Abstract

Total Quality Management (TQM) has become a frequently used term in discussions concerning quality. The international and national competitive environment is in a process of constant change by the globalization of markets and the increased interdependence of economic agents. This process of change has brought increased demands on the organizations’ competitiveness and customers have gained a central role in the organizations’ focus. TQM is considered to be an important management philosophy, which supports the organizations in their effort to obtain satisfied customers. However, there exist extensive numbers of examples of failed or badly performed implementation process of TQM. This is a problematic phenomenon, which negatively affects organizations in their development towards business excellence and ultimately survival in a competitive environment. Furthermore, diversity among researchers exists regarding the actual benefits of TQM. The issues regarding the critical success and barrier factors of TQM implementation, when considering the incentives for the large organizational change a TQM implementation implies, is important. The developments related to Indian companies, concerning quality of products and services, need to be examined on a comparative global scale. It is, therefore, imperative for the Indian automobile sector to understand and analyze the complex interactions and the dynamics of factors affecting TQM, and factors which are the outcome of TQM over a longer time horizon. This will allow India to evolve a development plan through the integration of all the identified dominant factors interacting or being acted on. The present research focused on assessing TQM implementation initiatives in selected Indian automotive industries to explain and identify similarities and differences in the implementation approach, benefits achieved, critical success and barrier factors of TQM implementation. The research is a multiple case study to investigate TQM implementation in selected automotive and automotive component industries in India and the following firms chose for this research:

- Automotive Axles Ltd. - Mysore
- Rane (Madras) Ltd. - Mysore
- TVS Motor Company - Mysore
- J.K. Industries Ltd. - Mysore
- Toyota Kirloskar Ltd. - Bangalore
- Motor Industries Co. Ltd. (MICO) - Bangalore
- Harita Seating Systems Ltd. - Hosur

For each company 20 questionnaires were distributed. Five of them were to be completed by the top managers (human resource manager, general manager, quality assurance manager, production manager and manager of maintenance department) and the remaining 15 questionnaires were to be completed by the middle managers and supervisors from different departments. First a within-case analysis is performed which means each case is a unit of analysis. Then a cross-case analysis is performed. The comparison between the cases shows both similarities and differences in approach to TQM. The result of present research shows that companies under study are actively propagating TQM through a variety of training and educational programs. TQM has proved to be a vital ingredient for success, and now has its permanent roots in the “mission and vision” of the Indian automotive sector. However, based on the result of present research regarding to the critical success and barrier factors and common observations the requirements for the successful implementation of TQM in Indian automotive industry is presented. An important aspect also investigated in this study was the results and outcomes from implementing TQM. The result of cross-case analysis shows similarities and differences in approach to TQM implementation among seven companies. The comparison between the cases, referring to which core values the respondents considered permeating the organization, also shows both similarities and differences. The research shows some quality programs such as Statistical Process Control (SPC), Quality Audit (QA), Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) and Failure Mode and Effect Analysis (FMEA) are the most quality programs undertaken by all companies during the implementation of TQM.