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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of Quality Management System (QMS) on the organisational performance of service providers in the Philippines. Through conducting in-depth interviews with personnel in the managerial position in various sectors, specifically property management and construction, this research explored the impact, contributors, challenges and strategies associated with the implementation of QMS. The study addresses three research questions: the effects of QMS on organisational performance, the contribution of QMS to performance metrics, and the challenges encountered during the implementation process. The findings of this study reveals a positive effect of QMS on the organisational performance in terms of operational efficiency, financial performance, branding, and customer-satisfaction. It also highlighted process standardisation and organisational culture as critical factors influencing QMS adaptation. The challenges encountered during QMS implementation were also identified such as time management and workload, resistance to change, high attrition rate and unfamiliarity or lack of knowledge of the management system. To overcome these challenges, the findings of this study identified continuous improvement, regular process reviews and workshops or trainings as effective strategies.

This study is valuable to organisations, policymakers and researchers seeking to explore the role of QMS on organisational performance. It provides practical recommendations to instil a quality-centred culture and enhance organisational outcomes through QMS implementation. For further research within the same context, it is recommended to conduct a longitudinal study, explore the impact on different sectors other than property management and construction, and to analyse cultural and behavioural influence in terms of QMS adaptation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

According to Fred Owen and Derek Maidment (1996), Quality Assurance and Total Quality Management have become recognized as the modern techniques for improving company competitiveness and profitability. It is every company or organizations dream and goal to make the customers and clients happy. Doing so, it would require these organizations to provide top quality products and or services to their end users. Quality, as defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), is the totality of features and characteristics of a product and/or service, that bear on its ability to satisfy the specific need (Tricker, 2020). Quality management systems (QMS), which covers a variety of mechanisms and procedures directed to ensuring the quality of services are of vital importance in moulding the performance and edge in terms of competitiveness of service-oriented sectors. In the service industry, where the concept of quality is something that cannot be easily seen or measured and are often incorporated with customer satisfaction, the efficient and effective integration of QMS is of the highest priority.

Concepts incorporated with QMS such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Quality certifications (ISO certification) and the likes are of strategic importance in the increasing the service quality, operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. The transition of QMS as an instrument for compliance to being a key factor in strategic assets can be seen in line with the transition of a firm's direction towards customer-focused approaches. This transition triggered the necessity of comprehending the use of the various mechanisms through which QMS affects organizational performance. Prajogo and Sohal (2016), in their study interpreted how TQM practices impacts the improvements in operational and market performance in service-oriented firms. Another study conducted by Nair (2006) investigates the impact of certain TQM key factors on the firm's performance metrics, highlighting the impact of the application of customer-centred approach. One of the biggest certifying body being followed by most industries in the Philippines is the International Standards Organization (ISO). It is an independent body that sets out standards for an organization. Since ISO is known globally, having an ISO certification is a way to give potential customers independent validation of an organization's conformity. It gets your quality management system recognized globally, showcase your compliance and commitment to industry-respected practices, gets your organization to stay competitive and opens it up to new business

opportunities. Given that it talks about international standards, securing said certification is a long and challenging process. Singh et al. (2018) in their study was able to reveal a positive relationship in between the implementation of ISO 9001 certification and organizational performance in the service sector. These studies collectively suggest a multifaceted impact of QMS on organizational performance, spanning overall efficiency, customer satisfaction, and financial performance.

Purpose of the Research

This research aims to explore the effectiveness of QMS in the Philippine service sector, examining how these systems influence organizational performance. Organizational performance, being intangible in nature, is known to be a concept that is hard to measure. Among the existing studies about the performance, is possible to state that there isn't a single criterion for defining the performance, which makes it difficult to measure or compare the results (Antunes et al., 2020). Philippines being known as a country of growing economy and unique cultural background, this study will explore into how these global methodologies are integrated in the local service-oriented industries and how they are affecting the organizational performance with respect to the three given perspectives.

This study aims to investigate the role that Quality Management systems play in the organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines and it will be aiming to answer three research questions in relation to this topic:

1. What are the impacts of the implementation of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines?
2. To what extent does the implementation of a Quality Management System contribute to the organizational performance of selected service providers in the Philippines, and what are the factors that influence its implementation?
3. What are the challenges encountered for the implementation of QMS of service providers in the Philippines?

Chapter two: Literature Review

Quality Management Systems (QMS) and Organizational Performance

Several research studies revealed that one main problem in the implementation of quality management systems in organization is the unclear, generic definition of quality (Jaafreh and Al-abadallat, 2013). Deming (1986, p.54) defined quality as “multidimensional to produce a product and/or deliver a service that meets the customer’s expectations to ensure customer satisfaction”. Another name in the quality management field quality leadership, Juran (1988, p.34), refers to quality as a multidimensional concept where by defined quality in two meanings: “Quality consists of those product features which meet the needs of customers and thereby provide product satisfaction,” and “quality is apparently associated with customers’ requirements, and fitness suggests conformance to measurable product characteristics” (Juran, 1988). Another leader in quality management, Crosby, defined quality as “conformance to requirement”. (Crosby, 1979). The seminal works of Crosby (1979) equates quality with the conformance of requirement. Pascal (1991) develops further on Crosby’s definition of quality whereby quality is detailed as being “a compelling value in its own right. It is robust enough to pertain to products, innovations, service standards, and calibre of people. Everyone at every level can do something about it and feel the satisfaction of having made a difference, making products at work, or providing first class service is something we can identify from our own experience”. These definitions from the experts in quality management shows that there is no one definitive definition of quality. However, each definition has its strengths and weakness in terms of generalisability, ease of measurement, and utility (Wilkinson, *et. al*, 1998). The definition quality as conformance to standard (Crosby, 1979) is more applicable in the manufacturing setup rather than in a high-contact personal service environment as it shows more relevance in terms of the emphasis in performance efficiency and productivity (Wilkinson, *et. al*, 1998). Quality as excellence (Peters and Waterman, 1982) focuses more on quality being the ultimate goal and is a powerful motivator in quality management initiatives. Framing quality as the pursuit of excellence inspires employees to strive for the best and contribute to the organization's success (Wilkinson, *et. al*, 1998). While all definitions have their drawbacks, “Quality as conformance to standard” can limit employee engagement as it tends to have an internal focus. "Quality as excellence," on the other hand, displays a stronger

commitment to quality through channelling through employees as a motivational device. Although “quality as excellence” inspires employees, it can be difficult to define and measure objectively. “Quality as conformance” focuses on consistence but tends to put aside customer needs. And finally, “meeting customer expectations” can be costly and vague to track (Wilkinson, *et. al*, 1998). For the purpose if this study, quality will be defined as a multidimensional concept that integrates several critical elements. Taking into account all of the above mentioned definition, quality is a degree of to which a product or service achieves or exceeds customer expectations, meets conformance to certain standards, and consistently improves operational performance and customer satisfaction. It integrates commitment to continuous improvement, adaptation to customers’ ever changing needs, and the pursuit of excellence in all organizational processes.

Quality Management Systems are considered as one of the most effective measures for a firm to gain competitive advantage. As defined, A quality management system (QMS) is a formalized framework that organizations establish to systematically manage and improve their processes. It ensures consistent quality of products and services by focusing on meeting customer requirements and enhancing overall organizational performance. This structured approach emphasizes continuous improvement, allowing organizations to adapt and excel in today's dynamic business environment (Priede, 2012). Sickinger-Nagorni and Schwanke (2016) described QMS as a well organized and carefully designed model which includes documented representations of operational structures that seeks to ensure product and process quality. Figure 1 reflects how every operational aspect of an organization is integrated within the quality management system.

Figure 1: *Quality Management System (Sickinger-Nagorni and Schwanke, 2016)*

As backed by previous studies, Quality Management Systems (QMS) is known as a crucial key



that improves a firm’s organizational performance. Various studies reveal a positive relationship

between the implementation of QMS mechanisms and improved organizational outcomes. For example, a research conducted by Talib, Rahman and Azam (2011) argues that QMS concepts, such as TQM, and ISO certifications are of great significant contributor to the operational efficiency and quality of services in various industries. Another study conducted by Pambreni et al. (2019) investigated the influence of TQM towards organizational performance of service sectors of SMEs in Malaysia and it shows that several critical factors of QMS positively impacts the organizational performance of the firms. This was measured through customer focus, continuous improvement, strategically based and total employee involvement (Pambreni *et al.*, 2019). Although prior studies have found a positive correlation between these two concepts; ISO certification and organizational performance, Sitki and Aslan (2012) discovered that there are no significant difference between certified and non-certified companies in terms of performance. However, their study revealed that motivations for certification are what affects organizational performance. It was found that firms that practices great internal motivation for certification have significantly higher performance than those companies that are externally motivated (Sitki and Aslan, 2012). Finally, Calvo-Mora et al. (2015) highlights the integral nature of QMS in enhancing service quality and organizational performance. They affirm that the strategic implementation of QMS practices like TQM and ISO certifications can lead to significant improvements in operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

The concept of performance has become a major focus in recent years, spreading through nearly all aspects of human activity. However, measuring such concept can be challenging as it is often a subjective interpretation of reality. This concern has led to several questions in terms of performance measurement tools and the concept of performance itself (Elena-Iuliana and Maria, 2016). One of the main challenges in measuring performance is the lack of a clear, generic definition of the term “performance”. This term is usually utilized in exchange of other terms such as productivity, efficiency, and profitability. This confusion led to challenges in developing consistent measurement tools. The term itself came about in the 1800s and was mainly used in the sports industry. As time went by, the definition has broaden to accommodate a wider range of activities. However, performance always comes hand in hand with a achieving specific goals. The more complex an organization’s goal become, the more difficult it is to define and measure it’s performance objectively (Elena-Iuliana and Maria, 2016).

A company's performance is measured in terms of what it has achieved over a specific period of time and this evaluation helps in assessing how effective the company makes use of its resources. Organizational performance has two aspects: Financial performance and overall performance. Financial performance focuses on the outcomes of a company's strategies and activities that can be measured in monetary form. It can be measured using metrics like return on assets (ROA) or return on investments (ROI). Overall performance is considered a broader aspect that takes into consideration how well the company achieves its goals and strategies. It includes financial success, market position and internal effectiveness (Shebeshe and Sharma, 2024). We can therefore say that organizational performance reflects how effective and efficient a company makes use of its resources to achieve its financial and market-driven objectives.

A study conducted by Hubbard (2009) identified several approaches to organizational performance and one of them is called quality approach. The main concept of this approach is centred in ensuring that all the internal processes and systems of the organization are working together seamlessly which helps the company achieve its overall strategy and goals. This approach is based on systems theory and has led to the development of frameworks by national and international bodies. For example, the European Federation for Quality Management created a comprehensive framework, now called the Business Excellence model. Several researches are developing measurement systems based on the quality management principles. The European Corporate Sustainability Framework aims to expand the Business Excellence model by considering broader environmental and social aspects. (Hubbard, 2009). This framework looks at organizations in terms of four perspectives: strategy and values, structure and processes, daily operations and monitoring and reporting. However, even the developers of this framework are aware of its complexity and lack of concrete examples (Hubbard, 2009). Measuring performance is imperative as it allows managers to assess the effectiveness of company actions and management decisions, evaluate the company's position against its competitors, and monitor the company's progress and performance over a period of time (Richard *et al.*, 2009). The importance of performance measurement is evident by its widespread use as a key metric in research. Studies have shown a significant portion of research articles include performance as a dependent variable (Richard *et al.*, 2009). A recent review of management journals revealed that 29% of the studies identified performance as a variable, but used 207 different measures. This large diversity makes it difficult to compare research findings and draw reliable conclusions. The lack of a clear theoretical

definition and consistent measurement methods are major limitations in performance research. This makes it difficult to conduct meaningful comparisons between studies and provide reliable recommendations (Richard *et al.*, 2009).

Total Quality Management (TQM) in Service Organizations

Total quality management, as defined by Dale, Weile and Iwaarden (2007) involves the application of quality management principles to all aspects of the organization, including customers and suppliers, and their integration with the key business process. TQM requires that the principles of quality management shall be applied in all business units and all levels in an organization placing an emphasis on the implementation into business practices and a balance between technical, managerial and people concerns. TQM improves quality management from a specific program to a company-wide initiative, whereby all members of the organization are involved in the process, a process which ranges from individual efforts to overall functions. Although TQM utilizes quality assurance practices, it extends beyond them, requiring a wider set of skills and encouraging ongoing creativity from the members of the organization (Dale *et al.*, 2007). Key terminology used to define quality and is used interchangeably within management are: 'Zero defects' (Crosby), 'right first time' (Crosby), 'plan do check action' (Deming), 'fitness for use' (Juran), which are prominent in the management world nowadays. TQM, although relatively different from concepts such as change strategies as participative management, quality of working life, job-enrichment and job re-design program, can be argued that is deeper than these and a distinction shall be made between TQM and other programmes such as 'quality control' and 'quality assurance' (Wilkinson, *et al.*, 1998). Quality control, as defined, ensures that products and services meet specific standards throughout the production process, and follows through after it's completion. It mainly focuses on two approaches: containment, wherein defects are prevented from taking place, and inspection, wherein issues are identified and are corrected. Quality assurance, on the other hand, has become a dedicated function within many organizations, with a specialized department overseeing quality initiatives (Wilkinson, *et al.*, 1998). TQM, in general, involves the application of quality control and quality assurance. It is also often viewed as a general business management philosophy, which is mainly concern about the achievement of continuously improving customer satisfaction by quality-led company-wide management. Dean and Bowen (1994) suggests that TQM's key components are: customer focus, continuous improvement, and teamwork. Psychogios and Priporas (2007) in their study, identified two aspects of TQM:

management tools and techniques, and management concepts and principles. From this, they developed what they referred to as the “hard” aspect of TQM and the “soft” side. Figure 2 below shows the concepts categorized under the “hard” side and Figure 3 shows the “soft” side.

Figure 2: “Hard” TQM practices (Psychogios and Priporas, 2007)

“Hard” TQM Practices Identified in Quality Management Literature

TQM Techniques, tools and systems
Statistical Process Control
ISO 9000 series
Pareto Analysis
Matrix Diagram
Histograms
Tree Decision Diagram
Critical Path Analysis
Fishbone or Ishakawa Diagram

Figure 3: “Soft” TQM practices (Psychogios and Priporas, 2007)

“Soft” TQM Concepts Identified in Quality Management Literature

TQM Concepts
Total Employee Involvement
Continuous Improvement
Continuous Training
Teamwork
Empowerment
Top-management Commitment and Support
Democratic Management Style
Customer/Citizen Satisfaction
Culture Change

In the earlier days of TQM, it was mainly focused on manufacturing and production, excluding the service industry. As competition raised within the service sector, the need for TQM practices became evident which led to the discussion on how service quality aligns into the generally accepted definition of TQM. However, TQM implementation in the service sector introduced unique challenges compared to products due to services being intangible, not being physically held or touched. This factor made it difficult to measure service quality objectively. Additionally, measure of service quality has been recognized to rely heavily on is on customer response or evaluation, as a result, leaning service organization to be highly customer-centred for them to succeed (Bon and Mustafa, 2012). Service based organizations prioritizes the softer aspects of TQM like communication and interpersonal skills training for their employees mainly because

being a service-oriented company, the quality of the service they provide are evaluated by customers. Therefore making communication and interpersonal rapport building imperative. Manufacturing, on the other hand, prioritizes the hard aspects of TQM, wherein it is more focused on technical training for statistical methods and process controls. The priority in this type of industry is on building strong relationship with their suppliers and making sure that quality is being observed through objective measurement approaches (Bon and Mustafa, 2012).

Impact of TQM practices on service-oriented firms reveals an increase in the process of efficiency and customer satisfaction as investigated by Sadikoglu and Oclay (2014) in their research. The results of their study are also aligned with the results of Zehir et al. (2012) in their study wherein it highlights the positive effect of TQM in terms of employee performance and business outcomes in service-oriented firms. TQM's role in improving process efficiency and customer satisfaction in the Philippine service sector aligns with global observations (Powell, 1995). The adaptation and effectiveness of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the Philippines are explored by Limpiada (2016). The study demonstrates how lack of understanding, access to available training, resistance to change and lack of system structure, are considered barriers to TQM implementation. Another study conducted by Dipasupil (2018) revealed that integration of TQM practices shall be continued in order to maintain competitiveness in the industry.

ISO Certifications and Service Quality

The ISO 9000 series, in a way, is a quality guarantee for the customers. It helps them feel confident that the products and services that they will be availing are going to meet their required standards and expectations. They act as a guide, emphasizing and outlining what a good quality management system should appear as. It emphasizes documented procedures and processes to ensure consistent quality is built into everything they do (Dale *et. al*, 2007). It outlines the core principles such as clear quality policy and a defined and standardized process. It also puts emphasis in identifying and monitoring defects, having corrective and preventive action plans in place, and most importantly, it encourages a regular management review to ensure that systems in place are working efficiently and effectively for the organization. This focus on broad principles allows companies operating in various industries and scenarios to develop their own quality management systems and assess them compared to the ISO 9000 criteria (Dale *et. al*, 2007). In response to today's developing and more complex business environment, over a million organizations

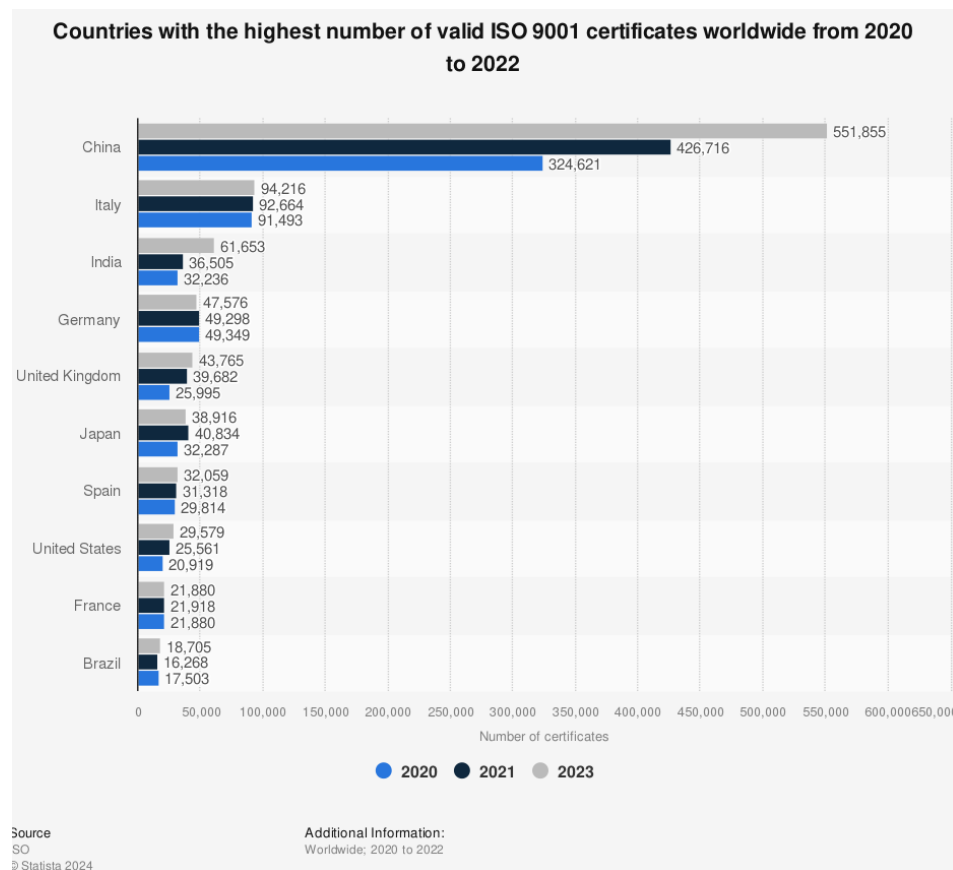
worldwide started adapting the ISO 9001 standard since its launch in 1987. For an organization to earn an ISO certification, an audit must be conducted by a third party independent body. This audit evaluates and verifies whether the organization meets the ISO 9001 criteria and if it actually achieved the desired results. For impartiality, the certification body itself must employ qualified staff and freedom from conflicts of interest. This impartiality is ensured by accreditation bodies that audit certification bodies against the ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 standard. An accredited certification body displays confidence in its evaluations for the companies seeking ISO 9001 certification (Fonseca and Domingues, 2016). A large amount of studies have explored the benefits of having an ISO 9001 certification and researchers have discovered over a hundred studies examining the impact of ISO 9001 standards in the global market.

A study conducted by Psomas (2013), investigated how ISO 9001 was implemented by service organization in a struggling economy for them to improve organizational performance. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was utilized to identify key underlying factors within the ISO 9001 objectives and analysed basic data to discover how efficient the companies achieved their goal. The study revealed that service companies implementing ISO 9001 were successful and that they prioritized keeping customers happy which lead to customer satisfaction, avoiding mistakes, and constantly taking continuous improvement into consideration. Another study conducted by Neyestani and Guanzon (2017) revealed that ISO 9001 can significantly improve a company's internal processes and how they operate on a daily basis.

The ISO 9000 group of standards continues to gain popularity worldwide, with over 400,000 companies in 158 countries utilizing this systems of standards as a strategic management essential (Juanzon and Muhi, 2017). Under the service sector, the construction industry has been a strong adopter since the ISO 9000 was launched and has been a benchmark for the success in this industry with it's emphasis on quality management systems. Its structured approach helps companies organize their operations to consistently meet client needs, ensuring a disciplined and systematic work environment (Juanzon and Muhi, 2017). The number of ISO 9001 certified companies has been growing to almost 1 million in 2007. In 2022, China was the country with the highest number of ISO 9001 certificates worldwide, followed by Italy and India (Statista, 2024). Figure 4 shows a graph of the growing ISO 9001 certificates globally. Although a number of companies adopt these systems due to pressures from the external environment, they also seek economic benefits that comes with it. Several extensive studies were already conducted in the early years of 1980s and

1990s, however, less researches were done focusing on the newer versions of standard ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 9001:2008 (Rusjan and Alic, 2010). These most recent versions of the standard put emphasis on customer focus, process orientation, and continuous improvement, potentially leading to more benefits of adopting the standard. We can then say that although the benefits identified in previous standards are still relevant, adopting the recent versions of the standard provides additional advantages. Quality managers themselves perceive more potential for improvement with the 2000 version compared to the 1994 version (Van der Wiele et al., 2005).

Figure 4: *Countries with the highest number of valid ISO 9001 certificates worldwide from 2020 to 2022 (Statista, 2024)*



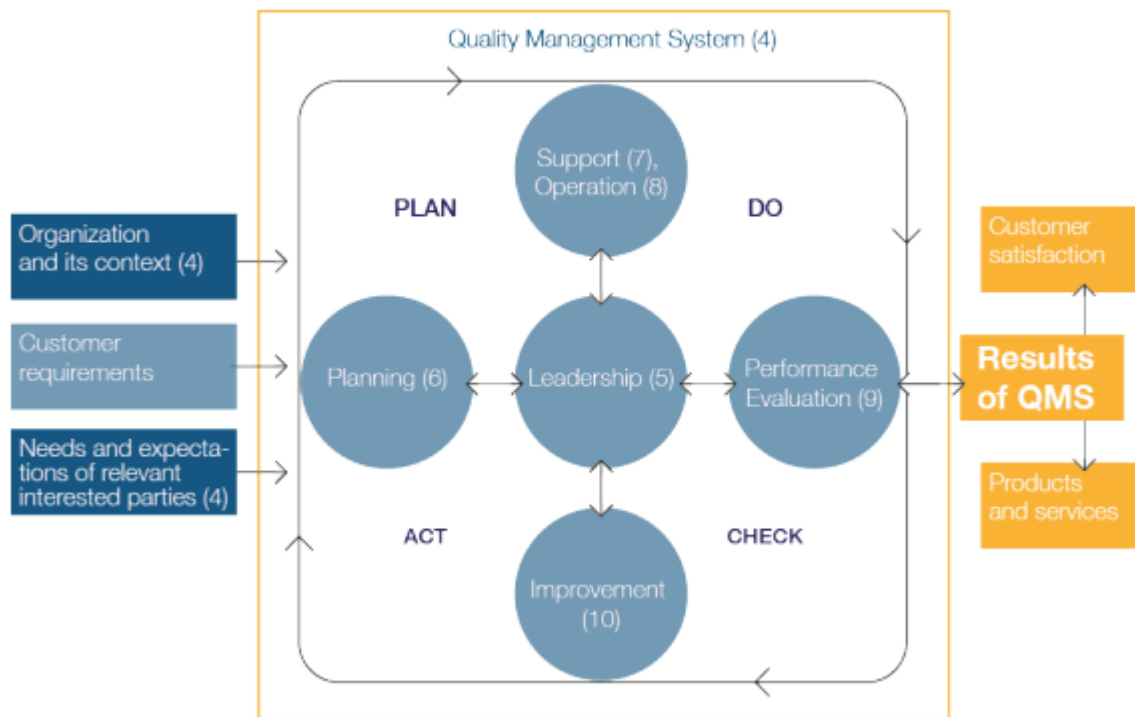
The core of the ISO 9000 Quality Management system circles around the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. This involves developing quality policy and objectives, outlining processes and tasks, delegating responsibilities, analysing results, and taking action for improvement (Rusjan and Alic, 2010). Figure 5 below shows the PDCA cycle as modified by Sickinger-Nagorni and Schwanke (2016). The ISO 9001 set of standards encourages the alignment of the quality policy

and the objectives with the company's goals although it does not provide a direct link between quality planning requirements to specific business objectives that the company has identified. Additional guidance on aligning quality objectives with strategic goals can be found in non-mandatory standards like ISO 9004, which emphasizes continuous improvement. This standard also highlights the importance of understanding and meeting the needs of current and future customers, as well as other stakeholders, for an organization to achieve success (Rusjan and Alic, 2010). The earlier ISO versions were a list of 20 separate categories, ranging from management responsibilities to statistical techniques with each category having detailed requirements. On the other hand, the more recent version of the ISO 9000 series replaced the former 20 categories to a more structured one with four main sections: management responsibility, resource management, product and service realization, and measurement, analysis, and improvement (Martinez-Costa *et al.*, 2009). These new categories were arranged in a logical sequence wherein each element leads to the next, leading to the goal of improving customer satisfaction. Since it reflects a significant shift from the previous version, this new framework poses a dynamic system perspective which is a core principle of Total Quality Management (Martinez-Costa *et al.*, 2009).

In the Philippine setting, the Bureau of Products Standards (BPS) is the National Standards Body (NSB), therefore they are responsible for developing and promoting Philippine National Standards (PNS). As of 2002, over a thousand organizations are ISO 9001 certified in the country which proves that the adaptation of these set of standards is being popular in the country (Capistrano, 2008). A study conducted by Marquez (1997) shows that there is a positive financial and non-financial benefit for companies that are ISO certified, including: increased sales, reduced production cost, improved profits, higher productivity, faster service response times, and better inventory turnover. Although there are identified benefits, ISO 9001 also have some limitations. One identified limitation of the set of standards is the potential for "going through the motions" without addressing the underlying issues (Capistrano, 2008). Another noted limitation is that it focuses on the conformance to standards without actually ensuring the effectiveness. And lastly, there is limited scope of studies using only one financial measure or simply relying on self-reported data. Therefore, it is recommended that a more rigorous research is done using multiple financial measures and objective data to reveal the impact of ISO 9001 certification (Capistrano, 2008). Despite evidences of the benefits of ISO 9001 certification, researchers remains divided on the true impact of certification on the organizational performance. Several studies provides conflicting

findings and unclear results with no definitive conclusion about the standard's effectiveness. These contradictory findings suggest that the impact of ISO 9001 can vary depending on numerous factors. In the construction and service industry, concerns regarding the cost-effectiveness of the standard is in question, suggesting it might be a waste of resources with minimal tangible benefits beyond potential competitive advantage (Neyestani and Juanzon, 2017).

Figure 5: PDCA-cycle (Sickinger-Nagorni and Schwanke, 2016)



ISO being known as one of the biggest and popular standardization bodies poses a credible and globally recognized certification standards. Therefore, securing an ISO certification means a great deal of opportunity for firms, particularly ISO 9001. Peralta (2015) explored the impact of the implementation of ISO:9001 on employee's performance in a government office and results showed revealed a positive impact on this aspect. Similarly, a study conducted by Neyestani et al. (2017) explored the impact of ISO:9001 implementation to the quality cost of a service-oriented firm in the Philippines and the results suggest that with proper implementation, this improves the quality of the work performance of the organization to minimize the "rework" and therefore

reducing the failure cost of the projects done by the firm. Magd and Curry (2003) investigate the impact of ISO 9001 certification on service quality, particularly in emerging markets like the Philippines and the findings affirms that ISO certification leads to standardized processes and improved service delivery, directly influencing customer perceptions and organizational performance. Another study conducted by Juanzon and Muhi (2016) wherein they identified the factors to motivate SMEs in construction firms in the Philippines to implement ISO 9001:2008, reveals that two great useful factors that influence the integration of ISO:9001 are: (1) it being a client's requirement and (2) is in order to qualify to the bidding process. These said factors are of great contributor to the increase of the organizational performance in terms of financial aspects as it puts them to a position of generating more revenue.

Challenges and Adaptations of QMS in Service Industries

As with other management systems, the implementation of QMS also comes with unique challenges. As stated by Antony, Kumar and Madu (2005), the nature of services and the diversity in the type of services needs customized QMS approaches. The implementation of QMS mechanisms in the Philippines service-oriented organizations incorporates a combination of global trends and local dynamics (Santos-Vijande et al., 2013). Challenges that were experienced in the implementation such as managing various customer expectations and adapting to dynamic market, are of vital importance to the analysis of the impact of QMS in the country (Antony et al., 2007). Exploring the challenges in QMS implementation, De Silva and Gallego (2021) focus on the Philippine service sector and they tackled how factors such as language, ethnical and cultural differences, top-management commitment and participation, awareness and trainings, play a critical role in the effective adoption of QMS practices.

Although extensive research exists internationally on the evolution and impact of QMS, the main concern in the Philippines setting has been primarily on adopting and implementing specific QMS techniques and frameworks. These limited studies on the effectiveness of QMS in the Philippine context is surprising, especially considering the unique challenges faced by developing nations like the Philippines including: poverty, high birth rates, limited resources, and dependence on developed countries. Investigating how QMS functions in this environment could provide valuable insights into its potential for improving organizational performance and contributing to economic development (Dipon *et al.*, 2023).

Thus, this study aims to contribute to the Philippines National Development agenda of reinvigorating services through strengthening creativity and innovation in services sector. The significance of the study is to determine the compliance of these selected service providers. This would provide avenue or opportunity to initiate innovative strategies for them to comply with global standards, making their services globally competitive and internationally recognized.

Research Objectives and questions

The research objective for this study is: To investigate the role of Quality Management System in the organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines.

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the impacts of the implementation of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines?
2. To what extent does the implementation of a Quality Management System contribute to the organizational performance of selected service providers in the Philippines, and what are the factors that influence its implementation?
3. What are the challenges encountered for the implementation of QMS of service providers in the Philippines?

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This study aims to understand how individuals within the service sector perceive the role that a QMS plays in organizational performance. Therefore, the methodological approach should centre on the participants' perspectives. That said, the researcher will adopt an interpretivist approach to address the research question and objective (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). An interpretivist approach will allow the researcher to gain deeper insights into QMS. The qualitative design approach is suitable for this study as this study intends to explore and examine the impacts and underlying factors that contribute to the effectiveness of QMS, concepts which are not easily quantifiable (Creswell, 2014). To fulfil the research objective, and answer the research questions, data required includes: insights and perspectives from individuals that use a QMS to understand how they believe that the implementation of TQM practices are effective, detailed descriptions of how QMS has affected the company's organizational performance, identification of the key factors contributing to the successful adaptation and implementation of QMS and finally, the challenges encountered during the implementation process.

Research Participants

The intended participants for this study are supervisory or managerial level employees working in the service providers sector such as construction and property management in the Philippines. The selected participants will have a good understanding of a quality management system and have experience using a QMS with their respective firms. They will be selected through the application of both purposive and convenience sampling method which would ensure that data collected is relevant to the research question and objectives. Purposive sampling is recognised as one of the main sampling approaches developed for qualitative research inquiry (Ritchie et al., 2013; Miles et al., 2014). It is a technique which is based on the calculated choice of participants due to the characteristics or particular features they possess (Patton, 2002; Ritchie et al., 2013). Purposive sampling is used to identify and select information rich participants from which one learns from the insights of others (Patton, 2002). The researcher intends to interview 10 individuals in the managerial and supervisory level will be chosen from different organizations to provide their views and opinions on the impacts of QMS.

Table 1: Selection criteria for interview participants

Criteria for selecting the interview participants
Managerial or supervisory position
Property management or construction background
2 years and above work experience in the organization

Research Instrument

The research instrument to be used to collect the data will be semi-structured interviews to be conducted with the chosen managers and supervisors from different service providers. Semi-structured interviews are widely recognized as the primary data collection method in qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). This method is chosen for its flexibility, allowing for in-depth exploration of specific themes while maintaining consistency across interviews. Interviews are essential tools for data gathering especially when dealing with a smaller number of participants (Gillham, 2000). Interviews are often conducted for two main purposes: drawing out specific details or prompting interviewees to share their interpretations of relevant topics (Stake, 2010). Stake (2010) identified two main styles of interviews: etic interviews which are researcher-driven, and epic interviews which he described as participant-driven. Etic interviews mainly focus on pre-defined topics generated by the researcher while epic interviews allow interviewees to guide the conversation with their own perspectives. Regardless of the style, interviews can be identified as structured, open-end (unstructured) or somewhere in between (semi-structured). Structured interviews include a pre-planned set of questions that are to be asked in a specific order while unstructured interviews are free-flowing, more flexible, wherein the interviewer introduces general questions based on their interest (Runeson and Host, 2009). Semi-structured interviews offers a balance of both aspects: standardized with pre-planned questions but the interviewer is able to adjust the order based on the flow of the interview which ensures that all relevant topics are addressed. Despite the planning involved, semi-structured interviews are generally considered a user-friendly data collection method (Kallio et al., 2016). Choosing the right interview type is a crucial first step in the research process. In this case, the researchers opted for a semi-structured interview to focus their investigation on a specific area (Naz et. al, 2022). For this study the researcher intends to use epic interviews style.

Data Collection

Prior to going into the field to collect the data, the researcher intends to conduct pilot interviews. The pilot interview intends to enhance the semi-structured interviewing to achieve the best validity of the data to be gathered. It will be used to test the research instrument that the researcher intends to utilize. As the researcher is not experienced in interviewing using a pilot study will help the researcher to practice the flow of the interview guide and utilize her listening skills. The researcher recognizes that active listening (Louw et al., 2011) should be practiced during the pilot interviews to ensure that the researcher documents the participants opinions. The pilot study will also allow the researcher ensure that the objective is addressed. Pilot interviews allow the researcher to assess the clarity and coherence of the interview questions. Confusing words and topics that need further exploration can also be discovered during this stage and allows for the filtration of the interview guide to ensure that it effectively draws out useful data (Harding, 2013). Pilots are also used to reveal unexpected logistical or technical concerns that might be encountered during the interview process such as the length of the interview, recording equipment that is needed. Identifying and addressing such issues prior to the actual interview minimizes the disruption of the data gathering. The purpose of the interview guide is to outline a series of broad themes that will be explored during the interview (refer to Appendix 1 for the interview guide). Considering the interview guide, it allows for flexibility in terms of re-arranging the order of questions based on the flow of the interview. Interview guides acts as a road map, leading the conversation towards topics and questions the interviewer wants to explore in order to address the research objectives. Interview guides can range from highly detailed scripts to more flexible outlines. Nevertheless, their purpose remains the same: to guarantee consistency in exploring core themes across all interviews (Qu and Dumay, 2011). The interview will begin with an introduction whereby the research will briefly explain the research topic and objectives and also thank the interviewee for their participation in the study, during this portion, consent to record the interviews will be obtained. The researcher will also ensure, at this point, that the consent to take part in the researcher for has been signed by the participants, prior to the interview commencing. The interview will progress to the first set of questions that will be close ended such as ‘What is your role in the organization?’ and ‘How long have they been working with the organization?’ The succeeding part of the interview intends to address the research question and research objectives therefore leaning into more open-ended questions such as ‘Describe the core TQM principles being implemented within the organization?’

‘What are the key challenges faced during the implementation?’ and How does the organization overcame these challenges?’. Open-ended questions are utilized for in-depth exploration of topics, processes, and reasons behind observations (Weller et. al, 2018).

Table 2: List of possible interview questions

Possible close-ended questions:
Whats is your role in the organization?
How long have you been working with the organization?
How long has the organization been operational?
Does the organization have a QMS in place? If yes, how long has it been implemented?
Possible open-ended questions:
Can you tell me about some of the key quality management practices your organization uses?
What were the key challenges faced during the implementation of TQM practices within the QMS?
How did your organization overcome these challenges in implementing TQM practices?
In your opinion, what are the effects of QMS in the organization?
What factors do you believe have contributed to the successful adaptation and application of TQM practices within your QMS?
Are there any specific aspects of the QMS or TQM practices that you believe could be further improved?

The interviews will mainly be scheduled around the participants availability, and each interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will be recorded with the consent of the participant. Thematic Analysis will be used as a primary data analysis tool. All interviews will be transcribed verbatim and will be reviewed for accuracy and completeness. The researcher also intends to record her thoughts and take notes during and after the interviews and would serve as a reflective journal and diary. Bowen (2009) stated that an audit trail helps researchers and readers retrace the research study. It clarifies the researcher’s thought process, how the data was analysed and interpreted, and the following procedures taken to arrive to the conclusions. This clarity strengthens the study's credibility by demonstrating confirmability in terms of verifiable findings and dependability in terms of consistent results. The data gathering procedure is intended to be conducted starting the last week on June up to the first week of July 2024 and the analysis of data is intended to take place within the second and third week of July.

Ethics Procedure

The interview guide to be distributed will also include a cover letter which will include a background of the researcher and the purpose of the study. It will also state that the details and data that will be gathered through interviews will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity aligning to the data privacy act and will be stored with a password encrypted protection. To adhere to confidentiality the researcher intends to assign a code to each of the participants such as I1 which represents Interviewer 1. The data collected will only be accessed by the researcher and research advisor and will solely be used for the purpose of this study. It will also clearly state the participation to the study is voluntary and option to withdraw at any given circumstance, prior to data analysis, is open. The researcher acknowledges the potential for bias due to having an insider access to the interviewees. Certain measures are to be observed to mitigate such risks and ensure ethical research conduct such as the reflective journal stated earlier on the study. This will be used to document self-reflections, identifying potential biases and strategize to minimise the impact. Another measure to be observed is utilizing open-ended questions that allows the interviewees to provide detailed answers without leading them towards a specific opinion. In this way the researcher sets aside their own personal opinion so as to not influence the respondent's answers. The researcher also intends to use member checking, as a tool to ensure clarity of the participants answers. This will also enhance the rigour of the data collected Lincoln and Guba(1986).

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

This paper will present the findings and analysis derived for the conducted semi-structured interviews with six participants of managerial positions in the property management and construction sector of service providers in the Philippines. Taking confidentiality of the participants into consideration, each participants will be referred to as Interview Participants 1 through 6, labeled Participant 1 through 6. Table 3 below details each participant, the date of the interview and the duration of the interview.

Table 3: Participants Interview Data

Participants	Date of Interview	Duration
Participant 1	July 3, 2024	26 mins
Participant 2	July 3, 2024	62 mins
Participant 3	July 4, 2024	59 mins
Participant 4	July 8, 2024	54 mins
Participant 5	July 8, 2024	61 min
Participant 6	July 9, 2024	54 mins
Total		316 minutes

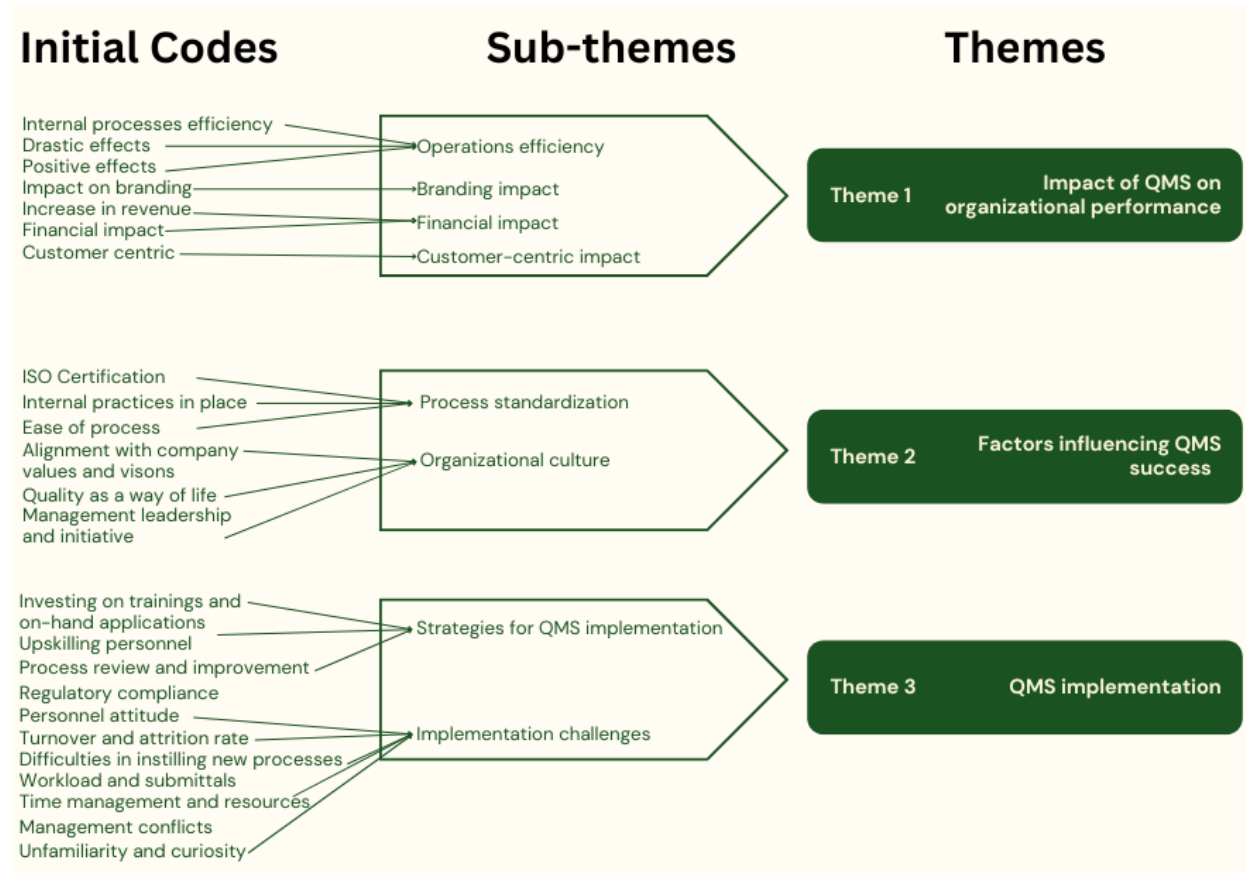
The interview process was completed using Microsoft teams each interview was recorded and transcribed using the application's built in transcription feature with the consent of each participants (refer to Appendices 3 and 4 for the consent forms). To ensure that the transcription generated by the application was transcribed verbatim, the researcher reviewed each transcript and listened back to the recordings several time to verifying the accuracy of each transcription, editing as necessary during the process. This process is in line with Braun and Clarke's phase 1 (familiarization of data) of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the transcriptions were transcribed, the researcher proceeded to the process of code identifying, wherein important points or topics that are essential to answering the research objectives were identified and highlighted. These codes were then reviewed thoroughly by going through an iterative process of constantly going back to the transcriptions over again. During this process, codes related to each other were merged, some were renamed or edited and others were completely omitted (refer to

Appendix 3 for thematic analysis coding process). The identified codes were grouped into sub-themes and were eventually categorized under three main themes to address the research questions. This analysis is in line with Braun and Clarke's phases 2 (generating initial codes), 3 (searching for themes), 4 (reviewing potential themes) and 5 (defining and naming themes) of the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is known for its accessibility and adaptability and for beginners in qualitative research, it provides clear and structured approach to data analysis compared to other approaches that can come across as abstract or complex. By providing a systematic framework for identifying codes and themes and interpreting qualitative data, it serves as an accessible entry point to the field and at the same time provides foundation for more advanced theoretical exploration. Thematic analysis involves six phases: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

By employing these steps on the analysis, key themes were extracted from the interview data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives on various aspects quality management systems in the property management and construction setup in the Philippines. Findings from this study were categorized into the listed themes, these themes were utilized to analyse the findings and results of this study. Figure 6 illustrates the development of the themes.

Figure 6: Theme Development



Next the findings from each of the themes and sub-themes are detailed.

Theme 1: Impacts of Quality Management System on organizational performance

Sub-themes:

Sub-theme 1: Operational Efficiency

Sub-theme 2: Financial impact

Sub-theme 3: Branding impact

Sub-theme 4: Customer-satisfaction impact

Sub-theme 1: **Operational Efficiency**

From the transcripts, operational efficiency emerged as an impact having QMS within the organization. Four participants stated that it has helped in their operational efficiency. It was found that the implementation of quality management practices such as documentations, company initiative processes, equipment maintenance plans and monitoring processes has led to a more organized and efficient operations. Participant 1 mentioned *“Well, in in my opinion, the effects are of the QMS in.. are reaching or basically drastic to the organization. Well, it helps us manage the buildings in an organized manner and has to follow all the processes and proper monitoring”*. This was supported by the statement of Participant 4 *“Yeah, well, this gives an efficient way to operate a company. Of course, if you're following a standard or a system, it's better to operate it in an efficient way”*. Additionally, participant 5 said:

Participant 5: *“Well, it helps a lot..uhh...In actually ensuring that your property is operating in good working condition and the likes. Of course, with the documentations in place with the quality management system in place through the documentations and the likes of, we get to, you know, we get to know what which is due for, for the company at a certain time or certain period. You would historical basis for for various equipment maintenance in particular. So those are actually the impact of having a good quality management system in place.”*

The participant's responses reflects how efficiently implementing standard operating procedures and keeping a credible and thorough documentation process leads to a more predictable and reliable operations, minimizing downtime and improves the consistency of service delivery as a result.

Sub-theme 2: **Financial Impact**

Another impact that was evident on the participant's responses was the financial implications of having QMS within the organization. Participant 4 highlighted *“...it increases the assets and value and the reputation of the organization which attracts clients, which makes it more valuable to increase the revenue of the organization”*. Participant 1 also mentioned *“.....and of course increase*

in revenue knowing that the organization has an efficient QMS in place”. Moreover, Participant 3 stated:

Participant 3 *“And being the head of a huge department, imbibing the importance of, and values of the total quality management system in the day to day operation of my team, help to improve our department performance from sales generation, account acquisition account retention including account receivables because of all the data that you need , to have and to be updated. And the kind of quality that you serve with the client. So that is being affected. So sales of the organization expanded and profit has tremendously increased. So that's the big implication”*

The excerpts above from the participant’s responses reflects the interplay between the financial and operational impacts of having a QMS in place within the organization.

Another perspective on the financial impact of having QMS in place was revealed from the participants responses wherein the organization makes financial investments to deliver an improved operating processes. Participant 2 mentioned that it affects the organization’s cash flow but in return, it is ensured that the return of investment is worth the expenses.

Participant 2 *“But of course with stating that in a financial way, of course there are a lot of impacts when it comes to the cash flow, because if you also if you want to to be the up uh property services in mind and quality is #1, there's also impact in how you spend or the way how you see your profit and losses.”*

“... that has an impact with the financial and cash flow, but yes, we do invest in that kinds of stuff, but we make sure also that return of investment and the lifespan of that equipment or a certain building or a certain facility is well taken care of.”

Sub-theme 3: **Branding Impact**

Branding impact also emerged from the participants responses. Participant 2 mentioned that having a QMS in place impacts the organization’s brand. He says *“Well, actually, aside from the keyword quality, of course it is a big impact on our organization..as our brand, because we usually*

showcase how we ensure quality in every step of our services.” which was supported by a statement from participant 4, saying that it increases the reputation of the organization.

Additionally, she states *“And yeah, it impacts the brand so much that we are the first property (management) or we are the first services that they chose when they stepped on, on a property or they choose to have an office here or a residential area, we are the top priority or we are #1 in their mind that when you want to live in the Philippines or you want to acquire an office or to acquire a business, they make sure or they chose to be with us because of the quality or that we that we give them or the quality of service that we give or the quality of the perhaps not just the facility but the services as well, so it impacts a lot in our brand and of course, since we make it, uh, way of life. So we also pass it on that legacy to.”*

Sub-theme 4: Customer-satisfaction impact

Another sub-theme that emerged from the participants responses for the impact of QMS on organizational performance of service providers is the concept of customer satisfaction, or a customer-centric perspective. Participant’s responses revealed that QMS practices have a significant impact on customer satisfaction by ensuring consistent and efficient service quality and reliability. Participant 6 mentioned that QMS in place ensures products and services consistently meets specified standards which in turn leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Participant 5 mentioned *“So it has a positive impact on the clients since they will be provided good, good service because equipment in their perspective are in good, good maintenance condition.”* Additionally, participant 4 said:

Participant 4 *“We also conduct tenant survey to ensure if our tenants are satisfied with the service that we're providing and we also conduct monthly meetings internally in our team to check and ensure what are the items that we need to improve in terms of our property.”*

“And we also do monthly touch-points with our customers to get their concerns or any queries about the property that they're in.”

These statements shows that the effects of having TQM practices in place has a positive impact of the client's satisfaction and when customers are satisfied, retention and acquisition is enhanced therefore also having a positive impact with the organization's profitability.

Theme 2: Factors affecting Quality Management System implementation

Sub-themes:

Sub-theme 1: Process standardization

Sub-theme 2:Organizational culture

Sub-theme 1: Process Standardization

From the participant's responses, process standardization emerged as one of the factors that influences QMS implementation success in the organization. Participant 1 mentioned *"some of the key quality management practices are the 'plan -do-check-act' method and the monitoring to through our ISO forms and documentations of each processes we have"*. According to him, having these practices in place provides them an "ease of process" through their day to day operations. Participant 3 also mentioned practices implemented in her organization including use of standard forms and documentation control which according to her it has helped her team carry out their responsibilities more effectively. Additionally, participant 2 stated *"we have an ISO certification for that. So all our systems or all our processes has this recording, monitoring and measuring all those things like we do have for our customer service survey"*. Equipment related process standards also emerged from the responses. Participant 4 mentioned *"we do have this so called 52 week calendar where we schedule our all of our technical equipment and preventive maintenance."*, and was supported by a statement from Participant 6 *"We also have our centralized meeting and monitoring system that is very helpful to building equipment and building equipment, performance and efficiency."*

The participants' responses highlights that having internal practices in place or an ISO certification influences the successful adaptation of QMS in their organizations.

Sub-theme 2: **Organizational Culture**

Another sub-theme that emerged from the responses was organizational culture which is viewed in terms of management initiative, leadership approach and company values and vision. Participant 5 stated *“overall everything starts with setting the expectations within the organization. That's the major factor in having a successful any kind of system within an organization”*. This was supported by Participant 4 saying *“of course I believe the initiative of the executive management has a role, the fact that they thought about improving the skills of the staff and the management and leadership to lead the people”*. Additionally, participant 2 mentioned:

Participant 2 *“So of course we live in the values of our current organization, which is a leadership, believe in integrity. Umm, we operate with the vision and ensuring also excellence in every step of the way. And of course, if you're quite familiar with the (filipino term) “malasakit”, you're act like an owner. So that's it. So we make sure that all those pillars are well performed and in that way we make sure that our customers are always happy and of course, in that way we we always make sure that the business is running very smooth.”*

“Of course, all those process should be led by good leaders so that everyone else would abide to do it and of course the integrity. So that's something vital for our organization. That what you do on the on the certain property or for your certain business unit should be within the company values. So it's boiling down to brand and yes, so now first the vision that we have should be aligned with our mother company and that quality is our number 1 aspect in terms of public management for building, building new buildings or real estate or whatever it is in construction, so we should always have that excellence to do those things, we just we don't just want to do it out of compliance, but of course we need to do it properly.”

Overall, the responses gathered from the participants highlight the interplay between organizational culture, leadership and quality management practices. It reflects that a supportive

culture, influenced by strong leadership and aligned with company values plays a vital role in the implementation of QMS which in turns improves the organizational performance.

Theme 3: Quality Management System implementation

Sub-themes:

Sub-theme 1: Implementation challenges

Sub-theme 2: Strategies for implementation

Sub-theme 1: Implementation Challenges

In terms of the implementation of QMS within the organization, several concepts emerged from the participants' responses of the challenges they have encountered. One of which that was highlighted is the unfamiliarity of personnel when it comes to the management system. Participant 1 said “ *Actually, the key challenges would be for the for the implementation would be unfamiliarity and curiosity of the employees and staff to the management system*” . Participant 4 added “*probably most of the issues might be coming from the entry level staff where it takes time to provide knowledge about this, implementation about these practices and the unfamiliarity and also the time that we have to resolve some issues because there are a lot of unforeseen circumstances within the property, which is a normal thing in operations*”.

The responses also revealed time management and workload as a challenge in terms of the implementation of QMS. Participant 3 mentioned “*Since the organization is just small and the personnel were occupied with their tremendous operational workloads, which they found it very difficult to allocate time in process writing, then some were also not good in writing. So it's a big challenge...another one is the volume of the projects and new accounts that were coming in that time. The management had to prioritize the operational needs*” This was supported by participant 2 in which she said “*...everywhere problems like lead submissions, and uh will lot lots of due dates through the the finish*”. Additionally, participant 5 said “*Well, most of the concerns on the implementation of the system would actually be the time management for for the staff as well as the familiarization*”.

Another challenge that emerged from the transcripts is the difficulty in instilling new processes and the attitude of the people working within the organization. This was highlighted by participant

6 saying *“Our key challenge would be integrating new processes with existing ones. Sometimes it causes disruptions or redundancy and often leading to a more complex, complex task. Uh employees and management may resist new processes due to comfort with existing methods”*. Participant 3 added *“And then the another one is with the personnel. Uh, because they're availability, willingness and capability to write down their respective processes”*. This was also supported by the following statements from participant 2:

Participant 2 *“There are always that hiccup and obstructions and other challenges that we are encountering well, for example. One of one of well, not all can just relate to a new process. So that's one challenge that that is really hard to automatically really address because since every generation has its challenges, like you have some millennials, we have the boomers, we have the Gen Z, so it's really hard to align all their visions.”*

“So is there might there are people that could adapt easily, but of course there are those that cannot, cannot just adapt with new technologies, new innovations...And of course, I don't want to say that it's it's something about attitude or values of certain people, but there are really people who's not into new technology.”

Lastly, the high rate of turnover as a challenge was also evident on the participants' responses. Participant 2 mentioned *“And of course attrition also is one of the problems that I forgot to. When you teach somebody, then they go. Then you teach another one, and then they go again.”* This was supported by participant 3 saying *“this was actually a continuing challenge, especially with the high turn over rate of the personnel”*.

These responses reflects the challenges encountered during the implementation process, from unfamiliarity with the system, time management concerns, resistance to change due to generational differences up to the high return of turnover within people in the organization.

Sub-theme 2: Strategies for implementation

Another theme that emerged under the implementation of QMS is the strategies or processes required to overcome the challenges encountered. From the transcripts, continuous improvement

and process reviews were highlighted as a strategy for the success of QMS implementation. This was supported by Participant 1 who mentioned “ *I believe the continuous improvement review of all of the processes and the implementation should be taking consideration or we would be the top priority, so that the improvements in all of the process would be improved step by step or accordingly into our internal audit on the process of each of the processes*”. This was also aligned with the response of participant 3 saying;

Participant 3 “*Also there is there's also the management review. The management review is very important because yeah, the reports being generated wherein are being used by the management in terms of their the review of their financial status of the organization. And then audit is also important because that's the way how to identify on how to Uh improve further the operation of the company*”.

Another strategy that was revealed from the participants’ responses is the investment on trainings and on hand application as a strategy for a successful implementation of QMS. This was backed up by a statement from Participant 1 wherein he noted “*On this challenges, the organization is implemented trainings and have ample time of amount of Man hours on, on trainings and the application or an on hand applications to familiarize every personnel on the implementation of the system.*”. Participant 4 added “ *Well, in order to overcome this challenges, of course, our management conducted a seminar or training for our staff, for the associates and of course to ensure that the managers are also in line with the goals and standards. The managers are also part of some seminars and trainings to ensure that our skills are still appropriate and efficient with our company*”. This was also supported by participant 5 saying:

Participant 5 “*But one thing that is I think the most effective way to do that or how we overcame to that we overcame that problem is that workshop, it's still educating them that is really important. So umm, make sure that we make sure of course, of course that those that we put in charge are also knowledgeable and always giving time to to to teach their subordinates on how the process would be and what is the effect of the process to them and how would it affect the business.*”

This was also evident from the responses of participants 5 and 6. Participant 5 states *“It's all about setting expectations to the new members of the organization, and then, of course, providing them the necessary trainings. And of course, giving them the right information on on how is, how is it going to be done for, for for the results uhh needed by the company.”* and Participant 6 states *“So, we develop and deliver training programs that over principles, techniques and tools, we promote continuous learning and professional development related to quality management.”* respectively.

From these statements, it is evident that continuous improvement, regular process reviews and comprehensive training programs are imperative strategies in implementing QMS in organizations within the service sector.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter, the discussion chapter discusses and interprets the findings presented in the findings and analysis chapter. The themes detailed in the findings and analysis chapter are linked to the research questions and the existing literature. Three research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the impacts of the implementation of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines?
2. To what extent does the implementation of a Quality Management System contribute to the organizational performance of selected service providers in the Philippines, and what are the factors that influence its implementation?
3. What are the challenges encountered for the implementation of QMS of service providers in the Philippines?

The findings revealed that QMS has positive effects on the organizational performance in terms of the operational efficiency, financial and branding, and customer satisfaction. It also revealed that process standardization and organizational culture influences the adaptation of QMS. Additionally, the findings revealed that challenges encountered in the implementation process includes unfamiliarity of staff members, time management, and the resistance to adapting to new processes. It was also unfolded that the strategies to overcome these challenges includes continuous improvement, regular process reviews, continuously educating the staff and providing the necessary trainings and workshops.

Due to the complexity and multi-faceted nature of this research study, the findings show that the themes overlap in that more than one theme addresses one research question. For example: Theme 1 (Impact of QMS in organizational performance) and Theme 2 (Factors influencing QMS implementation) addresses research questions 1 and 2. While Theme 3 (QMS implementation) addresses research objective 3.

Research Question 1: What are the impacts of the implementation of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines?

The findings show that the majority of the interview participants had similar perspectives towards the impact of having a QMS in place and its effects on the organizational performance. One of the key findings revealed was the positive effects on the operational efficiency. This finding is in line with the findings of Talib, Rahman and Azam's (2011) research whereby their research found that QMS concepts, such as TQM, and ISO certifications are of great significant contributor to the operational efficiency and quality of services in various industries. From the participants responses, it was revealed that the systematic approach provided by QMS helps organizations streamline their processes, avoid or at least keep errors in the minimum, and improve overall productivity. This finding further supports Prajogo and Sohal (2016) research in that they revealed how TQM practices impacts the improvement in operational and market performance in service oriented firms.

Another concept that was revealed as an impact of QMS on the organizational performance is the financial and branding impact. Improved organizational processes influenced by TQM practices leads to reduced operational costs, increased productivity and ultimately, enhanced profitability. Minimal wastage, efficient resource allocation and accelerated production cycles are examples of the effects of streamlined processes brought about by having a QMS in place. Since the customers are satisfied due to the implementation of QMS practices, increased in revenue and customer loyalty can be observed. With this, it can be stated that in order to achieve improved operational efficiency, organizations often need to invest in funding process redesign, trainings and expenses intended to ensure that TQM is implemented and observed in all aspects of the organization which in turn, contributes to a long-term financial benefit in terms of client satisfaction and retention. These findings support the study conducted by Dipasupil (2018) which revealed that the integration of TQM practices contributes to the maintenance of competitive advantage in the sector that the organization plays at. Additionally, Priede (2012) conceptualised that QMS are considered one of the most effective measures for an organization to gain competitive advantage. This is similar to the branding sub-theme identified in this research. The findings show that an improved operational efficiency brought about by QMS practices in place satisfies client, thereby retention is observed and account acquisition is increased. Therefore increasing the value of the organization

in terms of its reputation. Making their presence more known and having a competitive advantage in the market, which in turn leads to improved profitability.

Additionally, the findings of the study also reveals customer satisfaction as an impact of QMS implementation. This aligns with the findings of Nair (2006) study wherein they argue that one of the highlighted impact of TQM is the application of customer-centric approach. Similarly, Calvo-Mora et al. (2015) affirms that the strategic implementation of QMS practices leads to significant improvements both in operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Being in the service sector wherein the main goal is to give the best quality of service to your clients, having QMS practices such as TQM and ISO certification leads to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the implementation of a Quality Management System contribute to the organizational performance of selected service providers in the Philippines, and what are the factors that influence its implementation?

The findings of this study reveals process standardization and organizational culture as sub-themes. From the responses, process standardization covers both internal practices in place and ISO certification. This finding is aligned with the findings of Singh et al. (2018) which reveals a positive relationship between ISO 9001 certification and organizational performance in the service sector. Similarly, Psomas (2013) in his study also revealed that service companies implementing ISO 9001 were successful and that they prioritized keeping customers happy which lead to customer satisfaction, avoiding mistakes, and constantly taking continuous improvement into consideration. This was reflected on the participants responses, specifically participant 1 emphasizing processes they have such as the '*plan-do-check-act*' method and the use of ISO forms and documentation, which facilitate an "*ease of process*" in daily operations. Additionally, Participant 2 pointed out the significance of ISO certification, which ensures that systems and processes are systematically recorded, monitored, and measured.

Another noted practice in place from the responses are equipment-related standard processes. Since all the participants came from the construction and property management sector, the upkeep

of equipment is critical in performing the services that they provide. Participant 4 talked of the use of a "*52-week calendar*" for scheduling technical equipment and preventive maintenance, a practice supported by Participant 6, highlighted the use of a "*centralized meeting*" and "*monitoring system*" for building equipment performance.

Organizational culture is another sub-theme that emerged, encompassing management initiatives, leadership approach and alignment with company values and vision. Participant 5 highlighted the importance of setting clear expectations within the organization as a foundation for any successful system. Participant 4 mentioned the role of executive management in fostering a culture of improvement and leadership. Participant 2 elaborated on the organizational values, including leadership, integrity, and a commitment to excellence, which guide daily operations and ensure customer satisfaction. The responses reflect that an encouraging and supportive organizational culture, driven by a good leadership, and members that are aligned with the goals and values of the company are essential for an effective implementation of QMS within the service sector. These findings are aligned with several existing literature. One of which is a study conducted by Cameron and Quinn (2011) which revealed that organizational culture significantly influences the adoption and success of quality management practices. A culture that promotes continuous improvement, employee involvement, and customer focus is more likely to achieve sustained quality improvements (Zu, Robbins, and Fredendall, 2010).

The findings display a relationship between these two sub-themes. Standard processes provide a firm foundation, framework and consistency but it can be noted that having a supportive organizational culture is an important aspect for their successful adaptation and integration. An organization driven by strong leadership and aligned company values allows for an adaptive environment where QMS can thrive and ultimately leading to an improved organizational performance. This is aligned with the findings of the research conducted by Nair and Prajogo (2009) which affirms that the successful implementation of QMS requires both technical and cultural alignment. Organizations that integrate process standardization with a culture of continuous improvement and employee involvement are more likely to achieve improved performance outputs.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges encountered for the implementation of QMS of service providers in the Philippines?

Two sub-themes emerged under the QMS implementation concept to address research question 3, namely: Implementation challenges and strategies for implementation, respectively. The findings showed that many interview participants mentioned several implementation challenges such as: unfamiliarity and curiosity of the staff members, time management concerns and people's attitude towards change. Unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge emerged as one of the challenges encountered which was mentioned by participant 1 and 4. This aligns with the findings of Limpiada (2016) who revealed that employee resistance due to lack of knowledge can hinder QMS implementation. Another challenge encountered that was evident from the participants' responses was time management and workload. This was highlighted by participant 3 and participant 2 saying that due to operational workload and demands, managers find it hard to make time to write and document the processes. This was also supported by a statement from participant 5 saying time management was an issue in terms of the implementation. This aligns to an existing study by Fotopoulos and Psomas (2010), who identified time constraints and workload as common challenges in the implementation of quality management practices. Additionally, difficulty in instilling new processes or resistance to change by members of the organization. This was highlighted by responses from participants 6 and 2 saying that integrating new processes often leads to disruptions and redundancy and that generational differences plays a huge influence in the integration and acceptance of new processes and technology. This relates to an existing literature with Kotter (1996) noting that organizational change often meets with significant resistance due to entrenched habits and fear of the unknown. Lastly, high turnover also emerged as one of the challenges encountered by the participants. As mentioned by participants 2 and 3, constant staff changes slows down the process of QMS implementation which was also aligned to Kungu (2010) study, revealing that high attrition rate can disrupt the continuity and consistency of QMS practices.

In order to overcome these challenges encountered, responses from the participants identified several strategies that have been proven effective in facilitating the implementation of QMS in their respective organizations. The findings of this study reveals that continuous improvement and regular process reviews are effective means to overcome challenges encountered during the implementation of QMS. This was evident in almost all of the participants responses in which they

said, regular process reviews and internal audits are key to identify if practices in place are in fact effective or are done properly and helps in identifying areas for improvement. These practices are consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Pembrani et al (2019) cited in the literature review, wherein they discovered factors that positively impacts the organizational performance including customer focus, continuous improvement, and employee involvement. Another strategy that emerged from the responses is the role of providing trainings and workshops to consistently educate the members of the organization regarding QMS. This was mentioned by all the participants and they noted that the most effective way of overcoming challenges encountered is by providing the necessary trainings and workshops, having all the information accessible to the members of the organization to equip them to implement the practices efficiently. This finding is aligned with several existing literature like the research of Kaynak (2003) who found that training and education are crucial components of successful quality management initiatives. Another one is the research of Powell (1995) who identified continuous learning and employee involvement as critical success factors in TQM implementation.

Research Limitations

Although the findings of the study revealed in-depth insights of the role of QMS in the organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines, some limitations were observed. The participants of the study was limited to only six (6) managers within the property management and construction sector which may not be fully representative of the service industry. As Qualitative studies usually dive deep into specific context, focusing on specific groups and topics, it often generates findings that may not be directly generalizable to a broader population (Leung, 2015). Another limitation of this study is the geographical scope as it is confined within the service industry in the Philippines. It might not reflect the experiences and challenges of the same industry within a different country that has a different cultural, economic and regulatory environments. Similarly, the study is focused on just two (2) sectors within the service industry: property management and construction. The findings may not be directly linked or applicable to other service industries such as healthcare, finance or hospitality. In terms of data collection, since the study used interviews as the primary source of data, it is also subject to biases such as interviewer bias. Lastly, time constraint is another limitation observed while conducting the study. The data collection was done over a limited period of time which may not capture trends and changes within the QMS implementation and impact on organizational performance.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to analyse the role that quality management systems play in the organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines. To achieve this objective, the study addressed three key research questions: the impact of QMS practices on organizational performance, the factors influencing QMS implementation, and the strategies employed to overcome implementation challenges. The findings of this study reveal a positive correlation between QMS practices implementation and organizational performance of the service provides. This was evident from the responses in terms of improved operational efficiency, increased financial outcomes and enhanced customer satisfaction. These results are in line with previous studies which highlights the benefits of TQM and QMS practices in improving the organizational competitiveness. Two of which are studies conducted by Talib, Rahman, and Azam (2011) and Prajogo and Sohal (2016) which revealed the positive impact of TQM practices and ISO certification to operational efficiency and service quality. The study reveals that with streamlined practices in place, operational cost is reduced, productivity is increased, therefore leading to an increased profitability. Additionally, the study shows that effective QMS implementation practices results to improved customer loyalty and therefore increased customer satisfaction. This is also consistent with the findings of Dipasupil (2018) and Priede (2012). These improvements reinforces the organization's reputation and competitive edge. Furthermore, the study identified the factors contributing to the successful implementation of these QMS practices which includes process standardization and supportive organizational culture. It was revealed in this study that internal practices in place and ISO certification has a positive impact on the successful implementation of QMS which is aligned with the findings of Singh et al. (2018) and Psomas (2013), who noted the positive correlation between ISO 9001 certification and organizational performance. A supportive organizational culture was also revealed as a factor that contributes to the successful implementation of QMS within an organization. Similarly, Cameron and Quinn (2011) also emphasized the significant influence of organizational culture on QMS practices. Finally, the findings of this study also identified the challenges that the service sector, specifically property management and construction, encountered during QMS implementation and the strategies that were integrated to overcome these challenges. One of the challenges that was revealed in this study is the unfamiliarity and resistance to change of the members of the organization which is aligned

to the findings of Limpiada (2016) and Kotter (1996). Another challenge that emerged from the findings of the study is time management and workload. This was also similar to the results of the study conducted by Fotopoulos and Psomas (2010). Lastly, high turnover rate was revealed as another obstacle to effective QMS implementation. The strategies that emerged from the findings of the study includes continuous improvement and process reviews, and providing trainings and workshops. Similarly, Pembrani *et al.* (2019) emphasized the need for regular reviews and audits in the effective implementation of QMS and for identifying areas for improvement.

The results of this study provides practical implications to organizations, especially in similar sectors, researchers and also policymakers. This study provides a better understanding of the benefits of QMS leading to more efficient decisions regarding its implementation. Since the findings covers the identification of effective strategies for variety of challenges faced by the service sector, it would help organizations to provide continuous training and integrating a supportive organizational culture. Furthermore, companies can also utilize the identified impacts on operational efficiency, financial performance and customer satisfaction to develop metrics for the evaluation of QMS effectiveness. As this study highlights the importance of process standardization and ISO certification, policymakers can use this paper as a guide in promoting QMS practices implementation and adaptation within the industry. Overall, the findings of this study serves as a valuable source for organizations aiming to enhance their QMS practices implementation, policymakers seeking to promote QMS adaptation and researchers looking to explore the multifaceted impact of QMS implementation.

Recommendations

To have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the impact of QMS in organizational performance, it is recommended to conduct further study in the long-term impact of the management system. This would explore the sustainability, evolution and long-term benefits of these practices in terms of the identified areas. It is also proposed to explore the effects of technological advancements in facilitating QMS implementation. Furthermore, it is proposed to investigate the same objective on other service providers outside of the property management and construction sector. This would help identify sector-specific challenges and best-practices by providing an in-depth understanding of QMS across different industries. It would also be beneficial to further explore the cultural and behavioural aspect influencing QMS application. Having a

comprehensive knowledge on how organizational culture, leadership style and employee behaviours impacts the implementation of QMS can provide useful insights for organizations that seek to instil a quality-centred culture.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Introduction:

- Thank the interviewee for their time and participation
- Briefly explain research topic and objective
- Obtain verbal consent

Background:

1. What is your role in the organization you work for?
2. How long have you been working for this organization?
3. How long has the organization been established?
4. Does the organization have a QMS in place? If yes, how long has it been implemented?

TQM, Quality Management Practices and implementation:

5. Can you tell me about some of the quality management practices your organization uses?
6. During the implementation of the QMS did your organization face any challenges? Yes/no
7. If yes How did your organization overcome these challenges?

Impact on performance:

8. In your opinion, what are the effects of QMS in the organization?
9. What factors do you believe have contributed to the successful adaptation and application of TQM practices within your QMS?
10. Are there any specific aspects of the QMS or TQM practices that you believe could be further improved?

Closing:

11. Is there anything else you would like to share about the role of TQM and QMS in your organization?

12. Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.

Appendix 2: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Participant Consent Form and Information Sheet

Title of the Study:

The Role of Quality Management System in Organizational Performance of Service Providers in the Philippines

Researcher:

Jana Armela R. Junio
MSC in Management
National College of Ireland
+353892582578

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research is to explore the role of Quality Management Systems (QMS) in enhancing the organizational performance of service providers in the Philippines. This study aims to gather insights on how QMS implementation affects various performance metrics and overall service delivery.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview that will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be conducted online via zoom or MS Teams. With your permission, the interview will be audio and video-recorded to ensure accurate transcription of your responses.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality:

All information collected in this study will be kept strictly confidential. Your identity and any personal information will not be disclosed in any publications or presentations resulting from this research. Data will be stored securely and only the research team will have access to it.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. While there may not be direct benefits to you, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of the role of Quality Management Systems in organizational performance, potentially leading to improvements in service delivery in the Philippines.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact the researcher:

Jana Armela R. Junio
MSC in Management
National College of Ireland
+353892582578

Consent:

I have read and understood the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Name:

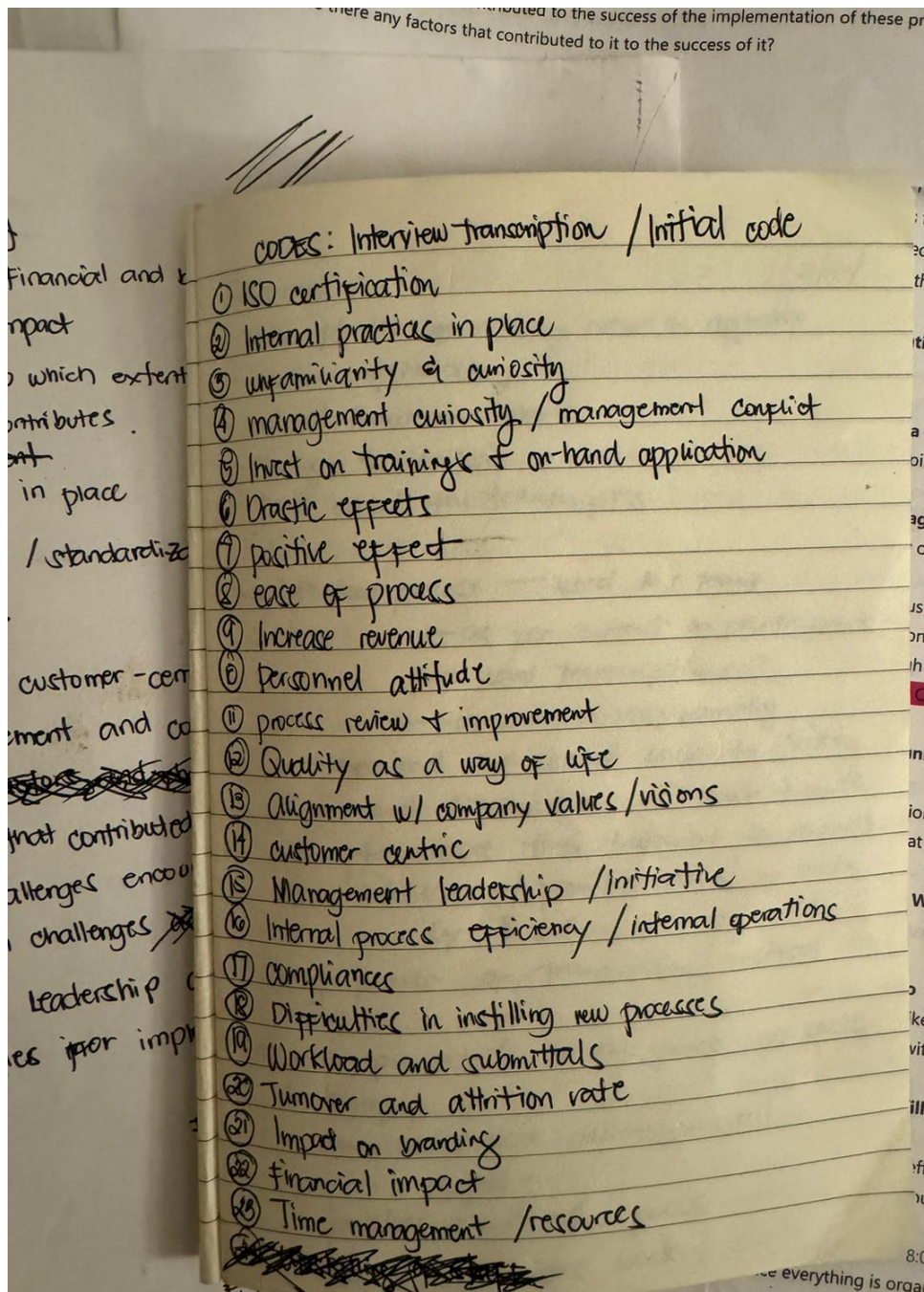
Participant's Signature: _____

Date:

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Thematic Analysis



① Impacts of QMS

- Operational efficiency
- ~~Reducing~~ Financial and branding impact
- Customer-centric impact

② ~~What factors~~ To which extent does QMS practices

contributes

- Continuous improvement
- Internal Practices in place
- ISO certification / standardization
- Ease of process

③ ~~What factors~~ organizational customer-centric approach

- Employee involvement and continuous improvement

Analyze factors that contributed to success

And challenges encountered:

- Implementation challenges
- Trainings + leadership approach
- Strategies prior implementation

Theme:
 Impacts of QMS on OP

Theme:
 Process standardization
 influencing
 organizational culture

Theme:
 QMS implementation

