The Importance for Managing Change for Quality in Higher Education: Literature Review

Muleya Jameson Denzilizium* – SARPCCO Centre of Excellence
Unami Manungwa Sibanda – Lupane State University
Ronney Thulisile– National University of Science and Technology
Shava George – National University of Science and Technology

Abstract:- This paper presented the importance of quality in higher education institutions. It is a literature review paper which delineated the reasons for managing change for quality education maintenance in higher education as well as the challenges faced in having and sustaining quality especially in developing countries' higher education sectors. The paper spelt out the reasons why managers of education systems need to tirelessly advance the element of quality of education in their institutions of higher learning. A proper maintenance of quality will always keep the institution at a competitive advantage within the higher education industry.

I. INTRODUCTION

Change is important and necessary in every aspect of human life. Survival nowadays depends on the ability to adapt to the changes which are unstoppable within the environments. No one has the power to control or stop the changes around as such, the only available option is to adjust and adapt to these changes which have become permanent. Higher Education is not spared on the effects of changes within its surrounding. This therefore calls for higher education to change in order to adapt to its new environment brought by the changes. Quality education can only come when the education system can fit well in its ever changing environment. In fact, Higher education system nowadays finds itself in a completely new era and environment which demands new ways of doing things. New environment is normally associated with several of challenges. It is therefore advised that every system finds means of overcoming these challenges to fit the unusual conditions brought by the new environment. This would therefore force for change. Smooth change requires proper management (Change management). According to Kezar and Eckel (2003), several environmental forces, including technology, competition and workplace/workforce play a vital role in bringing the observed changes as education evolves. The obvious changes which are brought by these forces include but not limited to higher education goals, processes and education decision-making (Welsh and Metcalf, 2003). It is prudent that the Higher Education adapt to the environmental changes with the rate of other sectors of the economy. However, as noted from the Zimbabwe situation, Higher Education's ability to deal with the changes is always questionable. It is believed that those in higher authority within Higher Education sector have tendency of ignoring or approaching the changes in a lackadaisical manner which makes the sector lag behind (Authur Levine, 2003).

II. DEFINING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality is a very old concept but still no proper definition of the concept has been found in Higher Education. In an attempt to formulate definition of quality in higher education, different stakeholders need to be considered including funding partners/communities, students who are the users/consumers of education, employers and employees in education sector (Srikanthan and Datrymple, 2003). This diverse make it very difficult to have generic definition due to lack of consensus among the groups because each group of stakeholders has its own perspective on quality. Failure to properly define quality education poses a serious obstacle to identifying education institutional mechanisms of transformational processes within the sector of higher Education. This has an effect of endowing it with completely different kinds of substances. A common definition of the term quality requires the involvement of all stakeholders who should agree (Bobby, 2014) and this process is not easy to come hence the reason why up to today, the concept of quality in higher education is still difficult to define.

It has also noted that the term quality is a multidimensional concept (Wasterhiejden, 2007). Defining it in its dimensional sense sometimes becomes too broad and cannot be operationalised in higher education (Eagle and Brennan, 2007). Other school argue that the non-existence of common definition of quality is because of the static nature of quality itself which is continuously changing (Bobby, 2014; Ewell, 2010). Despite all these challenges in defining quality in higher education, some authors still argue that a working definition is required to explain quality as it relates to Higher education.

According to Schrinder et al (2015), definitions of quality can be categorised into four broad conceptualisations (quality as purposeful, exceptional, transformative and accountable).

Classifications	Definitions
Purposeful	Institutional products and services conform to a stated mission/vision or a set of specifications, requirements, or standards, including those defined by accrediting and/or regulatory bodies (Cheng & Tam, 1997; Commonwealth of Learning, 2009; Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Peterson, 1999)
Exceptional	Institutional products and services achieve distinction and exclusivity through the fulfilment of high standards (Bogue, 1998; Cheng & Tam, 1997; Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Peterson, 1999)
Transformative	Institutional products and services effect positive change in student learning (affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains) and personal and professional potential (Biggs, 2001; Bobby, 2014; Bogue, 1998; Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Haworth & Conrad, 1997; Pond, 2002; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007)
Accountable	Institutions are accountable to stakeholders for the optimal use of resources and the delivery of accurate educational products and services with zero defects (American Society for Quality, n.d.; Cheng & Tam, 1997; Green, 1994; Harvey, 2005; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Nicholson, 2011)

Table 1:- Classification of Quality
Source: Schrinder et al (2015)

III. WHY QUALITY MATTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Education is the answer to the challenges of the 21st century; this answer is capable of preserving civilization and requires from a human being a new mentality or social character; its new priority status in society is determined by objective needs of developing society' (Gershunskiy, 1998). Higher education (HE) plays an important, multi-faceted role in the new global development agenda, which strives to eradicate poverty while addressing social needs such as education, health, social protection, job opportunities, climate change, food security and environmental protection. Access to quality education and lifelong learning is a means for escaping poverty and an enabler of progress across the 2030 Agenda. It is for this reason that the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) – plays a central role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies. Education is the key that will allow many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved. When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty. In a report released by the World Bank in the year 2002, it states that the higher economic productivity of a nation in the labour force has to be more knowledgeable. Therefore, there is a need to improve the quality of education in higher learning institutions

IV. CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

High quality education is desired for every society in the world. However, there are several challenges especially in developing countries which hinder the achievement of quality education in Higher education. It is the responsibility of education managers to address these challenges. The following are some of the identified challenges

➢ *Increase in the number of students*

Education for all which brought widening and deepening policy in higher education has increased the demand for the education services. This increase has an effect of adding pressure on the already strained resources in developing countries' higher education systems. This education policy meant that even those students who are not academically given find their way to the system. The increase in the number of students has an effect of increasing teacher-students ratio. It has an effect of increasing the burden on educators whose workload is ever increasing thus failing to concentrate on students with special needs.

➢ *Lack of funding*

Higher education sector is under-funded in most developing countries. Governments usual leave the funding of Higher education to parents and institutions. This gives rise to private institutions in the sector where government has less control on the quality of education. The increase in the number of private institutions in education sector increases the diverse of the quality which in most cases become low since the private institutions are for economical profits at the expense of quality of education. The little funding available are mostly channelled to administrative issues leaving the areas of Research and Innovation unattended despite the fact that it is the backbone in building quality of education.

➢ *Brain drain*

This is the condition when those people with knowledge of doing work move out of the sector. Higher education sector is not spared from this. Most qualified and experienced educators are leaving the sector to join other sectors in search of better remuneration and benefits. Some educators have even moved to other countries and continents for greener pastures. The higher education sector therefore is left with less experienced educators and administrators which compromises the quality of education.

V. SHOULD EDUCATION MANAGERS WORRY ON QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

The quality in higher education system assists in the following areas:

➢ *Competition*

Education sector nowadays has several players who compete for the same inputs (students). Parents and guardians consider to sending their children for education to institutions where they would get value of their money. Quality of education offered is the most determinant for this decision. Every Higher education institutions therefore aim for high quality education to remain competitive in the industry. Funders of education demand for value for their money and this can only be proved by providing high quality education in Higher education institutions. With globalisation, for any education institution which dreams of survival in the sector, it would require to worry about and take quality of its output seriously.

➢ *Stakeholder satisfaction*

Despite the completion within the education sector, institutions have the duty to satisfy its customers. Some of the customers in the education system include students, parents and/guardians, sponsoring agencies, governments among others. These stakeholders would only continue to be customers of the institution if they get the value for their money invested. Value for money is measured by the quality of the goods and/services offered by the institution. Customers are also conscious of their rights to get the right product at the right time, the higher education institutions therefore need to produce graduates with employable skills for labour market, as such, there should be quality teaching coupled with relevant courses and programmes.

➢ *Standard maintenance*

Higher education institutions need to keep up the standards. This can only be so if they maintain the quality of education offered to customers year after year. The standard set by the education institutions need to be maintained otherwise the quality would be compromised.

➢ *Enhancing employee morale and motivation*

Every rationale employee would want to be associated with good and quality standards. This has the effect of motivating employee to even work harder. High quality education would also attract highly qualified and experienced potential manpower at the institution to boost the manpower. This would also keep the institution at competitive advantage

➢ *Credibility, prestige and status*

Continuous maintenance of quality of education in higher education institution would lead to prestige, status and brand value. The institutions which keep high prestige and status have potential to attract good students, manpower and funding.

VI. CONCLUSION

Quality is an old concept but still it is proving difficult to have a consensus in coming up with a common meaning in higher education. However, in trying to have working definitions, some authors had categorised broad definitions of quality. Despite the absence of agreed definition of the term quality in higher education circles, the concept is widely used up to global level as indicated by the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education. Despite the effort and reasons for education manager to advance the attainment of quality education in their institutions, there are some challenges in achieving this dream.

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