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Business Performance Effectiveness with the Aid of Total Quality Management

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ABSTRACT

The growing diffusion and acceptance in the business world of Total Quality Management (TQM) has attracted greater interest on the part of academia. Although fundamental questions focus on how the different dimensions of TQM can bring about better business performance. The paper concentrates on various components of TQM & their effective contribution in the overall business performance.

Keywords : Total Quality Management (TQM), Business, Effectiveness, Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Quality now plays an important role for increasing the customers' satisfaction and other important benefits. Most of the organisations are seeking the way to achieve the target. And recent years, the people in TQM have been recognized as the key factor of success to improve the organisation performance. The concepts of quality and innovation have become guiding elements for what, in the business world, is known as management excellence. That is, they constitute the centre of ongoing discussion and a strategic management orientation for formulating and implementing objectives, policies and performance. Quality and innovation, as guides for managerial activity, have been nourished by, and spread from, pragmatic positions of business consulting to become true management models, and thus the concepts have moved from being simple attributes of goods and services to become conceptual nucleus of what currently is known as Total Quality Management (TQM) and innovation management. Both elements fall within the operations management area, and can increase a firm's competitive advantage (Garrido et al., 2007).

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality

A frequently used definition of quality is "Delighting the customer by fully meeting their needs and expectations". These may include performance, appearance, availability, delivery, reliability, maintainability, cost effectiveness and price. It is, therefore, crucial that the organisation knows what these needs and expectations are. In addition, having identified them, the organisation must understand them, and measure its own ability to meet them. Quality starts with market research – to establish the true requirements for the product or service and the true needs of the customers. However, for an organisation to be really effective, quality must span all functions, all people, all departments and all activities and be a common language for improvement. The cooperation of everyone at every interface is necessary to achieve a total quality organisation.

Total Quality Management

TQM is the way of managing for the future, and is far wider in its application than just assuring product or service quality – it is a way of managing people and business processes to ensure complete customer satisfaction at every stage, internally and externally. TQM, combined with effective leadership, results in an organisation doing the right things right, first time. The core of TQM is the customer-supplier interfaces, both externally and internally, and at each interface lie a number of

processes. This core must be surrounded by commitment to quality, communication of the quality message, and recognition of the need to change the culture of the organisation to create total quality. These are the foundations of TQM, and they are supported by the key management functions of people, processes and systems in the organisation.

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

The importance of quality management in business organisations has increased significantly over the past 20 years especially in the developed countries such as United States and Japan (Benson et al., 1991). A review of the previous empirical studies on TQM suggests that researchers have defined TQM practices, activities and construct in numerous ways although they are complementary to each other (Jung & Wang, 2006). Saraph et al (1989) came up with some critical measuring factors for TQM which include role of management leadership, the role of quality department, quality data and reporting, training, employees' relations, product/service design process management, and supplier quality management. Flynn et al (1994) suggest some practices that constitute TQM. He mentioned top management support, customer involvement, quality information, workforce management, product design and process management, and supplier involvement as critical TQM activities that can enhance organisational performance. Tamimi (1995) used Deming's 14 principles as the theoretical base, he successfully interviewed the TQM activities execution of department managers of 173 companies and later came out with eight TQM elements, including the managers' commitment, supervisors' leadership, education, communication with horizontal department on quality improvement, management of the suppliers, training, product/service innovation and commitment to the employees. Quazi and Padibjo (1997) generalized executive items of TQM activities into six categories; leadership and planning, human resource application, business and service process and customer satisfaction. Parast et al (2006) conducted a study on the quality management practices that are in use in both United States and Mexico. They discovered that quality leadership, customer focus and satisfaction, quality information and analysis, support for human resource development, strategic planning process of quality management, supplier quality, quality results, and quality assurance of product and services are the major practices that are crucial to firm's performance in both United States and Mexico. Research findings of Sila (2007) revealed that in measuring the relationship between TQM and organizational performance, the following variables of TQM must put into consideration. They are leadership, customer focus, information and analysis, hu-

man resource management, process management, supplier management, organisational effectiveness, and financial and market results.

COMPONENTS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Commitment and Leadership

TQM is an approach to improving the competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility of an organisation for the benefit of all stakeholders. It is a way of planning, organising and understanding each activity, and of removing all the wasted effort and energy that is routinely spent in organisations. It ensures the leaders adopt a strategic overview of quality and focus on prevention not detection of problems. Whilst it must involve everyone, to be successful, it must start at the top with the leaders of the organisation. All senior managers must demonstrate their seriousness and commitment to quality, and middle managers must, as well as demonstrating their commitment, ensure they communicate the principles, strategies and benefits to the people for whom they have responsibility. Only then will the right attitudes spread throughout the organisation. A fundamental requirement is a sound quality policy, supported by plans and facilities to implement it. Leaders must take responsibility for preparing, reviewing and monitoring the policy. The following is a list of points that leaders should consider;

- The organisation needs a long-term commitment to continuous improvement.
- Adopt the philosophy of zero errors/defects to change the culture to right first time
- Train people to understand the customer/supplier relationships
- Do not buy products or services on price alone – look at the total cost
- Recognise that improvement of the systems must be managed
- Adopt modern methods of supervising and training
- Eliminate barriers between departments by managing the process – improve communications and teamwork
- Eliminate goals without methods, standards based only on numbers, barriers to pride of workmanship and fiction – get facts by studying processes
- Constantly educate and retrain – develop experts in the organisation
- Develop a systematic approach to manage the implementation of TQM

Quality Information and Analysis

The use of quality data and reporting system enables organisational improvement based on scientific statistical methods. The existence of accurate and timely quality data is a prerequisite to product design and process design.

Product and process management

Process refers to certain unique combinations of machines, tools, methods, materials, and people engaged in production. Process control and improvement connotes a set of methodological and behavioral practices, which are implemented to control and improve processes that produce products and services. From the TQM perspective, product management and process management go hand in hand in terms of both elements being a hard aspect of TQM. Enhancement made in

product design (e.g. standardization) enhances process design. Enhancement made in process design (e.g. concurrent engineering) enhances product design. Product design translates customer expectations for functional requirements into specific engineering and quality characteristics, which can be called specifications. Sound product design can contribute to the improvement of product quality to be better than that of competitors, increasing a firm's competitive advantage in the marketplace

Customer/supplier management

Customer management focuses on the degree to which a firm continuously satisfies customer needs and expectations. A successful firm recognizes the need to put the customer first in every decision made. The key to quality management is maintaining a close relationship with the customer in order to fully determine the customer's needs, as well as to receive feedback on the extent to which those needs are being met. Dissemination of customer-related information through the organisation (e.g. customer complaint resolution) enables effective relationship management. Employee empowerment and involvement through increased access to information and resources so that employees can make timely and more responsive decisions to customers can have a positive impact towards customer relations. Supplier quality management can be defined as the set of supplier-related quality management practices for improving suppliers' quality of products and services. This is exemplified by firm-supplier partnership, product quality as the criterion for supplier selection, participation in suppliers, communication with suppliers, understanding of supplier performance, and supplier quality audit.

Employees relations

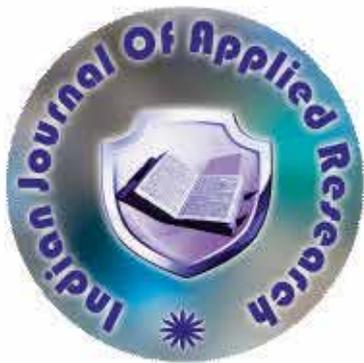
Employee participation can be defined as the degree to which employees in a firm engage in various quality management activities. By personally participating in quality management activities, employees acquire new knowledge, see the benefits of the quality disciplines, and obtain a sense of accomplishment by solving quality problems. Participation is decisive in inspiring action on quality management. Employee participation is exemplified by things such as teamwork, employee suggestions, and employee commitment. Empowering and involving all employees in making continuous improvement is essential; under such conditions, employees work harder and participate more in the change process. Management must ensure that an organisation-wide training program is available in order to equip employees with the proper skills. In order to participate in quality management practice, employees must be adequately trained in total quality management techniques

CONCLUSION

The paper concentrates on a significant TQM factors that has effect on organisational performance. Appropriateness of collection and communication of external and internal information, as well as application of statistical techniques to data analysis coupled with utilization of information have a greater impact on organisational performance. Often classified as 'hard' TQM elements, Quality information and analysis, employee relations customer/supplier management and product/process management, commitment & leadership seems for achieving greater organization performance through TQM.

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