

Requirements of total quality management application in higher Education institutions

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Abstract:

This study aims to highlight the importance of total quality in higher education to enhance the outcomes, which are a crucial element in the inputs of the job market. This is achieved by discussing the concept and significance that higher education can achieve through the application of this approach and its implementation stages. The process requires the existence of specific requirements, and the study also aims to showcase various obstacles that hinder total quality management in higher education and possible solutions to avoid or eliminate these obstacles.

One of the obstacles to the implementation of total quality management in higher education is the conflicting demands of beneficiaries, hindering the establishment of a unified vision to respond to their needs and desires. The centralization in formulating policies and making decisions is not compatible with the foundations of quality control in universities. Additionally, the shortage of educational experts in the field of total quality management is a challenge.

Some of the suggested solutions to eliminate or avoid obstacles in the application of total quality management in higher education include incorporating total quality management concepts as a specialized subject within the education curriculum across all disciplines and rewarding creativity and innovation related to ways that deviate from or alleviate organizational rigidity and transparency, in addition to measuring the effectiveness of college programs.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Higher Education, Establishment, Universities, College programs.

Introduction:

Many countries have recognized the significance of higher education in meeting societal needs and fulfilling the requirements of sustainable development over the last decade of the past century. This realization has necessitated the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the field of higher education. Numerous universities worldwide have benefited from implementing this approach, bringing about radical

changes in the educational system, encompassing thoughts, behaviors, values, organizational beliefs, prevailing administrative concepts, and established patterns. The objective is to satisfy the demands of the job market with qualified human resources, ensuring the institutions' survival and competitiveness, enhancing their ability to confront contemporary challenges, and keeping pace with technological advancements in all fields.

In this context, the primary question arises: How is Total Quality Management applied in higher education institutions, and what are the various obstacles and proposals for its implementation?

To address the main question, we have covered the following key points:

- Fundamentals of Total Quality Management in Higher Education.
- Stages and Requirements of Applying Total Quality Management in Higher Education.
- Obstacles and Proposals for Applying Total Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions.

I. Fundamentals of Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

Through this axis, we aim to understand the importance of Total Quality Management in higher education. Before delving into that, we will explore the essence of Total Quality Management.

1. Concept of Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

There are numerous definitions of Total Quality Management in higher education, with some of the most important ones being:

- It is an integrated strategy for continuous development, making every element of the university system responsible, including books, students, professors, buildings, laboratories, computers, and others. Everyone, from administrative leaders to professors, must contribute to organizational success and achieve the university's goals. Any dysfunction will affect development opportunities and competitiveness.
- It is a process consisting of three managerial processes: quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement.
- It is a set of activities and processes that must be realized in all dimensions of the educational system. This involves everyone in the organization, all processes, and

available resources to achieve high-level educational outcomes capable of increasing production.

Based on the above definitions, Total Quality Management in higher education can be described as a strategy comprising a set of activities and processes aimed at improving performance.³

Based on the previous definitions, it can be stated that Total Quality Management in higher education institutions is a strategy consisting of a set of activities and processes aimed at elevating performance levels comprehensively.

2.Importance of Total Quality Management in Higher Education :

In order to enhance the educational process, keep pace with modern systems, and address challenges faced by educational and scientific processes as a whole, adopting approaches from productive and economic fields has become essential for achieving better education. One of the prominent contemporary approaches is Total Quality Management (TQM)⁴. The importance of Total Quality Management in higher education can be outlined as follows⁵:

-Studying Community Requirements and Individual Needs:

TQM allows educational institutions to study the requirements of the community and the needs of individuals, aligning educational programs accordingly.

-Efficient and Cost-Effective Operations:

Implementing TQM ensures correct and efficient operations in the least amount of time and at the lowest cost, contributing to overall efficiency.

-Cultivating Values Related to Teamwork:

TQM contributes to the development of values related to teamwork and collaborative efforts, fostering a sense of collective responsibility.

-Satisfying Learners' Needs and Increasing Satisfaction:

Meeting learners' needs and enhancing the satisfaction of all educational institution stakeholders is a key focus of TQM.

-Enhancing the Institution's Reputation:

TQM aims to improve the institution's reputation among teachers, students, and the local community, fostering competition and initiative among various educational institutions.

-Building Trust and Strengthening Affiliation:

TQM helps build trust among the staff of the educational institution as a whole, strengthening their affiliation to the institution.

-Achieving Material Gains and Qualitative Experiences:

Implementation of TQM can lead to material gains and qualitative experiences for the staff and the local community, with the benefits being utilized for overall societal development.

By emphasizing these aspects, Total Quality Management becomes a pivotal strategy for continuous improvement and advancement in higher education.

II. Stages of Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

In the pursuit of achieving Total Quality Management in higher education, there are essential stages and steps to ensure the completeness of this process. These stages are represented by the following steps:

1. Stages of Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

The steps of Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education institutions are represented by the following stages:

-Convincing and Adoption Stage:

Initiate training programs for top leadership to understand the concept and importance of Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education, emphasizing its significance and philosophy⁶.

-Planning Stage:

Development of Detailed Plans : Detailed plans for execution are established, outlining the permanent structure and necessary resources for implementing the quality system⁷.

-Evaluation Stage:

Exploration of Challenges : The evaluation starts by posing critical questions to explore challenges, and through answering them, the groundwork is laid for implementing Total Quality Management⁸.

-Execution Stage:

Selection of the Execution Team: Individuals who will lead the execution process are chosen, and they undergo training on the latest training methods related to Total Quality Management.

-Experience Sharing and Dissemination Stage:

Utilization of Experiences and Successes: In this stage, experiences and successes achieved through the implementation of Total Quality Management are capitalized on⁹.

These stages are crucial for the successful application of Total Quality Management in higher education, ensuring a systematic and comprehensive approach to quality management.

2. Requirements for Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

To achieve comprehensive quality in higher education, certain fundamental requirements are necessary for scientific application. Among these requirements are¹⁰:

A. Quality Council:

The highest leadership level responsible for decision-making and granting the necessary authority to guide and support the Total Quality Management (TQM) process. It assumes the following responsibilities:

- Develop necessary plans for cultivating a quality culture.
- Lead and direct all activities related to the implementation of Total Quality Management.
- Activate the efforts of all university members to achieve the goal of Total Quality Management.
- Provide material and human resources for implementing the philosophy of Total Quality Management.
- Set annual goals for Total Quality Management.

-Establish a system for incentives and rewards for individuals excelling in their assigned tasks

B. Quality Design and Development Team:

This team operates under the leadership of the Quality Council, and its primary mission is to formulate a strategy for developing the quality system. Its key responsibilities include:

-Studying the concepts of total quality and their applications.

-Designing training programs for quality leaders and work teams.

-Identifying customer requirements within and outside the university.

-Proposing an initial plan for university operations, specifying its fundamental steps and the required facilities and workplaces.

-Enhancing quality within the university.

C. Quality Guidance Committee:

This committee serves as the operational center for quality management. Its major responsibilities include:

-Establishing and documenting connections between the university and other institutions.

-Alleviating fear and disseminating outstanding experiences and lessons learned within the university.

-Formulating necessary plans for developing quality control programs.

D. Quality Measurement and Evaluation Committee:

This committee evaluates the comprehensive quality program in the university and ensures that the university's objectives align with customer needs. Universities must verify that the beneficiaries' needs are met by focusing on a complete understanding of those needs in the short and long term. This involves using feedback and utilizing all information related to beneficiary needs and their management. It is essential to establish an effective collaboration system between the university and beneficiaries to exchange experiences and address the problems they encounter. Achieving total quality management is a complex task, but it is certainly not impossible, especially for universities. Universities are among the best-suited places to apply the principles of

total quality management, as they can add value and quality to the institution and its outputs when implemented correctly.

III. Challenges and Suggestions for Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions

The application of the principles and requirements of Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education is crucial for advancing and reaching high levels of performance and quality. It aims to enhance the efficiency of administrative and academic services that contribute to preparing graduates to serve the job market and society. However, to successfully implement TQM in higher education, it is essential to identify and address the challenges hindering its application.

1.Challenges of Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

- Weakness in the financial system and the difficulty of finding non-traditional funding sources.
- Lack of conviction about the importance of obtaining feedback from students.
- Conflicting demands of beneficiaries hindering consensus on a unified vision to respond to their needs.
- Centralization in policy-making not aligning with the foundations of quality control and assurance in universities.
- Scarcity of educational experts in the field of total quality management.¹¹
- Weak awareness of the concept of lifelong learning.
- Increased teaching workload at the expense of scientific research.
- Inadequate library resources.¹²
- Novelty of the Total Quality Management subject, especially in developing countries.
- Misbelief among some staff members regarding their need for training.
- Adoption of TQM methods and techniques that do not align with the institution's specificity.
- Administrative dominance over the academic sector.
- Lack of harmony and coordination among team members or between different teams.

-Expectation of quick results for the benefits that the organization can gain from implementing Total Quality Management.

It is evident that higher education institutions urgently need to review their systems and establish an administrative system based on the application of Total Quality Management in all its aspects. This is essential for improving performance, developing university outputs, and addressing the pressing need to eliminate obstacles hindering the application of TQM.

2. Suggestions for Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education:

Among the proposed solutions to address or mitigate the previously mentioned challenges, the following suggestions can be considered:

-Dissemination of Total Quality Management Culture: Leaders should promote the culture of total quality management to convince them of the importance of change, performance improvement, and the significance of implementing TQM in higher education institutions. Studies indicate that leadership-related obstacles are highly important, and leaders must convince university staff, including academics, administrators, and students, about the importance of implementing Total Quality Management for the university to have a recognized standard for its direction and progress.

-Start with Public Services and Administrative Services: When implementing a TQM program in universities, it is crucial to begin with public services and administrative services to create a conducive work environment. Focus on enhancing libraries, providing clubs, sports facilities, etc., as many universities lack these services, and they are considered the infrastructure for starting the operational (academic) work of the university.

-Prioritize Positive Incentives (Moral and Financial): Universities should pay significant attention to positive incentives (both moral and financial) for faculty members, ensuring fairness and equal opportunities. Faculty members play a crucial role in the success of TQM programs, and lack of motivation, both financially and morally, is identified as one of the major organizational obstacles.

-Involve Faculty Members in Decision-Making: Grant faculty members the opportunity to participate in making important decisions. Trust issues with faculty members are a considerable organizational barrier that needs to be addressed.

Universities should also focus on supporting scientific research by providing financial support and reducing teaching hours for faculty members involved in scientific research during the semester.

-Appoint Specialists for Community Service : Higher education institutions should appoint specialists to oversee the deanship of community service and provide the necessary support. This involves delegating authority and financial support to connect universities with the community, benefit from faculty members to research its issues, and intensify training courses and scientific programs needed by the community at symbolic prices¹⁴.

-Encourage Postgraduate Students in Research Projects: Encourage postgraduate students in their research projects to delve into modern areas of Total Quality Management.

-Introduce Total Quality Management Concepts as a Specialized Subject: Incorporate Total Quality Management concepts as a specialized subject within the education program across all disciplines.

-Reward Creativity and Innovation: Incentivize creativity and innovation related to ways that mitigate organizational rigidity, as well as measure the effectiveness of college programs.

These are essential recommendations for higher education institutions to overcome the obstacles to implementing Total Quality Management and obtain academic accreditation rightfully.

Conclusion:

Through this work, we explored Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education institutions, attempting to address the main problematics revolving around how TQM is implemented in these institutions. We analyzed various obstacles and proposed solutions for its application. In conclusion, we arrived at the following points:

-TQM in higher education institutions is a strategy comprised of a set of activities and processes aimed at continuous improvement of performance levels.

-Implementing TQM leads to tangible gains and qualitative experiences for those working in educational institutions and the local community. Utilizing these gains and experiences contributes to achieving comprehensive societal development.

-The application of TQM in higher education follows sequential stages, including awareness, planning, evaluation, execution, and experience sharing.

-Among the obstacles to implementing TQM in higher education are conflicting demands from beneficiaries, centralized decision-making in policy formulation, and a shortage of educational experts.

-Solutions to overcome these obstacles include introducing TQM concepts as a specialized subject, encouraging creativity and innovation, and providing effective evaluation for college programs.

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