CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

6.1 Conclusion of Study
6.2 Future research directions
This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part of this chapter presents the conclusions based on the present study.

The second part gives the future research directions that could be drawn from this study.

6.1 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of adopting the quality management systems in the garment manufacturing industry are reduced cost of operations, improved quality and better customer satisfaction resulting in better market share. This is in line with the findings of Idris et.al. (1996), Ebrahimpour (1996), Lipovatz et.al. (1999) and Collyer (1996). Customer pressure is also one of the major reasons behind implementation of ISO 9000, as evidenced by Erel and Ghosh (1997) and Raynor and Porter (1991).

The present study has tried to establish a relation between the motivations in implementing ISO 9000 and management satisfaction as a result of implementation.

The major impacts of ISO 9000 implementation in the organisation are reduced operations cost, clearer work methods, reduced complaints, reduced reprocessing and higher customer satisfaction. This has been found to be in line with the findings of Lee et.al. (1999), Yung (1997), Mo and Chan (1997), Tang and Kam (1999), (Gotzamani & Tsiotras, 2002; Santos & Escanciano, (2002), Reinheld & Sasser (1990) and (Holleran et.al., 1999).

The time taken in implementation plays a vital role in the impact of quality management systems on the performance measures of the organisation. The impacts are apparent over a long period of time rather than immediate as suggested by (Brecka, 1994) who emphasized that implementation of ISO 9000 should be considered as a long time investment. The result is also in line with the findings of (Quazi & Padibjo, 1998) and Tsekauras et.al. (2002)
In general, the managements of the organisations have been satisfied with the implementation of ISO 9000 and its impacts on the performance as also evidenced by the studies by Magd et.al. (2003).

The study established the relation between the impact on performance measures and the resulting management satisfaction. It was found that the major contribution to management satisfaction was due to increased productivity followed by reduced late shipments and reduction in customer complaints. The study established a numerical expression for the relation between the management satisfaction and impact on performance measures by using regression.

The implementation of ISO 9000 has been found to be associated with a number of problems also. The main problems identified by this study were high level of documentation, lack of awareness, employee resistance and inability to integrate ISO 9000 requirements with the operations of the organisation. This is in line with the findings of Tang & Kam (1999) and Carlsson et.al. (1996). High cost of implementation has also been found to a factor for the resistance to implementation as also evidenced by study of Jeganathan (1996)

Lack of management commitment and non acceptability by the junior managers has also been found to be one of the problems in implementation of ISO 9000 in line with the findings of (Whalen & Rahim, 1994), (Oakland, 1989; Taylor, 1995) and (Newall & Dale, 1990).

The relationship between the problems faced and management's satisfaction was also studied. However no significant impact of problems encountered on the management's satisfaction was observed. The reason for this fact is that management satisfaction is derived from the outcome of the process and not by the process itself.

Another aspect of the study was studying the implementation of ISO 9000 in large and small organisations and analyze for the differences if any. The organisations were divided in to two groups on the basis of turnover. The organisations having a turnover up o 5 crores was categorized as small and those with turnover more than 5 crores were categorized as large.
The management's satisfaction derived from implementing quality management system was also studied in small and large organisations. Significant difference was observed in the management satisfaction in large and small organisations. The reason for this fact is that management of smaller organisations strives for short term benefits and measures the benefit in monetary terms only, whereas the management of larger organisations strives for better work culture and streamlined operations. The expectation of immediate return causes reduced satisfaction for implementing the quality management system in smaller organisations.

6.2 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present study was not free from limitations. The scope of research can be widened if one or more of these limitations can be eliminated. Also there is a possibility to view the problem from a different angle. In this section suggestions have been provided for further research on these issues.

a. The study is based on the perception of ISO 9000 implementation from the top management point of view. The perception of employees towards impact of ISO 9000 could be entirely different from that of management. The employees of the organisation resist change in the working culture and may not like the adoption of ISO 9000 quality management standard. There is scope of carrying out this study on the perception of other levels of employees also.

b. With the increasing importance of quality in the global scenario, a number of quality management systems have emerged. TQM, QS 9000, ISO 9000 are some of the available tools of quality management. All these systems have their own inherent advantages and disadvantages. For example, ISO 9000 has the disadvantage of being too formal in terms of documentation requirements. The study can also include the comparison of the impact of ISO 9000 with that of other quality management tools like TQM.

c. The study has been carried out on the perception of top management with respect to impact of quality management system on performance measures. Only the ISO 9000 certified companies have been included in the study. There is
possibility of carrying out the study on the basis of continuous monitoring of the change in performance measures of the organisations while the implementation of ISO 9000 is in process.

d. The study can be carried out on the objective data rather than the subjective perceptions of the top management. The objective data can give a better picture of the impact because of its objective nature.

e. ISO 9000 standard is a compilation of various elements. Each of these elements has its own impact on the performance of the organisation. The present study has evaluated the overall impact of ISO 9000 implementation on the performance. More research is required to understand the impact of each element of ISO 9000 on the different performance measures.

f. Although ISO 9000 has been gaining popularity in the industry, but in the recent past it has started losing its luster. ISO 9000 has been used as a marketing tool rather than a process and quality improvement tool. As a result the faith of customers on ISO 9000 certification is going down. The study can also be carried out from the customer's point of view rather than the management's point of view.

g. ISO 14000 is an environmental management system, which is highly aligned with ISO 9000 requirements. The study can also be carried out on the impact of implementing ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 simultaneously.

h. The implications of ISO 9000 implementation may not be same for all industries. It is also suggested to test the implementation of the ISO 9000 in other industries and compare them with the results of garment industry.

i. Although ISO 9000 results into positive impacts on the performance measures of the organisation, long run impact has not been studied. It is equally important to achieve improvement and sustain it. Sustainability of impact of ISO 9000 on performance measures may also be studied.

j. ISO 9000 is a cultural change process. Time taken in implementing may have an impact on the performance of the organisations. Too short time of implementation may result into superficial application of ISO 9000 and too long period of implementation may cause loss of interest in the management and
employees. Studies may be undertaken to investigate the impact of time on implementation of ISO 9000.

k. The study has been undertaken on the garment manufacturing industry of India only. The performance of ISO 9000 may vary across different cultures in the same industry. The results of this study may be compared with the impact of ISO 9000 on the garment industry in other countries.

l. The study has been concerned only with the perception of management on the impact of ISO 9000 on the performance measures. The change in performance of the organisations may not be due to the implementation of ISO 9000 alone. It may be the result of other factors also acting simultaneously. Other factors like use of IT and existing quality system may also be considered in the study to assess their impact on the performance of ISO 9000.

m. A comparison of the performance of ISO 9000 certified companies with that of non certified companies may be taken up. It may lead to more in depth understanding of the impact of ISO 9000 on organization’s performance measures

n. Financial performance, organisational culture and leadership style could also be considered for their impact on ISO 9000 performance.