

# Formulation of Conceptual Model of Total Quality Management Practice with Organisational Performance of UAE Service Industry

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## ABSTRACT

UAE service industry constitutes nearly 55% of the total country GDP. UAE diversification policy such as introduction of TQM, it improves the services sectors activities, such as tourism and financial services. Hence, this paper presents a study on formulation of conceptual model that link TQM practices elements with organisational performance for service industry. Based on the TQM theories such as Deming's theory, Juran's theory, Crosby's theory, Feigenbaum's theory and Ishikawa's theory, the key practices of TQM are knowledge management, strategic planning, quality-oriented leadership, continuous improvement, customer focus, organizational culture, and supplier partnerships. While the impact of adopting the practices of TQM is measured in terms of performance improvement, customer satisfaction levels, financial gains, cost reduction, and achievement of performance targets in time and within the resources available. Finally, in the context of the UAE the conceptual model was presented. This model can be further analysed using structural equation modelling with data collected from service industry respondents.

## Keywords

TQM practices; organisational performance, conceptual model

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## 1. Introduction

Saif (2012) studied TQM in UAE environment and found that that previous researchers did not take sufficient time to actually determine TQM success factors which required to establish it within entities where it should be used, particularly in the Middle East. Another recent research by Al-Shdaifat (2015), when focusing on Jordan which is part of the Middle East, laments about the deficiency of research and explorations in connection with the use of TQM. In addition, a research conducted recently by Small, Ayyash, and Hamouri (2017) found that the establishment of TQM in Dubai, with specific attention to the construction and mechanical industries. Understandably, the construction industry is fundamentally concerned with the provision of services especially when it comes to building. Whereas such research remains deficient as argued in studies dating back to as recent as one year ago, Waal and Frijns (2016) reveal that employees of UAE's organizations have barely appreciated the need for TQM. They have not adopted a positive perception towards its implementation within the respective organizations. In the same light, the management of the organizations is not abundantly convinced to update their entities into high-quality companies or agencies.

This finding resonates a lot with the objectives of this research which specifically seeks to focus on the service industry. Yet, the private organizations are facing excellence challenges with other competitors, therefore they have adapted the implementation of TQM as a tool for excellence, and as an effective method for improving the final quality, raise the organization's performance, and keeping the survival in the diverse business environment. But when talking about the service industry, the matter becomes difficult, because it is a different approach from other sectors in many characteristics. The final product of these organizations is intangible and that makes it difficult to measure even through the customer's satisfaction, or the performance of the organization.

TQM is a novel philosophy in the business environment, and its practices, tools, aspects, and principles still uncommon among some employees and managers of many organizations. The implementation of TQM relies on the awareness and skills gained by both employees and managers of the organizations (Al-Qahtani et al., 2015). In addition, during the last few decades, TQM has been recognized as a key element in management theory and practice. In the 1990s, TQM was adopted by a lot of Western organizations (Sun et al., 2004) and the literature provides approaches

that can be used to enhance the quality of goods and products, ranging from behavioural approaches that emphasize teamwork and participative management to technical approaches that involve using statistical techniques. Both types of approaches are used with a view to the organizational processes and designing experiments that determine the essential factors that can affect the quality of products and services. According to some researchers, the incorporation of TQM philosophy and methods is a key factor to improve quality. However, there is less consensus as to what the main elements of TQM are, or what the general definition of TQM is. In fact, there is no common view of TQM today, and TQM has been realized differently by different people. Yet, an important factor that should be considered to ensure the success of TQM adoption is the development of a sound implementation structure prior to the start of the phase of transition (Smadi & Khawlidah, 2006).

Over the last three decades, Dubai has changed significantly, becoming a major business hub with a more diverse and dynamic economy. Dubai enjoys a strategic position and serves as the largest re-export hub in the Middle East. Due to its low logistical and operating costs, good infrastructure, opening up to the outside world, and promotion policies, Dubai has become an attractive environment for the investment of all types, which has led to strong economic growth. At the national level, Dubai's manufacturing sector is seen as a driving force for industrial development in the UAE. More than 25 percent of the country's manufactured goods are produced by this sector annually. The manufacturing sector is a significant element of a diverse economic base at the national level. This sector has contributed significantly to the Emirate's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since 1992 (Rosidawati et al., 2017). While great efforts have been made by the government of Dubai to encourage firms and companies to adopt TQM to improve the quality of products and services, there has been no practical procedures in this regard. A number of issues related to quality management are still unclear.

Reviewing the literature on quality management in Dubai, the researcher can state that there is little empirical research has been done in relation to the implementation of TQM in Dubai's private organizations. Due to this,

managers of firms and organizations find it difficult to get the information they need to be able to adopt the practices of TQM. In order to cover the gap and provide these firms with practical assistance in the area of TQM practices, this research aim of this study is to put a highlight on the implemented TQM practice in the services industry in the private sector in UAE to determine whether these organizations reached their goal by applying TQM practices.

Therefore, this field still needs more research works to provide a full understanding for this philosophy and help organizations to expand its benefit of TQM practices. Moreover, by reviewing the literature which concluded that all principals of TQM are the same, but its implementation differs among studies of utmost importance is the fact that most of the research studies focus on advanced and already developed countries with very few centring on UAE and Middle East in general as shown in the different research studies reviewed above.

## 2. Need of TQM in UAE service sector

TQM has become one of the terms of management that have not been understood fully. That is why different researchers defined TQM differently. TQM is defined as a "structured and comprehensive approach that organizations use to improve the quality of products and services" (Obaid, Ali, Saleh, Thami, & Minhas, 2015). Besides, TQM is viewed as a mechanism in which companies actively work to enhance their products or services through involving both the management approach and the expertise of workers. It is an integration of quality and management resources with a view to reducing losses and improving the market share of the company (Hashmi, 2010; Kanorio, 2014). Other researchers view TQM as a philosophy that stresses the quality of products or services through addressing the satisfaction of consumers by predicting their needs and desires (Kanorio, 2014). The implementation of TQM requires making comprehensive changes in the culture of the company to focus on the client, which needs thorough the participation and engagement of all management resources as a policy of the company to enhance products or services of the company in a way that meets the satisfaction of its customers (Kanorio, 2014; Talib et al., 2013).

In most cases, TQM is used by professionals and academics as an approach to change management with a view to enhancing the quality of products and services of a company in a way that helps it to improve its competitiveness (Arumugam, Chang, Ooi, & Teh, 2009). It is important to remember, however, that TQM can contribute significantly to the improvement of the management strategies of companies for the sake of revamping their quality of value distribution. Consequently, to ensure continual improvement of their service delivery so as to promote the longevity of companies, it is necessary that companies apply TQM. In fact, at the present time, not only competitiveness, but also the continuous changes and alteration in contexts in which companies work has necessitated the need for TQM (Talib, Rahman, & Azam, 2013). Researchers and scholars have identified a variety of TQP activities that have been deemed to have generated value in companies as well as improving their competitiveness at various levels.

In relation to UAE, the service industry constitutes nearly 55% of the total GDP of the seven emirates (HKTDC-Research, 2017). The UAE diversification policy makes it one of the region's most prosperous nations, particularly by improving activities in the services sectors, such as tourism and financial services. The report of HSBC showed that the contribution of services to the country's overall exports grew from (16%) in 2000 to (23%) in 2015 (Augustine, 2016). The service industry is considered the tertiary sector of the world's economies. The service sector outputs are distinct resources that make life or things appropriate. The service industry, which serves other economic industries, is an important part of the economy. Besides, service organizations can also offer resources for people or for their assets. Additionally, the service could be tangible such as services of installation, maintenance, and repair after buying products, or intangible, such as insurance, ICT, and education (Talib et al., 2012). At the present time, quality has been recognized as the primary element in business success and has been highly encouraged across sectors (Masejane, 2012). Similarly, the service quality can improve the competition potential for companies in the services sector and companies can enhance their competitiveness by enhancing their service quality (Hasan & Kerr, 2003). TQM has been primarily used as an efficient

management technique for different services sectors with the key goal of optimizing the efficiency of companies by successful inclusion of various models, policies, staff, and communication and management systems to respond to all the needs of customers (Abdul Aziz et al., 2015; Gharakhani et al., 2013; Van Ho, 2011).

### 3. TQM Practices

Researchers and practitioners in management and management quality have identified some practices for TQM, including customer focus, strategic quality planning, leadership, human resource focus, supplier quality management, knowledge and process, information analysis, training and education, resource management, strategic planning, staff selection and deployment, competent staff, teamwork spirit, recognition and motivation, and innovation and creativity (e.g., Ali et al., 2010; Ang, et al., 2011; Green & Zelbst, 2019; Ooi, 2015; Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014). While not all these practices can be adopted at the same time, (Smith & Rees, 2014) indicated that it is important that companies identify the key competitive areas in their business in order to focus inclusively on them. As it is difficult if impossible for organizations to adopt all these practices simultaneously, they are required to prioritize these practices according to the competitive areas they want to improve (Smith & Rees, 2014).

In contrast, (Phan et al., 2011) argued that it is important for organizations to adopt a comprehensive approach in TQM in order to be able to address any changes in the working area. In fact, although organizations are required to adopt a comprehensive and systematic approach to be able to respond to the needs of customers, it is equally important for organizations to recognize their key inputs and organizational aspects that should be enhanced to be able to perform their key deliverables. Therefore, in order to identify the potential of each practice of TQM, it should be explored comprehensively.

#### 3.1 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a practice of TQM that allows workers to receive reliable data in a timely manner. This can enable them to do their work and achieve their tasks successfully and

effectively (Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014). (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008) introduced a concept related to the process of knowledge management, namely the organizational learning, which is related to the way of getting, sharing, using data in organizations in order to achieve their strategic goals. In this, organizational learning involves establishing an effective mechanism for facilitating sharing information among workers in the organization. For an organization to be recognized as a learning one, (Garvin et al., 2008) stressed the importance of creating a positive learning atmosphere where workers feel comfortable to disagree with others, understand the value of divergent ideas, risk discovering new idea, and evaluate the organizational processes in the organization.

Furthermore, the existence of unique learning opportunities with the availability of all learning resources and tools with a view to improving the skills of workers throughout-of-the-job training is very important to facilitate organizational learning. Such activities play an important role in optimizing the performance of a company, as the constant monitoring of data from time to time helps organizations retain their productivity and the ability to address any environmental changes.

Previous studies have shown that this approach has enhanced the performance of management and can improve innovation (Kim et al., 2012; Phan et al., 2011; Zehir & Sadikoglu, 2012). Although some studies claimed that improvement of the performance of a company is not simply attributed to the advancement of learning or knowledge, but rather to the recruiting skilled workers and using modern technologies (Smith & Rees, 2014). In contrast, (Rickards & Moger, 2006) pointed out that when employees are not trained to the new skills required by their job, both the motivation of the employees, which will make the company lose its competitiveness. From this perspective, it is fundamental to stress the importance of the practices of knowledge management in every company as part of its TQM practices to enhance its competitiveness.

### 3.2 Leadership

Leadership is a crucial requirement for the perfect application of TQM in the companies of the service sector. This practice is completely linked to certain other practices, such as administrative support, the participation of upper management

(Talib et al., 2013). Leadership needs to make effective changes in the company's culture, and the best way to achieve this is to completely engage senior management in the organization's continuous improvement plan. It can also be done in establishing direct interaction and communication between employees and managers in all organizational processes in the company (Kanorio, 2014). Leadership that enhances learning among the staff of the company is essential to the improvement of its performance as (Garvin et al., 2008) stated. Besides, significant TQM practices can involve the ability to consider alternating points of view while signaling the significance of investing time to define challenges or issues and reflecting on the processes of the company.

Since TQM involves taking a holistic approach to the value chain in a company, leaders have to ensure that all workers in the departments of the company are adequately trained with the requisite expertise to ensure that the company can achieve its objectives successfully. (Henson, 2016; Morgan, 2013; Smith & Rees, 2014). In fact, there is no single path to leadership that fits all companies. This is because each company has its distinctive cultures and methods that help them to successfully accomplish their strategic objectives and goals and thus, different leadership styles thrive in one company but not in another depending on these differences. In addition, the culture of people in a country can be another crucial factor that can contribute to the variations in the leadership needs of a company. For instance in certain countries such as the USA, the power gap index is lower than in another country such as the UAE (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). This means that a leadership style that can succeed in one country may fail in another one.

There are several leadership styles that can be adopted to change the organisation behaviour through TQM. For example, where the manager needs to disseminate some critical skills to the workers, the style of transformation leadership may be more appropriate than the style of the autocratic leadership (Henson, 2016; Vance & Paik, 2015). In contrast, the most effective leadership style can be a democratic leadership style when a leader wants to promote a sense of self-accountability and autonomy at work (Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2012). In fact, there is no style of leadership that can be considered



appropriate for all situations. (Randere and Chaudhry, 2012) argued that it is important for the managers of companies to specify the unique activities of leadership that fit with the culture and structure of their companies. Through doing so, the company can specify the appropriate TQM practices because its leadership is powerful and capable of leading the majority of the members towards a specific path with respect to the necessary improvements in the company. In the context of the UAE, however, there is no adequate study to define the most appropriate leadership styles that most companies can follow due to the growing diversity of workers in different levels of authority that can result in complicated organizational behavior.

### 3.3 Customer Focus

The outcome of the best practice of TQM is to address the satisfaction of consumers, which will result in increasing their loyalty to the company. According to (Hapsari and Dean, 2017), having products or services of good quality can enhance the satisfaction and loyalty of consumers as well as drawing more new customers over time. Researchers (e.g., Obeidat, Hashem, Alansari, Tarhini, & Al-Salti, 2016; Wang, Chen, & Chen, 2012; Yang, 2003) believe that the key goal of any TQM system should be to obtain more customer satisfaction, which can contribute to their loyalty for the company as well. Although many clients address customer loyalty by mainly restricting facets of product quality alone, research has demonstrated that one aspect of TQM that is frequently ignored is the product-related services, including product packaging and timely delivery.

Employee-consumer loyalty is the most significant determinant of customer satisfaction in the service sector. Therefore, researchers argued that TQM practice that puts the needs and interests of customers at the forefront of every move taken as the utmost source of competition (Rai, 2013). Therefore, when companies fail to address the needs or interests of their clients, they lose their competitiveness, since the service touch-point is something that gives the differentiation between one service supplier and another (Molina, Lloréns-Montes, & Ruiz-Moreno, 2007). Actually, in order to keep their customers happier and thus encourage their commitment to the brand, it is necessary that companies consider exploiting more effective strategies in this regard. Besides, companies can use many tools to

measure the level of service quality that satisfies their customers.

According to (Mohamad, Ab Yazid, Khatibi, & Azam, 2017), employee courteousness is one of the essential factors used by consumers to determine the level of service. This ensures that consumers also feel pleased with the service given to them because staff members are polite and empathetic to them. Besides, factors such as responsiveness and durability of the service provided are also other aspects that consumers highly appreciate when assessing the quality of the service provided. Therefore, it is important that the practice of TQM should ensure that the service addresses the parameters of responsiveness and reliability to please customers (Ernest & Ike-Elechi, 2015). In addition, the knowledge of the service providers is another important factor of service quality to identify the satisfaction of customers.

Besides, to ensure that the service delivery meets the needs of customers, it is critical that companies train their personnel to care for customers effectively to ensure that service delivery is carried out successfully in accordance with the needs of the customer. Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that companies use an effective feedback mechanism to get the comments and suggestions from customers with a view to identifying the areas that require improvement in the light of the feedback and needs of consumers (Aquilani, Silvestri, Ruggieri, & Gatti, 2017).

### 3.4 Strategic Planning

TQM involves the redesign of the operations of the company to increase the quality of its services in order to satisfy the demands of consumers. Although strategic planning includes the process of prioritizing procedures and allocating resources depending on the company's strategic direction, some researchers argued that strategic planning is an important part of TQM (Kumar & Sharma, 2017). Strategic planning is a concurrent activity that ensures the involvement of all the relevant practices relevant to the goods or services and also delivers the feedback and early objectives through the planning process which involves several phases, such as defining the priorities of the company, targeting consumers, and then recognizing the needs of these customers and setting the strategy to satisfy the needs of the customer (Ater, 2011). In fact, in predicting the

relevant developments in their industries, companies use strategic planning to be able to improve their competitiveness. Therefore, strategic planning is a holistic approach that aims at making positive improvements to a company so that it is possible not only to provide consumers with greater benefit but also to promote customer satisfaction that results in more intentions of loyalty.

In addition, strategic planning has been regarded as an effective method to ensure that a company can obtain a competitive advantage over its competitors (Dereli, 2015). In certain cases, the practices of strategic management seek to introduce crucial developments, which enhance customer loyalty by delivering special, top quality, and products/services that better meet the needs and interests of consumers. These ideas have come as a result of several previous studies that have identified a positive correlation between strategic planning and creativity, which, in turn, leads greatly to improving the performance of companies. Considering that most of the practices of TQM are best oriented to make an improvement, researchers have pointed out the need to utilize TQM tools that allow them to promote excellent consumer experience in a role, including matrix diagram, tree diagram, and process decision-making (Sawalim, 2015). Moreover, the most critical focus of strategic planning is not only is to maximize consumer experiences, but also to ensure that the resources of the company are used optimally to generate optimum benefit for both shareholders and consumers. For this reason, strategic planning is crucial in ensuring that companies maintain a competitive advantage by increasing internal organizational performance, responding to environmental changes, and optimizing customer trust in the company's products and services.

### 3.5 Organization's Culture

Culture of a company describes behaviours, experiences, beliefs, and values of that company which shape expectations for the actions and behaviours of the staff of a company and the way they work to achieve its goals. Due to this importance company culture, the top management works hard to develop an appropriate culture which is the crucial factor that triggers loss or success (Bortolotti & Danese, 2015). The application of the practices of TQM needs to improve the culture of companies to enhance the

engagement of employees in all the process through open communication, interaction, and cooperation between staff, administrators, and customers in all processes (Kanorio, 2014). A company with a quality culture plays a vital role in the company's growth because its clients are more comfortable when a company insists on the quality of its services. In addition, Lee and Delfabbro (2017) found out that the culture of a company primarily influences the attitudes and behaviours of its staff, making it possible for the company to be able to compete in a highly competitive world with a healthy culture that prioritizes consumer value.

Although the importance of company culture has been thoroughly related to TQM, there is little analysis of the particular aspects in which the two terms are associated (Hoang, Igel, & Laosirihongthong, 2006). According to Lakhal, Pasin, and Limam (2006), employee empowerment, teamwork culture, workforce participation, human resource growth, and open communication are among the main facets of organizational culture found to be closely linked to TQM. Likewise, Sundqvist and Svärd (2016) argued that a company the culture of open information exchange can enable companies to address their customers' satisfaction, as innovations are quickly developed in the company through open communication and sharing ideas, leading to increased customer satisfaction. Researchers believe that the culture of a company is primarily affected by the existence of leadership of the company that responsible for the company diverse cultures (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015). As a consequence, it becomes easier for companies to deliver superior customer service when quality orientation becomes a part of the culture of the company, resulting in improving the performance of the company.

### 3.6 Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is to ensure that a company strives to bridge the quality of service gaps that can impact the satisfaction of the customers (Pattanayak & Punyatoya, 2017). Considering the competitive nature of the business environment, companies that exploit ongoing improvements in their supply chain are more effective because they are in a position to adapt their processes to meet emerging developments in the market (Obaid et al., 2015; Talib et al., 2010). In addition, Aquilani et al. (2017) stressed the

importance that companies should follow a culture of learning and that strategic plans should focus on how procedures are implemented. Unlike companies that do not embrace continuous improvements, companies that adopt continuous improvement are considered to be more successful because it is easier for them to achieve greater customer satisfaction (Goetsch & Davis, 2010). As an effective practice in TQM, continuous data collection, and acting based on it is among the most important activities in continuous improvement. This is because TQM requires a systematic approach to ensure that a company is able to maintain competitiveness over its competitors

### 3.7 Supplier partnership

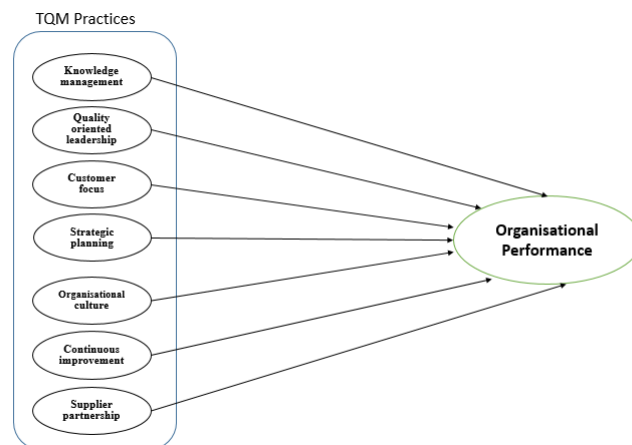
Supplier Partnership is a discipline of strategic planning and managing all interactions with third party organization that supply good or service to the organization. This partnership can maximize the values of those interactions. In practice, supplier partnership entails creating closer, more collaborative relationships with key suppliers in order to uncover and realize new value, and reduce risk. The suppliers should ensure that they deliver the required inputs on time while in return the customer (organization) should pay for the supplied inputs on time hence saving time and creating a good relationship. The supplier should fully understand and be able to practice just-in time (JIT) (Aquilani et al., 2017); Shafiq et. at. (2019).

## 4. Formulation of conceptual model

In order to investigate the degree to which TQM practices have been implemented by services organisation in the UAE and how these practices impact the overall success of the organizations, the current study emphasizes mainly identifying the awareness of the target companies about TQM and the extent to which TQM practices are adopted in the companies. The main focuses on some key TQM practices are *knowledge management, quality-oriented leadership, customer focus, strategic strategy, organizational culture, continuous improvement, and supplier partnership*. While for organisational performance, the study adopted Shafiq et. at. (2019) suggestion on the parameters to be considered whether TQM can improve organisational performance are *levels of customer satisfaction, financial gains, efficiency, cost*

*reduction, and accomplishing the performance goals in time and within the resources available.*

A conceptual model is a framework that is initially used in research to outline the possible courses of action or to present an idea or thought. When a conceptual model is developed in a logical manner, it will provide a rigor to the research process. Hence the proposed conceptual for this study is as figure 1.



**Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework/model**

Figure (1) depicts the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework shows the relationship between the different practices of TQM and the performance of companies. In light of how the way previous studies indicated that the failure to implement the practices of TQP is possible to affect the performance of companies negatively.

## 5. Summary

This paper presents a study on formulation of conceptual model that link TQM practices elements with organisational performance. Based on the TQM theories such as Deming's theory, Juran's theory, Crosby's theory, Feigenbaum's theory and Ishikawa's theory, the key practices of TQM are knowledge management, strategic planning, quality-oriented leadership, continuous improvement, customer focus, organizational culture, and supplier partnerships. While the impact of adopting the practices of TQM is measured in terms of performance improvement, customer satisfaction levels, financial gains, cost reduction, and achievement of performance targets in time and within the resources available. Finally, in the context of the UAE the conceptual model was presented. This model can be further

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