

Effectiveness of Total Quality Management in Nepal: A Case Study of Hospitality Sector

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ABSTRACT

In this 21st century, globally quality is the foremost emphasized in any sector, whether it is manufacturing or service sector. It leads to the competitive advantage to an organization. In this front, TQM implementation gives a cutting edge to the organization. In Nepalese context there is an increasing interest in TQM in service sector including hospitality, for providing company with a competitive advantage. A sample of 250 employees of hospitality sector in Nepal was taken with convenience sampling techniques, returned 226 questionnaires. It can be concluded in results that TQM is an important tool to manage organization successfully. TQM focuses strongly on the importance of the relationship between customers and as well as employee. It is practiced moderately. The dimensions of TQM - top management commitment & leadership, continuous improvement, quality planning, customer focus, service design, supplier relationship and employee management are equally vital and contribute to the instatement of TQM in hospitality industry. All the dimensions have positive correlation with effectiveness of TQM. Likewise, all dimensions have their impact over the effectiveness of TQM; employee management has the strongest impact on effectiveness of total quality management.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, hospitality sector, continuous improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Quality has a great importance in the hospitality industry (Saunders and Graham, 1992). As expectations of customers and potential customers have escalated, hospitality organizations have found the implementation of quality to be an important competitive component in the global market (Cannon, 2002). In this 21st century, globally quality is the foremost emphasized in any sector, whether it is manufacturing or service sector. It leads to the competitive advantage to an organization. In this front, TQM implementation gives a cutting edge to the organization. It is philosophy of continuous improvement to meet the expectation of the customer. In Nepalese context there is an increasing interest in TQM in service sector including hospitality, for providing company with a competitive advantage. It is more important when quality is referred to the hospitality sector, as it is the quality of the service provided by the employees and their ability to providing satisfied services to the

expectations of the guests. Therefore, the study aims at examining the effectiveness of total quality management in Nepalese hospitality sector.

Purpose of the Study

The following are the objective of the study:

- To explore the TQM practices of the Nepalese hospitality sector.
- To identify the effective dimensions of TQM in the Nepalese hospitality sector.
- To examine the relationship of dimensions of TQM and effectiveness of TQM the Nepalese hospitality sector.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the study.

H1: There is significant impact of top management commitment over effectiveness of total quality management.

H2: There is significant impact of continuous improvement over effectiveness of total quality management.

H3: There is significant impact of quality planning and over effectiveness of total quality management.

H4: There is significant impact of customer focus and over effectiveness of total quality management.

H5: There is significant impact of service design over effectiveness of total quality management

H6: There is significant impact of service design over effectiveness of total quality management

H7: There is significant impact of employee management over effectiveness of total quality management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TQM is the system of activities directed at achieving delighted customers, empowered employees, higher revenues, and lower costs (Juran & Gryna, 1993). TQM is an approach in which all company's people are involved in constantly improving the quality of product, services, business processes (Kotler and Haque, 2010).

In the hospitality industry, TQM was first used when Quality Assurance (QA) was introduced in the 1980s (Hall, 1990). Specifically, the implementation of quality management in the hospitality industry started from 1982 when the American hospitality industry implemented QA Systems and achieved excellence outcomes (Walker and Salameh, 1990). However, few hotels have heard about TQM (Walker and Salameh, 1990), and therefore there is still a lack of literature about TQM in hospitality industry. In the last decade, many hospitality organizations have shown more interest in the concept of TQM. There are a limited number of empirically researched studies of TQM in the hospitality industry, Breiter and Kline (1995) identified that leadership, customer focus, and vision and values as dimensions of TQM in the hotel industry, followed by training, communications, empowerment, alignment of organizational systems, and implementation.

TQM dimensions are the wide-ranging according to different TQM authors. In the history of TQM philosophy, scholars like Deming, Juran, Feigenbaum, Garvin, Crosby, and Ishikawa defined the concept of quality and total quality management in different ways.

Individual scholars precast the context of TQM practices. Collectively, they developed a conceptual framework that has evolved into a worldwide movement that some would call a transformation of every aspect of manufacturing and service (Smith and Lewis 1997).

Deming emphasized on quality is a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability, at low cost and suited to the market. He propounded fourteen principles of TQM that can be seen in terms of improving the performance of the Organization. Ishikawa contributed to this area by using a cause and effect diagram (Ishikawa diagram) to diagnose quality problems (Kruger, 2001). Garvin (1987), advocated quality in standings of the transcendent, product based, user based, and manufacturing based and value based approaches. He propounded eight attributes of quality product. Likewise, Juran simple defined TQM or quality as how fit is the product for use. He gave Juran trilogy- quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement. In other front Crosby defined quality as conformance to requirements or specifications. Crosby identified 14 steps for a zero defect quality improvement plan to achieve performance improvement (Kruger, 2001). In similar manner, Feigenbaum forwarded the concept TQM in organization wide total quality control. He defined quality as "the total composite product and service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacturing and maintenance through which the product and service in use will meet the expectations by the customer" (Kruger, 2001).

TQM emphases on customer needs and necessities, side on side adding value to the product and service as being provided by the Organisation. Voehl (1992), and Lewis and Smith (1994) identify four fundamental principles or pillars that form the basis of the application of TQM within the organization: customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, speaking with facts, and respect for people (Smith and Lewis 1997). Milosan (2011), research surmised that there are six key elements to successfully implement A TQM process: confidence, training, teamwork, leadership, recognition, and communication.

Likewise, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) 2001 gives the dimension of TQM as human resources focus, leadership, strategic planning, process management, information and analysis, customer and market

focus. Saraph, Benson, and Schroder (1989) gives eight dimension of TQM- Role of divisional top management and quality policy, role of the quality department, training, product and service design, supplier quality management, process management, quality data and reporting, and employee relations. Flynn, Schroder, and Sakakibara (1994) identified seven factors of TQM effectiveness- top management support, quality information, process management, product design, workforce management, supplier involvement, and customer involvement. Likewise, Ahire, Golhar, and Waller (1996) developed 12 dimensions of TQM in their research supplier quality management, supplier performance, customer focus, statistical process control usage, benchmarking, internal quality information usage, employee involvement, employee training, design quality management, employee empowerment, product quality, and top management commitment. Dale and Plunkett (1990) used the dimensions of management commitment, education and training, employee involvement, teamwork, customer focus, benchmarking, quality information and analysis, process management, continuous improvement and organizational culture for their research.

Subsequently there are numerous studies in TQM. Few studies in Asia has been done like Almansour (2015) investigated the effect of TQM of firms' performance in industrial sector, concluded that the adoption of TQM practices improve performance. The dimension used in this study was leadership, knowledge management, process management, training, supplier quality management, customer focus and strategic quality. Likewise, Munizu (2013) found that TQM practices have positive and significant effect both on organizational performance and competitive advantage. El-Tohamy and Raoush (2015) found significant impact of all TQM principles on the overall hospital effectiveness. The dimension used in this study was Leadership commitment to quality, Customer focus, Continuous improvement, Teamwork, Employee involvement, education and training. Mehmood, Qadeer, and Ahmad (2014), focuses on four TQM dimensions; customer focus, continuous improvement, employee involvement, top management support to identify the most critical quality dimensions as predictor of organizational performance.

Results reveal that continuous improvement and employee involvement are the most critical dimensions for predicting organizational performance. Idris (2011) examines the relationship between TQM elements and sustainable company performances. Using exploratory factor analysis, six dimensions were considered, leadership, best practices, customer focus, employee focus, community focus and productivity focus and argued that the leadership within the TQM constructs is the most influencing factor.

Major common dimensions of TQM is conceptualize based on literature review for this study- top management commitment & leadership, continuous improvement, quality planning, customer focus, service design, supplier relationship, and employee management.

METHODOLOGY

Explanatory research design was carried out for the purpose of carrying out this research. Convenience sampling techniques was adopted with a sample of 250 employees of hospitality sector in Nepal. The researcher distributed questionnaires to a total of 250 respondents, whereas 226 collected, the response rate was only 90.4%. Questionnaire was prepared in six point Likert scale questions indicating the dimensions of TQM as framed in this research. Santos-Vijande (2007), Das, Paul, and Swierczek (2008) was referred to desing the 35 opinion statement in questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared with the reference of (Vijande and Gonzalez, 2007) (Dyba, 2001) (Das, Paul, and Swierczek, 2008).

The data was analyzed in SPSS 23v. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed for the data analysis.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

There were more male than female employees in this research, 51.3% were male and 48.7% were female. Likewise, most of the respondents were of age group from 20 to 30 years consists of 54.0%, married accounted for 52.2%, income level from 40000 to 60000 consists of 36.3% and work experience from 1 to 2 year accounts for 30.1%.

Table1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Age (in year)	N	%	Age (in year)	N	%
Male	116	51.3	Below 20	2	0.9
Female	110	48.7	20 to 30	122	54
Marital Status	N	%	30 to 40	50	22.1
Married	118	52.2	40 and above	52	23
Unmarried	108	47.8	Income level (in NPR)	N	%
Work Experience	N	%	Below 20000	34	15
Less than 1 year	42	18.6	20000-40000	60	26.5
2-Jan	68	30.1	40000-60000	82	36.3
4-Mar	60	26.5	60000 & above	50	22.1
4 and above	56	24.8	Total	226	100
Total	226	100			

Status of Total Quality Management in Nepalese Hospitality Industry

TQM in Nepalese sector is not so encouraging. It is moderately adopted in these organizations. This study covers the eight variables of TQM as presented in table 2. The results indicate that overall TQM adoption is moderate, the respondent employees simply agree towards the implementation of TQM activities is effective in their company. The mean value for total quality management is 4.57 ($SD=0.971$), indicates that the total quality management is moderately adopted in Nepalese hospitality industry. TQM activities have moderately resulted in the growth

of the industry as a whole. In similar manner, the dimension of the TQM is also moderately adopted by the hospitality industry. The overall mean value for top management commitment & leadership is 4.63 ($SD=0.872$). The overall mean value for continuous improvement is 4.37 ($SD=0.903$). The overall mean value for quality planning is 4.34 ($SD=0.957$). Likewise, the overall mean value for customer focus is 4.70 ($SD= 0.977$). The overall mean value for service design is 4.31 ($SD= 0.997$). The overall mean value for supplier relationship is 4.27 ($SD=1.059$). The overall mean value for employee management is 4.34 ($SD=0.989$).

Table2. Descriptive statistics of TQM dimensions

Dimensions	M	SD
Top management commitment & leadership	4.63	0.872
Continuous improvement	4.37	0.903
Quality planning	4.34	0.957
Customer focus	4.70	0.977
Service design	4.31	0.997
Supplier relationship	4.27	1.059
Employee management	4.34	0.989
Total quality management	4.57	0.971

Results indicate that most of the respondents slightly agree that the Leaders consider quality management as a way to increase competitive advantage in their organization. There is a moderate situation of leaders listen and support employees and encourage them to take part in deciding and managing total quality policies and plans. Likewise, results indicate that the industry is systematically and continuously learning from the experience of prior service being catered. It is a con that they are systematically and continuously learning from the experience of prior service being catered. These hospitality organizations had a clear set of work instructions, documentation and quality manual. However, they have moderate

information on quality data available to management and employees. Quality-related customer complaints are treated with top priority in these organizations. However, these organizations are not so encouraging in conducting market research & surveys for collecting suggestions for improving quality of our service. The customer requirements are thoroughly considered in new service design. Similarly, the suppliers are selected based on quality rather than price or delivery schedule in these hospitality organizations. However, the involvement of the supplier in their product/service development process is not very high. In the employee relationship management, recognition and reward activities are used

moderately stimulate employee commitment to quality improvement. Employee’s quality circles have not been priorities.

Relationship between Dimensions of TQM and Effectiveness of TQM

The correlation analysis results indicate that top management commitment & leadership (r = 0.690, p<0.01), continuous improvement (r = 0.676, p<0.01), quality planning (r = 0.700, p<0.01), customer focus (r = 0.675, p<0.01), service design (r = 0.643, p<0.01), supplier

relationship (r = 0.624, p<0.01) and employee management (r = 0.744, p<0.01) has positive correlation with effectiveness of the TQM in hospitality organization. The correlation is significant at 1% level of significance. Employee management as the dimension of TQM had the highest strength of correlation, followed by quality planning and top management commitment & leadership at the top three dimensions. The correlation analysis is presented in table 3.

Table3. Relationships between TQM dimensions and effectiveness of TQM

		Effectiveness of Total Quality Management
Top Management Commitment & leadership	r	.690**
	p	.001
Continuous Improvement	r	.676**
	p	.001
Quality Planning	r	.700**
	p	.001
Customer Focus	r	.675**
	p	.001
Service Design	r	.643**
	p	.001
Supplier Relationship	r	.624**
	p	.001
Employee Management	r	.744**
	p	.001

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Impact of the TQM Dimensions over Effectiveness of TQM

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to analyze the impact of dimensions of TQM over total quality management. The regression analysis outlined in table 4 indicates that there is a total impact of 68.2% (R²=0.682), explained by the seven TQM dimensions. Likewise, the value of F=32.101 (p=0.001), indicate the model is significant and predict the goodness-of-fit of the regression model. In similar manner, the individual impact of the dimensions of TQM over the effectiveness of TQM is explained with

regression model. Employee Management (β7=0.345, p=0.001) carries the heaviest weight for total quality management, followed by Top Management Commitment & Leadership (β1=0.172, p=0.009), Quality Planning (β3=0.160, p=0.001), Service Design (β5=0.153, p=0.006), Customer Focus (β4=0.085, p=.005), Supplier Relationship (β6=0.057, p=0.041), and Continuous Improvement (β2= 0.019, p=0.033). The equation for impact of dimensions of TQM over effectiveness of TQM is expressed in the following equation:

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + e_i$$

Where,

Ŷ = Total Quality Management (dependent variable)

X1 = Top Management Commitment & Leadership

X2 = Continuous Improvement

X3 = Quality Planning

X4 = Customer Focus

X5 = Service Design

X6 = Supplier Relationship

X7 = Employee Management

α = Constant

β1, β2... β5 = Regression coefficients of dimension 1 to dimension 7 respectively

e_i = Error term

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$$\hat{Y} = .232 + 0.172*X1 + 0.019*X2 + 0.160*X3 + 0.085*X4 + 0.153*X5 + 0.057*X6 + 0.345*X7$$

Table 4. Standardized Regression Weights (Regression Model)

Hypotheses	Exogenous		Endogenous	Estimate	S.E.	P	Result	R2	F	p
H1	TMCL	=>	ETQM	0.172	0.107	0.009	Accepted	0.682	32.101	***
H2	CI	=>	ETQM	0.019	0.11	0.033	Accepted			
H3	QP	=>	ETQM	0.16	0.097	***	Accepted			
H4	CF	=>	ETQM	0.085	0.092	0.005	Accepted			
H5	SD	=>	ETQM	0.153	0.082	0.006	Accepted			
H6	SR	=>	ETQM	0.057	0.074	0.041	Accepted			
H7	EM	=>	ETQM	0.345	0.087	***	Accepted			

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

In view of the path analysis, the regression weight had made it clear understanding of impact of dimension of TQM over effectiveness of TQM. Path analysis determined the theoretically based hypotheses formulated for this study. All hypotheses are accepted.

H1: There is significant impact of top management commitment over effectiveness of total quality management.

The impact of top management commitment over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 1% level of significance.

Hence, H1 is accepted.

H2: There is significant impact of continuous improvement over effectiveness of total quality management.

The impact of continuous improvement over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 5% level of significance. Hence, H2 is accepted.

H3: There is significant impact of quality planning and over effectiveness of total quality management.

The impact of quality planning over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 1% level of significance. Hence, H3 is accepted.

H4: There is significant impact of customer focus and over effectiveness of total quality management.

The impact of customer focus over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 1% level of significance. Hence, H4 is accepted.

H5: There is significant impact of service design over effectiveness of total quality management

The impact of service design over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 1% level of significance. Hence, H5 is accepted.

H6: There is significant impact of service design over effectiveness of total quality management

The impact of service design over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 5% level of significance. Hence, H6 is accepted.

H7: There is significant impact of employee management over effectiveness of total quality management

The impact of employee management over effectiveness of total quality management is significant at 1% level of significance. Hence, H7 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study shows that Customer focus had the highest mean among the dimensions; this indicates that customer focus is given high priority in total quality management in Nepalese context. The past research has also found a link between total quality management and dimensions of total quality management such as customer focus & continuous improvement (Brah, Wong, & Rao, 2000). Customer feedback process is an integral part of the TQM approach. The results concur with the work of (Rad, 2005) who found that giving no attention to customers and their needs and wants is another reason for TQM failure in hotel organizations. Satisfied Customers' return to the hotel and recommend the hotel to others hence increased competitiveness which translates to profitability (Kotler, 2000). Thus, hospitality industries must uninterruptedly appraise the customer perception and expectation on regular basis for continuous improvement. Measures need to be made where improvement is possible, rather than merely monitoring people's work (Tsang and Antony, 2001).

The dimensions of TQM were found to be positively correlated with the effectiveness of TQM in hospitality sector in Nepal. This finding confirmed and supported the findings of

previous studies like Hendricks and Singhal (2001), Terziovski and Samson (2000), Kaynak (2003), Rahman and Bullock (2005), and Gimenez-Espin, Jiménez-Jiménez, and MartínezCosta (2013). These studies found that TQM has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance and effectiveness in direct or in indirect way. Among all of the dimensions of TQM employee management has the highest correlation. Likewise, correlation coefficient shows that there is significant correlation between all dimension of total quality management and total quality management.

The impact analysis shows that the employee management has the strongest impact on effectiveness of total quality management. This study revealed that the level of employee engagement is quite high and therefore, it does reflect the view of Zairi (2000), who reported that the issue of employee commitment and involvement, as a critical quality factor for successful TQM adoption. In order to build a quality culture, employee motivation need to be adapted to the cultural setting (Berman, Milakovich, and West, 1996). Likewise, Management commitment is another essential antecedent of TQM success Huq (1996), Zairi (2000), Taylor and Wright (2003), Rad (2005). The results reflect the findings of Rad (2006), who concluded that, if hotel managers were committed to TQM; its success was greater than in other organizations with a lower management commitment. This finding indicates there must be changes in attitudes, communications, employee involvement and commitment if the hotel intends to adopt TQM.

Several studies have argued that TQM principles should be applied in every organization (Lakhali, Pasin, and Limam, 2006). It has been emphasized that all departments have to collaborate together to accomplish the required level of the performance throughout TQM implementation, and it is not just top management responsibility, or quality unit, it is an integration of top management & leadership commitment, management, continuous improvement to provide high quality outcomes which include customer satisfaction (Lakhali, Pasin, and Limam, 2006). Teamwork, continuous improvement, integrated coordination, creativity and innovation are the bases of TQM philosophy. The capable managerial leadership is the mainstay for executing TQM.

CONCLUSION

Total quality management is a significant notion for managing organization effectively. Total quality management is especially more important in case of service based organizations in hospitality sector. It can be concluded here that TQM is an important tool to manage organization successfully. TQM focuses strongly on the importance of the relationship between customers and as well as employee. In Nepalese hospitality industry, total quality management is practiced moderately. All dimensions are identified as vital and affect effectiveness of total quality management. The dimensions of TQM - top management commitment & leadership, continuous improvement, quality planning, customer focus, service design, supplier relationship and employee management are equally vital and contribute to the instatement of TQM in hospitality industry. All the dimensions have positive correlation with effectiveness of TQM. Likewise, all dimensions have their impact over the effectiveness of TQM, employee management has the strongest impact on effectiveness of total quality management.

Hence, in the context of Nepalese hospitality industry, managers should focus on customer focus as one of the most important elements of total quality management. Total quality management helps the organization strengthen customer focus and employee management. Since, total quality management is continuous process; managers should perform total quality management at all levels and dimensions.

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