Balancing Management Expectations With Employee Opinions Using TQM, Ethics And Concepts: A Case Illustration

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The aim of this study is to develop and present a conceptual framework for corporate ethics in total quality management (TQM).

Design/methodology/approach: The study is based on a detailed longitudinal case illustration. The case summary discusses corporate ethics in intra-company relationships.

Findings – Human resources are critical to TQM performance, and disregarding them may impede growth. This case study demonstrates how management and employee's expectations and perspectives on corporate ethics evolve over time. This method prioritizes a company's human resources when pursuing Total Quality Management. Poor company ethics can have a negative impact on TQM results, either directly or indirectly. To accomplish successful TQM, both management and employees must have a favorable outlook on business ethics. The case study concludes with a move toward pessimism and negativity about business ethics in intra-company relationships.

Research limitations/implications – TQM integrates four corporate ethical principles, which include management expectations and staff attitudes. Corporate quality management is based on harmonizing management and staff mindsets. The outcome depends on the balance of management and employee expectations.

Practical implications – This study emphasizes the significance of balancing management and employee expectations and perceptions in internal business operations while applying TQM methods. Furthermore, corporate ethics supplemented business ethics.

Originality/value – The actual case study indicates that TQM is effective in meeting difficult goals. However, TQM is more than just numbers, earnings and expenses. This business approach is applicable to all aspects of the company's operations, including sensitive concerns, both internally and internationally.

Keywords Total quality management, Business ethics, Employee attitudes, Employee behaviour Paper type Research paper

Topic and limitations: TQM concentrates on a corporation's business operations. Furthermore, it has an external focus. Ethics is not an often discussed topic in TQM environments. TQM ideals should be founded on ethical principles first and foremost. Second, TQM techniques and tools should be consistent with ethical values. An internal approach to TQM concentrates on corporate ethics within the corporation, whereas an external approach focuses on business ethics between organizations.

Societal, business, and organizational principles all have an impact on ethics, particularly corporate ethics[1]. Current ethics are influenced by popular values, norms, and beliefs. Ethics can be seen as a contemporary mirror of society as a whole[2]. Commercial ethics investigates the gap between a corporation's ethical behavior and the market's perception of its ethics in commercial activities. Corporate ethics is largely concerned with internal operations[3]. Corporate ethics examines the disparity between management's ethical behavior and employees' views of it in corporate operations[4]. Our primary focus is not only on business activities in the marketplace, but also on how corporations treat their people internally[5].

There is a strong link between business ethics and corporate ethics[6]. Business ethics takes an outside-in view of a company's operations, whereas corporate ethics takes an inside-out approach. An outside-in approach suggests that a corporation's ethical behavior is influenced by external sources in the marketplace, including customers, suppliers, competitors, the general public, and other stakeholders. From an inside-out perspective, managment's ethical behavior is influenced by internal sources within the firm, such as employees. Although fundamental principles are essential for implementing TQM, ethical frameworks are

rarely articulated in the field. Svensson and Wood (2004b) illustrate the significance of business ethics in TQM with a case study[7].

This research, is based on Wood's (2002) partnership-model of corporate ethics, focuses on a corporation's commitment to ethical culture, as well as its commitment to personnel and shareholders. The focus is on TQM values as the primary source, with methodologies and tools as secondary sources of derivation. To achieve successful TQM in corporate business operations, values should guide the application of methodologies and technologies.

TQM

During the 1990s, practitioners and scholars became increasingly interested in TQM. According to Lagrosen (2001), Total Quality Management (TQM) is a widely accepted method for increasing corporate performance and customer satisfaction[8].

Despite its popularity, the definition of TQM is somewhat vague. According to Amsden et al. (1996)[9], many business professionals and academics view TQM as an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process. According to Hackman and Wageman (1995)[10], Harari (1993), Binney (1992)[11,12], and Ghobadian and Gallear (1996)[13], A collection of essential values, such as customer emphasis and managerial dedication, it can be a catchphrase or a goal to improve organizational competitiveness and profitability. TQM encompasses process emphasis, continuous improvement, and fact-based decision-making (Bergman and Klefsjo¨, 1994; Hellsten, 1997)[14,15].

Hellsten and Klefsjo¨'s (2000) framework for TQM consists of three components: core values, techniques and tools. Similar words are used to describe these phenomena. Shea and Gobeli (1995)[16] use terms such as principles, methods, and instruments. Various authors have defined basic values in TQM (Bergman and Klefsjo¨, 1994; Hellsten, 1997; Hellsten and Klefsjo¨, 2000; Lagrosen, 2002). According to Hellsten (1997), most TQM descriptions share common basic values. Our principles prioritize customer satisfaction, managerial commitment, teamwork, process improvement, and fact-based decision-making.

TQM necessitates cross-functional thinking, planning, and implementation (Schonberger 1995)[17]. TQM descriptions often overlook the importance of ethics in society, especially in the marketplace (Svensson and Wood, 2004b; Vinten, 1998; Peters, 1997a). This research focuses on TQM, which often overlooks the importance of business ethics. Bowman and Wittmer (2000)[18] emphasize the importance of ethics and quality in managing both the hard and soft parts of an organization. To effectively apply TQM, it is important to incorporate ethics in management practices (Peters, 1997b). According to Stainer and Stainer (1995)[19], ethical behavior in management is influenced by five factors: company condition, task, peer group, leadership style, and past experience. According to Svensson and Wood (2003), corporate ethics evolve throughout time and between cultures. Business ethics performance is influenced by evolutionary and contextual factors (Svensson and Wood, 2004a). Similarly, the functions and concerns affecting business ethics are the same. We argue that TQM and its performance rely on these functions and concerns. Lagrosen (2002) examines the impact of culture on quality management practices and identifies disparities in focus across international contexts.

Corporate ethics in TQM

According to Peters (1997a)[20], good capitalism promotes social responsibility. Corporate ethics plays a crucial role in social responsibility and positively impacts capitalism. To be ethical, one must prioritize social responsibility in corporate decision-making. According to Bowman and Wittmer (2000)[21], organizations produce goods and services to enhance people's quality of life. While producing goods and services, managers must understand that their job is not only to do the right thing, but also to do it correctly. According to Stainer and Stainer (1995), incorporating ethical behavior into productivity and quality management can lead to improved knowledge of corporate duties and a competitive advantage. According to Vinten (1998), TQM fails to prioritize ethical considerations.

According to Svensson and Wood (2004), corporate ethics can serve as a foundation for other fundamental values in TQM. As such, it can be used as a framework for internal TQM implementations. According to Townsend and Gebhardt (1997)[22], clients value firms' ethical business practices. Customers increasingly discriminate against firms that do not match ethical standards in company operations. This interest extends beyond customers to all corporate stakeholders and society as a whole. Corporate ethics is a fundamental value that should guide a corporation's business ethics and TQM implementation strategies. Bergman and Klefsjo (1994) identified basic ideals or "cornerstones of TQM" that include corporate ethics in addition to business ethics. Incorporating business ethics into the key values of TQM would significantly enhance its effectiveness. Corporate ethics should be included into the TQM process, not treated separately. Discussing corporate ethics in TQM is crucial for developing a comprehensive conceptual framework.

Contextual concerns impact TQM ethics (Svensson and Wood, 2004b)[23], as management systems and business environments influence ethical business practices in the marketplace. According to Stainer and Stainer (1995), productivity, quality, and ethics have a strong correlation. Svensson and Wood (2003) define culture as a societal environment for business ethics. Hakansson and Snehota (1995)[24] and Hakansson (1987) identify contextual difficulties in the marketplace, including actors, activities, and resources.

Hakansson (1982)[25] found that a company's ethical performance is influenced by its environment, atmosphere, and interactions with other firms. Corporations are influenced by various factors, including society, industry, corporate culture, and human behavior. Contextual corporate ethics can have an impact on TQM in a managerial organization, either implicitly or explicitly. Several studies (Fisher et al., 2001; Seitz, 2001; Peppas and Peppas, 2000; Singhapakdi et al., 1999; Fernandez-Fernandez, 1999)[26, 27,28]have examined ethical dilemmas in various contexts at both international and national levels.

Ethics in TQM is linked to evolutionary difficulties (Svensson and Wood, 2004a). Svensson and Wood (2003) identify time as a contextual issue in business ethics. Another option is change. Change is the only constant. Evolutionary concerns impact the setting of the marketplace, including actors, activities, and resources. Additionally, corporate factors impact the business environment, atmosphere, and interactions among businesses. Contextual difficulties in TQM can impact how fundamental values are used in the marketplace. Evolutionary difficulties have an impact on corporate ethics in TQM, which can be implicit or explicit in managerial settings (Kilcullen and Kooistra, 1999; Giacalone and Knouse, 1997; Yamaji, 1997; McDonald and Zepp, 1989)[29,30,31]. Many corporations are focusing on ethical concerns related to evolution, including time and culture. The implications that these two aspects may have for the corporation, organizations aim to adopt an ethical corporate attitude and expect their employees to follow suit.

Commentary

We emphasize the need for managers to examine the impact of ethics on core values in TQM. Ethics stems from societal, marketplace, and corporate principles. TQM emphasizes ethics as a basic principle. The global business climate is becoming more ethical. As the climate evolves, members may demand more ethical behavior from corporate leaders and corporations. Recognizing the growth of fundamental values in TQM is crucial for a corporation's ideology and its implementation in the marketplace.

When conducting an ethical audit, it's important to include both internal and external ethical factors. This helps to contextualize the corporation's values within its cultural and societal context. This concept requires further investigation. We believe that corporate malpractice stems from corporations' self-indulgent, introspective, and myopic perspectives, which prioritize corporate and/or personal self-interest over other potential outcomes.

Corporate ethics in TQM: a conceptual framework of core values

The approach aims to help firms implement TQM while also considering corporate ethics. The implementation process starts with identifying core values that align with the corporation's ethics. Next, the firm must identify effective practices that align with its basic ideals of corporate ethics. Finally, appropriate tools must be chosen to support the techniques. Corporate ethics should affect the fundamental principles of a The corporation's internal management system impacts the strategies and instruments used. Corporate ethics should be integrated into TQM's values, processes, and tools, as well as the overall quality management system.

In TQM, corporate ethics is primarily defined by the difference between management and employee expectations and perceptions. Management expectations should align with perceptions of business ethics. Additionally, there should be alignment between employee expectations and perception. Ideally, management and employee expectations should align.

TQM's gap-dualism model categorizes and describes many corporate ethical scenarios (refer to Figure 1). This article identifies four potential gaps between management expectations and employee perceptions. Each gap is labeled as a dualism-situation, meaning it can be viewed by either management or employees. Figure 1 shows two dotted lines that represent ideal situations where management and employee expectations or views align. While a perfect match is ideal, it may not be achievable in real life. The gap-dualism model identifies four circumstances with both academic and management implications. TQM identifies four dualisms in business ethics:
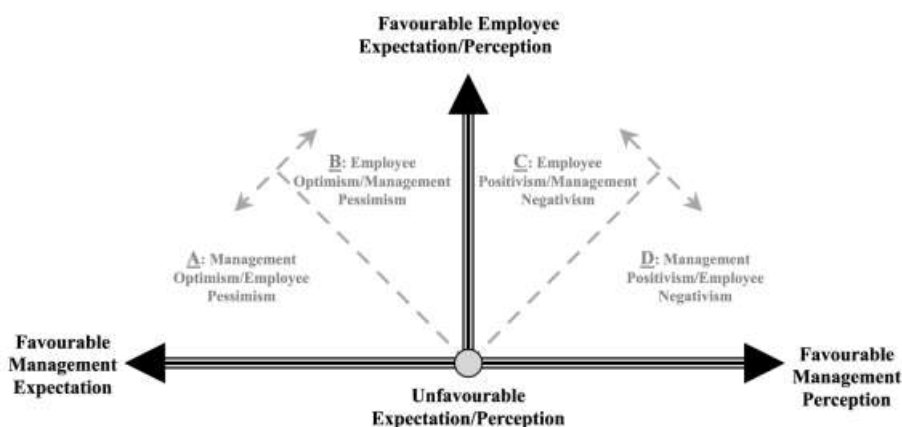

Figure 1 . The gap-dualism-model of corporate ethics in TQM

1. Management has a more positive outlook on corporate ethics than employees, who are more pessimistic.
2. Employees are more optimistic about business ethics than managers, who are pessimistic.
3. Employees perceive business ethics positively, but management perceives it negatively.
4. Management has a more optimistic view of business ethics (management positivism) than employees do (employee negativism).

Implementing TQM can be challenging because to dualism-related circumstances. To ensure internal harmony, it's crucial to align management and employee expectations. Corporate ethics are the foundation of a corporation's business ethics. The corporation's ethical beliefs are reflected in its continuing commercial connections. While it may go unnoticed at first, others in the business setting may eventually reveal it. These discoveries will undoubtedly be detrimental to the firm. TQM values, procedures, and tools should align with both internal company ethics and marketplace business ethics. Furthermore, the corporation's commercial ethics should align with society norms.

Summarized case description of corporate ethics: management versus employee expectations and perceptions

This section summarizes a case study on business ethics in intra-company relationships. Investing in human resources is crucial for TQM success. This case study shows how management's and employees' expectations of business ethics have evolved over time. This approach prioritizes a company's human resources in its pursuit of Total Quality Management. Poor company ethics can negatively impact TQM outcomes, either directly or indirectly. To achieve successful TQM, both management and employees must have a positive attitude towards corporate ethics. The shift towards pessimism and negativity in corporate ethics throughout intra-company relationships leads to the conclusion.

This case study examines how management influences employee expectations and perceptions within a business setting. The artwork includes delicate and sensitive information. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, all names, locations, and dates have been changed in the case description. The narrative summarizes and reflects the case's timeline. These examples show how management and employees progressed from high expectations to success. Positive impressions lead to pessimistic expectations and negative perceptions. This is a bad development in TQM.

Management versus employee: from optimism of expectations and positivism of perceptions

John was an engineer with a multinational engineering company looking to expand into the Global market. The company planned to expand to accommodate new work opportunities. The organization wanted a regional manager. The new enterprise need a leader capable of building the business for the organization. The role was crucial to the company's activities in the region.

John was summoned from his field work in Delhi to meet with the General Manager of his division. He had no idea what was to happen. He was greeted warmly when he entered a superior's office. Arjun was a direct and straight forward person. He got straight to the point. He detailed the Global venture and asked John to take the job. John was initially astonished, but as reality set in, his mood changed to one of excitement and anticipation. What an excellent opportunity. At 28 years old, he saw this transfer as an opportunity to advance both his personal abilities and his career within the organization. The supervisor chose John for this project due to his previous outstanding performance within the organization. John discussed the subject with his wife and decided to accept the offer.

John and his wife, Silvia, go on their great journey overseas. Both had positive expectations for the unexpected transformation in their life. John's assignment would require him to travel for approximately three weeks out of four. Silvia planned to maintain her teaching skills while anticipating further changes in their plans. As months passed, she became irritated and nervous over their inability to have a child. Her enthusiastic expectations became less encouraging. Silvia experienced irritability, agitation, and missed work due to John's frequent absences. She felt lonely and lacked social connections. Silvia asked John if she might return to Kerla to see her family. John was not an insensitive man, and he quickly agreed. Silvia returned to Kerla , and John focused on his business.

Management versus employee: towards pessimism of expectations and negativism of perceptions

As the days passed into weeks, John began to suspect that something was amiss. His formerly hopeful expectations for this job change became negative. Silvia's communication was decreasing as she became more withdrawn. John learned from a family acquaintance that she had started working part-time at her previous employer and was enjoying it. He spoke to her, but the discourse was unclear. His negative perception became clear. He realized there were many unresolved issues between them. He became aware of previously unnoticed problems. He realized that if he didn't take drastic action, he would only have his career.

He quickly called Arjun and explained the issue to him. The discussion was not handled optimistically. Instead, he handed John an ultimatum: choose between his wife and job. John was shocked. He resigned abruptly and expressed his displeasure with Arjun. Arjun warned him that if he departed to return to his home town , the corporation would pursue legal action to recoup money. John felt ashamed. He was hurt, puzzled, and felt completely let down. How did this situation develop? John had no idea that his former

manager in Delhi had discussed his position with the company CEO. The CEO contacted John right away, surprised by the scenario. John was overjoyed as it provided a glimmer of optimism in an otherwise bleak time in his life. The CEO stated that the company will relocate him to Kerla to advance his career.

The corporation did not wish to lose him. He wasn't sure if Silvia would feel the same way. Despite the company's acceptance, John and his partner grew alienated. John was highly disconcerted by his current situation. His expectations, perceptions, and reality had collided, resulting in an implosion. He found some comfort in knowing he still had his work.When he returned to Kerla, he was reassigned to a division with smaller tasks than before.

Although he was not demoted, it was clear that he was no longer as senior as before. John opted to wait and re-establish himself. Surely, the corporation would not keep this against him forever.

John was doing exceptionally well by the conclusion of his first year back. He had created rapport with his line supervisors, and even Arjun acknowledged him again. His career seemed to be taking off as he was given bigger tasks to manage. However, John was looking for new challenges. He possessed expertise in procurement and aimed to build a niche in the business.

John's previous employer in Delhi was the head of the procurement section, and they had worked together for a few years before to his departure to the Global venture. When John called, Suraj informed him that a deputy position was becoming available and advised him to keep an eye out for the next advertisement. John was excited by the opportunity.

After several weeks, John had not heard or seen anything. While reading his local newspaper, he noticed a job post in the executive section. It read quite similar to the employment offer at his company. The advertisement was placed by the company's executive recruitment firm. John called Suraj from work. When he was unavailable, he reached out to his line supervisor, Ajay, who agreed to make inquiries on his behalf. After a few hours, Ajay returned and informed John that the position was not what he had expected. John was hesitant to accept the message, but he did so with good faith.

Two months later, John ran into Suraj office. Suraj was distant with him,this was odd given their previous positive relationship. He expressed a desire to leave John quickly. JJohn inquired about the employment, but Suraj responded angrily that it was too late since John had already declined. John was shocked. He had received no such offer. Suraj was surprised by John reaction, prompting them to have a serious conversation.

He told John that he had asked HR for John to take the post, but John declined. Both men were surprised. John realized he had been engineered out of his next job opportunity. He resigned, cleared his desk, and left the building. The company he joined a decade ago was no longer the same. John felt duped and betrayed. He did not deserve this treatment after many years of service. He had a poor view of the company's management team. How disheartened he felt!

The company lost an entrepreneur who would have supported the ongoing implementation of TQM. Others in the firm may have seen or heard about John's instance and realized that the company's TQM efforts may not include human resources (soft side).

Lessons learned and concluding thoughts

The case description suggests that TQM is effective in achieving challenging objectives. However, TQM is more than just numbers, earnings, and expenses. This business approach applies to all aspects of the organization, both internal and external, including soft ones. Corporations must constantly assess societal and market trends. They must interpret employee wishes within their organizations. Environmental scanning is widely used in the business and society to stay aware of current happenings and sentiments. This is an evident component of TQM. The case description suggests that internal collaboration among staff is also necessary. Human factors must be considered when implementing TQM. Employees are a company's most important asset. They develop and implement TQM processes that impact all other assets. Without employees' optimism and positivism, TQM will be less successful. Investing in personnel benefits both the company and its performance in the market. Pessimism and negativism can stifle employee creativity and hinder TQM adoption efforts.

Misreading the internal environment is a significant organizational blunder that leaves the company vulnerable to employee behavior. Pessimism and negativism can negatively impact the outcome of TQM efforts. Corporations aim to get a competitive advantage by focusing on their products and branding and understanding societal trends. To imply that a corporation's management should be reactive to the marketplace and employees, rather than proactive, would be considered rebellious. Corporations should prioritize ethical ideals alongside product positioning. Corporate ethics must be prioritized in TQM planning and implementation.

This article proposes a framework for corporate ethics in TQM and uses a brief case scenario to derive conclusions. Corporate ethics are an important intra-organizational value in Total Quality Management. TQM should address both the hard and soft aspects of corporate operations, including human factors. Second, it's crucial to regularly assess the ethical performance gap, or mismatch.

Management and employee viewpoints cannot be stressed. To achieve TQM, companies must prioritize maintaining staff optimism and positivity. Otherwise, the outcome will be impacted badly. Internal ethical

deficiencies in TQM management may pose a threat to the firm in the marketplace. Inadequate internal strengths in TQM can lead to missed external chances.

Pessimism and negativity among employees can negatively impact a company's TQM and potentially its existence. Corporate ethics is founded on the ethical ideal of considering both internal and external business operations and connections in daily TQM practices. They must remain alert and cautious to avoid disenfranchising both the marketplace and their own workforce. Corporate ethics should be a basic value of TQM.
Corporate ethics in TQM should not be ignored until a crisis emerges. Failure to prepare, both philosophically and practically, might expose a firm to unnecessary risks. Corporations prioritize self-protection over considering the impact on employees or stakeholders, resulting in reactive rather than proactive ethics. Disgruntled employees can embarrass firms, leading to litigation and negative public relations. This can lead to the failure of TQM initiatives. In this article, we demonstrate how corporations and their management can suffer greatly from self-centered decisions that are made in a reactive manner without considering the prevailing circumstances and the impact on all parties involved. These decisions and actions undermine the value of TQM investments.

Contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research.
This paper provides a conceptual foundation for business ethics in TQM. It can be applied in management practice to analyze and describe corporate ethics in TQM, making a practical contribution. This emphasizes the significance of ethical considerations in TQM management practices. This study provides a methodological framework for describing corporate ethics in intra-company relationships, which has not been well addressed in earlier TQM and ethics studies.

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