

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT OF CERAMIC INDUSTRY OF THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Quality enhancement is the important process of taking deliberately steps at activity that improve overall quality. In fact, Quality enhancement is vital to the success of modern ceramic industry in Thailand. The effects of highly standard of quality can be positively related to high performance, high productivity, and high sales volumes. However, the diversity demographic of industry will have different impacts on ceramic industry and could also be the factors to have different standard quality. This study aimed to investigate both the necessary and vital factors contributing to the quality enhancement of ceramic industry in the northern of Thailand. In order to answer the research objectives and research questions, this study had been conducted by utilizing a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative method. For data collection of quantitative method, it is important to develop questionnaire survey. For data collection of qualitative method, an in-depth interview was conducted with 17 experts, managers, and local government officials to elicit insight information. The questionnaires were distributed to all ceramic factories and plants on the basis of convenience sampling. About 155 respondents were returned with proper answers and format. The in-depth interview was conducted with 17 experts in ceramic industry and a focus group who were having long experiences directly involved with ceramic industry. Data analysis and evaluation were performed by using SPSS. The findings from with study can be revealed that there was high success rate or about 92 percent to enhance quality at the beginning and planning process of ceramic. There was medium success or about 74 percent to enhance quality at the production process of ceramic. Finally, there was low success or about 39 percent to enhance quality at the final stage process of ceramic. There are three suggestions from this study. First, the focus on the quality enhancement should be on the beginning and planning process which proved to have highest success rate. Second, the quality assurance can be monitoring all and every step of production. Third, the quality enhancement should plan with the intention to save both time and resources.

Keyword: Quality Enhancement, Ceramic Industry, Quality Assurance, Productivity

Introduction

Ceramic industry of Thailand is one of the most likely industries to be success with the proper assistance from the local and central government. This is because the local ceramic industry have local distinguish designed for the finish products, together with low labor costs and material costs. These are the factors of advantages. However, there are some factors of disadvantages such as modern skills and knowledge of marketing, exportation, and quality. The focus of this research study is about the quality improvement or quality enhancement for local ceramic industry in the north of Thailand. In modern business, quality is seen as the subject that bring the long term success. Many papers and many studies agreed that quality is necessary and important. Service quality has been regarded as one of the most important success factors of organization due to its vital relationship with customer services, particularly in the service industry. It is often considered as a vital component to the achievement and success of hotel and tourism industry. It is a preceding factor for the business organization to have customer loyalty and long term sales and stable profits. In other words, good quality of service will have long term positive influence on profitability by elevating the customer base of the business organization in a sustainable way.

According to many researchers' view, quality means "innate excellence". It is a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement to provide customers with high standard

of quality to exceed their expectation. Certainly, there are some major differences between the quality in terms of products and the quality in terms of service. While most products are tangible, the service is intangible. In most manufacturing-based approach, quality can be defined as “making it right the first time”. This means quality is defined in terms of cost and price. However, in most service industry-based approach, quality can be properly defined as “the best satisfaction to customers”.

Research Methodology

Ceramic quality enhancement is a vital process of taking deliberately steps at activity that improve overall ceramic quality. In fact, ceramic quality enhancement is vital to the success of modern ceramic industry in Thailand. Certainly high impacts of better standard of quality can be positively related to many important issues such as high performance, high productivity, and high sales volumes and profits. This objectives of this research were to investigate conditions and factors of success for both the necessary and vital factors contributing to the quality enhancement of ceramic industry in the northern of Thailand. In order to answer the important research questions, this study had been conducted by employing a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative method. To obtain better quality of data collection, it is important to develop and design questionnaire survey. To obtain data collection of qualitative method, an in-depth interview was utilized with 17 experts, managers, and local government officials to gain better and deeper information. The design of open ended questionnaires were send to many different ceramic factories and plants on the basis of convenience sampling. About 155 respondents were returned with proper answers and format. The in-depth interview was conducted in the ways of open communication with 17 experts in ceramic industry and a focus group who were having long experiences directly involved with ceramic industry. Data analysis and evaluation were performed by using SPSS.

Findings

The technique of measuring ceramic quality and ceramic quality dimensions have become a major area in marketing of ceramic industry, and services industry during the past few decades. Since the increasing important of ceramic quality for Thai industry to compete with big players in the international level of competition, many researchers have paid attention on how the quality delivered. The techniques of measuring ceramic quality and service quality dimensions have become a focus of study in marketing literature during the past few decades. There are ten important of determinants of service quality (Parsuraman et al., 1985) that can be applied to ceramic quality. First is reliability which is a consistency of performance and dependability, and performing service right at the right place with the right customers. Second is responsiveness which is a willingness or readiness of employee to provide services and timeliness of service. Third is competence which is a possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform service. Fourth is access which is approachability and ease of contact or the service is easily accessible by customers. Fifth is courtesy which is politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of service providers. Sixth is communication which is ways to keep customers informed and listening and understanding customers. Seventh is credibility which is trustworthiness, honesty and company reputation. Eighth is security which is freedom from danger, risk, and physical safety. Ninth is understanding or knowing the customers which is understanding customer’s need, requirements, and individual attention. Tenth is tangibles which is physical evidence and representation of service. Customer satisfaction of ceramic

industry is a crucial factor in quality assessment as well as business success in the sustainable way. The fact is that the higher the customer satisfaction the higher the performance of the business, and in turn, the higher profitability due to high sales volume. Customer satisfaction can be defined as “an individual’s perception of performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectations”.

Conclusion

Measuring ceramic quality effectively is important and requires deep understanding of the nature of industry. Qualities of many ceramic products are distinguished by customers due to their natures and characteristics. Service providers should pay attention to marketing tools and research findings to develop service offered and enhance the quality of ceramic. In this study, it was found that to gain the optimal ceramic quality that exceed or meet customer expectation, business and service providers need to increase level of customer satisfaction.

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