

Role of Total Quality Management in Indian Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT: Total Quality Management (TQM) is the latest in a parade of models, recipes, programs, frameworks, and slogans for guiding academic reform. It provides a tool to help ensure this quality. The management in TQM means everyone is the manager of their own responsibilities because everyone in the institution, whatever their status, position or role is. Information and technologies have brought changes in education and has therefore changed the interpretation of the term quality. If we yearn to enhance quality of management Education, the first we need to do is to commit ourselves. It would require effort from one and all to achieve and maintain the desired standards in management education.

KEYWORDS: quality, management, education.

I. INTRODUCTION

‘Quality is about passion and pride.’

Quality is at the top of most agendas and improving quality is probably the most important task facing any institution. We have defined education as a provider of services. Its services include advice, tuition, assessment and guidance to pupils and students, their parents and sponsors. The customers—the stakeholders of the service—are a very diverse group and need identifying. If quality is about meeting and exceeding customer needs and wants, it is important to be clear whose needs and wants we should be satisfying.

Educational (value added to learners) =	The service
The learner	= Primary external customer or client
Parents/ Governors/ employers	= secondary external customer
Labour market/ Government/society	= Tertiary external customer
Teachers/Support staff =	Internal customer

Figure 1 The customers of education

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As an approach, TQM represents a permanent shift in an institution's focus away from short-term expediency to the long-term quality improvement. Constant innovation, improvement and change are stressed, and those institutions that practise it lock into a cycle of continuous improvement. They make a conscious attempt to analyse what they are doing and plan to improve it. To create a continuous improvement culture, managers have to trust their staff and to delegate decisions to the appropriate level to give staff the responsibility to deliver quality within their own sphere.

II. QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND TQM IN EDUCATION

Total quality management (TQM) was first introduced as a business management approach in the post-World War II era when Deming and others successfully re-invented the Japanese economy. Beginning in the early 1980s, American business leaders looked to the philosophy, principles, and TQM tools to improve the economy. More recently, education leaders have begun to recognize the potential for TQM applied to educational organizations. Quality management provides a connection between outcomes and the process by which outcomes are achieved. If, as many people realize, the cause of failures in education is a problem in design, quality management may be regarded as an ideal systemic process for managing change in public education

TQM: from industry to education

TQM is applied in education as in business and industry. In an attempt to define TQM in the educational context, Migratory and Morgan (1993) stated that it is a systematic management of an organization's customer supplier relationships in such a way as to ensure sustainable, steep-slope improvement in quality performance. They argued that TQM should be viewed in a holistic manner. Mokupadhyay (2005) contends that a partisan or fragmented way of looking at quality in any academic sector is neither desirable, nor feasible, for an action in one area sets out a chain of reactions in several other areas of management of an educational institution.

Continuous improvement

TQM is a practical but strategic approach to running an organization that focuses on the needs of its customers and clients. It rejects any outcome other than excellence... It can be thought of as a philosophy of continual improvement only achievable by and through people. As an approach, TQM represents a permanent shift in an institution's focus away from short-term expediency to the long-term quality improvement. Constant innovation, improvement and change are stressed, and those institutions that practise it lock into a cycle of continuous improvement. They make a conscious attempt to analyse what they are doing and plan to improve it. To create a continuous improvement culture, managers have to trust their staff and to delegate decisions to the appropriate level to give staff the responsibility to deliver quality within their own sphere.

Kaizen

TQM is usually accomplished by a series of small-scale incremental projects. The Japanese have a word for this approach to continuous improvement—*kaizen*. This is most easily translated as 'step-by-step improvement'. The philosophy of TQM is large-scale, inspirational and all-embracing, but its practical implementation is small-scale, highly practical and incremental. The essence of kaizen is small projects that seek to build success and confidence, and develop a base for further ventures in improvement. By way of illustration, Joseph Juran talks of 'elephant-sized' and 'bite sized' projects. He argues that the best way to tackle the 'elephant-sized' projects is to divide them up into manageable 'bite-sized' assignments. He recommends assigning one team the task of 'cutting-up the elephant' (Juran, 1989).

Changing cultures

TQM requires a change of culture. This is notoriously difficult to bring about and takes time to implement. It requires a change of attitudes and working methods. Staffs need to understand and live the message if TQM is to make an impact. However, culture change is not only about changing behaviours. It also requires a change in institutional management. Two things are required for staff to produce quality. First, staffs need a suitable environment in which to work. They need the tools of the trade and they need to work with systems and procedures which are simple and which aid them in

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doing their jobs. The environment that surrounds staff has a profound effect on their ability to do their job properly and effectively.

The upside-down organization

The key to a successful TQM culture is an effective internal/external customer-supplier chain. Once the concept has been grasped, it has enormous implications for the organization and the relationships within it. In education it changes the usual set of relationships to one with a clear customer focus. The upside-down organizational focus does not affect the structure of authority in the school or college, and neither does it diminish the essential leadership role of senior managers. In fact, leadership is pivotal to the success of TQM.

Keeping close to the customers

The primary mission of a TQM institution is to meet the needs and wants of its customers. Excellent organizations, both public and private, keep 'close to the customer', in the words of Peters and Waterman (1982), and have an obsession with quality. They recognize that growth and long-term survival come from matching their service to customer needs. Quality must be matched to the expectations and requirements of customers and clients.

Internal customers

The customer focus aspect of TQM does not just involve meeting the requirements of the external customers. Colleagues within the institution are also customers, and rely upon internal services of others to do their job effectively. Everyone working in a school, college or university is both a supplier of services and a customer of others. Each member of staff both gives and receives services. Internal customer relationships are vitally important if an institution is to function efficiently and effectively. The best way of developing the internal customer focus is to help individual members of staff to identify the people to whom they provide services.

The quality of learning

Education is about learning. If TQM is to have relevance in education it needs to address the quality of the learners' experience. Unless it does that, it will not make a substantial contribution to quality in education. In a period when most institutions are being asked to do more with less, it is important that they focus on their prime activity—learning. An educational institution that takes the total quality route must take seriously the issue of learning styles and needs to have strategies for individualization and differentiation in learning. Educational institutions have an obligation to make learners aware of the variety of learning methods available to them.

‘Successful institutions of the future must be as responsive
And fluid as the world around them.’

Edward Sallis

Institutional life-cycle theory

The first stage in the cycle is the birth and formation of the institution. A newly established institution requires a strategy to gain recognition and acceptance. It must establish its niche in the market and find a clientele. The new organization must build a client base and ensure that it is aware of and is in tune with consumer needs, even if it has created those needs in the first place. If the new organization succeeds it passes into the growth and development stage where it will face new and novel challenges. It has to ensure that it can continue to generate the excitement and optimism that is a strong feature of the formation stage. The main problem, however, in the growth stage is how to cope with the pressures built up by the increased demands for its services. This involves communicating the ethos to new staff and will involve considerable induction and in service training.

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QUALITY INSTITUTION	ORDINARY INSTITUTION
Customer focused	Focused on internal needs
Focus on preventing problems	Focus on detecting problems
Invests in people	Is not systematic in its approach to staff development
Has a strategy for quality	Lacks a strategic quality vision
Treats complaints as an opportunity to learn	Treats complaints as a nuisance
Has defined the quality characteristics for all areas of the organization	Is vague about quality standards
Has a quality policy and plan	Has no quality plan
Senior management is leading quality	The management role is seen as one of control
The improvement process involves everybody	Only the management team is involved
A Quality Facilitator leads the improvement process	There is no Quality Facilitator
People are seen to create quality – creativity is encouraged	Procedures and rules are all important
Is clear about roles and responsibilities	Is vague about roles and responsibilities
Has clear evaluation strategies	Has no systematic evaluation strategy
Sees quality as a means to improve customer satisfaction	Sees quality as a means to cut costs
Plans long term	Plans short term
Quality is seen as part of the culture	Quality is seen as another and troublesome initiative
Is developing quality in line with its own strategic imperatives	Is examining quality to meet the demands of external agencies
Has a distinctive mission	Has no distinctive mission

Figure .2 The differences between a quality institution and an ordinary institution

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A Quality System for Education

This encourages shared responsibility and a style that will engender an interactive working environment. He visualizes a leadership style where leaders ‘must walk and talk quality and understand that change happens by degree, not by decree’. Leaders have a pivotal role in guiding teachers and administrators to work for and in concert with their client groups. Spanbauer’s model is one of leadership for empowerment.

His conclusions are:

- Involve teachers and all staff in problem-solving activities, using basic scientific methods and the principles of statistical quality and process control.
- Ask them how they think about things and how projects can be handled rather than telling them how they will happen.
- Share as much management information as possible to help foster their commitment.
- Ask staff which systems and procedures are preventing them from delivering quality to their customers—students, parents, co-workers.
- Understand that the desire for meaningful improvement of teachers is not compatible with a top-down approach to management.
- Rejuvenate professional growth by moving responsibility and control for professional development directly to the teachers and technical workers.
- Implement systematic and continued communication among everyone involved in the school.
- Develop skills in conflict resolution, problem solving and negotiations while displaying greater tolerance for and appreciation of conflict.
- Provide education in quality concepts and subjects such as teambuilding, process management, customer service, communication and leadership.
- Model, by personally exhibiting desired characteristics and spending time walking around, listening to teachers and other customers.
- Learn to be more like a coach and less like a boss.
- Provide autonomy and allow risk taking while being fair and compassionate.
- Engage in the delicate balancing act of ensuring quality to external customers (students, parents, and taxpayers), while at the same time paying attention to the needs of internal customers (teachers, board members, and other co-workers).

The importance of teamwork in education

The application of teamwork has often been limited to curriculum and management functions. To build an effective TQM culture, teamwork needs to be extended and must penetrate and permeate throughout the institution. It needs to be used in a wide range of decision-making and problem-solving situation. It must exist at all levels and across all functions and should include both academic and support staff.

A well-functioning institution should consist of a large number of overlapping teams. Teams should not consist exclusively of academic or support staff. Mixed teams of academic and non-academic support staff have an important role to play.

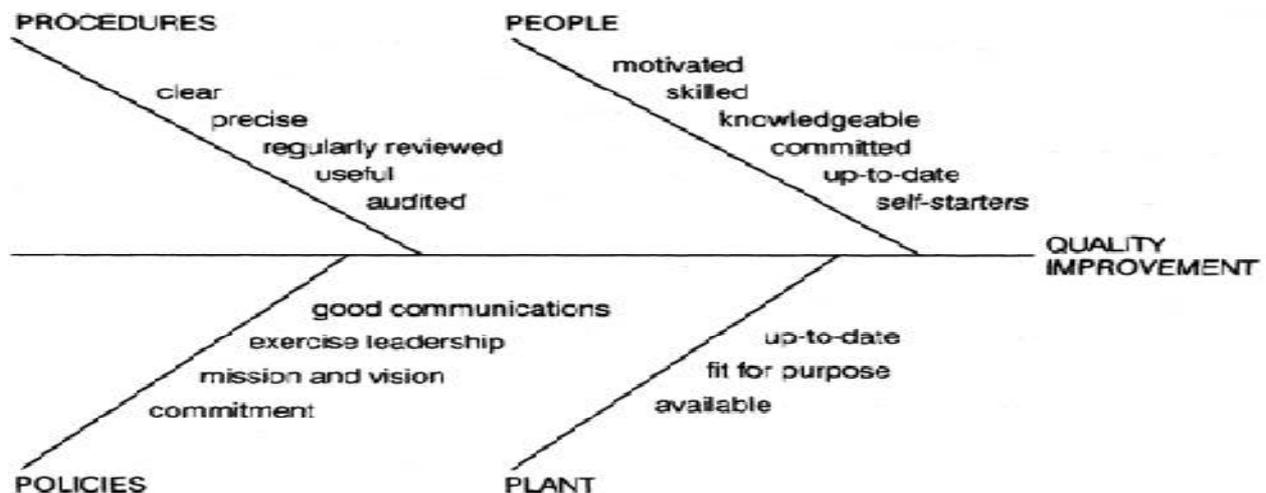


Figure: 3

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The educational travel club

To carry out inter-institutional benchmarking it is often useful to visit other schools to see how they do things. Often thought of as a type of *educational tourism*, it is an important exercise to see how others do things and to learn lessons from them. Of considerable value is being able to visit educational institutions in other countries and to make international comparisons. This is particularly important if your institution has ambitions to become world class. Good sources of information are conferences and seminars, but much good data on other information can be obtained from official sources, annual reports, and inspection reports and from the educational press.

III. CONCLUSION

The total quality management education it can be concluded that in order to provide quality education the amount of efforts needed on the part of the educational institutes is double that needed to be made by the educational system as a whole whereas the efforts needed on the part of the faculties is three times that of the educational system. In spite of the arguments against Tammany educational institutions have achieved positive results from it. A growing number of institutions in India and other developed countries have implemented the process, principle and tools of TQM

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