Total Quality Management as a Competitive Advantage in Higher Educational Institutions

Dr. S. Edwin Christopher
Principal, New Horizon College, Kasturinagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Abstract: Education is just not school, college or universities but a place of learning in which every individual involved with is infused with knowledge and the individual is updated with every aspect of information required for better understanding of concepts, subjects, context and as well the lessons of life for better individual living and societal living.

Quality in education is the much spoken entity in today’s world. Educational Institutions are mushrooming across the world and all the players in the society are eyeing on competitive edge as who is the best and who is doing good in the field is talk of the day. Hence for the survival of the educational institutions irrespective to what level they impart education, quality matters.

Higher educational institutions are the most targeted and do have the dire necessity of enabling the qualitative approach for their wellbeing in the competitive world wherein major players from within and outside the geographical boundary have their say in the field.

Just quality does not hold good for sustainment in the longer run for educational institutions as they are not dealing with non living beings but the living ones and hence the concept of quality should be in total and the totality of the aspects need to be taken care.

Therefore, it is said and experienced that quality in education should be in total and thus total quality management becomes the most important competitive edge over other factors in the field and the rate of success and the percentage of the success factor also depends on the success rate of implementing total quality management in higher educational institutions as these are the one that would make an impact on society through their deeds, actions, thoughts, ideas, creativity, initiatives and so on.

Key Words: Total Quality Management, Higher Educational Institutions, Quality education

1. Introduction

Higher Educational Institutions across the country has undergone drastic changes being incorporated at every level of their incubation and are anticipating to undergo and implement changes in their day to day well being and existence.

In the context of diversification and enabling sustainable growth in the Higher Educational System, the society in general is very much concerned about the quality of programmes offered to students in these higher educational institutions. As a result of these, lots of comparisons are being drawn within the education sector and outside the sector, with public assessment playing a major role in the present day.

Quality in education is the password for success in the education sector irrespective of level of in education being delivered and any compromise on the term quality is taken very seriously by every stakeholder, well-wisher, promoter, educator, regulatory bodies and all those concerned with the field.

In today’s scenario, management in educational sector is after the concept of Total Quality Management in every aspect of education and is striving hard to look at total quality is the one and only option in the system of learning and imparting knowledge left for one’s survival.

It is found that Total Quality Management is a comprehensive and structured approach in the management of educational institutions that would seek to improve their approach towards delivering quality in their process of delivering education and disseminating knowledge.

The process of bringing total quality management is an ongoing process of refining the entire mechanism of delivery system and receiving system in education with continuous monitoring and continuous evaluation of what is been delivered and received in the process of learning and educating individuals.

Total Quality Management was earlier related to only production oriented units around the world and slowly it created an impact on the services sector to adhere and deliver quality as it matters the most even with their services rendered. Educational services
sector was not left behind in this scenario and educational field is one of the major players in the services sector. Ever since the growth and requirement of education has gone far beyond ones imagination the importance of quality also has dwindled and as such they are given their place at every level and process.

Practicing Total Quality Management in Higher Educational Institutions is no doubt an undue advantage for learner, educator, promoter, regulatory body and as well the statutory requirement as these not only improve the individual within the Institution but also enables the society, the people and the country to reach much higher standards of approach and deliver the expected beyond ones expectations.

2. Definition of Quality
The definition of quality teaching depends on the meaning of a “quality a multi layered and complex word. As Briggs (2001) points out “Quality can be defined as an outcome, a property or a process”.

It is seen that as many number of authors exist on the subject, there exist that many number of definitions on the subject Quality. Hau (1996) says that “quality in higher education and quality teaching in particular, springs from, a never ending process of reduction and elimination of defects”.

Argyris and Schon (1974) believe that “quality is driven by the inquest “Are we doing things right? and by the next question “Are we doing the right things”?

3. Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management that seeks to improve the quality of products and services through ongoing refinements in response to continuous feedback.

A core definition of total quality management (TQM) describes a management approach to long-term success through customer satisfaction. In a TQM effort, all members of an organization participate in improving processes, products, services, and the culture in which they work.

The methods for implementing this approach come from the teachings of such quality leaders as Philip B. Crosby, W. Edwards Deming, Armand V. Feigenbaum, Kaoru Ishikawa, and Joseph M. Juran. Total Quality Management is defined as a system of management based on the principle that every member of staff must be committed in maintaining high standards of work in every aspect of an organisation.

A holistic approach to long-term success that views continuous improvement in all aspects of an organization, as a process and not as a short-term goal. It aims to radically transform the organization through progressive changes in the attitudes, practices, structures and systems.

Total quality management transcends the product quality approach, involves everyone in the organization, and encompasses its every function: administration, communication, distribution, manufacturing, marketing, planning, training, etc.

4. History and Evolution of Total Quality Management (TQM)

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, quality control did not exist as we can see today. However, some activities of quality control were carried out informally at workshop level. Quality Control started to develop and spanned in the twentieth century. JC Penney was the first person who presented the importance of Total Quality Management (TQM) in 1913 when he proposed principles such as "customer satisfaction", "quality", "fairness", "value", "related training" and "rewards for performance" play an important role in an organization. Moreover, in the early 1900s, "father of scientific management", Fredrick W. Taylor, also suggested other quality principles.

Total Quality Management is a revolutionary approach even to this day and more so it is described as the Japanese style of functioning in management approach towards establishing quality. This was initially practiced in the command of Naval Air Systems that would describe the Japanese approach towards quality improvement in their management style of functioning. The theories of Total Quality Management is drawn from various subject knowledge of behavioural sciences, the analysis of quantitative and non quantitative data application, the theories of buying and selling in the market arena and the demand and supply of products and services etc.,
## Time Line of Total Quality Management in the World of Corporate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Line</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1920s - 1929</strong></td>
<td>Seeds of Quality Management was planted through the principles of Scientific Management. The process from planning to execution and evaluation is carried out with every one's involvement. Hawthorne study showed that individual participating in the organisation process delivers good results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1930 - 1949</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Walter Shewhart developed statistical methods to measure quality and used the statistical technique to control the mechanism of quality. Mr. W Edwards Deming developed and taught methods for statistical analysis and controlling the quality of work through regular process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1950 -1967</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Joesph M Juran taught concepts of controlling quality and made a managerial breakthrough. Mr. Armand V Feigenbaum book on Total Quality Control was the forerunner for the present understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1968 - 2000</strong></td>
<td>The Japanese model of Quality Control is widely accepted worldwide as companies quality control. Kaoru Ishikawa synthesis of philosophy contributed towards Japan's ascendancy as a quality leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2001 &amp; Beyond</strong></td>
<td>TQM is the name for the philosophy of a broad and systematic approach to managing organizational quality. Quality output and standards set in like ISO 2000, 9001 etc are quality award programmes like Deming Prize and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award specify principles and processes that comprise TQM.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Certified Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence Handbook

### 5. Why TQM approach

There is always a question as Why TQM?

The same cannot be answered within a word or a sentence as there are lot many reasons as to why they need to consider implementing TQM and the main approach towards making it very firm in the system and the reasons for the same is cited below.

- The organisation would benefit from

  - It aids in anticipating competitive advantage by striving for quality improvement continuously.
  - TQM reduces the turbulence caused as a result of new technology being put in place.
  - TQM provides the effective impulse that an organization needs to provide that would diffuse frustrations and capitalize on the positive energy of its workforce.

  - TQM provides a work atmosphere that nurtures good work ethics and allow workers to achieve their full potentiality as workers and as well as human beings.

The most important elements that rule the Total Quality Management in an Institution is highlighted below.

### 5.1 Vision and Mission of the Institution

The Institution is guided by the framework of the vision and mission that would provide the Institution the belief and values to further their cause of existence in the society. The Institutions vision and mission should be written down in the simplest format, to be accurate and also well versed with its thoughts so that when it is communicated to all those concerned in the Institution that would lead them to achieve the desired purpose.
5.2 Excellent Communication

Total Quality Management mandatorily requires the Institution to be very specific and precise in their communication and it is mandatorily necessary for all in the Institution to communicate well and ensure that communication is perfect to reach the recipients in order to execute, support, facilitate, negotiate and participate in the whole process for the welfare of the individual and as well as the Institution.

5.3 Resistance Removal

Every change in the Institution is inevitable and every change is easily resisted than practiced and implemented in their day to day activities. The resistance to change itself will bring in lot of chaos among individuals acting as changing agent and also towards people who would like to see that these changes are implemented in total.

Total Quality Management is the expanded version of overcoming resistance and for natural expansion of various efforts put in the Institution that would support and facilitate the smooth execution of the task so that effective and efficient working of the Institution would take place.

5.4 Continuous Evaluation

Every Institution aspires with consistency at work and looks for continuous growth in their domain with improvements taking place at every stage. In this scenario, feedback is one of the major tool to look at work evaluation and continuous feedback on work executed is the most important corrective tool that would enable not only corrective measures in actions but also initiate suitable orientation to be better at work and also achieve the desired results.

5.5 Continual Improvement

Individuals have talents and skills and it is upto the Institution to look at these talented ones and hint them for pruning their learning skills so that the process of continuous improvement will be easier to manage and there by every individual’s skills and talents are put to use.

The Kaizen approach towards work culture fits in hand in hand with the team building approach and as such the quality circles, brain storming on quality initiatives, zero defect process and approach would all play a very dominant and punitive role in enabling things to be perfect in the organisation.

5.6 Stake Holders Relationship Management

Institutions become successful only if they are looking after their stake holders well and ensure that every stake holder of the Institution take all the aspects of its functioning as good and well versed with results that needs to be projected.

An Institution just does not succeed only with the success rate of convincing the stake holders but also with the number of error free procedures adopted and the results of the same would be much high when only compared with number of satisfied stake holders in the organisation.

An Institution will succeed when total quality management approach is followed to improve on the results of the relationship between stake holders satisfaction, suppliers satisfaction, parents satisfaction, teachers satisfaction and overall the entire society should benefit.

5.7 Employee Empowerment

In Total Quality Management, empowering the employee is one of the highest potentials enabling the employee individual to reach their zenith. An Institution that is focused on empowerment would also portray the message that the management of the Institution is in place to assist and enable every employee individual of the Institution to overcome their routine problems, unusual bottlenecks and road blocks for growth and would also enable to suffice any other requirement in this regard.

5.8 Training and Development

Is one of the key elements in total quality management to bring in quality at work and thereby increase the quality of output. Fine tuning of all the available human resources through training and development is to make use of them in the best possible way and in the most appropriate way with cost effective principles.

The core competency level of the individual employees of an Institution would require strategic approach towards enabling them for perfection and in order to improve their competency skills for them to be more effective and efficient at work.

Thus all these areas are crucial and important towards enabling the Institution to receive its benefits for achieving Total Quality Management without which the sustainability of the Institution would be difficult.
6. Implementing Total Quality Management in Educational Institutions

Total Quality Management was basically started for the manufacturing industry and those in the areas of production and services by an American W. Edwards Deming after the close of IIInd world war.

The concept of TQM gained momentum only when the Japanese adopted in their organisation during 1950 to revive their dying business units, industries and services sector during the post war period and only then the whole world of corporate started looking at Total Quality Management with open arms.

As the concept gained momentum in all these phases of manufacturing and services sector TQM being applied in the field of Education was not over looked and hence many educators believed that Deming’s approach to TQM becomes the guiding principles for educational reforms.

However, the implementation of TQM in educational Institutions would depend on the size of the Institution, the complexity of the programmes, the Institutional culture and the style of management. In view of these complex situations the success rate of the Institutions in implementing TQM would be based on the high approach of participation.

Thus it is found that Total Quality Management that is proposed and implemented in Educational Institutions today is much larger than what we would normally think and understand.


The Top Level Management / Chairman / President of the Institution should be the core leader of quality and should have imbibed the Institutional value system with communication about his value, adopting quality, the communicative value and the works developed to commit throughout to adhere, follow and practice the Total Quality Management at every level of application.

Further, the Top Level Management / Chairman / President promotes the value through frequent symbolic and substantive actions.

Would educate the administrators, academic deans and then bring in the stake holders orientation in the field of management and make the team more receptive towards participating in all the activities of the management.

Identify the needs of the students and also set the performance objectives in the TQM of the Institution.

To train and delegate compatible individuals to provide technical assistance to the rest of the human resources of the Institution and train faculty, staff and employees in appropriate statistical techniques, process analysis, decision making, and student orientation.

Formulate Internal Quality Assurance team and seek continual improvement in the process and identify individual employee quality output and reward them suitably as quality champions and enable others to follow suit.

Making delegation of authority compulsory and enable every individual to owe the authority and responsibility without fail.

Develop performance measurement systems to continuously monitor the progress of the Institution; the measurement should focus on the stakeholders’ needs and their level of satisfaction.

To incorporate reward systems for practicing TQM and achieving the desirable results in the span of time during which the evaluation takes place.

Continue the good work of quality in the Institution and reduce the resistance to change and bring in quality at work and enable the management to focus on the reality of bringing in quality output every time and all the time.

8. Why Total Quality Management in Educational Institution

Management, the Principal, Administrators, the teaching community and various other heads of academics in the Institution should definitely think about quality in teaching and achieving Total Quality Management in every aspect of individual’s task, the following aspects need to be taken care.

8.1 Competitive World

Education sector has undergone sea changes in their setup, functioning and administration. The field has opened up to the global market and its just not the domestic players in the field but also the global trend setters are competing in the field without any binding of geography, culture, region etc. The existence in the field has become very tough to survive and its found that only those who deliver quality services in the field are able to sustain.
8.2 Satisfied Stake Holders

Educational Institutions are promoted by individuals, groups, corporate, state agencies, group of promoters etc., who claim the management of these Institutions and do take the overall responsibility in its day to day functioning and delivery of education.

Apart from the promoters who invest and look forward to returns on their investment there are other stake holders like students, parents who always look for getting value towards their investment of money and time. These stake holders expect that only Total Quality Initiatives taken in the Institution would provide the requisite output without any compromise on quality. Hence the relevance of the course, the employable skill set being taught and continual effort towards progressive results would lead an individual to be lead in the right direction.

8.3 Acceptable Standards

Standards are the measuring tools against which a task is measured for its output and compared to find the missing aspects or the lacunae in the output, when expected output for a given task has not been achieved.

When the output is comparatively measured against the standards determined, it make sense for every individual involved in the Institution to adhere and always provide the standard output for the long sustenance of the Institution. Hence it is said that continual effort to maintain the standards would be possible only when the Institution adheres to application of quality.

8.4 Accountability

Institutions functioning on day to day task have accountability and this comes with the responsibility given to an individual along with authority that is instituted with them in order to execute the job in the most appropriate way.

Hence it is found that quality of work at every level and place would ensure sincere accountability of the individual executing the task in the Institution. This would also ensure that the funds that are sourced for appropriate investment in the Institution are done through correct decisions and this mechanism of monitoring can also be called as Quality Monitoring Mechanism.

8.5 Improve Employees Morale and Motivation

The Institution needs to build the employee morale and motivate them to do their best and it is proved that a motivated employee would give their 100 percent to the Institution while an individual who’s morale is weak and not motivated would not match the output of those whose morale is high and motivated.

Thus it is found that when quality is in place and every employee involved with application of quality in their day to day task would definitely be systematic and would be complementing with each other in their service domain and lead others to high morale and motivation.

8.6 Credibility, Prestige and Status

Institutions that are concerned about quality in their existence and do their quality job continuously with consistency will lead to practice perfection, status building and building value. Hence creating credibility among the employees and instituting to work with quality leads to enhancing brand value for the employee and the Institution in the society at large.

8.7 Brand Image and focus

Institutions that practice quality initiatives in all their task and are oriented towards quality task and output would attract better prospective employees, stake holders, garner support system from within and outside and would become easy for passing out students to gain employability amidst stiff and stern competition from others.

9. Advantages of Implementing Total Quality Management

Every management would like to see what would be their benefit by implementing Total Quality Management in their Institution and what would be their financial implications if any, to the organisation either in terms of cost saving which is considered as profit or the accrual of profit over investment made.

The advantages of the Institution in adhering to the Quality Initiative would be cited below.

- Able to succeed the stiff competition in the field and to sustain the competitive advantage leveraged to the Institution through practice of Total Quality Management.
- Adaptability to changing or emerging market conditions and to environmental and other government regulations
- TQM has ensured that higher productivity status is being bagged due to precise process, definite procedures, low incidence of failures and systematic approach towards the entire task concerned.
- Practice of TQM ensures that the image of the Institution is enhanced and everyone in the field would look at the Institution, as the process and practice in TQM ensures zero defect output and the same is friendly for all the employees of the Institution and the stake holders.
Elimination of defects and waste in the process of TQM application emerges the most crucial and most important practice in the process and this not only cut savings but also increases the margin of profits.

Total Quality Management ensures that cost is reduced and the cost cutting factors are found, understood and the entire process of the same not only enhances the quality of the output, but also ensures that it’s done at lower cost with enhanced productivity.

Total Quality Management practiced in the Institution ensures lot many positive features and enhances the satisfaction level of the stake holders and ensures that every aspect of the quality management is taken care to reduce the risk of failures and as well keep the risk of higher cost at bay.

Total Quality Management will showcase that improved customer focus and satisfaction would lead to the achievement of the following.

- Enhanced customer loyalty and retention
- Increased job security
- Improved employee morale
- Enhanced shareholder and stakeholder value
- Improved and innovative processes

10. Conclusion

It is said that silence is a power tool to signify a message than what is outspoken loudly for people to listen and hear. Thus it can be said and summarized that Total Quality Management is a system of comprehensive authority to ensure that every aspect of the task being executed in the Institution is well adjudicated and executed.

Here, it should be made note that Total Quality Management is student focused in educational Institutions that would make all their employees to continually strive for improvement using strategy, application data and communication to integrate the quality discipline, the applicable discipline and culture to ensure the smooth functioning of the Institution.

In order to achieve the overall welfare of the Institutions and as well of the stake holders of the Institution in addition to the implementation of the Total Quality Management every employee in the Institution should possess patience, participatory management with well trained and educated partners, understanding and believing in principles of Total Quality Management.

Some of the personnel committed towards Total Quality Management should also lay their hand on leadership management, interpersonal communication, problem solving techniques and methods along with being creative and cooperative in the implementation of Total Quality Management in Educational Institutions.

References

3. asq.org/learn-about-quality/total-quality-management/.../overview.html
4. searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/Total-Quality-Management
8. ecocostsvalue.com/EVR/model/theory/3-garvin.html