

A STUDY ON ENTREPRENEURS' STRATEGIC APPROACH TOWARDS TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management philosophy that emphasizes customer satisfaction, employee involvement, and continuous improvement. To achieve sustainable success in their businesses, entrepreneurs should adopt total quality management as a strategic approach. To implement a successful TQM strategy, entrepreneurs must create a culture of quality, focus on customer needs, implement quality systems and processes, foster continuous improvement, and build strong supplier relationships. In order to ensure that their goods or services meet or exceed customer expectations and maintain a competitive advantage in their industry, entrepreneurs should emphasize TQM as top priority in their strategic planning. The aim of this research paper is to identify the strategic issues faced by entrepreneurs and how TQM can be used as a tool to address these issues. Strategic issues can include changes in the business environment, shifts in customer needs and expectations, technological advancements, and emerging competitors. Also, the study attempts to investigate how to adopt a strategic perspective which considers TQM as a source of competitive advantage. It helps to understand the steps involved to achieve greater customer satisfaction, increased efficiency, and improved profitability.

Keywords: Strategic Planning, Entrepreneur, Total Quality Management, Competitive Advantage, Customer Satisfaction.

Introduction

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management approach that involves every stakeholder of the organization with an aim to continuously improve the quality of their product and services. It involves a commitment to quality, a focus on customer satisfaction, employee involvement and continuous improvement of processes in achieving organizational excellence. It involves systematic approach to quality management, including identifying customer needs and expectations, designing products and services that meet those needs, and continually improving processes to ensure that quality standards are met. The benefits of TQM include improved customer satisfaction, reduced costs, increased productivity, and greater employee satisfaction and engagement. By focusing on continuous improvement and involving employees in the process, TQM can help organizations stay competitive and achieve sustainability. It requires the commitment of top management, as well as the participation of all employees in the organization.

A strategic issue refers to the significant challenges or opportunities that an organization faces in achieving its goals and objectives. Strategic issues can include changes in the business environment, shifts in customer needs and expectations, technological advancements, and emerging competitors.

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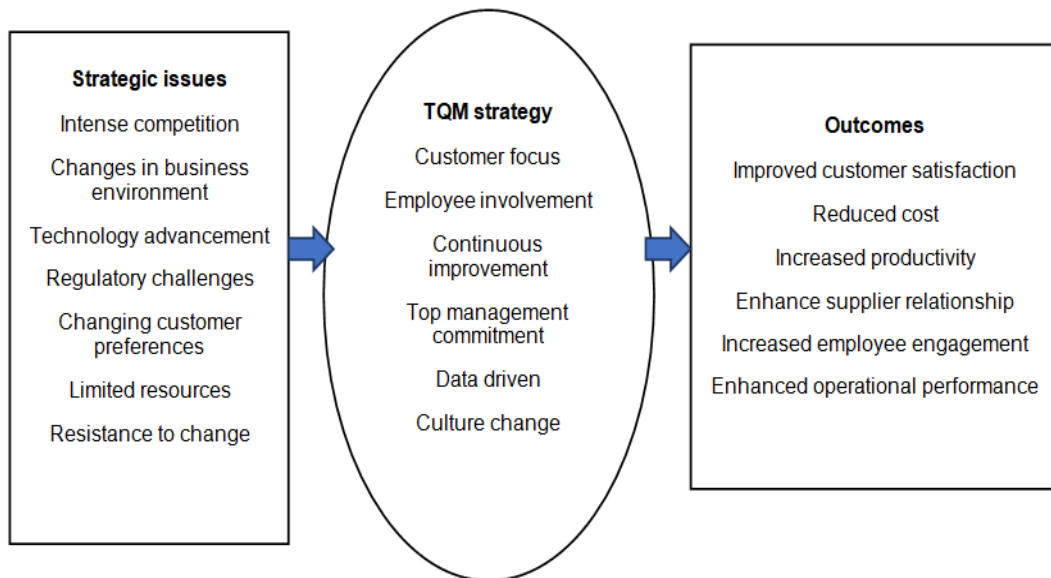
Literature Review

The relationship between TQM and organizational performance has been examined by Hassan and Kerr (2003). They found that top management support, commitment, and customer support focus are among the most significant factors that impact performance. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities are important for organizations because of their positive effect on organizational performance that in turn sustains competitive advantages (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Zahra, 1986). As a process that place entrepreneurship into practice, entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has been examined through a large stream of research in the literature (Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, & Frese, 2009). According to Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) EO is the processes of strategy-making that support the entrepreneurial actions and decisions of the organization. According to Frank, Kessler, and Fink (2010) EO is an organization's strategic orientation of capturing the specific entrepreneurial aspects of methods, decision making, and practices. Miller (1983) defined EO as a set of related process and activities that can be consisted of three dimensions – risk taking, innovativeness, and proactiveness. However, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) suggested two more dimensions, they are autonomy and competitive aggressiveness.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the key strategic challenges face by entrepreneurs in implementing TQM practices.
- To highlight the importance of TQM as a strategic tool for entrepreneurs' to address the challenges.
- To investigate how to adopt a strategic perspective considering TQM as source of competitive advantage.

Conceptual Framework



Discussion

Key Strategic challenges involved in successful implementation of TQM by entrepreneurs:

- **Aligning TQM with Business Strategy**
 - TQM practices should follow the organization's overall business plan. The implementation of TQM should be conceived on a comprehensive understanding of the organization's objectives, clientele, and competitive environment.
- **Develop a customer-focused strategy**
 - TQM emphasizes the importance of understanding and meeting customer needs and expectations. By focusing on customer satisfaction, organizations can develop a competitive advantage and address strategic issues related to changes in customer preferences.

- **Organizational Culture**
 - TQM requires a significant shift in organizational culture, including a commitment to continuous improvement, open communication, and employee involvement. The existing organizational culture should be assessed to determine its readiness to adopt TQM practices. The leadership team should be committed to creating a culture that supports TQM principles.
- **Leadership Support**
 - Top leadership support is essential for the successful implementation of TQM. Leaders should provide clear direction, resources, and support for TQM initiatives. Leaders should also set an example by demonstrating their commitment to TQM principles.
- **Employee Training and Development**
 - TQM requires employees to be trained in quality management principles and techniques. Employees should be provided with ongoing training and development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. TQM implementation requires a significant investment in employee development.
- **Quality Measurement and Evaluation**
 - Robust quality measurement and evaluation systems are crucial for TQM implementation. Metrics should be developed to measure the success of TQM initiatives, including customer satisfaction, defects rates, and employee engagement. The results of the quality measurement system should be used to identify areas for improvement and guide the continuous improvement process.
- **Supplier Management**
 - TQM involves managing suppliers to ensure that they meet quality standards. Organizations should develop a supplier management program that includes supplier selection, monitoring, and evaluation. The supplier management program should be integrated into the overall TQM strategy to ensure that suppliers are aligned with the organization's quality goals. By enhancing supplier relationships, organizations can address strategic issues related to supply chain management, cost reduction, and risk management.
- **Improve Processes and Operations**
 - TQM involves a focus on continuous improvement of processes and operations. By improving efficiency and effectiveness, organizations can address strategic issues related to cost reduction, productivity improvement, and time to market.

Tools to Address the Strategic Issues to Implement TQM

To effectively address the strategic issues related to implementing Total Quality Management (TQM), entrepreneur can use a range of tools and techniques. Few of these include:

- **Leadership Commitment**
 - Entrepreneurs can use tools such as executive sponsorship, setting up TQM steering committees, and establishing a TQM policy that clearly outlines the organization's commitment to TQM principles.
- **Employee Involvement**
 - In order to engage employees, tools such as suggestion schemes, problem solving teams, quality circles, and training programs can be used to involve employees in TQM efforts and ensure that they understand the importance of TQM and their role in the process.
- **Continuous Improvement**
 - It can be supported through tools such as process mapping, benchmarking, root cause analysis, and statistical process control. These tools can help organizations identify areas for improvement and track progress towards improvement goals.
- **Customer Focus**
 - To maintain a customer-focused approach, organizations can use tools such as customer feedback surveys, complaint handling processes, and customer satisfaction metrics. These tools can help organizations understand customer needs and preferences and respond appropriately.

- **Data Driven Decision Making**
 - Data collection, analysis, and reporting tools such as six sigma, Pareto charts, control charts, and flowcharts can be used to support data-driven decision making and ensure that TQM efforts are based on objective data and analysis.
- **Supplier Management**
 - Tools such as supplier scorecards, supplier quality audits, and supplier development programs can be used to manage and improve relationships with suppliers and ensure that high-quality inputs are consistently provided.
- **Culture Change**
 - To support culture change, tools such as change management frameworks, communication plans, and training programs can be used to help employees understand and embrace the new culture of continuous improvement and TQM principles.

A Strategic Perspective Considering TQM as Source of Competitive Advantage

To adopt a strategic perspective considering Total Quality Management (TQM) as a source of competitive advantage, entrepreneur may take the following steps:

- **Conduct a Strategic Analysis**
 - This involves assessing the organization's internal and external environment, identifying the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and understanding the organization's strategic goals and objectives.
- **Develop a TQM Strategy**
 - Using the strategic analysis, the organization can develop a TQM strategy that aligns with the organization's overall strategic goals and objectives. The TQM strategy should include specific goals and objectives, a timeline for implementation and measure of success related to quality management.
- **Create a Culture of Quality**
 - TQM is not just a set of tools and techniques; it is a culture of quality that requires commitment and participation from all employees. Organizations can create a culture of quality by involving employees in TQM efforts, providing training and education, and recognizing and rewarding quality improvements.
- **Focus on the Customer**
 - Ultimate goal of TQM is to meet or exceed customer expectations, so organizations must be customer focused in their TQM efforts. This involves understanding customer needs and preferences, gathering customer feedback, and using that feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- **Emphasize Continuous Improvement**
 - TQM is a continuous process of improvement, and organizations must be committed to ongoing improvement in all areas of the business, including processes, products, and services. This involves using data and analysis to identify areas for improvement and implementing changes to achieve better results.
- **TQM as Competitive Advantage**
 - By adopting a strategic perspective and implementing TQM as a source of competitive advantage, organizations can differentiate themselves from their competitors by providing higher quality products and services, improving customer satisfaction and reducing costs through improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion

TQM can play a critical role in addressing strategic issues in an organization by providing a framework for continuous improvement and a focus on customer satisfaction, quality, and efficiency. Proper implementation of TQM plan could result on higher customer satisfaction, increased employee engagement, and enhanced organizational performance. Entrepreneur should adopt TQM practices as a strategic tool to improve their competitiveness, and address strategic issues related to quality by developing customer focussed strategy, improve processes and operations, build a culture of quality, and enhance supplier relationships to remain competitive. By adopting a strategic perspective considering

TQM as a source of competitive advantage involves conducting a strategic analysis, developing a TQM strategy, creating a culture of quality, emphasizing continuous improvement and using TQM as a competitive advantage in their industry.

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