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Review Article

Quality Management as an Outcome of Management Field Evolution: A Review

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The interest in Quality Management since its entry into the management arena has grown unabated despite the controversies, criticisms and dismissive labels. There are those who have dismissed it as a fad. Enthusiastic proponents too have done it disservice through hypes and selling it as a quick fix for the organizational problems arising from lack of organization-environment fit. There are situations where operational performance improvements have been attributed to the approach and there are others where such improvements have not been apparent. In this review, a perspective is presented based on current knowledge in management and taking into consideration the various viewpoints in the subject. From the analysis of the literature, it is concluded that management field is evolving and new methods and constructs are expected to emerge and focusing on labels is very likely to result in practitioners and researchers missing opportunity to evaluate and correctly apply new and emerging knowledge required to improve the situation for mankind.

Key words: Quality Management, management paradigm, historical context, customer-value, management theory, organizational system.

INTRODUCTION

"Seemingly on schedule, every few years a hot new management technique comes along, almost always described by a three-word or two-word acronym" [1 p18]. The "hot new management techniques" referred to obviously include Total Quality Management (TQM) or Quality Management (QM), Organizational Development (OD), Management by Objectives (MBO), Business Process Reengineering (BPR), Just-In-Time (JIT), Value Management (VM) and others. Massie [2] makes similar observation asserting that the last few decades have seen "one fad after another", which he gives a life of no more than two years at the most. Oxford English dictionary defines a "fad" as a "fashion, an interest, a preference or an enthusiasm that is not likely to last". But Total Quality Management (TQM) or Quality Management (QM) stands out from among these techniques by the mixed perceptions, expectations, and the differing views it has generated about what it constitutes.

To many people, quality management is ISO 9001 certification; to others, it is simply Quality Management. Others see it in terms of context-based management frameworks – sometimes referred to as Self-assessment models, Business Excellence models, or simply, Excellence models. Notwithstanding these differences in perception, interest in Total Quality Management or simply, Quality Management has now found its way into every sector serving the society in one way or the other. In a program dubbed "Policing 2000", a New Zealand Police Service challenges the traditional policing assumptions and uses Quality Management approach in aligning itself to a more customer-focused strategy akin to the commercial sector [3]. The Citizens' Charter in the United Kingdom uses Quality Management-based framework in the same way [4]. In the United States of America, a key goal of National Performance Review Report is provision of customer service that can be placed in the top ranks in any business, a re-orientation of service towards a "focus on the customer", one of the fundamental principles of Quality Management. It has been cited in public sector reform forums as one of the means through which a customer-driven and efficient government with high productivity can be achieved in the poor under-developed nations of the world [4].

Published texts on Quality Management discuss the subject in ways that can be categorized into two; Quality

Management as a program [5] and Quality Management in terms of its contradiction to the principles underpinning traditional management [6]. It has been argued that the former is probably not a significant contradiction to the later but rather a question of operating era in the evolution path of quality as a concept [7]. The trigger for paradigm shifts from one managerial era to another is argued to be the changing needs of the times. This view supports the arguments by Harrington [8] that Quality Management is much like Scientific Management, but with the times taken into account. If these suggestions are accepted as reasonable and valid, then one would probably wish to see quality evolutionists refer to eras in evolution path of "management" – as a concept and a process rather than eras in evolution path of quality. In this conceptual paper, literature on the theoretical foundation of quality management and its standing with extant theories of management is reviewed. With an aim of understanding the position of quality management in the management arena, the paper seeks to answer one key conceptual question; Is quality management an outcome of management field evolution or a program? Issues to consider are how the knowledge of the principles, practices, tools and techniques can be integrated into a field that is generally not considered a "profession". This requires identification and clarification of the concepts underpinning the actions prescribed in the approach so as to determine if they have discriminant validity in the management context.

Management Theories in Discontinuous Contexts

There is consensus in the management literature on what a general definition of management as a process should be; a process in which people in leading positions achieve purposive goals through coordination and cooperation of human effort [9]. Theories relating to the process of management use concepts that have been developed over the centuries, starting from early military and church organizations, through to the industrial revolution, classical management viewpoints and to human relations school [10]. These theories must be applied in contexts that are changing in both mechanistic and philosophical terms. Historical contexts provide meanings to these theories, as they are applied to help decision-making in the global capitalist environment which has, in the last one century, been characterized by constant discontinuity and disruptions [11]. Meanings in historical contexts concern the problems of the time, the key focus areas, and the values at play. New knowledge is created if the problems of the time cannot be tackled effectively by rearranged or repackaged old knowledge represented by the existing theories [12]. Outcomes of rearranged and or repackaged knowledge can be changed focus.

The key issues at the time of the development of early leadership theories concerned situational demands of running cities, empires and religious communities and the problems were of command and control. The administrative systems of the time therefore emphasized practices and methods based on the doctrine of lines of authority. The post-industrial context needed solution for the problem of how to achieve efficiency in the workplace. The classical and the human relations management theories developed during the time necessarily emphasized efficiency as the key objectives of decision-makers. The systems theories address the context issues by recognizing the existence of and emphasizing "mutual interactions". Support for this position comes from Amagoh [13] who describes the relationships involved as complicated to conceive of from an analytical framework based on linearity. The thinking holds that it is the mutual interactions that change a collection of parts or components into a system.

The theories provide a context-based meaning to the definition of management in terms of achievement of purposive goals through coordination and cooperation of human effort [9]. Managing based on the systems theory therefore adds the cooperation between the components of the organization working as a system as another driver to achievement of organizational aims without disregarding the context relevant aspects of the early management theories. In this aspect, a hitherto missing integrating management view becomes a reality [10]. Quality Management, one of the fundamental principles of which is systems approach to management, could just be the integrative concept in this scenario [5].

Quality Management as an Integrating Theory of Management

Not unexpectedly, the expansion of management disciple in the post-industrial era has been accompanied by an equally large "fad" industry. A fad has been defined in the opening paragraph in page 1 in terms of relative period the "fashion", "preference" or "enthusiasm" keeps the interest of the audience before the interest on it wanes. Probabilistic nature of social science, to which management belongs, provides a context in which practitioners are willing to be selective with the contradictions they observe and allow a "band wagon" effect to take hold. Parker and Ritson [14], when discussing "fads" and the associated "gurus" in relation to two management figures, Mary Parker Follett and Henri Fayol, points to the risks of misunderstanding the true value of the concepts and ideas that are being passed on. How then does one know if a fad is being propagated or a misunderstanding of a valid management concept is causing its dismissal as a fad?

A study by Miller *et al*. [15] exemplifies not just the risks of accepting fads in management but also of dismissing a valid concept based on incorrect evaluation. The literature reports on a study done to identify prominent management fads and "classics" by evaluating the

lifecycles of listed management ideas. Using the speed of rise and decline in citations as a distinguishing factor to determine whether an idea is a fad or "classic", the study uses data from the 2002 edition of a global bibliographic database to conclude that Total Quality Management possess characteristics of a fad. Other practices and management concepts that are lumped together with Total Quality Management as having characteristics of fads are job enrichment, Management by Objectives, Theory X/Y and Z. They distinguish fads from what they call "classics" in terms of simplicity, promises, universality, novelty, and resonance with business problems of the day. Other properties listed are ease of implementation of the recommendations and use of buzzwords.

A critical evaluation of these findings identifies major weaknesses and inconsistencies. As pointed out by Miller et al. [15], a decline can be explained by the acts of "vulgarization" and "sexy packaging" [15 p8] that so often transform valid ideas and concepts into different things. Key questions that must be answered when considering this potential explanation are; decline of what and what is being transformed? Two central issues in the discussion are the label and the idea. Just as labels are used to position, promote and market services and tangible products, management practitioners and management arena themselves form a market. Consulting industry needs labels to help promote their services so as to achieve growth. The catchy phrases in the articles sampled in Miller et al. [15] study attests to this fact. Phrases like "Total Quality; Wave of the Future", "From Total Chaos to Total Quality", "TQM: Understanding the Basics of Total Quality Management", "Giving Companies a Way to Enhance Position in Global Market" and "How to Work Wonders Completely" are catchy labels meant to draw attention, and therein lies an opportunity for "vulgarization". Such labels provide opportunities for consultants and publishing houses to offer textbooks, motivational books, increase journal readerships and, of-course, increase consulting services business opportunities.

Proponents of what is labeled Total Quality Management too appear to be on the bandwagon of "vulgarization" and "sexy packaging" when they use labels to defend the validity of the idea by citing its fostering of Six Sigma, ISO certification system and enhancement of statistical process control [15]. For one, putting forward the fostering of these practices as the benefits of a management idea exemplifies "solution thinking" or "ideas thinking" views [16]. In these views, persons focus on ideas or their individually acknowledged solutions instead of what is really wanted – an outcome. For every desired outcome, there can be myriad of solutions, and ideas. By focusing on ideas, a group is likely to waste time arguing which idea is best, when it is trying to get an outcome achieved. The "TQM as a fad" debate exemplifies this scenario. The importance of separating ideas, solutions and outcomes is explained in McDemott and O'Connor [16]. Putting forward practices fostered in defense of a management approach similarly

mixes up solutions and the outcomes as indicated below.

Six Sigma, ISO certification system, and Statistical Process Control are solutions to the problem of how to achieve some outcomes. These are, by description, practices, and are the embodiment of some rules or laws concerning the functioning of an organization as a phenomenon. The rules or laws are the principles behind the practices. Like cultural practices in communities, practices of management are embodiment of some principles upon which management decisions are anchored. In the hierarchy of concepts applied in any phenomenon, practices fall somewhere between principles and techniques/tools. Indeed what is described in Miller et al. [15] as "the fad-like" aspects - quality committees, quality circles, quality seminars are, by definition of their use, techniques. The ritualistic activities are ideas and techniques put forward or considered in some respects to constitute application of practices and do not form the foundational anchorage of what is labeled Total Quality Management.

Determining whether a management concept is a fad or a valid concept or a "classic" as described in Miller et al. [15], must therefore begin by having clarity on the concept. Is it the label under discussion or concept? A distinction has to be made between Total Quality Management as a label and Quality Management as a concept and a management approach, without confusing methodology, practice or technique for the approach itself. As a concept and a management approach, evaluation of the underpinning principles that guide its practices to determine the distinction of its constructs from the constructs used in traditional management must be the starting point. Feng et al. [17] suggest that, in addition to the evaluation of the practices, determining whether a management concept is a fad or has validity must include consideration at the philosophical quality aspects of the organization as well. A view in some literature considers the term, Total Quality Management (TQM), as merely a "buzzword and a label to distinguish the thoughts and practices being adopted from those in traditional management" [18]. In this view, TQM, as a label, is of "milestone" value only. It marks the beginning of an era in the expected ongoing evolution in the field of management. In this new era, managers focus on customer value, cross-functional systems and continuous improvement, and Quality Management, without the three-letter or two letter acronym – TQM, or Total Quality, is defined as "a people focused management system that aims at continual increase in customer satisfaction at continually lower cost" [6]. It is a "Total System approach" and not a separate area or program. The word "total" in the label can be vulgarized [15], but contextual meaning as "everybody is involved" is underpinned by identifiable self-reinforcing fundamental principle of "involvement of all people". The label can be "vulgarized" but the core foundational principles remain.

In reference to the evolution of Quality Management and Total Quality Management (TQM), Bounds et al. [19] suggest a paradigm change as the basis for using labels

to describe the approach. This paradigm change involves transformation of thinking from that in the traditional management which has its basis on Fredrick Taylor's Scientific Management and Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy to one in which the key components are customer value strategy, organizational systems and continuous improvement. This means changing from a management paradigm in which the job of the manager involves setting goals, defining roles, providing technology, and motivating employees through inducements to one in which the managerial role itself is redefined and theory and actions in the practice of management changed. In this scenario, Total Quality Management (TQM) is a convenient label and a buzzword to signify the beginning of the change, which is expected to disappear leaving only the word "Management" once the shift to the new paradigm is complete. A position by Ratnayake [20] that progress only happens through successive and abrupt shifts of paradigm supports this view.

One interpretation of the diminishing publications with the "TQM" label could be that the global managerial paradigm shift has reached a replacement stage and a consensus on the new fundamentals of organizational management has been achieved. Reliance on keywords that largely represent a label in the study by Miller *et al.* [15] essentially results in a situation in which this becomes a credible alternative interpretation. This interpretation is supported by findings in der Wiele and Brown [21] suggesting that use of specific quality management labels diminish after the concepts have been integrated into the management of an organization. A focus on the concepts and the foundational principles, and stripping Quality Management practices of the "faddish connotations" is suggested as critical to minimizing causes of the hypes that has led to some dismissing Quality Management as a fad. The faddish connotations are seen as emanating from the labels and decline of their use in no way suggests the foundational concepts have been abandoned or invalidated. Neither can widespread use be an indicator of validity. It would only be an indicator of existence of drivers for propagation. A successful marketing campaign to convince consumers that ISO 9001 certification is the sole mark of reliability as a supplier results in growth of conformance assessment industry. The herd mentality does the rest as firms, not wishing to be left out, rush to seek conformance assessment by management systems assessors in the industry. In many Business-to-Business (B2B) markets, the certification becomes an order qualifier.

Validity of Quality Management as an Approach to Management

Definitional issues relating to quality management are handled by many of the mainstream literature mainly at

philosophical and principles level. A philosophical concept, by itself, cannot be documented in form of a standard nor implemented in a start – stop approach. The consensus among extant literature is that the principles are applied to the value chain through actions within the organizational infrastructure described as management practices [22]. A "practice" is defined in Oxford advanced learner's dictionary as "a way of doing something that is common, habitual or expected". Other definitions are "a thing done regularly, a habit, or custom". In the context of an organization, practices are described as "the activities that occur within the organization's infrastructure so as to achieve the organization's goals" [6]. Stamm *et al.* [23] refer to practices as methodologies and describe a practice as an embodiment of the philosophical assumptions of a specific paradigm. Like the paradigm itself, a methodology may be applied using a set of techniques.

Literature reporting on investigation of the distinguishing constructs used in emerging management approaches against those used in traditional management during the bigger part of twentieth century use "practices" as the level of investigation [24,25]. Principles have been considered too general for empirical research while techniques are seen as too detailed to provide accurate data for investigation [18]. Terminologies used in reference to practices include "steps" [26], "factors", "implementation constructs" and "elements" [5]. By evaluating these constructs, whether referred to as practices, steps, factors, implementation constructs, or methodologies, researchers in management theory are able to identify the discriminating constructs used in the management approach that has been labeled "Quality Management". These studies have sought to identify the constructs in this emerging approach to management which affect problems not addressed in the traditional management theories in much of the twentieth century. In reviewing the theories of management under the umbrella of what is described as rational management, which includes leadership theories, classical theories and the human relations theories, Martin [12] notes the total absence of the concept of "customer value". Similar observations are made in Dean and Bowen [25] when they write of somewhat disregard of role of the customer in these theories. In terms of management of value creating activities, the management theories ignore process and technical factors and focuses on social aspects in work place as the issues at play in drive for efficiency. Howard and Hoverstadt [27] suggest this to be a consequence of the absence of customer-value thinking behind the theories.

Deming [28] argues that management is about prediction. Lacking prescriptive theories on decision-making, classical, human relations and even the contingency approaches to management rely on examples of past success as the only alternatives to

unscientific intuition and guesswork in making decisions. The arguments are that a theory on decision-making is an aspect of the technical and system factors that anchor the multi-functional systems of work and enable improvement. A conclusion from the works listed [12,19,25,27,28] is that new constructs not in the rational management based on classical, human relations and contingency theories are customer-value and organizational system constructs. As pointed out in Dye *et al*. [29], avoiding over-simplification in the dissemination of management theorization requires understanding the theorizing itself in its historical context. The historical context in the emergence of the quality management is characterized by changed and context-disrupting technology, customer choice enhancing globalization, employee and consumer rights enhancing deregulation and democratization in most nations. The new variables in this context, namely; technology, globalization and democratization constitute a significant change from the localized markets, non-knowledge work using basic technology, and capitalism un-moderated by demand for equity and social responsibility. Achieving outcomes in such a context may require more than the constructs and practices based solely on principles developed before their emergence. A study by Shore *et al*. [30] lists increasing cultural diversity among the emerging contextual issues that may influence how individual, groups and organizations are managed. The principles of customer focus and process approach, as part of the foundational principles that direct activities are part of response, through management theorizing, to emergence of these contextual variables. This scenario can be modeled as in Figure 1.
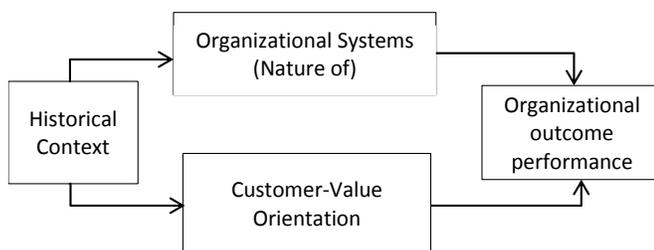

Figure 1. A model of the emerging management theory.

Customer-Value Concept in Quality Management Approach

Figure 1 presents a model in which the hitherto lacking customer-value orientation emerges to meet the challenges in an operating context shaped by technology, globalization and de-regulation and democratization. Studies investigating the distinguishing aspects of this concept report a change in thinking that shapes the practices and, by extension, the instrumentation. Associated with the emergence of the customer-value concept, the literature reports, is the changed view of quality, a

broader view of customer and the techniques for addressing the needs of the customer [25]. This significant change in view point pervades the whole organization through appreciation for the systems perspective anchored on the principle of the systems approach [28]. Anderson *et al*. [24] point to the view of quality as multidimensional and dynamic as one factor that distinguishes the two managerial paradigms and by extension, the practices, instrumentations and techniques required to address quality issues. The elevation of quality to a strategic level has meant that it is no longer a candidate for trade-off with cost but cost is now one of its components. Cost has been explained in extant literature as resulting from productivity. Daghani [31] considers productivity and quality as being two sides of the same coin. Expansion of customer as a concept that extends from an organizational level customer to include user or buyer of finished product or service, end-user of an output to processes that use those outputs is reported in Dean and Bowen [25] as distinctly different from how the customer has been viewed in much of the twentieth century. The customer now includes both external and internal customers and can be categorized into organizational level, process level and job-performer level.

Martin [12], however, argues that there may not really be a discontinuity in thoughts but rather rearrangement and repackaging of old knowledge by generations to respond to new contextual variables. These are more of semantics, as it is also argued in the literature that the rearrangement and repackaging may include addition of newly created knowledge to take account of the new variables in the context and that what is definitely different may be the technique of addressing the customer. This argument is consistent with a position by Deming [28] asserting that changes in the context may have introduced a fourth factor of production that is now brought into the equation. That fourth factor is described as "profound knowledge". One conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that quality management, as an approach to management, but without the catchy labels, is distinguishable from the management approach as based collectively on classical, human relations and contingency approaches. But the arguments by Martin [12]; Deming [28]; and other literature attest to the continuity in thoughts which leads to needs for new concepts to deal with an emerging context. This new concept is customer-value concept. It changes and introduces a need for worker flexibility in shaping the product to meet the customer's needs that are now recognized as changing. This constitutes a movement in the management field evolution through incorporation of the customer-value as a concept in the management model.

Organizational Systems in the Emerging Paradigm

Bounds *et al*. [19] suggest a paradigm in which theory and actions in the practice of management are changed.

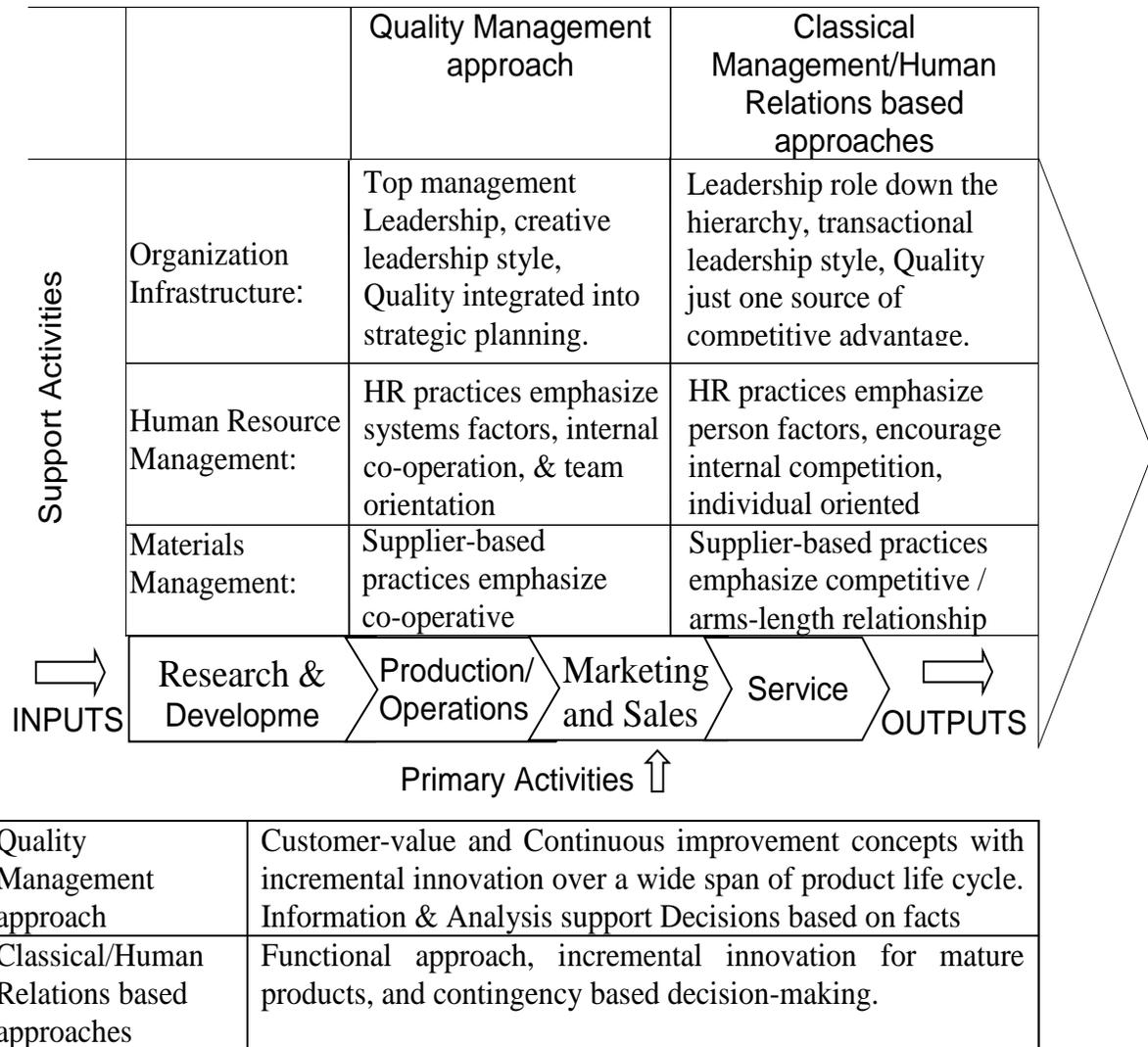Note: * - Values/Status in the emerging (Quality Management) paradigm

Figure 2. A model of Organizational Systems based on the emerging management paradigm.

Literature on management approaches have identified three constructs that distinguishes the organizational systems in the emerging management approach from those shaped by classical and human relations theories. These are leadership approaches, strategic planning, and work performance drivers. In each of these constructs, consideration is made of an organization as a collection of parts which interact positively when the system aim is understood and accepted by all in the organization. A fundamental principle of leadership guides activities that create this organization as a system viewpoint empowers and enables each of the sub-parts to realize these system aims. Figure 2 presents a representation of the organizational systems model based on the emerging management paradigm. Classical management theories have been characterized by "practices" that emphasize structure and shop floor activities, science of work, and reduced individual initiative. The human relations theories are characterized by activities that emphasize attitudes, values and relationships as the driver of performance in organizations. Looked at structurally, Quality Management provides a bridge between the two, incorporating aspects of both by rearranging, repackaging, and, where there has been a gap, incorporating new knowledge. The mechanism for this integration is provided by the systems and contingency theories through changed leadership constructs and the view of what the driver of work performance is [5]. Incorporating systems approach as one of the fundamental principles underpinning the practices of quality management approach sets out the approach as a hitherto missing integrating framework for the desperately

different theories of classical, human relations, systems and contingency approaches.

A position supported by extant literature is that preference in Quality Management approach for leadership constructs that stress leadership by top management and emphasize creative leadership styles distinguishes the approach from the classical and human relations theories which consider leadership roles in hierarchical terms with transactional styles preferred [25]. As a consequence of the development of customer-value concept, differences in two other key factors of managing organizations are identified. While strategic planning have been focused more at corporate level in traditional management theories, this changes in the emerging paradigm with strategy formulation focus being at business level. In addition to the changes in strategy level focus, the emphases and assumptions in strategy formulation are distinctly different in the emerging management approach. A change from emphasis on strategy content with stable environment assumed to emphasis on process and deployment with improvability of formulation and implementation as the background assumptions have been cited as significant distinguishing differences. Roese and Olsson [32] describe an iterative and probing approach between the formulation and implementation as knowledge, learning of new concepts, and ongoing activities and culture in which they are situated are considered. An integrated view in which leadership and strategy concepts interacts with customer-value concept to achieve outcomes for an organization has been presented in Okwiri [33] using the value-chain model by Porter [34]. In the model, the differentiating

	Quality Management approach	Classical Management/Human Relations based approaches
Organization Infrastructure:	Top management Leadership, creative leadership style, Quality integrated into strategic planning.	Leadership role down the hierarchy, transactional leadership style, Quality just one source of competitive advantage.
Human Resource Management:	HR practices emphasize systems factors, internal co-operation, & team orientation	HR practices emphasize person factors, encourage internal competition, individual oriented
Materials Management:	Supplier-based practices emphasize co-operative	Supplier-based practices emphasize competitive / arms-length relationship

Support Activities

INPUTS → | Research & Developme | Production/ Operations | Marketing and Sales | Service | → OUTPUTS

Primary Activities ⇧

Quality Management approach	Customer-value and Continuous improvement concepts with incremental innovation over a wide span of product life cycle. Information & Analysis support Decisions based on facts
Classical/Human Relations based approaches	Functional approach, incremental innovation for mature products, and contingency based decision-making.

Figure 3. Discriminating constructs in organizational system.
Source: Hill *et al.* [35].

constructs of leadership and strategic focus, emphases and assumptions, as identified in Dean and Bowen [25], influence the achievement of outcomes by shaping the internal organizational context through actions in the organizational infrastructure support activities in the value chain model. Other aspects of internal context influenced through support activities as described in the value-chain model are the human resource management and material management. In Figure 3, the value chain model is used to present these arguments graphically.

As shown in Figure 3, the consequence of the change in the view of what work performance drivers are, is the development of new constructs emphasizing process and technical factors, team-based objectives, performance evaluation and compensation, internal co-operation, continuous improvement and co-operative supplier relationships [25]. Allocation of team rewards based on team contribution rather than strictly on the basis of individual contribution has been suggested by Bamberger and Levi [36] as a significant driver to performance. This is in contrast to the position in the classical theories in which individualized objectives and compensation are seen as the influencing point for performance. Other points of contrast are emphasis on social factors rather than process and system factors in work performance, encouragement for internal competition, incremental innovation on mature products and processes, and competitive approach to supplier relationship. The relatively high emphasis on information processing and decision-making based on fact in quality management approach provides a sharp contrast to the lack of prescriptive theories on decision-making in the traditional management practices [19]. This is supported by the suggestion by Malik and Malik [37] of a shift to knowledge as the primary source of value, with greater influence of knowledge on the organizational effectiveness.

Conclusions

The current knowledge as presented in the literature leads to one important conclusion: this is that context has been the driver of theories in management. Other conclusions that can be drawn are that validity or otherwise of a theory or management method has to be evaluated based on the concepts at play and not as a box with a label, and that management, as a field of study needs an integrating framework for the desperately different theories that have been put forward in over 100 years. The positions that quality management has aspects that integrate these theories appear rational. When stripped of the labels, the constructs of quality management are distinct and can very easily be integrated into how management actions are taken without the awareness and acceptance of the labels. As a research area, the focus ought to be on the specific concepts and principles and evaluated in that form rather than as a whole box with the label. The development of customer-value concept provides one such route for study to examine what actions driven by the concept are and how they influence desired outcomes. A research in which the consulting industry-driven and labeled activities are evaluated against the concepts and principles that form the basis of the approach would clarify the implication of the faddism that has been seen in the field. A study in which the practices that are brought about as part of solutions such as certification systems are evaluated to determine the extent of their embodiment in the principles that form the foundational underpinning for quality management approach would be one such potential research area.

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