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A Meta-Analysis of Higher Education Institutions' Adoption of TQM Practices for Quality Education

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ABSTRACT

In the context of global competition, high-quality education is essential for developing human skills that meet industry needs. In order to attain these objective Total Quality Management (TQM) techniques plays a significant role. However, for optimal impact, it is crucial that TQM practices need to be uniformly implemented across all higher education institutions (HEIs).The study aims to assess the extent of TQM adoption in HEIs and evaluate the consistency of its implementation. Findings from this systematic literature review reveal that HEIs demonstrate a high adoption rate in areas such as management involvement, employee focus, and customer focus. However, the adoption rates for other TQM aspects are found to be moderate or low. Therefore, it is imperative for all HEIs to adhere to standardized criteria for implementing TQM processes. This study aims to identify gaps in TQM adoption and provide a comprehensive evaluation of its application across HEIs those work on continuous quality improvement.

Keywords: - TQM Practices, HEIs, Quality Dimensions

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals. It promotes the development of morality, values, and character, enabling people to become responsible citizens who contribute in nation-building and holistic development of the society. The progress of both individuals and the nation as a whole is directly linked to the quality of education. Moreover, education promotes a more informed and law-abiding society by ensuring that individuals understand and respect laws, rights, and regulations, thereby augmenting the community they live in. Education has the transformative power to improve lives by advancing sustainable development, reducing poverty, and fostering peace. As a fundamental human right, education should be accessible to everyone, regardless of gender bias. High-quality education equips individuals with the knowledge base and skills needed to effectively address and resolve challenges at local, regional, and global levels.

“To uphold the fundamental principle that- the destiny of India is being shaped in her classroom, the first Education Commission of independent India (Kothari Commission, 1964–66) put forward a series of im

portant recommendations".

"According to A. S. Altekar, education in India has long been regarded as a powerful force for transformation and enlightenment, shaping and empowering individuals by fostering the progressive and harmonious development of their mental, physical, intellectual, and spiritual faculties".

"As per Article 21(a) of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to education, stating, every state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children aged six to fourteen years in such manner as the state may, by law, determine." This provision, enshrined as one of the fundamental human rights in "Part III of the Indian Constitution, ensures that every individual has the right to free elementary education". It applies equally to all, regardless of caste, creed, colour, gender, place of birth, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, age, or disability.

To enhance education, the Indian National Education Policy (NEP) was revised in 1992, developed on the original draft of 1986. Aligned with the NEP, India is currently progressing towards becoming a knowledge-based superpower, driven by a focus on quality, innovation, and research. The NEP (2020) envisions transforming India into a knowledge-based powerhouse by developing an educational system that makes a significant contribution to this goal. This can only be achieved by providing high-quality education that meets global standards. To support students in recognizing their roles and responsibilities in a progressive changing world, our pedagogy and curriculum must be student-centred, fostering holistic development and preparing them for future challenges.

The advancement of civilization is directly linked to education. A strong education not only fosters personal growth but also moulds the students to acquire the skills needed for the workforce. Key factors that contribute to high-quality education include professional development, the creation of safe and supportive learning environments, the use of high-quality learning resources and technology, and access to qualified teachers. These elements are essential for ensuring that students receive the best possible educational experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TQM in Higher Education Institutions

Formerly it was believed that, TQM techniques were primarily associated with manufacturing sectors. However, over time, these approaches were successfully adopted by service industries, yielding impressive results. Malcolm Baldrige's quality philosophy played a pivotal role in revolutionizing quality management within the service sector, demonstrating that TQM principles can be just as effective in enhancing service delivery as they are in manufacturing.The adoption and implementation of TQM methods have significantly influenced the educational environment, as education is one of the most valuable services provided by the service industry. In United States Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (1987) was established to recognize organizations that exhibit excellence across all service areas, including non-profit and educational institutions. This award has played a critical role in encouraging quality improvements and application of best practices in education and other sectors.

TQM Dimensions of Malcolm Baldrige

The Baldrige Education Criteria consist of seven key components: knowledge management, workforce, operations, results, measurement, strategic planning, leadership, and customer focus. By effectively implementing TQM principles, educational institutions can deliver world-class education, enhance their global reputation, and contribute to the country's overall development.

Various studies have explored the relationship, impact, and influence of TQM methods on institutional

excellence, high-quality education, and the achievement of global competency. The following is a summary of their key findings.

In their study, Sabra & Mohamed (2020) emphasised that the main barriers to TQM adoption are funding, organisational culture, scientific research, human resources, educational technology, community service, curriculum, and top management commitment. Bahir et al. (2020) highlighted in their study that by implementing academic supervision of classroom learning, fostering independence and community participation, and emphasizing quantum learning and innovation, educational institutions can enhance their research quality and overall development. Mohamda (2019) in his study found, weak positive correlation between performance and process management, moderate positive correlation of performance with strategic planning, and strong positive correlation of performance with factors such as student focus and human resources. Cabacang (2021) indicated that higher education institutions (HEIs) demonstrated a strong TQM adoption in areas such as top-management commitment, teaching and learning delivery modes, campus amenities, system and process management, customer satisfaction, and linkages. However, HEIs showed a moderate level of acceptance in strategic planning and data management. Mahmood et al. (2021) revealed in their study that while public and private universities were striving to implement TQM practices, they quiet lagged in certain aspects, such as quality infrastructure and quality assurance processes, which are key TQM indicators. Almurshid (2017) found that TQM implementation in HEIs was generally average, except in the areas of academic affairs and community service. However, educational leaders perceived TQM as average, with the exception of strategic planning. Sivaramakrishnan (2016) identified key factors influencing quality improvement in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including the use of technology, supplier services, training, quality policy, qua;ity culture, operating procedure and human resource management. Purwati and Kadir (2018), in their study, identified nine priorities essential for achieving a high student achievement index. These priorities include research supervision by lecturers, lecturers' discipline, technological proficiency, assessment methods, academic staff's patience and dedication in service delivery, English proficiency, the academic environment, and the efficacy of academic information. Platis and Fragouli (2019) concluded in their study that achieving a strong competitive advantage in the higher education sector, both domestically and internationally, requires the adoption of a system and methodology based on TQM principles and the EFQM Excellence Model. Kinker et al. (2021) identified curricular structure and physical facilities as key appealing features of service quality in educational institutions. On the other hand, they highlighted infrastructure, academic excellence, library assets, employment opportunities, career counselling, and faculty quality as essential components that significantly influence service quality. Vyas (2020) highlights a significant positive association between student satisfaction, management commitment, employee involvement, and continuous improvement in HEIs. The study also suggests that the application of TQM principles in Indian HEIs has the potential to enhance their global competitiveness in delivering quality education. Hota et al. (2020) identified several critical factors contributing towards successful implementation of TQM in HEIs. These factors include organizational culture, scientific research, human resources, strategic planning, educational technology, community service, educational curriculum, management involvement, student focus, and infrastructure. Indiya et al. (2021) highlighted the mediating role of organizational culture in significantly enhancing organizational performance. Their study indicates that the interactive influence of organizational culture plays a pivotal role in driving performance improvements. Pushpa (2016) indicated that TQM significantly impacts an institution's objectives, mission, and vision, adding value by fostering growth

and improving quality. Abubakar et al. (2018) revealed that management shows commitment only to quality assurance and quality control, which are aspects of TQM. The study furthermore concluded that the TQM philosophy is absent in public HEIs. Abuamer (2021) highlighted key quality indicators that significantly affect sustainable quality education, including continuous improvement of the educational process, predictive measures to identify factors impacting education, organizational structure, objectives, program renewal, administrative operations, democracy at work, student quality, and an understanding of the total quality culture and its impact on educational improvement. Kigozi et al. (2019) depicted that the crucial TQM strategies employed in educational institutions include customer focus, continuous improvement, and top management commitment. El Hawi and Alzyadat (2019) revealed the three major components of TQM—participation, development, and evaluation—have a significant effect on student satisfaction. Mutohir et al. (2019) in their study revealed that effective planning and evaluation of various management activities conducted over a specific period—including human resource management, the learning process, and higher education administration—can significantly enhance the quality of education. Zanqar et al. (2019) highlighted that to achieve high educational standards, institutions must fully implement all principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), including employee engagement, customer focus, quality processes, continuous improvement, leadership, relationship management and data-driven decision-making. Salama and Swareldahab (2019) in their study revealed a significant positive correlation between organizational performance in private universities and key success factors of Total Quality Management (TQM), including employee awareness, continuous improvement, and organizational culture and environment. Kwarteng (2021) concluded that continuous improvement, management commitment, customer focus and organisational and TQM culture are the vectors those have significant relation to achieve institutional goal, mission and vision. Kistiani and Permana (2020) in their study revealed that by implementing TQM in a continuous and consistent manner, higher education institutions can succeed in a highly competitive global environment and gain benefits that contribute to advancing and enhancing the quality of education. Akbar et al. (2019) in their study showed that instructors were not consulted during curricular modifications, resulting in a lack of collaboration between management and educators. Another issue highlighted in the study was that students perceived the institution as neglecting property maintenance, which posed challenges to the implementation of quality management. Msallam et al. (2020) revealed that Total Quality Management (TQM) awareness, leadership, infrastructure, periodic evaluation, and training contribute to creating a competitive advantage for higher education institutions (HEIs). Ahmed (2018) stated that the performance of operations, employees, innovation, and social responsibility significantly affects institutional performance.

Summary

According to the studies referenced, HEIs that have adopted TQM philosophies are showing significant improvements in institutional quality. However, it was also observed that the application of TQM practices varies widely across institutions. The current study aims to inspect on the adoption rate of TQM principles by HEIs to enhance their quality.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The growth and development of any organization, whether in the manufacturing or service sector, are significantly influenced by the quality indicators of TQM. The current study aims to inspect the adoption rate of various TQM concepts discussed in existing research and determine whether there are systematic

guidelines for higher education institutions (HEIs) in implementing TQM practices.

Research Objective

To find out whether there is any structured guidelines and policies available for adoption of TQM practices for HEIs.

HYPOTHESIS

H_1: There are no structured guidelines and policies for TQM practices in HEIs.

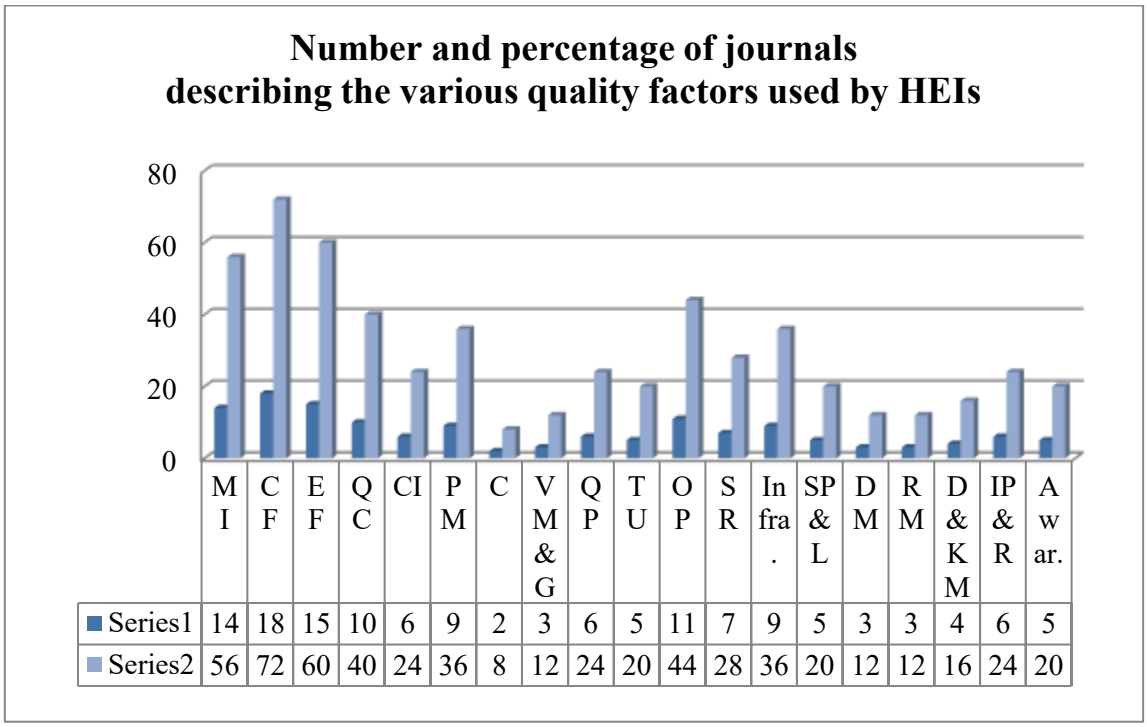
Table-1 Analysis of TQM Practices in HEIs

TQM Factors → / Authors ↓	MI	CF	EF	QC	CI	PM	C	VM & G	QP	TU	OP	SR	Infra.	SP & L	DM	RM	D & KM	IP & R	Awar.
Sabra & Mohamed, 2020	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔				✔		✔							
Bahir et al., 2020		✔				✔					✔	✔						✔	
Mohamda, 2019		✔	✔			✔							✔						
Cabacang, 2021	✔	✔	✔			✔							✔	✔				✔	
Mahmood et al., 2021											✔		✔						
Almurshidee, 2017											✔	✔		✔					
Sivaramakrishan, 2016		✔	✔	✔					✔	✔	✔								
Purwati & Kadir, 2018		✔	✔							✔	✔						✔		
Platis & Fragouli, 2019	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Kinker et al., 2021		✔	✔								✔		✔						
Vyas, 2020	✔	✔	✔																✔
Hota et al.,	✔	✔		✔								✔	✔	✔				✔	

2020																			
Indiya et al., 2021				✔															
Pushpa, 2016				✔				✔											
Abubakar et al., 2018	✔			✔															
Abuamer, 2021	✔	✔		✔		✔													
Kigozi et al., 2019	✔	✔	✔		✔														
El Hawi & Alzyadat, 2019	✔				✔						✔								
Mutohir et al., 2019	✔	✔	✔						✔										
Zanqar et al., 2019	✔	✔	✔		✔				✔						✔	✔	✔		
Salama& Swareldahab, 2019				✔	✔	✔					✔								✔
Kistiani & Permana, 2020	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Akbar et al., 2019	✔	✔	✔			✔							✔						
Msallam et al., 2020	✔	✔	✔						✔				✔						✔
Ahmed, 2018		✔	✔								✔	✔						✔	
TOTAL	14	18	15	10	6	9	2	3	6	5	11	7	9	5	3	3	4	6	5
%age	56	72	60	40	24	36	8	12	24	20	44	28	36	20	12	12	16	24	20

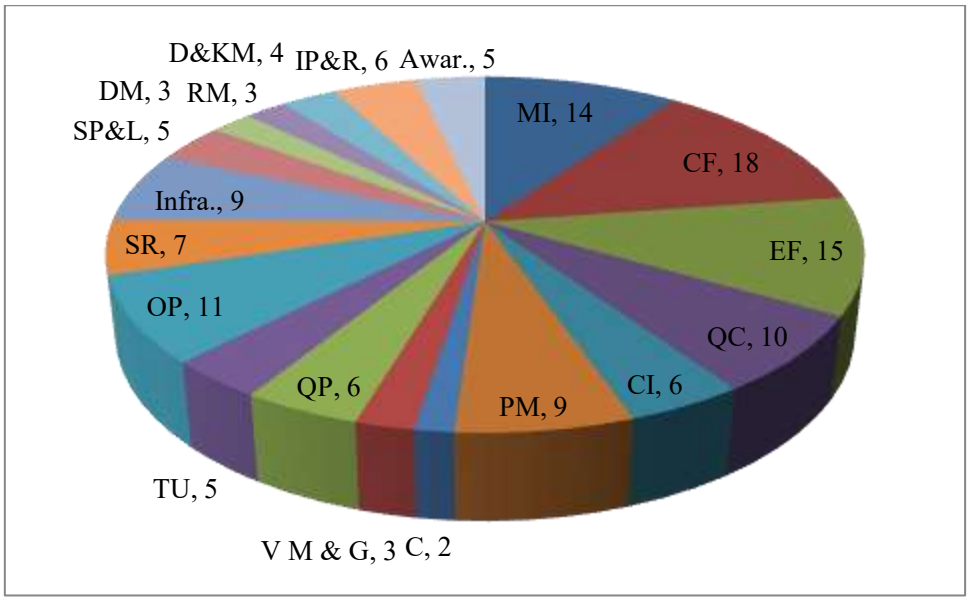
(* ✔-Indicates that the respective factor contributing for quality education.)

Analysis - 1.1



(Graph-1)

Analysis -1.2



(Chart-1)

(* MI- Management Involvement, CF- Customer Focus, EF-Employee Focus, QC- Quality Culture, CI- Continuous Improvement, PM- Process Management, C- Communication, V M & G- Vision Mission and Goal, QP- Quality Policy, TU- Technology Utilisation, OP-Operating Procedure, SR- Social Responsibility, Infra.- Infrastructure, SP&L- Strategic Planning & Leadership, DM- Decision Making, RM- Relationships Management, D&KM- Data & Knowledge Management, IP&R-Innovation Performance & Research, Awar.- Awareness)

From the outcome of the different authors above chart reflects customer focus, employee focus, management involvement and operating procedure are the major TQM indicators for quality enhancement in HEIs. Besides that quality culture, continuous improvement, infrastructure and strategic planning & leadership contributes significantly for quality enhancement. All other parameters have low significant contribution towards quality enhancement of HEIs.

FINDINGS

- 72% of the articles reflect that Customer Focus (Student Focus) is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 60% of the articles reflect that Employee Focus is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 56% of the articles reflect that Management Involvement is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 44% of the articles reflect that Operating Procedure is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 40% of the articles reflect that Quality Culture is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 36% of the articles reflect that Process Management, are the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 36% of the articles reflect that Infrastructure is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 28% of the articles reflect that Social Responsibility is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 24% of the articles reflect that Continuous Improvement is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 24% of the articles reflect that Quality Policy is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 24% of the articles reflect that Innovation Performance & Research is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 20% of the articles reflect that Technology Utilisation is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 20% of the articles reflect that awareness is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 20% of the articles reflect that Strategic Planning and Leadership is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 16% of the articles reflect that Data & Knowledge Management is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 12% of the articles reflect that Vision Mission and Goal is the TQM factors contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 12% of the articles reflect that Decision Making is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.

- 12% of the articles reflect that Relationships Management is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.
- 8% of the articles reflect that Communication is the TQM factor contributing for quality education in HEIs.

Table-2 RESULTS

TQM Dimensions	Described in %age of Articles	Remarks
Customer Focus	72%	High Adoption
Employee Focus	60%	High Adoption
Management Involvement	56%	High Adoption
Operating Procedure	44%	Moderate Adoption
Quality Culture	40%	Moderate Adoption
Process Management	36%	Moderate Adoption
Infrastructure	36%	Moderate Adoption
Social Responsibility	28%	Moderate Adoption
Continuous Improvement	24%	Low Adoption
Quality Policies	24%	Low Adoption
Innovation Performance & Research	24%	Low Adoption
Technology Utilisation	20%	Low Adoption
Strategic Planning & Leadership	20%	Low Adoption
Awareness	20%	Low Adoption
Data & Knowledge Management	16%	Low Adoption
Vision Mission and Goal	12%	Low Adoption
Decision Making	12%	Low Adoption
Relationships Management	12%	Low Adoption
Communication	8%	Low Adoption

≥ 50% High adoption
25% - ≤ 50% Moderate Adoption
≤ 25%Low Adoption

CONCLUSION

Research on HEIs across several publications indicates that certain quality dimensions of TQM are widely adopted, while others remain underdeveloped. The elements of management involvement, employee focus, and customer focus are highly embraced as key components of quality within HEIs, signalling a strong commitment to stakeholder satisfaction and organizational performance. These practices align with the essential principles of TQM, emphasizing the need for active leadership, an engaged workforce, and a clear orientation toward meeting the needs of both students and external partners. Moderate acceptance is found in quality dimensions such as infrastructure, social responsibility, process management, operating procedures, and quality culture. While these elements are acknowledged and somewhat integrated into the practices of HEIs, their full potential for fostering continuous improvement and achieving excellence has not been fully realized. Many institutions show a

willingness to improve their physical and organizational infrastructure, while fostering a responsible social stance and optimizing operational processes, yet these areas often lack systematic integration into a broader, strategic TQM framework. However, HEIs have yet to fully adopt a number of critical TQM dimensions, which are fundamental for advancing institutional performance. These include communication, quality policies, innovation, performance management, research and technology utilization, strategic planning and leadership, awareness, data and knowledge management, vision, mission, and goal alignment, decision-making processes, and relationship management. The lack of robust implementation of these dimensions suggests an area of potential growth for HEIs, where clearer strategies, more informed decision-making, and a stronger connection between leadership and institutional goals could drive greater institutional success. Without these dimensions, HEIs risk missing opportunities for innovation and sustainable development, which are key to competing in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.To enhance the overall adoption of TQM in HEIs, it is crucial to emphasize the integration of these underdeveloped dimensions. This would involve the creation of a comprehensive quality management strategy that not only focuses on the immediate operational concerns but also encompasses long-term strategic goals, innovation, and continuous learning.

SUGESSTIONS

The analysis clearly indicates that various HEIs are implementing different dimensions of TQM to varying extents. However, the implementation of these TQM principles is not uniform across institutions, with each HEI adopting and applying them based on its own unique approach and priorities. This inconsistency suggests that HEIs are able to integrate TQM techniques without necessarily adhering to a standardized or defined framework. Consequently, there is no cohesive strategy guiding the widespread application of TQM across the sector.To ensure a more systematic and unified approach, it is imperative that governments or relevant regulatory bodies develop a comprehensive and standardized set of TQM guidelines for HEIs. These guidelines should be tailored to the specific needs of the educational sector but should also promote global competitiveness by aligning with international best practices. A structured, mandatory approach would not only foster greater consistency in quality management practices across HEIs but also enhance their ability to deliver quality education and research outcomes on a global scale. Furthermore, while the findings from this analysis provide valuable insights, they could have been even more comprehensive and accurate had a broader range of publications been considered. The inclusion of additional studies would likely offer a more nuanced understanding of the diverse ways in which TQM is implemented within HEIs and reveal any emerging trends or best practices that could further inform policy and strategy development in the higher education sector.

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