


Chapter 15

Total Quality Management (TQM) Practices in Achieving Hospitality Excellence in the UAE

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has witnessed unprecedented growth, driven by a global influx of tourists and a strong emphasis on service quality. This study explores the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices within the UAE's hospitality sector and evaluates their role in achieving service excellence. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys and interviews from 125 hospitality professionals across major UAE cities.

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The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between TQM components— leadership commitment, employee involvement, and customer focus—and perceived service quality dimensions such as responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stands today as one of the most dynamic and rapidly evolving hospitality and tourism destinations in the world, driven by a strong commitment to economic diversification, service innovation, and tourism-led growth. Its major urban centers, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, have gained international recognition as premier hubs for luxury travel, global conferencing, cultural experiences, and sporting mega-events. Simultaneously, other Emirates, including Sharjah with its cultural tourism initiatives and Ajman with its emerging hospitality footprint, are increasingly contributing to the sector's expansion and competitiveness. Within this region, the hospitality industry functions not only as a key economic pillar but also as a platform through which global perceptions of the UAE are shaped. Hotels have become strategic components of national branding and service excellence, serving as a reflection of the UAE's aspirations toward operational efficiency, innovation adoption, and world-class customer experience delivery.

Given the inherent competitive intensity of the UAE hotel market, particularly in the upscale segment dominated by 4-star and 5-star properties, service quality has emerged as a paramount strategic differentiator. The presence of international hotel chains, globally benchmarked service standards, and culturally diverse guest expectations compel hospitality organizations to prioritize operational excellence as a core performance requirement. Moreover, social media and digital review systems such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Google Reviews have increased transparency and service visibility, placing additional pressure on hotels to maintain consistent quality levels. To sustain market competitiveness in such a demanding environment, hospitality organizations in the UAE increasingly turn toward Total Quality Management (TQM) as a comprehensive and systemic approach to improving service processes, employee performance, leadership effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

TQM, founded upon the seminal contributions of Deming (1986), Juran (1992), and Crosby (1979), is widely understood as a holistic management philosophy emphasizing continuous improvement, zero defects, customer involvement, and proactive leadership. Traditionally rooted in manufacturing, TQM principles have been progressively adapted to service industries, where customer interaction, experience creation, and service delivery variability significantly influence perceived quality. Evans and Lindsay (2013) note that the hospitality environment differs profoundly

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