

## ABSTRACT

### **Critical factors affecting the establishment of Quality Management Systems in Small and Medium-Sized Manufacturing Enterprises in Trinidad**

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This study investigates the critical factors (CF) and associated criteria required for implementation of total quality management (TQM) in small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMME) in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). It is of particular importance because there is a scarcity of quality management research in developing countries. The study uses a grounded research methodology by incorporating inductive and deductive reasoning to determine the extent to which TQM is implemented in ISO 9000 certified SMME. It used literature review, project management, case study ethnography and the Analytic Hierarchy Process techniques. Findings suggest that the inherent nature of SMME endemic to T&T is similar in nature to that found in the literature. In addition, the barriers faced are similar to those as found in the literature. When the CF were analyzed as hard and soft factors, there was contrasting emphasis, with the literature emphasizing the soft factors and the ISO 9001:2000 Standard the hard factors. The empirical findings indicate that the average percent priority weighting for TQM implementation in the case studies was 65%. With respect to individual TQM criteria based on the percent weightings it is recommended that SMME using this Standard for quality management system implementation should include soft compliance requirements that are not included in the existing compliance requirements.

**Keywords:** Terrence R.M Lalla; quality management systems, small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises.