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A STUDY ON QUALITY CIRCLE MANAGEMENT TOWARDS HITHARTH ENTERPRISES, VILLUPURAM

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation and impact of Quality Circle (QC) management at Hitharth Enterprises, located in Villupuram. Quality Circles, as participative management tools, empower employees to identify, analyze, and solve work-related problems collaboratively, thereby improving productivity and organizational efficiency. The research focuses on understanding how QC practices are structured and managed within Hitharth Enterprises, evaluating their effectiveness in enhancing product quality, employee involvement, and operational performance. Primary data was collected through employee interviews, questionnaires, and observations, complemented by secondary sources. The findings reveal that Quality Circles have led to measurable improvements in workplace morale, communication, and problem-solving capabilities. However, the study also highlights certain limitations in training, follow-up mechanisms, and management support. Recommendations are provided to strengthen QC initiatives and promote a culture of continuous improvement. This research contributes valuable insights for similar enterprises aiming to adopt or optimize Quality Circle management practices.

Keywords: Quality Circle, Employee Involvement, Participative Management, Continuous Improvement, Problem Solving, Productivity Enhancement, Organizational Efficiency, Workplace Communication, Hitharth Enterprises

INTRODUCTION

Though the entire manufacturing industry is under constant pressure to continuously keep improving the quality, productivity, safety of its products and services, the pressure is all the more when it comes to small and medium scale industries. The small and medium scale industries do not have the wherewithal of the large scale industries to implement the elaborate quality management programmers which are in vogue. They feel the lack the financial, technological and managerial resources for execution of the modern quality concepts. However out of the various quality concepts, quality circles are much easier to implement even in the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and can give substantial tangible and intangible benefits. QCs do not really require a high level of technological facilities or managerial abilities or financial investments. In fact they give a high return on the investment as they use low cost

creative solutions by using the common wisdom of the workers, channelized effectively by QC methodology, for solving the day to day problems at the workplace. Such problems when solved improve the quality, productivity, safety delivery time of their products and services. The cost benefits aggregated over a longer period of time are very substantial. Most importantly participation in this process of problem solving develops a positive attitude, self confidence and enthusiasm in the workers who develop a hunger for solving more and more problems with higher levels of complexities. This prepares the workers for adopting the higher level quality management systems. Quality circles thus serve as a foundation for building the more advanced quality management system in the organization The Quality Circles (QCs) or Quality Control Circles (QCCs) as they are called in some countries originated in Japan in the year 1962. They consists of forming groups of workers, generally 8 to 12 working in similar areas to solve the work related problems by using a systematic problem solving approach and the QC tools. Though the name used is quality circles the groups try to take up the problems or improvements which increase the productivity, safety, comfort etc during the working. The philosophy behind the introduction of the QCs was to involve the workers into the company wide effort of improving the organizational performance. In the process the workers remain engaged in the positive activities. It is very important that the quality circle programme once implemented in an organization succeeds. Failure can result in loss of interest and motivation to continue further. The support and commitment from the top management, creation of the proper QC organizational structure, proper training of the workers and continuous facilitation and encouragement are very important for the success of the QC programmed. Circle membership**:** It is homogeneous group of people usually from the same work areas. However, whenever required experts may be invited for guidance or advice. QCs believe in voluntary participation by the workers without any compulsion. Circle size: Usually a group of 6 to 12 members seems quite effective; however, it depends upon the people employed in a particular section QC meeting: An hour‟s duration is usually quite adequate for a meeting. Whatever the frequency may be, regular meetings should be ensured. Autonomy: An important ingredient of a QC is the sense of autonomy experienced by its members.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anadh Jayakumar A ital. [2011] has discussed complete procedure for formation and implementation of Quality Circles in an organization including objectives of QCs activities operations of QCs, Structure of QCs, roles and function of members, coordinators, leaders and facilitators. The procedure for launching QCs in an organization and the training to be provided to the stake holders is also described.

Chirakumar ital. [2012] has described 7 QCs tools and PDCA cycle which are at the core of solving the problems using the QC approach and discussed the application of the QCs to solve the problem of rejections in the taper roller bearings. Though Quality Circle is a low-cost tool for implementing total quality management in an industry not all Quality Circle programmes achieve the desired success [Jyoti Prakash

Majumdar, ital. 2011]. Quality Circle can fail at various stages due to organizational issues, circle formation issues, operational issues recognition issues etc. QCs awareness for the management and QC training for the workers are very important for the success for the QC programmed.

Shantanu Welker and Shantanu Kulkarni [2013], have discussed the use of Quality Circle to improve productivity and compared the Quality Circles with, Quality Improvement Groups and Work Groups/Project Teams.

Monden (2014) and many other researchers made great contributions to popularize the lean approach. To analyze the implementation of lean approach, it is essential to study the inner working of companies following the basic principles of identified by various researchers over a time period. Researcher examined the lean principles implementation and inner workings of more than 50 companies in automotive sector in USA, UK and India. They studied production

system, product development processes, supply chain management, and management style to see how these companies are following lean principles.

Rahman (2015) describes quality circle and use this technique to improve the productivity. Author implements in BISF (Bangladesh Industrial Sanitary Ware Factory) and enterprise of Bangladesh Industrial Corporation. The factory produces various types of insulators and sanitary ware for local market and export. In the study five different product were considered for analyze. These are then eliminated by implementing the suggestion recommended by quality circle member. Author found good results after implementation with decrease in rejection percentage.

Karlsson (2016) summarizes the idea in three principles: being global, building knowledge structures together, and operating in networks with other actors. Perhaps most important is the organization and building of hierarchies of technological knowledge for the development and production of products. There is one common denominator in the studies cited above: their ideas were generated through research in large companies, most commonly the global automobile industry (Karlsson, 1992; Womack et al., 1990).

Adler (2017) suggest that quality and productivity depend on management „s ability to free workers from the coercive constraints of bureaucracy is not true. According to him, bureaucracy can be reformed to encourage innovation and commitments while standardization, if properly understood and practiced, help continuous learning and motivation. His two-year study shows that Toyota succeeded in employing an innovative form of Toyota „s time and motion regimentation on the factory floor not only to create comparatively better productivity and quality standards but also to enhance workers motivation and satisfaction. It also provides a unique example of employee empowerment, where workers themselves design their procedures and involved in continuous improvement and leading to better employee-employer relationship.

Kamath and Liker (2018) went through study of best practices used by Toyota and other Japanese manufactures in supplier management and product development. They claim that Japanese structure their development programs tightly and use targets and prototype to keep suppliers in line. Japanese set clear, and understandable goals and communicate them consistently to suppliers. Japanese use schedules and targets as major coordinating mechanism. Toyota and others treat suppliers based on their capability and mutual alignment, not blind trust, is what binds important suppliers to customers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role and effectiveness of Quality Circle (QC) management within manufacturing industries, with a particular focus on its application and outcomes. Quality Circles are small groups of employees who voluntarily come together to identify, analyze, and solve work-related problems, aiming to improve productivity and workplace quality. The secondary objectives of the study include evaluating the level of employee participation in QC activities, which is crucial for fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among staff. It also seeks to assess the impact of QC initiatives on reducing machine and equipment downtime, thereby enhancing operational efficiency. Another key area of focus is the role of Quality Circles in promoting better communication and teamwork across all organizational levels, which contributes to a more cohesive and collaborative work environment. Additionally, the study investigates how Quality Circles influence employee recognition and involvement in the decision-making process, ultimately supporting employee motivation and engagement. This comprehensive approach provides insights into how Quality Circles can drive both human resource development and operational improvements in manufacturing settings.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of this study focuses on the implementation and effectiveness of Quality Circle Management in organizations, particularly in manufacturing, service, and corporate

sectors. It examines how Quality Circles contribute to employee engagement, problem-solving, and overall organizational performance. The study will explore employee participation at different levels, the challenges organizations face in sustaining Quality Circles, and the key success factors that enhance their effectiveness. Additionally, it will assess the impact of Quality Circles on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. The research will be limited to organizations that have implemented or are considering implementing Quality Circles, relying on case studies, surveys, interviews, and literature reviews. While it will analyze both historical and current data, it will not cover organizations without any employee participation programs or unrelated management technique.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY:

1. The study is based upon the consumer satisfaction, perception and experience of consumer perception in online product ordering.
2. The data collected for the research is fully primary data given by the respondents by filling the google form.
3. The questionnaire was made available to consumers through google drive – forms.
4. No personal biasness happens while taking filling the questionnaire because of the online google form.Limited time frame.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will adopt a descriptive research design to examine the implementation and effectiveness of Quality Circle Management in organizations. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to gather and analyze data.

The research design stands for advance planning of the method to be adopted for collection the relevant data and the techniques to be used in adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in analysis, keeping the view the objectives of the research and availability time. In general, research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted: it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The Research Design undertaken for the study is Descriptive Research Design. A study, which wants to portray the characteristics of a group or individuals or situation, is known as Descriptive study.

Data collection and sampling:

Data collection is a critical component of any research process, as the accuracy and relevance of information directly influence the quality of the findings. In this study, data has been collected using both primary and secondary methods. Primary data was obtained through the questionnaire method, which served as the main tool for gathering first-hand information from respondents, allowing for direct insights into the effectiveness of Quality Circle management. Secondary data, on the other hand, consists of information that is already available and has been previously collected. This includes data gathered through Google Forms as well as from various secondary sources such as books, company websites, magazines, and other relevant publications. Together, these methods provided a comprehensive and well-rounded foundation for the research.

One of the most prominent problems that countries like India face with regard to their construction projects is quality of construction which is below par as compare to international standards. There is a need for finding substantial solutions to these problems quickly. Quick problem-solving leads to improved quality of construction, maintenance of schedule etc. The use of Quality Circles could prove to be an efficient problem-solving technique which can improve the quality of construction.

FINDINGS:

- 77.8% of the respondent have 18-24 age of the response
- 55.6% of the respondent have male Gender Criteria
- 55.6% of the respondent have undergraduate Qualification Criteria

- 55.6% of the respondent have professional Occupation Criteria
- 88.9% of the respondent have married Marital Status Criteria
- 55% of the respondent have to solve company problem Primary aim of quality circle
- 30% of the respondent have all of the above main purpose of Quality Circle in an Organization
- 60% of the respondent have yes members in your quality circle are able to solve the problems and are participative
- 77% of the respondent have yes Quality Circles are helpful in cost reduction and increases productivity
- 70% of the respondent have once in a week Most preferably Quality Circles should meet
- 40% of the respondent have yes management keep track on the activities of Quality Circle in your organization
- 41% of the respondent have satisfactory satisfaction level with the top Management role in Quality Circle of your organization
- 38% of the respondent 35% of the respondent have yes problems are resolved in an efficient manner by Quality Circle have individual problem Quality Circle
- 65% of the respondent have yes Quality circle identifies analyses and solve quality, cost reduction and any other problem in their work area
- 57% of the respondent have sometimes change developed by your Circle been implemented
- 54% of the respondent have somewhat effective was the Quality Circle in developing solutions to problems
- 45% of the respondent have satisfied are you with the Quality Circle process in your organization

SUGGESTIONS

In the course of this study, a significant problem related to high gas consumption was identified within the organization. This issue was directly impacting operational costs and overall energy efficiency. Through the structured process of the Quality Circle (QC) methodology, the problem was thoroughly analyzed by a cross-functional team of employees. After careful examination and root cause analysis, the team proposed the installation of a solar water heating system as a sustainable and cost-effective solution. This proposal was not only environmentally friendly but also aligned with the organization's goals of reducing energy expenses and improving long-term efficiency.

The implementation followed the standard steps of the Quality Circle approach, which included problem identification, data collection, analysis, brainstorming solutions, feasibility assessment, and execution. The team collaborated across departments to ensure proper planning, resource allocation, and timely execution of the solar heater installation. Post-implementation, measurable outcomes were recorded, revealing approximately a 38% reduction in gas consumption. This reduction translated directly into significant cost savings for the company and marked a clear improvement in energy utilization.

Moreover, the success of this initiative contributed to a notable increase in productivity, as resources previously allocated to gas usage could now be redirected towards other productive activities. This case effectively illustrates how Quality Circles can serve as a practical and impactful tool for solving workplace problems, especially those related to operational efficiency and resource management. By empowering employees to participate in problem-solving and decision-making, the Quality Circle process not only delivers tangible improvements but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and teamwork within the organization.

CONCLUSION

Majority of employees are participating in the QC projects apart from their day to today accomplishment of task. Quality Circle was introduced in organization, the participation level is five percentages now the participation level is ninety percentages and their achievement in QC Projects have increased internally over and above sixty percentages. There is a supportive atmosphere for Quality Circle participants, each and every employee are showing good response for doing projects in Quality Circles. The company wants to implement more innovative ideas to increase the level of participation to hundred percentages and therefore to increase their employee‟s standards.

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