
TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a feature which determines the efficiency of an organization in every aspect. TQM Programs are considered to be inevitable in every organization now days. It mainly focuses on the efficiency of the organization in every aspect. Most organizations have a program that incorporates some of the practices and principles of Total Quality Management. Lawler (1994) defines Total Quality Management as “a managerial approach which stresses the long term development and growth of the organization by customer satisfaction through total participation and the concept of total quality”.

Employee involvement is the process in which employees are participating in managerial decision making. True responsibility lies with the person or group who is actually doing the work (Oakland & Porter, 1994). Employee involvement refers to giving the participants opportunities to participate and simultaneously taking the ownership for the quality initiative that is critical in leading effective and sustainable change (Pun, 2002). This Study aim of the study is to determine the most effective employee involvement options that will be linked to specific organizational goals.

KEY WORDS: Total Quality Management, Employee involvement, ISO 9000,

INTRODUCTION

In the present globalized organizational environment, it is highly essential to practice employee involvement without lapse. There is growing evidence that both employee involvement and TQM can lead to substantial improvements over traditional bureaucratic management in many respects. Although employee involvement and TQM share some common themes and place a common emphasis on giving employees more responsibility, power, information, and knowledge, they are different in so many ways that they are not interchangeable.

The concept of employee involvement is relatively new and somewhat contradictory to the traditional style of management, in which management makes all the decisions and workers are there to follow its policies and directions to accomplish each job task. Workers today are more and more being asked by management to join employee involvement programs in order to improve the quality of their work lives. It is in the best interest of both workers and supervisors to increase happiness and satisfaction on the job, because happy and satisfied employees are productive employees who insure the employer’s profit and continued existence of the company and the worker’s jobs. The logical evolution of employee involvement is toward a substantial flattening of the organization and in many cases the elimination of substantial amounts of staff work and support work. There is little systematic theory or research which

suggests whether the TQM approach or the employee involvement approach is the best starting point for an organization that is thinking about changing its approach to management. Employee involvement may be postulated as the best choice since it stresses radical change rather than continuous improvement. In this context it is very important to study Total Quality Management and the role of employee involvement in Total Quality Management in the manufacturing organizations in Kerala.

OBJECTIVES

1. To gain insight of the nature of practice of Total Quality Management in the manufacturing organizations in Kerala.
2. To identify the extent to which the organizations are practicing employee involvement in the manufacturing organizations in Kerala.
3. To assess the practice of employee involvement in the private and public sector manufacturing organizations in Kerala.
4. To analyse the perception about the practice of employee involvement among the managers in the manufacturing organizations in Kerala.
5. To evaluate the perception about the practice of employee involvement among the workers in the manufacturing organizations in Kerala.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The type of research design for the study is descriptive research. The study focused on the medium and large scale manufacturing organisations in Kerala. A detailed review of literature was undertaken in order to identify various dimensions of Total Quality Management and Employee involvement. Several issues related to the topic under study were discussed with experts, researchers, industrialists, and other eminent personalities in the field of Industrial Engineering, Quality Management, Production Management, Operations Management, Maintenance Management and Quality Auditors to have an idea about the subject for finalizing the data and collecting the data. A careful survey of literature on the previous studies and discussion with practitioners and scholars in the field of Total Quality Management helped the researcher to collect to explore the important variables and concepts relevant to the area of study. The data was very helpful in evolving an appropriate methodology for the study and in formulating a conceptual framework of the study. The information and ideas obtained from the discussions were well utilised for the formulation of the framework for the study.

FIELD STUDY

Field study was done in randomly identified ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisations and non-ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisations. After the field study, the researcher felt that non-ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisations do not implement Total Quality Management in a systematic way. Hence researcher concluded that studying the practice of TQM in non-ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisation in the state of Kerala is not a potential area of study. Hence, non-ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisation in the state of Kerala were excluded from the study. After field study in randomly identified small scale industrial units, it was also understood that the practice of TQM among the small scale industry units was minimal, so these units were excluded from the study.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The population of this study includes the ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisations in the state of Kerala. The organisations which received ISO 9000 certification on/before April 2010 were considered for the study. The study focus only on the medium and large manufacturing organizations in the state of Kerala. The study excluded those organisations without ISO 9000 certification from the purview of the research.

The participating organisations were selected on the basis of multilevel stratified random sampling method. In the first level, the fourteen districts of Kerala were divided into three regions: southern region, central region, and northern region. Southern region consists of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, and Alappuzha districts. Central region consists of Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki and Thrissur districts. Northern region includes Malappuram, Kozhikode, Waynad, Palakkad, Kannur and Kasargod districts In Kerala State.

The population of the study is the medium and large scale manufacturing organisations in the state of Kerala. The researcher obtained the 2010 directory of ISO Certified medium and large scale manufacturing Industries in Kerala published by the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) for getting the information about the population. The sampling technique is multi- stage random sampling.

Ten organisations were randomly identified from each of the three regions: southern region, central region and northern region. Thirty organisations were contacted for permission for the study purpose and twenty six organisations responded. The major reason explained by the organisations for their non-co-operation was difficulty in revealing organisational information. The non-cooperating organisations were contacted again to explain the importance and the objectives of the study .Assurance was given that the study findings would be confidential and the findings would be used only for academic research purpose. Assurance was given that the name of the participating organisations will not be specified corresponding to the findings. After clarifying the queries, those organisations that initially refused to participate in the study gave consent to participate. The managers and workers of the medium and large scale ISO 9000 certified manufacturing organisations were the respondents of this study. The manager respondents included the Top executives, Top level Managers, Middle level Managers and Bottom level Managers. In this research the term used to represent this category is “Managers”. The worker respondents included the supervisors and workers of different grades and in this research the term used to represent this category is “Workers”. The primary data is collected from 5 manager category respondents and 10 worker category respondents from each organisations.

DATA COLLECTION

PREPARATION OF THE TOOL

The tool for data collection prepared by the researcher includes multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. Few questions were in five point Likert scale. Two different sets of questions were used to collect primary data on Total Quality Management and Employee involvement from the employees. Interview schedule for data collection on Total Quality Management included multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. For data collection on employee involvement questionnaire was prepared in five point Likert scale. Questionnaire was translated into Malayalam for ease of data collection from the workers. The content validity and face validity of the tools for data collection were checked with experts in the

field of management, business, industry, academics and statistics. The validity and reliability of the tools for data collection is assessed.

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted with the help of a draft interview schedule for evaluating the practice of Total Quality Management in ISO 9000 manufacturing organisations in the state of Kerala. A pilot study was conducted with the help of a draft questionnaire for evaluating the practice of employee involvement in manufacturing organisations in the state of Kerala. The respondents were randomly selected for the pilot study. Based on the pilot study, the aspects irrelevant to the topic with respect to the population were removed and the aspects relevant to the topic with respect to the population were added. After conducting a thorough analysis of the data collected from the pilot study, the style of some of the questions were modified to avoid probable ambiguities and to obtain more reliable, unbiased and accurate answers. Slight rearrangements in the logical order of the questions were also done.

COLLECTION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA

In order to investigate the research problem and answer the research questions, primary data were collected from the selected manufacturing organisations. The data was collected from the samples on Total Quality Management by conducting interviews. The researcher himself conducted interviews with the samples. This ensured the accuracy and authenticity of the collected data. Questionnaire was used to collect the data on employee involvement. The questionnaires used to collect the data on employee involvement from the managers were distributed in English language since the responding persons were managerial executives. The questionnaires used to collect the data on employee involvement from the workers were in the local language, Malayalam. The questionnaires were distributed and collected personally from the respondents. This ensured that the questionnaire was completely filled in. The primary data is collected from 5 manager category respondents and 10 worker category respondents from each organisations.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data collected from the respondents have been classified, tabulated and analysed by applying appropriate mathematical and statistical techniques. Statistical results have been derived with the help of the SPSS software. Frequencies and Percentages are computed. One way ANOVA and independent sample t-test is done to analyse the data.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Certain suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the Total Quality Management and employee involvement in the manufacturing organisations in the light of this research study is summarised in this section.

- For the successful Total Quality Management practice, there must be a strategic plan that identifies the clear organisational goals. This plan involves a long-term endeavour to create and sustain the new culture, which reflects the systems approach and optimises the employee involvement and organisational performance.
- The top management has a pivotal role in establishing TQM concepts throughout the organisation. Top management should be committed to the application of Total Quality Management. The top

management should allocate adequate resources for the implementation and maintenance of quality initiatives. The top management should exhibit their commitment towards quality in all their actions.

- In the organisation, there is a strong need to create a new culture, which is fulfilled with the sense of shared values, organisational trust, team work, and all other constituents necessary for the process of implementing continuous improvement in the organisation.
- Employees should be empowered through decentralisation of decision making. Employees should be encouraged to be involved in decision making. When employees present appropriate strategy suggestions or quality initiatives, it is essential that the management committee to offer reinforcement and motivation for the employees .The incentives rendered would increase the satisfaction and self-esteem of the employees. It is recommended to develop a long term relationship of trust and commitment with the employees by the organisation.
- Effective leadership is very crucial in the organisation. The leaders should look at the organisation not as individual functions but as unified collective whole.
- The top management is not expected to practice an autocratic or bureaucratic leadership style in a TQM environment. A transformational and reengineered style of leadership style is highly sought in a TQM practicing organisation. Top management should listen to the employees and encourage feedback from the employees. In a TQM environment, the traditional 'superior' style of management need to be changed to a 'facilitator' style. The top management should develop commitment for the transition of role.
- Decision making in the organisation should be evidence based, i.e. Based on facts and data.
- A transition from the traditional hierarchical to a functional team structure is expected in the organisation is said to practice TQM. A functional team structure is to be adopted for improving organisational effectiveness.
- System costs and savings are to be reported.
- The manufacturing organisations should support and facilitate quality teams. The quality teams will have multi-faceted benefits to the organisation and for the employees.
- A quality committee has to be organised to implement and assess the Total Quality Management. Quality circle is to be very effectively practiced by the organisations in their pursuit of TQM. The practice of quality circle is very important in many ways: The workers feel proud of giving suggestions for the improvement of the organisations. Since the workers are always in touch with the work they are the right people to give suggestions regarding the work. Moreover, quality circle would improve the morale of the employees.
- The suggestion systems are used to solicit, collect, evaluate and adopt or turn down suggestions from the employees. Certain requisites for good suggestions are: All suggestions should receive a formal response. All suggestions are to be responded immediately. Performance of each department in generating and responding to suggestions to be monitored by the management. Be sure to let the employees know that their suggestions are appreciated. Encourage future suggestions. If the suggestions are not accepted, appreciate the effort in giving suggestions.
- Standardised process with a performance measurement system to assess the progress of Total Quality Management practice has to be established.
- Practice of Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) is an important tool for employee empowerment and for improving shop-floor efficiency. Practice of TPM with the right conviction and with right authority by the organisational members is highly suggested for the effective implementation of TPM.
- 5S is basically a systematic and rational approach to methodological housekeeping built on a sound economic base. The practice of 5S will ensure service efficiencies, better quality system, safer

workplace, higher employee morale, efficient workplace layout and better material handling. It is certainly the first step towards continuous improvement.

- The TQM practicing organisations are expected to have a collaborative culture in which there will be shared vision, high degree of openness, high degree of empowerment. It is recommended to have a collaborative culture in the organisations to practice TQM.
- Provide information technology based communication systems.
- Continuous training to be instituted for the employees in the area of quality. Both on-the-job and off-the-job training is to be arranged.
- A work study team needs to be planned and executed in the organisation. The works study team could carefully scan the shop-floor for studying the work. The suggestions of works study team need to be incorporated for the efficient manufacturing organisations.
- Employees are to be empowered by providing them with the tools and equipment's necessary to carry out their work. This include the availability and accessibility of new machines, new material handling equipment's or any variety of tools identified by the employees as necessary for increasing the operational efficiency. It is also necessary to ensure that the workers get the same type of materials all the time.
- The whole hearted commitment of the employees could be obtained through providing team-sprit and togetherness among the employees. It is suggested to provide an environment which could create a culture of oneness in the organisation. Informal recreation programmes outside the working hours, company sponsored tours, and other group programmes are to be designed by the HR department for making the employees feel more dedicated to their organisations.
- A reward and recognition system has to be setup. This is beneficial as it would encourage employees to participate in the Total Quality Management. With a change in management evaluation and recognition for high performance, Total Quality Management would be taken more seriously by the employees. The attribute for selecting the best performing employee should be by considering their commitment, creativity, flexibility, adaptability, determination and responsibility.
- Recognition and rewards are to be handled promptly. The organisation should recognise the teams as well as the individuals for harmony in the system. The organisation should not keep on changing the type of awards. The organisation should periodically announce the rewards. It could be appreciation in annual meeting, mementos, certificates and cash awards.
- Those organisations wish to implement TQM for the first time, it is highly suggested to attempt for benchmarking. This could be done by following the good TQM practices of the best organisations in the industry or in different industries.
- Total Quality Management education and training need to be effectively organised and carried out properly. When training the employees on the Total Quality Management principles, the benefits for the employees and to the organisation are properly communicated and convinced for effective execution of the Total Quality Management principles.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study concentrates on the employee involvement in ISO Certified medium and large scale manufacturing organisations in Kerala. The study focused on a specific sector, i.e., manufacturing sector. Hence, specific attention is to be paid in attempting to generalize the results to other economic sectors and small scale manufacturing organisations.

- The study has focused in the state of Kerala. The socioeconomic, cultural and political context of this particular region might have influenced the response to the questionnaire and the validity of the findings.
- Since the vision and mission of each business enterprise is unique and different and each organisation has a set target to achieve in the financial year, the strategies and plans of production and operation are dynamic. The strategies have significant influence in Quality management initiatives of the organization. These factor might have influenced the quality of the data collected and there by the results.
- Moreover, research projects in longitudinal nature additional insights of the dynamic growth process may be gained.
- Case study of select organisations could have given a better picture on the topic under study.
- Relying upon self-reported questionnaire of informants might cause respondent biases and potentially affect the findings. Collection of data from multiple respondents through case studies would enhance the validity of findings.

CONCLUSION

Total Quality Management is a much broader concept than just controlling the quality of the product itself. Total Quality Management is the relationship between quality and productivity. It emphasizes process improvement to improve the quality of the product or service, reducing costs, and higher productivity. Through this study the researcher has attempted to identify how the core elements of Total Quality Management are practiced in the manufacturing organisations in the state of Kerala. This study has revealed the dynamics of employee involvement practiced in the manufacturing organisations in the state of Kerala. The study has clearly established a link between the need of employee involvement and practice of TQM. Through this study, it is understood that there is significant difference in the practice of employee involvement in the private and public sector manufacturing organisations in Kerala. The study has concluded that the perception about the practice of TQM among the managers and workers of manufacturing organisations shows significant difference. TQM requires a turnaround corporate culture as compared to the old transitional form of management in which the top managers give instructions and the employees simply abide them. In an efficient and effective TQM program, the organizational chart is more flattened and there is a shared responsibility between managers and employees and this will eventually resolve quality problems faster and easier because everyone would be responsible for their activity.

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