

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE SAUDI HIGHER EDUCATION: A REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the implementation of total quality management (TQM) at the Saudi Arabian universities and the best leadership practice in order to improve quality and ranking of Saudi Arabian universities. Total quality management is one of the effective tools to minimize the cost and to improve the outcomes; many universities and colleges around the world have applied TQM as a tool to enhance the quality of higher education, Due to the increase of recent competition in different sectors including the higher education (HE) (e.g., expansion of new universities and research centres in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain), many Middle Eastern universities are trying their best to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in higher education by adopting TQM principles. Data will be collected from two major universities with regards to staff and students, primarily through semi-structured interviews, will be supplemented by observations and document analysis.

Keywords: *Total Quality Management (TQM); Improvement; Leadership; Higher Education (HE); Saudi Arabia*

1 Introduction and Background

The rapid economical and educational development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has forced universities to implement modern management styles (Al-Karni, 1995 & 1999; Al-Naeem, 2002; KSA, 2009 & 2010) to ensure continuous improvement and improve its outcomes. This includes the adoption of the Total Quality Management philosophy (TQM), which acquired immense popularity in managerial science and gains a widespread attention in developed countries since the late of the twentieth century and especially in United States and Japan (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1989; Samson & Terziovski, 1999; Becket & Brookes, 2008; Murad & Rajesh, 2010). During twenty-first century, TQM has global popularities and importance in many organizations, manufacturing and services. At this time, TQM adopted not only in the industry but also extended to the higher education. TQM was the tool of improvement the H.E includes most of the USA and the UK

universities (Aly & Akpovi, 2001; Becket & Brookes, 2008; Murad & Rajesh, 2010). Leadership is the main key and pillar of TQM implementations in higher education (Kanji, 2002). Also, it seems to be the most influential factor to influence the success of quality in higher education. Hence, TQM and leadership cannot be treated separately and go hand in hand.

Due to the increase of recent competition in different sectors including the higher education worldwide and specifically the Middle East region, this reflects on the increase of Saudi students studying abroad which according to Saudi ministry of higher education (2011) has reached 130,000 students. The Saudi universities are trying their best to increase their ranking and performance as well as to serve the community with minimum costs and highly outcomes. Also, to enable them to deliver high quality graduates enable them to find positions in both academia and industry. This will provide a fresh insight in HE, as this research will investigate and measure the effect of TQM implementation and the leadership practice to improve the quality of education at the universities in Saudi Arabia.

This paper is expected to find out how to establish the best leadership practice and to support the implementation of TQM concepts in the Saudi Arabia universities. Since this concept is one of the most recent concepts in higher education in developing countries, Saudi universities could benefit from the concept of leadership and tools that TQM offers to gain advantage and in improving its ranking and quality since it became a big concern for Saudi HE. It is hoped that this study will provide an answer to the following question:

What is the best TQM and leadership practice to improve the Saudi universities quality and the Universities ranking?

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of leadership practice on the implementation of TQM concept and tools to improve the performance of Saudi Arabia universities. The research focuses on exploring the relevant literatures of TQM and leadership practices. Also to investigate and identify what is the type of leadership to use in order to improve the quality. Finally, a conceptual framework has been developed to address the issues concerned.

This paper structured as follows. The second section provides the brief literature review related to the main issues in this research. The third section is the framework which has been developed to address the implementation of TQM by using the best organisational leadership style. The fourth section presents the research methodology. Finally, the conclusion and further research are discussed.

2 Literature Review

The literate reviews will focus on the main topic of the study which is TQM in higher education and leadership practices and style.

The concept of TQM was developed by the American scholar, W. Edwards Deming, after World War II for improving the production quality of goods and services (Williams, 1993). The concept was not taken seriously by the Americans companies until the Japanese, who adopted it in 1950 to resurrect their post-war business and industry and used TQM it to dominate the world markets. By 1980, most of American manufacturers had finally accepted the TQM and started to improve their quality to compete the Japanese and taking a share of global markets. TQM is defined as both a philosophy and an approach with a set of guiding principles that present the foundation of continuous improving organisations. TQM practices have a positive impact on improving the organisational performance. The use of TQM has been utilised in many business settings. In relation to business excellence, TQM can improve the customer's growth, profit, and value for stakeholders (Kanji, 2002).

The concept of TQM is applicable to both academics and industry which many educators believe that the Deming's concept of TQM provides guiding principles to improve the education quality (Mehrotra, 2010).

The use of TQM is also utilised in academic settings, which provides guidance in educational institutions. It was known to promote management-teacher-student involvement, which leads to the improvement of higher education (Mehrotra, 2010). Adopting TQM is being witnessed worldwide with different cultures viewing TQM philosophy differently. Quality of education is becoming important in the world of the competitive environment. TQM has been successfully adopted in Oregon State University (Coate, 1993) and California State University, University of California (Aly and Akpovi, 2001) also it was adopted in most of UK universities ; e.g. South Bank University, University of Ulster, Aston University, and Wolverhampton University (Kanji & Tambi, 1999; Ahmad, 2008).

Ahmed (2008) investigated the TQM implementation at some of UK Universities; e.g., University of East London and the Aston University and found that TQM can be a powerful technique for unleashing employee creativity and potential, reducing bureaucracy and costs, and improving the speed of service and efficiency, if the right leadership style had been used.

TQM have key elements and themes which need to be consider in order improving the quality, which are Leadership, Continuous improvement, Employee participation and empowerment and information management (Venkatraman, 2007).

A number of scholars (Deming, 1986; Garvin, 1993; McElwee, 1995; Stensaasen, 1995; Shutler,1999; Harris, 2005; Fullan, 2006; Bush, 2008; Levin and Fullan, 2008; Middlewood, 2010) have investigated the quality criteria in higher education and found that it is necessary for improving the education system, also argued that leadership is the key rule for adopting successful TQM (O'Mahony, 2012). The leadership emerges as a significant and powerful theme in the quality management literature. A variety of leadership characteristics is highlighted in the higher education literature, including responsiveness, integrity, courage and passion, the capacity to champion change and adopt a collaborative approach to gain the necessary support for quality management initiatives (Drew, 2006; Rosser et al., 2003).

Since the leadership is the most important theme of TQM, then we most study which leadership practice do we need to implement TQM in Saudi Arabian universities, So according to Cox (2001), there are two basic categories of leadership: transformational and transactional, the different between transactional and transformational leadership was firstly pointed out by Downton in 1973(Barnett, McCormick & Connors, 2001) but distinguished and became popular when Jame Burn covered it in his book entitle of "Leadership"(1978). Burns defined the leadership into ordinary leaders (transactional), where leaders focus on the relationship between the leader and follower by adopting punishment and reward style, and extraordinary leaders (transformational) where leaders focus on the beliefs, needs and values of their followers who transforms the followers and engage with them to achieves the goal (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Barnett, McCormick & Connors, 2001; Cox, 2001; Gellis, 2001; Griffin, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

It is worthwhile mentioning that, Transformational leadership theory is the focus of this study, because many scholars argues that transformational leadership is the visionary leadership adopted by Deming as being the most suitable type of leadership for implementing TQM (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Laohavichien, 1999; Cox, 2001; Gellis, 2001). Therefore, the transformational leadership will be the best style to transforms the TQM into better improvement and success for the universities.

3 Conceptual Framework

A framework has been developed to address the implementation of TQM by using the best organisational leadership style to improve the HE. The Quality circles (QC) which is an important management technique to implement TQM in higher education (Romero et al., 1995; Freed et al., 2000; Venkatraman, 2007) should be directly involved with four core elements of TQM in higher

education which according to Venkatraman, (2007) are Leadership, Human Resource Management, Information Management and Educational Management.

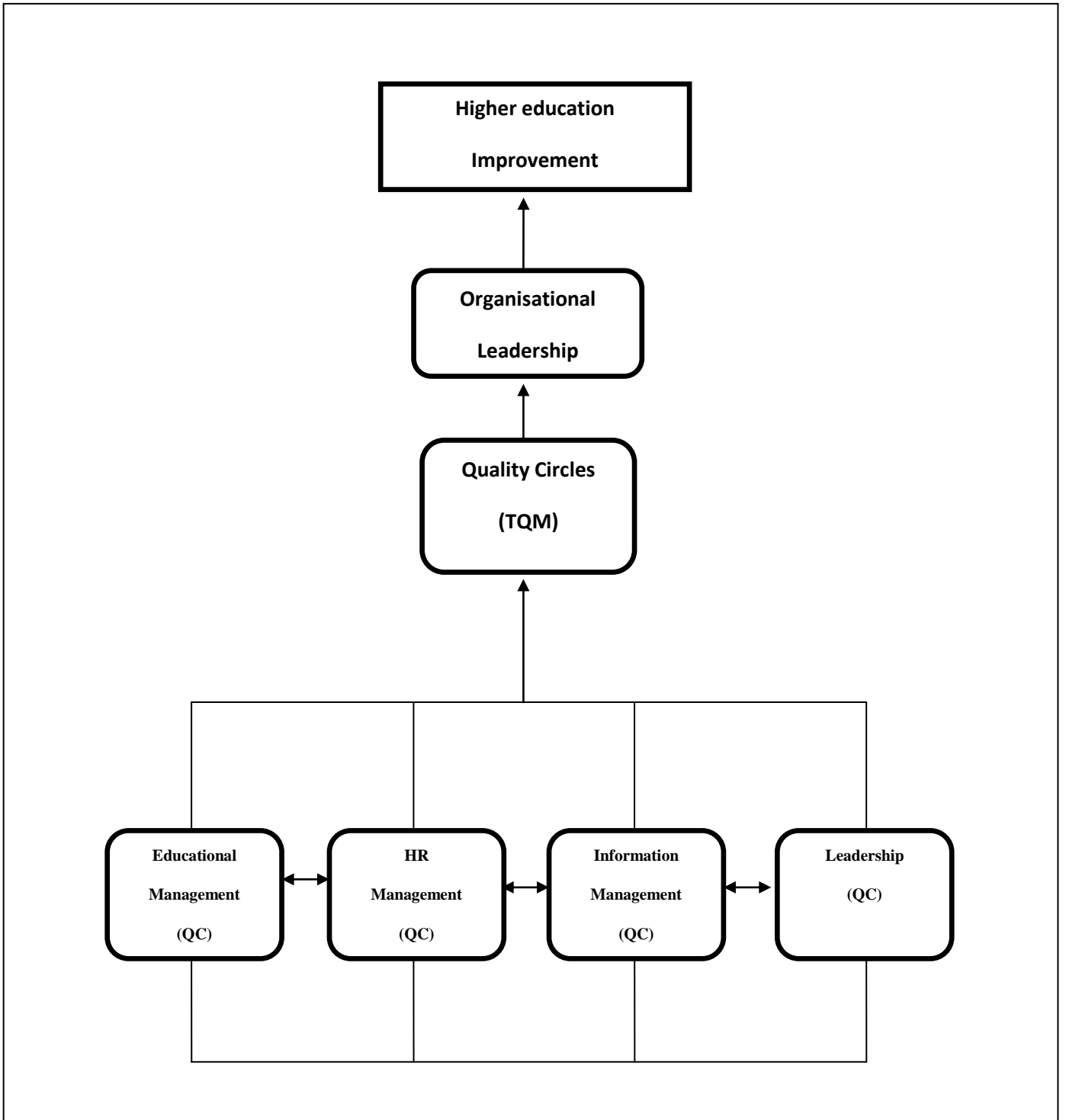


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Leadership emerges as a major theme in the TQM implementation. It should examine senior management's commitment and involvement in creating and supporting a customer focus, clear goals and high expectations. Leadership system also would promote performance excellence for the HE. It should sit the rule and responsibilities for each member of staff toward the student's satisfaction and create a partnership with parents, public communities and the government.

Information management element should manage the use of data and information to provide the fast response and the best analysis for the decision maker about the daily operational tasks. It should ensure all messages are clear for any stations, also accessible and reliable at all levels.

Human resource management element will examine if the staff recruitment and development will meet the institution objectives to ensure the best performance, also to provide staff with the best quality work environment to ensure the staff satisfaction and participations.

Educational management will examine aspects of process management, including education design, learner-focused, education delivery, services and institution operations. It should examine how processes are creatively designed, effectively managed and continuously improved. This element should ensure continuous improvement and innovation in educational processes of the institution.

The leadership issue is very important and relevant to both QC and the overall organisation, because without adopting the right leadership style at the organisation, the implementation of TQM will not be effective. Leadership has many different styles to implement, but this paper will focus on only two leadership styles which are Transactional leadership and Transformational leadership. The paper will find out what is the best leadership practice and style for implementing TQM. This study will identify the difference between both styles and will address the suitable style for effective TQM to improve the H.E.

4 Methodology

This study will adopt an interpretive multiple case study approach (Yin, 2009) and will carry out in two major universities in Saudi Arabia (King Saud university and King Abdul-Aziz university) which are the biggest universities in Saudi Arabia with over 100,000 students (Burns, 2010; KAU, 2012). Case study is very suitable for such research where understanding is the primary objective and the phenomenon to be investigated is not well understood, and needs to be studied within its natural setting (Yin, 2009). Evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling than a single case, and the overall study will be regarded as more robust (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The chosen case approach deemed the most suitable for the purpose of this research. Also, phenomenology seems to be appropriate technique to explore and understand the people's experience.

Data will be primarily collected by semi-structured interviewees. Interviews have allowed us to approach Quality managers from two hierarchical positions (the dean of quality at the university also all the quality managers at colleges in the university) in order to compare, contrast and gain multiple perspectives on the key factors that impact implementing TQM and the leadership practice at the universities. Other complementary data will be collected through observations and documentary analysis. Data will be coded using qualitative content analysis technique. Nvivo 8.0, which is a software program designed to aid in the analysis of qualitative data, facilitate the coding, linking codes and text segments, documenting diversity in codes, searching, editing and re-organizing (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

5 Conclusion

This paper attempted to extend the body of knowledge for both leadership and TQM, also highlight the growing interest of implementing TQM in higher education, especially in Middle Eastern countries. A review of the key literature is presented which gives insight and direction about TQM implantation in H.E which helps in developing a conceptual framework for future testing. Since the TQM is an effective tool to enhance the quality for better improvement, this paper will find out what is the suitable leadership style to lead the university to a successful TQM. The future work will be interviewing 45 quality staff from two Saudi universities which are the limitation of the research. The research will provide a roadmap for the decision makers of Saudi higher education to successful improve the TQM implementation by using the best style of leadership. As a result, the research findings will enhance the universities ranking and the quality of the graduates. Moreover, the university will adopt a new management system that creates competitive H.E environment.

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