

EXPLORING HR PRACTICES FOR TQM IN BUSINESS**Nisha Solanki**

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ABSTRACT

The competition is increasing every moment for the organizations and hence organizations are putting their best possible efforts to compete. This paper is designed with the objective to explore various HR practices that can contribute in achieving the TQM in Business. The basis for the study is taken from the aspects of competition that are cost reduction, differentiation and innovation. The extensive literature review from Scopus, J-gate, Ebsco and Springer databases are studied to integrate various aspects of TQM and HR practices that inculcate the competitive advantage for organizations. The framework may be developed for the reference to introduce and implement HR practices and manage TQM in the organization. The study may also help the professionals in designing the relevant HR practices for more value to the organizations. The linkage between various factors of the study may be helpful for the academicians and corporate.

Keywords: Total Quality Management (TQM), HR practices, Competitive advantage, Innovation, Differentiation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Jack Welch (1998) emphasized upon the fact that organizations need to develop their competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate by other competitors. The competitive advantage of any organization, depends upon the cost maintenance as well as the value that customers seek in the product and services they are dealing in. Ross Freedman, Forbes Councils member, well explained that now days, organizations are very wisely deploying the technology so that they can facilitate best experiences to employees and customers who are critical stakeholder of any business and can contribute directly to the competitive advantage.

According to Groysberg in 2019, the top management is hiring other professionals alike to them that hinders the diversity and create a gap. This issue along with the other operational challenges to the management can be resolved in a better way with the help of suitable HR practices. The best HR practices as per the organizations always proved to be a great support to contribute growth and success of the organizations. The survey of 5000 executives all around the world has also resulted into the more emphasis upon the solutions to day to day operations that can be made more conducive through HR practices.

The cost reduction was witnessed as most difficult challenge to tackle by the managers, Sean

Silverthorne (2020). This might be due to the dependence of quality of the offerings upon the cost and price. The delivery of best product and best quality both depends upon the talent that organizations do have in the form of Human resource and can be managed by the appropriate choice of HR practices.

The competitive advantage of the organization depends upon the overall quality of the organizations in terms of service, products, customer focus, etc. The TQM that is imparted in the organizations through various gap analysis and rectification always brings customer satisfaction and hence increase the competitive value among the peer competitors.

The competitive value is highly determined by the cost and differentiation and affected by the operations managed by the people at different ends. The operations of the organizations can be driven by the HR functions and practices that enhance the total quality of organizations. This concept motivated the author to develop the integrated model to reflect the contribution of TQM and HR practices into the competitive advantage through innovation and differentiation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HR Practices for TQM

The TQM is having the wide scope of entire organization and demands integrated efforts from various stakeholders who are being managed by the key actors of the organization-HR professionals. These HR professionals used to design and implement effective HR practices to foster TQM through various components of TQM. The HR practices now days need to be design by keeping the global aspect into consideration that helps to develop multinational culture (Sparrow, P. R., & Budhwar, P. S. (1997). The HR practices used to develop employee's service behavior (Tsaur, S. H., & Lin, Y. C. (2004) in such a manner that they can serve the customers in best possible way and may also improve the service quality. Bae, J., & Yu, G. C. (2005) has elaborated the HR practices as HRM configuration of an organization that can shape the organizational talent as control-based human resource system (CBHRS) and high-performing human resource system (HPHRS). The research has given more emphasis upon the high performing human resource as that is the base of Resource Based View (RBV) theory of HRM and proved the organizational performance (Kaufman, B. E. (2015). These two type of HR team can contribute to the organization in different situations. The increase of globalization and post liberalization has led to many changes that need to be adopted by employees and hence, HR practices were supposed be innovatively transformed to survive in the competition (Som, A. (2006). These innovative practices included HR as strategic partner, professionalized recruitment, proactive performance appraisal, etc that contribute to corporate performance and total quality of the organization. These innovative HR practices must be best practices that can be convergent to worldwide practices (Pudelko, M., & Harzing, A. W. (2007) and must not ignore the core competence of the country of origin. The decision of forward (from parent country to host country) or reverse (from host country to parent country) adoption and diffusion of HR practices need to be taken after evaluating all the best factors that affect the adoption and implementation of HR practices (Chiang, F. F., Lemański, M. K., & Birtch, T. A. (2017). This diffusion and implementation of HR practices must be supported with the policies and procedures to make it more appropriate. The core HR practices improve the organizational functions and contribute to the

innovation if different HR practices are adopted in different countries by considering different factors affecting (Fey, C. F., et al. (2009). The maintenance of employee's productivity is challenging in case of small organizations due to limited resources (Patel, P. C., & Cardon, M. S. (2010) and affect the labor productivity in the product-market competition. This integration of internal and external aspect of the organization serves to the organizational effectiveness. This product market competition also contributes to the productivity of employees through better culture in among the small group of employees in small firms. The employee motivation and dedication was found with some mediating effect for the organizational performance (Fey, C. F., et al. (2009) and hence HR practices must be incorporated in such a way that employee's motivation can be maintained. Kaufman, B. E. (2010) discussed about the HR practices through various theories and concluded that HR practices need to be evaluated against the improvement contributed by a single addition of HR practices. They also discussed about the economic pattern of demand and supply that also affect the organizational HR practices as huge demand will contribute to the higher wages and hence will motivate employees without other HR practices. This huge demand and motivation by extra incentives may attract more candidates to apply and hence makes the hiring more efficient. In addition to economic theory, Kaufman, B. E., & Miller, B. I. (2011) explained the role of strategic HRM for choosing the HR practices after considering the economic conditions. They justified the integration of organizational objectives and core strategies to implement other lower Hr practices so that HR practices can contribute to the overall organizational improvement and TQM of the corporate. In support to this, Gurkov, I., & Settles, A. (2013) also researched out that misfit of the Hr practices with the strategic decisions of organization leads to discontinuation of HR practices and also disturbance in the organizational working. This kind of fluctuating HR architecture, hinders the organizational innovation and poor organizational climate for growth (Gurkov, I., & Settles, A. (2013). The organizational innovations also dependent upon the high tenure of innovative R & D teams of the organization (Eriksson, T., Qin, Z., & Wang, W. (2014) and this is directly driven by the implementation of sound HR practices that facilitate the research teams with desired system and other resources with proper HR practices for growth and development. The competitive environment can be handled by more performing teams and human capital as they serve as the resource for the organization (Kaufman, B. E. (2015). The intensity of competition in a particular organization is also having a hold and influence over the relationship between the HR practices and organizational performance (Adnan, Z., Abdullah, H. S., & Ahmad, J. (2016). This is why researchers used to focus more on the conventional practices rather than modern after sensing the extent of competition to develop more innovation based culture (Waheed, A., et al. (2019) and to nurture more innovation in the organization.

2.2 Continuous Improvement

Improving the process, product, system and all other aspect is always ongoing and never ended process for a competitive organization (Nourpash, M. 2013) and hence is also a component of Total Quality Management (TQM). This aspect is supported with the learning of various stakeholders of the organization and learning is also crucial requirement for the improvement that facilitate the organization survival in worst case and opportunities for delighting the customers in better way (Locke, E. A., & Jain, V. K.1995) (Bhuiyan, N., Baghel, A., & Wilson, J. 2006). Earlier, continuous

improvement was more focused for the improved performance (Muhammed, M. A., et al. 2017) with some basic techniques of continuous improvement (Soković, M., et al. 2009) but with the evolution of contingent business processes and competitive environment, it is also revolutionized with modern techniques like Tree diagrams, activity Network Diagrams, etc. (Kovach, J. V., Cudney, E. A., & Elrod, C. C. 2011) (Singh, J., & Singh, H. 2015) (Alvarado-Ramírez, et al. 2018) that minimized the time duration of the ongoing projects by more than 50 percent (Khan, S. A., et al. 2019). Hence the organizations must ensure proper experimentation by developing risk taking capabilities and by providing supportive ecosystem to the employees that develops learning in the organization. De Ron, A. J. (1998) suggested that removing the wastage and improving efficiency in production leads to sustainable development of the organization and also contributes to the continuous improvement. This sustainable production process of the organization is more feasible if organizations facilitate flexibility in the system whereas some researchers (Míkva, M., et al. 2016) believe in the standardization of procedures and documentation that reduces the variations and previous standards must be consider as the predictors of further standardization. The sustainable production brings quality improvement, process improvement and system improvement as compared to other competitors in the market. Kovach, J. V., Cudney, E. A., & Elrod, C. C. (2011) researched out that implementation of continuous improvement techniques is easier in the manufacturing organizations than the service organizations as it was initiated in the manufacturing operations in its beginning (Bhuiyan, N., & Baghel, A. 2005) & vary from private sector to public sector (Fryer, K. J., Antony, J., & Douglas, A. (2007) as well on the basis of construction and non construction nature of business (Muhammed, M. A., et al. 2017). Commitment from the leaders is one of the most critical factor that defines success or failure of lean technique implementation. Bhuiyan, N., & Baghel, A. (2005) also found the different implications of continuous improvement at different levels of management like strategy related at top level, problem solving at group level and improvement at micro level while dealing with individual level.

2.3 Customer Focus

We all believe customers as the king for any business organization and hence every organization put all the hard efforts to make them satisfied. This provokes the organizations for adopting and implementing various processes and policies with customer focus (Rosen, D. E., Schroeder, J. E., & Purinton, E. F. (1998) (V. Arumuga, et al. 2009) but sometimes, this huge competition exerts pressure to the organizations for adopting some unethical and corrupted practices (Bennett, V. M., et al. (2013) that also makes the legal compliance of the organization complicated. The competition is also observed as mediator for the customers while deciding the customer value and loyalty and for organizations, this competition defines the relationship between customer loyalty (Chen, S. C. (2015) (Kiseleva, E. M., et al. 2016). The customer focus strategy can be successfully implemented by strengthening the relationship management, that is important aspects of service industry as well (Gronroos, C. (1990) and by improving information distribution channel as relevant, timely, accurate information is base for customer understanding (Cina, C. (1989) (Lagrosen, S. (2001) and customer satisfaction (Hall, J., & Porteus, E. (2000) (Sit, W. Y., et al. 2009). This customer focused culture maintained by the organizations for long term were observed as one of the indicator of organizational performance excellence (Bartley, B., Gomibuchi, S., & Mann, R. (2007) and serve to the Total

Quality Management (TQM) through customer satisfaction (Ooi, K. B., et al. 2011).

2.4 Cost Cutting & Differentiation for Competitive Advantage

Survival of the business organization in today's competitive environment has become a challenge to managers and hence they are striving hard to differentiate themselves to offer their product at lowest prices. Since a long time, Price and Differentiation is considered as best strategies to beat competition and now these both strategies are supposed to be implemented simultaneously (Baroto, M. B., Abdullah, M. M. B., & Wan, H. L. 2012). The reduction in price is possible if companies can reduce the cost and for the same, Resource Consumption Accounting (RCA) was identified as one of the important aspect (Kbelah, S. I., Amusawi, E. G., & Almagtome, A. H. 2019). This RCA works efficiently by dividing the costs in various heads and by controlling the cost of the factors which are not critical for the quality and other operational costs are also been critically evaluated to gain cost advantage over competitors. The lowering of cost is also found dependent upon the institutional arrangements as well as the economic construction of the country (Charles W. L. Hill, (1995) and hence vary from one country to another country. This cost and low price advantage may also put forth the challenge of risk and less bargaining power as it was happened in southwest airlines (Gillen, D., & Lall, A. (2004) and may also affect negative with reference to different psychology of customers (Ariffin, A. A. M., et al. 2010). Manjeet Kharub, Rahul S. Mor, Rajiv Sharma, (2018) also researched out that cost leadership strategies of the organizations are not having any significance relationship with the performance of the organization but are mediated by the quality management of the organization whereas Klemperer, P., & Meyer, M. (1986) discussed about the external uncertainty and Stalk, G. (1988) found "time" as the factors that affects the price and quality of the organization. Hence, organizations must also work upon the quality management interventions to strengthen the competitive strength.

2.5 Innovation

Innovation is demand of the time and also required for the differentiation in today's competitive environment through the integration of innovation, technological advancement and competitive advantage (Lengnick-Hall, C. A. (1992). The innovation integrates the competitive advantage with the support from all the stakeholders of the organization (Minoja, M., Zollo, M., & Coda, V. (2010) and the important stakeholders are customers and employees. The innovative ideas from the creative trained team are keys to the organizational success now days. The innovation oriented culture is catalyst for the process of competitive advantage to any organization (Anning-Dorson, T. (2018) and hence organizations are more focusing upon the innovative minds. The nurturing and developing these innovative minds in the organization is highly affected by the style of leadership and attitude of leaders in the organization who helps to create conducive culture and facilitate required resources (Weerawardena, J., & Mavondo, F. T. (2011) (Chen, J., Yin, X., & Li, J. (2020). The product or process, both can serve as basis of innovation (Lew, Y. K., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2013) and as per the studies (Sakchutchawan, S., et al. (2011) process innovation is more difficult to imitate by the competitors and contributes to the competitive advantage through efficiency and effective operations in logistics. The innovation may take place in any manner for the organization but as per the situation of environmental consciousness, green practices and innovative ideas for helping to sustain the environment is much in demand now days (Masoumik, S. M., Abdul-Rashid, S. H., & Olugu, E. U.

(2014).

2.6 Competitive Advantage

The organizational resources are considered as the best determinants of competitive advantage if the available resources are harnessed effectively. Different theories and approaches like “Resource Based theory”, “Management Based View”, “Best Practice theory”, etc are given to elaborate competitive advantage for the organization since earlier from 1960s till dated (Wang, H. (2014). The Resource Based approach supports that identification, development, and proper utilization of all the available resources in the organization helps to grab all available opportunities and contributes to the competitive advantage to the organization (Robert M. Grant, 2001). Raduan, C. R., et al. (2009) also supported the relevance of resource based competitive advantage and emphasize upon the critical implementation of strategies to utilize the resources in best possible manner. The resources must be sustained in such a manner that utilization of resources must develop some unique capabilities and competencies for the organization that gives differentiation. The differentiation strategies must be incorporated so as competitors find it difficult to imitate and hence strengthen the competitive advantage (Tim Mazzarol Geoffrey Norman Soutar, 1999). The sustained competitive advantage was also found logical with the superior performance and it was found that superior performance may or may not develop the sustained competitive advantage but sustained competitive advantage always rooted on the effective performance (THOMAS C. POWEL, 2001). Clayton M Christensen, 2001 has studies change management and articulation of strategies according to the changing factors in the environment as one of the important requirement for competitive advantage. The effective change management and implementation is foremost requirement to make the organization sustained in the contingent environment. Green practices are mostly spread among majority of the organization that add value to the society with the contribution to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and hence creating a competitive advantage through stakeholders support (Vaccaro, V. L. (2009).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

On the basis of above literature, author has designed the below designed framework for the research. In this model, HR practices and TQM aspects are considered as the independent variables that affect the dependent variable Innovation and Cost & Differentiation and these dependent variables are further affecting the final dependent variable that is Competitive advantage. The linkage between the dependent and independent variables suggests that more competitive advantage can be developed by integrating the HR practices and TQM aspects in an organizations so that the nurtured talent can be harnessed for gaining and giving more competitive value in the market (refers to Figure 1).

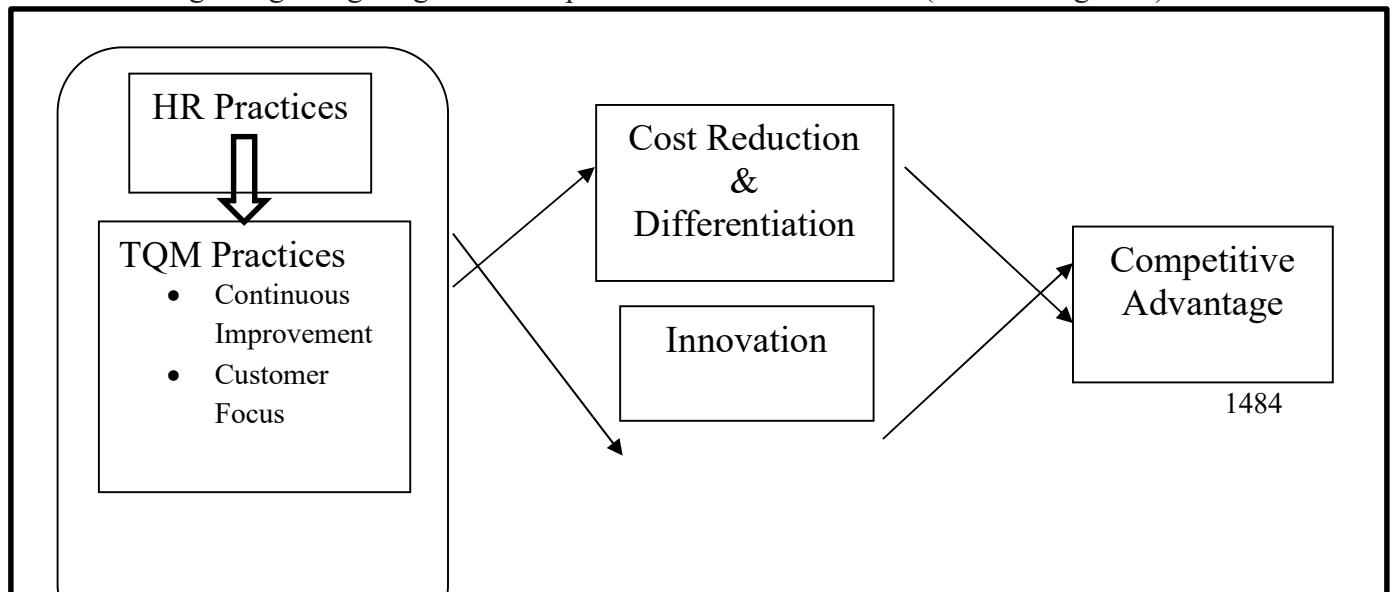


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework*Source: Created by author***4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this research work has contributed an effort to fill the gap analyzed through the literature related to the integration of HR practices, TQM and Competitive advantage. The conceptual research model is proposed in the paper that can be tested through the empirical research in future by the professionals. This conceptual model will also guide the HR professionals for identifying the suitable HR practices in align with the overall quality maintenance of the organization and help the different stakeholders of the organization through more competitive value. The developed model can also be used to study the impact of HR practices and TQM on competitive advantage. Further studies can be developed by including remaining aspects of TQM which were excluded in this study and also industry specific empirical studies can be conducted to test and verify the developed model.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Human Resource management makes the talent in an organization more responsive to suggestions for continuous improvement by fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders is critical during the early phases of Total Quality Management implementation. It is impossible to maintain total quality management when workers believe that their independence is being restricted in any manner, or when they believe that their input is being perceived as "adversarial" by their superiors. As a result, this research may assist professionals in incorporating proper human resource strategies into their organizations in order to achieve total quality management (TQM) and ensure that the process is error-free.

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