

Dimensions of Total Quality Management in Higher Education in India

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Abstract

It has now become a major concern among the Public Universities in India to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) to ensure quality of higher education. TQM initiatives include the implementation of ISO 9001:2000, Total Quality Organization and Total Quality Education Models, and more recently the Quality Assurance (QA) exercise. The QA consists of nine criteria and standards, which was imposed by the Ministry of Higher Education India to inculcate the quality culture in India's public universities. This paper presents the concerns and challenges the faculty lives through in implementing the QA system onto the Marketing Program. The most significant concerns are: To Run the Program Effectively - Execution of the QA and ISO 9001:2000 QMS;

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Introduction

Changes in global educational landscape have forced the institutions of higher learning to revolutionize its operation. The imperatives of the conversion are the stringent requirement of the work force environment and increasing in the supply of the quality work force across continent and countries. On top of that, the competitive business environment drove the stakeholders of the educational sector to demand for more reliable, creative, and multi-skilled & knowledge work force.

Other educators regard these measures as manipulative and unbecoming of higher education institutions. However, with changing student needs and societal expectations, increasing competition for scarce clientele, limited resources and unlimited financial pressures, many educators are forced to adopt strategies for making their institutions viable (Yilmaz, 2005). Confronting an era marked by dwindling support and competition, it is incumbent on administrators and higher education leaders of colleges and universities to broadcast who they are, what they do, and what makes them valuable (Anctil, 2008). Furthermore, to be viable in the modern era, today's universities must strike a balance among delivering sound academic programs, conducting and promoting research, and engaging with the community as social institutions and places of higher learning - while also meeting the contemporary challenges of running large organizations with dwindling public support and greater competition from education sectors which are operating for profit (Anctil, 2008). According to the reports of United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) and the World Bank, social and private returns of the higher education are less than those of primary and secondary education. It is estimated that social return of primary education is 25% while that of higher education is only 1%. This has led to the thinking that the returns of higher education are largely private and therefore, subsidy on this should be reduced.

Higher Education

Higher education imparts in-depth knowledge and understanding so as to advance the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life (subject domains). It develops the student ability to question and seek truth and makes him/her competent to critique on contemporary issues. It broadens the intellectual powers of the individual within a narrow specialization, but also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around. According to Ronald Barnett (1992) there are four predominant concepts of higher education.

Higher education as the production of qualified human resources: In this view, higher education is seen as a process in which students are counted as “products” absorbed in labour market. Thus, higher education becomes input to the growth and development of business and industry.

Interestingly, all these four concepts of higher education are not exclusive; rather they are integrated and give an overall picture of higher education. If we look at the activities of colleges and universities, we will realize that teaching, research and extension form the three main functions of higher education.

Role of higher education in the Society

Higher education is generally understood to cover teaching, research and extension. Scientific and technological advancement and economic growth of a country are as dependent on higher education as they are on the working class. Development of indigenous technologies and capabilities in agriculture, food security and other industrial areas are possible because of our world-class higher education infrastructure. Higher education also provides opportunities for lifelong learning, allowing people to upgrade their knowledge and skills from time to time based on societal needs. The Kothari Commission (1966) listed the following roles of the universities (Higher education institutions in the modern society)

1. To seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the pursuit of truth, and to interpret old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new deeds and discoveries;
2. To provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life, to identify gifted youth and help them develop their potential full by cultivating physical fitness, developing the powers of the mind and cultivating right interests, attitudes and moral and intellectual values;
3. To provide the society with competent men and women trained in agriculture, arts, medicine, science and technology and various other professions, who will also be cultivated individuals, imbued with a sense of social purpose;
4. To strive to promote quality and social justice, and to reduce social cultural differences through diffusion of education; and
5. To foster in the teachers and students and through them in the society generally, the attitudes and values needed for developing the “good life” in individuals and society (GOI, 1966, p. 497-8)

Implementing Quality Measures

How the faculty and administration of institute prepare for implanting total Quality management and assessment? How the introduction of quality implantations influences the goals, roles, and mission of an institute? Who are the key players and what are their individual goals and motivations? How will the culture of an institute change in an environment of increasing demand for demonstrable Quality and outcomes? Abdulraheem M. A. Zabadi Submitted on October 15, 2012 44 © Science and Education Centre of North America

(Tewari, 2012) To answer such questions should be available in the institute. Most of the Quality standards for accreditation state that assessment principles are complementary to the institute's mission. Clearly defined mission, goals, and objectives guide faculty, administration, staff, and government bodies in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, programs and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes. These goals and objectives should focus on student learning, other outcomes, and institutional

Quality Management in Higher Education

The principles of quality management were originally developed in the USA in the nineteen-fifties, were adopted with significant worldwide commercial success by the manufacturing sector in Japan in the nineteen-sixties and, as a consequence, were adopted by manufacturers in the USA during the nineteen-seventies and eighties (Sallis, 1996; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Lagrosen, Hashemi and Leitner, 2004; Travers, 2007). Following their success in the manufacturing industries, quality management systems have since been adopted globally across many other sectors including government services, the military, community services, health and education.

The higher education sector at both government and institution level has been progressively introducing quality management systems over the last two decades (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Haug, 2003; Materu, 2007; Brookes and Becket, 2007), most notably in the USA and Europe, but also in the Middle and Near East, Africa, China, South East Asia, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. This has led to a significant level of debate within institutions and between academics on the relevance of such systems to higher education. Opponents have focused on concerns about restrictions to academic freedoms, risk averse processes that may stifle innovation and the emergence of managerialism, or the burgeoning of administrative control, whereas proponents have pointed to the benefits of effective change management, continuous improvement cycles, higher academic standards, increased staff and student satisfaction and forward planning (see the commentaries by Harvey and Green, 1993; Biggs, 2001; Lomas, 2001; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2002; Vidovich, 2002; Hodson and Thomas, 2003; Cruikshank, 2003; Chua, 2004; Vidovich, 2004; Hoecht, 2006; Mizikaci, 2009; Williams, 2009; Reid, 2009).

The debate on whether quality management systems are suitable for higher education providers, in Australia or elsewhere with national regulation of the sector has therefore become moot to the extent that they are here to stay for the foreseeable future. Rather, the central question for

providers is how best to develop such a system (Yorke, 1999; Newman and Courturier, 2002; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Hodson and Thomas, 2003; Cruikshank, 2003; Hoecht, 2006).

Implementing Quality in higher education in India:

Faculty's role

Educational institutes are a system of inter-dependent processes, comprising of collection of highly specialized teaching faculty, linked within a functional hierarchy. Faculty is viewed as a "commodity", employed on the basis of perceived needs of the institute. Though they form the institute's true competitive edge, teachers have very little autonomy, are generally passive contributors, and do nothing beyond what they are told. Every faculty is a process manager, provides students with opportunities for personal growth and presides over the transformation of inputs to outputs of greater value to the institute and to the ultimate customer. Students enjoy and take pride through learning and accomplishment, and hence they are active contributors in the process, and are valued for their creativity and intelligence.

Administrator's role

The institute's administration manages various departments, functions, faculty, and the students, who do not appreciate that they are inter-dependent. They also exercise managerial leadership through participative management in playing their roles as mentors, facilitators, innovators, etc. Quality results from the institute's education management systems. People working in the system cannot do better than the system allows. Problems arise when the individuals, singly as well as jointly, do not do their best. Such a situation could only be prevented when people understand where they fit in and have the knowledge to maximise their contributions to the whole. Administration must create an environment that nurtures a team-oriented culture, which can prevent problems and make continual improvements.

Move towards Quality gaining momentum

The impetus for improving Quality of higher education and scrutiny by the accreditation agencies and the corporate employers is gaining momentum in India. There are many important Quality management tools and techniques, fully tried out in the industry, which could be adopted in the field of education, to diagnose a system and identify potentials for improvement. Now people have started realising that there is no other activity that promises more leverage in the improvement of society than the development of a generation that understands Quality and remains equipped to improve it.

Conclusion

Challenges in higher education are no longer nation centric. They have already attained global dimensions, particularly after trade in services has been brought under the purview of the World Trade Organisation regime and hence the need for implementation of TQM. TQM, hopefully, will help institutes in creating new knowledge, acquiring new capabilities and producing an intelligent human resource pool, through challenging teaching, research and extension activities so as to balance both the need and the demand of higher education.

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