Summary

Quality problems are perennial ones for all industries. The crux of the issue is the objectivity versus subjectivity of quality. Some opine that subjectivity is inherent in quality problems, while some take the opposite view. The differences in perceptions and attitudes towards quality have led to the diversity of approaches to quality and quality strategy. Hitherto, most of the studies on quality in building industry focus mainly on the manifestation of defects of end products. This study takes on a different route by looking at quality from the competition viewpoint and the process of formulating quality strategy which will have far-reaching impact on the project management process and the end products.

The prime object of this dissertation is about quality and quality strategy and how it could be employed as a tool to enhance competitive edge in project management. The study concentrates on the strategic rather than operational aspects of quality. Quality strategy is defined as the sustained and coordinated efforts made by a company to achieve long term goals of accomplishing competitive edge by quality. Against this context, the concept of competition and quality strategy is introduced to be an integral part of company’s business strategies. This is a growing trend because competition is becoming more relevant and intense as Singapore market opens to the world in the wake of globalisation and liberalisation of market economy.

The research study began with literature review on theories and practices of quality, quality management, competition and strategy and followed by tracing the quality development in Singapore construction industry. The background research forms the backbone of this study and allows the author to gain deeper insights into different facets of quality, quality problems and quality practices prevalent at the time of research.

The author proposes a quality strategy for development companies to be implemented in corporate and project levels as follows:

A. Corporate Level Quality Strategy
a) Scanning the competitive environment;
b) Setting visions, quality principles and policies for competitive edge;
c) Fostering quality culture and competitive spirit;
d) Continuing education and training on quality and competitiveness;
e) Continuous improvement and innovation as competitive tool.
B. Project Level Quality Strategy
   a) Organizational structure for quality and competitive edge;
   b) Communication for quality and competitive edge;
   c) Effective management and implementation of quality system;
   d) Quality records;
   e) Quality performance review and assessment.

The last chapter of the dissertation contains the findings of case studies of selected development companies in Singapore. The main objective of the case studies is to examine the state of practice of quality and quality strategy in these companies. The case studies involved conducting interviews and gather relevant information from the senior management of the companies. The results of the case studies revealed some commonalities and differences in the practice and formulation of quality strategy. In general, companies formulate quality strategy in accordance with their perception of quality, needs, aspirations and responses to competitive market forces. Quality strategy is therefore not a fixed formula but a carefully crafted one for each company.