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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECT OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRUTECH, CALABAR CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the effect of total quality management on the management of the Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) and concludes that total quality management is consistent with higher education environment and is based on fundamental educational values such as human resource development, life-long learning, rational problem solving and social benefit. These higher education quality principles emphasize the fact that the information students get in the classrooms should be reinforced in the manner CRUTECH is being operated. They should be a conceptual shift from person-focused to system-focused thinking. It is essential that total quality management should be the basis of how work is performed, the quality of students trained in the University, how people are held accountable for what they do in the institutions, how people are evaluated, promoted or disciplined and how effectively higher education services are provided. This should be the hallmark of applying total quality management to the management of not only CRUTECH but also other universities in Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Total quality management strategy is defined as a form of statistical quality control, invented by Walter A. Shewhart in 1920. The purpose was, and still remains, to ensure that customers receive an excellent, quality product. This is achieved by conducting periodic stage-by-stage inspections to ensure that products meet minimum quality standards (Bateman and Zeithaml, 1993). When applied to secondary school situations, students come in as raw materials. They are subjected to teaching and learning activities with periodic evaluations to ensure they meet minimum academic and/or professional standards with some being advised to repeat classes or change course combinations if they cannot perform satisfactorily in the course combinations they had chosen. Besides, the curriculum offers different subject combinations and trade choices are available to those who cannot successfully complete secondary school education and proceed to higher institutions for further studies (CRSG, 2013). Striving for continuous improvement in the management of higher education in Cross River State is one of the foremost goals of education in an educationally backward state.

However, how to adopt quality principles and practices in the management of higher education in the state has been a major problem because since its creation. The state has never involved its own educational policy. The state has always struggled to "fit in" into the educational policies of the country. A look at the Nigerian educational system reveals a clear shift from the traditional bureaucratic pattern of management of higher education to a more result-oriented information-driven and research-based management of higher education. This new approach appears to have awakened the CRS government to its responsibility for a definite education policy for its citizens. Before 2002, Cross River State proudly owned three accredited institutions of higher education (the Polytechnic, Calabar; College of Education, Akamkpa and IBB College of Agriculture, Obubra). These institutions existed alongside other non-accredited institutions of higher education (Management Development Institute, Calabar; Central school of Nursing and Midwifery, Calabar; School of Health Technology, Calabar and Schools of Nursing and Midwifery at Calabar, Abi, Ogoja and Obudu. These accredited and non-accredited schools of higher education catered for the manpower development needs of the state and were supplemented by the University of Calabar, Calabar and Federal College of Education, Obudu.

However, from 2003, the state government decided to merge (collapse) the three accredited institutions of higher education (Cross River University of Technology CRUTECH) with locations in Calabar, Obubra, Ogoja and Okuku in Yala Local Government Area. The Calabar Campus houses the Faculties of Biological Science, Physical Sciences Engineering, Communication Technology, Architecture and General Studies; Obubra for the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, Ogoja for the Faculty of Management Sciences and Okuku for the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The important question now is: has this method of higher education reforms enhanced CRS indigenes' access to higher education; improved or jeopardized the effective management of higher education in the state? What has the Quality Assurance Unit of CRUTECH done to help Cross River State achieve its higher education goals and objectives as stated in the Vision and Mission of CRUTECH? This empirical paper answers these questions by explaining how the Quality Assurance Unit of the university uses total quality management principles in managing CRUTECH.

Total Quality Management (TQM) involves product quality control determined through regular inspections by measuring, examining and testing the products for quality, processes and services against specific requirements from the arrival of raw materials to the finished product stages. This is to ensure that each element adhered to set standards and guidelines. Secondary schools also receive students as raw materials; subject them to theoretical and practical training, periodic evaluation for remedial academic instruction and final certification on qualification. This strategy helps CRUTECH Management not only to gain a better understanding of planning and ordering their operations but also efficient resource allocation and decision making process for achieving organizational efficiency.

Theoretical framework: The first theory of this paper is the vision and mission of CRUTECH which are to "seek to be a center of excellence in technology with highly qualified staff and excellent teaching and research facilities for production of graduates that can compete with their peers anywhere in the world." Another theory that guides this paper is Taylor Francis' Holistic Theory that emphasizes the principles of continuous improvement, customer focus, team involvement and data driven. Deming's theory of Total Quality Management rests upon fourteen points of management he identified, the system of profound knowledge, and the Shewart Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act). He is known for his ratio - Quality is equal to the result of work efforts over the total costs. If a company is to focus on costs, the problem is that costs rise while quality deteriorates. Deming's system of profound knowledge consists of the following four points:

- **System Appreciation** - an understanding of the way that the company's processes and systems work
- **Variation Knowledge** - an understanding of the variation occurring and the causes of the variation
- **Knowledge Theory** - the understanding of what can be known
- **Psychology Knowledge** - the understanding of human nature.

It is his conclusion that by being aware of the different types of knowledge associated with an organization, and then quality can be broached as a topic. Quality involves tweaking processes using knowledge.

Literature Review

Literatures reviewed for this paper include empirical studies conducted by the following researchers: Ogunnaike, Borishade, Adeniyi, and Chinelo, (2014) investigated "An Empirical Analysis of Total Quality Management and Perceived Corporate Image in Higher Education Management". The researchers found that the independent variable (total quality management) contributed significantly to the corporate image of higher institutions. The study concluded that there was no difference in the relationship between total quality management and the corporate image of private and public universities in Nigeria and recommended that Nigerian universities put in place processes, standards and support infrastructure that will enhance effective learning and updating staff, ensure that admission policies and procedures emphasize admission of qualified students based on merit; avoid politicization of admissions and encourage stakeholders to improve the overall quality of Nigerian universities. Nwangwa & Omotere (2013) conducted a study on "the new roles of school managers in managing educational changes in Nigerian schools" and found that Education in Nigeria is rapidly changing and technically tailored towards meeting certain goals such as the Education for All (EFA, 2015) and the Nigeria Vision 20:2020. Recommendations were made for the retraining of school management teams to help them execute their expected managerial roles in meeting the nation's national goals. Akpan and Onabe (2016) investigated management of students' personnel services and sustainable Secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The researchers found that management of students' personnel guidance/counseling and recreational services significantly correlated with sustainable students' academic work and recommended that both the government and school administrators should work together to provide essential facilities for effective management of students' personnel services. van Ooijen, Cresswell, Slee, Coleman, Williams, Bates and Sheikh (2013) investigated qualitative analysis of round-table discussions on business and procurement challenges for hospital electronic prescribing systems. It emphasized round-table discussions on business cases and procurement challenges. This is one area that usually generates controversies, clash of personalities and loss of confidence between Management and staff of CRUTECH. Other materials reviewed included: Block (1989), Denning (1985), Kistiani and Permana (2018), Thamizhmanii and Sulaiman (2018), Larinaa (2015) and Papanthymou and Darra (2017).

TQM and Quality Assurance Unit in CRUTECH: This Unit is responsible for monitoring quality performance, through assessment and evaluation of the university's activities on regular basis, in order to receive feedbacks for amelioration and thus promote productivity and development. Quality Assurance and Enhancement (commonly abbreviated as QA) refers to a collection of processes each School in the University is responsible for carrying out, gathering and analyzing student feedback on the quality of courses and programmes from their perspective. Academic quality is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them. The main functions of the Unit are to: Establish and monitor quality standards and practices; Promote a quality culture and quality assurance systems; and conduct QA related research.

Consequently, the Quality Assurance Unit of CRUTECH has been carrying out validation activity that validates the product against the requirements, defining processes, quality audit, and selection of tools, process checklists, process standards, process documentation and project audit. In order to achieve these objectives, the Quality Assurance Unit of CRUTECH has utilized the following techniques:

- QA team starting with the discovery phase.
- Plan and record testing process.
- Test-driven development
- Obligatory code review for every single feature.
- Does neglect integration testing.
- Automate when possible.
- Always remember user experience.
- Ask questions when necessary.

With specific reference to CRUTECH, as evidence of the hard work of the Quality Assurance Unit of the University, the institution enjoys complete and comprehensive accreditation of its programmes in all the four campuses. Therefore, this researcher recommends that the QA Unit of the University should be sustained and supported as well as the Unit institutionalizing Quality Assurance as continuous process in all academic, administrative and service departments of the University.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate the lessons from some institutions of higher education which reinforce quality principles presented in this article. Particularly, these are in line with the beliefs of the *American Association for Higher Education (1994)* which suggests that stakeholders in higher education should: ensure committed leadership because leadership is a critical factor; training facilitators because they are essential; demand and initial commitment from the Board, Senate, Council, the Vice Chancellor, Deans, Directors and lecturers; engage academic staff in an intellectual dialogue about total higher education quality early in the process; communicate the mission and vision statements to staff to gain more understanding and ownership of the process; do not view continuous quality as an end but a means to achieving desired outcomes; clarify all employees' expectations about their role in contributing in quality improvement in higher education; change reward and incentive systems to encourage improvement in higher education quality; change performance appraisals, job descriptions and recognition to incorporate goal for sustainable quality improvement in higher education; spend time talking about institutional and cultural change to prepare employees for transformation when it becomes necessary; make training a top priority and allocate resources to support on-going training; integrate higher education quality with strategic planning and emphasize personal change early by helping people understand that quality is a philosophy. Finally, quality principles that are consistent with higher education environment are based on fundamental educational values such as human resource development, life-long learning, rational problem solving and social benefit. These quality principles emphasize that the information students get in the classrooms be reinforced in a manner that the university is being operated. Hull (1992) argues that if the administrative and academic processes can be in alignment with the ways that more effectively prepare students for the challenges of life.

A conceptual shift from person-focused to system-focused thinking is essential. Total quality management should be the basis of how work is performed, how people are held accountable, how people are evaluated, promoted or disciplined and how effectively higher education services are provided. This should be hallmark of applying total quality management to the management of higher education in not only Cross River State but Nigeria as a whole.

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