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Politis, John D.

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QFD, creativity and productivity

John D. Politis

Pioneering Faculty of Business Programs, Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper examines the relationship between organisational creativity, productivity and the underlying dimensions that foster quality function deployment (QFD).

Methodology – A total of 359 usable questionnaires were received from employees who are engaged in quality management programmes from nine companies in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These were subjected to a series of correlational and regression analyses.

Findings – There are three major findings in this research. First, the relationship between the QFD variables and organisational creativity is positive and significant. Second, the relationship between the QFD variables and productivity is stronger compared with the relationship between the QFD variables and organisational creativity.

Practical implications – Finally, the study suggests that top management commitment, worker-supervisor collaboration in QFD efforts, internal processes and strategies for QFD, the effectiveness of use of information and data to support QFD actions, and building relationships with customers, are essential in creating an organisational climate conducive to QFD implementation. The study shows that the real challenge for organisations in the UAE is to create a working environment that facilitates the process of QFD.

Keywords Creative thinking, Quality function deployment, Productivity rate, Innovation, United Arab Emirates

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The competitiveness of an organisation depends on its ability to continuously adapt to new environments, develop new products, and create innovative ideas (Kay, 1993; Martensen and Dahlgaard, 1999). But how? Many organisations have reached the conclusion that total quality management (TQM) is essential in the process of achieving sustained organisational competitive advantage in the new economy. It is reported that TQM is a paradigm and a philosophy (Haag *et al.*, 1996) that comprises three primary activities, namely:

- (1) *hoshin* planning;
- (2) quality function deployment (QFD); and
- (3) statistical process control (SPC).

Yet, QFD appears to be the key tool in every conceptual TQM model proposed today (Besterfield *et al.*, 1999).

According to Akao (1990), QFD is:

... a method for developing a design quality aimed at satisfying the consumer and then translating the consumer's demands into design targets and major quality assurance points to be used throughout the production phase.

