

Effects of the use of quality cost information on quality-related learning

QCI on
quality-related
learning

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyze the effects on quality-related learning resulting from the use of the quality cost information (QCI). Specifically, this paper analyzes to what extent the diagnostic and interactive uses of QCI contribute to improve quality-related learning.

Design/methodology/approach – The proposed model was tested using a structural equation modeling procedure with AMOS and the data were collected through a questionnaire survey conducted on a sample of Portuguese certified companies.

Findings – The results shed light on expected relationships since the interactive style of use of QCI, unlike the diagnostic style of use, has a positive effect on quality-related learning. However, the diagnostic use of QCI was found to be a predecessor of the interactive use of QCI, in line with previous studies. Finally, diagnostic use of QCI exerts an indirect positive impact on quality-related learning through the interactive use of QCI.

Research limitations/implications – This paper contributes to the body of research on the use of interactive and diagnostic systems, providing evidence that a balance between those systems improves quality-related learning.

Practical implications – The results show that the use of QCI to promote participation, dialogue and involvement of all participants (according to an interactive style of use), and not just to control the accomplishment of predetermined objectives (according to a diagnostic style of use), is a necessary condition for quality-related learning.

Originality/value – Despite the wide-ranging literature focused on the identification, measurement and reporting of QCI, less attention has been paid to how this information is used in the management process. The way in which the use of QCI can contribute to the improvement in quality-related learning is also an unexplored topic in the literature.

Keywords Quality, Organizational learning, Quality cost information, Quality-related learning, Style of use of information

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the effects on quality-related learning resulting from the use of the quality cost information (QCI). Specifically, this paper analyzes to what extent the diagnostic and interactive uses (Simons, 1994, 1995) of QCI contribute to improve quality-related learning. Practitioners and scholars (e.g. Williams *et al.*, 1999; Prickett and Rapley, 2001; Adams *et al.*, 2003; Sower *et al.*, 2007; Su *et al.*, 2009; Lari and Asllani, 2013; Sailaja *et al.*, 2015) have acknowledged the imperativeness of the quality costing management, the importance of using QCI in the management process, the QCI as an effective tool for organizational performance improvement and the potential for generating knowledge that may arise from its use. Past research (e.g. Saraph *et al.*, 1989) has also stressed the link between quality data and reporting and organizational learning.

A review of quality management practices investigated in previous studies shows that quality data and reporting is among the most emphasized quality management practices. Nearly all management of quality approaches requires the generation of objective data

