

Quality Management System Applications in the Hotel Industry in Macedonia

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Abstract

This paper represents the research findings referring to the approach toward the quality in the hotel industry in Macedonia, managers' ability to build up a good quality system as well as the directions that should be undertaken in order to improve the business processes, products and service. The research has determined the "age", i.e. the development of the hotel capacities according to the pillars of the house of quality (from young and not so developed system toward a mature and developed one).

The solution should be found in quality system development by applying TQM (Total Quality Management) strategy, improving the staff, introducing instructions for improving quality service and enhancing the processes.

Keywords: TQM (Total Quality Management) strategy; hotel industry; the house of quality; quality service

1. Introduction

The appearance of serial standards ISO 9000 and the philosophy of TQM (Total Quality Management) in the world caused mass implementation of this strategy; decrease of expenses and long-term sustainable development of hotel industry from one point of view set as a market strategy for satisfying the customers' needs, and from another point of view as a superior work style. The adoption of this strategy brought improvement of competition and efficiency in the industry. The new approach toward quality asks for new activities in the field of employee's education, introducing standardization of all processes, introducing statistic process control for non defective work as well as a new approach in the expenses' analyses.

All this requires a scientific, methodological, planned, persistent and systematic approach. At the same time, it means total difference in staff behaviour, vital change in the organizational process, clearly defined rights, duties and responsibility of each individual. Although, in Macedonia, a new European quality concept is continually mentioned, it is not really accepted nor established in all cells of the hotel industry.

It has been rumored about thousands of pages of European standards that should be translated, adjusted, discussed and adopted, but this process is still deadlocked.

2. Literature Review

The standardization in the management system has become a key task of managers as well as a prior question for the hotel industry survival in the 21st century (Casadesus & Gimenez, 2000). Beside the hotel owner who is mainly interested in profit and quick multiplying of the invested capital, the other interested parties: clients, employees, delivery people and community put pressure and make demands in order to adapt the hotel management system according to the different standards which will surely fulfill their expectation. A great number of authors say

that introduction of a quality system will help them to overcome their problems. According to the demands ISO 9001:2015, not only a new way of work should be started, but a different way of thinking should be approached. It means a hotel reengineering and a radical new way of thinking and work.

For many companies the implementation of ISO 9001 is the first step to TQM (Total Quality Management). The upgrading of ISO 9001:2015 with TQM strategy means improving the quality through review of the organizational processes in terms of defining, improving and design as well as enhancing the productiveness and optimization of the expenses (Casadesus & Gimenez, 2000). The advantages of competence are often decisive for development and use of the system for quality provide.

The daily practice of employees in the hotel industry should not be their self-control working only but they have to be trained to act preventively. They ought to be responsible, to correct their mistakes and to reveal each problem connected to quality (Mitreva et al., 2016).

The implementation of the new TQM strategy in the hotel industry means projection of a good documented quality system that comprises all hotel business processes and represents an essential foundation for successful apply of statistic process control (SPC) and efficient team work; otherwise, they cannot be set in case of bad quality system (Mitreva, et al., 2015). In this way, it is guaranteed that the top management attitudes are carried out which establish an atmosphere and information base for team work.

The design of quality system in the hotel industry is a task of the strategic management. It is done through managing activities that determine the elements and structure of the enterprise, delegate the assignments and connect all the elements together. Inside the framework of the managing activities, a certain balance is achieved between the desired goals and the real possibilities in the hotel. Inside the division, the number of units is defined – organizational units and their integration is realized [4].

Inside the description of the hotel business process, the following questions have to be answered:

- Is this process covered with documents and to what extent?
- Is this process in interaction with other processes and what kind?
- How is this document going to be valorized?

Within the description of information flow, we get the answer of the question:

What information are needed in the process and what information arise from the process? (Beskese & Cebeci 2001; Mitreva & Filiposki, 2012; Juran, 1978; Shepherd, 1998). Within the description of the executor, we get the answer of the question:

- Who is responsible for the process that is described in the document?
- Within the description of the authority, we get the answer of the question:
- Who is responsible for the document content, what are other standards and procedures and what other parties are interested in the process as well as the document?

Within the control, we get the answer of the question:

- What are the terms and conditions under which the document is applicable?
- When structuring the standard operative procedure (SOP) which is the base of the quality system, it is necessary, at the very beginning to perceive the concept elements of the organizational structure and management.

When describing the general concept, it is necessary to establish connection among the directives, procedures, work instructions and the matrix of duties and responsibilities inside the defined hierarchy (Ciampa, 2005; Crosby, 1989).

The hotel structure, number and different levels of management influence the number of SOP and instructions.

Difficulties in implementation of quality system in the hotel arise from the difference in structure of the organization and the structure of processes that are realized inside it. The structure and the number of documents (SOP and instructions) should fit the real organizational needs and their mutual connection. If differences arise, adequate instructions should be provided for their implementation.

The document and information should give the answer of the questions: Who should know, what he should know, why he should know, where and when it happens, who he should give the information to, etc. (Deming, 1996; Kanji, 1998b; James, 1996; Oakland, 2000; Shiba, 2002).

The implementation of separate documents of the quality system (manual, procedures or instructions) depends on business culture and maturity of the top management and employees, working norms and values, the attitude toward the quality and the employees' awareness (García-Bernal, et al., 2004). Hence, it is necessary (before introducing the quality system) to make preparations in terms of decreasing the organizational inertia and resistance and creation of a good

atmosphere to accept the changes. The education program is the first step in achieving the goal (Kaplan & Norton, 2001; Sethi, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 1995; Mitreva, 2014; Mitreva, et al., 2016b; Mitreva, et al., 2016c).

3. Description of the Hotel Industry in Macedonia

The tourist offer is a complex category consisting of numerous elements that influence the service quality directly or indirectly. The most characteristic direct receptive factors are: hotel and restaurant management, trade, traffic, craft and travel agencies as mediation factors etc. On the other hand, indirect factors in the tourist offer are: public institutions, water and electricity supply, parks etc. Consequently, it is understandable why tourist offer is considered the foundation of the tourism development. Macedonia actually has a well-developed hotel accommodation offer. As of 16.01.2018, there are 140 registered hotels of all categories in total, Table 1.

Type of hotels	Number	%
Superior hotels with 5*	9	6,4
Hotels with 5*	3	2,1
Superior hotels with 4*	10	7,1
Hotel with 4*	46	32,9
Superior hotels with 3*	10	7,1
Hotels with 3*	36	25,7
Superior hotels with 2*	10	7,1
Hotels with 2*	14	10
Hotels with 1*	2	1,4
Total	140	

Table 1. Structure of hotels in Macedonia as of 16.01.2018
Source: Ministry of economy, Sector of tourism and hospitality, Review of categorized hotels

Table 1 shows that the most numerous hotels are those with 4* (32,9%), while the least numerous are those with 5* (2,1%). Since 2013, a new Rulebook of categorization of hotels has been brought officially and a certain number of hotels got additional star as a result of improved standards so they achieved the category superior hotels. The received decisions of categorization are valid for three years.

The increased number of hotel accommodation brought about growth of hotel rooms and beds. The current accommodating touristic offer in Macedonia is versatile and it comprises all kinds of basic and additional capacities that give service for accommodation and stay. So, as of December 2017, from total 28305 rooms and 73168 beds registered in all capacities in hospitality, the hotels with three, four and five stars participate with 6777 rooms (24%) and 14.521 beds. (19,8%).

Table 2 shows the dynamic growth of hotel rooms and beds in the period from 2015-2017. It is seen that the total number of hotel rooms with three, four and five stars has grown to 114,4% i.e. from 5.802 rooms in 2015 to 6.777 rooms in 2017.

At the same time, the increase of 14,7% is registered in the total number of hotel beds (Table 3), i.e. from 12.390 beds in 2015, to 14.521 beds in 2017.

Number of hotel rooms in different accommodating objects in Macedonia according to the structure 2015-2017						
	2015	2016	%	2016	2017	%
	Rooms			Rooms		
Hotels *****	1258	1338	6%	1338	1455	9%
Hotels ****	2588	3005	16%	3005	3321	11%
Hotels ***	1956	2030	4%	2030	2001	-1%

Table 2. Number of hotel rooms with three, four and five stars in Macedonia according to the structure, 2015-2017.

Source: State statistical office (2017)

Number of hotel beds in different accommodating object in Macedonia according to the structure, 2015-2017						
	2015	2016	%	2016	2017	%
	Beds			Beds		
Hotels *****	2513	2739	9%	2739	2867	5%
Hotels ****	5363	6323	18%	6323	6964	10%
Hotels ***	4514	4657	3%	4657	4690	1%

Table 3. Number of hotel beds in different accommodating objects in Macedonia according to the structure, 2015-2017.

Source: State statistical office (2017)

4. Methods in the Research

In the research qualitative and quantitative methods are used. The qualitative approach comprises literature review of many publications that generally analyze the quality system and its implementation in practice.

The quantitative approach consists of electronic survey aimed to the managers of hotels with three, four and five stars. The survey was carried out in the period from March to April 2018 and they were reminded of the unanswered questions weekly. This sample was done according to the list received from the Sector of tourism and hospitality within the framework of Ministry of Economy (Table 4). In this survey, more than half of the hotels have 4 stars (48,9%), more than a third have three stars (38,3%), while only 12,8% are hotels with five stars.

Type of hotels	Number	%
Hotels with 5*	12	12,8
Hotels with 4*	46	48,9
Hotels with 3*	36	38,3
Total	94	100

Table 4.
Sample
in the research

Source: Government of the Republic of Macedonia,
Ministry of Economy, Sector of tourism and hospitality.

Note: Data as of May 2018.

Although the research was planned to be carried out among total number of 94 managers of hotels with three, four and five stars, only 37 of them have answered the questionnaire. The distribution of answers is seen visually in Table 5. The final percentage 39,4% is relatively high which is a result of the electronic survey where the lack of personal contact caused the percentage between 16-25% (Medina-Muñoz & García-Falcón, 2000; Bohdanowicz, et al., 2005).

Type of hotels	Number	%
Hotels with 5*	10	27
Hotels with 4*	17	46
Hotels with 3*	10	27
Total	37	100

Table 5.
Distribution of
answers in different
hotels in percentages

The electronic survey consists of a questionnaire structured in four parts:

I part: General data (open questions according to the type of the hotel, years of existence, number of employees, categorization etc.);

II part: Pillars of house of quality. The house of quality sits on four subsystems: internal standardization, methods and techniques of quality, education and motivation and analyses of quality expenses; on the roof is the top management, and on the foundation is measurement, assessment, analyses and implementation of quality/ bad quality. (Thirty-five questions are connected to the implementation of quality system). The second part of the research should determine the "age" i.e the development of hotel capacities according to the pillars of the house of quality (from a young and not so developed system to a mature and developed one).

III part: Indicators for receiving the European prize of quality: leadership, politics and strategy, management with employees, resources, processes, consumers' satisfaction, influence on the society, business results and innovation investment. These criteria assess the position of Macedonian hotels if they compete for the European prize of quality.

IV part: Managers' assessment (twenty-two questions for measuring the manager assessment of advantages and disadvantage of implementing the total management quality system).

The questions in the second part of the questionnaire determined the grade of implementation of the quality system in the hotel industry. The aim is to identify if the higher-rated hotel use the same or different practices when projecting and implementing the quality system, in comparison with the lower-rated hotels. The research should determine the deviation of

subsystems of TQM (Total Quality Management) system, through the symptoms of "health" i.e. the implementation of four pillars of the house of quality: internal standardization, methods and techniques of quality, education and motivation and analyses of quality expenses.

The questionnaire consists of one type of a question: Answer according to the 5-grade Likert scale where 1= (low that means-no, they do not plan at all, 5= (very high-they have implemented it). Automatically, when interpreting the average values of the results, the following scheme is applied when quantifying the factor of influence: 1.00-1.80 (no, it is not planned at all); 1.81-2.60 (activities are planned); 2.61-3.40 (activities are at start); 3.41-4.20 (activities are at advanced phase); and 4.21-5.00 (activities have been implemented).

5. Analyses of the Results

The questions in the second part of the questionnaire aim to define the current grade of implementation of quality system. The house of quality sits on four subsystems: internal standardization, methods and techniques of quality, education and motivation and analyses of quality expenses. Because of the vast research, only the results referring to the implementation of internal standardization and quality supply are shown in this paper. The goal was to identify whether higher-rated hotels apply the same or different practices when implementing the internal standardization compared to lower-rated hotels. Table 6 shows the cumulative results received from the second part of the questionnaire related to the indicators for assessment the management of quality systems in hotels.

Generally, it is concluded that the hotels involved in the survey have different attitudes toward the research. In the survey, on one hand, there are some new hotels, existing only 5 years at the tourist market; on the other hand, there are some well- positioned hotels with more than 15 years experience. Table 6 for all hotels (with 3*, 4* and 5*) generally shows that the indicators for assessing the quality systems in the surveyed hotels are evaluated with average and high influence factor. It means that the surveyed hotels are at initial or advanced phase in the process of projection and implementation of internal standardization (3,5 average value). The necessity of practice to work according to the international standards and strategic connection with western countries has made some managers and hotel owners to implement the quality systems, which was shown in the very research. What is obvious in Table 6 is the lack of complete implementation and certification of internal standardization according to ISO 9001:2008 or ISO 9001:2015 with average influence factor (3,2 average value). The average value of the influence factor shows that hotels are at beginning with the activities of implementation and certification of quality system. Generally speaking, the hotel managers in Macedonia assess that they have certificates referring to quality system according to ISO 9001:2008 or ISO 9001:2015 with 3,2 average value, a level that shows that all of them are actually at their beginning phase.

The implementation and certification of different standards/ systems such as quality, environment, health and safety of employees, social responsibility of the corporation, the safety of food products, information management, energy, etc, demand a new proactive management style and system orientation as well as reengineering of the business processes. The problem occur at the hotels with 3* and 4* because they do not have enough resources in order to build up the quality systems themselves. Table 6 shows that the indicators for assessing the management of all the hotels with different standards / systems are as follows: they all have introduced quality system according to ISO 14001:2015 (3,2 average values), they all have a system for managing information (3,0 average value). This assessment shows that all the hotels are at initial phase. They have a system

Indicators for assessment the level of implementation the internal standardization	Hotels with 3*	Hotels with 4*	Hotels with 5*	Total
	Average grade	Average grade	Average grade	Average grade
The quality system has been introduced according to ISO 9001:2015	2,6	3,4	4,5	3,5
There is a certificate for the quality system according to ISO 9001:2008 or ISO 9001:2015	2,4	3,3	4,0	3,2
There is a publicly outstanding quality policy	3,3	3,3	3,9	3,5
The quality system has been introduced according to ISO 14001:2015	2,2	3,2	4,1	3,2
The quality system has been introduced according to ISO 22000:2005	2,6	3,1	4,7	3,5
There is an ECO sticker	2,4	2,4	2,5	2,4
The HASSP system has been introduced	3,7	4,1	4,4	4,0
The HALAL system has been introduced	1,9	2,7	2,8	2,5
The system of health and safety managing practices at work has been introduced BS OHSAS 18001:2007	2,9	3,4	3,8	3,4
The information security managing system has been introduced ISO/IEC 27001	3,1	3,4	4,2	3,0
The energy management system has been introduced ISO 50001:2011	3,1	3,4	4,3	3,6
It is planned to introduce some of the international quality systems in future	3,2	3,4	4,3	3,6
The tasks, duties and responsibilities of the employees have been defined in details through the standard operative procedures (SOP)	3,7	3,9	4,3	3,9
The employees get precise superior orders only for complex activities or specific demands of the customers.	3,8	4,1	4,7	4,2
There is a manager in charge of the quality system	3,2	4,1	4,3	3,9
There is an award connected to the quality of service	3,1	4,2	4,2	3,8
Average value	2,9	3,5	3,6	3,3

Table 6. Indicators for assessment the level of applying the internal standardization in hotels

Note:

The influence factor is shown in color according to the following legend:

1.00-1.80 (no, they do not plan at all)	1.81-2.60 (activities are planned)	2.61-3.40 (the activities are at start)	3.41-4.20 (the activities are at advanced phase)	4.21-5.00 (They have implemented the activities)
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for managing health and safety at work BS OHSAS 18001:2007 (3,4 average value), they have system for managing information security (3,0 average value). This reveals that generally all the hotels are at initial phase.

Table 6 reveals that for all the hotels (with 3*, 4* and 5*) indicators for assessment and implementation of the quality system according to ISO 22000:2005 are at advanced phase (3,5 high value) and they have introduced HACCP system (4,0 high value), because of the law. This is a result of the Macedonian law that obliged all economic entities dealing with breeding, producing and manufacturing food products to implement the HASSP system and other standards.

Table 6 shows a small number of indicators where implementation of different standards/systems is at a low level, except for the questions referring to possession of an ECO sticker (2,4 average value), and implementation of HALAL system (2,5 average value) where the indicators show that the hotels are planning activities connected to implementation of these systems in future. However, what concerns a lot is the fact that almost two thirds of all surveyed hotels (no matter the type) do not implement the HALAL system.

Taking into consideration the fact that Macedonia is a country candidate for European Union membership, it is particularly essential for the hotels to fulfill the international standards. A great number of hotels with 3* and 4* do not possess ECO stickers.

Luckily, all three categories of the surveyed hotels have an influence factor of 3,6 which means that all of them are planning to introduce some of the international quality systems and they are at an advance phase of realization of their planned activities.

Table 6 reveals that for all the hotels (with 3*, 4* and 5*) indicators for assessment the efficiency of the quality system through identification, documentation and control as well as the documentation for the efficiency system are between 3,9-4,2 which means they are at an advanced phase with these activities.

The system of quality will be effective and efficient if only the employees get clear and precise SOP for each activity, if there are criteria for assessing the good results, not only for specific and complex activities, specific decisions or specific customers' requirements. The formal certification of ISO 9001:2015

standards does not fulfill the desired advantages at the market; it does not accomplish the demands of ISO standards.

6. Conclusion

All in all, it is noticed that hotels with five stars show a particularly great care in terms of the questions connected to implementation of the quality system. (4,5 very high value). They mainly possess certificate of implementation of the internal standardization (4,0 high value).

While the surveyed hotels with four stars are at initial phase (3,4 average value) which is not a case with lower- ranked hotels with three stars (2,4 average value) where they are only planning such activities in future.

High value of the influence factor introduced according to the standard ISO 9001:2015 means that the companies are aware of the quality values and they know how to handle it.

Hopefully, there is a strong determination toward quality by the top management, there is a defined organizational structure, there is documentation for the quality system, and there are trained people as well.

Our research reveals that the companies which have certified a quality providing system formally in order to provide quality of products/service do not fulfill the requirements of ISO standards and they do not have any advantages from that certified quality system.

We reach the same conclusion in terms of the questions connected to written instructions where tasks, duties and responsibilities of employees are prepared in details (3,9 high value). However, we are surprised by the fact that half of the hotels with three stars state that they are preparing the instructions (3,7 high value).

The majority of surveyed hotels possess certain written documents connected to internal standardization (3,9 average value), but it can be interpreted as a business policy of the hotels in Macedonia,

The fact that a great number of surveyed hotels have got a prize for the quality of service (3,8 average value) means that hotels in Macedonia have been making an advance in improving the quality of hotel service.

Generally speaking, we can conclude that the higher ranked the hotel the higher the perception of the standards is in terms of quality, environment, safety at work, managing information, energy and food safety.

However, for better goal achievement, the companies and their owners need to have a vision, mission and culture oriented toward satisfying the requirements of all interested parties: customers, employees, business partners and society because all enjoy the achieved results. The world practice says and it is confirmed in this research that the companies which have been practicing the quality management system realize the following benefits (compared to those who haven't):

- A quality of service is introduced, so the customers' requirements are fulfilled;
- The quality of business processes is improved;
- A balance between the strategic and the operative management in the companies is achieved;
- The quality management system according to standards ISO 9001 represents a foundation of continual advance of quality by implementation of the strategy TQM;
- A work order and discipline are introduced.

Our research reveals that the companies that formally certified a system for providing the quality of products/service, do not complete the requirements of ISO standards and they do not have any benefits by the formally certified quality system. For many companies, the implementation of ISO 9001 is the first step toward TQM (Total Quality Management).

Building up the ISO 9001:2015 with TQM strategy means improving the quality through examining the organizational process in terms of its definition, improvement of the process and its design, progress of productivity and optimizing the expenses. The competition advances are often decisive in the development and the use of the quality providing system.

On the base of the research results, we could recommend that the hotel managers in Macedonia should focus themselves on improving the quality system through implementation of TQM strategy, staff development, introducing directions how to advance the quality, improvement of the processes as soon as possible before purchasing a new technology. All this mentioned above imposes a systematic effort including: strong leadership, (a new style of top management founded on market vision, policy and strategy, systematic orientation and business moral that will return the confidence between the management and the employees), participation of all employees (ability of cooperation and team work, which does not destroy the creativity and individualism).

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