Total Relationship Management (TRM), and Quality of Labour Force performances in the Higher Education Sector in Sweden, Turkey and Egypt

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Introduction
There is no doubt about the global impact of the quality movement. In the development of most sectors (e.g. education, health-care, trade, services, manufacturing, etc), worldwide economic integration and the growth of the global market, quality becomes one of the main factors of organizational competition and success. Most academic studies of the services sector have looked only at the link between services’ quality and satisfaction. Few studies have been conducted to investigate the link between the technical and functional performance of the labor force quality and the level of student satisfaction in the knowledge-intensive sector. But none of the identified studies has examined how studying and working place atmosphere, interaction and infrastructure might impact overall quality perception and satisfaction.

Quality should be embedded in the culture of organisations. Thus, great attention needs to be given to developing a culture within which quality is embedded. Total quality management is the culture of an organization committed to customer satisfaction through continuous improvement. This culture varies from one country to another and between different industries, but has certain essential principles. Lomas (2004) states that “senior managers and other change agents face major challenges but, by achieving the goal of embedding quality, students would receive greatly improved higher education and, as a consequence, their country's economy and society would also prosper”. In the 1980s weaknesses in the accreditation and inspection process, the persistence of poor quality, and the emergence of new management techniques in education and other industries, together with rising costs, led education professionals to begin reassessing accreditation and standards-based quality assurance. Higher education institutions began testing the industrial philosophies of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Total Quality Management (TQM). At the same time, the accreditation system expanded its focus from inspections to promoting quality improvement (Roberts and Schyve, 1990). While TQM has been used in the manufacturing area for a long time, service applications of TQM are relatively new (Bayraktar et al, 2008).
Implication of TQM principles is also applicable to higher education (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1997). As a standalone process, TQM has the potential of improving quality in educational institutions and achieves continuous improvement (Kanji et al, 1999). We argue that Total Relationship Management (TRM) highlights the role of quality, labor force performances, students service, the impact of the external environment on rules and performance, on relationships and networks, on communications and interactions with different actors of different departments/functions. In this work, it is argued that it is vital to understand the holistic perspective when seeking to use labour force performances, student satisfaction and quality evaluation of the core education, the teaching and the atmosphere to enhance and improve the total quality of higher education.

Quality in Higher Education
A human being made the first tool 1.7 million years ago. Then the idea of quality was found. Foodstuffs' exchange began 10000 years ago. Then the concept of cost was found. During the industrial revolution, i.e. 200 years ago, it became interested in productivity. Therefore concept of quality is much older than the other two. Besides that quality is an unquestionable factor for customer choosing the product (Kondo, 1997). The oldest definitions of quality describe it as an object determination because of what the object is such and not different. Later the other definition of quality appeared. It characterizes quality as peculiarity, indication of product. The latter definition in the main means is not quality, but characteristic.

The definition of quality presented in ISO 8402 and ISO 9000 series standards is the most widespread and used in quality management theory and practice. It is a complex process to construct and design an educational and training course or study program. The attempt to define specific course and program learning objectives and outcomes, and then assess them, has led to the recent revival of Bloom’s Mechanistic Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Yorke, 2002). Bloom’s Taxonomy provides a terminology for describing the level of knowledge the course will give the student. The design and construction of clear learning objectives and outcomes means that measurement of the success in achieving them is facilitated and simplified (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2000; Rust 2002).

In order to have a quality assessment tool to measure the quality of education in higher education institutions the approach “total relationship management” should also be viewed. The reason for this is that in education industry student- academic staff and student – university staff relationship cannot be neglected when student satisfaction is the case.

TRM (Total Relationship Management) in Higher Education
The application of TQM is more appropriate to the service rather than the education functions of a university, because there is a significantly fewer number of quality indicators in industry than the numerous and complex indicators in higher education which are more difficult to assess (Roffe, 1998; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003). Becket and Brookes (2006) stated that a more holistically and comprehensive quality evaluation model in higher education is needed in order to ensure that the various meanings and perceptions of quality are being adequately assessed. However, such a model is not yet complete or exists. Total Relationship management (TRM) is a management philosophy, developed by Zineldin, 2000 as a new theory, methodology and systems of quality tools. It is ‘total’, because it considers and coordinates ‘all’ activities- including internal and external relationships, networks, interactions and co-operation as well as all activities involved in getting, keeping, enhancing and satisfying customers throughout quality. It is a strategy because it emphasizes maintaining high
products/services, internal and external relationships quality, and trying to keep customers in the long run.

TRM highlights the importance and the role of workforces at any organisation. Psychology is the understanding of people, their motivation, and their social interactions as they work within confines of their environment. Deming (1986) states that people/workforce are the organisation’s most precious resource and that they have an innate need for positive relationship with others, a need to learn, and a need to belong. Gupta et al, (2005) refer to TRM by stating that:

“Under Zineldin’s paradigm of total relationship management (TRM), the firm focuses on all integrated activities within the organization, including internal and external relationships with employees, other stakeholders and collaborators. The main philosophy behind this holistic approach to company relationships is to facilitate, create, develop, enhance, and continuously improve appropriate and advantageous internal and external relationships. ...It is therefore incumbent upon the leadership of the organization to inspire employees and hold them accountable for utilizing TRM as a tool to achieve a genuine total quality services environment”.

The main philosophy behind this totality approach of relationships is to facilitate, create, develop, enhance and continuously improve appropriate internal and external relationship with different labor force, customers and collaborators (Zineldin et al, 2011).

TRM emphasizes the holistic view of the student-university relationship and interaction; multiplicity and integration of different functions inside and outside a university. TRM is an unforgiving and very demanding process. One weak link and the whole effort can be wasted. Thus, making quality education demands a lot of cooperation and coordination through the value chain of activities within a university to deliver value for its citizens/students. If the citizen/student can be integrated into the education development process, through cooperation and collaboration in real time, an intense citizen/student-University relationship can begin. TRM includes 5 different quality dimensions, i.e quality of object, processes, interaction, infrastructure and atmosphere.

**A 5Qs Model**

Students, their families, employers and the government want the assurance that students will get “good quality” education. Students are important stakeholders in the quality monitoring and assessment processes and it is important to obtain their views (Harvey, 1997). A university with its forking force and professionals has to help individuals taking charge of their own learning, to develop more individualised learning approaches and cater to individual needs at various stages of life and career (European training foundation, 1997). Quality doesn't improve unless we measure it. Service quality is a multidimensional concept and in order to operationalize it many variables have to be considered. Zineldin (2006) developed a framework of five quality dimensions (5Qs). According to the 5Qs perceived quality of interaction and communication reflects a students’ level of overall satisfaction. The culture in a specific environment where they co-operate and operate influences the interaction process between the provider and receiver of an educationally service. This is applicable in a university, faculty or department atmosphere where the student, teacher, dean, rector or any administrator is operating (Zineldin, 2012). In turn, the atmosphere is influenced by the characteristics of the partners involved and the nature of the interaction itself.

The 5Qs model is more comprehensive and incorporates essential and multidimensional attributes. Such attributes are the object, process, infrastructure, atmosphere and interaction
between the student and the educational (providers) staff. Figure 1 shows the interrelationship between quality of the labour force performances (QLFP) with regard to the 5Qs, and students’ satisfaction.

**Q1 Quality of the object** (education or research itself) – Technical “what Quality”. It measures the education itself; the main reason of why students are studying at a university and communicating with its workforces.

**Q2 Quality of the process** (Caring) - functional “how quality”. How the workforces is delivering the object (lectures, seminars, individuality, flexibility, creativity, field work, exam forms, etc), and how students perceive their education. It measures how well educational activities are being implemented.

**Q3 Quality of the infrastructure** (competence, financial, technical and human recourses, self assessments, course evaluations, etc). Measures the basic resources which are needed to perform the educational services: the quality of the labor force competences and skills, experience, know-how, technology, internal relationships, motivation, attitudes, internal resources and activities, and how these activities are managed, co-operated and co-ordinated

**Q4 Quality of the interaction** and communication (among labour force staff, between staff and leaders, between staff and citizens, citizens’ involvement, etc.) measures the quality of information exchange (tutoring, lectures, individual meetings and supervision, feedback of the questions and exams, and even social exchange). The fact the most academic staff is overloaded can lead to the lack of extra time for the communication or interaction outside the lecture rooms. That is one of the most challenges the higher education sector faces.

**Q5 Quality of the atmosphere** (quality culture, common interest, common goal, participation of the staff reg. decision making, responsibilities, trust, commitment, authorities, structure of the organization, etc.). According to TRM and 5Qs approach, workforce and student preferences should guide every aspect of education and research delivery, from lecture hours to counselling pedagogical techniques to final graduation. Students’ satisfaction is created through a combination of responsiveness to the student’s views and needs, and continuous improvement of the higher education services, as well as continuous improvement of the overall workforce atmosphere, infrastructure and interactions. The importance of atmosphere, infrastructure and interaction has never been included in these policies and plans.

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**Figure 1. Zineldin’s 5Qs: A Multidimensional TRM based Model of Higher Education attributes, Labour force performances and Students Satisfaction**

- **Q1** Quality of the object
- **Q2** Quality of the process
- **Q3** Quality of the infrastructure
- **Q4** Quality of the interaction
- **Q5** Quality of the atmosphere

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Students Satisfaction

QLFP

SS*
Finally, by innovating a TRM philosophy and system which includes the 5 Qs and viewing a university or any higher education institution as a collection of interdependent systems and processes, university workforces and leaders can understand how problems occur and can strengthen the university/institution as a whole. This is applicable in a university, faculty or department atmosphere where the student, teacher, dean, rector or administrator are operating (Zineldin, 2004; 2006, 2012a).

Some Empirical Evidences

Methodology
As the empirical research setting, this study concerns people who are students, teachers and other researchers in higher educational institutions. The final draft questionnaire contains a total of 45 items (attributes) of the 5Qs which were identified to be the most relevant attributes for the higher education sector in Sweden, Turkey and Egypt for that time. A total of 1400 complete and usable questionnaires were received.

Result and Discussions
This section presents the results of the analysis of a research conducted in Sweden, Turkey and Egypt which is based on the propositions that TRM and 5Qs in higher education is a cumulative construct, summing various facets and variables which impacting students satisfaction, such as technical, functional, infrastructure, interaction culture and atmosphere variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Sweden 5Qs</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Critical Percentages</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Egypt 5Qs</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Critical Percentages</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Turkey 5Qs</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Critical Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Relevance of the course literature</td>
<td>92% good and very good 0% bad and very bad 8% average</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>The lecturer’s commitment</td>
<td>72% good and very good 18% bad and very bad 10% average</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Lecturer’s ability to stimulate critical thinking</td>
<td>67.4% good and very good 14.6% bad and very bad 17.4% average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Adequacy of instruction before and after a seminar, lecture or exam</td>
<td>91% good and very good 0% bad and very bad 9% average</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>The lecturer’s ability to inspire me for the subject was</td>
<td>65% good and very good 15% bad and very bad 20% average</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>The lecturer’s ability to inspire me for the subject was</td>
<td>61% good and very good 21% bad and very bad 17.99% average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Accessibility to the study rooms</td>
<td>83% good and very good 0% bad and very bad 17% average</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>The lectures covers an appropriate amount of contents</td>
<td>62% good and very good 24% bad and very bad 14% average</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>The lectures covers an appropriate amount of contents</td>
<td>60.8% good and very good 11.1% bad and very bad 27.8% average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>75% good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>The lecturer’s</td>
<td>58% good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>58.6% good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table I. Most 5 Critical Components to labour force (professors, lectures and other employees), Student Satisfaction and Quality in Swedish, Egyptians and Turkish higher Education sector

Q3 (infrastructure) and Q5 (atmosphere) are more critical for the Egyptian and Turkish students. While all qualities but Q3 (infrastructure) are critical for the Swedish Students. The Swedish students believe more in the competences and qualifications of their labor forces. Professors/teachers might be very productive in Egypt and Turkey but less efficient. Low level of efficiency has a positive correlation with the low quality of the services. Some other reasons can be lack of management skills and the heavy academic staff working load of teaching and researching which leads to insufficient professional control over the education quality.

Conclusions
The use of the 5Q dimensions provides both a structure for designing a service quality measurement instrument and a framework for prioritizing results and findings. The 5Qs results can be used in a variety of ways: understanding current higher education quality; comparing workforce performances across different universities and higher education institutions among and between different countries and cultures, comparing workforce or labour performance across different parts of the education services and assessing the impact of improvement initiatives.

In this study, a 5Qs model to measure workforce performance and student’ satisfaction is proposed. It encompasses technical, functional, interaction, infrastructure and atmosphere qualities and services. Innovating and developing comprehensive measurement tools for the student quality assurance and student satisfaction will be only the initial step for the institution in truly managing education.

We are all asked to think in terms of life-long learning, and quite some higher education institutions already have a majority of mature students in addition to online learning. Therefore interaction and good atmosphere are also important factors for the wellbeing of the students. There is risks that higher education institutions focus more or only on the quality of education itself (technical) and how (functional) to deliver it, but relatively ignoring the impact of the other 3 Qs, i.e. quality of infrastructure, quality of interaction and quality of atmosphere.

By innovating a TRM philosophy, culture and system which includes the 5Qs and viewing a university or any higher institution as a collection of interdependent systems and processes, university leaders can understand how problems occur and can strengthen the university/institution as a whole.
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