

REVITALIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES : A TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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Abstract

Critical for the production of high level manpower capable of planning and executing public and private sector development plans, programmes, and projects, is the quality of teaching and learning in our universities. As we all know, quality graduates are often derive from quality teaching and learning processes. A number of research reports (Sawyers, 2004; Hayward, 2003) have observed the declining state of teaching and learning in universities(including those in Southern African sub-region), calling for greater use of collaboration and active modes of teaching, creation of learning communities, and more personal contacts between students and faculty. Although universities in South Africa and some in Southern African countries have embraced the outcome-based curricula, much remains to be seen in terms of developing seamless quality systems, structures and procedures that result in dependable products which bridge the skills-gap between universities and the world of work.

Against this background, the purpose of this paper is to advocate the integration of total quality management approach into the teaching learning process of Southern African universities. Total quality management (TQM) is a philosophy or system of long-term organizational operation geared towards the continuous improvement of services/products that meet customer requirements at the lowest cost. Studies show that an increasing number of universities in America, Europe and East Asia adopt TQM for the improvement of classroom teaching and learning outcomes. This paper examines the TQM philosophy (including customer orientation, continuous improvement, active involvement of all organization members, data -based learning, teamwork and lowest cost production). It highlights the values derived from adopting various TQM tools and techniques in university teaching and learning contexts.

Finally, it suggests strategies that are to be used to integrate TQM into the teaching/learning processes of the Southern African universities in order to effect higher standards of knowledge-building as well as overall organizational and individual performance.

Introduction

An important global phenomenon is the changing landscape of the higher education sector. In many countries of the world the pace of economic development and transformation has increased and has ushered in more demand for highly skilled manpower, many of whose educational preparation derive from tertiary educational institutions. In the past two decades, higher education has greatly expanded not only in terms of the diversity of programmes and volume of student enrolment but also in the nature of demands and challenges placed on it by the market place and the society in general.

These challenges and demands impinge more so on university education, often regarded as the bastion of academic excellence. Globally, universities are looked upon as the ultimate ports of call for the education of high level manpower capable of managing programmes and projects of government, companies and other corporate organisations. Paradoxically, a number of researches (Sawyer, 2004; Hayward, 2003) have observed the declining state of teaching and learning in universities, calling for more efficient, effective and quality oriented methods. Although quality management and quality control of university education is not a new phenomenon globally, the universities in Southern Africa (with special reference to those in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa) have only recently embarked on systematic measures to assure their quality.

Many of the factors which gave rise to a quality culture in university education internationally are also common to Southern African universities (Fourie, 1998). They include the general public concern with the increase in public expenditure on higher education, the massification of higher education, the demand for increased accountability from government and the public, growing student and staff mobility, rapid technological growth and development. Other factors are the impact of globalisation, information technology and the increasing diversity and voice of university clientele.

Although universities in Southern Africa have on their own institutional basis, developed some procedures of self-evaluation, no national quality assurance system existed in Southern African university education in the past. Mechanisms and procedures for self-evaluation and quality improvements have for many years been part and parcel of the institutional policies and practices (Lategan, 1997)

The institutional autonomy along with the self-regulatory powers of universities granted by government implied that universities are legally recognized as independent certification bodies. At the moment more changes are taking place in Southern African Universities, amongst others, in terms of quality management, quality assurance and quality control, but much remains to be seen in terms of Total Quality Management (TQM) and quality culture that promotes a sense of ownership among the various stakeholders. Consequently, there is an urgent need for the establishment of total quality management culture capable of strengthening the capacity development capabilities of Southern African Universities.

The rest of this paper is divided into five sections. The first section examines the concept of TQM while the second highlights the purposes of TQM. The third section reviews the quality policies and practices in Southern Africa while the fourth suggests the strategies that would be employed to facilitate the incorporation of TQM culture into the teaching and learning processes of our universities. Finally, section five concludes the paper.

Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management can be viewed as a logical extension of the way in which quality (consistent conformance to customers' expectations) and quality practices have progressed overtime (Slack N., Chambers S. and Johnson R., 2001). While quality practices such as inspection (screening out defects before they were noticed by customers) and quality control (not only inspecting but treating quality problems) have been the touchstone in education all over the world (Kistan, 1999), the same cannot be said of quality assurance and TQM which have been dominantly practised in the manufacturing industrial and services sectors of the advanced countries such as Japan, USA and United Kingdom. Quality assurance refers to the systems in place that are used to control formally and guarantee the quality of products and services produced by an organisation (Kruger, et al 2007). It has widened the responsibility of quality to include such elements as quality systems, problem solving and quality planning.

TQM is a much wider concept than quality assurance and has included a substantial part of what went on before in quality assurance practices, in addition to some new and distinctive quality themes. Due to the new and distinctive themes, TQM represents a clear shift from quality business and practice as usual. In this paper TQM is defined as a long term effort by an organisation to change its own management approach towards the production of goods and services that continuously meet customer requirements at the lowest cost possible by releasing the potentials of all organisational resources (Yalokwu, 2006). Customers have tastes and much of their tastes have to do with excellence in terms of meeting their needs/requirements. So TQM is not just a management approach, but a whole philosophy of how to approach quality management to ensure that customers needs are met in a cost-effective manner. It is a whole style of individual, group and organisational working towards continuous quality performance.

TQM was introduced in the 1930's by American statistician Dr. W. Edward Deming who developed full systems of quality control in the United States of America (Deming, 1986). Deming held strong views about how to achieve excellence in manufacturing industry in USA, but having been ignored for several years, he relocated to Japan (after the World War II) where his work was able to contribute to Japan's technological break-through even as far back as the 1950's.

Other contributors to TQM revolution are Dr. Joseph Juran and Philip Crosby. Based on the work of these quality gurus, TQM as we know it today has become an

integrated and systematic approach to quality thinking and working which lays particular emphasis on the following themes:

- Meeting the needs and expectations of the customers
- Covering all parts of the organisation
- Involvement of every person in the organisations
- Examining all costs which are related to quality, especially failure costs.
- Getting things right first time(and at all times)
- Developing systems and procedures which support quality and improvement.
- Developing continuous process of improvement
- Team work
- Management by fact and data
- Effective and transformational leadership
- Continuous training and retraining of employees

Following the success story of the application of TQM in industries and services sectors(including schools, colleges and universities) in Japan, USA and Britain (Juran, 2006; Carruthers, 2001; Guest and Duhs, 2003; Kistan, 1999) one is hereby asking the reason why TQM which has worked well in proximate establishments outside Africa, should not also work well in Southern African universities. While the improvement of quality education in higher institutions is not a new topic but a highly researched one(Fourie, 1998; Strydom, 1995; NCHE, 1996; QPU, 1997; RSA, 1997) attempts at instituting TQM in university education are at a relatively early stage of discussion. In fact, quality assurance measures have since been championed by the Council for Higher Education(CHE)(of South Africa) and its agencies but TQM is at the moment not practised at any co-ordinated fashion in the universities of Southern Africa. It is in view of this quality gap that this paper is making a case for TQM to be adopted as a way of normal business in our universities.

Purposes of Total Quality Management

A range of international studies including those of the Commission for European Communities (1993), European Training Foundation (1998), Kember (1997) Ratcliff (1997), Strydom (1995), Republic of South Africa (1997), Hayward (2005) have documented the purposes of total quality management in work organisations including universities. TQM serves many useful purposes in that it :

- 1) Ensures accountability for use of public funds and therefore value for money.
- 2) Improves the quality of higher education through the innovative approaches adopted.
- 3) Informs funding decisions
- 4) Provides timely feedback to students' employers and other stakeholders about the conditions that make for better learning and better products.
- 5) Stimulates competitiveness within and between institutions.
- 6) Fosters equitable quality check on both public and private institutions.
- 7) Assigns institutional status
- 8) Makes international comparisons

- 9) Creates learning environment in which openness, freedom and lack of fear are hallmarks.
- 10) Enables both teachers and students to get the support needed and take pride in achieving the maximum output at the least cost to all concerned.
- 11) Emphasizes the advantages of teamwork and collaboration at the level of individual staff members, departments and institutions.
- 12) Instills in management the importance of guidance and support for employees through continual training and retraining.
- 13) Instills in management the appreciation of the advantages of collective decision making by teams.
- 14) Stimulates management by measurement, that means every decision and performance measures are checked against hard facts and data; and
- 15) Enhances programme effectiveness and improves teaching and learning.

Quality Policies, Practices and Patterns of Responses

a). *Quality Policies and Practices*

The general trend in quality policies in the universities of Southern African countries is that each university is recognized by the state as an autonomous institution and independent certification body primarily responsible for its own quality assurance by virtue of private act by which it was established. As such all the universities in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa determine their own curriculum contents, duration of programmes, student numbers, admission criteria, methods of instruction, examinations and granting of qualifications. They all adopt quality improvement through institutional self-evaluation and peer evaluation of research and publications. Where appropriate, they share good practices among institutions. Examples of good practices range from student evaluation/participation/representation systems, staff development/workshops, innovative approaches to academic functioning, to collaboration between institutions or departments. Also common among the universities is the exercise of their responsibilities over the years, concerning quality assurance involving a practice of submitting their assessment of student performance at the higher level to some form of external examination (except in the case of the University of Botswana whose external moderation of examination has recently been scrapped).

Further more, in many professional fields (such as Medicine, Accountancy, Business, and Pharmacy) the professional programmes are subject to some form of accreditation by the professional boards concerned. Such accreditation is normally based on self-evaluation exercise at the university and a subsequent on-site visit by a team of peers. In addition some universities have introduced regular evaluations of academic department in which teaching and research quality is assessed. In universities where such practice has been introduced, the quality levels have been enhanced considerably (Fourie, M., Westhuizen, L. V. D., Alt, H., and Holtzhausen, S., (1995). There is however no all encompassing systematic co-ordination of quality management and quality assurance across the various universities in Southern Africa.

In the case of South Africa, a number of government policies have been made especially following the transition from apartheid and minority rule to democratic government. According to then Minister of Education, S.M. E. Ebengo, "Our message is that education and training must change. It cannot be business as usual in our schools, colleges, technikons and universities (Department of Education, 1995). One of the numerous tasks of the new democratically elected Government was the transformation and restructuring of higher education. This gave rise to several policy and legal initiatives to transform higher education including universities. This policy elements are documented in reports by the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE, 1996), Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) of the South African Universities' Vice chancellors' Association (SAUVC) (QPU, 1997), Green Paper on Higher Education (RSA, 1996), the Education White Paper 3 (RSA, 1997) and finally the Higher Education Bill (QPU, 1997). While the details of all the above policy documents are beyond the scope of this paper, one would briefly mention that one of the provisions of the National Commission on Higher Education was to help restructure the fragmented higher education sectors into a single coherent national system. The NCHE argues that quality assurance is not only an internal institutional matter, but an essential ingredient of an emerging new relationship between the government and higher education in which the former steers the overall mission and goals of the higher education system. The NCHE (1996) believes that a quality assurance system is central to a single higher education system, and that it is an essential mechanism to tackle quality differentials across institutional programmes and will serve as an important element of institutional governance.

Also the Education White Paper 3 (RSA, 1997) proposed that a Council for Higher Education (CHE, a statutory body) be established and that within its domain, a Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) be formed. The CHE would form an umbrella body for quality assurance in higher education. The functions of the HEQC would include programme accreditation, institutional auditing and quality promotion.

b). *Patterns of Institutional Responses.*

At this juncture one would ask: what are the institutional responses of South African Universities to the quality assurance efforts of government? A review of the documentation of six institutional audits performed by Quality Promotion Unit (QPU, 1997), including self-evaluation portfolios compiled by the institutions themselves, four audits reports compiled by the audit team and four case studies written by the quality officers of the institutions concerned is very revealing. The institutions represent the historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged universities.

Despite context specific variations between the universities, some general patterns were evident in their responses to quality demands. The following general trends could be observed from the six audited universities (Fourie, M., Westhuizen, L. V. D., Alt, H., and Holtzhausen, S. 1995.).

- ◆ **Absence of a shared notion of quality.** According to QPU (1997) the South African Higher education system demonstrates diversity with special reference to the extent to which culture of quality for teaching and learning exists in the various institutions with special reference to the extent to which a culture of quality for teaching and learning exists in the various institutions. This is confirmed by the above-mentioned resources. Most of the institutions concerned had not developed a clearly defined and shared notion of quality at all levels. Different faculties would focus on different mechanisms, for example, elements of discipline, international recognition of qualifications, usefulness in the community, and quality students who would find outside employment. Also, various notions and interpretations of quality exist such as: fitness of purpose, quest for zero defect product quality, service quality, quality assurance, and value for money. So it appears as if quality means different things to different universities and that individual staff members are emphasizing different mechanisms and procedures to attain quality. These differences could be due to the diversity in the higher education system as well as to the fact that South African institutions are still in the process of becoming acquainted with the notion of quality.
- ◆ **Emphasis on accountability and improvement:** External quality reviews worldwide have a dual purpose, namely reviews for accountability and improvement (QPU, 1997). The emphasis on either of these varies depending on the degree of accountability required by the authorities concerned. The fact that quality assurance in South Africa is in its beginning phase and that the QPU focused on improvement during the first round of audits, explains why the purpose of quality mechanisms and procedures in the majority of universities is mainly directed at continuous commitment to improvement and not accountability. The QPU aimed at improvement through institutional self-evaluation and, where appropriate, the sharing of good practice among institutions.
- ◆ **Different notions of self-evaluation:** The awareness and presence of the notion of self-evaluation, which is a necessary requirement to formulate and design a strategic plan, differ among higher education institutions. The majority of the institutions investigated seem to understand the value and importance of self-evaluation, but experienced problems with the establishment and implementation of such a system (Brink, 1996). The functions, areas and issues that impact on quality, differ among higher education institutions. Examples of issues include accommodating disadvantaged students, the employability of graduates humanities, uniqueness of academic departments, policies on accountability and system improvement, improving the quality of life of students taking into account the number of programmes and multiple entry and exit points by means of which students can interrupt their studies.
- ◆ **Impact of external factors:** External factors have specific implications for the quality movement in South Africa. Not all higher education institutions, for example,

are prepared for massification. Their infrastructure did not keep pace with the growth in student numbers; therefore these institutions would need more resources and, because of an increasing number of non-traditional students, have to provide more academic support. This could have quality implications. It is evident that quality has to be included in the strategic planning of institutions. Some universities have Academic Development Centres, which are playing a central role in the university's approach to quality in teaching and learning. The efficiency of these centres is however uneven.

- ◆ **External examination system:** There is diversity among universities with regard to the use of the external examination system. In some cases entire faculties use the system, in others it is used only by individual departments within faculties. Across institutions there is also evidence of disagreement among staff and students with regard to the effectiveness of the external examiner system in maintaining standards, (e.g due to a lack of time at the end of the year, a lack of resources and of experienced examiners). It also appears that the external examination system in some universities has not developed sufficiently to ensure good quality academic programmes.
- ◆ **Student-evaluation of teaching:** It seems that there exist differences with regard to student-evaluation within and among universities. Student evaluation of teaching staff is described as uncoordinated, unregulated, not scientifically designed with no report-back system. Student evaluation of post-graduate supervisors appears to be patchy and inconsistent; furthermore, no structured training exists for research supervisors- this seems to be a general problem in most of the universities. The major problem in assessing teaching excellence seems to be an absence of clear criteria. Although in some universities Excellence of Teaching Awards is in existence, there is still no evidence that this creates general improvement in teaching.
- ◆ **No incentives for curriculum development:** Quality in curriculum development is hampered by the fact that in some universities there are not enough incentives in place for curriculum development and students do not have any input in curriculum development. Some universities demonstrate curriculum changes to adapt to (mainly external) demands (e.g the labour market). These changes include the restructuring of programmes to become more vocationally orientated, implementing multiple entry and exit points, forming programme clusters, internal restructuring of faculties to be more flexible and effective, developing a generic first year, including prior learning in admission requirements.
- ◆ **Quality of students intake:** Student academic development is a vital factor in most South African universities due to the fact that they have to cope with a considerable number of students who are ill-prepared for higher education studies. Some institutions try to solve these problems via bridging programmes. With regard to student intake, there are a number of factors that reflect negatively on quality such as students' financial problems, and poor school leaving results.

◆ **Language Problems:** Language issues such as moving from dual-media(of Afrikaans medium instruction to English as medium) of instruction have major implications for quality at some universities. Additional complicating factors include the fact that English is not the mother tongue of many students, and a high student: staff ratio which necessitates the increasing use of materials to supplement the lack of individual teaching attention. The use of study materials requires a high level of English literacy that is not prevalent among the majority of students.

Strategies to Facilitate TQM in Universities

Against the background of the fact that TQM philosophy and practices have not become the way of life in Southern African universities, the following strategies are hereby suggested for adoption and integration into the university teaching and learning contexts.

1. Create an environment that supports quality systems and culture. Total quality management of any organization requires putting in place the conducive environment in which the organizational functions and activities can take place. The physical, social, technological, economic and political environments of our universities should be structured to accommodate efficient and effective teaching and learning. The university environment should be quality friendly to the extent of attracting all the inputs and processes required to effect quality products/services. Besides, the working climate should be supportive of quality innovations, such that members will be able to openly ask questions and interact with others to build on and develop new and high quality ideas that enhance teaching and learning.

2. Concerted training on quality management: Training on quality and quality management is imperative for all members of the managerial hierarchy of universities. The university administrators including the top management, the professors, lectures and administrative officers should all participate in quality management training. Refresher programmes should also be done on a continual process from time to time after the initial training. Training is needed as quality is a dynamic phenomenon and it is only through targeted training that personnel will gain mastery on quality improvement process.

3. Adopt quality leadership that works. According to Joseph Juran (2002) a total quality management guru, a good starting point for any company that wants to succeed in quality management is to adopt a culture in which the chief executive officer personally leads the quality initiative. If quality management in our universities would succeed, the whole idea must be championed by the Vice-chancellors who by virtue of their positions will provide the inspiration for other universities staff members to follow. Universities are learning organizations that often change and therefore require transformational leaders rather than mere transaction leaders(Yalokwu,2002b).

Transactional leaders care for the self-interest of their constituencies by means of contingent reinforcement. But transformational leaders raise the awareness of their constituencies about what things are important, increase concerns for achievement, self-actualization and ideals. They move the followers to go beyond their self-interest for the good of their group, organization/community or country/society as a whole (Bass, 2000).

4. Include strategic quality goals in the business plan: The strategic quality goals should be incorporated into the business plan of the organization. All categories of employees should be conversant with what the strategic quality goals are, and these should be translated into the specific performance goals at the tactical and operational level of the organizational plans. The Strategic quality goals can be easily facilitated through the construction of quality planning map (Juran, 1999) which details out the activities required to provide the desired quality output.

5. Set up means to measure progress against quality goals: An important element of all TQM process is measurement. Measurements lead to precision and accuracy. It allows the organization to make decisions based on facts and not opinions. Realistic standards of measurement of performance are to be maintained and processes kept within agreed-upon tolerance level.

6. Employee participation in quality decisions: No TQM effort will succeed without carrying along all the employees, right from the Vice-chancellor to the Office assistant. TQM is sometimes referred as "quality at source" (Slack et al, 2001). This notion stresses the impact that each individual staff has on quality, as well as the idea that it is each person's personal responsibility to get quality right. In the university, setting the academic staff will affect the quality of teaching and learning directly but other staff categories such as faculty officers and secretaries will affect quality of teaching and learning indirectly. As integral members of the university, students should be given roles in the TQM function, such as the assessment of one another papers (marking of scripts of junior students) and the assessment classroom performance of their teachers.

7. All costs of quality must be considered: Quality teaching and learning costs money, time and energy. It is therefore necessary to examine all the costs and benefits associated with quality. The costs of quality are usually categorized as prevention costs, appraisal costs, internal failure costs and external failure costs. Prevention costs involve costs incurred in trying to prevent problems, failures and errors occurring in teaching and learning in the first place. In universities it may involve costs of quality selection of staff and students. Appraisal costs are those associated with controlling quality, to check and see if problems or errors have occurred during and after teaching the students. This can be determined through course evaluation survey and peer

assessments. Internal failure costs involve errors dealt with inside the process of teaching and learning. While the external failure costs are those associated with an error going out of the university system to a customer e.g employers of graduates may complain about poor performance by new graduates. It includes loss of customer goodwill which may affect future business transactions.

8. Meeting customer needs continuously: Much more than ever before, the university customers, including students, training course participants, parents of students and employers of labour, are becoming more diversified and more discerning of what they want either in the form of education or training. So in formulation of goals and designing of programmes, there is need to get the customers and clients well informed so that their inputs can be harnessed into the formulation of the curriculum. This should not be a one time affair. Students and trainers should be incorporated into the appraisal of teaching framework, as well as peer evaluation of publications and external examinations. Customer satisfaction surveys should be done from time to time to find out how they (e.g employers) feel about the products of a university. Feedback received from all these evaluations and surveys should be used to improve performance of teachers.

9. External accreditation of programmes: As a matter of urgency, all university programmes and learning infrastructures should be subjected to periodic evaluations through external accreditation visits. The present system (where only some professional programmes such as accountancy and business, engineering engage in external accreditation) does not suffice. The initiative set up for external accreditation by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) should be enforced in a manner to involve Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in setting up mechanism that will make it possible for all university programmes to undergo external accreditation through periodic visits to ascertain the standards of programmes and learning infrastructures in all universities.

10. University as adaptable learning organization: Universities are by their nature learning organizations. As Senge (1990) pointed out, adaptability characterizes learning organizations. As learning organizations, our universities should strive to align the educational interests of their various stakeholders such as government agencies, companies, teachers, students, parents, professional bodies and community. While trying to benchmark the best universities outside Africa, Southern African universities should build their capacities for adaptability to change in their task and macro-environments. Local line leaders in the organization and other senior executives as well as internal net workers and community leaders are needed to motivate and direct the organization and its members to embrace changes towards quality.

11. Strength Alliance with Industry: As we all know, alliances between large companies and their favorite faculties and schools (e.g Engineering and Business) are beginning to spring up with a view to enlarging the roles of universities in preparing for careers in industry and business sectors. These alliances should be strengthened as they help to bridge the gap between the world of work and university. The education faculty and others should take a cue from these other faculties and tailor their programmes to suit the practical realities of the world of work.

12. Encourage team work: TQM involves everyone in the organization; the role of team work in TQM cannot be over-emphasized. In a typical successful organization where TQM has greatly made its continuous marks such as Toyota Company of Japan, team work is a necessity. In Toyota, every decision and every improvement effort must be made collectively by teams and by groups of teams. Members of the larger system are given opportunity to interact. Whatever measures are taken is checked against data at every stage (Taylor, 1990). In the best universities such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Stanford University, key teaching and learning decisions are done by teams of specialists. Southern African universities should therefore bring in more team work to bear on programme planning and design, teaching and evaluation of programmes and teacher appraisal. This team work idea brought by Deming (1986) can also be adapted into our universities and Colleges (Glasser, 1990).

13. Strategic choices of investments: As diversity in clientele and funding capabilities is one of the hallmarks of our universities, quality management will need to follow suit with contextualized approaches. Each university, while not ignoring natural and international standards of teaching and learning will have to develop quality practices that are informed by its own mission and profile (product) mix. Each will make strategic choices about how to invest so as to enhance teaching and learning to suit the needs of its own client group and the constraints of financial and other circumstances. There is need to evolve a system that takes cognizance of the diversities without compromising quality at the national and international levels.

14. Strike a balance between teaching and research: Universities need to strike a balance between teaching, research and public service. Most universities grant promotions to academic staff based on higher weighting of research output. Consequently, the quality of teaching is somehow neglected. University authorities should encourage quality teaching by increasing the weight given to teaching and teaching support activities (Guest and Duhs, 2003). As the realities of lifelong learning take hold, universities like other companies selling products in the open market should seek to attract return business, rather than rely on the new customer (the school leaver). Efficient and effective teaching can improve the quality of university products and therefore the status and quality of the university.

15. Technology based teaching and learning: A major driver of quality teaching and learning is the proper application of modern technology to teaching (Gilbert, 1997). Technology for large access and participation by large numbers of people as well as those that lend themselves to the use of quality tools (such as histograms, scatter diagrams, control charts, fish bone diagrams, etc) make teaching and learning more effective (Hayward, 2006). Sufficient training should be given to both staff and students on how to use these training and learning technologies and tools.

16. Recognize success by offering rewards: If quality improvement are so important, it stands to reason that organisations must find ways to equitably reward teams and individuals whose performance are outstanding. Quality initiatives and efforts should be duly rewarded through promotion, pay increments or by other intrinsic rewards. As most universities have reward systems that heavily compensate individual performance, the general tendency is for staff to neglect team roles and teamwork. To correct this problem, university administrators must encourage and reward team teaching, team research and other team activities

Conclusion

In the foregoing sections of this paper, we have observed amongst others that TQM and quality culture are lacking across the universities in Southern African countries. It is evident that the practice of self-evaluation in the South African universities are undergoing transformation, but still largely comprises a combination of traditional practices applied selectively along with new quality practices. The fine initiatives and efforts made by Republic of South Africa with regard to National policy on quality assurance, external quality auditing and programme accreditation will require far reaching and systematic self-evaluation mechanisms in all the universities to be able to bear fruits. It should be emphasized that "ideal" quality assurance system can only be phased in over a period of time in all the universities. The efforts needed in the different institutions centre around building a culture of high standards of ethical behaviour in self-evaluation and overall management. In addition, the setting up of feasible mechanisms for implementation of quality policies should be properly addressed. The cost of running a national quality assurance system for all the universities as well as the individual institutions in meeting the system's requirements is very colossal but one which is worth it. With the establishment of HEQC of the CHE, there is hope that given the will and determination of all concerned, it would be possible to have an all encompassing internal and external audit and accreditation policy implementation guidelines for all universities, putting into consideration the diversities among universities especially those that are due to historical and cultural factors.

These challenges notwithstanding, the Universities in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland have a lot to learn from South African initiatives especially in connection with external quality auditing and external accreditation. In fact, each of these countries can enlist the assistance of South African quality assurance bodies.

While university education, in Southern Africa, is undergoing rapid and profound transformation, the economic globalisation, technological expansion and different ideological viewpoints of knowledge and information influence the quality assurance system world wide. Hard choices must therefore be made in connection with the ownership of viable quality assurance and TQM systems.

The warning and advice given by Herbert Kells, one of the first experts in quality assessment in higher education is crucial to Southern African countries. Other countries are embarking on the establishment of quality systems, and a danger exists that political and other pressures may tempt the planners to mimic an existing model or to heed the unwise advice of the promoters of one or another existing model that it be applied to their situations regardless of the history, range of institutions and the local cultural attributes (Kells, 1995).

Hence the most crucial challenges are for the Southern African universities to establish total quality culture and quality assurance systems that promote a sense of ownership among the stakeholders of the universities. It is also instructive for them to prioritize quality measures and link them with each institution's strategic plan. Using both top down and bottom up management approaches to handle these challenges, it is quite possible to bridge the existing gap between the quality management practices of Southern African universities and their counterparts in developed countries such as USA, Britain and Japan.

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