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A Study on the Relationship between Selected Processes of Higher Education Institutions in Mumbai

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Abstract: *Academic institutions have academic and non-academic processes through which various tasks are performed and objectives met. Some of these processes are related to each other. The purpose of this paper is to find the relation between 3 such processes namely Admissions, Exams and Placements, in terms of quality. Quality of the processes and hence the institute as a whole can get affected depending on how activitiesin those processes are performed. The study involved using a questionnaire to collect survey data from stakeholders in professional higher education institutes. Activities and tasks in these processes are the main ingredients to study the processes, their quality and interrelation.*
All inter relations between the processes in this context were found to be statistically significant.. Thus the quality of Exam process will affect the Admissions process and thus Admissions of the Institute. Similarly Exam process will have an effect on the Placements process and hence placement of the institute.
Keywords*: Professional Higher Education, Processes, Quality Management.*

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I. Introduction

Quality of the business process and the deliverables is an important parameter in gauging the success of the business. Customer's expectations and the value that they derive from the service are very important aspects ofQuality. Quality is related to profitability and growth of the organization. These are generic definitions and apply to all products i.e. goods and services.

Higher education is important in realizing the potential of a country and lays the foundation for its success. Academic institutions imparting quality education services are likely to sustain themselves in future. Quality of higher education is essential for the country's economic growth and technological innovation. Various reports point out the fact that though the number of higher education institutions across India is high, the quality of education is not upto the mark.In an era where some institutions are closing and many seats are going empty, a study of quality in the education is paramount.

This study delves into finding the relationship between 3 academic processes in terms of Quality of those processes. The study also considers the relation of one process on the quality of the other related process(es).

II. Review of Literature

Quality was originally implemented in manufacturing industry.M.M.Gandhi(2014) gave the evolution and definitions of quality with respect to Higher education. According to him, Higher Education is the key for development & change and has the important task of preparing leadersin various fields of work.M.M.Gandhi (2014), pointed out that only a few reputed institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology are providing education of a desired quality. Higher education, particularly professional education, should be able to deal with global market demands.Total Quality Management (TQM) in Higher Education is a process of continuous improvement with the following features: (1) Focus on customer (stakeholders) expectations, (2) Prevention of problems and (3) Building commitment to quality in the work force. For

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successful implementation of TQM in Higher education, proactive initiatives and measures need to be taken.. However there remain hurdles in the implementation of TQM due to the approach of some stakeholders. The author has mentioned that with proper motivation TQM can be achieved.

The concepts of TQM have been successfully applied to the field of education by the developed countries. P. B. Sakthivel, R. Raju(2006), emphasize the need for development of a new educationalexcellence model. They have conceived the 'TQM 9-C EDEX Model' (EDEX represents Educational Excellence), for engineering education in India. Their TQM Model uses the relationship of Commitment of Top Management, Educational Service Quality, Customer Value and Customer Satisfaction. Committed leadership and Top Managementsupport are necessary for successful implementation of a quality management system in an engineeringinstitution.

Over the years, the Indian higher education sector has grown phenomenally. Declining qualitystandards in the institutions due to poor quality of students, infrastructure, lack of vision,faculty members, project guidance and so on is a cause of concern for allthe stakeholders (Begum Sayeda, ChandrasekharanRajendran, PrakashSaiLokachari (2010).Proper implementation of Quality Management can enable organizations to cope with thedynamic businessenvironments in a sustainable manner (Hackman and Wageman, 1995)

In higher education Quality management consists of improving the quality of courses, instructional processes, resource management processes and structures, student support service (Tulsi, 2001, as quoted by Sayeda, ChandrasekharanRajendran,PrakashSaiLokachari (2010).

Rajani Jain, GautamSinha and SangeetaSahney (2011)conceptualized the dimensions of service quality in higher education. In the era of competition between institutes, the students have more choices and options. Institutions should understand the student expectations and adopt Total Quality Management concepts.Various stakeholders are realizing the importance of quality management in education. Technical and Management education have a major share in the higher education. Educational institutes should incorporate the TQM in their activities and processes. It is important to understand the customer expectations properly so that systems leading to customer satisfaction and delight can be designed. They studied the stakeholders as follows: faculty, administrative staff, students and industry. The study was confined to engineering and management institutions at graduate and post graduate level in and around Delhi.

From the view of policy makers and educational administrators, Defining, Conceptualizing, Implementing and Measuring Quality are important (SangeetaSahney, 2012). The author conducted the study on select higher educational institutions to identify the various design characteristic constructs which would form the quality components for an educational system. According to her study, an educational institution must identify "Quality" and then incorporate the principles of quality management. In education, Quality encompasses the quality of inputs such as students, faculty, support staff, infrastructure and capital; the quality of processes such as teaching, learning and administrative activities; and, the quality of outputs.

Everett E. Adam*et al*. (1997) in their studyproposed that quality improvement helped reduce costs and enhance operating and financial performance. They linked organization success to the quality of its products and services and tried to identify the approaches for performance improvement in different parts of the world.

Hale Kaynak(2002) has summarized the relationship between total quality management (TQM) and firms' performance. He has presented findings of different studies. He quoted another author Hendricks and Singhal(1996, 1997) whose finding is that implementing an effective TQM program improves performance of firms. Based on the literature,Kaynak (2002) has identified 3 dimensions of a firmrelated to TQM (Total Quality Management). These are:- 1. Financial and Market Performance, 2.Quality Performance and 3.Inventory performance.

Ginn David and Zairi Mohamed (2005) define QFD as a system for translating customer requirements into appropriate company requirements at each stage (of the product development cycle) from research and product development to engineering and manufacturing to marketing/sales and distribution.

Need of the Study

From the literature review, it has been observed that there arestudies on implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and stakeholder expectations in higher education institutions. But there is not much study on Quality while implementing TQM in Admissions, Exams or Placement process and the way each process links to each other. Moreover, there are no studies particularly in non-aided and autonomous engineering and management colleges in Mumbai

Having ascertained the important variables that affect quality of the processes, it would be interesting to find the way the 3 processes link to each other in terms of quality.

Research Objective:

To understand the relationship between theAdmission, Exam and Placement processes in higher education institutions with respect to the activities in these processes.

1:To identify the relation between Admissions and Exam process
2: To identify the relation between Admissions and Placement process
3: To identify the relation between Exam and Placement process

Hypothesis

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between the Admission Process and the Exam Process.

$H1$: There is a significant relationship between the Admission Process and the Exam Process.

$H02$: There is no significant relationship between the Admission Process and the Placement Process.

$H2$: There is a significant relationship between the Admission Process and the Placement Process.

$H03$: There is no significant relationship between the Exam Process and the Placement Process.

$H3$: There is a significant relationship between the Exam Process and the Placement Process.

III. Research Methodology

The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. With the help of Surveys,the study tries to find the relation between the 3 processes i.e. Admissions, Exams and Placements(ofprofessional higher education institutes) in terms of quality. The activities carried out in these processes (transactions) areconsidered for the study of Quality

The study was restricted to Private (non aided) institutes and colleges in Mumbai region. Only Management schools and Engineering colleges in Mumbai were contacted. The data was collected from 2 Engineering and 2 Management Institutes in Mumbai and Thane

Secondary Data was reviewed from various published/non published sources.

Primary Data was collected from the Process owners of the above 3 processes and the stakeholders such as Faculty, Support staff and Students.

Quota sampling was used to select the Respondents. From each of the institutes, about 40 respondents were contacted and survey questionnaire was given to them. This consisted of about 15 faculty/staff and 25 students. The students included Under graduate as well as Post Graduate students. The total sample size was **150** respondents in all.

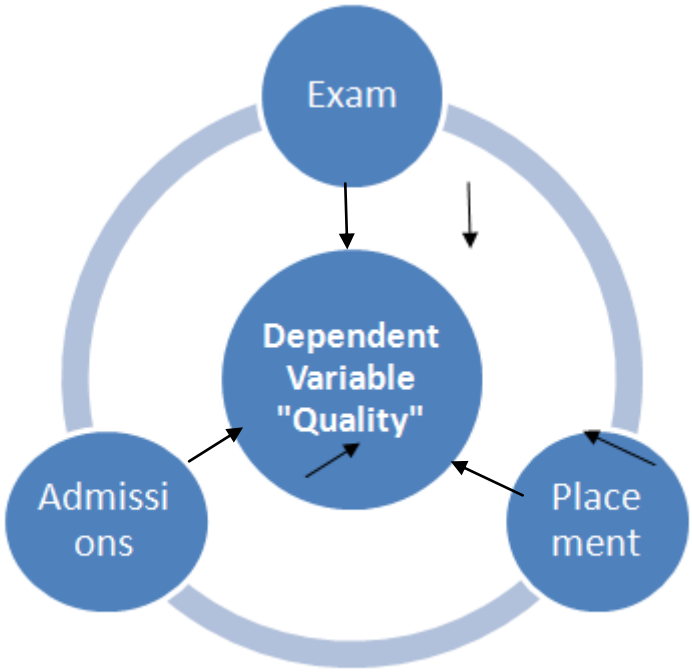

Fig 01: The proposed model. Source: Author's Analysis

The model will be helpful to study the link between the implementation of the stakeholder expectations in Admissions, Exam and Placement process and the quality in the interest of the institute. The model will

explain how the quality will increase or decrease with a change in the variables of the 3 processes during implementation of the Total Quality Management (TQM).

***Variables*:**

Independent Variables in the EXAM Process
IndependentVariables in the ADMISSION Process
IndependentVariables in the PLACEMENT Process

Dependent Variables (which we are measuring)
Quality in terms of Organizational Behavior and Staff Interaction
Quality in terms of TQM implementation and Institute Leadership
Quality in terms of Control of Processes

IV. Data Analysis and Results

Correlation: This paper considers the Correlation in between the 3 processes to find how the 3 processes are related to each other.

Admission and Exam Process

Correlations			
		Admissions Process	Exam Process
Admissions Process	Pearson Correlation	1	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	148
Exam Process	Pearson Correlation	.599**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	148	150

The above table shows that p value = 0.0 which is significant. The correlation coefficient is 0.599, so it is a strong relation. The p sig value is 0.0 so less than alpha hence $H0_1$ Rejected and H1 accepted.

Admission and Placement Process

Correlations			
		Admissions Process	Placement Process
Admissions Process	Pearson Correlation	1	.443**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	149	146
Placement Process	Pearson Correlation	.443**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	146	149

The above table shows that p value = 0.0 which is significant. The correlation coefficient is 0.443, so it is a strong relation. The p sig value is 0.0 so less than alpha hence $H02$ Rejected and H2 accepted.

Exam and Placement Process

Correlations			
		Exam Process	Placement Process
Exam Process	Pearson Correlation	1	.531**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	149
Placement Process	Pearson Correlation	.531**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	149	149

The above table shows that p value = 0.0 which is significant. The correlation coefficient is 0.531, so it is a strong relation. The p sig value is 0.0 so less than alpha hence $H03$ rejected and H3 accepted.

Limitations of the Study

There are number of academic processes that are involved in academic institution. For the study purpose and to evolve the model we have restricted to Admissions, Examination and Placement processes only. The study was restricted to autonomous and private Engineering (Technology) and Management (Business) institutions affiliated to state university only. Private Universities, Government Institutes, Foreign Universities and Deemed Universities are not considered as per our defined scope. Some of stakeholders such as parents and recruiters are difficult to be tracked and reached and hence are not considered.

Conclusions and Managerial Implication

The study brings out the relationship between the 3 processes under study. All inter relations are statistically significant. The highest correlation is between Admissions and Exam, followed by Exam and Placements and the lowest among the 3 processes is between Admissions and Placement. Thus the quality of Exam process will affect the Admissions process and thus Admissions of the Institute. Similarly Exam process will have an effect on the Placements process and hence placement of the institute**.**

Understanding the relation between these will be useful in improving the processes thereby improving the quality of the Educational Institutes. This study is ongoing as a part of the doctoral work. With more data collection, the theoretical model presented in this paper can be proven using SCM and Path analysis.

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