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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN, CREATIVE THINKING, INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND QUALITY HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

Dr. Paul D Madhale¹ and Prof. Milka D. Madhale²

¹Associate Professor, Department of MBA, Sanjay Bhokare Group of Institutes, Miraj, Maharashtra, India.

²Vice Principal, K.L.E. Universities Institute of Nursing Sciences, Belgavi, Karnataka.

ABSTRACT

When it comes to excellence in health care, are there any relationship between clinical decisions and customer service? Can patient's perception of the care providing institution affect his/her degree of satisfaction and recovery? Are there new paradigms in total quality management that can enhance the quality of health care delivery? In the last four decades, numerous studies have been conducted around total quality management practices and applications in different organizational settings, private and public. But not much has been done specifically on the dimensions of TQM in the health care industry. Many questions are yet to be asked and many answers are yet to be found. While this research is not intended to address all these issues, a particular commitment is made here to explore new paradigms. This is done through a thorough literature review of recent scholarly works in the area and a direct probe of practitioner's opinions. An attempt has been made to recognize the relationship between, creative thinking, interpersonal skills and quality health care delivery. The purpose is to empirically elucidate the new paradigms in the principles and practices of TQM and continuous quality improvement as applied to health care industry.

KEYWORDS : TQM, Creative Thinking, Interpersonal Skills, Dimensions of Quality Care, New Paradigms and Patient Perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

This paper put forward an empirical explanation as to how some health care providers continued to achieve



increasing successes in patients' perception of their quality of Care even during the global financial crisis. Hypothesizing that creative thinking is a reflection of knowledge management, effective interpersonal skills and efficient total quality management as an organizational cultures It examined the relationship between patient satisfaction, and organizational effort in emphasizing creative thinking and interpersonal skills as new dimensions of total quality management culture. The Competing Values Framework devised by Robert Quinn and John Rohrbaugh (1983) was used to diagnose the dominant organizational culture and TQM priorities. Likert scale was used to measure the dimensions of creative thinking and interpersonal skills. The implications of this study can be of significant value to health care

providing institutions experiencing various challenges and crises between their clinical excellence and sustainability as a business.. The findings could help organizations assess how their staffs and leadership interpersonal skills and creativity could be impeding or enabling their competitive advantage and ultimately their organizational success and effectiveness.

CASE BACKGROUND

Prior to the financial crisis of 2008-2010 many businesses in the health care industry have become complacent with their total quality management efforts. Their emphases have shifted from customer based quality management culture to regulations and best practice compliance standards. Since then there has been a clear paradigm shift from patient care quality orientation to defensive medicine and business oriented health care delivery. With the after math of the global crunch and the more and more regulations in the industrial TQM is once again being widely recognized as a competitive advantage and many organizations have incorporated the creative thinking and interpersonal skills (knowledge management) strategy (Marshall et al, 1996; Inkpen, 1996; Buckley & Carter, 1999; Armbrecht et al., 2001; Bell DeTienne & Jackson, 2001). Brannen and Salk (2000) cited many researchers who stated that there is a significant link between strong TQM cultures and effective organizational outcomes. Moore (1998) also stated that fostering a creative thinking, interpersonal skill and customer satisfaction oriented culture is the most important critical success factor for business sustainability efforts. Kim and Mauborgne (1999) further stated that the systemic use of creative thinking and interpersonal skills ideas are infinite economic goods that can generate increasing returns especially in the health care industry where clinical knowledge is no longer enough to establish and maintain a positive impression and positioning. With this in mind this research questions,

- When it comes to excellence in health care, are there any relationship between clinical decisions and customer service?
- Can patient's perception of the care providing institution affect his/her degree of satisfaction and recovery?
- Are there new paradigms in total quality management that can enhance the quality of health care delivery?

METHODOLOGY

This research focused on the following questions;

- 1.Are there any positive correlation between Clinical decisions, creative thinking, Interpersonal skills, leadership /TQM efforts and Patient's degree of satisfaction and institutional perception?
- 2.Are there new paradigms in total quality management that can enhance the quality of health care delivery and business sustainability?

This research was both a co-relational and a causal study. This is in an effort to determine the relationship between creative thinking and interpersonal skills and later using the two as variables intervening in the perception of quality of care delivered by a care provider. The research used a one-time survey to obtain research data. Data consisted of three major sets of information, Firstly different types of organizational TQM orientations, Secondly dimensions of Creative Thinking skills, and lastly the dimensions of Interpersonal skills. Each of the three sets of dimensions was calculated to give the dependent variable of TQM strategic or philosophic orientation of a care providing institution. The existence of a significant relationship was use to permit prediction.

The remaining part of this research was based of secondary data from a wide spectrum of current literature and scholarly works on changing paradigms of TQM principles mostly six sigma perspectives.

RESEARCH MODULE

The research foundation was constructed from a strong literature review and theoretical framework. These previous works suggested that there could be a relationship between creative thinking, interpersonal skills, perceived quality of care delivered by a provider of serving institution, TQM as a competitive advantage and business sustainability

- Creative Thinking= A way of looking at problems or situations from a fresh perspective that suggests unorthodox solutions (which may look unsettling at first). Creative thinking can be stimulated both by an unstructured process such as brainstorming, and by a structured process such as lateral thinking.
- Interpersonal Skill= The skills used by a person to properly interact with others. In the business domain, the term generally refers to an employee's ability to get along with others while getting the job done. Interpersonal skills include everything from communication and listening skills to attitude and deportment. Good interpersonal skills are a prerequisite for many positions in an organization. The term "interpersonal skills" is somewhat of a misnomer, because it refers to character traits possessed by an individual rather than skills that can be taught in a classroom. Within an organization, employees with good interpersonal skills are likely be more productive than those with poor interpersonal skills, because of their propensity to project a positive attitude and look for solutions to problems.
- Perceived quality of care= The Institute of Medicine defines healthcare quality as the extent to which health services provided to individuals and patient populations improve desired health outcomes. The care should be based on the strongest clinical evidence and provided in a technically and culturally competent manner with good communication and shared decision making. Total quality is best defined as an attitude, an orientation that permeates an entire organization, and the way in which that organization performs its internal and external business. People who work in organizations dedicated to the concept of total quality constantly strive for excellence and continuous quality improvement in all that they do.
- TQM= an integrative philosophy of management for continuously improving the quality of products and processes. This is based on the premise that the quality of products and processes is the responsibility of everyone involved with the creation or consumption of the products or services offered by an organization, requiring the involvement of management, workforce, suppliers, and customers, to meet or exceed customer expectations.

LITERATURE

A simple definition is that creativity is the ability to imagine or invent something new. As we will see below, creativity is not the ability to create out of nothing, but the ability to generate new ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas. Some creative ideas are astonishing and brilliant, while others are just simple, good, practical ideas that no one seems to have thought of yet.

Believe it or not, everyone has substantial creative ability. Just look at how creative children are. In adults, creativity has too often been suppressed through education, but it is still there and can be reawakened. Often all that's needed to be creative is to make a commitment to creativity and to take the time for it. The ability to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good, while looking for ways to improve it, is creativity.

Creative people work hard and continually to improve ideas and solutions, by making gradual alterations and refinements to their works. Contrary to the mythology surrounding creativity, very few works of creative excellence are produced with a single stroke of brilliance or in a frenzy of rapid activity. Much closer to the real truth are the stories of companies who had to take the invention away from the inventor in order to market it because the inventor would have kept on tweaking it and fiddling with it, always trying to make it a little better. A creative person knows that there is always room for improvement.

THEORIES

Theory Concept	Characteristics
<p>Honing Theory: Honing theory posits that creativity arises due to the self-organizing, self-mending nature of a worldview, and that it is by way of the creative process the individual hones an integrated worldview.</p>	<p>Honing theory can account for many phenomena that are not readily explained by other theories of creativity. For example, creativity was commonly thought to be fostered by a supportive, nurturing, trustworthy environment conducive to self-actualization. However, research shows that creativity is actually associated with childhood adversity, which would stimulate honing. Honing theory also makes several predictions that differ from what would be predicted by other theories. For example, empirical support has been obtained using analogy problem solving experiments for the proposal that midway through the creative process one's mind is in a potentiality state. Other experiments show that different works by the same creator exhibit a recognizable style or 'voice', and that this same recognizable quality even comes through in different creative outlets. This is not predicted by theories of creativity that emphasize chance processes or the accumulation of expertise, but it is predicted by honing theory, according to which personal style reflects the creator's uniquely structured worldview.</p>

Theory Concept	Characteristics
<p>Wallis Model of Creativity: Researcher Graham Wallis, many years ago, set down a description of what happens as people approach problems with the objective of coming up with creative solutions. He described his four-stage process as follows:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Preparation. The person expecting to gain new insights must know his field of study and be well prepared. This seems to fit what we have experienced 0 people get inventive ideas mainly in their own fields - poets in poetry; scientists, in science. ? Incubation - Wallas noticed many great ideas came only a period of time spent away from the problem. This was certainly the experience of Archimedes when he got his idea in the public bath. Many ideas come to us when we are away from the problem, usually after actively engaging with the problem. ? Illumination. The "click" or "flash" of a new idea. It's a mysterious phase. Resting the mind by doing other activities was the only suggestion Wallas could offer about how creative ideas form. ? Verification. In this final step, efforts are made to see if the "happy idea" actually solves the problem. Since "great" ideas don't always work out in actual practice, this final step is vitally important to the success of any project.

We know that invention comes only in a person's field of specialization. Wallas is right when he says there must first be a Preparation stage: people have to become knowledgeable in some field before they may expect ideas to "dawn" on them in that area. Probably the more we know, the more

apt we are to get new ideas. Novel ideas seem to come from a fortunate scrambling of information we already have, and yet, certain threshold level of knowledge seems necessary for creativity, creative breakthroughs are not always the product of the most expert thinkers in a discipline.

Theory Concept	Characteristics
<p>Theories of Creative Thinking:</p> <p>Three Perspectives Can be divided into three categories:</p> <p>a) Supernatural Perspective: ? The supernatural perspective is a traditional view of creative thinking. ? In this perspective, people are born with creativity and are not made it through training</p> <p>b) Rational Perspective: ? Rationalism presents the creative process in terms of natural consequences resulting from the application of universal principles. ? This view holds that all activities of our world complement one another</p> <p>c) Developmental Perspective: ? Developmental appears to present an overall view of how creative thinking develops as an individual grows to maturity. ? The creative growth stages includes the world, the egos and the others, is one of energy transformation from one level of growth to the next stage of development to adulthood.</p>	<p>? Each of us has creative talents that reflect our individual personality and experiences in pursuing creativity.</p> <p>? Most often people who believe that they are creative will achieve success in their career.</p> <p>? In order to achieve creativity, we must be able to think positively and have a good attitude for example willing to learn new things to improve your level of knowledge and educational.</p> <p>? A positive attitude and mindset for beneficial change guides your brain and energy toward getting the results your desire.</p>

Theory Concept	Characteristics
<p>Teresa Amabile Theory of Creativity:</p> <p>In Amabile's theory of creativity, three important components:</p> <p>? Domain-relevant skills.</p> <p>? Creativity-relevant mental processes.</p> <p>? Task motivation.</p>	<p>? Breaking sets that break out of old patterns of thinking about something.</p> <p>? Breaking out of scripts, which is much the same thing,</p> <p>? Perceiving freshly that is, changing one's old ways.</p>

Amabile summarizes her views on creativity in the context of a discussion of how to increase the chances of raising children who can think creativity. She presents the some of the thinking styles that are often observed in creative adults. A number of researchers have stated the belief that situations which demand creative thinking are so novel that one's past experience cannot be applied to them without large scale modifications.

BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

Theory Concept	Characteristics
<p>3-legged stool model:</p>	<p>The 3-legged stool metaphor reinforces the three dimensions that are required for us to enjoy a high quality of life and shows that society is unstable if one of them is weak. The downside of this metaphor is that the economic, environmental, and social legs look separate and equal.</p>

Theory Concept	Characteristics
3-overlapping-circles model:	The overlapping-circles model of sustainability acknowledges the intersection of economic, environmental, and social factors. Depending on our mindset, we re-size the circles to show that one factor is more dominant than the other two. Unfortunately, this model implies that the economy can exist independently of society and the environment that the part of the red circle that does not overlap with the blue and green circles has an existence of its own. This large incongruity leads us to the next, more accurate model.
Theory Concept	Characteristics
3-nested-Dependencies model:	It's the people in societies who decide how they will exchange goods and services. That is, they decide what economic model they will use. Because they create their economies, they can change them if they find their current economic models are not working to improve their quality of life. He proposed that , the society-economy relationship is symbiotic. During the recent recession, the economic downturn had a significant impact on people's quality of life. Good jobs are so important to a vibrant modern-day society that sustainability champions who portray the economy as subservient to society are sometimes accused of being naive about how the "real world" works.

Dr. Matthew Tueth, . reiterates the ideas put forward by authors such as Paul Hawken (The Ecology of Commerce and Natural Capitalism), Bill McDonough and Michael Braungart, and Janine Benyus when he proposes that a mature and authentic sustainable business contains six essential characteristics.

• **Triple top-line value production (TTL):**

"The TTL Establishes three simultaneous requirements of sustainable business activities, financial benefits for the company, natural world betterment, and social advantages for employees and members of the local community with each of these three components recognized as equal in status." Whereas many businesses use the Tripple Bottom Line, "triple top line" stresses the importance of initial design and is a term attributable to McDonough and Braungart in their book Cradle to Cradle.

• **Nature-based knowledge and technology:**

"This principal involves the conscious emulation of natural-world genius in terms of growing our food, harnessing our energy, constructing things, conducting business healing ourselves, processing information and designing our communities"

• **Products of service to products of consumption:**

"Products of service are durable goods routinely leased by the customer that are made of technical materials and are returned to the manufacturer and re-processed into a new generation of products when they are worn out. These products are mostly non-toxic to human and environmental health but toxic materials that are used will be kept within a closed loop type system and not be able to escape into the environment. Products of consumption are shorter lived items made only of biodegradable materials. They are broken down by the detritus organisms after the products lose their usefulness. These are also non-hazardous to human or environmental health. This principal requires that we manufacture only these two types of products and necessitates the gradual but continual reductions of products of service and their replacement with products of consumption as technological advancements allow.

• **Solar, wind, geothermal and ocean energy:**

"This principal advocates employing only sustainable energy technology like solar, wind, and ocean and geothermal, that can meet our energy needs indefinitely without negative effects for life on earth." Other authors, such as Paul Hawken, have referred to this as utilizing current solar income.

- **Local-based organizations and economies:**

"This ingredient includes durable, beautiful and healthy communities with locally owned and operated businesses and locally managed non-profit organizations, along with regional corporations and shareholders working together in a dense web of partnerships and collaborations."

- **Continuous improvement process:**

"Operational processes inside successful organizations include provisions for constant advancements and upgrade as the company does its business. The continuous process of monitoring, analyzing, redesigning and implementing is used to intensify TTL value production as conditions change and new opportunities emerge.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Most health care providing institutions like hospitals , clinics, hospice homes etc., do not interpreted TQM in the way that other services based industries like hotels, educational institutions, air lines just to mention but a few. This observation is not limited to public sectors only but also in the private. This research observed with interest that health care providers are more concerned with the quality and results of their clinical decisions than the entire customer satisfaction as a business philosophy.

Health care providers focus their TQM efforts on the patient rather on the entire families and relatives of patients who are in one way or the other involved in judging how well or not the institution is. The notion that quality of care is only about Doctors and Nurses undermines the fact that patients and their relatives spent more time in contact in the hospital with none clinical staff than they do with clinical staff and as such if their perception and impression of the non-clinical staff is negative it affects their entire perception of the institution, regardless of the quality of clinical interventions

The aspect of management concerned with quality policy and an organization's production Function, including, for example, mechanisms for producing products to specifications, Designing products that customers desire, and producing the technologies that expand, what can be produced (product technology) and how well it can be produced (process technology), and mechanisms for improving quality management According to Anderson EA, Zwelling LA. Quality management is one of the most important and most debated topics within the service sector. This is especially true for health care, as the controversy rages on how the existing American system should be restructured. Health care efficiency and sustainability aimed at reducing costs and ensuring access to all. No one wants to jeopardize the quality of care. As such, total quality management (TQM) has become a vital ingredient to strategic planning within the health care domain. At the heart of any such quality improvement effort is the issue of business sustainability and competitiveness. TQM cannot be effectively utilized as a competitive weapon unless quality can be accurately defined, measured, evaluated, and monitored over time. Through such analysis a hospital can elect how to expend its limited resources toward those quality improvement projects which will impact customer perceptions of service quality the most. Thus, the perception of the quality of care by the patient becomes crucial in directing the actions of management

As Conclusion, in today's leading organizations recognize that sustainability is an essential aspect of their business strategies. A broader, more creative plan for sustainability can only drive efficiency and innovation across the enterprise to satisfy customer needs in the competitive markets. We believe that developing sustainable business solutions should be easy, affordable and create measurable economic, ecological and social values Creative thinking can be the method to obtain this Sustainable business solution. Business sustainability starts with innovation that needs three

components that is creative thinking skills, expertise and motivation.

Expertise in sustainability is required as to enable the best decisions to be made. Within a sustainability context, people often fear that an innovation developed today may create bigger problems in the future if everything about it is not clearly understood at the present time. Creative thinking skills and motivation come hand in hand. They are enhanced through better incentives and rewards. It is increasingly argued that people respond better to non-financial incentives such as the feeling of personal satisfaction, self-esteem building and reputation. Creative thinking skills are also driven by dynamic organizational structures which are less rigid, and less hierarchical than non-dynamic ones where roles are less well defined and people are free to move through the organization. It's also important to consider the implications of framing sustainability within a human wellbeing context for creativity and motivation.

Finally it's important to remember that the components all influence each other and work together to create the right mix for sustainable innovation. Increased motivation encourages the quest for expertise and creative thinking skills through increasing desire to find new ways of solving problems. A creative thinking skill increases motivation as people like being creative and will encourage the search for new paths to expertise.

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