Abstract

Total Quality Management (TQM) is an emerging and widely used management concept fruitfully and effectively implemented in both manufacturing and service sectors in the world over, and the literature is inundated with research outcomes in the areas of TQM and their chequered. Nevertheless, not many have explored into the area of TQM implementation in hospitals even though many hospitals are today ISO certified and many are in the process of accreditation by various National and International Accreditation bodies such as NABH, JCI etc., and have implemented TQM principles and practice. So, this research is significant as it explored a less investigated area to seek relationship between TQM implementation and its desirable outcomes.

Purpose

The research attempts to study and explore the influence of TQM implementation on the gaining of the Competitive Advantage (CMA) and on Business Performance (BNP) in hospitals.

Design/Methodology/Approach

This is an empirical research with mixed methods approach. Through the meta-analysis of the literature, the research variables were identified and a hypothetical research model was developed. The sample selected was from
a set of private and public hospitals from Kerala state and stratified random sampling was used to select the sample hospitals and the respondents were the top and the middle level managers who had sufficient knowledge about the TQM implementation in their respective entities. Primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire and semi structured interview. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed with the help of statistical tools.

**Contributions and Findings**

The research had systematically identified the most relevant dimensions of TQM which need to be considered in the implementation process with specific reference to hospitals. The research provided empirical evidence to the linkages between the individual dimensions of TQM practices and those of gaining of the Competitive Advantage (CMA) and Business Performance (BNP). The qualitative component of the research through survey as well as the semi-structured interviews had enabled the identification of specific problems encountered in TQM implementation in the hospitals and the challenges to overcome. Based on the above findings, suggestions were recommended to the strategic planning managers in the hospitals in order to strengthen the critical dimensions of TQM. Finally, the research had contributed a TQM Model for the hospitals which can be used by both the hospitals which have already implemented TQM to fine tune...
their TQM dimensions and the hospitals which are planning to implement the TQM as it provides a clear understanding about the dimensions which need to be considered during the TQM implementation. Thus, this research has a significant contribution in the area of TQM implementation in hospitals.

**Conclusion**

Thus through the research, the researcher is able to understand the great relevance of TQM in the service sector, especially in Hospitals and is convinced of the fact that if systematically implemented, TQM results in the enhancement of business performance and helps the concerned healthcare entities to gain competitive advantage in business. Therefore, it can be concluded that TQM is vital for healthcare entities to ensure continuous progress and enable them to the dizzy heights. And as such the model developed in this research can be used to guide its effective implementation.

**Key words:** Total Quality Management, Competitive Advantage, Business Performance