UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTING TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

Lekia Nwikina, Ph.D
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt
nwikinalekia@yahoo.com

&
Worlu, Paul N. (Ph.D)
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt

Abstract

The purpose of the paper was to highlight the concept of TQM, discuss its implications in education, its relevance for promoting quality in secondary schools, and some measures for implementing it in Nigerian secondary schools. The Edwara Deming's 14-point TQM principles is one of the veritable sources of understanding the concept. One of the most important requirements for implementation is a head or Chief Executive Officer with resourcefulness, knowledge, vision and commitment to quality management. The formation of steering teams and teamwork are important strategies for implementing the quality mission. Relevant levels recommended for team formation are at the staff parent teacher association and student levels. It is very important that all those who are seriously involved in quality improvement be recognized and rewarded and that their success stories be celebrated never should the important task of celebrating accomplishments be neglected. To keep collaboration effective they need to celebrate their achievements, reevaluate their collaborations, create ways to collaborate still more effectively and monitor their collaborations. The positive focus of these meetings should increase their motivation and encourage new ideas for collaboration for further and continuing improvement.

Introduction

Many Nigerians love quality things – quality products and services. They love quality institutions and quality management – public and private. They love quality schools and quality education. Even some moderately poor parents may stint to sponsor their children in the relatively expensive private schools instead of public school; some even opt for overseas education for their children – all for the sake of the quality. The value for quality and measures to attain it are commonly expressed in public parlance and are reflected in many top official policy statements and decision making fora in Nigeria. The National Policy on Education proposal is an epitome of quality education and this reflects the nation's philosophy of quality. For instance, such expressions as "quality instructions to be improved", "minimum standard laid down by the federal government", "qualification for improved performance in jobs, in order to ensure uniform standard and quality control", "service to improve and maintain standards" flank

the policy document (FRN, 1981 24, 32, 34). These indicate Nigerians' covetous and unquenchable desire for quality education.

The Decree (1983) otherwise known as the Education National Minimum Standards and the Establishment of institution Decree is rooted in the need for quality. It specifically empowered the Minister of Education to appoint inspectors for the purpose of ensuring quality control of education through regular and continuous supervision of instructional service (Igwe, 2003). Section 25, subsection 3 of the Rivers State Schools Board Edict (1987) also emphasizes the importance of supervisory service to the school system for purpose of standard and quality improvement of school (Igwe, 2003). Decree No. 1 of 1974 which established the National Universities Commission also aimed prominently to ensure quality higher education through accreditation of university programmes, and setting of minimum standard (Igwe, 2003).

The proceeding of the 12th Annual Congress of the National Academy of Education held at the Chris Ogunbanjo Foundation, Ogun State, November 1992, centred mostly on the issue of quality education, especially on how to attain it. That the communiqué recommended a customer oriented approach as necessary for attaining quality demonstrates realization that initiatives that have worked in business sector may also be relevant in education. It states that:

> The achievement of effective and efficient education for Nigeria in the foreseeable future should come from increased participation of community and private sector made up of autonomous communities, Parent Teacher Associations, organized societies and community union as well as cultural groups; non-governmental organizations, private sector (namely) individuals, organizations, corporate bodies, industrial commercial and manufacturing enterprises – international regional and bio-lateral organizations and agencies such as UNESCO, UNDP, and Bank – ECA (Osiyale 2001: 1).

Collapse following what many believe to be "soaring demand and excessive liberation of access to education which stimulates expansion particularly under conditions of declining funding associated with diminishing quality education, some Nigerians believe that "poor quality of education is worse than useless to the recipient and to the nation" (Onoh 1996:316). The issues involved in the decline have however been vividly discussed by Adesina (1990) and Ajayi (1997). Adesina (1990:50) summarizes the sources of declining education quality this way:

> The crises relate to he enormous wastage that is inherent in the educational process, the consistently declining quality of those sent to the classroom to train the mind so the nation, the relative decline in student enrollment in teacher training institutions in the face of acute demand, overcrowded classrooms, poor and haphazard inspection of school by the ministry officials,

obsolete teaching and shoddy supervision of school teachers by teacher educators, lack of textbooks and teaching materials at ball level of educational system, lack of systematic planning at the national, state and local levels. All these forces have resulted in one major thing; the declining quality of the educational system.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the concept of total quality management, discuss the implications of TQM in education, its relevance for promoting quality in secondary school and to discuss sonic measure for implementing total quality management in Nigeria secondary schools.

The Concept of Total Quality Management (TQM)
To understand total quality, one must first understand quality. Hartzell (2000:322) defines quality as "the nature, kind, or character of someone or something the degree or grade of excellence possessed by a person, service or thing; the character of nature that belong to or distinguishes a person or thing – a way of measuring or describing how good or bad a service or product is at performing its functions". Goetsch and Davis (2000:48) opine that although some people may not be able to define quality if asked, all know it when they see it: "Quality if in the eye of the beholder and perceived quality is the major factor by which people make decisions in the market place".

Some of the ways that quality has been defined by different people as citied by Goetsch et al include the following:
1. Meeting the customers' needs the first time and every time
2. Providing our customers with products and services that consistently meet their needs and expectations.
3. Doing the right thing right the first time, always striving for improvement and always satisfying the customers.
4. Quality involves meeting and exceeding customers' expectations.

It is stated also that quality is an ever-changing state, that is, what is considered quality today may not be good enough to be considered quality tomorrow.

As regards total quality. Goestsch et al define as "an approach to doing business that attempts to maximize the competitiveness of an organization through the continual improvement of the quality of its product, services, people, processes and environment". Jablonski (1992:4) defines Total Quality Management as "a cooperative form of doing business that relies on the talents and capabilities of both labour and management to continually improve quality and productivity using teams". The definition embodies three ingredients necessary for TQM to flourish in any organization; participatory management, continuous process improvement, and the use of teams.

The distinctive characteristics of total quality according to Goetsch and colleagues are: customer focus (internal and external), obsession with quality, use of the scientific approach to decision making and problem solving, long-term

commitment, teamwork, employees involvement and empowerment, continual process of improvement, bottom-up education and training, freedom through control and unity to purpose, all deliberately aimed at supporting the organizational strategy. A veritable way of understanding the concept of Total Quality Management however is to go to the source, the 14 points of TQM as defined by its founding father, Edward Deming in Walson (1986). They are as follows:

1. Create constancy of purpose to improve products and services
2. Adopt the new philosophy of quality improvement
3. Cease dependence on inspection as the way to achieve quality
4. Stop making purchase decisions just on price alone, work instead with few suppliers.
5. Improve constantly and forever processes for planning, manufacture and service
6. Institute training on the job
7. Practice leadership
8. Drive fear from workplace
9. Break down barriers between staff
10. Eliminate slogans, targets, and exhortations for workers
11. Get rid of numerical quotas for workers and numerical goal for managers
12. Remove obstacles that rob workers of pride of work and eliminate annual merit or rating systems.
13. Educate employees and implement self-improvement for all
14. Put everyone to work on transforming the enterprise.

These 14 points are Deming's management practice design to provide basis for a management system that focuses on improving quality and productivity in any kind of organization or business.

In TQM word "improvement" is underlined. According to Cortada (1995), it suggests a decline in errors and enhancement of performance in a continuous or incremental basis: improvement of the process includes better allocation of human efforts, it also include selection of people, their placement, their training, to give everyone, including production workers, a chance to advance their learning and to contribute their talent. It means removal of barriers to pride of workmanship both for production workers and for management. The philosophy of continuous improvement assumes that our way of life, be it working life, our social life, our home life deserves to be constantly improved.

Jablonski (1992) maintains that continuous process improvement means accepting small, incremental gains as a step in the right direction toward Total Quality, it recognizes that substantial gains can be achieved by accumulation of many seemingly unimportant improvements whose synergies yield tremendous gains over the long run. It reinforces a basic principle of TQM long-term focus.

Implications of TQM in Education
Enahwo, in Okorie and Uche (2004) hold that TQM in education involves continuous improvement in school processes as a way of upgrading school

outcomes under existing environmental conditions and at the same time reducing the cost of education. It is a new way of thinking, and a new way of managing a system which involves new tools and practices for improving the institutions effectiveness. Okorie and Uche maintain that, in the context of education, TQM refers to managerially inspired activities relating to the delivery of educational services and their outcomes resulting from appropriate curricular, effectiveness and efficiency in getting the best learning outcomes from the resources invested, and includes a quest for quality at all times. In education TQM

> Emphasizes teacher competence, creativity and commitment, and how educational managers organize and lead in order to realize the full potentials of all personnel in educational organization it concerns cultural changes in both stated and unstated rules that government behaivours and beliefs in educational organizations (Okoric and Uche, 2004:46).

Nnabuo (2001), in throwing future light on the implications of TQM in education, notes that the concept opens the eyes of school administrators to appreciate the overriding importance of students (client band product) as the key of education and the arbiter (measure) of school administrative performance: "The students' requirement and their satisfaction must be for the school principals, head and teachers, the impetus to do the right things first and every time". To Nnabuo, the school personnel especially the principal must be fully committed to continuous improvement of the school which also means their own improvement, the students improvement, the involvement of and satisfaction of other shareholders or customers including parents, community and government agencies. Discipline, commitment, accountability, transparency and effective performance are necessary ingredients of TQM.

Quality in education result from an interplay of a broad range of success factors that influence teachers performance and students learning. These according to Okorie and Uche include:

1. Quality school facilities such as classrooms, standard libraries, well equipped laboratories, staff' offices, teaching facilities.
2. Financing – adequate provision of funds to school, staff remuneration, school budget and its effective implementation.
3. Personnel including quality and quantity, quality mindset and orientation among personnel usually resulting from motivational efforts, staff satisfaction, commitment and moral.
4. The school organizational environment including climate conduciveness and leadership effectiveness.

Reasons for Recommending TQM to Educators
Cortada notes that many American profit and non-profit organizations have not hesitated in embracing TQM principles to their entire management philosophy since its introduction by Edward Deming and that they have prospered because of it, Peter and Waterman (1982:14) corroborate this. They observe that the excellent and successful American companies were those applying the principles of TQM.

Such companies were characterized with "Quality, service, cleanliness and value". They were closed to their customers and they learned from those they served. "They provided unparallel quality service and reliability – things that work and last – everyone gets involved into the act. Many of the innovative companies got their best product ideas from customers – from listening intently and regularly.

There is no doubt that the TQM principles and practices right similarly work well if translated into education. It is therefore not surprising that many educators (including McCormick, 1993) arc confidently advocating TQM in education. McCormick (1993:15) sums her arguments this way:

> The private sector TQM journey has been motivated by the increased need to be more internationally competitive. For educators concerned about student outcomes, increased private school competition and general dissatisfaction with educational results are providing similar motivation. Educators are also finding that TQM provides a common language to capitalize on the unprecedented level of business involvement in educational reforms.

Some benefits of the application of TQM in secondary schools as revealed by research works cited by McCormick include the following:
• An increase in the quality of student work as shown by grade, achievement test scores and quality of students' portfolios.
• An increase in student and personnel attendance
• An increase in student motivation and graduate
• An increase in state-mandated test scores
• An increase in the number of students taking advanced classes
• External and internal customers' satisfaction
• Schools and departments with healthy organizational mate
• A reduction in the number of dropouts of and at-risk students
• A reduction in the number of remedial programmes and special at-risk programmes.
• A decrease in disciplinary problems
• A decrease in the number of accident and injury claims
• A decrease in the number of students labeled as needing special attention or assistance.

One principal's experience of the benefit of the application of TQM in his school as cited by McCormick is reported as follows:

> Working through a team, our accidents and injuries are down, our workmen's compensation fund is in good shape. Students are more excited about learning and are discussing what is and trying to achieve it. Staff members have a positive attitude about work as they experience ownership in trying to "break out of the box". Parents and business partners are more involved and participating in the school. And finally, our state

> mandated test scores at one campus went up. (McCormick, 1993:32).

Implementing TQM in the Schools

Some of the identified requirements that are critical for the implementation of TQM in Nigerian schools are listed below.

1. **The school's head:** One of the most important requirements for success is a Chief Executive, head or principal with knowledge, resourcefulness, vision and commitment to quality management. Deming in Walton (1988) says "Change starts vat the top with informed, quality-conscious management". His role in the process of TQM implementation is enormous. As Jablonski and Flartmon (1992:41) believe, the head (principal).

> Has to demonstrated TQM prior to expecting it of his people. He has to lead by example. He must routinely voice support and enthusiasm for TQM, play a decisive role in recognizing contributors to the implementation of the process, (initiate and) participate in subordinate training, and create a proactive, positive image of TQM in the minds of everyone in the organization. Top management commitment is a commitment of corporate resources, including the executives' own time, to the improvement process – infact substantial amounts of executive time, particularly that of CEOs are necessary to successfully implement TQM.

The principal is more likely to develop the necessary values and resourcefulness for the implementation of TQM if he has been opportuned to participate in some initial quality training seminars and workshops deliberately conducted for quality improvement by the Schools Board, Ministry of Education or other statutory or voluntary body. This is important because he must have the conviction that if TQM tools and techniques are used in the instructional process, it would make significant difference in academic results as well as solution of other challenges the school, staff and students face.

This means that there must be an external state policy or patronage by which the principal is mentally motivated to actions toward TQM. Importantly, the principal should be able to convince the staff and students to buy into the process. Jablonski and Hartmon warn that everybody in the organization must be convinced of the need for change and shown how he will benefit by helping in the change to take place" "if TQM as a major corporate initiative is neither approved nor disapproved, but rather put in place with halfhearted, half steps, it will not succeed".

2. **Mission statement:** The mission of an organization is the fundamental, unique purpose that sets it apart from others of its type and identifies the scope of its operation in product service and market terms. One company's mission is particularly instructive" "to improve continually our product and service to meet our customers' needs, allowing us to prosper as a business and to provide a

reasonable return for our stakeholders, the owners of our business – the guiding principles for pursuing this mission are: (1) quality comes first; (2) customers are threw focus of everything we do, (3) continuous improvement is essential to our success; (4) employment involvement is our way of life; (5) dealers and suppliers are our partners; and integrity is never compromised (Boone & Kurtz, 1992:151).

He principal and his staff should spend time defining the organization's vision and mission statement, detailing corporate goals and outlining policy and making the all- important decisions to proceed. A typical statement of mission of one school cited by McCormick (1993:32) is,

> The purpose- is to provide quality school and academic programmes that will maximize each student's full potential in today's changing technological society and prepare students to meet challenges of our rapidly changing world. In an era of intense international competition, each student will be prepared to meet the demands of the world of work, pursue post-secondary education, and address life's challenges.

The mission of one other educational institution is to be world class – to be a top ten of the nation' s institutions for provision of excellent education.

3. Training and Retraining: This is an important requirement for implementation of quality management. The principal and his staff should develop and deliver training workshops so that participants become familiar with the quality philosophy, actions, tools and techniques which would help achieve a better quality and reduce failure as well as identify and define all the problems of the school and seek measures to solving them progressively.

4. Develop Teams and Teamwork: Cortada (1995:348) notes that teams and teamwork are important part of the quality approach to management. Teams facilitate cooperation and the coordination of the different sub processes and tasks by which final outputs arc delivered to customers. They aid in communication and help minimize duplication of effort. They help eliminate destructive internal competition and contribute to culture where everyone focuses on working together to the organization's and customers' benefit. Besides, teams promote the need for training therefore major gains in quality and productivity must often result from teams – a group of people pooling their skills, talents and knowledge. Some relevant levels for developing teams are the staff, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the student level.

5. Formation of staff steering committee: A cross-functional staff steering committee needs to be formed from selected intelligent and trusted members of the staff. The continuing application of quality process should best be exemplified by the activities of and actions of the Quality Staff Steering Committee. The tasks of the committee should be to address monitor and institutionalize quality practices in the school. It should also include reducing student and staff lateness, truancy, cultist practices, examination malpractices and every form of' misbehaviour. It

should seek to promote excellence in availability of' instructional materials and instructional delivery. It should develop and maintain the school code of ethics which demand honesty, transparency and discipline from everyone in the school.

6.   **Role of Parents:** Parents as internal customers of the school should be vigorously involved in the schools' objectives for quality management. To facilitate this, a questionnaire survey needs to he conducted to determine the best way to meet their needs; for instance, the day and time for Parents Teachers Association meetings, what agenda parents would wish to discuss at each meeting, what dues to pay, projects to pursue and level of contribution they would wish to offer. The survey should also reveal parents' personal profile including income levels, educational achievement and family composition. Parents could find their voice and the PTA could be transformed as parents are brought into the decision making process of the school.

Quality workshops should be developed constantly to train parents, for example, in negotiating with teenagers, conflict resolution, evaluating, selecting college, concept of shared responsibility and to become enthusiastic, creative and proactive, importantly, parent should be encouraged to form the Parent Quality Steering Committee, which should frequently meet with the principal, staff' and student committees, thus building teams for nurturing TQM. Beside other things, the committee should seek to improve the school facilities, improve quality of teachers' commitment to work, improve educational process so that when students graduate they can move into further education or employment.

7.   **Involve the Students:** A key component to implementing TQM is bringing the process to the student level and involving theme vigorously as they arte also the principal customers of the school. The aim should be to motivate them intrinsically in the process, to shift the paradigm from student apathy to student partnership in the learning process. To achieve this, as McCormick (1993) suggests, leadership class should be established for students. The class, composed of between 25-30 students should meet regularly with the principal and try to locate ways to improve students' performance at the school. Pursuit of Quality, community service, cleanliness and value should be the esteemed principle of the Student Quality Team

The school should continually develop quality workshops for students. This should emphasize teaching the students how to do things right the first time, critical thinking and decision making, listening, team building, time management skills – the use of improvement tools and how to handle difficult people. Quality workshops should aim at driving out fear by eliminating failure and institutionalizing a culture where students who do not successfully master the materials of a course are required to repeat the course. Promotion should be based on achievement, not time served. Examination malpractice of any sort and unethical practices including sexual harassment should not even be mentioned among students and staff.

8.   Satisfying and Utilizing the External Customers: Jablonski and Hartman (1992) note that as an organization moved towards TQM, it acknowledges the existence of many customers it may have overlooked in the past. These include the customers outside the organization, the organized societies and community unions as well as cultural groups, non-governmental organizations private sectors including individuals, corporate bodies, educational institutions, industrial commercial and manufacturing enterprises.

The school needs these organizations as they also need the school. Some may need the quality products of the school for jobs, some are already practicing TQM and could be veritable models benchmark or could be interested in the school experimental efforts towards TQM and may be moved to donate seminar/workshop or other training opportunities to staff and students, or donate facilities to patronizing the TQM programmes of the school, The principal may benefit by meeting the external customers and discussing his school-base vision, mission and programmes for quality and source for advice and support.

9.   Benchmarking: This is critical for achieving quality goal it involves identification of them world's best performance for the global measures the organization has chosen to measure. Information acquired from these world class organizations about the processes they use to achieve their level of performance should help to identify areas for improvement as well as how to improve, and by how much. It should provide guidelines for process and organizational improvement and general engineering (Cortada and Woods, 1995).

McCormick (1995:14) says "what gets measured gets attention and what gets rewarded gets more attention" identification of outcomes, measuring progress toward achieving them, and regarding attainment can produce very powerful results. So as schools develop plans for improvement they should as well pay attention to quality indicators and outcomes than ever before as informed through the process of benchmarking.

10.   Recognition, Reward and Celebration of Success Stories: Many researchers (Cortada 1995, Goetsch, 2000, Gale, 1994) believe that recognition and reward for achievement have been an integral component of Total Quality efforts. Each subject area or department should recognize departmental achievements as quality student of the year and their names should be put in the principal's log book and on the bulletin board. Quality students may be those with an average 85% and above score in the exams. Quality student recognition ceremony should be held each year to honour high achievers and their parents should receive arid congratulatory letter from the principal thanking them for contributing to their ward's success.

At the end of each term of year, the Quality Steering Committee of Staff, Parents Teachers Association and the students should meet the principal to recognize and celebrate successes made in quality improvement during the period and to identify areas for further collaboration and improvement. This should be a continuing source of motivation for all those that are significantly involved in quality

improvement of the school. The name of participants should be included in the principal's log book as well as placed on the bulletin board as quality patrons and achievers.

Conclusion

Total Quality Management is a co-operative form of doing business that relies on the talents and capabilities of both labour and management to continually improve quality of service and products using teams. The 14-point TQM principles are enunciated by Edward Deming is a veritable source of understanding the concept. TQM education emphasizes teacher's competence, creativity and commitment and how educational managers organize and lead in order to realize the full potentials of all personnel in educational organization. It focuses on the seeks to involve staff, students, parents and community agents and all the stakeholders in the education enterprise in the improvement of education quality. This profit sector innovation is relevant for education to improve student's academic performance and their general development.

A very important requirement for implementing TQM in Nigerian schools is a head, Chief Executive Officer with resourcefulness, vision and commitment to quality management. He should be able to carry his staff with him in writing the mission statement of the school for quality administration and in implementing them. The formation of teams and teamwork is an important strategy for implementing the quality mission. A team is a group of people pooling their skills, talents and knowledge for achieving the goal of the school. Relevant levels recommended for team formation are at the staff, Parents Teachers Association and at the student levels. These are the Staff Quality Steering Committee.

It is very important that all those who are seriously involved in quality improvement be recognized and rewarded and that the success stories be celebrated to encourage further collaboration and improvement. Never should this important task of celebrating accomplishments be neglected. To keep collaboration effective, they need to celebrate their achievements, reevaluate their collaborations, create ways to collaborate still more effective and monitor their collaborations. The positively focus of these meetings should increase their motivation and encourage new ideas for collaboration and for further and continuing improvement.

References

Adesina. S. (1990). Educational management: Enugu: Fourth Dimensions Publishing Company Ltd.

Ajayi, T. (1997) Maintenance of academic standards in Nigerian schools, some basic planning consideration. In AM. Ejiogu & K. Ajayi (eds). Emergent Issues in Nigerian Education Vol. 2. Lagos: (JNILAG Consult.

Boone, L.E. & Kurtz, I) L (1992). Management. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Cortada, J. (1995). Quality: Terms and concepts. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981). National Policy on Education. Lagos: NERC Press.

Goctsch, DL. & Davis, S.F. (2000). Quality management: Introduction to total quality management for production, processing and services. Columbus: Prentice Hall.

Gale, LIT. (1994). Managing customer value: Creating quality and service that customers can see. New York: The Free Press.

Hartzell, D. (2006). Dictionary of Management. New Delhi Academic (Inidia) Publishers.

Igwe, L.E.B. (2003). Elements of education law. Port Harcourt: Pam Unique Publishing Coy. Ltd.

Jablonski, JR. (1992). Total quality management: Competing in the 1990s. New Mexico: Technical Management Consortium.

McCormick, B L. (1993). Quality of education: Critical linkages. Boston: Eye on Education.

Nnabuo, P.O.M (2001). Essentials of educational management. Lagos: African Heritage Publication.

Okorie, NC. & Uche, M.C. (2004). Total quality management in Education: Its imperatives and key concepts. In P.O.M. Nnabuo, N.C. Okorie, O.O. Ogabi, L.E.B. Igwe (eds) Fundamental of educational management. Owerri: Versatile Publishers.

Osiyale, A.O. (1996). The public school system in the new Nigeria, its quality, standard, effectiveness and efficiency. Ibadan: Wemilore Press & Fafunwa Education Foundation.

Peters, T.J. & Waterman, RH. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best- run Companies. New York: Harper & Row.

Walton, M. (1986). The Deming management method. New York: The Putman Publishing Group.