

A Comparison of Quality Administration and Management in Higher Education in Nigeria and Malaysia: Implication for Human Resource Development

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Abstract – *Quality higher education system will produce quality skills and quality human capacity. Therefore, in adjustment to needs for development countries in Africa such as Nigeria and others should embrace and implement Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), and Total Quality Management (TQM) in the universities and Higher Education administration for the purpose of all-round Human Resource Development. On the other hand, Asian countries that have developed established forms of TQM framework of their own, like Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, for example, should continue improving them in line with the realities of world constant changes. Thus, this article reviewed the literatures on quality administration and management in higher education in Nigeria and Malaysia with the aims of highlighting the implication of human resource development. Copyright © 2015 Penerbit Akademia Baru - All rights reserved.*

Keywords: Human Resource Development, Quality Improvement, Higher Education, Technology, Economic Growth

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Managing quality in education, especially in university and higher education system should be seen different from that of manufacturing concerns as result of the fact that quality improvement approaches in manufacturing concern is mainly targeted towards ‘process and production’ while less quality improvement is placed on the people involved in the ‘process and products’ [1]. The main difference between university and higher education systems and manufacturing concerns lies on the fact that university and higher education systems are ‘people driven’ while manufacturing concerns are ‘products and process driven’ [2,3]. This study explores the literatures on the quality administration and management in higher learning in Nigeria and Malaysia. The study employs the use of explorative style of making use of relevant studies, empirical and conceptual, in the background of Human Resource Development in higher education in developed countries as well as in Nigeria and Malaysia; in order to get to a useful conclusion.

2.0 IN MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

Quality approaches and models used in manufacturing concerns have been successfully applied in higher education systems, examples of developed countries have indicated this in a positive direction [1,4]. Specifically, on this, quoting from previous works on quality in higher education, Chua (2004) reported that Total Quality Management (TQM) have been applied to schools and colleges in the UK, USA and in Malaysia and other Asian countries. However, he noted the model of quality improvement as used in manufacturing concerns emphasized customer satisfaction; and the customer satisfaction theory of TQM in manufacturing cannot be directly applied to education as a result of the fact that education is not 'out to please the students' which happen to be customers in education systems. Rather, education is out to develop its customers that are the students, expanding their abilities and performances towards optimum efficiency [5,6]. In an alternative measure to boycott the effect of customer satisfaction principle enshrined in raw TQM models, modified TQM for educational systems such as: European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), excellence models (ISO 9000), Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award to improve performance, and even the very popular quality service method, SERVQUAL, have been adopted and used to measure quality in education in countries like USA, UK, Malaysia and so on [7-12].

In the direction of Total Quality Management in application to Malaysia and other developed and developing countries, the general standard TQM model has been modified with indigenous effects suitable to their national realities in terms of economic needs, aspirations and socio-cultural needs. This has brought the effect of internationalization in the higher education systems of countries such as Malaysia, as a result the development of world acceptable education quality models in these countries [12]. To this effect, according to Tan (2002), in his study that compared national quality models and awards in some 16 countries, he asserted that some nations have been able to develop Total Quality Model (TQM) in education as well as in industries, while some other countries are on the verge of developing theirs. This further emphasize the vital importance of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in education, in the sense that, in view of the dynamic and constant changes in the global terrains, each and every country should find it necessary to develop TQM approaches capable of cushioning the effect of global volatility and dynamism and placing the nation within the rank of development. To this end, quality models have to be developed in the interests of various specifics peculiar to different nations such as: Economic Growth Objectives, National Human Resource Development Objectives, and Socio-Cultural Objectives, and Internationalization Objectives [1,9-11,13].

In response to the need for Continuous Quality Improvement, in education and industry for effective HR development, several countries have developed their quality models and approaches in pattern after developed countries like the USA and UK and benchmarking established world recognized quality models, like Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award 2001 (MNQA) [9,12]. Malaysia for example developed Prime Minister's Quality Award Malaysia (2000); and other countries have developed indigenized quality models that have been widely applied to education and industries as well, such as Australian Business Excellence award, 2000 (ABEA), Chilean National Quality Award 2000 (CNQA), Egypt Quality Award 1997 (EgyQA), European Quality Award for 2001 (EQA), European Quality Award for SMEs 1998 (EQA for SMEs), Hong Kong Management Association Quality Award 2000 (HKMAQA), Japan Quality Award 2000 (JQA), Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award 2001 (MNQA) and others [12]. It can be observed from this that Malaysia and

countries in South East Asia have developed one or different kind of quality model applicable to them in terms of their national education and economic objective. The effect of these indigenized quality models have resulted in Continuous Quality Improvement towards efficiency, optimum Human Resource (HR) Development and internationalization of higher education. Therefore there is free flow of knowledge resource between countries of South East Asia that have developed indigenized quality model and developed countries such as the USA, as well as export of knowledge [9-10].

Singapore as a developed country in Asia and next neighbor to Malaysia has developed her own quality measure in school management, to the point of world recognition, Singapore Quality Award (SQA) has gone beyond the shores of Singapore in terms of education quality management and benchmarking. Towards this end, Singapore Quality Award (SQA) in mixture with world popular quality benchmarks such as School Excellence Model (SEM) and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) have been applied widely in educational institutions, especially higher education in Malaysia as well as other developing and developed countries [14,15]. The reason for the inter usage of quality models among countries is based on the fact that these quality models of countries have comparative advantages among one another and they are developed based on the benchmark of well-established quality practices such Total Quality Management (TQM) and Deming Application Prize (DP) [16]. Therefore, these national quality models have enjoyed cross border application among countries in view of the fact they are pointing to the effect of quality improvement, efficiency in human capital input, efficiency in product and service.

The effect of application of TQM in Malaysia higher education systems like similar application in the USA Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can be felt in the process and product dimensions of education. That is the teaching and evaluation process of education, the process dimension of education is the aspect of knowledge dissemination which include the method used and the effectiveness of such method in disseminating the knowledge [17]. Educational process dimension is divided into three area or aspects namely, teacher, material and learning materials and learners. Interactions between these three aspects of learning make up the process of education. In achieving learning, optimum and efficient interaction between these three aspects of learning process must be well facilitated and enabled. In the adult education theory which is the main fundamental of higher learning, the role of the teacher is to mainly facilitate, that is create suitable environment in which learners can adequately interact with the three aspect of learning process to create learning achievement [17-19]. The material and learning materials aspect of the process of learning refers to the various teaching methods and contents of learning. It should be noted here, there are various learning methods unique and peculiar to different learning contents and situations. For example, lecture method of teaching may not do well as project method in certain learning situations, therefore on this note it is imperative for the teacher or the facilitator to decide accurate teaching-learning methods suitable for certain learning situations [19-21]. It is fundamental to quality practice in education for the teacher or facilitator to be able to decide and apply suitable teaching learning methods to certain learning situations. On the other hand, the education system as a central body to the learner and the teachers or facilitator should be able to design appropriate learning contents for different learners in different programs as well as providing the supporting facilities and infrastructures for the support of these learning contents [22].

In essence, the university system, in compliance with quality practice, should be able to design quality learning curriculum in terms of learning content to be disseminated to the learners by capable hands towards progressive human capital development [22]. Total Quality Management (TQM) approaches have been applied in Malaysian universities in the

area of educational process aspect, that the teachers/facilitators, materials and learning materials and the learners. Towards this end continues development approaches have adopted as basis for employment and promotion of lecturing staff, lecturers are expected to contribute to research and development and also bring in innovation to the general system [23,24]. The higher education systems in Malaysian universities have provided appropriate facilities, in benchmark of advanced countries such as the USA and UK, in terms of e-learning environment for teaching, ICT and computer assistance in teaching and learning process.

In the aspect of learning, learning content are directed to be in touch with the latest changes in research and development, in essence learning content are research focused [22,25]. The aspect of learner in the process dimension of education has also received Total Quality Improvement application, in a benchmark of world renowned universities in the developed worlds, such as USA, students are driven towards innovation through exposure to researches, in addition activities leading to academic achievement of students such as assignment and examinations are research oriented and problem based [26]. Product in education has been ascribed to different concepts in education by different scholars, but in terms of quality measurement and improvement in education there has been universal consensus on what forms the product of education. In line with this, the knowledge and the quality of it is generally accepted by scholars as the product of educational process [27]. The reason and augment for this fact is enshrined in the theory of Human Capital Development (HCD) as in development and expansion of human capacity and knowledge for the purpose of personal and societal effectiveness [28].

Education in the first place is born out of the need for community and society development, individuals need to acquire knowledge and technical know-how necessary for the movement and advancement of the society in the direction of development. That is from one stage of development to the next stage of higher development, and in pursuance of this, quality and dynamic knowledge is needed and necessary. Based on this, education has to be planned to be effective and quality towards achieving societal development needs. Therefore, the outcome of the summary process of education is seen in terms of quality knowledge imbibed in the learner as products outcome of educational process [27-29]. More important aspect of product dimension of education, as far as TQM is concerned, is the evaluation and measurements of student learning achievement of students. That is a good quality process in education must be accurately measuring exactly what it claims to measure with high reliability and precision [30]. The measurement and evaluation of quality education process must be near to perfection in terms of grading student learning achievement, towards this end facilities like ICT and appropriate quality methods must be deployed in grading and evaluation in quality education system [30]. In this direction, Malaysian universities have fared well, that is in compliance with benchmark and established quality processes in education, have adopted quality grading system in measurement of academic achievement and there is assistance of computer system in this which help in reducing human and rater errors associated with measurement and evaluation in education [30,31].

In similitude to the countries that have adopted certain TQM models in their education systems, the application and adoption of TQM in university education in Malaysia, for instance, in process and product dimension of education has over the years seen universities in Malaysia to the point of internationalization, as evidenced by the fact of the patronage of foreign students from diverse background [32]. Quality improvement in education and educational practice with an eyes for quality results effectively into internationalization, as a

result of the fact that quality application gives the assurance that educational gains can compete globally [33].

3.0 TQM IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Though Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) speaks the same universal language, nations have to strive to develop indigenized quality improvement models in consonance to the realities of their cultural, socio-cultural and economic needs. In the face of the fact that no two different nations are exactly the same in terms of economic and socio-cultural needs [34]. Quality improvement in business and education is universal in terms of language and objectives; in the sense that all indigenized quality models specific to different countries speak the language of 'zero defect' in process and product and the objective of 'continuous incremental efficiency' towards optimum Human Resource Development (HRD). Nigeria has enjoyed long term ties with the UK in terms of education. The commonness between Nigeria and UK in terms of education dated as far back as the colonial era, during the introduction of western or European education through Christian missionaries, in 1842, by European colonial masters [35]. The curriculum designed that time was purely school and classroom based, therefore grown up adults who were illiterate in 'western literacy and numeracy' were not involved as subjects in the curriculum development. The curriculum was school - age-children and classroom based and as a result, adult education which is fundamental to Human Resource Development and Continuous Quality Improvement was missed, except for adults who did not mind personal self-ego and enrolled as school children [35].

Education for the adults, in progressive direction and with an eye for quality, of a particular population implies Human Resource Development (HRD) as a result of the fact that the success of a particular country in terms of technological advancement and economic proficiency depend on the quality of the labor force of the country who are normally adults [29,36]. On this note, Nigeria, like other African countries, under colonial administration of education did not fare well in the area of Adult Education and Human Resource (HR) Development which are fundamental to continuous quality improvement. According to Jayeola-Omoyeni and Ajayi (2012), they observed that early attempt to draw up meaningful adult development through education system was deficient as a result of the fact the early school based curriculum designed primarily for literacy education of school age group was not sufficient and efficient enough to accommodate the Human Resource Development of the adults.

However, memorandum on education policy in the British Tropical Africa was signed in 1925, in recognition of the high percentage of the adult illiterates who could not be accommodated in the school systems designed for school children in various British colonies of Africa [35]. The memorandum recommended implementation of Adult Education program in Africa continent. In this line, the recommendation for Adult education for development was not immediately adopted by colonial administration in Nigeria until 1930 and subsequently, a document was published on it in 1944.

However, the implementation of the recommendation started in 1944 with noted insufficiency and imbalances. Also on this note, the first Mass Literacy Campaign was launched in 1946 based on the recommendations of the 1944. Toward this end, Adult Education and improvement of it has suffered neglect fundamentally influenced by the colonial masters. It would be noted here that serious attempts were not made on Adult Education and Literacy,

until the time Nigeria, as a sovereign state, became a member of UNESCO, and in effect, started sending delegates to international conferences organized by UNESCO.

The education design and curriculum designed for the school age student by the colonial education administrator was patterned after the benchmark of UK standards. This continues for a long time and as an established premise for benchmarking UK in terms of quality improvement in education [37]. The civil war of 1967 did not help matter in terms of developing indigenous framework of quality improvement in education, in that the war pushed the country to waste vital millions of dollars that would have been put in proper reshaping of education framework towards quality improvement [38,39]. Meanwhile UK, as Nigerian benchmark for quality, had gone far ahead in terms of technological application and sustainable continuous quality improvement, thereby leaving Nigeria far behind in education quality in the late 1960s; and since UK education had been developing progressively while Nigeria and other similar African countries are still grasping with the realities of proper education quality development [39]. Lots of resource that would be put into education reformation and development, went to fixing the disrepair caused by the civil war that dragged more than two years [39]. To this point, there has not been a developed world recognized indigenous Total Quality Management (TQM) applied in the university education in Nigeria. Rather targets and standard were set in benchmark of UK [40].

In a related study on the leadership management towards the administration and application of European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Model in education in Nigeria, Ololube (2006) found that the leadership style of the ministry of education is not relevant to educational development needs of Nigeria. Therefore, on this it can be noted educational TQM which the administration and management of Education in Nigeria are trying to use like EFQM is not in total touch with the realities of Nigeria as a country. On this note, the development of an indigenous TQM approach is necessary for higher education quality in Nigeria to improve to the level of internationalization. However, there is a good working regulatory framework in Nigerian universities such as the NUC (National University Commission), but still there is still felt need for a Nigerian kind of TQM in Nigerian Education and industries. However, there are high armies of Human Resource Input available in Nigeria universities to support indigenous TQM implementation but regulatory frameworks like NUC have to ensure compliance [41].

4.0 CONCLUSION

In comparison to Malaysia and other countries that have developed indigenous TQM models, such that have been described above, it can be concluded that there is a need for the design and implementation of an indigenous TQM approach to position Nigerian university education to the status of internationalization so that there can good inflow of foreign student into the region and viable export of knowledge from Africa in returns of economic gains.

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