

Total Quality Management: A Veritable Management Change Strategy for Enhanced Organizational Productivity and Performance in Nigeria

Dibie, V. M.

*Department of Marketing
College of Management Sciences
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State
E-mail: v.dibie@yahoo.com*

Ekezue, H. M.

*Department of Business Administration and Management Technology
Delta State School of Marine Technology Burutu, Nigeria
E-mail: ekezumadu@yahoo.co.uk*

ABSTRACT

This study showcases Total Quality Management (TQM) as a veritable management change strategy for enhancing organizational productivity and performance on continuous basis. The study is carried out through a survey process involving four manufacturing firms in Lagos Metropolis. A well designed questionnaire is employed to generate data from fifty respondents (ten from each firm), through a simple random selection process. Results from the study indicate that TQM is a change management strategy geared towards continuous improvements in organizational productivity and performance. Major recommendations given at the end of the study include: Organizations should embrace change where it is deemed necessary and manage it effectively to achieve the best results possible from it. Organizations should continuously seek to achieve the best level of productivity and performance capable of giving their customers maximum satisfaction to profitably remain in business.

Keywords: *Total Quality Managements, Management Strategy, Organizational Productivity and Performance.*

INTRODUCTION

Organizations do not change until external catastrophes bring them near the edge of annihilation. This is unfortunate because at that point they are usually encountered with liquidity problem and have cynically demoralized personnel. The secret of successful change seems to be to create self-inflicted catastrophes so as not to have the threat imposed externally. These can usually be created by setting aggressive external threat-based goals and then demanding that they be attained aggressively in a short time frame (Strausz, 1993). Bennis, Benne and Chin (1964) report that as a member of an organization, it is not easy to change something in a desired direction without:

- (a) Eventual reversion to the previous state;
- (b) Consequences somewhere in the organization that you did not anticipate;
- (c) Negative outcomes cropping up that you did not intend.

One way to think about starting point for change in an organization is to consider the number of people involved. Change may be aimed at the individual, pair, small group, two or more groups, the entire organization or at leaders themselves. The target for change efforts will therefore depend on a number of questionable factors:

i. Where is the tension in the system? It is often easier to get people to change when they are experiencing a moderate amount of discouragement. Those who are contented with the way things are will resist changes that might increase tension. Those who are suffering a great deal sometimes also cling to the status quo because it is the only certainty they can identify. Generally, however, those who are experiencing moderate discomfort and tension are most amenable to change (Cohen, Fink, Gadon and Willits, 1995).

ii. How interconnected is the unit showing the problem with other units within the organization? Ultimately, all parts of an organization are interrelated, some units are relatively independent, compared to others. Cohen and Gadon (1986) suggest that the greater the economy of an organizational subsystem, the more readily change can be implemented and the less will changes there cause problems for the rest of the organization.

iii. To what extent does the organization operate as a hierarchy? In strongly hierarchical organizations, where control tends to be tight and top down, changes that do not have the support of those at the top are likely to be short-lived. Bechard (1967) puts that "the more hierarchical the organization, the higher the change efforts have to be aimed or legitimized. In turn, the greater the autonomy of the subunit, the less important will be the support from the higher levels in the organization." This does not however, imply that change in non-hierarchical organization is necessarily easier to bring about, support from the top is almost always helpful. When those who have to change receive clear, unambiguous messages from the top about the reasons for an inevitability of change, they are more likely to go along with it (Kanter 1983; Peters and Waterman, 1982).

iv. Where in the system is the most readiness for the change? To initiate change, first try to determine, where there is already inclination for movement in the desired direction and then start with the aspect of the problem that is least likely to be directly resisted (Lawrence, 1969, Bennis, Benne and Chin, 1964; Franklin, 1976). Within an organization, correction of deviations in performance brings the entire management tasks into focus. Managers can correct such deviations by

changing measures or plans. They can also eliminate poor performance by changing how things are done, (Peers and Robnison, 2003). Japanese manufacturers, according to Peers and Robinson (2003), embrace the quality messages of America's W. Edwards and Deming and J. M. Juran, following World War II and adopted the changes ushered in. So, by 1970s, Japanese products had acquired unquestionable reputations for superior high quality.

Japanese have over the years achieved operational control by seeking their units continuous improvements. Companies worldwide have adopted this point of view, that operational control is best achieved through a persuasive commitment to quality, originally called, "Total Control Quality Management", (TQM), which is seen as essential to strategic success in the 21st century. Aluko (1998) state that TQM is a business philosophy that emphasizes the need for organizations to be customer centered. TQM stresses continuous improvements of product quality and service delivery all rounds the organization. The philosophy underlying the implementation of the TQM strategy is to see organizations' customers as the vital key to organizational success. Organizations that are TQM centred see their business through the eyes of their customers and then measure their performance against customers' expectations.

Stumberger (1994) notes that TQM incorporates Business Process Reengineering (BPR) which is all about change implementation, wherever such is deemed necessary within organizational affairs, to actualize set goals of the organization. Today, many organizations are adopting TQM and BPR strategies to actualize their goals. They extend such strategies from frontline offices to back offices and beyond; to include external partners. They now see every staff of the organization as an important "tool" that should make reasonable contribution to quality improvement and customer want satisfaction. The concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) has received great applause worldwide as a management change strategy for enhancing organizational productivity and performance, hence, more organizations that hitherto where not TQM compliant are now embracing the TQM strategy to move forward.

Stumberger (1994) emphasizes that TQM encompasses Business Process Reengineering (BPR) which is all about change implementation wherever such is deemed necessary within the organizational affairs, to actualize set organizational goals. Some organizations, despite available evidences of the role of TQM in strengthening organizational productivity and performance still remain indifferent to the concept. They rather prefer to maintain their status quo, probably because of fear of eventual reversion to the previous state; likely consequences that may result in the organization (that were not anticipated) or some other negative outcomes not intended (Bennis, Benne and Chin, 1964). It is against this background that this study seeks to determine how the TQM strategy can actually improve organizational productivity and performance. Hence, the key objectives of this study include:

1. To determine whether the TQM strategy is actually a management change strategy
2. To determine whether the TQM strategy is actually customer focused.
3. To determine whether the TQM strategy is actually capable of improving organizational productivity.
4. To determine whether the TQM strategy is actually capable of improving organizational performance.

METHOD

A survey research process was adopted in generating primary data for this study. The population of the study covered senior and management staff of four manufacturing firms across Lagos Metropolis. A well structured questionnaire with measuring scales of Yes (Y) and No (N) was produced and randomly distributed to 50 potential respondents across four firms (10 to each firm) and 80% response rate was achieved. Simple percentage method was used to analyze the primary data generated in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the table 1, it is observed that out of the 40 respondents majority indicated that TQM is actually a management change strategy, while few indicate on the contrary. Similarly, a very significant proportion of the total respondents indicate that the TQM strategy is actually customer focus, whereas an insignificant few indicated that it is not customers' focus. Whether TQM strategy is actually capable of improving organizational productivity on a continuous basis significant majority of the respondents were of the positive view point while few gave negative response that it is not capable of improving organizational productivity. Similar response was gotten when assessing whether TQM strategy is actually capable of improving organizational performance on a continuously basis. Based on the foregoing, it is established that TQM is actually a good management change strategy, the strategy is actually customers' focus, is actually capable of increasing organizational productivity and performance on the continuous basis. Hence, it is important that organizational members see Total Quality Management as a strategic measure capable of implementing or managing relevant changes within an organization, for improved productivity and performance.

Table 1: Total Quality Management as a strategic measure for management change

Details (Q)	Yes (Y)	No (N)	Total
Is TQM actually a management change strategy?	30(75%)	10(25%)	40(100%)
Is the TQM strategy actually customers' focus?	38(95%)	2(5%)	40(100%)
Is TQM strategy actually capable of increasing organizational productivity on continuous basis?	35(87.5%)	5(12.5%)	40(100%)
Is TQM Strategy actually capable of improving organizational performance on a continuous basis?	34(85%)	6(15%)	40(100%)
Total	137(342.5%)	23(57.5%)	60(400%)

Source: Field work 2011

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above, the conclusion is that TQM is a change management strategy, geared towards the continuous improvement of organizational productivity and performance in the overall interest of the customers; and profitable to the organization as well. Rather than be afraid of the unknown, organizations should embrace change whenever such is deemed necessary within their affairs and manage it effectively to get the best results from it. Organizations should continuously seek to achieve the best level of productivity and performance capable of giving their customers maximum satisfaction to profitably remain in business. Organizations should see total quality management as a change management strategy and commit relevant resources to its course, to achieve all the benefits associated with it. Organizations should make total quality management a way of life; and make their customers their best friends through guaranteed customer satisfaction; as these are profitable to modern organizations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are quite grateful for the significant contribution of the respondents who collected, completed and returned the copies of questionnaire as scheduled. Their cooperation made collation and analysis of data easy, which led to the logical conclusion of this study.

REFERENCES

- Aluko, M.** (1998). *Business Policy and Strategy* (2nd Ed.). Lagos: Pugmark Nig. Ltd.,
- Bechard, R.** (1967). The Confrontation Meeting. *Havard Business Review*, 45, 149-155
- Bennis, W., Benne K. D. and Chin R.** (1964). *The Planning of Change*. New York: Holt, Renhart and Winston.

- Cohen, A.R.; S. L. Fink; H. Gadon and R. D. Willits** (1995). *Effective Behaviour in Organisations: Cases, Concepts and Student Experiences* (6th Ed.). U.S.: Irwin, McGraw-Hill.
- Cohen, A. R. and Gadon H.** (1986). *Changing the Management Culture in a Public School System*. M.A.: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Franklin, J. L.** (1976). Characteristics of Successful and Unsuccessful Organizational Development. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 22, 1.
- Kanter, R. M.** (1983). *The Change Masters: Innovation for Productivity in the American Corporation*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Lawrence, P.** (1969). How to Deal with Resistance to Change. *Harvard Business Review*, February Edition.
- Pearce, J. A. II and Robinson R. B. Jr.** (2003). *Strategic Management: Formulation, Implementation and Control* (8th Ed.) North America: Irwin, McGraw-Hill.
- Peters, T. and Waterman S.** (1982). *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best Managed Corporations*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Strausz, A. K. S.** (1993). Reinventing America. *America Business Week*. December Edition.
- Stumberger, R. J.** (1994). Lessons for a Decade of Total Quality Management and Reengineering. *California Journal of Management Review*, 38, 1