

The Interplay of Malagasy Cultural Values and Quality Assurance within an Ecclesial Setting: A Case Study of the Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple, Antananarivo

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Abstract:

This article examines the challenges, opportunities, and potential conflicts related with implementing a quality culture within a Malagasy ecclesial context, using the FJKM Tranovato Ambatonakanga Protestant Temple in Antananarivo as a case study. The study explores the inherent tensions between Malagasy cultural values, particularly Fihavanana (community spirit), Moramora (taking things easy/going slowly), and Hena-maso (respect for hierarchy/avoiding direct confrontation), which remain deeply ingrained in Malagasy society, and the demands of modern management practices emphasizing rigor, standardization, and continuous improvement. Malagasy culture's emphasis on consensus, solidarity, and tolerance can pose challenges to the adoption of structured, standardized processes characteristic of quality management systems. Furthermore, the often-informal nature of church management structures can complicate the strict application of quality theory principles and regulations. However, congruences between certain Christian values, such as commitment, truthfulness, and righteousness, and core quality principles offer potential avenues for the gradual integration of quality management within a religious setting. Employing a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection, the study analyzes the perceptions and practices of temple stakeholders, exploring the interrelationships between the variables under investigation. The findings underscore the importance of adapting, and even indigenizing, quality culture to the specific ecclesial context and local realities to mitigate resistance and foster greater acceptance. The article concludes that successful implementation of a quality approach within an ecclesiastical environment necessitates a contextually sensitive and pedagogically informed strategy, one that respects traditional values while simultaneously promoting the improvement of existing practices.

Keywords:

Fihavanana; Malagasy; Cultural values; mentality; church management.

I. Introduction

Human history is fundamentally a narrative of the perpetual pursuit of an improved existence—a quest for well-being, or, in more common parlance, "quality of life." This aspiration has been the driving force behind human progress throughout time. The human desire for quality is primordial and transcends any temporal measurement (Ruževičius, 2013).

Following the Great Depression of 1928, industries, driven by the imperatives of profitability and productivity, were compelled to embrace new production strategies. These

strategies centered on the standardization and normalization of production and quality control systems (Shewhart, 1931). However, it was only in the post-World War II era that quality theory experienced a genuine revolution, catalyzed by the contributions of thinkers such as William Edwards Deming and Joseph Moses Juran (1986), notably, introduced the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle and played a pivotal role in the resurgence of Japanese industry.

Toward the close of the 20th and the dawn of the 21st centuries, globalization, fueled by the rapid and exponential advancement of technology and scientific discovery, effectively diminished or eliminated traditional barriers between nations. This, in turn, intensified already fierce international competition, where, absent distinctive competencies, national viability is imperiled.

Within this context, the development of a quality culture within organizations—a now-essential paradigm for business success in the liberalized, particularly Western, world—presents a universal challenge, one that transcends geographical and sectoral boundaries (encompassing economic, financial, social, cultural, and even spiritual domains). Given the acknowledged distinctiveness of the Malagasy cultural ethos compared to its European counterpart (Mollet, 1959), the application of this concept within specific socio-cultural settings, such as Malagasy ecclesial institutions, raises particular questions. Notably, the interplay between the Malagasy cultural mindset and the requisites of a quality culture within a religious context demands careful consideration. (Ramarolahy & Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina, 2025)

This article examines the FJKM Tranovato Ambatonakanga Protestant Temple in Antananarivo—an emblematic site of faith (where the martyred Rasalama, an icon of Malagasy Christianity, was imprisoned) and tradition—as a case study. The temple serves as a microcosm where two distinct realities intersect: a deeply rooted cultural mentality grounded in Malagasy values and modern aspirations, such as the adoption of quality management principles (Razafindrakoto et al., 2017).

This study pursues the following objectives:

- a. To identify points of convergence, divergence, and potential tensions between the Malagasy cultural ethos and the principles of a quality culture.
- b. To analyze the challenges and opportunities inherent in implementing quality practices within an ecclesial setting.

This research adopts a multidimensional, mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, to comprehensively understand the perceptions, practices, and dynamics operating within the temple.

II. Review of Literatures

For a clearer understanding of the context of this study, a brief overview of the site is warranted.

2.1 Brief history of the Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple

The original wooden structure, erected in the late 1830s under the direction of Rev. D. Johns and Mr. Cameron, was inaugurated on June 5, 1831. On this occasion, seven individuals were baptized, and the first Holy Communion was celebrated (Razafimpanilo et al., 1997). During the reign of Ranavalona I, the building was repurposed as a stable and served as a

prison for Rasalama, Madagascar's first Christian martyr, prior to her execution at Ambohipotsy.

The current stone edifice at Ambatonakanga, officially inaugurated on January 22, 1867, during the reign of Queen Rasoherimanjaka, was constructed as a memorial to the Christian martyrs of the persecution period (1835-1861) (Razafimpanilo et al., 1997). The Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple holds significant historical and spiritual importance for the Protestant Reformed Church of Madagascar (FJKM).

Situated in central Antananarivo, the temple is considered a cornerstone of Malagasy Reformed Christianity. Its Norman architectural style contributes to its status as a frequently visited historical monument in the city. The stone structure, hence the name "Tranovato" (meaning "stone building"), symbolizes resilience and spiritual steadfastness, a testament to the unwavering faith of the martyred Rasalama in the face of her persecutors.

2.2 Malagasy mentality and cultural values

Malagasy society is profoundly shaped by a constellation of interconnected values. These include: (1) Fihavanana (communal solidarity), characterized by a spirit of compromise and tolerance; (2) reverence for ancestors and elders; (3) Moramora (a concept embodying a measured pace and often translated as "taking it easy" or "going slowly"); (4) a strong sense of belonging coupled with a cautious approach to change; (5) Hena-maso (concern for the perceptions of others), which can potentially stifle critical expression; (6) a relaxed attitude toward punctuality, often described as "l' à peu près"; and (7) a keen awareness of hierarchical and social relationships. While these values and characteristics are instrumental in maintaining social cohesion, they also exert a significant influence on Malagasy socio-economic life. However, they can, at times, present obstacles to the adoption of new and modern practices, particularly those involving the rigorous formalization of management procedures and processes, or the implementation of standardized systems.

2.3 Quality culture

A quality culture is founded on principles such as transparency, rigor, adherence to standards, continuous evaluation, and process improvement (Juran, 1992). These elements, frequently originating from secular Western organizational contexts, require careful adaptation for acceptance within environments where religious values, informal structures, and established traditions are predominant.

The concept of quality, often perceived as an external imposition, is defined by ISO 9000:2015, a key standard in the quality management domain, as follows: "A quality-oriented organization fosters a culture reflected in behaviors, attitudes, activities, and processes that deliver value through the satisfaction of the needs and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties. The quality of an organization's products and services is determined by its ability to satisfy customers and by the expected and unexpected impact on relevant stakeholders. The quality of products and services includes not only their intended function and performance but also the value and benefit perceived by the customer." Thus, a quality culture is fundamentally a mindset, not merely a set of imposed constraints.

III. Research Methods

Our methodological approach begins with a clear delineation of the research domain, an articulation of the central issues under investigation, and a thorough review of existing scholarship. These foundational elements will be elaborated upon in the subsequent sections.

3.1 Problematization

Central Research Question:

Within a context deeply rooted in communal and traditional values, how can a quality culture be effectively implemented without compromising the cultural and spiritual sensitivities of stakeholders?

Specific Research Questions:

- a. What facets of the Malagasy cultural ethos facilitate or impede the adoption of a quality culture?
- b. How can the demands of quality management be harmonized with established traditional values?

Research Hypothesis:

- a. The Malagasy cultural emphasis on community, while valuable, may generate resistance to standardized systems due to prioritizing Fihavanana and established traditions.
- b. A phased, contextually adapted integration of quality standards may promote their acceptance and successful implementation.

3.1 Literature review and presentation of reference frameworks

a. Malagasy mentality: a sociological perspective

Research on the Malagasy cultural landscape, such as that presented in *L'énigme et le paradoxe - Économie politique de Madagascar* (Razafindrakoto et al., 2017), emphasizes the significant role of traditional values in shaping Malagasy society. Fihavanana, a central tenet of Malagasy culture, promotes cooperation and mutual respect. However, it can also present a challenge to, or even impede, the adoption of practices perceived as overly formal or individualistic.

This adherence to traditional values may thus act as a constraint on paradigm shifts and the adoption of new mindsets, such as a quality-oriented culture. Indeed, as noted in *L'énigme et le paradoxe* (Razafindrakoto et al., 2017, p. 141), "...to explain the country's trajectory, a crisis of values—between a more or less strong attachment of the Malagasy to traditional values and the aspiration and/or constraints of 'modernization'—is sometimes put forward as one of the factors blocking development" (Urfer, 2012a).

Fihavanana, a key value in Malagasy society, is defined in the glossary of Razafindrakoto et al. (2017, p. 271) as: "an essential value... enshrined since 1992 in the preamble to the constitution... often described as a traditional way of living out inter-individual relations, based on fraternity, mutual respect, consensus-building, and cordiality." However, Fihavanana is sometimes overused and adapted to rationalize certain decisions, particularly compromises made at the expense of established principles and rules, including those related to quality, such as rigor and adherence to standards. Frequent invocations of Fihavanana within Malagasy society, considered a "citizenship contract," perpetuate the notion of a society characterized by equitable conditions, thereby influencing individual behavior and political perspectives (Razafindrakoto et al., 2017, p. 120).

To effectively apply quality theory within the Malagasy context, and considering the aforementioned paradigm shift, a thorough understanding of Malagasy culture and mentality is essential. This study draws upon the work of Henri Rasamoelina, specifically his article "Les

sources et les parties constitutives de la mentalité malgache contemporaine" (Rasamoelina, 1988), and Louis Molet's article "Esquisse de la mentalité malgache" (Molet, 1959). These works examine the characteristics and attributes of the Malagasy people, the influence of culture, and the impact of economic development on Malagasy mentality, thought processes, and subsequent actions. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate: (1) the role of culture in the application of quality theory within an ecclesiastical setting, specifically considering the interplay between Christian culture and Malagasy cultural values (e.g., Fihavanana, Moramora, Hena-maso, and the role of elders); and (2) Malagasy approaches to problem-solving and engagement with novelty. Like all people, the Malagasy may exhibit a natural resistance to change, a tendency underscored by proverbs and sayings such as: "Aza miala amin'ny mahazatra" (Don't depart from what is familiar); "Aleo very tsikalakalam-bola toy izay very tsikalalam-pihavanana" (It's better to lose a small amount of money than to lose a relationship); "Avadio impito ny lela" (Turn your tongue seven times); and "Ny fihavanana toy ny fasam-bazimba ka izay mandrava aloha no kely ila" (Relationships are like the tombs of the Vazimba, whoever breaks them first is the one who is at a disadvantage).

While reverence for the divine is often emphasized, a certain inconsistency can be observed in the practical application of religious principles. This includes a lack of rigor in fulfilling religious obligations, a disregard for punctuality, and a tendency to minimize certain transgressions.

The socio-economic realities of poverty experienced by many Malagasy citizens, placing them at the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, can influence their cognitive processes and subsequent behaviors (Razafindrakoto et al., 2017, p. 136). This may result in emotional responses and sentiments taking precedence over rational thought and adherence to established norms. This dynamic offers a potential explanation for various events that have transpired since 1972.

This apparent paradox is further highlighted by the intrinsic values of Christianity. While Christ's teachings emphasize truth, uprightness, and righteousness, principles that brook no compromise (as exemplified in Revelation 3:16: "So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth"), these same principles resonate with the core tenets of quality theory. However, these values may appear to conflict with other Christian virtues, such as tolerance, mercy, and compassion.

This raises several key questions: (1) What impact do these cultural and religious traits have on the implementation of a quality approach? (2) How do these traits influence its practical application? (3) What are the interrelationships and interdependencies among these various traits and their effects on quality initiatives?

b. Quality theory and culture

The evolution of quality management is inextricably linked to the broader history of management theory and practice. Throughout history, human endeavor, whether executed effectively or ineffectively, has been driven by the pursuit of well-being, a fundamental human aspiration shaped by the surrounding environment. Work, as defined by Marx (and discussed by Emmanuel Renault in "Comment Marx se réfère-t-il au travail et à la domination?" in *Actuel Marx* (Renault, 2011)), occupies a central position in social life, and its organization—encompassing the technical, social, and sexual division of labor—constitutes a fundamental political concern.

From antiquity, civilizations have demonstrated an understanding of quality through their artistic and craft traditions. Quality, therefore, has long been associated with the artisan's craft, characterized by bespoke creations tailored to individual client specifications, where each product is inherently unique. However, the Industrial Revolution, driven by the pursuit of increased productivity and, primarily, profitability, challenged this artisanal model. Frederick Winslow Taylor's early 20th-century work organization system, based on production standardization through the separation of design, manufacturing, and control functions, aimed to achieve products with consistent characteristics and, consequently, a more uniform level of quality (Shewhart, 1931).

Modern quality theory centers on concepts such as quality control, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction. International frameworks, such as ISO 9001, prioritize the formalization of processes and rigorous monitoring—principles that may, at times, diverge significantly from established local practices.

According to Juozas Ruževičius, in his article "Paradigm Shifts in Quality Management" published in *International Business, Innovations, Psychology, Economics*, the concept of quality predates recorded history, originating from the continuous human pursuit of improvement, even before the invention of the first tools. Like the mythical Phoenix, quality has been reborn and revitalized, evolving within the realms of management and industry to become a foundational philosophy centered on continuous improvement, the pursuit of excellence, and the satisfaction of individual and collective needs and expectations. (Ruževičius, 2013, pp. 33–44).

Initially, quality initiatives tended to prioritize the object—the product and its conformity to standards and regulations—rather than the subject—the human element, the individual who creates quality. More recently, the application of quality principles within ecclesial contexts has garnered increasing attention, highlighting the importance of this approach for church practices while simultaneously raising questions about how it might transform those practices and structures.

While the pursuit of quality, well-being, and excellence is a timeless human endeavor, modern quality theory is rooted in the quality management principles articulated by influential figures such as William Edwards Deming, Joseph Moses Juran, Armand Vallin Feigenbaum, and Philip Bayard Crosby over the past several centuries. These foundational theories, initially conceived for industrial applications and business management, have been instrumental in the ongoing quest for operational effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the relentless pursuit of performance—a drive toward a "semblance" of perfection, as John S. Oakland notes in *Total Quality Management and Operational Excellence* (Oakland, 2014). This pursuit is invariably linked to the imperatives of profitability and even organizational survival, underscoring the critical importance of continuous improvement and customer satisfaction.

A review of existing literature revealed that while quality theory has found application within theological education (Johnson, 2001), its direct application to ecclesial management remains less explored.

Furthermore, Martine Brasseur and Zahir Yanat (2010), in their article "Humanisme et management" within the edited volume of the same name, highlight the crucial role of the human element in quality management, signifying a notable paradigm shift.

In the context of intensified global economic competition, quality has become a critical factor for organizational survival. Dr. Souhila Ghomari, in her textbook on Total Quality Management (2020, p. 10), emphasizes the importance of quality in organizational management. Defining Total Quality Management, Dr. Ghomari (2020, p. 10), a lecturer at the University of Tlemcen, Faculty of Economics, Management & Commercial Sciences in Algeria, describes it as "the implementation of a corporate project based on a quality approach mobilizing all personnel, i.e., a global strategy by which the entire company (entity, organization) makes every effort to satisfy its beneficiaries (quality, cost, and deadline)," as well as all stakeholders. She posits that Total Quality Management should be a mindset, not a mere constraint or obligation.

3.3 Approach adopted

To validate or refute the aforementioned hypotheses and to gain a deeper understanding of the interplay and interdependencies between Malagasy culture and Christian culture, a survey employing an administered questionnaire was conducted.

a. Sampling

Due to limitations in respondent availability, a sample of 50 individuals was selected quasi-randomly, based on accessibility during Sunday services. With the exception of a balanced gender distribution (50/50), no pre-defined selection criteria were applied.

b. Sampling

Data were collected using an administered questionnaire. This sample of 50 congregants was considered representative of the Tranovato Ambatonakanga church community, encompassing a range of demographic profiles.

c. Analysis methodology

To analyze the collected data, a dual approach was employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques.

Qualitative data, derived from open-ended questions and narrative responses, were subjected to thematic analysis. This involved a systematic process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic analysis facilitated a deeper understanding of the nuanced perspectives and experiences shared by participants, allowing for the exploration of recurring ideas, beliefs, and values related to the intersection of Malagasy culture, Christian faith, and quality management principles.

Quantitative data, gathered from closed-ended questions and scaled responses, were analyzed using descriptive statistics. This involved calculating measures of central tendency (e.g., mean, median, mode) and dispersion (e.g., standard deviation, range) to summarize and describe the numerical data. Descriptive analysis provided a quantitative overview of the sample's characteristics and responses, enabling the identification of trends, frequencies, and potential correlations between variables. This quantitative perspective complemented the qualitative insights gained from thematic analysis, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The combined use of these two distinct analytical approaches allowed for a richer interpretation of the data, enhancing the validity and robustness of the study's findings.

3.4 Information gathering method

a. Primary data collection

A questionnaire survey was administered to the selected sample of congregants to ascertain their perspectives, expectations, and behaviors concerning the concept of quality within the temple. The primary objective was to gauge parishioners' understanding and experiences of quality-related practices and values within their religious community. This data collection method provided insights into the intersection of faith-based traditions and modern management principles.

The questionnaire, designed to elicit both qualitative and quantitative data, explored various dimensions of quality as it relates to the temple. Participants were asked about their perceptions of existing practices, their expectations for service delivery, and their own contributions to maintaining a high standard of quality within the community. The survey also delved into the perceived compatibility or tension between traditional values and the principles of quality management. By gathering data directly from the congregants, the research aimed to capture the lived realities and diverse perspectives within the temple, providing a nuanced understanding of how quality is perceived and enacted in this specific context. The responses offered a rich tapestry of experiences and opinions, illuminating the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating modern management concepts into a faith-based setting. This approach allowed for a grounded analysis of the practical implications of quality principles within a religious community, moving beyond theoretical frameworks to explore the human dimension of quality implementation.

b. Secondary data collection

Complementing the primary data collection, secondary data were gathered through a comprehensive analysis of existing documentation relevant to the study. This encompassed a review of scholarly works, including books, articles, and theses, addressing similar themes of cultural influence on organizational practices, particularly within religious or community-based settings. This literature review provided a theoretical framework for understanding the broader context of the research and identifying key concepts and methodologies employed in related studies.

Furthermore, a detailed examination of historical records and archival materials pertaining to the Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple was undertaken. This included exploring the temple's historical narratives, official documents, records of congregational activities, and any available materials related to its governance and management practices. This historical analysis provided valuable context for understanding the temple's evolution, its cultural significance within the community, and the interplay between its traditions and contemporary influences. By incorporating both scholarly and historical perspectives, the research aimed to develop a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing quality management principles within this specific ecclesial context. The combination of these secondary data sources allowed for a richer and more nuanced interpretation of the primary data collected through the questionnaire survey.

IV. Results and Discussion

This demographic analysis examines the survey participants' gender and age distribution. The sample aimed for a balanced gender representation. Respondents were

selected based on availability at church services. The age distribution reveals a diverse range of participants, with a notable concentration among working adults and seniors, suggesting potentially greater engagement in church management within these age groups.

4.1 Demographic analysis

This demographic analysis examines the composition of survey respondents, focusing on gender and age distribution. A balanced gender representation was intentionally sought to ensure equitable analysis. Age group representation reveals the distribution of respondents across different life stages, offering insights into potential variations in perspectives and experiences related to the research topic. The following sub-sections detail the findings for gender and age.

a. Breakdown by gender

To ensure a balanced representation and mitigate potential gender-related biases in the analysis, the sample was intentionally structured to include an equal number of male and female participants. This deliberate approach aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and experiences under investigation, avoiding any disproportionate influence from either gender.

b. Age ranges

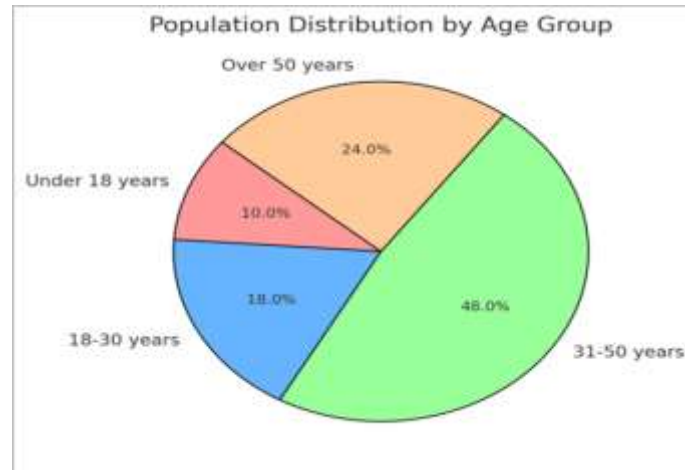
Participants were selected quasi-randomly as they exited worship services, and their distribution across age cohorts is detailed below. The age breakdown offers insights into the demographic profile of those engaging with the concept of quality within the church context. A clear majority of respondents (72%) fall within the working adult (31-50 years) and senior (over 50) age brackets.

This concentration within these more mature demographics suggests a potentially greater level of lived experience and engagement with matters of organizational management, which may be reflected in their perspectives on church administration and quality-related initiatives.

The specific age group distribution is as follows:

- under 18 (10%),
- 18-30 years (18%),
- 31-50 years (48%),
- and over 50 years (24%).

The following figure provides a visual representation of this distribution:



Source: Author

This figure visually depicts the distribution of variable being represented, e.g., respondent age, level of education, opinion on QMS implementation. The graphical representation allows for a clear and concise understanding of the proportions within each category, highlighting trends and patterns within the data. This visualization complements the accompanying textual analysis, providing a valuable overview of the sample's characteristics.

This chart shows the age distribution of the surveyed population. The data indicates a predominantly adult sample, with a significant concentration in the economically active and established age ranges.

4.2 Socio-professional analysis

This socio-professional analysis explores the distribution of respondents across different occupational categories to discern which groups demonstrate the strongest interest in, or engagement with, the concept of quality within the context of this study.

a. Distribution

The distribution of respondents across various employment categories reveals a diverse range of socio-professional backgrounds. Executives comprised 10% of the sample, while non-executive employees and non-executives each constituted 28%. Self-employed individuals represented 20% of the respondents, and entrepreneurs accounted for 12%. Those not currently employed made up 26% of the sample, with a small proportion (4%) categorized as "other."

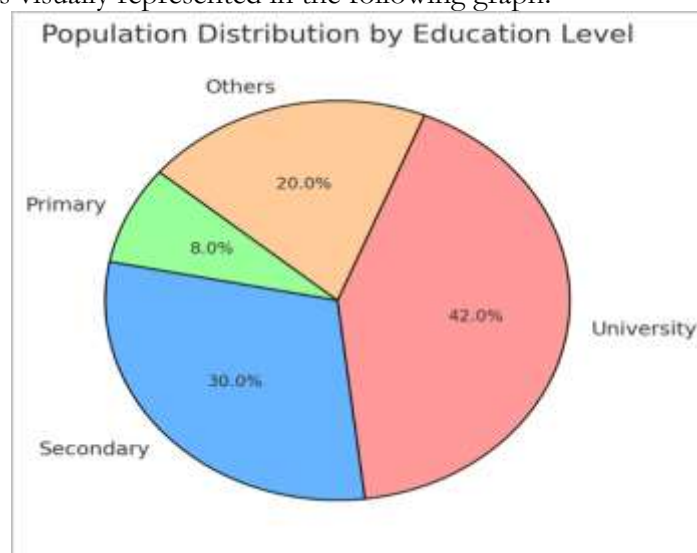
A notable observation is the substantial representation of non-executive employees and the unemployed, collectively comprising 54% of the respondent pool. This suggests a significant engagement with the research topic among individuals in these groups. Conversely, professionals and entrepreneurs, representing a potentially more affluent segment of the population, constituted a smaller proportion of the sample, at 32%. This distribution across employment categories offers valuable context for interpreting the survey results, as socio-professional status can influence perspectives, experiences, and priorities related to the concept of quality within the studied environment. Further analysis will explore the potential correlations between these employment categories and responses to the survey questions.

b. Education level

The educational attainment of survey participants is illustrated below. The distribution reveals that a substantial majority (72%) of respondents have completed at least secondary education, 42% with university degrees and 30% having attained a secondary level of education. Primary education was the lowest level reached by 8%, while 20% of respondents indicated "other" educational backgrounds, which may encompass vocational training, specialized certifications, or other forms of educational experience.

The predominance of respondents with secondary or higher education levels suggests a potential positive correlation with their receptiveness to complex concepts such as quality management. Higher education often fosters critical thinking skills, analytical abilities, and a greater familiarity with abstract ideas and organizational frameworks. This educational background may contribute to a better understanding of the principles and practices underlying quality management, potentially influencing their perceptions, attitudes, and engagement with quality-related initiatives within the context of the study. Further analysis will explore the potential links between educational attainment and specific responses to the survey questions, providing a deeper understanding of how education may influence perspectives on quality within the studied environment.

This distribution is visually represented in the following graph:



Source: Author

This chart illustrates the educational attainment of the surveyed population. The data suggests a relatively high level of formal education within the sample, potentially influencing their perspectives and understanding of the concepts under study.

c. Church Branches

An analysis of the completed questionnaires reveals the distribution of respondents across the principal church branches. The Sampana Lehilahy Kristiana (SLK – Christian Men's Branch) and the Vondrona Fototra Laika (VFL – Lay Basic Group) each represent 22% of the respondents, indicating substantial involvement from these two groups. The Sampana Tanora Kristiana (STK – Young Christian Branch) accounts for 12% of the participants.

These branches, encompassing active young people and adults, constitute the core of the temple's religious and social activities. Their significant representation in the survey underscores the importance of considering their perspectives and experiences when

examining the implementation of quality principles within the church context. The SLK and VFL, likely composed of more established members, may offer valuable insights rooted in their long-term engagement with the church community. The inclusion of the STK, representing younger generations, provides an opportunity to understand how perceptions of quality and related practices may differ across age demographics. This distribution across the church branches allows for a nuanced exploration of how quality initiatives might be tailored to resonate with the diverse groups that comprise the congregation. Further analysis will investigate potential variations in responses across these branches, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the adoption and implementation of quality management within the temple.

4.3 Thematic analysis

The thematic analyses reveal respondents' perceptions of quality and its complex interplay with the prevailing cultural context. These analyses explore how cultural values and traditions influence understandings of quality, highlighting potential areas of alignment and tension in implementing quality-focused initiatives within the specific cultural setting.

a. Knowledge and perception of quality

This survey aims to gauge respondents' understanding and perception of the concept of quality, along with the level of importance they ascribe to it. The data collected will illuminate their familiarity with quality principles and how these principles intersect with their values and experiences.

•Knowledge of the Concept:

While 65% of respondents had heard of the general concept of quality, only 40% demonstrated familiarity with the more specific concept of a Quality Management System. This indicates a general awareness of quality, but a need for targeted educational initiatives to deepen understanding of its practical applications, particularly within a religious context. Further awareness campaigns could effectively disseminate information about quality management principles and their relevance to ecclesial practices.

•Definition of Quality (Open Answers):

Analysis of open-ended responses regarding the definition of quality revealed several recurring terms, including "excellence," "standard," "product," "service," and "merchandise." This suggests that most congregants associate quality with tangible aspects of their daily lives, often related to goods and services. This practical understanding of quality provides a foundation upon which to build a more comprehensive understanding of quality management within the church.

•Importance of Quality in the Church:

A strong consensus emerged among respondents regarding the importance of quality in church management. A significant majority (70%) rated quality as "very important," while 25% considered it "moderately important." Only a small fraction (5%) perceived it as having little or no importance. These findings underscore the widespread recognition of quality's value within the church community, demonstrating a strong foundation for initiatives aimed at enhancing quality in ecclesial practices.

b. Knowledge and perception of culture

•Compatibility between Culture and Quality:

A substantial majority (80%) of respondents believe that traditional Malagasy culture and quality management principles can be effectively harmonized. While this indicates a generally positive outlook on integrating the two, a minority (20%) expressed reservations or doubts about their compatibility, suggesting the need to address potential concerns and perceived tensions.

- Cultural Priorities (Ranking):

When asked to rank cultural priorities, respondents placed "values and paradigms" as the highest priority (50%), followed by "uses and customs" (30%), and then "behaviors and mentalities" (20%).

This prioritization underscores the importance of moral and ethical foundations as a catalyst for positive change. The emphasis on values and paradigms suggests that respondents recognize the need for a fundamental shift in mindset and approach, both within the broader Malagasy society and specifically among the faithful, to effectively embrace and implement quality principles. This highlights the necessity of addressing core beliefs and value systems as a crucial component of any successful transformation initiative.

c. Needs and expectations

While the concept of a Quality Management System (QMS) enjoys considerable popularity, interviewees expressed high expectations for its implementation. However, a gap exists between these expectations and an understanding of the commitment required, particularly regarding the investment in training and personal development necessary for successful QMS adoption.

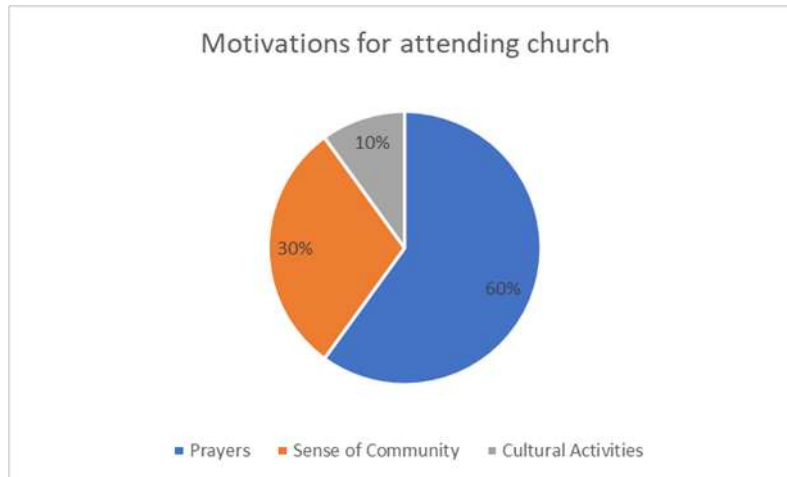
- Priority Areas for Improvement:

Respondents identified several key areas for potential improvement within the church. Awareness-raising and training for both church leaders and lay members emerged as the top priority (35%), followed by financial and infrastructure management (30%). Worship organization was identified as a need by 20% of respondents, while communication was highlighted by 15%. These responses indicate that congregants perceive the greatest need for enhancement in organizational aspects, particularly regarding transparency and accountability in the management of church resources and finances. The spiritual dimension of the church experience, however, appears to be generally viewed as satisfactory.

- Motivations for Church Attendance:

When asked about their primary motivations for attending church, respondents overwhelmingly prioritized prayer (60%). A sense of community was the second most important factor (30%), while cultural activities were considered less influential (10%). These findings suggest that faith and the desire for spiritual connection, along with a sense of belonging and fellowship, are the primary drivers for church attendance. Cultural activities, while present, appear to play a secondary role in motivating congregants to participate in church life.

The following graph visually represents the distribution of motivations for church attendance;



Source: Author

This chart illustrates the primary motivations for church attendance among respondents. The data highlights the strong spiritual focus driving attendance, with community connection also playing a significant role, while cultural aspects are less central to the respondents' decisions to attend church.

d. Acceptance and feasibility

•Importance of Quality in the Church:

Respondents assigned a high average rating of 4.3 out of 5 to the importance of quality within the church. This underscores a strong desire among congregants for improved services and enhanced quality of sermons, highlighting key areas where quality initiatives could be focused.

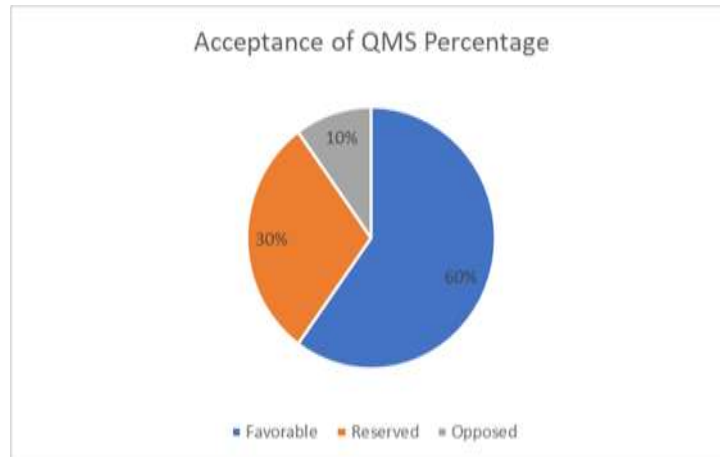
•Main Obstacles Identified:

The principal obstacles identified by respondents as hindering quality improvement include resistance to change (40%), a lack of adequate training (30%), and financial constraints (20%). This combination of cultural and structural resistance necessitates a carefully considered change management strategy. As the Malagasy proverb "Aza miala amin'ny mahazatra" (Don't change from what is familiar) aptly illustrates, addressing ingrained habits and promoting acceptance of new approaches will be crucial for successful implementation.

•Acceptance of a QMS:

While a majority (60%) of respondents expressed a favorable view towards the implementation of a Quality Management System (QMS), a significant proportion (30%) remained reserved, and a small minority (10%) expressed opposition. This apparent paradox—a general welcome coupled with underlying reservations—suggests that while a QMS is broadly accepted in principle, its practical implementation will require careful navigation of existing reservations and potential resistance.

The following graph illustrates that a majority of loyal customers are receptive to the introduction of a QMS.



Source: Author

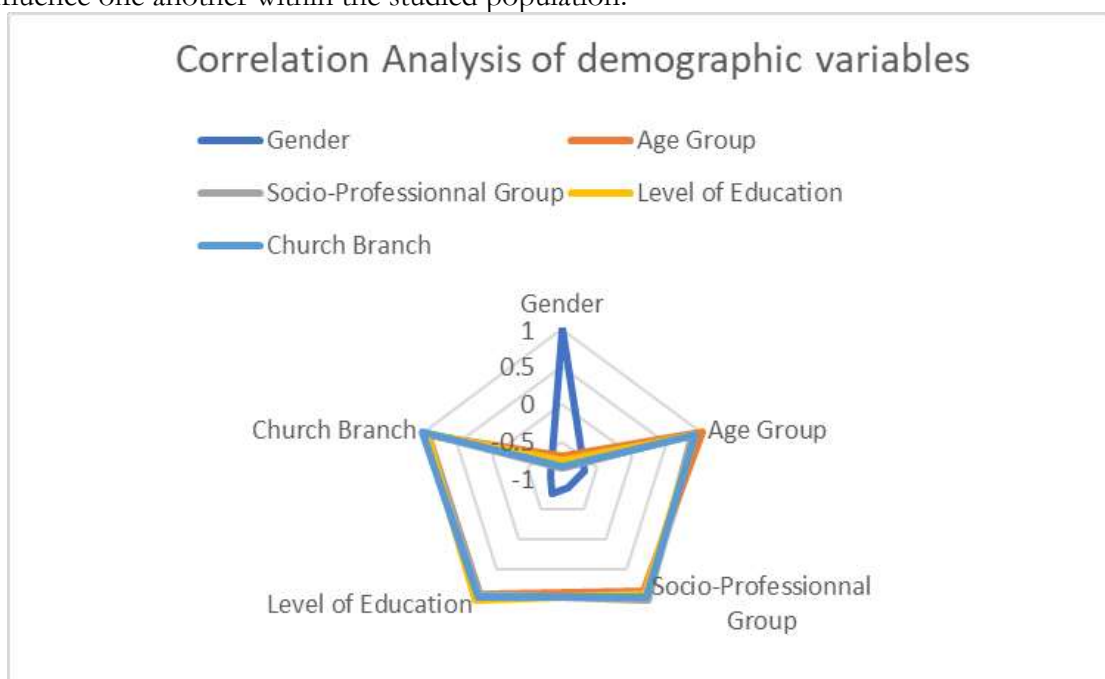
This chart displays the level of acceptance toward a Quality Management System (QMS). The data suggests a generally positive attitude toward QMS, though the significant proportion of reserved individuals indicates a need for further engagement and clarification to ensure broader buy-in.

4.4 Correlation analysis

Correlation analyses were conducted to explore the interdependencies between select variables. These analyses aimed to identify potential relationships and assess the strength and direction of any correlations, providing insights into how the variables may influence one another.

a. Interrelation analysis between demographic variables - SPC

This section presents a correlation analysis between key demographic variables and socio-professional categories (SPC). The correlation graphic below illustrates the relationships between gender, age group, socio-professional category, level of education, and church branch affiliation. Examining these interdependencies provides insights into how these factors may influence one another within the studied population.



Source: Author

Analysis of the correlation graphic between gender, age, occupational category, church branch affiliation, and level of education reveals several key relationships.

- **Age Group and Socio-Professional Group:**

A moderate positive correlation exists between age and socio-professional status, largely attributable to the natural progression of professional development with age. Younger respondents (under 18) are more likely to be classified as "Not Working," while executive and professional categories are more heavily represented in older age brackets.

- **Level of Education and Socio-Professional Group:**

A positive correlation is observed between university education and qualified professional categories, suggesting the influence of education on access to certain types of employment.

- **Age Group and Church Branch:**

A moderate correlation links age and church branch affiliation. Younger individuals (under 30) are more frequently associated with branches like STK (Youth Organization) or SAMPATI (Scouting), while older congregants tend to participate in groups such as Dorkasy, SLK (Christian Men's Branch), or SAFIF, which often cater to adults and seniors.

- **Church Branch and Level of Education:**

A weak correlation exists between church branch affiliation and level of education. Religious branches are generally more strongly associated with age or spiritual role than with educational attainment. However, certain branches, such as SA (Service Branch) or SLK, may include members with university education due to the specific responsibilities within those groups.

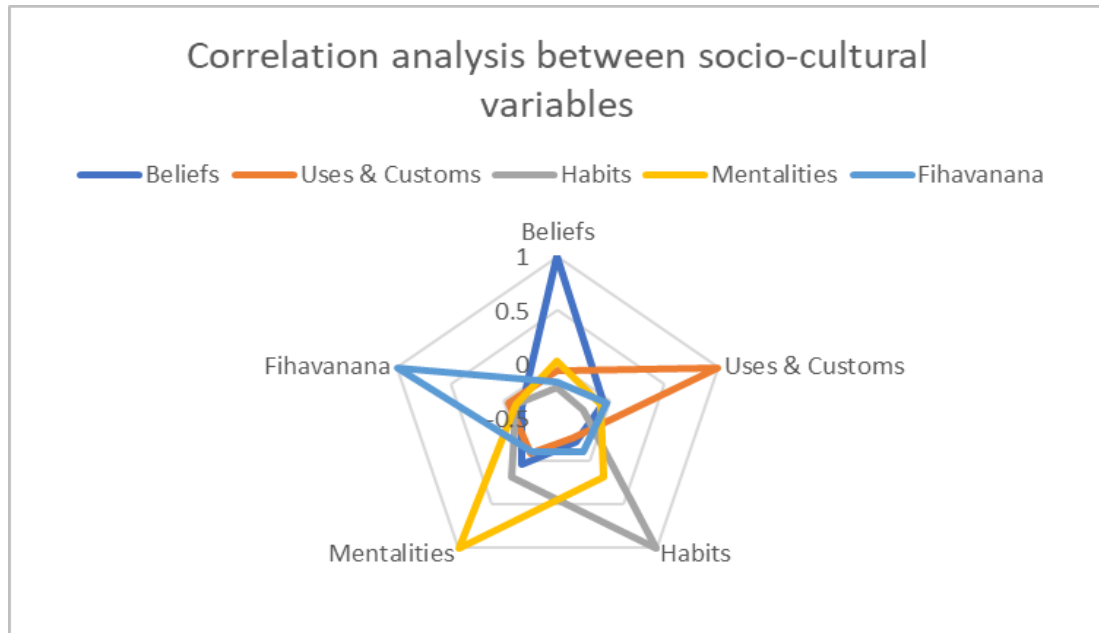
General Observations:

Several general observations can be made from the correlation analysis:

- Correlations in surveys of this nature are often weak, as the explored variables (socio-demographic, educational, religious) are inherently distinct.
- Younger individuals with a university education demonstrate a greater likelihood of adopting a Quality Management System (QMS).

b. Correlation analysis between socio-cultural variables

The following matrix illustrates the levels of correlation between the socio-cultural variables.



Source: Author

Analysis of the correlation matrix between socio-cultural variables reveals several noteworthy trends:

1. **Beliefs and Other Indicators:** Weak or even negative correlations exist between beliefs and other indicators. This suggests that these elements evolve independently, or even in opposition in certain situations. The near-neutral relationship with Mentalities (0.03) indicates minimal direct influence.
2. **Uses and Customs:** The relationship between uses and customs and other indicators suggests that uses and customs may be perceived as constraining or out of step with evolving mentalities and behaviors. A very weak negative correlation with *Fihavanana* (-0.04) implies that they are not necessarily opposed, but neither are they closely linked.
3. **Habits and Mentalities:** The link between habits and mentalities indicates that habits influence mentalities, though not decisively.
4. **Fihavanana and other variables:** The correlative analysis of *Fihavanana* and its integration into the socio-cultural system suggests that *Fihavanana* is not necessarily reinforced by these elements. This implies that other societal dynamics may exert a stronger influence on community solidarity.

General Interpretation:

This graphic reveals a degree of independence between these socio-cultural elements. Strong correlations are absent. Beliefs and customs tend to be slightly misaligned with current habits and mentalities, and *Fihavanana* appears relatively independent of these dimensions.

V. Conclusion

5.1 Deductions from the Analysis

The analyses conducted yield several key deductions:

1. Congregants primarily associate quality with spiritual experience and community, rather than with technical metrics or indicators. This suggests that quality initiatives within the church should prioritize enhancing these core aspects of the religious experience.
2. A degree of apprehension exists regarding excessive formalization, stemming from a perceived risk of "desacralization." This highlights the importance of carefully balancing structure and process with the sacred nature of religious practices.

3. Younger, university-educated individuals demonstrate a greater inclination towards adopting Quality Management Systems (QMS). This suggests that targeting this demographic for initial QMS implementation and training may be a strategic approach.
4. A slight disconnect appears to exist between traditional beliefs and customs and contemporary habits and mentalities. Furthermore, *Fibavanana* seems relatively independent of these dimensions. This underscores the need for culturally sensitive change management strategies that acknowledge and address these nuances.

The principal challenges identified include:

1. Resistance to change, particularly among older generations. Effective strategies for engaging and integrating these members will be essential.
2. A lack of training in modern management concepts for both spiritual and lay leaders, coupled with a general lack of awareness among the faithful. Targeted educational initiatives will be crucial for bridging this knowledge gap.
3. The challenge of reconciling the sacred with the practical. Framing quality management within a context that respects and reinforces the sacred nature of religious practices will be essential.
4. The need to leverage Malagasy cultural values positively in the implementation of a QMS within an ecclesial setting. Identifying and integrating culturally relevant principles will enhance acceptance and effectiveness.

5.2 Identifying gaps and problems

The analyses conducted reveal several key findings, notably the importance of spiritual and communal aspects of quality, apprehension towards excessive formalization, and the influence of education and age on QMS acceptance. These findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive and targeted strategies for quality implementation.

a. Malagasy mentality versus quality culture

Regarding the interplay between mentality and a culture of quality, a primary deficiency lies in the absence of standardized processes for managing church activities, coupled with a limited culture of evaluation. This lack of formalized procedures hinders consistent performance and makes it challenging to identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, a lack of demonstrable will and spiritual leadership to formalize the management system and embrace necessary changes presents a significant obstacle. These factors contribute to a less-than-optimal environment for cultivating a robust quality culture.

Based on these analyses, the initial hypothesis can be refined as follows: Contextualizing quality standards within the specific cultural and operational context of the church would facilitate greater understanding, acceptance, and ultimately, more effective appropriation of quality management principles. Tailoring the standards to align with existing values and practices, while acknowledging the unique challenges and opportunities within the ecclesial setting, is crucial for successful implementation.

b. Challenges, issues, opportunities and threats

The FJKM Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple, its congregants, and its leadership face a complex interplay of challenges, opportunities, and potential threats, as outlined below.:

- **Challenges:**

The FJKM Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple faces several key challenges: maintaining a delicate balance between tradition and innovation; shifting perceptions without

disrupting deeply held traditional values; and effectively training both spiritual and lay leaders in modern management principles while respecting and preserving their distinct spiritual roles.

- **Opportunities:**

Opportunities exist to establish the temple as a model of effective management for other institutions, and to successfully harmonize spiritual values with organizational effectiveness. It's make also sense to emphasize the fact of leveraging the energy and enthusiasm of young people to introduce new practices presents a significant opportunity. Furthermore, strengthening the sense of community and belonging through unifying activities and projects can foster greater engagement and support for the temple's initiatives.

- **Threats:**

Potential threats include resistance to change, particularly from older generations; a perceived loss of authenticity in established practices; and the risk of diminishing trust among loyal members if the pace of transformation is perceived as too rapid or insensitive to their concerns.

5.3 Main recommendations

The ensuing recommendations and proposed actions prioritize a people-centric approach, recognizing that the system itself must be adaptable and responsive to the needs and requirements of its stakeholders. Rather than imposing a rigid framework, the focus will be on empowering individuals, fostering understanding, and facilitating a collaborative process to tailor the system to the specific context and unique needs of the community it serves. This approach emphasizes human factors, engagement, and ownership as crucial elements for successful implementation and long-term sustainability.

a. Training and Awareness

A comprehensive training and awareness program is essential. This should include targeted sessions on quality management principles adapted specifically to the religious context, ensuring relevance and understanding within the church environment. Furthermore, educational sessions should be implemented to explore the crucial role of Malagasy culture in effective church management, fostering a deeper appreciation for the interplay between tradition and contemporary practices.

b. Organizational Strengthening

To enhance organizational effectiveness, clearly defined processes for managing both human and material resources are necessary. This involves establishing transparent and accountable systems for resource allocation, utilization, and oversight. Crucially, a procedures manual should be developed that is not only practical and efficient but also compatible with traditional Malagasy values, ensuring that new processes are integrated seamlessly with existing cultural norms.

c. Communication and Transparency

Open and inclusive communication is paramount. The faithful should be actively involved in discussions regarding planned changes, fostering a sense of ownership and minimizing potential resistance. Strengthening both internal and external communication channels will facilitate the dissemination of information, enhance transparency, and promote dialogue between leadership and congregants.

d. Resistance Management

Addressing potential resistance to change requires a multifaceted approach. Engaging charismatic and respected personalities within the community can be instrumental in securing cultural buy-in and promoting acceptance of new initiatives. The gradual integration of quality elements, prioritizing quick wins and demonstrable successes, can build momentum and demonstrate the tangible benefits of adopting quality management principles.

In essence, the successful adaptation and adoption—meaning both internalization and genuine appropriation—of quality principles within an ecclesial context, and particularly within the Malagasy ecclesial context, necessitates comprehensive understanding and active adherence to these concepts by all stakeholders. Furthermore, these principles must be seamlessly integrated into the very life and practices of the Church. A culturally informed approach to quality, advocating a holistic perspective, can be effectively applied to various facets of church life. This includes ecclesial governance, pastoral activities, the education and spiritual development of the faithful, missiology, and the Church's interaction with the broader society. This holistic application considers both the Church as an organization—with its material, financial, and, most importantly, human resources, upon which its success ultimately depends—and the individual believers, whether practicing or not. It acknowledges their diverse needs and demands, recognizing them first and foremost as complex human beings with interconnected spiritual, physical, and mental dimensions, all interacting dynamically with their environment.

The Malagasy mentality, while deeply valuing community, can sometimes present a challenge to the adoption of standardized systems. However, the successful implementation of a quality culture and a structured system like a Quality Management System (QMS) within a Malagasy ecclesial setting is indeed achievable. Its success hinges on the careful adaptation and reconciliation of cultural and spiritual values with the established rules and principles of quality management. This delicate balance ensures that quality initiatives resonate with the community's core beliefs and practices, fostering acceptance and ownership.

The contextualized integration of quality standards is paramount for promoting greater acceptance and internalization. Within the Malagasy religious environment, this necessitates the active and sustained participation of all stakeholders. This participatory approach empowers the faithful to better appropriate and deeply internalize the concepts and principles of quality management. Targeted training and awareness-raising sessions will be essential in addressing the inherent human reluctance to change, a characteristic particularly relevant within the Malagasy cultural context. By fostering dialogue, promoting understanding, and demonstrating tangible benefits, these initiatives can pave the way for a smoother and more effective integration of quality principles.

Limitations:

This study, like all research endeavors, is subject to certain limitations. The sample size, while providing valuable insights, could be expanded both in terms of the number of participants and its representation across other temples to facilitate comparative analysis and enhance the generalizability of findings. Furthermore, the temple-specific context of this research presents a limitation, as the unique characteristics of the Tranovato Ambatonakanga Temple may make it challenging to extrapolate the results to other religious settings. Finally, a crucial limitation lies in the need for investment in training spiritual leaders and lay members in appropriate quality principles. Without adequate training and support, the successful implementation of any quality management system will be significantly hampered.

Recommendations for Future Research:

Future research could explore several avenues to build upon the findings of this study. Comparative studies with other ecclesiastical structures, both within Madagascar and internationally, or even across different religions, would provide valuable insights into the diverse approaches to quality management in faith-based organizations. Additionally, a deeper anthropological and cultural analysis of the Malagasy mentality, with a particular focus on understanding the mechanisms of cultural resistance to change, would be invaluable. This would allow for the development of more tailored and effective strategies for implementing quality principles in a culturally sensitive manner.

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