

A TQM Model for Higher Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The primary role of management is to lead an organization in its daily operation and to maintain quality in all aspects. Quality has become an ultimate motto of all the leading organization. Providing high quality is now recognized as a key element for success and a competitive advantage. Quality and profits are closely linked. Successful quality programs are built through the dedication and combined efforts of everyone in the organization. This approach places a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction. The concept of Quality Management was implemented first in manufacturing companies during earlier times. Now it has extended in all sectors of business. The purpose of the paper is to give an insight on the concept of modern quality management, "Total Quality Management" (TQM), and its application in the field of higher education by reviewing literature from various sources. The study helps us to analyze the various contributions of Quality Gurus and its applicability in higher education and to design a TQM model for Higher Education Institutions.

Keywords: *TQM, Quality Management, Service Quality, Higher Education*

Introduction

It is important for management to recognize the different ways that the quality of services can affect the higher educational institutions. Some of the major ways that quality effects on institutions are loss of students, liability, productivity and costs. One way to think about quality is the degree to which performance of a service exceeds customer expectations. Service quality dimensions are tangibles, convenience, reliability, responsiveness, time, assurance and courtesy. Tangibles include the physical appearance of various facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. Convenience includes the availability and accessibility of the service. Responsiveness is the willingness of service providers to help students in all situations and to deal with problems. Time denotes the speed with which service is delivered. Assurance is the knowledge exhibited by personnel who come into contact with a customer and their ability to convey trust and confidence. Courtesy is the way that students are treated by employees of the institutions. TQM is a management philosophy

that seeks to integrate all organizational functions to focus on meeting customer needs and organizational objectives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To conceptualize the basic principles of TQM approach.
2. To assess TQM principles and its applicability in Higher Educational Institutions.
3. To design a TQM model that revolutionizes Higher Educational Institutions.

Methodology

A Qualitative research method has been chosen for the study. Data for this study are collected through extensive literature and other secondary sources.

TQM

According to William J Stevenson, TQM is an approach that involves everyone in an organization in a continual effort to improve quality and achieve customer satisfaction. It is an approach that seeks to make never ending improvements to the process of converting inputs into outputs. According to Witcher, TQM is the combination of three terms—Total: meaning that one is involved, including customer and suppliers; Quality: indicating that customer needs are met exactly; and Management: indicating that senior executives are committed. Oakland expresses TQM as an approach involving the whole organization for understanding each activity of each individual at each management layer. TQM strives to integrate all organizational functions (marketing, finance, design, engineering, and production, customer service, etc.) to focus on meeting customer needs and organizational objectives.

Elements of TQM

TQM is possible only by genuine top management support. Focus groups are group of customers brought together to discuss and evaluate quality with executives and engineers. Continuous improvement is the philosophy that seeks to improve all factors related to the process of converting inputs into outputs on an ongoing basis. It covers equipment, methods, materials and people. Competitive benchmarking involves identifying other organizations that are the best at something and studying how they do it to learn how to improve your operations. It is the practice of establishing internal standards of performance by looking into how world class companies run their business. Employee Empowerment is

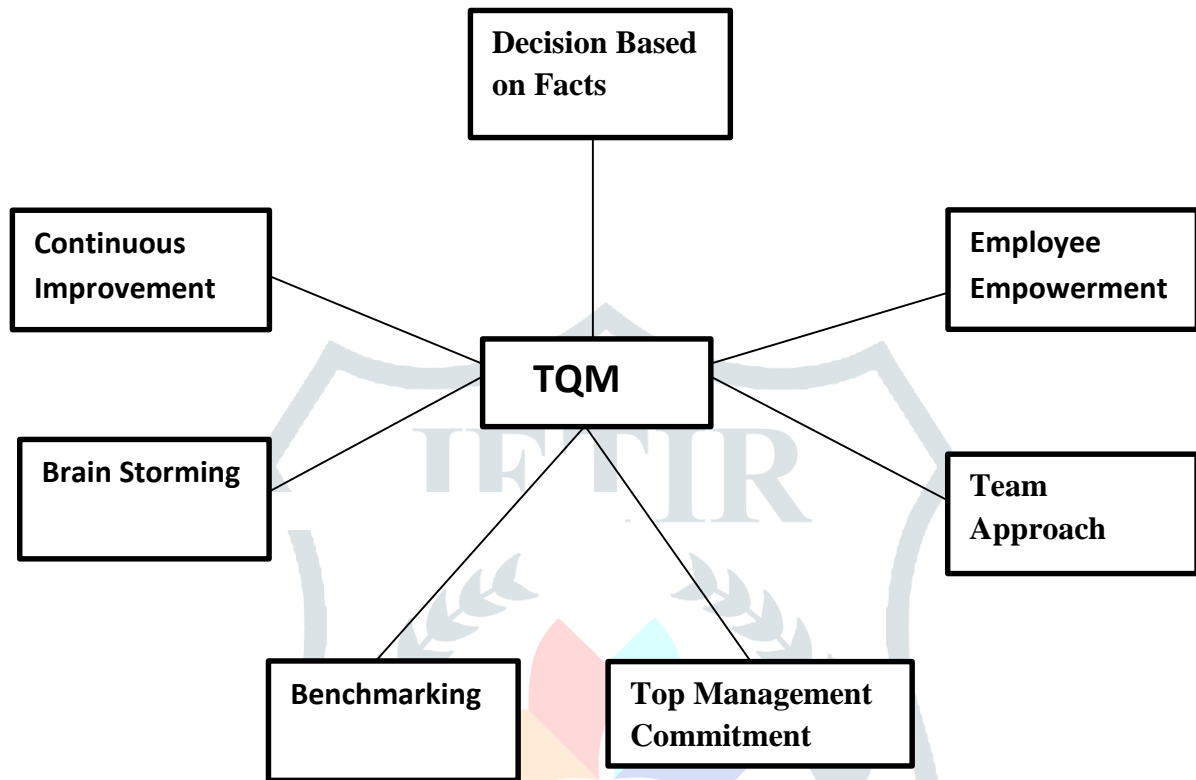
giving employees a certain degree of authority to make changes or to improve the process. Team approach is use of team or group of people for problem solving and team promotes a spirit of cooperation. Decision is based on facts rather than opinions. TQM focus on supplier quality to deliver quality parts and materials in a timely manner. Quality Circle is a small group of employees who meet together regularly to improve or manage quality by bringing innovative and unique solutions to problems.

Application of TQM in Education Sector

In education sector, students are the customers. Approach should involve everyone in the institution organization in a continual effort to improve quality and achieve students satisfaction. It should focus on never ending improvements to the process of converting inputs into outputs. For that Quality circles are to be formed among teaching staff, nonteaching staffs and even in administration level. A quality circle consists of small groups of people that meet on a regular basis to discuss problems to seek solutions and to cooperate with management in the implementation of those solutions. Structured brainstorming can be adopted in to generate ideas on identifying problems, finding causes and ways to implement solutions in all levels of management and even among students. Idea can be generated from Research and development, students, competitors, and from employees including teaching and non teaching staffs. Interviewing is another technique can be used to identify the problems or collect information about a problem. Benchmarking is another approach that can be implemented in education field. In this approach, performance of an institution can be compared against the best in same industry. Quality can be improved by identifying a critical process that needs improvement and identify an organisation that excels in the process, study the benchmark activity and analyse the data and improving the critical process in an institution. Continous improvement is another approach that can be applied in Educational institutions. It seeks to make never ending improvements in all the factors related with education. All the employees are to be empowered to take decisions in critical situations. Team approach can be applied in higher educational institutions. Working in team enhance the spirit of unity among employees and among students too. It also examines leadership system and policies internally that would impact staff and students and public responsibilities establishing partnerships with industry parents and general community externally. Improvements in leadership effectiveness could be achieved through a participative management style that includes inputs from a comprehensive 360 degree feedback system from these internal and external stakeholders. Quality can be improved only with the support of top management. Benchmarking is another element which can be included in TQM model. It allows educational institutions to identify the best in class, learn the various process and implement the best practices. All the educational institutions need sophisticated

infrastructure, well qualified teaching staff, well qualified management to make TQM implementation success.

TQM model for Higher Education



The elements of TQM for educational institutions are top level management commitment, benchmarking, brainstorming, continuous improvement, employee empowerment, team based approach, decision based on facts. By incorporating all these elements in Quality Programs, Higher Educational Institutions can revolutionize the existing system and meet their customer expectations and organizational objectives.

Conclusion

Quality should be the essence of the education system. We should pay attention to quality education at Higher Educational Institutions. Without total quality management, we cannot transform our society into knowledge society. Without improvement and efficiency in education system it will be difficult for India to move ahead in shoulder to shoulder with other countries. There is a need of implementing TQM in Higher Educational Institutions which can solve many problems in all levels because the success of educational institutions depends on the Quality of Education. Studies have been proved that students satisfaction depends on the quality of Education as well the system. So institutions should take necessary steps to find out the problems at all levels and come up with feasible solution and should

improve continually to meet the students exceeding expectations and thereby making institution a successful one.

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