

## TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING STANDARDS IN NIGERIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

BY

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### Abstract

*This paper examined Total Quality Management (TQM) Practices as a Strategy for Promoting Standards in Nigerian Private Universities. The study discussed: the concept of quality; the concept of total quality management; the theoretical framework on total quality management; total quality management measures; factors influencing the implementation of total quality management and standards in Nigerian private universities. It is clear that a lot still needs to be done, the National Universities Commission (NUC), needs to start thinking of quality and implementing appropriate quality programmes in the universities. Nigerian universities ought to look beyond the shores of the country for possible benchmarking to access their competence and performance. The benefit of the revitalization of education will lead to increased customer loyalty, better customer service, improve productivity, a committed and enthusiastic workforce, cost-effectiveness, increased profit, and satisfied customers. Based on the observations of this study, the following suggestions were advanced: TQM should be introduced immediately as a course in all Tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The course should not be restricted to any particular Faculty but should be a compulsory course for all students. This will enable every Nigerian graduate to have overall knowledge of the principle of TQM; the University should step up its own enlightenments campaign through seminars, workshops, and other publications; NUC may consider establishing an annual award for TQM. This will serve many purposes like encouraging continuous improvement, raising awareness, and removing the fear of change; there is an urgent need for institutions that have successfully implemented TQM to process and obtain certification, which should keep them on their toes to continuously improve their process.*

**Keywords:** *Total Quality Management, Strategy, Promoting standards, Nigerian, Private Universities*

### Introduction

Education is viewed as an instrument for national development. This is because it is expected that by using the right mix of inputs, the educational system will produce the quality and quantity of human resources required for economic development. In a bid to develop human resources for national development the Nigerian government resorted to opening universities across the country and increasing access to these universities (Wu, 2019). Nigeria is currently witnessing a proliferation of universities, as Federal, State and Private individuals and organizations are exercising their constitutional rights in the establishment of schools. According to NUC (2022), there are 49 Federal Universities, 54 state universities, 111 privately owned universities, and 47 other degree-awarding institutions. While admission into universities has rapidly increased, the volume of resource inputs has not expanded to meet the admission demand. The result is an acute shortage of staff, funds, physical facilities, and equipment. Other indicators of declining quality in education are a high dropout rate, examination malpractice, cultism, hooliganism, drug abuse, sexual harassment, and general lawlessness. In recent years, the trend in the world is towards a restructuring of school management along the line of decentralization in which quality promotion is based on the prevention of wastage.

Education stakeholders have been quick to comment on the issue of quality in education in Nigeria Decree 16 of 1993, empowers the National Universities Commission to lay down minimum academic

standards for all the academic programmes taught in Nigerian Universities and accredit them. Consequently, academic minimum standards were developed in 1993 for all the undergraduate programmes taught in Nigerian Universities. Today, educational stakeholders demand high quality for the achievement of efficiency and effectiveness. Since no one institution can boast of holding the rights to the development and delivery of quality services, many organizations have embraced the Total Quality Management (TQM) concept introduced by business and industry to establish standards and techniques that ensure the quality of products leaving and reaching firms through continuous actions rather than through one final inspection. It relies on the experiences, expertise, and commitments of all members of an organization to improve the processes by which customers are served. No organization can afford to be competitive if it does not continuously improve on its products, services, processes, and people. There is, therefore, an urgent need for Nigerian universities to integrate TQM in the area of curriculum evaluation (Marsh, 2019).

### **Concept of Quality**

Quality plays a significant role in every organization for the survival of mankind. According to Sternberg, and Chowkase, (2021) quality is a slippery concept because it has such a variety of meanings and the word implies different things to different people. The significance of the term "quality" in an educational context, includes its political importance and increased substantially. However, given a normative interpretation. Quality pervades all our activities, whether in business or institutions. Wehnmeier (2010) defined quality as a "degree of excellence", or "relative nature, kind or character". Quality in teaching means possessing the competencies to teach effectively. The competencies required include the ability of the teacher to measure students' educational achievements, and of ensuring that parents are satisfied with the educational development of their wards for which overall concern is the effective improvement of children's educational development. Similarly, quality according to Timmons, et al (2021) is a basic input that improves students' learning achievement qualitatively or quantitatively which is dependent on the qualitative or quantitative improvement of teachers. However, quality lies in the perception of the consumers because what is good for one may not be good for another. According to this definition, quality lies in the eye of the beholder. This is because the customer, who makes the judgment on quality, does this by reference to the best comparable performance. In this context, it is associated with monitoring and evaluating components of education to see whether the outcome is good and of the intended standard. Quality according to Sahin, et al (2019) is "a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and suited to the market". Quality education is measured by the extent, to which the training received from an institution enables the student to think, independently, and analytically to solve relevant societal problems in any given environment.

In addition, quality in education can be defined from two perspectives which are; Quality of the Education system as a whole (i.e. schools and related bodies, teaching and learning environment, and policies), and the Quality of what the system offers the students (i.e. quality of teaching and learning process and curriculum), (Jin & Prasad, 2018). Quality in education can be defined as the process of education, which enhances the need to achieve and develop the talents of the customer and at the same time, meet the accountability standards set by the client who pays for the process. According to UNICEF 2000, quality in education recognizes five dimensions of quality which are learners, environment, content, processes, and outcome founded on the right of the whole child and all children, to survival, protection, development, and participation. Quality criteria must reflect the aim of cultivating students' critical and independent thought and the capacity of learning throughout life (UNESCO, 2009). Quality can be defined as a predictable degree of uniformity dependability at a low cost and suited to the market (Deming, 2020). Quality ensures that an organization or product is consistent and is customers focused. According to Alzoubi and Ahmed (2019) quality is equated to the following phrases: meeting the requirement, meeting needs, achieving standards, state of excellence, best practice, best performance, benchmarking, and fulfilling intentions, however, quality in private Nigerian private university is to achieve effective school administration and the delivery of quality education to the students.

### Concept of Total Quality Management

Quality is not easy to define and there is no single definition of this concept that is universally accepted, especially, as it is used in education. To some educationists, quality is seen as a "degree of excellence", or "degree of worth" "fitness for use" or degree of conformity to standard" while other educationists see it as the "level of value in a product". Marsh (2019) conceptualized quality as a grade of achievement, a standard against which to judge others. However, the industry has moved from quality to a more proactive process-quality assurance and later transformed into Total Quality Management. This is a combined, process of quality control, quality assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. This can be represented in the form of an equation:

$TQM = \text{Quality Control} + \text{Quality Assurance} + \text{Continuous Monitoring and Education.}$

$TQM = QC + QA + CM + E.$

Total Quality Management (TQM) can be seen as a change in private universities' management style that aims to continuously increase value to students by designing and continuously improving private universities' processes and systems. Al Hasan and Micheli, (2022) define TQM as the continuous improvement of individual lecturers, departments, and faculties of private universities' processes focused on meeting always meeting students' expectations. TQM is the state of an organization in which all the activities or all functions are designed and carried out in such a way that all external customer requirements are met while reducing internal time and cost and enhancing the workplace climate:

Tahir (2019) gives a quantitative definition of TQM as a process designed to focus on students' expectations, preventing problems, building commitment to quality in the classrooms, and laboratories, and promoting open decision-making. The focus on students is one of the central tenets of TQM. Ijaya, (2019) emphasized that TQM is seen as an approach based on a positive attitude to quality at every level in private universities. Cole (1996) describes the TQM process as a cyclical process that never ends. It involves identifying the needs and wants of customers, translating such needs into specifications, developing and testing specifications, setting a quality standard, drawing up resources and implementing plans, assessing and monitoring every stage of the planning, and setting up procedures for assessing customers' satisfaction.

### A Cyclical Process of Total Quality Management

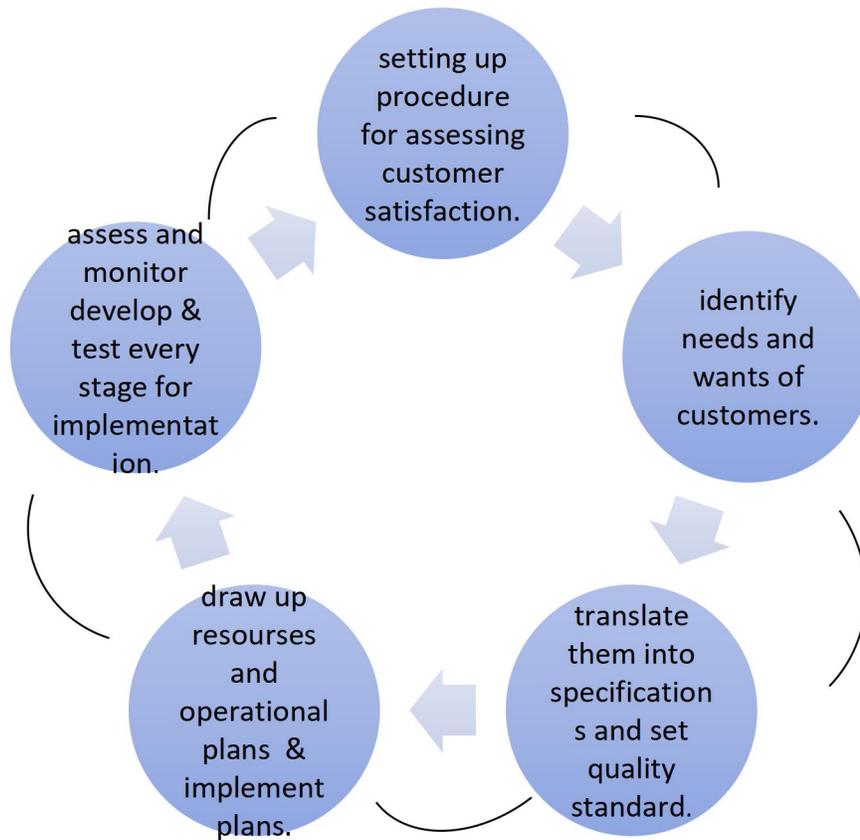


Figure 1: A Clinical Process of TQM: Adapted from Cole, 1996, p. 242

To be able to apply TQM to education involves the following philosophical steps: achieving quality in everything, doing the right thing first, continuously striving for improvement, strengthening the supplier-customers chain, team building, and technology, reducing the cost of bad quality, establishing standards and specification, adequate inspection, adopting statistical quality control and mentoring. TQM provides an overall concept that fosters an obsession for continuous improvement in the organization. The philosophy behind TQM is to develop a culture of continuous improvement through employees' collaborative efforts for the satisfaction of customers' (students, parents, teachers, and community) needs. Appropriate application of TQM will lead to a reduction of wastage in schools, increased productivity, and job satisfaction among staff. TQM will enhance customer satisfaction and enhance the morale of staff and students. On the benefit of TQM to education, Ijaiya (2019) emphasizes the improvement of management teachers' relationships and achievement of educational objectives and societal development. In the process of management, TQM focuses primarily on total satisfaction for both internal and external customers. It is obvious, therefore, that organizations that were doing the right first become a culture, substantial reduction in operating costs, and the associated effect of higher profitability. Drayton, (2022) argues that TQM had much to offer schools because it is value-driven, has a clear moral imperative, customer focused, exiting for and driven by the needs of young people, parents, and the community.

It recognizes the autonomy of schools to handle their affairs. By adopting TQM principles, Alawamleh, (2020) opine improved communications, increased involvement, improved quality and efficiency, and increased potential for productivity. The integration of TQM to higher institutions involves 7 distinct but overlapping steps such as organizing the top team, developing a shared vision and mission from the organization, defining the key performance indicators, understanding and sponsoring the core processes,

breaking down core processes into activities and tasks, ensuring process and people alignment through policy development, Olsen & Tomlin, (2020) affirmed that, to be competitive if it does not continuously improve on its products, services, processes, and people. There is, therefore, an urgent need for Private Universities to integrate Total Quality in the area of curriculum evaluation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The concept of Total Quality Management as applied to Private Universities can be traced to the system theory developed by Easton David in 1938. According to the theory, a system is a unit with a series of interrelated and interdependent parts, such that the interplay of any part affects the whole. A system can, therefore, be regarded as a structure with interdependent parts. The system theory is relevant to private Institutions because the entire educational setup is a system. The university is a social system that does not exist in a vacuum. The operations of the institution are mutually dependent on its internal and external environments. The system theory is characterized by the following properties, output, and feedback among others. Within the educational system, all the various parts operate to achieve the overall objectives of education. Hence, no matter how many departments are established, each will function to achieve various institutional objectives. Alawamleh, (2020) opined that effective communication and a common understanding of roles and responsibilities are important to the optimization of the system. When one component, function, or subsystem benefits without concern for the impact on the total system, then the total system is sub-optimized. The aim of the system must be clear to all and consistent with the needs of the system's customers.

The system theory has practical application to educational administration. Most of the nation's educational problems today can be resolved through system analysis. This can be done through the application of various system-oriented management techniques, which have been developed and can be adapted and applied to educational administration. Some of these include planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS), management by objective (MBO), project evaluation and review techniques (PERT), Dephi techniques, etc. all these could be used by educational administrators to analyze every educational program systematically. All these theories lend credence to resource and human management and are therefore relevant to this study. This study is anchored on behavioural and systems theories respectively (Nkuda, 2019).

The relevance of this study is that it views society as a system that is made up of structures known as institutions. These institutions are family, education, legal, religious, economic, and policy. These institutions which the theorists refer to as structures or sub-systems must continue to perform their roles, it would affect the other sub-system because these sub-systems are interrelated and interconnected. If the family institution fails in its duties, definitely the educational institution will be affected. In like manner, if the educational institution also fails in its duties, the political institution would be affected and if the political institution is affected, it would affect the economic institution and in the end, the society at large would be at the receiving end. Each institution has a function to perform or a role to play in the development of society at large.

Deficiency in one of these structures of society would lead to deficiency in others. In like manner, a University institution is a system just like society. Universities are also made up of parts such as administrators, students, academic staff, non-academic staff, and others. Each of these groups must perform its functions or roles for the success of the school which is also a system like society. All the stakeholders must work harmoniously together for the University to realize its objectives. The University administrators cannot do without the students or the academic and non-academic staff. The students also cannot do without the administrators and other staff both academic and non-academic. Each of these groups has a role or function to perform for the success of achieving institutional goals and objectives. Without students, there will be no University administrators and other staff and without administrators and other staff of the University, there would be no students. Just as society needs those established

institutions to survive, the University environment also needs the administrators, students, staff, and other members of the University to survive. These groups are important in light of their contributions to the University system. Just like social groups can have their differences of interest resulting in conflict as a valid and necessary part of social discourse. University and students could also have their differences resulting in crisis such as increment in school fees, lack of provision of adequate instructional facilities, lack of functional healthcare facilities, etc.

### **Total Quality Management Measures**

A review of the previous studies on TQM across organizations including educational institutions advocated TQM practices, activities, and construct in numerous ways although they are complementary to each other. Thus, the TQM practices in education which apply to this study are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

**Leadership Commitment:** Leadership would mean different things to many people. Some writers have given the impression that leadership is synonymous with management. The assumption is not correct because leaders are not found in the managerial hierarchy but also in informal work groups. Nonetheless, a work definition can provide a useful frame of reference. In this regard, leadership can be described as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievements in a given situation (Syakur et al, 2020). A more comprehensive definition of leadership was offered by Ibrahim, and Daniel (2019) that leadership is the process of influencing the people so that they will strive willingly and committed toward the achievement of group goals. The foundation of an effective TQM effort is leadership commitment. Leadership commitment in university settings, therefore, means doing the right thing as a leader. i.e. providing vision; developing, consultatively, a common purpose, facilitating the achievement of educational and organizational goals, being responsive to diverse needs and situations, having a future orientation, providing educational entrepreneurship, linking resources to outcomes, supporting the school as a likely educational place, working creatively with, empowering others and ensuring that the processes and content of the curriculum are contemporary and relevant (Kaminskiene, et al, 2020). Leaders who are committed have roles in motivating teachers toward individual and shared learning, a factor which is considered to be quite important for university administration (Kirk, et al, 2018). Consequently, it becomes clear that the commitment of the University leader is the mediator which has the authority to develop and empower lecturers in the quest for institutional effectiveness (Hendri, 2019). Holmes, Parker, and Gibson (2019) note that in each institution, leadership can contribute to the improvement of the lecturer by providing the conditions as well as the climate in which effective teaching and learning can thrive. It has been established that apart from classroom teaching, there is hardly anything that positively or negatively affects students learning than leadership.

Besides, Miller (2018) argues that irrespective of the problem universities face their solutions rested squarely with leadership. The job of an administrator, as the leader of an institution, is a complex and multifaceted endeavor, as has been well documented in the research on university leadership over the past decades. Therefore, the high-level commitment of the administrator is highly needed for the smooth running of and the attainment of institutional effectiveness.

**Employee Involvement:** According to Robinson and Ginder (2020), employee involvement is a process of empowering employees to participate in managerial decision-making and improvement activities appropriate to their levels in the organization. Since McGregor's Theory Y first brought to managers the idea of a participative management style, employee involvement has taken many forms, including job design approaches and special activities such as quality of work life (QWL) programs. There are at the end of the day the only thing that differentiates one company from another is the people. Not the product, not service establishments, not the process, not secret ingredients; ultimately any of these can be duplicated. The Japanese have always recognized this and it is one of the reasons for their success in

world markets, they place tremendous value on the integration of people with organizational objectives, equipment, and processes (Godwin, 2018). Employee involvement if well implemented, changes the fundamental relationship between individuals and the organization they work for. It builds employees in as a business partner, so they know more and they do more to make the organization successful, particularly in industries where the human component is important in most knowledge work, high-tech, and many kinds of service industries.

According to Robinson and Ginder (2020) employee engagement can increase the understanding of organizational policies. It involves processes such as lower levels of decision making, adopting the experience, knowledge, and ideas for the advancement of the organization. Employees shall be given due recognition for their contributions and their ideas. It is a psychological process to develop confidence between the members of the organization and encourage them to make decisions and solve problems with each other. Chanana, (2021) maintained that job involvement could be produced in the outer and inner self. Internal involvement is influenced by its commitment. It involves defining the duties of employees entrusted with any evaluated behavior shown by the employee. Involvement also enables management, and employees to share the resulting performance, and member understanding of the employees will work goals. It is important because, without employee engagement, an organization cannot function properly. It can provide satisfaction, especially in the quality of working life, and increase employee commitment to a continuous quality improvement process.

**Teachers' Commitment:** The strength of any profession depends upon the level of commitment of its members to the goals and purposes of the organization, teaching as a profession is no exemption. Teacher commitment according to numerous researchers and authors is central to the work of teaching and functioning of the educational system (Goering, et" al. 2022). Ayele (2014) defines commitment as the investment in a particular career, in this case, teaching. San-Martín, (2020) describes commitment as the willingness of an individual in investing personal resources in the teaching task. Teacher commitment like an organizational commitment is conceptualized as being multi-dimensional. Day, Aziz-Ur-Rahman, and Siddiqui, (2019) argued that there are different forms of commitment to teaching. In their opinion, the nature and intensity of commitment to teaching depend on factors derived from personal and professional lives. Commitment is a word they use to distinguish those who are caring, dedicated, and who take their job seriously from those who put their interest first. Professionally committed teachers take their job seriously and they get enjoyment from it (Molan, and Nolan, 2020). Also, Moss, et al (2020) believed that teachers who are committed are those who see their students' welfare; they care for, respond to, and meet needs. The committed teachers strive to improve their practice, pedagogies research. Commitment can be described as a high level of attachment to an organization (Crosswell, 2017). Teacher commitment is the emotional bond between the teacher and the school (Ayele, 2014). TQM as a philosophy is based on several principles such as top management/ leadership commitment, involvement of people, continuous improvement, employ focus, process system approach, factual approach to decision-making, and mutual benefit of suppliers' relationship (Evans, 2010). Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with a particular organization. Commitment to an organization is about believing in the organizations goals and values and having the intention to exert considerable efforts for the organization. Therefore, in the context of education, we speak of teacher commitment (San-Matin, (2021).

Razaq, Darmawan, and Keeves (2015) stressed that quality education just cannot be realized without the effort and contribution of dedicated and dedicated teachers. According to Donohoo, (2018). Lecturer commitment is believed to be an important factor that affects positively school effectiveness and the success of the education system. Eginli (2019) believed that committed lecturers who have the support of their colleagues and leaders experience the fulfillment of their professional work as a result of their ability to reach every student. He further noted that committed teachers may likely stay in the profession and continue to have positive impacts on students' achievement. Demir (2020), in his study on commitment

and effectiveness, found out that job commitment was strongly related to indices of effort and performance effectiveness. Furthermore, Suliman (2002), in his study on mediating the role of commitment on work relations and performance found that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between work climate and performance. In addition, Malik (2019) found that psychological hardness is significantly and positively associated with the identification and internalization dimensions of lecturer commitment.

**Effective Communication:** Communications are inextricably linked to the quality process, yet some executives find it difficult to tell others about the plan in a way that will be understood. An additional difficulty is filtering. As top management's vision of quality filters down through the ranks, the vision and the plan can lose both clarity and momentum. Thus top management as well as managers and supervisors at all levels serve as translators and executors of top management's directive. The ability to communicate is a valuable skill at all levels from front-line supervisors to CEO. According to Tam (2018), the communication gap within institutions and between groups in society has been widening steadily to a point where it threatens to become an unbridgeable gulf of total misunderstanding. Having said that, he provides an easily understood and simple approach to help communicate the strategy, vision, and action plans related to TQM. Communication is defined as the exchange of information and understanding between two or more persons or groups. Effective communication activities involved in school administration is inter-personal communication, which is defined as the transmitting of information from one person to another. It is also a process of sharing and exchanging ideas, feelings, information, and thoughts (Goering, et al 2022). Apart from the need for effective communication and coordination in the management structure and process, the basic functions of education, rely almost on communication among teachers and students and coordination among various organizational structures and levels. In any institution where there is effective communication, there will be an understanding among workers (teachers), harmony in work operation, good interpersonal relationship, and easy realization of common objectives and goals. Communication is recognized for playing a vital role in the effective administration of any organization which encourages teamwork. In the application of effective communication, principals are to establish and encourage good interpersonal relationships among lecturers, and lecturers to students to maintain a continuous improvement in the quest for quality Education. Therefore, the lecturers are expected to apply effective communication to a very great extent in order to achieve the organisational objectives.

**Student/Consumer Satisfaction:** The word customer is not a familiar term in education because the word carries overtones of buying and selling. A customer can be any person or group that receives products or services from another person or group (Lee&Lee, 2020). In other words, customers in education can be regarded as the students, parents, and stakeholders (Kodrin,2020). Deming (2017) considered customers to be the most important part of the quality line. Customers (students, parents, teachers, and community) according to Goshine, et al, (2018) are indeed the purpose of product development and continuous improvement.

The origins of the concept of customer satisfaction get their roots in the 1990s. Customers' satisfaction was taken into account in hopes of providing a solution for the growing issues of companies being capable of competing with both national and global competitors. Concerning education, (Billups, 2008 & Bryant, 2006) mentioned that unsatisfied students can either drop out of a higher education institution, transfer to another higher education institution or carry out their continuation of a degree program at another higher education institution and it is in the school best interest to see as many students to graduation as possible. Many higher education institutions that boast high satisfaction among students also boast a low dropout rate, a high graduation rate, and a group of alumni that is happy to donate to the higher education institution both financially and by word of mouth marketing.

TQM is a strategic business initiative and should be recognized as such to be successful. To achieve customer satisfaction, lecturers are to understand students' needs as the focus for continuous improvement to provide them with effective teaching and learning and also organize in-service training for lecturers' effectiveness. TQM can further be applied in higher institutions by being committed to strategic quality planning and providing human resources development in private universities to motivate and realize the maximum potential of lecturers and also by being understandable and competitive. Continuous school improvement and effective school administration are simply what comes out of an activity for what the lecturers put in, in terms of commitment to the work. Lecturers are required to establish effective communication among students for effective teaching and learning, and also accept the responsibility for providing students' needs as a focus for continuous quality improvement.

### **Factors Influencing the Implementation of Total Quality Management**

According to Shofoluwe (2010), total quality can be achieved through continuous improvement and it brings about the success of private universities. Continuous improvement can be attained through motivated employees who work together and utilize productive tools for increasing teaching and learning effectiveness in private universities. Training is another factor influencing total quality management. TQM revolves around employee empowerment and motivation, which requires some important skills and knowledge. This aspect could be gained through training. However, some steps need to be adhered to ensure effective training. The first and most important step in training is to make everyone understand the need and value for training and then finally implement the program. There is another key aspect of total quality management training and that is for the employees to understand the vision and mission of their institutions. Although school management and governing boards are responsible for ensuring optimum performance in place, they depend on individual employees and their involvement in TQM knowledge transfer to implement school policies.

Knowledge management is also considered one of the factors influencing TQM which is seen as continuous improvement. Deming (2014) stated that the school management and lecturers should overcome the fear of change. Good feedback and a communication system are vital in expressing ideas to the school management. According to Saylor (2013), the best ways of communication are direct communication between employees and supervisors. The extent to which private universities go to satisfy students is called students centered approach. A successful private university understands the needs of students and is always ready to put them in place. The quality management key is in maintaining a close relationship with the students. If the lecturers are dedicated and have the requisite skills, then TQM could be implemented successfully. Hence, all the lecturers from higher to lowest levels must be encouraged to own up to their responsibility and communicate effectively for improving the quality at all stages.

### **Standards in Nigerian Private Universities**

In the words of Isibor (2011), the positive impact private universities had on the development of education in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. According to him, private universities have impacted positively on the education sector so far. Before now, there were incidences of strike actions in the government-owned or public universities, no regular academic calendar and a programme that should last for just four years could end up causing a student six or seven years. The student then could only know the year of admission they could not predict their year of convocation. Consequently, the Nigerian university certificates that were once highly rated in foreign countries lost their credibility, such that when Nigerian graduates wanted to pursue a master's degree abroad, they were forced to undergo undergraduate courses before they were enrolled. Morenike (2003) further argues that since the major university lecturers' strike in 1989, the university system in Nigeria has been rooted in pungent soil; according to him, from that point onward, the university degree has become no more a university degree but a certificate, armed with which a job might be obtained at a later date. Therefore, there is a need for private involvement in providing educational opportunities for people in developing countries, particularly in

Nigeria, to ensure that all categories of citizens have access to university education. Also, private universities have reduced admission pressure on public universities.

Private universities have afforded Nigerians the opportunity to seek admission alternatives. Private universities have also raised the academic standard and moral values in the nation's ivory towers; it has equally improved the quality delivery of education, they have restored sanity and discipline to the system, and reduced industrial action drastically the system. For instance, the first ranking of universities done by the National Universities Commission revealed that private universities despite their young ages performed better than many of the public and old universities. Oyalabu, & Oyalabu (2020) argues further that the establishment of private universities in Nigeria has boosted healthy competition and enhanced standardization between public and private universities. These competitions according to Shofoluwe, (2010) could be based on research teaching, infrastructural and manpower development. Many private universities are confronted with the problem of a shortage of quality Faculty members, this could be addressed by strengthening local staff and enhancing their international staff ratio by recruiting top-class foreign teachers/researchers in programmes it desires to excel. Enticing outstanding academic-prize winners in the words of Okebukola (2008) will add significant value to the standing of many private universities. Also, the proprietor of private universities must not be motivated by profit but by service. Private universities are not something that one can invest in and get money the next day, if that is the mindset of people going into it, then they do not have any business coming into the establishment of private universities if they cannot make the sacrifice required. National University Commission (NUC) must also ensure that minimum academic standard is enforced in many private universities which are bottom-heavy with their academic staff mix. The quality should be such that will consist of a good proportion of seasoned and experienced academic staff.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that a lot still needs to be done, the National Universities Commission thinks of quality and implementing appropriate quality programs in the universities. Nigerian universities look beyond the shores of the country for possible benchmarking to access their competence and performance. The benefit of the revitalization of education will lead to increased customer loyalty, better customer service, improve productivity, a committed and enthusiastic workforce, cost-effectiveness, increased profit, and satisfied customers.

### **Suggestions**

1. Total Quality Management should be introduced immediately as a course in all private universities in Nigeria. The course should not be restricted to any particular Faculty but should be a compulsory course for all students. This will enable every Nigerian graduate to have overall knowledge of the principle of TQM.
2. The private universities should step up their enlightenment campaign through seminars, workshops, and other publications.
3. National University Commission (NUC) should establish an annual award for total quality Management. This will serve many purposes like encouraging continuous improvement, raising awareness, and removing the fear of change.
4. The management of private universities should promote an institutional culture of self-analysis on quality. A culture of quality connotes a scenario in which all members of the academic community recognize and accept the need to set and also define levels of performance, which involves scholastic achievement in an environment of continuous monitoring and improvement.

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