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AN INTERVENTION BASED EMPIRICAL MODEL TO DEVELOP CORE VALUES OF TQM IN TEAMS

Abstract

TQM discipline lacks interventions based empirical models that could help in the development of core values of TQM at the team level. Thesis of this research is that a team can develop four core values of TQM i.e. customer based management, participative management, process approach and kaizen by implementing the proposed intervention based empirical model.

Implementation of TQM requires organization-wide changes in policies, structures, and processes. It requires top management commitment for financial and other resources such as manpower, consultants and training. Organizations that are not prepared for such commitments, therefore, cannot avail the benefits of TQM. However, this study shows that organizations that are not prepared for a full-scale implementation of TQM can still derive some benefits of TQM approach by developing a set of core values of TQM at the team level using the proposed model.

The proposed model addresses two other issues, as well, raised in the literature. Employees who understand the TQM concepts often lack specific directions for implementing TQM (Yui , 1995), and lack of empirical TQM research (Thiagarajan et al. 2001, Black & Porter 1996, Rao et al. 1999, Dean and Bowen 1994).

There are two segments of the model i.e. set of interventions and framework of quality factors. Interventions refer to structured activities in which selected organizational units (target groups or individuals) engage in a task or a sequence of tasks where the task goals are related directly or indirectly to organizational improvement (Wendell L. French, 1995).

The set of interventions has eleven interventions. The interventions are simple in language, easy to understand and comfortable to implement. The set of interventions can be implemented by a team in a period of three to six months without requiring any policy change, structural change, change in processes, change in technology, help of consultants, commitment of top management and external training to teams. The concept of intervention originated in the discipline of Organization Development. The study employs it for the first time, in the discipline of Total Quality Management.

The set of intervention was developed by tailoring, arranging and customizing appropriate concepts and techniques from the disciplines of Project Management, Organization Development and Total Quality Management. An empirical research was conducted to verify the set of interventions. For this purpose, experiments were conducted on four experimental teams. A fifth

team was used as a control team. Application of set of interventions served as a treatment given to four experimental teams. The fifth team i.e. control team, was not exposed to this treatment. The purpose of control team was to detect any changes occurring in experiment teams because of external environment. Four core values of TQM were measured at pre test (before) and post test (after) states, in all the teams, using various indicators. All the experiments were performed under constraints of the study and took a period of almost one year in completion.

The second segment of the model i.e. framework of quality factors emerged as a result of empirical research. The framework of quality factors describes six quality factors, their criticality level and their role in various phases of implementation. The framework of quality factor serves as a coach to teams by providing them necessary guidelines, during their efforts of implementing the set of interventions.

The study brings out three important findings. First, it verifies that the model can work effectively without requiring organization-wide commitments. Commitments are only required at the team level. Second, the model can develop four core values of TQM i.e. customer based management, participative management, process approach and kaizen, 135%, 92%, 132% and 119% respectively, as a minimum; and 208%, 169%, 295% and 227% respectively, as a maximum, in teams working in production environment. Third, the core values can be developed in teams, in a period of three to six months.