Vol. 6 No. 2 April 2018 ISSN: 2320-4168 UGC Approval No: 44120 Impact Factor: 4.118

A STUDY ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF TQM IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Article Particulars

Received: 27.03.2018 Accepted: 06.04.2018 Published: 28.04.2018

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Abstract

The quality excellence in the higher education sector is the need of the hour. The education commission reports and the measures taken by the Government had recommended the educational institutions to think about the quality & to assess themselves in the quality requirement. The role of higher education be it technical/non-technical has extended its responsibility to satisfy the industrial environment requirement apart from its traditional objective of achievement of academic excellence. The learning community is faced with the challenge of handling contemporary issues in the industry employed beyond academic achievement which is possible through implementation of TQM in the education sector. The educational sector is seen as an industry which will produce students absorbed in the labour market. The objective of the study is to assess the impact of TQM in the higher education sector and the practices that can be applied to achieve academic excellence.

Keywords: *Quality, Higher education, perception of teaching & learning community, commission reports on education, academic excellence.*

Introduction

TQM is more than a management philosophy; it can be considered a convenient framework used in and by organizations to guarantee a systematic and permanent optimization of the added value in order to maximize the realization of their aims. As a consequence of this proactive approach, all primary, supporting and managerial processes have to be designed in a manner that ensures an optimal (perceived) quality for customers, employees and other stakeholders (De Knop, Van Hoecke, & De Bosscher, 2004).

The interest in higher education, in developing countries, is a necessity imposed by the changes that have occurred in most societies all over the world. A few examples of the major changes include population explosion, globalization of economy, lack of resources, political instability, inconsistency in the policies of various regimes, lack of qualified workers, and inefficient educational management system. Additionally, higher education institutions face many pressures and challenges resulting from rapid expansion in student enrolments, shortages of funding, declining quality of graduates, lack of qualified staff and faculty, and increasing competition between various public

and private colleges and universities. In response to the need for improvement in the services and administrative procedures, many institutions of higher education have begun to explore various management processes (McMillan, 1998). Total Quality Management(TQM) is one of the most popular management processes adopted by many institutions (Ritter, 2005).

Literature Review

Venkatraman(2007) TQM is a managerial effort to standardize in educational industry and also to finalise the approaches on the same.

Harris(1994) identified the three generic approaches in higher education. The focus on customer is the primary approach where the ideas of serving the student are fostered through staff training & development, promoting students choice & autonomy. The second approach focuses on contribution made by all the members of the staff. The third approach focuses on key measurement initiatives in the process of education(Ex) evaluation of assignment by teachers on specified time frame.

Sangeeta(2004) considered education as a transformation process of inputs & outputs. Inputs include students, teachers, administrative staff, physical facilities & process. Output include examination result, employment, earnings & satisfaction.

Becket & Brookes(2005) The emphasis of quality maintenance in higher education has increased as the number of students are increasing and at the same time, their expectations are also increasing.

Methodology to the Study: The study used both analytical and descriptive type of methodology and has used both primary and secondary data.

Sampling Size and Design: The primary data needed for the study was collected through survey method. Survey was conducted using well formulated Questionnaire. Simple Random Sampling was applied for generating data.

Questionnaire Design: The primary data were collected through questionnaire survey. The respondents were asked to give their opinion relating to TQM practices.

Scaling Technique in the Questionnaire: The questionnaire comprised of both optional type and Statements in Likert's 5 point scale. The responses of these sections were obtained from the employees of private sector banks in the 5 point scale, which ranged as follows:5 – Strongly agree 4 – Agree 3 – Neutral 2 – Disagree 1 – Strongly Disagree.

Secondary Data: The Secondary data were collected from Journals, Magazines, Publications, Books, Articles, Research Papers, Websites, Company Publications.

Data Analysis

The Primary data collected were analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer packages. The study has used Factor analysis which is a

method for reducing large number of variables to a small number of components or factors. The results are shown in KMO & Bartlett's test table, scree plot, component matrix, communalities table and component transformation matrix tables. After reviewing the National & International literature the researcher identified 21 variables pertaining to TQM practices in manufacturing sector. In order to identify the predominant factor influencing TQM practices the researcher applied Factor analysis by principal component method and reduced them in to predominant factor in the following way.

KMO Bartlett's test: From the above table it is found that KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.640, Bartlett's test of sphericity with approximate chi-square(x^2)value 1664.983, p=0.000 are statistically significant @ 5% level. This indicates the 21 variables of TQM practices are normally distributed & suitable for the data reduction process. The individual variances for all these 21 variables are presented in the following Communalities table.

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extraction**
L1	1.000	.772
L2	1.000	.660
L3	1.000	.756
V1	1.000	.677
V2	1.000	.514
V3	1.000	.790
ME1	1.000	.751
ME2	1.000	.880
ME3	1.000	.642
PI1	1.000	.860
PI2	1.000	.920
PI3	1.000	.816
CD1	1.000	.712
CD2	1.000	.914
CD3	1.000	.607
EI1	1.000	.845
EI2	1.000	.566
EI3	1.000	.766
T1	1.000	.677
T2	1.000	.757
T3	1.000	.789

From the above table it is found that the 21 variables have their variances ranging between .514 to .880. This implies the 21 variables have a range of variances between 51% to 88%. This leads to the data reduction process & formation of factors as shown in the total variance table. The table below shows that the 21 variables are reduced in to 6 predominant factors with total variance of 74.629%. Individually the 6 factors have their variance of 28.010%, 12.675%, 10.440%, 9.169%, 8.277%, 6.058%. This implies all the 6 factors out of 21 variables are highly significant. The variable loadings are presented in the following descriptions.

Total Variances Explained

Variable Loadings

All the 7 factors consist of 3 variables each in their variable loadings.

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	6.126	29.172	29.172	5.882	28.010	28.010
2	3.115	14.833	44.005	2.662	12.675	40.685
3	2.221	10.577	54.582	2.192	10.440	51.125
4	1.838	8.753	63.335	1.926	9.169	60.294
5	1.280	6.096	69.431	1.738	8.277	68.571
6	1.092	5.198	74.629	1.272	6.058	74.629

No of factors	Component in the variable loading table	Name of the factor
Factor 1 consist of 3 variables		
(1)Top management/ leadership concentrates on TQM implementation	.913	The factor is termed as
(2)Leadership supports TQM practices & processes	.895	leadership
(3) Leaders are aware of the quality related concepts and implementing it	.876	
Factor 2 consist of 3 variables		
(1)Concentrates on the vision of the organization	.862	
(2) Vision is realized by the staff	.846	Vision
(3)Insist the workforce to improve performance of staff & students.	.843	
Factor 3 consist of 3 variables		
(1) Regular audit on policies & strategies	.823	
(2) Compares academic performance with others	.809	Measurement & Evaluation
(3)Follows performance measures(eg) course teacher valuation.	.805	
Factor 4 consist of 3 variables		
(1)Expectations of workforce and students are satisfied	.790	
(2)Academic & Non-academic areas are improved to bring effectiveness	.775	Process Improvement
(3) Maintains infrastructure facilities	.755	
Factor 5 consist of 3 variables		
(1)Students requirements is analysed	.735	Course Design
(2)subject experts are consulted from other institutions	.685	
(3)Enables students to meet the requirements of corporates	.685	
Factor 6 consist of 3 variables		
(1) Staff have coordination & cooperation in quality efforts	.613	
(2)participates in quality related activities	.589	Employee Involvement
(3)suggestions are evaluated and implemented	.583	
Factor 7 consist of 3 variables		
(1) Training is encouraged for attainment of excellence	.563	
(2)work related skills are imparted	.513	Training.
(3)Encourages employee participation		

Conclusion

The above study from its findings conclude that top mgt commitment is essential in developing the quality of the higher education institutions. It helps in evaluating the effectiveness of QM regularly. Top Mgt should facilitate effective quality plan through training and appraisal programme so that the employee performance will increase. The process design should be upgraded to meet the customer expectation for ensuring long term success. Continuous monitoring of employee performance and rewarding will ensure better operations both in terms of serving the customer(students & stakeholders) as well as the managing of internal operations. The top management has got the major responsibility to devise the quality plan effectively so that the employee performance is improved which will in turn enhance the business performance especially framing the course structure according to the requirements of corporates.