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Professor MURUGESAN SELVAM, M.Com, MBA, Ph.D
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TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tohid Kachwala*

Professor, NMIMS University, Mumbai
tkachwala@nmims.edu, tkachwala@gmail.com

Ashu Sharma

Associate Professor, NMIMS University, Mumbai
ashu.sharma@nmims.edu

and

Shailaja Rego

Associate Professor, NMIMS University, Mumbai
SRego@nmims.edu

Abstract

Measuring TQM in Tourism Industry is justified by the significance of the tourism segment and the competition among different tourism destinations. TQM is the vehicle, utilized by increasing number of companies, to bring about changes in quality management, which is recognized as the foundation of business competitiveness and it is proactively integrated with all business practices. The quality of services has to improve in order to increase competitiveness and customer loyalty. Tour operator is the key player, influencing quality because the principal service provider is responsible for delivering the promised service mix, including all arrangement such as flights, transportation, accommodation, excursion and guidance, throughout the service delivery period. Adoption of TQM is not a quick fix approach to improving quality and productivity. It requires a transition from outcome oriented systems to a continuous improvement approach to problem identification and resolution of organization processes. Since there are limited resources, it is important for the study, to identify the order of importance amongst the TQM factors and also their inter-relation. This survey (questionnaire) - based study is an attempt, to identify the important factors of Total Quality in Tourism industry, the relative importance of these factors from service providers' point of view and evaluation of these factors for statistical significance. In addition, the study will also provide an in depth understanding of TQM factors that will help the tourism industry, to improve their services.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Tourism, Dimensions of Total Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Top Management Leadership, Employee Involvement

JEL Code: M10, M19

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* Corresponding Author

1. Introduction

Tourism provides employment and improves the livelihoods of the local residents who are poor in material wealth but rich in culture and heritage. Tourism development helps in maintaining the natural surroundings and encouraging the development of infrastructure like roads, health care facilities, hotels etc. that benefits the host community, catering to the needs of visitors. Providing quality tourism services expands faithful customer base (**Marcjanna, 1998**). Managers in tourism are continuously improving the quality of their services and the level of customer satisfaction in the belief that this effort will create repeat visitors (**Tian-Cole and Crompton, 2003**). Poor quality results in dissatisfied customers, customer complaints and adverse word of mouth communication (**Crosby, 1979**).

Tour operators, who do not provide quality service, will not only go out of competition but will also eventually cease to exist. For quality service to flourish, everyone in the organization must internalize the concept that quality is a journey and not a destination. Quality management is recognized as the foundation of business competitiveness and it is proactively integrated with all business practices. Total Quality is a “total system approach”. It works horizontally across functions and departments, involves all employees from top to bottom and extends backward and forward to include the supply chain and the customer chain. Total Quality stresses learning and adaptation to continual change as keys to organizational success. Tour operators are struggling to improve service and proclaim that they are customer-focused. Yet outstanding, exceptional quality service is still the exception rather than the rule.

Total quality management represents a formidable challenge to tourism marketers, seeking to understand what makes their tours shine in the eyes of their customers. As tourism industry moves from the realm of quality service

into the domain of total quality management, they are asking themselves some serious questions about the way they do business. Their probing extends beyond sales and service to include the total management philosophy. Both internal and external procedures are being examined, measured and improved to deliver quality service that is consistent throughout the tour operations.

2. Review of Literature

Burkhart and Medlick (1981) define tourism as a temporary short term movement of people (tourists), to destinations outside the place where they normally live and work. World Tourism organization has defined quality in tourism as result of a process which implies the satisfaction of all the legitimate product and service needs, requirement and expectation of the consumer, at an acceptable price, in conformity with the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity, and harmony of the tourism activity concerned with human and natural environment.

Management participation and leadership is crucial to building a culture of service quality. This vision and leadership is also important in developing and implementing a total quality management strategy. Lack of management commitment could lead to service gaps or cause service gaps to widen. Quality must be a management priority. Igniting the explosion of quality leadership in a company means repositioning quality from a secondary to a primary management role. Although much of the research indicates the need for management commitment, renowned quality consultant, **Crosby (1979)**, says that he does not want “commitment” from top managers but he wants “participation.” Quality service comes from inspired leadership. Employees and managers, at all levels, look to top executives to set an example and a tone for the rest of the organization. Top management must foster a general awareness that quality improvement will

take its place, as equal in importance, to traditional cost, profit, growth, and sales goals. Leadership is the backbone of quality, as it is for all planned cultural change. Adopting quality as a tourism strategy means cultural change. Change is difficult to accomplish without solid, committed leadership. The president and other senior executives set the pace. It is imperative that senior managers, in service organizations, provide the leadership to build their company around a set of core values that include customer service and service quality. Once senior management has a vision statement that reflects the opinion and brain power of the entire management team, they ask the employees for feedback. One of the most important functions of the total quality leader is the ability to empower people. It includes transferring power downward and outward and fostering wide employee participation in the quality process. Service quality is everybody's business, and effective leaders empower employees, to make on the spot decisions, that are in the customers' interest.

Advances in service quality, rely heavily on an organization's ability to discover ways, to be more responsive to customers and the market place. Employee involvement in quality teams is essential, for identifying obstacles to sales and service improvement and cost containment. Many organizations, including tour operators, are realizing that empowered teams provide a way to accomplish goals and meet the needs of a changing work force and a changing customer. Quality teams, with team leaders trained in problem solving and participative management, must be granted authority commensurate with responsibility. A lot of research has been done in the areas of Total Quality Management in Service Industries (from Service Provider Perspective), providing ample evidence that quality has always scored highly as an important competitive capability. The decision, as to which management practices should be given importance for effective TQM implementation,

has been a major concern of practitioners in the field (Flynn et al., 1995). The following are some of the notable contributions, to the development of the theory, on "TQM in Services".

Gerald Smith (2002) identified the following underlying principles of TQM, with focus on quality in everything, customer, process, continuous quality improvement, involvement and team work. **Saraph et al., (1989)** studied the critical factors of quality management, underlying the importance of management leadership and quality policy, the role of the quality department, training, product/service design, supplier quality management, process management, quality data and reporting; and employee relations. **Flynn et al., (1994)** identified seven key dimensions of quality management, that included top management support, quality information, process management, product design, workforce management, supplier involvement and customer involvement. **Sureshchandar et al., (2001)** studied the twelve critical dimensions of TQS, for the institution of a TQM environment, in service organizations: Top management commitment and visionary leadership, Human resource management, Technical system, Information and analysis system, Benchmarking, Continuous improvement, Customer focus, Employee Satisfaction, Union intervention, Social responsibility and Service culture. **Morrall Katherine (1995)** identified three critical components to total quality management programs: technological efficiencies, ongoing service quality measurement systems and the human element. Technological efficiencies include policies and procedures, computer systems and behind the scene efforts, that affect how quickly and efficiently the tour operators can service customers. Service quality measurement systems consist of programs, that provide feedback, on the type of service being delivered. The human element component includes setting up service quality training for

managers and employees on an ongoing basis. A growing trend is to have managers conduct one-on-one service quality training with their employees. The managers act as coaches and train employees where they work, instead of in a remote classroom. With the proper training, employees feel more confident to make decisions without guidance. Stronger relationships also develop between the employee and manager because they are working in a “hands on environment.”

3. Statement of the Problem

TQM studies are popular and widespread. Individual educators, consultants and practitioners may vary somewhat but most would agree that TQM philosophy includes a number of elements. The present study identifies eighteen factors that are associated with Total Quality Management, in Tourism Industry. The problem statement is that each of the eighteen factors, listed in the TQM Model (**Table-2**), individually and jointly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.

4. Need for the Study

Total quality management programs empower employees, to participate more in the decision process. If service quality is the nuts and bolts of an organization, then total quality management is the brick and mortar, giving the organizational structure vitality and strength. More encompassing than individual programs, total quality management is a change in behavior and attitude, experienced throughout the whole company. It is not just front line employees, who bear the responsibility for delivering quality service but also back room employees who are also held accountable. The need for the present research study is to assess Tour Operators, for their importance in the present environment, the magnitude of employee involvement, the present levels of quality, the customers’ expectation and the scope of improvement for service quality.

5. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study were, as follow:

- i) To identify the important factors of total quality management in tourism industry
- ii) To identify the relative importance of these factors from service providers’ point of view
- iii) To evaluate whether the factors of total quality management are statistically significant

6. Hypotheses of the Study

Dimensions (**Prajapati & Tohid Kachwala, 2006**), important for total quality management in tourism, are top management leadership and commitment, customer focus (customer satisfaction), organizational culture, employee commitment, continuous improvement (in products, processes & services), training of personnel, employee satisfaction, involvement and empowerment and development of employees, benchmarking (for improvements), tangibles – services capes for customers and employees (physical environment & facilities), good HR practices (good relations with union, transparent etc, rewards & recognition, 360 feedback), adherence to regulatory framework, including adherence to guidelines, treating customers fairly, customer fair pricing regulations, etc., fulfilling social responsibility, process management (operational procedures & processes) including focus on technology, to simplify and improve customer touch points and back-end processes, thereby improving customer experience, supplier involvement and engagement, focus on holistic relationship management, effective, efficient and fast customer redress mechanism (24/7 contact center), and vision, mission and brand value of tour operator .

Hypotheses of this study (**Kachwala, 2014**) deal with each of the eighteen factors, listed in the TQM model, which individually & jointly, influence Total Quality Management, in

Tourism Industry:

NH-1: Dimension Top Management Leadership & Commitment does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-2: Dimension Customer focus (Customer Satisfaction) does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-3: Dimension Organizational culture does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-4: Dimension Employee commitment does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-5: Dimension Continuous improvement (in Products, Processes & Services) does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-6: Dimension Training of personnel does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-7: Dimension Employee Satisfaction does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-8: Dimension Involvement & Empowerment & Development of Employees does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-9: Dimension Benchmarking (for Improvements) does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-10: Dimension Tangibles - Servicescapes for Customers & Employees (Physical Environment & Facilities) does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-11: Dimension Good HR Practices does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-12: Dimension Adherence to Regulatory Framework does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-13: Dimension Fulfilling Social Responsibility does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-14: Dimension Process Management (Operational Procedures & Processes) does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-15: Dimension Supplier Involvement and Engagement does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-16: Dimension Focus on Holistic Relationship Management does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-17: Dimension Effective, Efficient and fast Customer Redress mechanism does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

NH-18: Dimension Vision, Mission & Brand Value of Tour Operator does not significantly influence Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry

7. Research Methodology of the Study

7.1 Sample Selection

The forty four respondents to the questionnaire, were in the age group of 30 – 60 years and regular service providers of Tourism Industry, in and around Mumbai City. These forty four respondents were graduates, with more than ten years of related work experience and they characterized the modern day informed and savvy service providers.

7.2 Data Collection

Total quality evaluation of Tourism Industry was carried out by using a self-administered questionnaire. The initial inputs were obtained from literature of TQM/TQS. All statements were phrased positively, as suggested by **Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1994)**. The first level inputs, for the design of the questionnaire, were the variables/dimensions defined in the Total Quality Model. These inputs were translated in the form of questions, which were submitted to functional experts from Tourism Industry, for critical comments and content validation. The Questionnaire was designed to assess a scale of relative importance of the eighteen factors, identified for TQM and whether they were individually and jointly and significantly influenced Total Quality. Responses of the items were obtained, on a seven-point Likert Scale, with anchors 1 for 'Not essential' and 7 for 'Absolutely essential'.

7.3 Period of the study

The responses were collected, during the period January 2016 to April 2016.

7.4 Tools used

The Researcher (**Kachwala, 2015**) used the mean, standard deviation, and the standard *t*-test. For hypothesis testing of means (One Tailed Test) and a *Likert scale 1-7*, the expected value was taken as 4. The following structure of *t* test was applied to the eight factors individually.

NH: Mean \leq 4 (The null hypothesis is that the population mean is less than or equal to 4)

H₁: Mean $>$ 4 (The alternate hypothesis is that the populations mean is greater than 4)

Assuming $\alpha = 0.05$ (for single tailed test),
 t table = 1.65

$t_{\text{statistic}} = \frac{\text{Actual Mean} - \text{Expected Mean}}{\text{standard error of mean}}$

Decision: Depending on the value of $t_{\text{statistic}}$,
 Reject NH or Accept H_a (when NH is rejected,
 we accept H_a (1to18)).

8. Analysis and Discussion

Table-1 shows the average response for Top Management Leadership and Commitment, Customer focus (Customer Satisfaction), Organizational culture, Employee commitment, Continuous improvement (in Products, Processes & Services), to be high (6.26 – 6.38 on a scale of 7). These factors formed the core of the TQM Model. Benchmarking (for Improvements), Supplier Involvement and Engagement and Fulfilling Social Responsibility were relatively scored less (4.76 – 5.29 on a scale of 7). **Table-2** shows the mean values, for all the fourteen factors, to be high (4.76-6.38 on a scale of 1-7). The following is the detailed analysis of the eighteen hypotheses, based on the standard procedure, for testing of hypotheses:

1. Since t -value was 12.53, reject the null hypothesis NH-1. The study concludes that Dimension of Top Management Leadership and Commitment significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
2. Since t -value was 9.22, reject the null hypothesis NH-2. The study concludes that Customer focus (Customer Satisfaction) significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
3. Since t -value was 12.4, reject the null hypothesis NH-3. The study concludes that Organizational culture significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
4. Since t -value was 10.02, reject the null hypothesis NH-4. The study concludes that Employee commitment significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.

5. Since t-value was 15.78, reject the null hypothesis NH-5. The study concludes that Continuous improvement (in Products, Processes & Services) significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
6. Since t-value was 16.27, reject the null hypothesis NH-6. The study concludes that Training of Personnel significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
7. Since t-value was 8.84, reject the null hypothesis NH-7. The study concludes that Employee Satisfaction significantly influences Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
8. Since t-value was 16.38, reject the null hypothesis NH-8. The study concludes that Dimension Involvement & Empowerment & Development of Employees significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
9. Since t-value was 12.36, reject the null hypothesis NH-9. The study concludes that Benchmarking (for Improvements) significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
10. Since t-value was 15.38, reject the null hypothesis NH-10. The study concludes that Tangibles–Servicescapes for Customers & Employees (Physical Environment & Facilities) significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
11. Since t-value was 16.72, reject the null hypothesis NH-11. The study concludes that Good HR Practices significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
12. Since t-value was 19.9, reject the null hypothesis NH-12. The study concludes that Adherence to Regulatory Framework significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
13. Since t-value was 6.40, reject the null hypothesis NH-13. The study concludes that Fulfilling Social Responsibility significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
14. Since t-value was 11.56, reject the null hypothesis NH-14. The study concludes that Process Management (Operational Procedures & Processes) significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
15. Since t-value was 8.70, reject the null hypothesis NH-15. The study concludes that Supplier Involvement and Engagement significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
16. Since t-value was 7.33, reject the null hypothesis NH-16. The study concludes that Focus on Holistic Relationship Management significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
17. Since t-value was 11.6, reject the null hypothesis NH-17. The study concludes that Effective, Efficient and fast Customer Redress mechanism significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.
18. Since t-value was 10.88, reject the null hypothesis NH-18. The study concludes that Vision, Mission & Brand Value of Tour Operator significantly influenced Total Quality Management in Tourism Industry.

9. Conclusion

The dimensions of TQM can be broadly grouped under three categories: (i) Those dimensions, that are generic to both manufacturing and service organizations. For example, Top Management Commitment, Customer (Client) Focus, Employee Satisfaction, Continuous Improvement. (ii) Those dimensions, that are unique to Service Organization. For example, Tangibles. (iii) Those dimensions, that

are seldom addressed in the literature but are also elements of TQM. For example, Good HR practices. Certain behavioural features (soft issues) like Organization culture, Employee empowerment are vital, for an environment, conducive to TQM. These resources and not mere TQM tools and techniques are instrumental for success and the organizations, that acquire them, can win over their competitors, with or without the TQM label. People-oriented issues of TQS such as Customer (Client) Focus, Employee Satisfaction, Training, and Employee Involvement significantly influenced Total Quality. These findings underline the importance of the 'people-oriented issues over technology-related issues' in delivering high Total Quality. TQM emerges as an integrated approach and a set of practices that emphasizes, inter alia, management commitment, customer focus, continuous improvement, employee involvement etc. Proper implementation of TQM can positively influence customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to enhance financial performance.

Customer driven quality is the way of doing business because they no longer tolerate poor or average quality. The real competition is not price but quality and customer satisfaction.

Commitment of Top Management is crucial and the approach has to permeate every aspect of the organization. It aims to create a cultural environment in which employees are guided by commitment because they have internalized the values of the organization. This ensures that the employees aspire for customer satisfaction and continuous improvement, without any external monitoring and control. Total quality management is a process, not a program. Despite the barriers, a tour operator might face in working toward total quality, there are ways to persevere. Quality is hard work. Rather than plunging into quality, tour operators must understand the history and study the lessons learned over the years. Understanding that

quality has value, may be enough to get the ball rolling. Most tour operators are wasting their time, viewing quality as goodness and happiness. Tour operators spend probably 40 percent of their operating cost, doing things over. Understanding quality could virtually eliminate that cost. Quality impacts competition, by providing tour operators, with a competitive advantage. Quality impacts employees, by focusing them on the customer, by challenging them to better serve the customer, and by making the workplace a better place to be. Finally, quality impacts the customer, by providing products and services, designed to meet customer expectations.

10. Limitations of the Study

The population being studied involves an ongoing process, that makes listing or counting every element in the population impossible. A strictly random selection procedure cannot be used because full listing of the population is impossible. The respondents for the study were obtained as per convenience of availability. Therefore, the sample drawn was not a truly random sample. The TQM model was based on service providers' expectations of an excellent service organization on the basis of a conventional scale. These expectations were not necessarily predictable and robust. In an ongoing business of monitoring and improving Total Quality Management, one must assess simultaneously expectations and perceptions, to reduce the gaps in Total Quality Management.

11. Scope for Future Research

The study was conducted predominantly in just one city, i.e., only in Mumbai. If the study were conducted in some other part of the country, results may vary. This is because the perceptions and needs of the customers may be different, in different areas of the country. It is because a country like India has culturally and economically, very diverse areas.

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Table-1: Analysis of the eighteen factors for relative importance (Scale 1 to 7)

	Factor Description	Average	Rank
1	Top Management Leadership & Commitment	6.38	1
2	Customer focus (Customer Satisfaction)	6.28	4
3	Organizational culture	6.30	3
4	Employee commitment	6.36	2
5	Continuous improvement (in Products, Processes & Services)	6.26	5
6	Training of Personnel	5.62	13
7	Employee Satisfaction	6.12	7
8	Involvement & Empowerment & Development of Employees	6.05	8
9	Benchmarking (for Improvements)	5.29	16
10	Tangibles - Servicescapes for Customers & Employees (Physical Environment & Facilities)	5.60	14
11	Good HR Practices (Good Relations with Union, Transparent CTC, Rewards & Recognition, 360 feedback)	5.84	11
12	Adherence to Regulatory Framework including adherence to guidelines, Treating Customer fairly, etc.	5.83	12
13	Fulfilling Social Responsibility	4.76	18
14	Process Management (Operational Procedures & Processes)	5.95	9
15	Supplier Involvement and Engagement	5.29	16
16	Focus on Holistic Relationship Management	5.86	10
17	Effective, Efficient and fast Customer Redress mechanism (24/7 contact center)	6.24	6
18	Vision, Mission & Brand Value of Tour Operator	5.46	15

Source: Statistical Analysis of Primary Data comprising of forty four respondents to the Questionnaire using Excel

Table-2: Analysis of the Eighteen Factors computed for t value

	Factor Description	Mean	s.d	s.e	t
1	Top Management Leadership & Commitment	6.38	1.26	0.19	12.53
2	Customer focus (Customer Satisfaction)	6.28	1.64	0.25	9.22
3	Organizational culture	6.30	1.23	0.19	12.40
4	Employee commitment	6.36	1.56	0.24	10.02
5	Continuous improvement (in Products, Processes & Services)	6.26	0.95	0.14	15.78
6	Training of Personnel	5.62	0.66	0.10	16.27
7	Employee Satisfaction	6.12	1.59	0.24	8.84
8	Involvement & Empowerment & Development of Employees	6.05	0.83	0.13	16.38
9	Benchmarking (for Improvements)	5.29	0.69	0.10	12.36
10	Tangibles - Servicescapes for Customers & Employees (Physical Environment & Facilities)	5.60	0.69	0.10	15.38
11	Good HR Practices (Good Relations with Union, Transparent CTC, Rewards & Recognition, 360 feedback)	5.84	0.73	0.11	16.72
12	Adherence to Regulatory Framework including adherence to guidelines, Treating Customer fairly, etc.	5.83	0.61	0.09	19.90
13	Fulfilling Social Responsibility	4.76	0.79	0.12	6.40
14	Process Management (Operational Procedures & Processes)	5.95	1.12	0.17	11.56
15	Supplier Involvement and Engagement	5.29	0.98	0.15	8.70
16	Focus on Holistic Relationship Management	5.86	1.68	0.25	7.33
17	Effective, Efficient and fast Customer Redress mechanism (24/7 contact center)	6.24	1.28	0.19	11.60
18	Vision, Mission & Brand Value of Tour Operator	5.46	0.89	0.13	10.88

Source: Statistical Analysis of Primary Data comprising of forty four respondents to the Questionnaire using Excel