CHALLENGES FACING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF ELDORET EAST DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *One of the primary and most important service industries in the public sector and communities is education. It is the quality of education that forms an enduring wealth and security of the societies and their people (Babbar, 1995). During the last two decades, the preservation of high quality and standards in education has become a major concern for educational institutions and the government. Consequently, the demand for explicit quality evaluation and assurance processes has been increased rapidly. The enormous funds which the government allocates to this sector makes it very important for those who manage education to ensure that the quality of education imparted in schools and other institutions of learning is of the required standard. During the 2012-2013 financial year, the government allocated Ksh 200 billion to the Ministry of Education in the budget (2012-2013 budget, GOK, 2012). This paper examines the challenges facing the implementation of Total Quality Management in Schools. The overall aim of this study was to evaluate the extent to which Total Quality Management principles are practiced in secondary schools in Eldoret East District.The study was carried out in Eldoret East District, Kenya. The study employed use of a survey research design and utilized the stratified random sampling technique for data collection. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires and document analysis. The target populations used were principals, directors of studies and heads of departments of the selected schools. A total of 15 secondary schools in Eldoret East District participated in the study. The findings of the study revealed a number of challenges in the implementation of TQM as; Lack of commitment by the management and some staff members, Organizational culture in the school, Poor documentation, Insufficient training of key team players, Ineffective communication. The study is aimed at giving Academic scholars and implementers a practical view of the implementation process of Total Quality Management with the involved loophole. Those who wish to further their education will find new information, which will contribute to the building of their scholarly abilities and growth. It also gives a model to minimize these challenges.*

KEYWORDS: Challenges, Implementation, Total Quality Management (TQM), Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The tasks carried out by Quality Assurance and Standards include assessment in schools, monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation, co-coordinating capacity building programmes, recruitment of students to teacher training programmes among others. According to

a Quality Assurance and Standards report by the DQASO, Eldoret East District, Quality Assurance and Standards is faced with challenges which include the following:-

Inadequate budgetary allocation: Adequate financing is required to enable Quality Assurance activities to run smoothly. There is inadequate budgetary allocation to the directorate of quality assurance and standards.

Lack of transport: This is because there are few vehicles and the few available are not well maintained. This makes mobility of the officers to the fields difficult.

Poor motivation and job dissatisfaction: The frustrations experienced by quality assurance and standards officers make them to lose morale thus job dissatisfaction. Poor terms and conditions of work also contribute to job dissatisfaction. The officers are not given good remuneration packages. Sometimes their salaries are lower than those of the officers they inspect in the field.

Lack of pre-service and in-service training: There are no regular in-service courses for updating skills of the quality assurance and standards officers. Coupled with the lack of a definite staff development policy, the problem of inadequacies in skills has arisen.

There is understaffing of schools: This is occasioned by the freezing of employment of teachers. Quality and staffing go hand- in- hand. Metobo (2011) in his letter to the editor on the teacher's strike argued that many schools were disadvantaged as far as staffing is concerned. He stated that the strike was about bridging the gap to ensure quality teaching. Mbindyo (2011) on the same issue argued that the strike was not just about pay but rather it was about employing more teachers to improve the quality of Education in Kenya

Barriers in the Implementation of TQM

Sallis (2002) identifies various barriers to the successful implementation of TQM as discussed in this section. The author acknowledges that TQM is hard work. It takes time to develop a quality culture. By themselves hard work and time are two of the most formidable blocking mechanisms to quality improvement. TQM needs a champion in the face of the myriad of new challenges and changes facing education. Quality improvement is a fragile process. Cultures are essentially conservative and homeostasis is the norm. The members of staff in any organization are most comfortable with what they know and understand. However, to stand still while competitors are improving is a recipe for failure.

Sallis (2002) further argues that if TQM is to work it must have the long-term devotion of the senior staff of the institution. They must back it and drive it. Senior management may themselves be the problem. They may want the results that TQM can bring, but be unwilling to give it their wholehearted support. Many quality initiatives falter because senior managers quickly return to traditional ways of managing. Fear by senior managers of adopting new methods is a major barrier. If senior management do not give TQM their backing there is little that anyone else in the organization can do.

The sheer volume of external pressures also stands in the way of many organizations attempting TQM. Although quality programmes are introduced with considerable publicity, too often they can be overtaken and submerged by other initiatives. There is a need to ensure that quality always

has an important place on the agenda of an organization. This is where strategic planning plays such an important role. If TQM is firmly a part of the strategic role of the institution, and if there are good monitoring mechanisms in place, then there is a good chance that quality will keep a high profile. This makes it harder to ignore, and increases the chances of it being taken seriously (Deming, 1986).

The strategic plan can help staff understand the institution's mission. It helps to bridge gaps in communication. There is a need for staff to know where their institution is going and how it will be different in the future. Senior managers must trust their staff sufficiently to share their vision for the institution's future. Visions are often not shared because of a fear of a loss of status and disempowerment by managers. When coupled with a fear of delegation by managers, this can make quality development nearly impossible. Managers have to be able to let their staff take decisions and be willing to see them make honest mistakes (McCulloch, 1993).The strategic plan is therefore an avenue to the realization of total quality management practices through planning, implementation of the plans, monitoring and evaluation of programmes which will lead to continuous improvement in an organization. With such programmes in place there is bound to be an improvement in the quality of service delivery.

A potential problem area in many institutions is the role played by middle management. They have a pivotal role because they both maintain the day-to-day operation of the institution and act as one of its most important communications channels. They can often block change if they have a mind to or they can act as the leaders of teams spearheading the impetus for quality improvement. Middle managers may not define their role as one of innovation unless senior management communicates to them their vision of a new future. Senior managers must be consistent in their behaviour when advocating and communicating the message of quality improvement. They cannot say one thing and do another and then expect to engender enthusiasm among their staff or loyalty and commitment in their middle managers. They have to persuade others that new working methods will pay dividends.

Barriers to quality are not the sole prerogative of managers (Deming, 1986). Many staff fear the consequences of empowerment, especially if things go wrong. They are often comfortable with sameness. They need to have the benefits demonstrated to them. For this reason TQM must avoid being about nothing but jargon and hype. This can easily lead to a loss of interest and to skepticism and cynicism, and to the belief that nothing makes any difference. Many of the barriers to TQM involve an element of fear and uncertainty. Fear of the unknown, of doing things differently, of trusting others, and of making mistakes, are powerful defense and resistance mechanisms. Staff cannot give of their best unless they feel that they are trusted and their views listened to. Deming (1986) argues that it is essential when undertaking the quality revolution to 'drive out fear', and it is imperative to take this message seriously when building a quality institution. This is because human beings resist change due to fear of the unknown.

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METHODOLOGY

The study was an examination of the challenges the hinder implementation of Quality and Standards in Schools with a focus on Eldoret East District, Kenya. Schools that were involved in the study included; Day mixed schools, Boarding mixed schools, Day/ boarding schools, Boys boarding and Girls boarding. The study employed use of a survey research design and utilized the stratified random sampling technique for data collection. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires and document analysis. The target populations used were principals, directors of studies and heads of departments of the selected schools. A total of 15 secondary schools in Eldoret East District participated in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Facing Implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM)
One item in the Principals' questionnaire sought to find out the challenges facing implementation of TQM in schools. A total of fifteen (100%) responses were received. Analysis and interpretation of data revealed that twelve (80%) indicated lack of funds, eleven (73.3%) indicated poor motivation and job satisfaction among team players, fourteen (93.3%) indicated lack of pre-service and in-service training, two (13.3%) indicated understaffing, seven (46.7%) indicated resistance to change by major stakeholders and ten (66.7%) indicated role ambiguity. This is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Challenges facing implementation of TQM Practices

NO	CRITERIA	FREQUENCY	%
1	Lack of funds	12	80
2	Poor motivation and job satisfaction among team players	11	73.3
3	Lack of pre-service and in-service training	14	93.3
4	Understaffing	2	13.3
5	Resistance to change by major stakeholders	7	46.7
6	Role ambiguity	10	66.7

Source: Survey Data, 2014

On the HODs questionnaire, the author sought to find out the challenges in implementation of quality management practice. A total of one hundred and thirty five (100%) responses were received. Analysis and interpretation of data revealed that on the scale of strongly agree, one hundred and thirty five (100%) indicated lack of commitment by the management and some staff members, one hundred and thirty (96.3%) indicated organizational culture in the school, five (3.7%) indicated poor documentation, five (3.7%) indicated insufficient training of key team players and eighty (59.3%) indicated ineffective communication. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Challenges Facing Implementation of Quality Management Practices

NO	CRITERIA	FREQUENCY	%
1	Lack of commitment by the management and some staff members	135	100
2	Organizational culture in the school	130	96.3
3	Poor documentation	5	3.7
4	Insufficient training of key team players	5	3.7
5	Ineffective communication	80	59.3

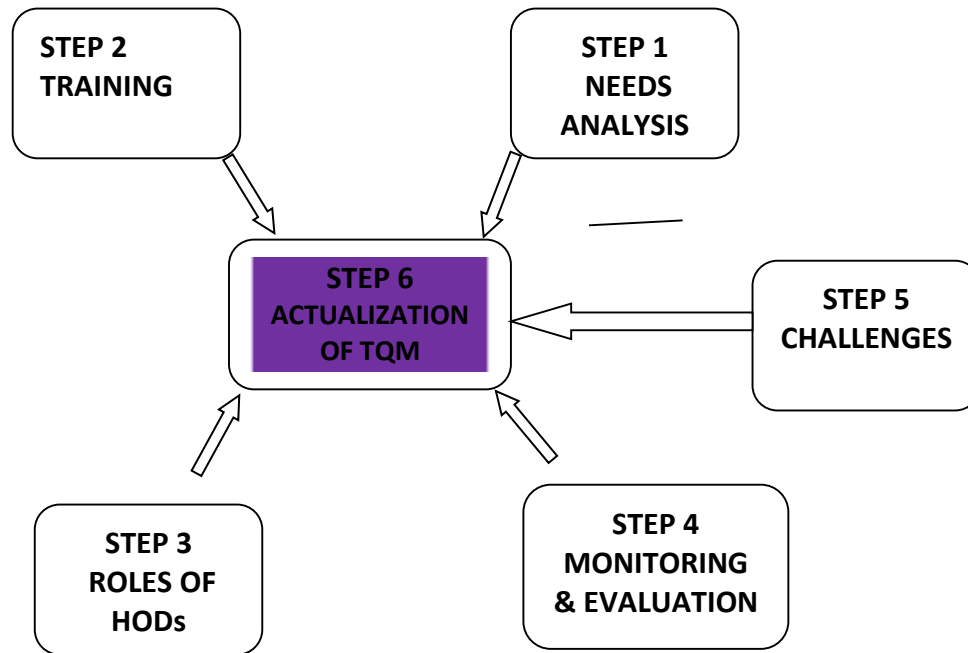*Source: Survey Data, 2014*

DISCUSSION

The study found out that the implementation of TQM faced many challenges. As much as the teachers were professionally trained and experienced, the responses indicated that lack of commitment by management and some staff members (100%), Organizational culture in the school (96.3%), lack of pre-service and in-service training (93.3%), lack of funds (80%), poor motivation and job satisfaction among team players (73.3%), role ambiguity and ineffective communication (59.3%) were the major challenges in the implementation of TQM practices in secondary schools in Eldoret East District. This study has further established that secondary schools in Eldoret East face a number of challenges that include; lack of commitment by staff, poor organization cultures, lack of training, and lack of team work, poor documentation and records keeping among others that had a significant negative bearing on TQM. These challenges need to be addressed for TQM to be attained in secondary schools. The study noted that team work, timely planning and adequate supervision were necessary to ensure the actualization of TQM. Provision of adequate resources and relevant training would provide a favorable environment for the attainment of TQM at secondary schools at Eldoret East.

Although the Ministry of Education embraced TQM after its ISO certification in 2007 the disparity in performance of various schools calls for the need to ascertain the extent to which TQM principles are practiced and the challenges facing its implementation. The author recommends a model that if implemented will create a conducive environment for implementation of TQM.

RECOMMENDATION

The study proposes a model that could be used to ensure the proper implementation of TQM in secondary schools in Eldoret East. The suggested model presents six stages that secondary schools in Eldoret East would have to go through to ensure there is conducive environment for the actualization of TQM. These stages and requirements are shown in Figure 1.

The model has five phases namely: Needs analysis, training, role of HODS, continuous monitoring and evaluation as shown in figure 1 below:

(insert a minus sign below the arrow on challenges coz challenges have to be minimized)
Figure 1: Proposed TQM Implementation Framework for Secondary Schools
Source: Survey Data, 2014

Step 1- Needs analysis
The starting point in implementation of TQM is to carry out a needs analysis of the organization. The needs analysis should also be carried out among the staff, students and other stakeholders of secondary schools so as to establish the following:

i. Staff capacity building levels within secondary schools, It will further examine the knowledge and skills gaps of these staff in TQM.
ii. The needs of the users, staff and stakeholders, of the secondary schools.
iii. The required resources, Financial and human capital among others, that are necessary for the implementation of TQM secondary schools.
iv. The policies and procedures put in place in secondary schools, to provide guidelines on implementation of TQM.
v. Needs analysis should be carried out continuously in view of the dynamic environment.

Step 2 –Training
There should be continuous training on staff as regard to TQM developments. New staff should adequately be inducted on TQM implementation and the management should make known their expectation from the staff. Responsibilities should be clearly spelled out.

Step 3- Roles of Heads of Departments

The HODs have the invaluable role of championing for TQM in their schools.
HODs have a major role to play in spearheading the walk towards successful implementation of TQM in secondary schools.
The HODs also play a paramount role of supervising staff under them to ensure they perform as per required standards.

Step 4 -Monitoring and Evaluation

Continuous monitoring and evaluation is vital for the implementation and the sustainability of TQM in secondary schools in Eldoret east. This therefore requires that record keeping and proper documentation is done in schools. This is vital as it provides the necessary evidence to analyze trends that are crucial for the monitoring and evaluation process.

Step 5- Minimization of Challenges

Challenges are a great impediment towards the implementation and sustainability of TQM practices in secondary schools at Eldoret east. It's for this reason that schools should strive to eliminate if not minimize factors that slows down the pace of implementation of TQM in schools such as: lack of commitment, lack of team work, poor documentation and record-keeping among others.

Step 6 -Actualization of TQM

When the above six factors are well factored in as shown in the model, then the actualization of TQM can be achieved in secondary schools. However other external factors may help improve the intake of TQM in secondary schools such as having in place policies and procedures on implementation of TQM to provide guidance and spell out responsibilities of parties concerned furthermore the adoption of information communication technology (ICT) can help improve and sustain the implementation of TQM in Secondary Schools.

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