

Total Quality Management Practices and Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Industry: A Case Study of Selected Hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District

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Authors Contribution

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author **Ahimbisibwe James** searched for related literature, designed the methodology, collected data, analyzed the data, typeset the manuscript.*

*Author **Sebuliba Christopher** Formulated the title of the study and objectives, searched for related literature, analyzed the collected data, discussed the findings, proof read the entire manuscript.*

Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

ABSTRACT:

The study set out to examine the relationship between Total Quality Management Practices and customer satisfaction in hospitality industry in Uganda, focusing on the selected hotels Makindye Division, Kampala District as a case study. The study focused on the TQM practices that are implemented by the four selected hotels; the level of customer satisfaction and the relationship between TQM and customer satisfaction in the selected hotels. The study used a population of 170 selected from managerial and non managerial staff of the selected hotels and a sample of 119 was selected using Neumann's formula, but 110 respondents returned the questionnaires representing a response rate of 92.4%. A case study research design was employed and both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection and analysis were used. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Regression analysis such as model summary, ANOVAs and coefficients were also used to test the relationship between the variables. Multiple regression result showed that TQM practices are positively and significantly related to customer satisfaction (H_1). Further, TQM practices explained up to 79.8% of the variance in customer satisfaction of the selected hotels. The study concluded multiple linear regression analysis established that implemented TQM and customer satisfaction levels influences customer satisfaction in the selected hotels. The study recommends that hotels should focus more attention to customers' satisfaction and sustainability by identifying their needs through feedback mechanism. Hotels need to continuously improve their products, services, and processes to remain competitive and be able to maintain a work space that is organized and clean, promoting enhanced functionality, efficiency, and productivity.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Customer Focus, Staff Empowerment, Top management Leadership & Commitment, Strategic Quality Planning, customer satisfaction

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Total Quality Management (TQM) originated as a philosophy in the United Kingdom during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The concept and approach to quality are often attributed to Feigenbaum, who introduced the notion of total quality control, emphasizing the necessity for participation from all organizational functions in the quality management process, rather than limiting it to manufacturing alone.

The evolution of customer satisfaction within the hotel industry is quite significant. In the early 20th century, hotels primarily offered basic accommodations and dining options. As the industry progressed, competition intensified, leading to an increase in customer expectations for more refined services. Hoteliers have recognized the importance of addressing the needs and preferences of their clientele to differentiate themselves in a competitive landscape.

The principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) have been extensively embraced within the hospitality sector to minimize waste, improve product quality, and boost customer satisfaction. TQM promotes efficiency, consistency, and responsiveness in service-oriented businesses, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Esin and Hilal, 2023). Research conducted by Oke et al. (2018) indicates that the hotel industry can significantly improve operational performance and reduce waste through the application of lean principles.

Customer satisfaction serves as a fundamental element for achieving success within the hospitality sector. As noted by Paraskevas and Altinay (2013), it represents a customer's comprehensive assessment of the quality of service received, which is determined by comparing their expectations with their actual experiences. Consequently, customers who are satisfied are more inclined to revisit and recommend the hotel to others, thereby positively influencing the organization's reputation and financial outcomes (Ladhari, 2019).

The research examined the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices in improving customer satisfaction within selected hotels in the Makindye Division of Kampala district. The study aimed to identify the TQM practices employed by these hotels, evaluate the level of customer satisfaction, and analyze the correlation between TQM and customer satisfaction. The results of this research are intended to assist hotel managers in developing effective strategies to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction, while also contributing to the broader understanding of TQM practices and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

TQM refers to the systematic management of initiatives and processes designed to ensure the provision of high-quality products and services. This approach aims to enhance quality and performance to meet or surpass customer expectations. Achieving this goal involves the integration of all quality-related functions and processes across the organization. TQM encompasses a comprehensive view of the quality measures employed by a company, which includes managing quality in design and development, quality control and

maintenance, quality enhancement, and quality assurance. It considers all quality measures implemented at every level and engages all employees within the organization.

As stated by Kanji et al. (2012), the practices associated with Total Quality Management (TQM) encompass the development of human resource management, leadership from top management, the establishment of quality systems and culture, a focus on customer needs, management of process quality, quality data and reporting, continuous improvement initiatives, supplier quality management, effective communication, benchmarking, and the design of products and services. The effective implementation of TQM is likely to yield both immediate and indirect benefits, including enhancements in quality, increased employee engagement and teamwork, improved working relationships, heightened customer satisfaction, greater employee satisfaction, increased productivity, better communication, and an expanded market share.

Customer Satisfaction

In the hospitality industry, customer satisfaction ratings wield significant influence. They serve to remind employees of the critical nature of meeting customer expectations. Additionally, a decline in these ratings serves as an alert to potential issues that could impact sales and profitability. These metrics provide a quantifiable insight into a vital dynamic. A brand that cultivates customer loyalty benefits from positive word-of-mouth marketing, which is both cost-free and remarkably effective. Consequently, it is imperative for businesses to adeptly manage customer satisfaction (Bolton and Drew, 2011). To achieve this, companies require dependable and representative measures of satisfaction.

Jana and Chandra (2016) assert that customer satisfaction is a critical component of the hotel industry. Unlike other sectors, the success of the hotel industry is largely dependent on customer retention. A hotel can only maintain its clientele through the satisfaction of its customers. Essentially, customer loyalty hinges on the quality of services provided. Furthermore, the hospitality sector has seen an influx of investors eager to fulfill customer demands. Consequently, if patrons are dissatisfied with the services offered by a particular hotel, they are likely to seek superior options elsewhere (Jana and Chandra, 2016). To sustain competitiveness in customer satisfaction, hotels must monitor satisfaction levels. This is where technology plays a vital role. Over the years, technological advancements have enabled hotel management to effectively track customer satisfaction metrics.

Two theories that guided the study are Service Quality Model and the Service Profit Chain Theory. The Service Quality model highlights the importance of exceeding or meeting customer expectations regarding service quality. Conversely, the Service Profit Chain theory illustrates the interconnectedness of customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, service quality, and the overall profitability of the organization. Within the framework of this research, the Service Quality model served as an essential basis for guiding Total Quality Management (TQM) and ensuring customer satisfaction within the hotel sector. This theory underscores the importance of not only meeting but also surpassing customer expectations regarding service quality. A prominent model associated with this concept is SERVQUAL, which assesses service quality through five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman, 1988).

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study was to investigate how the effectiveness of TQM practices in enhancing customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. To achieve this purpose, the study focused on the following specific research objectives.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was based on the following specific objectives.

1. To identify the total quality management practices that is implemented by the four selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District.
2. To examine the level of customer satisfaction in the four selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District.
3. To determine the relationship between total quality management practices and customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a case study design with quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain in-depth information about the effectiveness of TQM practices on customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye division, Kampala District. For this study, the multiple case study strategy was the best option. Case studies are in-depth, real-world investigations that are used to examine groups of people or a circumstance that is limited to a certain amount of time, often providing rich insights and understanding (Alpi and Evans, 2019).

In the descriptive research investigation, the researcher employed the quantitative research approach in order to get quantifiable data for the population sample's statistical analysis. Additionally, a qualitative descriptive study was conducted to determine the relationship between the hotels TQM and customer satisfaction. The qualitative descriptive approach was used in studies conducted by a number of researchers, including Hapsari et al. (2017), Othman et al. (2019), and Fida et al. (2020). The researcher was able to conduct cross-sectional investigations, which include examining various segments of the same study population or sample. The researcher therefore used quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Out of 170, a sample size of 119 was selected from different members and customers of Las Vegas Garden Hotel, Speke Resort and Conference Center, Munyonyo Common Wealth Resort and Forest Resort- Lweza as the selected respondents for the study (Neumann, 2000). The sample size is defined as the number of participant used for determining the estimations of a given population.

Sampling is the process of choosing a target population to be used in the study of a given phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Purposive and random sampling methods were employed to select the population of the study for better results. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select a sample with vital data on the topic under study that assisted in analyzing the problem further. The purposive sampling involved the engagement of top executives from the selected hotels. The study also adopted random sampling which was applied to ensure that the units of the population are organized into status and every member in the selected strata has a chance of being selected.

The tools used for data collection were interview method, observation method and documentary review. Data was collected from the managerial and non managerial staff of Las Vegas Garden Hotel, Speke Resort and Conference Center, Munyonyo Common Wealth Resort and Forest Resort- Lweza.

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0) to generate descriptive statistics in form of inferential statistics in form of bivariate and multivariate to establish the relationship between variables. The Pearson coefficient was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Regression analysis was established to determine the contribution of TQM practices on customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District.

Qualitative data analysis starts at the beginning of the research project and not at the end of data collection as was the case with quantitative data analysis Neumann, (2000). It involved; thematic analysis, context analysis, and content analysis where themes that come in the topic were discussed, then familiarization with data collected from the field was followed based on the notes and interview scripts, classifying major issues covered, summarizing the findings, and coding the different sections of data relevant to the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected were analyzed to obtain univariate statistics on TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, bivariate with Pearson’s correlation coefficient, and multivariate models of analysis for regression tests. 119 questionnaires were filled and 110 returned for analysis which gave a response rate of 92.4% for the study. It reveals that 63(52.3%) of the respondents were male and 47(42.7%) were female. More still, since both male and female where represented in the study, the findings can early be trusted by the population as unbiased.

Descriptive statistics on TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction in the selected hotels

Table 1: Relationship between TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	SD	D	N	A	SA
				%	%	%	%	%
Hotel implements TQM practices to continuously collects, analyzes and acts on customer information.	110	3.83	1.096	16.4	20.0	7.3	43.6	12.7
All employees participate in working toward common goals.	110	3.70	1.136	10.0	12.7	15.5	22.7	39.1
TQM practices promote team work in the hotel.	110	4.10	4.156	10.9	20.0	9.1	22.7	37.3
TQM requires that hotel continually collect and analyze data in order to improve decision making accuracy, achieve consensus, and allow prediction based on past history.	110	3.29	1.163	14.5	13.6	9.1	29.1	33.6
Customers consistently receive products and services that meet their needs, and delivered when expected, and have value for price.	110	3.64	1.105	20.9	13.6		27.3	38.2
TQM practices promote employee loyalty in the hotel.	110	3.73	1.007	10.0	15.4	7.2	30.9	36.4
Continual improvement drives hotel to be both analytical and creative in finding ways to become more competitive and more effective at meeting customer expectations.	110	3.66	1.062	16.4	9.1	8.2	40.9	25.4

The hotel uses the techniques of process management to develop cost controlled processes that are stable and capable of meeting customers' expectations.	110	3.54	1.052	10.9	24.5	8.2	26.4	30.0
Hotel implements TQM practices to integrate customers' knowledge with other information and use the planning process to orchestrate action throughout the hotel in order to manage day to day activities and achieve future goals.	110	3.60	1.038	12.7	20.9	9.1	28.2	29.1
TQM practices promote employee retention in this hotel.	110	3.87	1.029	9.1	18.2	13.6	37.3	21.8
The customer ultimately determines the level of quality.	110	3.83	1.097	9.1	4.5		58.2	28.2
Hotel use TQM practices to understand that customers are satisfied with products and services rendered to them.	110	3.70	1.137				67.3	32.7

Source: Field Data, 2024

KEY: SD: Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, A- Agree, SA-Strongly Agree, %-percent

Findings in table 1 reveals that 56.3% with the mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 1.096 agreed that hotel implements TQM practices to continuously collects, analyzes and acts on customer information; 61.8% agreed a with the mean of 3.70 and standard deviation of 1.136 affirms that all employees participate in working toward common goals; 60% agreed with the mean of 4.10 and standard deviation of 4.156 that TQM practices promote teamwork in hotels; 62.7% agreed with a mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 1.163 that TQM requires that hotel continually collect and analyze data in order to improve decision making accuracy, achieve consensus, and allow prediction based on past history; 65.5% with a mean of 3.642 and standard deviation of 1.105 accepted that hotel customers consistently receive products and services that meet their needs, and delivered when expected, and have value for price; 67.3% agreed with a mean of 3.73, standard deviation of 1.007 that TQM practices promote employee loyalty in the selected hotels. This means that hotels implement Total Quality Management (TQM) practices to promote employee loyalty through employee empowerment and involvement; training and development; recognition and reward; communication and feedback; continuous improvement culture; customer focus; 66.3% agreed with a mean of 3.66 and standard deviation of 1.062 that continual improvement drives hotel to be both analytical and creative in finding ways to become more competitive and more effective at meeting customer expectations; 56.4% agreed with a mean of 3.54 and standard deviation of 1.052 that the hotels use the techniques of process management to develop cost controlled processes that are stable and capable of meeting customers' expectations; 57.3% agreed with a mean of 3.60 and standard deviation of 1.038 that hotel implements TQM practices to integrate customers' knowledge with other information and use the planning process to orchestrate action throughout the hotel in order to manage day to day activities and achieve future goals; 59.1% agreed that with a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 1.029 that TQM practices promote employee retention in hotels; 86.4% generally agreed with a mean of 3.83 and that standard deviation of 1.097 that hotel customers ultimately determine the level of quality; 100% agreed with a mean of 3.70 and standard deviation of 1.137 that hotels use TQM practices to understand that customers are satisfied with products and services rendered to them. This indicates that Total Quality Management (TQM) practices are commonly employed in the selected hotels.

Results of correlation analysis

Table 2: Correlation between TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction

		TQM Practices	Customer Satisfaction
TQM Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	110	110
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.798**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	110	110

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In this study, correlation analysis was undertaken to measure the strength of the linear association between Total Quality Management Practices and Customer Satisfaction. Usually, the Pearson correlation coefficient, R values range from +1 to -1, that is coefficient between the main study variables. $r=.798$, $P<0.000$ indicates that there is a positive significant correlation coefficient between TQM practices and Customer Satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary on TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction

The results from regression model summary explain the variable in dependent variable as a result of independent variable. The results in table 3 show that total quality management practices caused a variation of 63.7% in customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala. This indicates that TQM practices enhance customer satisfaction in the selected hotels. This therefore means that other factors not studied in this research contribute 36.3% of the customer satisfaction.

Table 3: Model Summary on TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.798 ^a	.637	.636	1.2516

a. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation of TQM Practices, Level of Customer Satisfaction.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The study findings table 4 reveals that the relationship between Total Quality Management Practices and Customer Satisfaction was statistically significant, $F=8526.710$, $P<0.05$. This means that TQM Practices were good predictors of Customer Satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. Based on the significance of F-statistics, the null hypothesis, Total Quality Management Practices does not significantly relate to Customer Satisfaction in the selected hotels was rejected.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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1	Regression	5732.718	2	12933.18	8526.710	.000 ^b
	Residual	216.900	108	1.517		
	Total	5949.618	110			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation of TQM Practices, Level of Customer Satisfaction						

Coefficients for TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to assess the direction and extent to total management quality practices influences customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. The study findings that TQM practices implemented, $\beta=.733$, $t=6.628$, $p<.005$, level of customer satisfaction significantly predicted customer satisfaction, $\beta=.639$, $t= 7.292$, $p<.005$. This meant that a unit change in TQM practices would lead to an increase in customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala district. Table 5 presents the study results.

Table 5: Regression coefficients for TQM Practices and Customer Satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.244	.342		.714	.476
	Implementation of TQM Practices	.614	.093	.733	6.628	.000
	Level of Customer Satisfaction	.646	.089	.639	7.292	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction						

Discussion, implication and contribution of the study

In this study, correlation analysis was undertaken to measure the strength of the linear association between Total Quality Management Practices and Customer Satisfaction. $r=.798$, $P<0.005$ indicates that there is a positive significant correlation coefficient between TQM practices and customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. This is supported by (Ishikawa, 2015 and Kanji, 2020) who indicated that customer focus, continuous improvement, management leadership and commitment, strategic quality planning and customer satisfaction are regarded as the driving force for the whole quality process in hotels. Deming (2016) also indicated that the survival of the hotel is dependent on meeting the customers’ needs and ensuring that the customer is satisfied. The descriptive statistics demonstrated that there was consensus on the respondents agreeing on the significance of having quick resolution for customer needs in hotels. This is supported with the R of 79.8% of the respondents’ responses. It is consistent with Mallack and Lyth (2018) who indicated that hotels must be responsive to customers’ needs and requirements.

The results from regression model summary explain the variable in dependent variable as a result of independent variable. The results in table 4.12 show that total quality management practices caused a variation of 63.7% in customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala. This indicates that

TQM practices enhance customer satisfaction in the selected hotels. The study found management TQM practices to have significant effect on the customer satisfaction. A unit increase in TQM practices, led to 0.637 increases customer satisfaction in the selected hotels. The descriptive analysis indicated the significance of customer focus, continuous improvement, management leadership commitment and strategic quality planning in enhancing effective communication and regular meetings with hotel customers. This statement is supported 79.8% response rate. The respondents also agreed on the significance of quality policy in an organization that is committed to ensure customer satisfaction. In overall, the respondents agreed that TQM Practices influences customer satisfaction. This is supported by (Oakland, 2018) who stated that quality policy shows that hotel top management is committed, focused to quality services and fulfillment of customer needs. It is also consistent with Besterfield (2016) who indicated that hotel top management commitment to quality improvement makes the implementation of quality efforts to be successful.

The study findings reveals that the relationship between Total Quality Management Practices and Customer Satisfaction was statistically significant, $F=8526.710$, $P<0.05$. This means that TQM Practices were good predictors of customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. The study found that customer focus, staff empowerment, strategic quality planning, management leadership and commitment to have a significant effect on the customer satisfaction. The regression analysis indicated that a unit increase in TQM practices led to increase in customer satisfaction in the selected hotels. The descriptive statistics indicated that the majority respondents agreed that hotels used customer feedback in making future decisions. The respondents also agreed that the delivery of service is continually improved for quality enhancement. The respondents agreed on the significance of TQM practices based on the hotel needs. This is consistent with Arasi and Paul (2015) who indicated that hotels that practice TQM constantly improve their customer service and internal performance. Hotels must continually improve their processes to be able to survive in a competitive hospitality industry. This also agrees with Yousaf (2016) who found out that TQM efforts lead to increased customer satisfaction and delight.

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to assess the direction and extent to total management quality practices influences customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. The study findings that TQM practices implemented, $\beta=.733$, $t=6.628$, $p<.005$, level of customer satisfaction significantly predicted customer satisfaction, $\beta=.639$, $t=7.292$, $p<.005$. This meant that a unit change in TQM practices would lead to an increase in customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala district.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive approach aimed at improving quality and performance in the selected hotels to meet or exceed customer expectations. TQM practices focus on continuous improvement, employee empowerment, and strategic quality planning and customer satisfaction. By integrating these practices, the selected hotels can enhance their overall performance and build stronger, more satisfied customer relationships.

Recommendations

The study recommends that hotels should focus more attention to customers' satisfaction and sustainability by identifying their needs through feedback mechanism. Also, TQM and customer satisfaction culture should be spread through training of hotel employees and above all, the leadership of hotels should be committed to TQM and customer satisfaction improvement. Hotel management should carry out training and development programs for tasks leading to successful hotel operation do an in-depth understanding of the hotel environment, an insight regarding training and development options and career development approach to weld in employees into organizational effectiveness and knowledge sharing to improve customer satisfaction. Hotels should ensure that employees to be great at customer service they create a hotel culture focused on caring. Have a good understanding of what their customers want and establish good lines of communication. The Uganda Hotel Owners Association (UHOA), as the highest governing authority for hotels in Uganda, should establish standardized guidelines for all hotels across the country. These guidelines should serve as a reference for the fundamental aspects of delivering quality services in the hotel industry. The UHOA should conduct regular inspections of hotels through unannounced visits to ensure that proper facilities are in place.

Limitations and Suggestion for the Further Study

Limited time for the research: This interrupted the researcher's study arrangements. It was solved through proper time allocation. Methodological challenges in view of measuring the variables. It was cumbersome to choose measures to use for the different variables. The researcher intends to have a trade-off between measurability and significance. The researcher expected limited access to confidential information which is necessary for the research. Therefore the researcher assured the respondents that the information obtained was treated with a high level of confidentiality. The researcher expected a problem of getting information from the refugees who are cautious not to speak freely with strangers. It raised suspicion that they are being investigated.

The study focused on how TQM Practices such as customer focus, continuous improvement, management leadership and commitment, strategic quality planning influence customer satisfaction in the selected hotels in Makindye Division, Kampala District. Therefore, other constructs or determinants for Total Quality Management practices should be examined such as employee involvement, factual decision making, relationship management, management by fact and culture.

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