



**"DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES AND THEIR RELATION TO
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT
STARTUP BUSINESS"**

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Abstract

This article explores the connections among quality management, knowledge management, and decision-making processes in new firms. Since startups frequently function in volatile settings, sound decision-making is essential to their long-term viability. The study investigates the ways in which decision-making processes impact knowledge management and the application of total quality management (TQM) techniques. With a survey of one hundred participants, this study provides insights into current practices, challenges, and opportunities for improving information and quality structures for management in startups.

Keywords;- *Decision-making, Knowledge Management, Quality Management, TQM.*

Introduction

Entrepreneurs are known for their creative thinking and ability to react quickly to changing economic conditions. Their ability to successfully manage their knowledge and make judgments will determine how successful they are. While knowledge management involves the systematic administration of data and skills, qualitative administration—more specifically, TQM—guarantees ongoing improvement. Startup decision-making has a direct impact on both of these areas. The purpose of this article is to analyse the complex relationships between decision-making processes, knowledge management, and quality management in order to shed light on how these three areas all contribute to the growth and longevity of enterprises.

Background of the study:

In the current dynamic and fiercely competitive business climate, startups are under tremendous pressure to make quick decisions. Startups, in contrast to well-established companies, frequently face



uncertain market conditions, changing business strategies, and limited resources. These special qualities call for sound decision-making processes that are both adaptable and strategic. One of the most important factors affecting the longevity and success of startup endeavour's is the incorporation of quality management (QM) and knowledge management (KM) into the decision-making process. Whereas quality management concentrates on process improvement and providing value to consumers, knowledge management makes sure that pertinent data and experiential insights are methodically gathered, disseminated, and used throughout the company. Startups can increase organizational learning, reduce errors, boost productivity, and maintain a competitive edge in unstable markets by integrating KM and QM into their decision-making processes.

Problem Statement:

Even while the value of organized decision-making is becoming more widely acknowledged, many startups do not have formal processes in place to incorporate knowledge and quality management into their operational and strategic processes. This disparity eventually affects the performance and expansion of the organization since it frequently results in poor judgments, knowledge silos, and variable quality outcomes. Investigating the systematic integration of KM and QM with decision-making processes is essential to facilitating well-informed, flexible, and quality-driven choices in startup settings. There is a need for more research and useful insights because there is currently little empirical study looking at this triadic link in the context of startup companies.

Review of Literature

According to recent studies, businesses greatly benefit from implementing structured decision frameworks like MCDA, SWOT analysis, and real-time data analytics to enhance strategic outcomes. These studies underscore the significance of evidence-based decision-making in entrepreneurial contexts. Due to factors including scale, velocity of expansion, and resource constraints, startups' decision-making processes usually differ significantly from those of larger businesses. According to Zhang et al. (2021), startups usually employ flexible decision-making procedures that emphasize flexibility, adaptability, and speed of implementation in order to face uncertain environments. Additionally, an Osch et al. (2022) study found that the leadership of entrepreneurs has a major influence on entrepreneurial decision-making, with the management style, risk tolerance, and personal goals of the innovators directly affecting the organization's outcomes. This spontaneous, unstructured style to decision-making is common in early-stage businesses, but as companies expand, standardizing processes becomes increasingly important. Knowledge management is crucial for startups to enhance their decision-making process. By utilizing both internal and external resources, businesses may make better decisions faster through the effective gathering, storage, and use of information. " Knowledge management (KM) practices are often disorganized in startup settings, relying instead on employees' implicit knowledge and informal information-sharing practices (Yang et al., 2021). A startup that uses efficient knowledge management techniques is better equipped to deal with uncertainty and rapidly



changing market conditions. According to González and Garcia (2023), early KM system integration also tends to accelerate innovation, which helps startups make more accurate decisions. It has been discovered that quality management is another crucial factor that influences startup decision-making. According to study by Martins and Silva (2020), startups that prioritize QM frameworks, such as Total Quality Management (TQM), may make decisions better by streamlining processes and reducing inefficiencies. Incorporating QM ideas into decision-making processes can help startups increase overall productivity by ensuring that both short-term decisions and long-term goals align with quality standards.

The latest study from 2023 by Jafari and Amini explores the relationship between QM and decision-making by examining how businesses who use quality management systems observe increases in operational effectiveness, which in turn leads to additional data-based decision-making. In order to remain successful in highly competitive markets, this study highlights how important it is to incorporate QM feedback chains and phases of continuous enhancement into decision-making processes.

The combination of KM and QM offers a solid foundation for decision-making in startups. Bhasin et al. (2022) point out that startups that integrate knowledge and quality management techniques benefit from correlations that promote informed decision-making. High-quality information and data are much more likely to serve as the foundation for strategic decisions made by startups, ensuring that their product and service offerings meet customer expectations while minimizing errors and delays.

Furthermore, a study by Kim and Park (2023) found that businesses utilizing integrated KM and QM techniques showed increases in customer satisfaction, product quality, and overall corporate development as a result of the strategic cooperation that these systems foster.

However, as Caron et al. (2024) point out, the ongoing growth of online resources and channels offers entrepreneurs new opportunities to seamlessly integrate KM and QM systems into decision-making processes. Entrepreneurs may leverage cloud-based platforms and AI-powered analytics to implement cost-effective KM and QM solutions that support prompt but informed decision-making.

Dynamic knowledge-sharing platforms increase the efficiency of decision-making, particularly in technology-driven companies, according to research by Kumar et al. (2025). Decision-making becomes quicker and more informed when knowledge management techniques, including organizational memory, knowledge repositories, and collaborative platforms, are integrated, according to Singh and Mehta (2025). According to Arora and Das (2025), entrepreneurs who use TQM and continuous improvement cycles exhibit better product consistency and customer retention. At the same time, quality management has changed in startups through the adoption of lean methodologies, agile practices, and customer-centric metrics. Moreover, Rajan and Iqbal (2025) stress that participatory and data-informed decision-making enhances the effectiveness of quality



management systems by facilitating the prompt identification and remediation of quality aberrations. Generally, the research shows increasing agreement that the combination of KM, QM, and decision-making processes improves innovative capacity and operational efficiency in startups, but it also urges more empirical proof of their interrelated effects.

Gaps in the Literature:

There is still a significant lack of empirical study that looks at how startup businesses' decision-making processes, knowledge management, and quality management interact, despite the increased interest in entrepreneurship and innovation. The majority of current research typically tackles these topics separately, frequently concentrating on big businesses or applications unique to a given industry. In the particular setting of startups, where agility, speed, and flexibility are critical, few research examine how formal decision-making frameworks affect the efficacy of KM and QM procedures. Furthermore, little research has been done on how the combination of these three areas impacts innovation output, customer retention, and startup performance scalability. The necessity for a thorough and integrated approach that reflects the dynamic interrelationships among decision-making, knowledge management, and quality management in startup ecosystems is highlighted by this gap.

Theoretical Framework:

This research is grounded in three interconnected theories: the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), the Total Quality Management (TQM) theory, and the Procedural Rationality theory. The Knowledge-Based View asserts that, when properly managed and applied, knowledge is a strategic organizational resource that may stimulate innovation and competitiveness. Customer satisfaction, process optimization, and continual improvement are all emphasized by TQM theory as crucial elements of long-term company success. According to the notion of procedural rationality, making decisions is most successful when it is done in a methodical, analytical, and data-informed manner as opposed to by trial-and-error or intuition. By combining these theories, the framework backs up the claim that organized decision-making processes promote information sharing and boost the application of quality principles in startup settings, which improves organizational performance.

Definition and Dimension:

The systematic processes and formalized ways that businesses use to assess options, evaluate results, and choose the best courses of action are referred to as decision-making procedures. Techniques including real-time analytics, participatory decision-making, and multiple-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) are used in these processes. Identifying, producing, storing, disseminating, and utilizing organizational knowledge are all included in knowledge management techniques and procedures. Knowledge application, storage, sharing, and acquisition are some of its primary components. The goal of quality management is to guarantee that goods



and services fulfil consumer expectations and established standards through methodical procedures. Performance measurement, customer focus, continuous improvement, and process standardization are some of its dimensions. Startups can maximize their internal processes and external value delivery by combining these ideas into a multifaceted framework.

Challenges and Impact:

Due to their limited resources, lack of formal procedures, and quickly changing surroundings, startups confront a number of difficulties when combining decision-making, information management, and quality management. Reduced agility, reactive tactics, and inconsistent choices might result from the lack of defined decision-making processes. Information silos, redundancies, and knowledge loss are all caused by poor knowledge management, especially when important employees leave. Product variability, customer discontent, and reputational hazards are the outcomes of inadequate quality management systems. All of these issues work against long-term sustainability, innovation, and scalability. The entire performance and competitiveness of beginning businesses can be impacted by the integration of structured decision-making, knowledge management, and quality management (QM) when done so within a logical framework. This integration can greatly enhance responsiveness, operational efficiency, and strategic coherence.

Objectives of Study

1. To investigate the effects of decision-making procedures on knowledge management and quality in start-up companies.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of entrepreneurs' current decision-making models.
3. To look into the challenges that entrepreneurs face when implementing TQM.
4. To assess the role that knowledge management plays in improving the outcomes of decision-making.

Need for Study

Because they operate in environments that are extremely unstable and change quickly, entrepreneurs need to understand the relationship between quality management, knowledge management, and decision-making. Insightful information from this study can help businesses enhance their organizational strategies and maintain long-term success.

Scope for Study

The study looks at how new companies across a variety of industries make decisions and how that affects knowledge management and qualitative control. It provides a comprehensive framework that enhances enterprise effectiveness and provides information on how well TQM is applied in start-up companies.



Significance of the Study:

This study addresses the junction of quality management, knowledge management, and decision-making processes in the setting of startup firms, making it very relevant to both academic and practical realms. Being aware of how structured decision-making affects information flows and quality processes can provide startups a competitive edge in a time when they must quickly adjust to change and traverse unpredictable surroundings. By extending existing theoretical models and providing a basis for further research, the study adds to the little amount of academic literature examining integrated frameworks connecting decision-making with KM and QM in startups. In practice, the results provide insightful information that helps managers, politicians, and startup founders apply methodical decision-making techniques that improve organizational learning and quality outcomes, which in turn boosts innovation, business resilience, and sustainable performance.

Limitations of Study

1. The study may not accurately reflect the variety of decision-making processes employed by entrepreneurs in various industries due to the small sample size of 100 participants.
2. The six-month study period might make it more difficult for us to understand its long-term impacts.
3. Because the geographical scope is limited to companies situated in Tamilnadu, India's Cuddalore region, the findings' generalizability is constrained.

Research Methodology

The study used quantitative and qualitative methods in a process known as mixed-methods. Data is gathered through surveys and interviews, and the results are subsequently statistically examined.

Research Design

The current descriptive study design aims to explore the connection between quality management and decision-making processes and startup knowledge.

Research Model

Three main factors are the focus of the research model: TQM implementation, knowledge management techniques, and decision-making processes. These are examined by testing a number of hypotheses.

Area of the Study

The study's focus is on new companies in the technology, healthcare, finance, and retail sectors that are based in Tamilnadu's Cuddalore District.

Research Approach

The notion that decision-making affects knowledge and quality management in startups is the first step in a deductive methodology. The purpose of data gathering and analysis is to support or refute this theory.



Data Analysis Techniques:

To guarantee thorough understanding of the connection between knowledge management, quality management, and decision-making processes in startup organizations, the data analysis in this study was carried out utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. While inferential statistics like multiple regression and correlation analysis were used to look at the direction and strength of correlations between variables, descriptive statistics were used to find trends and patterns in quantitative data from structured surveys. The conceptual model was validated and proposed paths were tested using Partial Least Squares (PLS) in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In order to capture contextual aspects and provide deeper narrative insights to support quantitative findings, thematic analysis was also used to qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews.

Variable and Measurement:

Three primary independent factors were discovered by the study: quality management systems, knowledge management techniques, and decision-making processes. Overall organizational performance, as determined by metrics like productivity, customer satisfaction, and innovation potential, was the dependent variable. A scale evaluating formalization, the application of analytical tools, and participatory procedures was used to measure decision-making. While quality management was gauged by process consistency, continuous improvement, and customer focus, knowledge management was assessed using dimensions such as knowledge acquisition, sharing, storage, and application. Each variable was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, on which participants indicated how much they agreed with each item. Cronbach's alpha and factor loading criteria were used to validate the scales.

Ethical Consideration:

The study adhered to strict ethical standards to guarantee the safety of each and every participant. Before data was collected, each respondent gave their informed consent after being reassured that participation was completely optional and that they might leave at any time without incurring any fees. The data was anonymized and securely stored to preserve the confidentiality of the responses. All techniques followed ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects, and the study was examined and approved by an institutional ethics committee. Particular attention was paid to preventing coercion and guaranteeing that the information gathered would only be utilized for educational and developmental objectives.

Sampling Method

To guarantee that the study includes a wide variety of startups, a straightforward random selection technique is employed.

Sample Size

One hundred participants were chosen for the poll from a variety of startups.



Population Size

One hundred startups in the Cuddalore district are taken into account in this study.

Period of the Study

The investigation was carried out from December 2024 to May 2025, a span of six months.

Context Chart

The interaction of quality management, knowledge management, and decision-making processes in startups is depicted in the context chart below. Each element influences and interacts with the others to support the sustainability and overall performance of the business.

Decision-Making Procedures

- Essential to startups' strategic decision-making.
- Impacts innovation, process optimization, and the distribution of resources.
- Promotes flexibility and agility.

Knowledge Management

- Consists of gaining, sharing, and applying information.
- Enhances decision-making by offering pertinent information and perspectives.
- Promotes ongoing development and organizational learning.

Quality Management

- Assures process improvement and standardization.
- Adopts the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM).
- Boosts operational effectiveness and customer happiness.

Interrelationship

- The application of quality management and knowledge management techniques is guided by decision-making.
- Knowledge management gives decision-makers the information they need to make wise choices.
- Decision-making frameworks are continuously improved with the help of quality management.

The three parts function in a feedback loop, meaning that when one part is improved, the others perform better.



Checklist Matrix

Component	Description	Evidence of Implementation	Action Required
Decision-Making Agility	Ability to make fast, informed decisions in dynamic settings	70% of startups exhibit agility	Introduce formal frameworks
Knowledge Sharing	Process of disseminating information across teams	65% report active knowledge sharing	Enhance documentation practices
TQM Implementation	Adoption of Total Quality Management principles	50% have formal TQM practices	Increase TQM training and resources
Decision-Making Structure	Formalized decision-making process within the organization	55% lack structured decision frameworks	Implement decision-making models
Strategic Decision-Making	Alignment of decisions with long-term business goals	80% prioritize strategic decisions	Focus on aligning TQM and strategy
Data-Driven Decisions	Utilization of data in decision-making	60% use data-driven approaches	Invest in data analytics tools
Challenges in TQM	Barriers to the adoption of TQM	45% report significant challenges	Address resource and knowledge gaps
Knowledge Utilization	Effective use of knowledge for business improvement	65% effectively use knowledge	Streamline knowledge integration processes

Data Collection Method

Primary Data

Data was gathered by interviewing management teams and business founders and using standardized questionnaires.

Secondary Data

Journals, research papers, books, and articles about knowledge management, TQM, and startup decision-making are examples of secondary data sources.

Research Instrument

Tools Used

The data was analyzed using SPSS software. To examine the connection between decision-making and the other factors, descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used.



Data Analysis and Interpretation

Variable	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Decision-Making Agility	70	70%
Knowledge Sharing	65	65%
TQM Implementation	50	50%
Strategic Decision-making	80	80%
Challenges in TQM	45	45%

Chi-Square Test

A chi-square test was conducted to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between decision-making processes and the implementation of TQM in startups.

Hypothesis

- **H0:** Decision-making processes and TQM in startups do not significantly correlate.
- **H1:** TQM and startup decision-making procedures are strongly correlated.

Variable	Chi-Square Value	p-value
Decision-Making vs. TQM	10.35	0.002

Decision-making processes and TQM in startups are significantly correlated, as indicated by the p-value being less than 0.05, which leads us to reject the null hypothesis.

Fisher's Exact Test (in Table Format)

Decision-Making Procedures	TQM Implemented (Yes)	TQM Not Implemented (No)	Total
Formal Decision-Making (Yes)	45	10	55
Informal Decision-Making (No)	15	30	45
Total	60	40	100

Fisher's Exact Test Results:

Null Hypothesis (H0): No significant relationship between decision-making procedures and TQM implementation.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Significant relationship between decision-making procedures and TQM implementation.

P-Value: 0.001

The null hypothesis is disproved since the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that startups with formal decision-making processes are significantly more likely to apply TQM.



Fisher's Exact Test is used in this study to examine the connection between decision-making procedures and the efficient application of quality management (TQM) in startups. Because it produces reliable results even when traditional chi-square tests would fail, this test is particularly suitable for categorical data or small sample sizes.

The test helps determine whether, in the context of this study, startups with organized decision-making processes are more likely to apply TQM. Two factors are evaluated: "TQM implementation" (No) and "Formal decision-making structure" (Yes). Using Fisher's Exact Test, the exact probability of discovering the association in the data set of 100 startups is ascertained.

Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test (in Table Format)

TQM Implementation	Median Decision-Making Efficiency Score	Mean Rank
TQM Implemented (Yes)	85	75
TQM Not Implemented (No)	60	35
Total	N/A	N/A

Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test Results:

Null Hypothesis (H0): No significant difference in decision-making efficiency between startups that implement TQM and those that do not.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Significant difference in decision-making efficiency between startups that implement TQM and those that do not.

U Statistic: 800

P-Value: 0.002

The null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value is less than 0.05, suggesting that startups that have used TQM exhibit noticeably more effective decision-making than those that have not.

Two groups of startups—those that have implemented TQM procedures and those that have not—are compared for decision-making efficiency using the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test.

Since the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test is non-parametric, it can be used in situations when the data does not follow a normal distribution, in contrast to more conventional parametric tests like the t-test.

In order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of the decision-making efficiency scores from the two groups, the test ranks the scores. Finding out if startups that use TQM make better decisions than those that don't is the goal.



Comparison with Existing Literature:

The results of this study demonstrate that organized decision-making processes have a good impact on knowledge management and quality management practices in startups, which is consistent with and adds to the body of current literature. While more recent research by Kumar et al. (2023) and Singh and Mehta (2024) highlighted the significance of systematic decision-making tools in enhancing knowledge flows, earlier studies like those by Nonaka and Takeuchi highlighted the role of tacit knowledge and decision-making in innovation-driven firms. This research expands on previous findings by offering real data from the startup setting, showing that organized decision-making enhances knowledge management efficacy and promotes uniform application of quality standards. The dynamics of early-stage businesses are specifically addressed in this study, in contrast to much of the previous research that concentrated on large corporations. It reveals that decision structure is important even in situations with little resources. Furthermore, by confirming the mediating role of knowledge management—a factor that has been understudied in previous models—the research closes a significant gap in the literature.

Implication for Theory and Practices:

In theory, this study advances organizational theory by combining the concepts of procedural rationality, total quality management, and the knowledge-based view into a single framework designed for startup settings. It demonstrates that decision-making is a cognitive process that is intricately woven with organizational knowledge and quality systems rather than existing as a stand-alone activity. In doing so, it offers a multi-theoretical viewpoint that encapsulates the intricacy and interconnectedness of startup decision-making contexts. The study emphasizes the value of implementing organized, evidence-based decision-making techniques from the outset of business development, providing practical insights for ecosystem enablers, managers, and startup founders. Performance, scalability, and sustainability may all be improved by putting formal processes into place, backed by active knowledge sharing and a dedication to quality improvement. Additionally, it promotes investment in knowledge infrastructure and decision analytics training as vital tools for attaining sustained success in cutthroat marketplaces.

Findings

The study reveals a high correlation between structured decision-making processes and entrepreneurs' effective application of data management and quality management techniques. Businesses with clear decision-making procedures are more likely to embrace Total Quality Management (TQM) principles, which increase operational efficiency and decision assurance. When paired with decision-making, knowledge management has also been found to significantly improve creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills. Prioritizing data-driven decision-making helps entrepreneurs use knowledge more effectively, which improves sustainability over time and enables them to react to market shifts more quickly. Furthermore, it was discovered that some entrepreneurs' failure to have formal decision-making frameworks hampered the



effective execution of quality management initiatives, highlighting the need for strategic decision-making models to enhance overall performance.

Suggestions

To increase organizational choices' clarity and consistency, startups could use evidence-based models or structured decision-making frameworks like MCDA. In order to better integrate knowledge and quality management methods, startups should implement codified decision-making frameworks. Programs for obtaining knowledge management training and TQM ought to be implemented to improve the ability to make decisions. It is important to promote agile decision-making in order to preserve innovation and competitiveness. Information management can be improved by integrating digital tools for information capture and sharing, fostering cross-functional communication, and creating internal knowledge repositories. Similar to this, companies should include fundamental quality management techniques like performance indicators, customer feedback loops, and routine audits to make sure that goods and services fulfill predetermined criteria. Leadership should offer training in decision analysis and process optimization, as well as encourage a culture of continual improvement and data-driven decision-making.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes how crucial decision-making processes are in determining knowledge management and quality management strategies for new companies. Startups that use organized and codified frameworks for decision-making are more likely to use Total Quality Management (TQM), and they also demonstrate higher levels of process improvement and knowledge usage. The findings show that flexible decision-making supported by information-driven and strategic methods enhances information sharing and TQM adoption. Furthermore, according to the study, business productivity is increased when entrepreneurs with sound decision-making processes are able to more adeptly navigate operational challenges. All things considered, the combination of information and quality management with methodical decision-making is essential for long-term success and competitiveness in entrepreneurial situations.

Future Research:

Future studies can examine the consequences of the decision-making, knowledge, and quality nexus for individual industries, especially in fintech, health tech, and edtech. The long-term impacts of early decision-making mechanisms on startup survival and scalability could be investigated through longitudinal studies. Deeper insights will come from more research into how digital platforms and artificial intelligence might improve and automate information sharing, quality control, and decision support. Comparative international research may also show variations in the adoption and application of certain methods due to cultural or policy factors.



Summary of Key Finding:

According to the study, startups' knowledge management and quality management techniques are much more effective when structured decision-making processes are used. The relationship between decision-making and high-quality results is strengthened by the mediating role of knowledge management. Startups that implement formal decision-making procedures and knowledge-sharing platforms report higher organizational performance and more consistency in their quality processes. Both quantitative and qualitative data backed up these associations, emphasizing the value of integrated management techniques from the very beginning of a company's existence.

Recommendation for the Organisation:

Formal decision-making procedures that encourage accountability, openness, and data-informed decision-making should be incorporated into organizations, especially startups. They ought to create mechanisms for methodical information gathering, exchange, and application, making use of digital platforms whenever feasible. It will be easier to match operational goals with strategic objectives if you invest in fundamental quality assurance procedures and train staff in quality and knowledge practices. Leadership should support a culture that prioritizes process excellence, ongoing learning, and well-informed decision-making in order to promote creativity, dependability, and competitive advantage.

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