

# **Challenges of Total Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions**

**Abdullah Al-Amri**

Department of Design, Manufacture and Engineering Management,  
University of Strathclyde,  
Glasgow, 75 Montrose St, Glasgow G1 1XJ, UK  
abdullah.al-amri@strath.ac.uk

**T.C. Wong**

Department of Design, Manufacture and Engineering Management,  
University of Strathclyde,  
Glasgow, 75 Montrose St, Glasgow G1 1XJ, UK  
andy.wong@strath.ac.uk

## **Abstract**

In today's competitive environment Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are facing many challenges and growing pressure from various stakeholders. To cope with this pressure, HEIs require a supportive managerial approach that fosters the understanding of stakeholders' needs and expectations.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is considered as one of the most comprehensive approaches to enhance performance and to meet customer needs. While this approach is being successfully adopted in the manufacturing sector, the same cannot be achieved in many service organisations. HEIs operate in a unique environment with multiple stakeholders and subjective nature of managing TQM compared with the manufacturing industry and encounter more challenges due to their unique nature. Most of the existing studies focus on students and give less attention to staff. There is lack of research that that focus on staff views, thus more attention should be given to them due to their vital role as a mediator between the policymakers and students as well as their closeness to the encountered problems. Some of these problems might result from the nature of HEIs environment, and some might originate from existing perceptions regarding TQM applicability in HEIs.

This research aims to contribute toward the identification of TQM challenges in HEIs from the staff perspective in order to gain a better understanding of TQM challenges. The study designed to collect qualitative data by conducting semi-structured interviews with staff from HEIs. The findings are expected to be an important step towards the identification of major TQM challenges in HEIs and to create better awareness regarding the potential obstacles as well as to call future research to move towards the second step of seeking and proposing a TQM-framework that facilitate successful TQM implementation.

## **Keywords**

Total Quality Management (TQM), Quality implementation, Higher Education Institutions, quality problems or challenges.

## **Biographies**

**Abdullah Al-Amri**, is a PhD candidate in the Department of Design, Manufacture and Engineering Management at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK. His research interest in the area of Total Quality Management and its implementation in higher education institutions. He has a working experience in both public and private Omani organisations and currently he is an employee in the Ministry of Manpower in Oman and working as a lecturer in a public higher education institution in Oman.

**T.C. Wong** received the B.Eng. Degree in Industrial Engineering and the M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees in Operations Research from the University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong. He is a member of IEEE and Senior Member of Hong Kong Society for Quality (HKSQ). His research areas include evolutionary algorithms, computational modelling and optimisation, production scheduling, and decision-making. Prior to joining the University of Strathclyde as Lecturer in 2014, he worked at the City University of Hong Kong for more than five years. He is a reviewer of several International Journals such as International Journal of Production Research, IIE Transactions, Decision Support Systems, Computers & Industrial Engineering, etc.