

A Review of the Obstacles Hindering the Application of Total Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions in Palestine and How to Eliminate them

Mohammed Hassan AlKhatib, Doaa Said Awaja, Ahmed Rawhy Awaja

Abstract:- Many challenges affect the quality of higher education in Palestine, which requires acting wisely to figure out these challenges and eliminate them in order to improve the quality of higher education through the development of many different and new experiences, systems and methods to improve the quality of higher education institutions. Thus, solutions and alternatives to the current problems and obstacles in similar circumstances have been proposed in order to identify the indicators that influence the quality of higher education institutions in Palestine and identify the different ways to develop these institutions and ensure access to the desired results.

In the light of the foregoing, Palestinian higher education institutions have played an important role in supporting the Palestinian and Arab labor market over the past decades and till now with qualified and trained individuals who contribute directly to the overall development of Palestine and the Arab world. However, they suffer from challenges and difficulties that prevent the application of quality. Thus, this paper aims at identifying the obstacles to the application of total quality in the Palestinian higher education institutions, in addition to the role played by the Accreditation and Quality Commission in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to overcome these obstacles.

I. INTRODUCTION

Palestinian society has long realized that its survival and continuity lies in the development of its cultural and civilizational identity. This aim has led it to exert all its capacities to improve the cultural and educational level of its people at a time when it has to face many other political and economic challenges. It can be noted that Higher education is not only the foundation of critical human development throughout the world, and in the framework of ongoing learning, higher education not only provides the necessary skills for every labor market but also provides the necessary training for all human cadres of teachers, doctors, nurses, and leaders. They are the ones who support civil society, lead effective governments and make important decisions that have an impact on the society as a whole.

The field of higher education has received considerable attention from many Palestinian researchers. This is reflected in great numbers of studies, researches, articles and books that were found over the past two decades addressing the Palestinian universities between reality and expectation. In 2007, a report by the European

Commission entitled "Higher Education in the Occupied Territories" was issued in addition to a Palestinian study by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education addressed the Palestinian Education, Reality and Aspirations, and many other reports on the "Higher Education Council and Palestinian Universities" as well as reports on "the reality of the funding of university education and its future."

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of Higher Education is considered one of the most important challenges of this era, which has an influence on the level of higher education institutions. However, a serious attention has been given to this issue through raising it in many scientific conferences at the global, regional and local levels. For instance, (UNESCO) has held a conference on higher education focused on the recommendations need to be done by governments and educational institutions in terms of quality in order to improve the level of quality and higher education in general (Alian Alhuli, 2004).

The Palestinian universities are considered young based on the international standards, where the oldest university has not been established for more than 30 years and some have just been established recently. However, they play a considerable role in providing full and qualitative support to the Palestinian society by providing the necessary services to promote it intellectually, culturally and economically. they also provide the Palestinian labor market, and some other middle eastern areas, over the past decades with qualified and trained individuals who contribute directly to the overall development of Palestine and the Arab world. Thus, this paper aims at identifying the obstacles to the application of total quality in higher education institutions, in addition to highlighting the role to be played by the authority of accreditation and quality in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in order to overcome these obstacles.

In order to keep supporting the society and the Palestinian people, Higher Education institutions are in need to acknowledge all the challenges facing the application of high quality levels Palestinian education need to be acknowledged in order to know the size and strength of their impact, as well as identify the impact of these challenges on the process of development and improvement of these institutions. Therefore, they will be able to identify the trends to be followed for renewal and change. Previous and good experiences need to be developed and new systems or methods need to be

developed to improve the quality of higher education institutions. This paper will highlight the various solutions and alternatives suggested to solve the current problems and obstacles by addressing similar circumstances and experiences. In addition to addressing the role desired by the accreditation and quality assurance commission in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in overcoming these obstacles.

In reference to several previous studies on the subject, many of these studies have addressed the concepts related to the application of Total Quality Management in the Palestinian universities' system, and few of them addressed the obstacles to the application of Total Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions in Palestine.

For instance, the study conducted by (Nasr Maddukh, 2008) entitled "Obstacles to the application of Total Quality Management in Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip governorates and ways to overcome them". On the other hand, (Najwa Saleh, 2009) study addressed the reality of the application of Total Quality Management at the University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza Governorate. Another study conducted to address how to achieve Quality Management Standards in Palestinian Universities in the West Bank Governorates as seen by members of the teaching staff. In addition to the study done by (Muhammad Abu Maluh, 2009) highlighting Quality Indicators in Education. Another study by (Raed Al-Hajjar, 2004) evaluated the University Performance from the point of view of faculty members at Al-Aqsa University in light of the concept of Total Quality Management. Another study by (Ibrahim Al-Attar, 2006) also addressed the reality of total quality in the Palestinian universities and ways to develop it from the point of view of the heads of academic departments in the universities of Gaza. In the light of the previous studies addressing the field of Quality in Higher Education Institutions, it can be concluded that there are some obstacles to the application of Total Quality Management in Palestinian colleges and universities, these obstacles can be categorized as follows:

➤ *First: Obstacles Related to Scientific Research:*

- Neglect of the Palestinian copyright law.
- Lack of specialized research centers in some Palestinian colleges and universities.
- Conducting research on traditional issues and neglecting recent and urgent issues.

➤ *Second: Obstacles Related to the Teaching Staff:*

- The low number of faculty members in relation to the number of faculties.
- The application of traditional teaching methods by faculty members and teaching staff.
- The low level of commitment by faculty members to the regulations and laws of their universities.
- The lack of human relations among faculty members.

➤ *Third: Obstacles Related to the Administrative Body:*

- Low qualified staff with huge responsibilities.

- Neglecting the complaints and suggestions of administrative staff by the management of the university/college.
- Weak relations between management and employees.
- A high degree of central decision-making in the university.

➤ *Fourth: Obstacles Related to the Institution Itself:*

- Weak periodic maintenance to the university facilities.
- Weak services provided by the university facilities such as library, cafeteria and labs.
- Lack of reading spaces provided to students and staff at libraries.

➤ *Fifth: Obstacles related to community service:*

- The lack of contribution done by education institutions in solving the problems facing society.
- Lack of linking university programs to plans for the development of the society.
- Lack of participation of faculty members in community and social activities.

In the light of what has been concluded from previous studies regarding the obstacles that hinder the application of Total Quality Management in higher education institutions, the researcher has proposed some recommendations that can help decision makers and Accreditation and Quality Assurance commission in the Ministry of Higher Education in order to overcome these obstacles and improve the level of quality of Higher Education institutions. These recommendations include:

- Develop a clear five-year independent plan for the quality department in the Commission's advanced programs for accreditation.
- Establishment of a committee that includes academics from various specializations to evaluate the courses and programs offered by the university, as well as the follow-up with the existing programs to develop them while ensuring high quality.
- Support the participation of the staff working in quality units in educational institutions in both local and international sessions, seminars and conferences related to the application of Total Quality Management.
- Attracting local, Arab and international experiences and presenting them through seminars and conferences and including them in the field of quality in higher education institutions.
- To codify the approved programs and focus on the quality of the choice to suit the needs of the community.
- Supporting total quality units in higher education institutions (reinforcement - share of experience ...) so that they can survive, improve and develop.
- Establishing a hospital in coordination with the Ministry of Health to receive the university student, in addition to using it to train the students of medical programs, especially after the spread of medical schools in Gaza
- Work on the establishment of a unified university network through the Commission to support scientific research.

- Establishment of a national center for information in partnership with universities to serve researchers and issues of the Palestinian society.
- Follow up the budgets of scientific research in higher education institutions and try to support them by various means available such as approval with the state budget.
- Putting up an award called the ministry's prize for qualitative research.
- Activate the role of higher education institutions by conducting various activities to achieve excellence in quality under the supervision of the Accreditation and Quality Commission.
- Follow up the results of research and studies related to the overall quality in higher education and focus on those that can provide solutions to the obstacles facing these institutions.
- Ensure Local private classification for private colleges every three or five years.
- Encourage private colleges emerging in disadvantaged geographical areas, which are taking strides in Total Quality Management in adopting new programs to serve the community and introduce programs that fulfill the needs of labor market.

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III. CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed previously it can be concluded that previous studies highlighted some obstacles that hinder the application of Total Quality Management in higher education institutions in Palestine including those challenges related to scientific research, the teaching staff in these institutions, the administrative body, the institution itself as well as the community as a whole. Thus, the researcher has proposed some recommendations that can help decision makers and Accreditation and Quality Assurance commission in the Ministry of Higher Education in order to overcome these obstacles and improve the level of quality of Higher Education institutions.

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