41	0.793
3. Shows employees the benefits of achieving establishment goals	4.30	0.881
Eigenvalue per factor		2.119
% of variance explained		70.634
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.681
Barlett's significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach's alpha		0.792
<i>Intellectual stimulation</i>	4.27	
1. Takes part in continuous improvement processes, even when these activities go beyond management responsibilities	4.17	0.876
2. Interested in knowing the needs of his/her working group	4.33	0.825
3. Allows employees to think about old problems in new ways	4.30	0.853
Eigenvalue per factor		2.174
% of variance explained		72.467
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.705
Barlett's significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach's alpha		8.808

**Table III.**  
Items on transformational leadership (reliability and validity)

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive analyses

Most establishments (51 per cent) have between 1 and 100 rooms. In the other extreme, there are hotels with more than 400 rooms (3 per cent). A total of 24 per cent of hotels have between 101 and 200 rooms, 14 per cent between 201 and 300 rooms and 9 per cent between 301 and 400.

Regarding the modality, 52 per cent of the hotels belong to a chain and 48 per cent are independent hotels. In relation to the type of product that the establishments provide, 42 per cent offer a vacational product, 22 per cent an urban product and 36 per cent a mixed product (urban and vacational). Finally, regarding number of employees, 27 per cent are small hotels (between 10 and 49 employees), 60 per cent are medium-sized hotels (50 and 250 employees) and 7 per cent are large ones (more than 250 employees).

	Mean	Factor
<i>Strategy</i>	4.39	
1. Sets objectives taking into account the opinions and needs of customers, employees and other stakeholders (society, shareholders)	4.47	0.914
2. Informs employees about quality strategies	4.35	0.909
3. Reviews the effectiveness of his/her strategies and plans	4.33	0.933
Eigenvalue per factor		2.532
% of variance explained		84.402
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.749
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach’s alpha		0.907
<i>People</i>	4.30	
1. Encourages employee autonomy and participation	4.38	0.882
2. Encourages and supports individual and team participation in improvement activities	4.36	0.854
3. Develops training and development programs for employees	4.32	0.884
4. Uses formal processes to understand employee feedback and improve staff policies	4.17	0.745
5. Explicitly acknowledges to employees their involvement and assumption of responsibilities	4.28	0.921
Eigenvalue per factor		3.692
% of variance explained		73.848
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.869
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach’s alpha		0.908
<i>Partnership and resources</i>	4.12	
1. Has a high capacity for external cooperation	4.08	0.859
2. Identifies opportunities to build partnerships with other organizations	3.98	0.880
3. Establishes quality agreements with suppliers	4.17	0.809
4. Facilitates access to information for all those who need to know it	4.29	0.870
Eigenvalue per factor		2.924
% of variance explained		73.108
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.795
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach’s alpha		0.877
<i>Processes, products and services</i>	4.31	
1. Explicitly defines working methods and processes	4.34	0.820
2. Implements process indicators and performance targets	4.22	0.881
3. Identifies and prioritizes opportunities for continuous improvement	4.28	0.852
4. Designs, develops, produces and offers products and services based on customer needs	4.40	0.816
Eigenvalue per factor		2.839
% of variance explained		70.975
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.733
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000
Cronbach’s alpha		0.863

**Table IV.**  
Items on enablers of EFQM (reliability and validity)

#### 4.2 Transformational leadership

In the case of transformational leadership, Table III shows that “Idealized influence” is the most important dimension of leadership (4.37). The second most valued dimension is “Inspirational motivation.” The least important dimension is “Intellectual stimulation.”



	Mean	Factor	Model in five-star hotels
<i>Customers</i>	4.51		
1. Increased customer satisfaction	4.61	0.898	
2. Increased service quality	4.54	0.911	
3. Increased customer loyalty	4.56	0.926	
4. Increased Web 2.0 ratings and social media	4.50	0.897	
5. Reducing customer complaints	4.37	0.786	
Eigenvalue per factor		3.915	
% of variance explained		78.292	
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.891	
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000	
Cronbach’s alpha		0.926	
<i>People</i>	4.27		
1. Increased people’s satisfaction	4.29	0.887	
2. Increased people’s satisfaction	4.34	0.936	
3. Increased people’s productivity	4.34	0.904	
4. Improved people’s working conditions	4.34	0.887	
5. Reduction in absenteeism	4.22	0.816	
6. Reducing people’s complaints	4.12	0.887	
Eigenvalue per factor		4.718	
% of variance explained		78.627	
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.894	
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000	
Cronbach’s alpha		0.944	
<i>Society</i>	4.32		
1. Increased environmental protection	4.26	0.895	
2. Improving the ethical behavior of the organization	4.29	0.910	
3. Increased levels of health and safety risk prevention	4.42	0.881	
Eigenvalue per factor		2.404	
% of variance explained		80.138	
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.738	
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000	
Cronbach’s alpha		0.876	
<i>Business</i>	4.35		
1. Increased market share	4.36	0.883	
2. Increased sales	4.38	0.895	
3. Increased profitability	4.42	0.932	
4. Cost reduction	4.26	0.812	
Eigenvalue per factor		3.110	
% of variance explained		77.750	
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index		0.795	
Barlett’s significance test of sphericity		0.000	
Cronbach’s alpha		0.902	

**Table V.**  
Items on EFQM  
results (reliability  
and validity)

Nevertheless, there are very little differences between dimensions (see [Table III](#)), which indicates that the level of transformation leadership is high in the hotels analyzed.

[Table III](#) also shows the results (means) of each item. These results show that leaders allow the integration and the mobilization of their followers (4.44) and inspire employee loyalty to the establishment (4.43). On the contrary, the two aspects of leadership least developed in hotels and, therefore, the behaviors to improve are the following: “taking part in the processes of continuous improvement, even when these

activities go beyond their responsibilities” and “there is a strong communicative culture in all areas of the hotel.”

#### *4.3 European Foundation for Quality Management enablers*

The results show that the most important dimension or enabler with a mean of 4.39 is “Strategy” (Table IV) and the least valued enabler is “Partnership and resources” (4.12). Regarding the quality management practices developed by the hotels, the most important is “establishing objectives taking into account opinions and needs of customers, employees and other stakeholders (e.g. society)” (4.47). This indicates that leaders understand needs and expectations of the stakeholders and the environment to define strategy (Table IV). On the contrary, the least implemented quality practices are as follows: “hotels identify the opportunities to establish alliances with other organizations,” “hotels use formal processes to know employee opinions and improve employee policies” and “hotel establishes quality agreements with suppliers.” Thus, the improvement areas in hotels are related to the lack of high external cooperation and to the need to improve communication with employees (see Table IV).

#### *4.4 European Foundation for Quality Management results*

Table V shows the means regarding the result dimensions. The most important impact is on customers (4.51), and the least important is on employees (4.27). This indicates that quality has somehow clearer effects on increased customer satisfaction, increased service quality, increased customer loyalty, increased assessments in Web 2.0 and social networks and the reduction in customer complaints. Similarly, the effects are somehow lower on employees: increased employee satisfaction, increased employee motivation, increased employee productivity, improved work conditions, reduction in absenteeism and complaints. These results also show that quality management practices can also have positive effects on society results (environmental protection, organizational ethics and prevention of labor risks) and on business results such as market share, sales and costs.

Table V also shows that the most important impacts are “increased customer satisfaction” (mean of 4.61) and “increased customer loyalty” (4.56). On the contrary, the least valued impact is that related to human resources variables. This indicates that quality practices have clear benefits in the improvement of customer satisfaction and, although improvements in employees also exist, they are lower.

#### *4.5 Significant differences and association between leadership and quality*

This section supplements the previous one with an analysis of significant differences of the variables measured between groups of hotels and a regression analysis between the two variables. In relation to category, there are no significant differences regarding enablers of EFQM (strategy, people, alliances and processes) and regarding customer, employee and social results and business results between five-star hotels and five-star large luxury hotels. As Table VI shows, minor differences can be observed between two dimensions of transformational leadership ( $p < 0.10$ ).

This indicates that similarities exist between communicative culture, the commitment and leader behavior, as well as the consistency between their words and their acts. In addition, leaders in both types of establishments behave in such a way that they allow the integration and the mobilization of the members of their teams. Also, it can be said that both five-star and five large luxury star hotel leaders take into account the feelings of their followers, express their gratitude when employees do a good job and show them the benefits of achieving organizational goals. Regarding “Intellectual stimulation,” in both types of

Constructs	Category		Modality		Sign.
	Five-star (N = 62) Mean	Five- star large luxury hotels (N = 40) Mean	Independent (N = 49) Mean	Chain- affiliated (N = 53) Mean	
Idealized influence	4.274	4.533	4.2109	4.528	0.036
Inspirational motivation	4.268	4.400	4.2041	4.4277	0.101
Individualized consideration	4.220	4.441	4.1361	4.4654	0.023
Intellectual stimulation	4.193	4.383	4.1361	4.3899	0.025
Strategy	4.344	4.450	4.2177	4.5409	0.111
People	4.203	4.460	4.1796	4.4189	0.169
Partnership and resources	4.076	4.212	4.0408	4.2123	0.293
Processes, products and services	4.250	4.406	4.1071	4.5000	0.014
Customers	4.443	4.537	4.4245	4.6038	0.227
People	4.212	4.365	4.1905	4.3553	0.348
Society	4.247	4.450	4.2449	4.4025	0.328
Business	4.330	4.400	4.2704	4.4387	0.266

Model in five-  
star hotels

**Table VI.**  
Descriptive analysis  
and differences  
regarding category  
and modality

hotels, many similarities exist between leaders when they work in groups, take part in the processes of continuous improvement and understand employee needs.

Five-star and five-star large luxury hotels have a similar level of implementation of strategy dimensions. In general terms, both types of hotels establish objectives and collect internal and external data, and communicate and review their strategy with a similar level of development. Both five-star and five-star large luxury hotels develop training programs for employees and encourage their autonomy and their individual participation in improvement activities. Regarding “Partnership and resources,” both types of hotels cooperate with external organizations and identify the opportunities to establish alliances with other organizations. In addition, they establish agreements with suppliers and facilitate access to the information to all those that have to know it. Both kinds of hotels have a similar level of implementation of process indicators, so that, in general, both types of hotels design, develop, produce and offer products and services based on customer needs with a similar level of development. Finally, the effects of enablers on customer, employee, society and business results are also similar in both types of hotels.

Regarding the modality (see [Table VI](#)), significant differences exist in relation to dimensions “Idealized influence,” “Individualized consideration” and “Intellectual stimulation” between independent hotels and chain-affiliated hotels. Similarly, there are also differences in the dimension “Processes, products and services” ( $p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, chain-affiliated hotels develop these dimensions to a higher extent.

[Table VII](#) shows the differences by type of product and by number of employees, and [Table VIII](#) shows the differences regarding the number of rooms.

Regarding the type of product that the hotel offers (urban, vacational or mixed), there is some difference in the dimension strategy ( $p < 0.10$ ). It seems that vacational hotels pay less attention to the definition and control of objectives. Concerning number of employees, results indicate that number of employees is not an important factor to develop both leadership and quality practices to a higher or lower extent. Nevertheless, in the cases where there are small groups, the non-parametric test is also applied (H of Kruskal–Wallis). In these cases, results show that some differences can exist in dimensions people and processes ( $p < 0.10$ ), indicating that size could be a factor that might have some influence in people and process management. Similarly, hotels with more rooms have a higher level of the dimension “Inspirational motivation” and develop the dimensions “People management” and “Product, process and services” to a higher extent.

Regarding the association between leadership and quality, regression analysis shows that transformational leadership facilitates quality development. A significant relationship exists ( $p < 0.05$ ) between:

- idealized influence, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation with strategy and people management;
- intellectual stimulation and alliances; and
- the four dimensions of transformational leadership and process management.

These results partially support *H1*, because certain significant differences between groups of hotels exist. Similarly, *H2* is partially supported because a relationship exists between the two variables, although not all dimensions of transformational leadership impact on all enablers of EFQM.

## 5. Conclusions

The present research shows data that shed light toward a better knowledge of transformational leadership and quality management in five-star hotels. These hotels integrate the dimension “Idealized influence” of transformational leadership in their activities, which refers to the charismatic actions of leaders that focus on values, beliefs and the sense of mission (Lee *et al.*, 2011). Leaders are admired by their followers, as they are a role model for their values and ethical behavior. The results show that leaders engage their employees in their future vision, express their values and beliefs to employees and inspire in them loyalty to the company.

In addition, it can be highlighted that transformational leadership impacts on quality management (EFQM enablers). That is, through idealized influence, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, transformational leadership influences strategy, people management and process management. Through vision and values, communication and employee motivation and the promotion of creativity and continuous improvement, leaders can develop planning processes, improve relationships with employees and boost analysis and work process improvement. These characteristics related to communication, people relationships, creativity and solving problems, which are important for the improvement of enablers of EFQM, are critical for the leaders of hotels, as prior research has found regarding the key competences of leaders in the hotel industry (Kay and Moncarz, 2007; Jeou-Shyan *et al.*, 2011; Bharwani and Talib, 2017). Similarly, intellectual stimulation influences alliances and individual consideration in process improvement; for example, taking into account employees’ needs is important so that they feel involved in process improvement. These results support previous authors’ works that show the importance of these competences in transformational leadership to improve in hotels (Jovicic *et al.*, 2018) and other works applied to other contexts other than hotels that have found a relationship between transformational leadership and quality (Teoman and Uleengin, 2018). Also, these results expand previous works that show the relationship between leadership and enablers of EFQM in the tourism industry (Álvarez-García *et al.*, 2016), expanding these results to the case of transformational leadership.

Regarding quality practices, in general terms, leaders of both types of hotels take into account the feelings of their employees, express their gratitude when these employees do a good job and show them the benefits of achieving organizational goals.

Nevertheless, some differences can be suggested in the development of transformational leadership and quality. Regarding the modality of the establishment, chain-affiliated hotels have a higher level of transformational leadership than independent hotels and have more advanced people management and process management. In relation to the type of tourism product that the hotels offer, it can be said that minor differences exist in strategy in vacational hotels, in this case with the lowest implementation level. The hotels focused on a vacational product pay lower attention to the dimension strategy. Finally, number of employees is not an important factor in the implementation of quality management, although it seems that large hotels give more importance to people management and process management. Based on these results, the following improvement areas for hotels can be suggested:

- Hotels that wish to improve their level of quality management have to define vision and values and work on this idea until it becomes a reality. In this regard, it is important that leaders also make efforts to communicate, motivate and apply practices for continuous improvement. In this case, one of the least valued items in leadership is the item related to participation in continuous improvement. Taking

**Table VII.**  
Descriptive analysis  
and differences  
regarding type of  
product and number  
of employees

Constructs	Type of product				No. of employees			Sign.
	Mixed (N = 37)	Urban (N = 22)	Vacational (N = 43)	Sign.	Small (N = 31)	Medium (N = 64)	Large (N = 7)	
Idealized influence	4.3333	4.5909	4.3023	0.327	4.4048	4.3632	4.3810	0.972
Inspirational motivation	4.4054	4.4545	4.1783	0.199	4.3393	4.3993	4.5357	0.749
Individualized consideration	4.3333	4.5455	4.1628	0.135	4.2857	4.3769	4.2500	0.802
Intellectual stimulation	4.3153	4.3636	4.1783	0.618	4.2411	4.3209	4.3571	0.876
Strategy	4.5225	4.6061	4.1550	0.063	4.3786	4.3761	4.6571	0.698
People	4.4595	4.4455	4.0977	0.127	4.3071	4.2985	4.3429	0.992
Partnership and resources	4.1622	4.2273	4.0523	0.690	4.0625	4.1269	4.4286	0.575
Processes, products and services	4.3378	4.5909	4.1453	0.108	4.2232	4.3134	4.6429	0.477
Customers	4.6054	4.5909	4.4047	0.429	4.4143	4.5582	4.5429	0.694
People	4.2928	4.4091	4.1938	0.646	4.2024	4.3532	3.8333	0.293
Society	4.3514	4.3939	4.2713	0.827	4.2619	4.3632	4.2381	0.822
Business	4.3446	4.4205	4.3372	0.910	4.2321	4.3806	4.6429	0.409

Constructs	From 1 to 100 (N = 53)	From 101 to 200 (N = 25)	From 201 to 300 (N = 13)	From 301 to 400 (N = 8)	More than 400 (N = 3)	Sign.
Idealized influence	4.0130	4.4667	4.7436	4.5000	4.7778	0.125
Inspirational motivation	4.2075	4.2267	4.8205	4.3333	4.8889	0.017
Individualized consideration	4.1950	4.3467	4.6154	4.2917	4.6667	0.281
Intellectual stimulation	4.2933	4.1132	4.7692	4.2917	4.5556	0.158
Strategy	4.2138	4.4400	4.8462	4.5000	4.6667	0.109
People	4.2880	4.1283	4.8308	4.4000	5.0000	0.062
Partnership and resources	3.9670	4.3500	4.2885	4.2500	4.1667	0.338
Processes, products and services	4.0613	4.4600	4.7692	4.6875	4.5000	0.015
Customers	4.4025	4.3533	4.7436	4.7708	5.0000	0.287
People	4.2604	4.0720	4.5231	4.3750	4.8000	0.425
Society	4.3145	4.2267	4.4615	4.4167	4.5556	0.900
Business	4.2453	4.3300	4.6154	4.5938	4.8333	0.332

Model in five-star hotels

**Table VIII.**  
Descriptive analysis  
and differences  
regarding number of  
rooms

into account these weaknesses and the fact that the characteristics related to intellectual stimulation are important for quality improvement, a higher commitment to continuous improvement activities with the participation of employees will make them improve the quality practices adopted in the hotel. In addition, the dimension “Intellectual stimulation” is one of the least important ones; therefore, leaders should obtain their stakeholders’ opinions to identify strategies and process in the search for continuous improvement.

- Managers in hotels have to act as role models both because of their values and principles and because of their performance. They have to inspire confidence and loyalty in other people, because one of the least valued items is related to communicative culture in all areas of the establishment.
- Managers in hotels have to be conscious of the importance of communication, the relationship with employees, creativity, critical thought and strategic thought because they also are key competences for a successful behavior of hotel managers (Kay and Moncarz, 2007; Jeou-Shyan *et al.*, 2011; Bharwani and Talib, 2017).

Regarding enablers of EFQM, the following suggestions to improve quality management in hotels can be made:

- Leaders should strengthen the relationship with stakeholders and partners. It is recommended that managers extend their leadership to the whole value chain, that is, to both employees and external collaborators, such as suppliers, as a way of improving their work processes.

Concerning EFQM results, the suggestions are the following:

- The issues that have obtained a lower value are related with employee results. Taking into account the association between leadership and people management, managers should interact more with employees by participating in improvement activities and transparently recognizing staff efforts and improvements by employees.

## 6. Limitations and future research

This work presents interesting results on transformational leadership and quality management in hotels. Nevertheless, it has some limitations. The work has collected the information in a moment of time. Thus, it would be interesting in the future to carry out a longitudinal study to know the level of transformational leadership and quality, and the effects of this leadership on quality management.

In addition, this study has used data from 102 hotels and collected the information of one person per hotel. It would be interesting in the future to expand the sample to several respondents, for example, managers and employees, and to hotels in other categories, or even to other tourism subsectors or other services .

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