

CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
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**An Organizational Development Study of
the Impact of Cultural Factors on the
Implementation of the Six Sigma
Methodology in Southern China**

從組織發展的研究看文化因素對
「六西格瑪」方法
在南中國的履行的影響

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Abstract

Research and empirical study from an organizational development perspective on Six Sigma methodology as a means of quality management in China is limited. It offers an opportunity for this study, which not only examines the impact of soft factors of culture on Six Sigma implementation, but also explores the strategic objectives of organizational development by Six Sigma, and analyzes the respective variables that may affect necessary Six Sigma outcomes. The theoretical underpin is the change process theory formulated by Porras and Robertson (1987). The soft factors of culture consider the organizational culture of performance in business operation and process, and how Chinese cultural characteristics may affect work behavior and attitude. This study measures organizational and cultural factors by utilizing the Organizational Culture Profile model (O'Reilly III et al., 1991a), and looks at Chinese culture factors by employing the Chinese Value Survey (Bond et al., 1987).

The Six Sigma methodology has been one of the most popular management methodologies employed in the West in the last three decades. This specific tool of quality management has been adopted in China for about twenty years, mainly through Hong Kong which has been the gateway of Sino-global business.

Only in the last decade have researchers studied the relationship between soft factors of culture and concerted business management initiatives (e.g., Detert et al., 2000; Zu et al., 2006; Naor et al., 2008). Examining organizational intervention by implementation of the Six Sigma methodology, this research focuses on the responses of academics, experts and practitioners towards Six Sigma implementation in Hong Kong and Southern China, and their attitudes towards this popular Western management initiative. This research also investigates outcome factors, which is a major concern that accounts for the usefulness and success of Six Sigma.

This study is a mixed methods research. The main tool of study is a two-part survey questionnaire. Two series of multiple individual interviews will be conducted; the first one for soliciting study information before the survey, the second one after the survey for evaluating research findings. The survey is to be completed online. The respondents are mainly Hong Kong Chinese who are employed, and are working in Hong Kong or in Southern China. Data collected from the survey is checked reliability and validity, and is used for identifying variables and factors for statistical analysis.

The result of this research will add knowledge to the area of academic research of quality management by Six Sigma. It also will give relevant and real world reference to practitioners and industrialists of the position of Six Sigma as they design or consider strategic and implementation plans for the Six Sigma methodology. As far as the present researcher is concerned, the result will serve as a beacon for providing Six Sigma training and consultation to users in different industries, and grounds for future research.

Key Words: Organizational Development and Change, Quality Management, Six Sigma, Culture, Implementation, Critical Success Factors