

School of Health
University of New England
Armidale, Australia

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**Components of teamwork that influence
the successful implementation of a total
quality management program in a Saudi
Arabian healthcare setting**

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A thesis submitted by

Ali Almagheeb

for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

* * *

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Certification

I certify that this thesis is original. It has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged herein.

Name: Ali Hayf Almagheeb

Signature:



Date: 03/11/2015

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Abstract

Many health organisations in Saudi Arabia have adopted total quality management (TQM) programs as a strategy to enhance quality and efficiency. Among the many factors that influence the successful implementation of TQM programs are teamwork and its components.

This study aimed to investigate the components of teamwork that influence the successful implementation of the TQM program in King Fahad Medical City (KFMC). The study also aimed to explore interactions between teamwork elements and the TQM program that influence employees' engagement in implementation of the program – elements such as task reflexivity, participative trust, team learning behaviour, team efficacy and stability, leadership and decision-making, effective communication and management support. The final aim was to explore KFMC employees' experiences, challenges and opportunities that might influence successful implementation of teamwork within the TQM program.

A quantitative study design was used to answer the objectives of the investigation. Specifically, the modified version of an existing validated survey questionnaire was employed, i.e. The Team Climate Assessment Measure, which also included three open-ended questions that aimed to enrich the data collected from the participants in a Saudi Arabian setting. Data were collected in 2013 from three groups of participants: nurses, physicians and managers. The statistical software SPSS was used to perform the data analysis, which consisted mainly of descriptive statistics, e.g. mean and standard deviation, and factor analysis. The qualitative responses were analysed using content analysis, and a series of relevant themes emerged.

Results show that a tool of seven factors and 30 items were found to be valid and reliable ($\alpha=.948$) to measure TQM in the Saudi context. These factors were: task reflexivity; participative trust; quality of communication; management support; team learning behaviour; roles of effective communication; and team efficacy and stability. The themes that emerged from the qualitative data were: descriptions of teamwork; perceived benefits of teamwork; and challenges to implementing teamwork successfully.

Findings from analysing the scale and its factors indicate that all mean scores fall within the high range, except for 'team efficacy and stability', which fell in the moderate range. This indicates that employees were favourable towards the implementation of teamwork principles to achieve TQM objectives. The whole scale mean score indicates that employees perceived a high level of teamwork and thus commitment towards TQM.

The findings of this study indicate that, in order to enhance teamwork, management should identify talented and qualified leaders, who can promote team spirit among team members. Each team member is required to provide initiatives that reflect potential, knowledge and skills that could support the achievement of team objectives. There is a need for a system that offers incentives and promotes individual initiatives. Hospital administration needs to conduct frequent meetings with senior and junior staff of both genders and all professions, where employees can express their feelings and ideas concerning issues related to teamwork, such as quality of communication and the type of management support they believe is required to promote willingness to work in teams.

Addressing aspects that determine effective teamwork when adopting a quality program is essential in order to improve healthcare services, enhance client and employee satisfaction, and achieve better TQM outcomes.

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