IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENTS QUALITY CIRCLE IN MANAGEMENT COURSES AT COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SALMAN BIN ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY, AL-KHARJ, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract
    The University by its very nature is supposed   to stimulate the process of learning and teaching with the consensus of students, faculty, administration, top management and stakeholders etc. Changes in higher education traditionally take place at a slow pace as compared to the other sectors. Infusing responsiveness, agility, efficiency, flexibility, pro-activeness attitude etc. are the preferred teaching and learning strategies frequently employed by the college.
Agility in education looks more effective at a grass root level as class room bears a testimony to the fact (faculty-student).
Student Quality Circle (SQC) is a humble beginning to bring about positive changes in teaching and learning process by employing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) frequently. The bottom-up, self-determining philosophy has been put into action it simply means "SQCs are of self-managed groups led by students with support and resources especially provided by faculty and administration". Contemporary method of teaching has been shifting from the time- honored teacher centered learning to student centered learning where student is reckoned as a channel master and all academic strategies and decision making revolves around student satisfaction .The concept of SQC assumes that those who are involved in work are best

qualified to identify the weaknesses, shortcomings and flaws etc. and they can   make appropriate suggestions or strategies to improve learning methods and propel the effective teaching process to their respective faculties.

Keywords: Student Quality Circle, Teaching& Learning, Agility, Intended Learning Outcome

Introduction

Quality circle goes well beyond the campus as it stimulates extracurricular activities among students which lays emphasis on cultivating leadership qualities, initiative, teamwork spirit, creativity, innovation, confidence, and building up problem- solving mechanism etc. Indeed these are the basic soft skills which the industries look for. The future employees fully equipped with above-mentioned qualities will make a difference and infuse value to the organization. Student's quality circle will promote quality learning, quality environment, and quality work life and so on meaning enhancing quality on all counts

Student quality circle is an extension of quality circle. Its purpose is to facilitate learning, academic and extracurricular activities by honing knowledge and soft skills among students. Feedback from the students, a part of student quality circle at Management Department of the College of Business Administration, Al-Kharj under Salman bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, indicates overall change in the learning process. It is hoped it will fully equip them to face stiff competition in the market place after graduation. There are numerous quality circles operating in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but Student Quality Circle functioning at any college or university in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is unheard. Our College of Business Administration, Al-Kharj under Salman bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj truly feels proud of in putting this significant endeavor and initiative into motion.

Our college will be shortly going for the NCAAA accreditation so it is very essential to involve students in never ending journey of quality improvement initiative.

Overview of Education sector in KSA

According to" Saudi ArabiaOn A Move" –An Aranca special report 2013 "Education sector is expected to double to USD 101 billion by 2025 against USD 45 billion in 2012, up from USD 25.8 billion in 2007".

The need of the hour is to develop human capital which indeed is the top priority of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. KSA has been focusing on accelerating its manufacturing base as a long term plan. Therefore it is necessary to improve the quality of education especially at the graduate level

with a view to maintaining equilibrium between the demand of workforce and supply from the learning institutions. The education sector has emerged as a priority area for the Saudi government with budgetary allocation has gone more than double since 2005.The Saudi government has introduced new education programs, research and development initiatives, and built many schools and universities to strengthen the country's education system. Government's spending on education is more than 50 percent of the total spending on education in the kingdom.

A rapid increase in demand for skilled personnel across various industry verticals is expected to trigger strong growth in the Saudi education sector. The current Saudi education system is often found wanting   in imparting the right skills required for a modern workplace. The hiatus between education and workplace requirements occurs owing to factors such as wide gap between education and employment. Student's employability skills are not up to the expectations of the employers. Lack of personality and communicative skills prevents students from getting a dream job.Impetus on technology is the focal point as there is phenomenal growth in internet users which paved the way for rapid technological advancements. Internet users in KSA reached 13 million in 2012.

 In a nutshell education sector will see a vast change in terms of learning, teaching, research & development, community services, sustainability etc. Collaboration and partnership will be actively initiated with a view to bringing education and industry together.

Benefits of student quality circle are numerous like students will inculcate habit of working in groups in understanding problems and amongst themselves solving issues and generate strategies to solve problems. Students are highly motivated and enthusiastic to be associated with SQC (Student Quality Circle).

SQC is an opportunity for students to get involved in the learning process other than the traditional approach of learning by classroom teaching. This research done at college level, focuses on Management department.

Literature review

Student Quality Circle is a formation of students usually between 6 to 12 members joining hands together purely on voluntary basis, focusing on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Usually meeting takes place once in 15 days or once in a month with the coordination from the instructor. With mutual co-operative and collaborative approach discussions are encouraged and subsequently problems are resolved. Expectation of students and faculty are matched and encouragement of learning environment is instilled. Business students have to be groomed well to be competitive so

that they can excel after graduation either they join industry, corporate, government organization etc. or pursue master or aspire to be an entrepreneur. Equinox Blueprint Learning 2030 has drafted a report on the learner's expectation would be needed in future. These traits, soft skills will be mapped and then injected among students through SQC in order to make them to be outstanding, they are as follows:

- Continue preaching and practicing obviously good habits with avoidance of deviation from the main frame.
- Controlling, managing impulsivity wait and watch for the right opportunity to act and communicate.
- Going beyond sympathy to a level of empathy. From empathy perspective problem solving exercise can be more genuine, original and authentic.
- Agility and flexibly in the environment to change as per the need of the hour.
- Aligning input and output through resources, processes for optimum utilization etc.
- Do the right thing at the right moment every time and reduce wastages and errors.
- Deliberation, clarification, better understanding form the crux of a pleasurable learning.
- Understanding theory and then apply through support from mentors and facilitators who have experienced it.
- Effective communication is the essence of effective teaching and learning.

With these goals insight, vision for learning in 2030 can be drafted easily. It is a commendable initiative by "Waterloo Global Science Initiative" that needs to be emulated. Students' Quality Circles developed from the original Quality Circle concept; a practice developed in 1962 in Japan's manufacturing industry. Its   main aim was to work so as a team to identify, analyze and solve problems at the workplace. Quality circle stimulates employee engagement, motivation and empowerment. Continuous improvement, or kaizen, underscores the Quality Circle philosophy.

In 1993, for the first time Quality Circle concepts was applied in academia as expected   positive results started pouring in.

SQC preaches that all are equal and they have to work together to achieve their shared goals. "A democratic structure further emerges in the bottom-up approach to innovation and problem solving, where students lead and teachers facilitate, challenging traditional power structures through collaboration" (Nahai& Osterberg, 2012).

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"Collaboration and knowledge-sharing transforms universities from teaching organizations into learning organizations" (Ennals&Haga 2010), where each individual is both learner and teacher.

Research Objective
The following research objectives are:
1. To find the overall change pre and post implementation of student quality circle in the overall classroom environment.
2. To understand various stages of quality life cycle from infancy, incubation, growth, mature etc. in student quality circle.
3. To chalk out teaching strategies and to customise them with regional environment (organic) for maximum output yield concept.
4. To recognize the importance of Students Quality Circles in current business college.
5. Students will have hands- on experience of various quality tools, by incorporating various quality management courses in the curriculum structure.

Research Significance
College of Business administration, Al-Kharj under Salman bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj is under the process of accreditation from National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment. In the National Qualifications Framework for higher education emphasis is given to grow, improve and develop students through cultivating interpersonal skills, infusing team spirit, and instilling a strong sense of collaboration. Instilling an essence of working together indicate win-win approach   and it manifests a smooth transition from academia   to corporate sector   NCAAA accreditation norms lay emphasis on producing strong students.

Student quality circle is a very effective tool to understand the expectation of student as well as faculty. Necessary shuffling and tweaking make learning and teaching more effective. Voice of customer, here is the student, is considered central to devise strategies for a fruitful outcome for the student.

Business students' performance can be judged from the employer perspective as they hire business graduates from various business colleges across the country. Thus opinions of employers are indeed the expectation the graduates demonstrate with basic characteristics or special attributes that a particular program is intended to develop. (NCAAA 2009)

Research Methodology
Students under student quality circle are as follows in the semester September 2013 to January 2014:

University: Salman bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
College: Business Administration, Al-Kharj
Department: Management
Program: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Course: Business Statistics-I
Group-1991
Course: Operations Management
Group-1145

Questionnaire filled by students before implementing quality circle and subsequently questionnaire filled after completing this course. A gap analysis has been done to measure the impact of SQC in the learning and teaching environment in our department. Also, make an analysis of the trend of student's development and growth while practicing SQC.

Result and Findings
Demographic Profile of Students of Business Statistics I (Group-1991)

S. No	Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	≤ 20 years	15	68.2
		20 - 25 years	7	31.8
		25 - 30 years	0	00.0
		≥ 30 years	0	00.0
2	Semester	1	20	90.9
		2	2	9.1
3	Place	Urban	17	77.3
		Rural	5	22.7

Table 5.Gap Analysis of Students of the course Business Statistics I (Group-1191) towards the following variables

Variable	Pre Mean(I)	Post Mean(II)	Gap=(II)-(I)
Positive Attitude.	3.18	3.64	0.45
High Motivation.	3.05	3.59	0.55
Positive learning outcome.	3.36	3.77	0.41
Personality Development.	3.50	3.77	0.27
Very Enthusiastic and have new ideas.	3.05	3.64	0.59
Strong resources.	3.05	3.41	0.36
Very Creative.	3.00	3.91	0.91
Desire to learn.	3.18	3.77	0.59
Adaptive to conditions.	2.95	3.59	0.64
Good in Solving problems.	2.77	3.55	0.77
Satisfied with extracurricular activities.	2.59	3.50	0.91
Team player.	3.05	3.55	0.50
Strong Decision Making Skills.	2.86	3.36	0.50
Having leadership qualities.	3.14	3.64	0.50
Having Confidence.	3.41	3.77	0.36

Sense of self-worthiness.	3.27	3.27	0.00
Congenial learning atmosphere.	2.91	3.50	0.59
Satisfied with content of curriculum.	2.41	3.27	0.86
Having Critical Thinking Skills.	2.68	3.59	0.91
Overall Satisfied.	2.82	3.32	0.50

Initially the students were reluctant to actively involved in the SQC but later on   the program proved infectious as some active and enthusiastic students compelled passive students to participate which overall improved the environment.
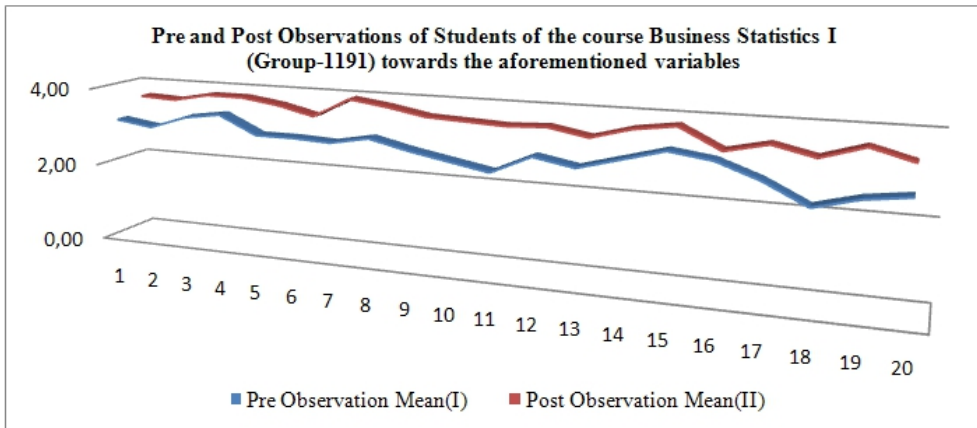

Figure 1.Graphical Presentation of Pre and Post Observations of Students of the course Business Statistics I (Group-1191) towards the aforementioned variables

Table 2.Gap Analysis of Students of the course Business Statistics I (Group-1191) towards the following perceived variables

Variable	**Pre Observation Mean(I)**	**Post Observation Mean(II)**	**Gap= (II)-(I)**
This program has improved my communication skills.	2.45	3.14	0.68
My relationship with faculty is good.	3.27	3.73	0.45
My relationship with non-teaching staff is good.	3.18	3.59	0.41
I have opportunities to set goals.	3.05	3.68	0.64
I have a quality work life.	3.32	3.45	0.14
Present way of teaching helps me to learn.	2.64	3.36	0.73
My grievances are promptly resolved.	3.09	3.59	0.50
Will this program help me to do get a better job?	3.23	3.68	0.45
Evaluation of my test and exams are fair.	2.86	3.45	0.59
Faculty encourages class participation and is more students centered.	2.64	3.18	0.55
Faculty gives examples of Saudi organizations to substantiate theory.	2.73	3.36	0.64

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My suggestions and feedback are taken and implemented.	2.45	3.18	0.73
Pressure of studies and fear of failing is hindrance in my initiative for self-development.	3.32	3.50	0.18
Faculty helps me improve and overcome my weaknesses in particular course.	2.73	3.23	0.50
My parents are involved in learning and studies.	3.73	3.77	0.05
My parents encourage me in the learning.	3.82	4.05	0.23
Overall satisfied with the expectation of learning and evaluation procedure.	2.82	3.36	0.55
Overall satisfied with the infrastructure at the college.	2.23	3.09	0.86
I believe that I have confidence and solve issues.	3.50	3.68	0.18
I need assistance and guidance in job searching.	3.68	3.82	0.14
I like to have a placement cell in the college.	4.18	3.86	-0.32
I did like to have industry and corporate support before graduation.	3.86	3.73	-0.14
Classroom management is well organized and systematic.	2.45	3.32	0.86
This program will facilitate me in pursuing Master's.	2.73	3.32	0.59
This program will facilitate in starting my own business in a professional way.	2.86	3.14	0.27
This program will facilitate to get me a job and gain confidence to work effectively.	2.91	3.41	0.50
I like to have regular training and internship related to my course/program.	3.09	3.59	0.50
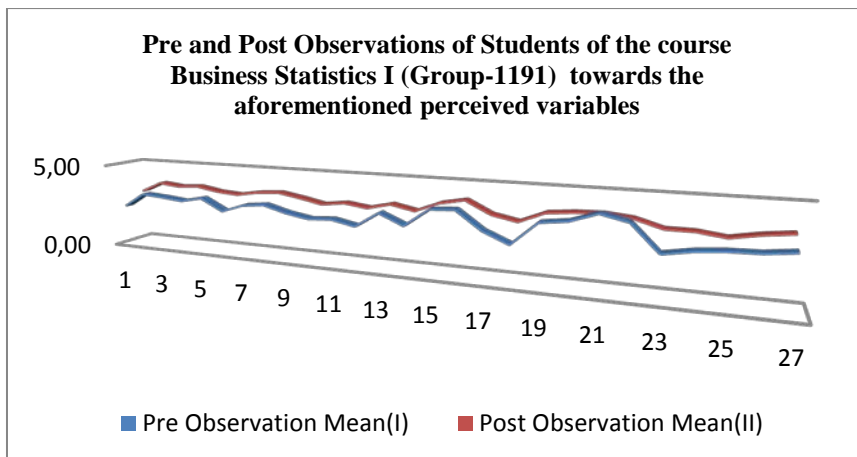
Figure 2.Graphical Presentation of Pre and Post Observations of Students of the course Business Statistics I (Group-1191) towards the aforementioned perceived variables

SQC is a tool which stimulates the learning and teaching environment but it should not be looked as a quick fix solution to various issues. Fundamental issues of students like numerical skills or English grammar

cannot be improved in one go but indeed SQC opens various avenues and possibilities to overcome the weaknesses.

Demographic Profile of Students of Operations Management (Group-1145)

S. No	Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	≤ 20 years	3	27.3
		20 - 25 years	7	63.6
		25 - 30 years	1	9.1
		≥ 30 years	0	00.0
2	Semester	1	8	72.7
		2	3	27.3
3	Place	Urban	10	90.9
		Rural	1	9.1

Table 3.Gap Analysis of Students of the course Operations Management (Group-1145) towards the following variables

| Variable	Pre Mean(I)	Post Mean(II)	Gap=(II)-(I)
Positive Attitude.	3.27	3.82	0.55
High Motivation.	3.36	3.55	0.18
Positive learning outcome.	3.45	3.73	0.27
Personality Development.	3.64	3.45	-0.18
Very Enthusiastic and have new	3.55	3.18	-0.36
Strong resources.	3.18	3.18	0.00
Very Creative.	3.27	3.00	-0.27
Desire to learn.	3.64	4.00	0.36
Adaptive to conditions.	3.55	3.82	0.27
Good in Solving problems.	3.45	3.73	0.27
Satisfied with extracurricular	2.91	3.00	0.09
Team player.	3.00	3.27	0.27
Strong Decision Making Skills.	3.27	3.55	0.27
Having leadership qualities.	3.36	3.73	0.36
Having Confidence.	3.27	4.00	0.73
Sense of self-worthiness.	3.09	3.82	0.73
Congenial learning atmosphere.	3.18	3.36	0.18
Satisfied with content of curriculum.	2.45	3.18	0.73
Having Critical Thinking Skills.	2.91	3.09	0.18
Overall Satisfied.	3.18	3.09	-0.09
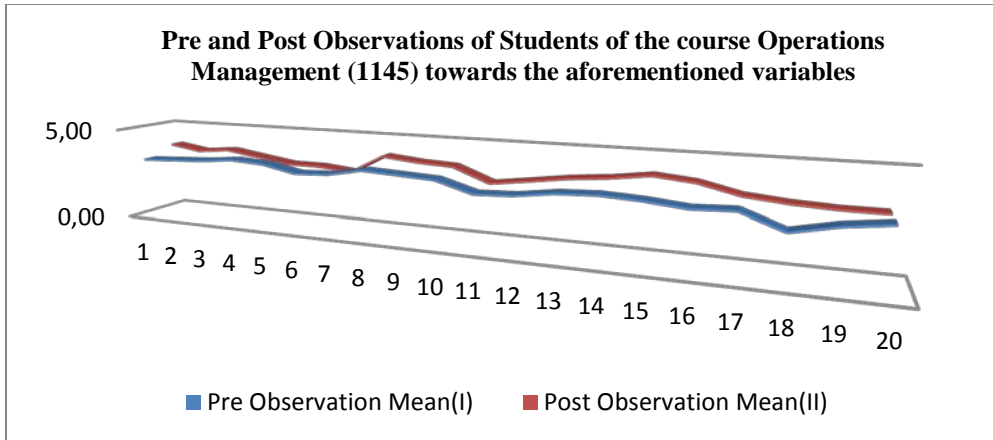
Figure 3.Graphical Presentation of Pre and Post Observations of Students of the course Operations Management (Group-1145) towards the aforementioned variables

SQC is a beginning at a grass root level from student's stand point, their career advances, personal life and finally family life can all very well be associated with the quality. Preaching and practicing quality will ensure quality work life for them. Thus SQC is an opportunity and a chance of real exposure to the power of quality.

Table 4.Gap Analysis of Students of the course Operations Management (Group-1145) towards the following perceived variables

Variable	Pre Mean(	Post Mean(	Gap= (II)- (I)
This program has improved my communication skills.	2.45	3.00	0.55
My relationship with faculty is good.	3.36	3.73	0.36
My relationship with non-teaching staff is good.	3.27	3.73	0.45
I have opportunities to set goals.	3.73	3.82	0.09
I have a quality work life.	3.55	3.55	0.00
Present way of teaching helps me to learn.	3.18	3.09	-0.09
My grievances are promptly resolved.	3.27	3.73	0.45
Will this program help me to do get a better job?	3.45	2.91	-0.55
Evaluation of my test and exams are fair.	2.91	3.45	0.55
Faculty encourages class participation and is more students centered.	2.91	2.91	0.00
Faculty gives examples of Saudi organizations to substantiate theory.	2.91	3.18	0.27
My suggestions and feedback are taken and implemented.	2.73	3.27	0.55
Pressure of studies and fear of failing is hindrance in my initiative for self-development.	2.91	4.18	1.27
Faculty helps me improve and overcome my weaknesses in particular course.	2.64	3.27	0.64
My parents are involved in learning and studies.	4.09	4.00	-0.09
My parents encourage me in the learning.	4.09	4.18	0.09

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Overall satisfied with the expectation of learning and evaluation procedure.	3.45	3.36	-0.09
Overall satisfied with the infrastructure at the college.	2.73	2.45	-0.27
I believe that I have confidence and solve issues.	4.18	4.45	0.27
I need assistance and guidance in job searching.	4.00	4.00	0.00
I like to have a placement cell in the college.	4.55	4.45	-0.09
I did like to have industry and corporate support before graduation.	4.09	4.09	0.00
Classroom management is well organized and systematic.	2.82	3.27	0.45
This program will facilitate me in pursuing Master's.	3.18	3.00	-0.18
This program will facilitate in starting my own business in a professional way.	3.45	3.18	-0.27
This program will facilitate to get me a job and gain confidence to work effectively.	3.36	3.36	0.00
I like to have regular training and internship related to my course/program.	3.82	4.18	0.36
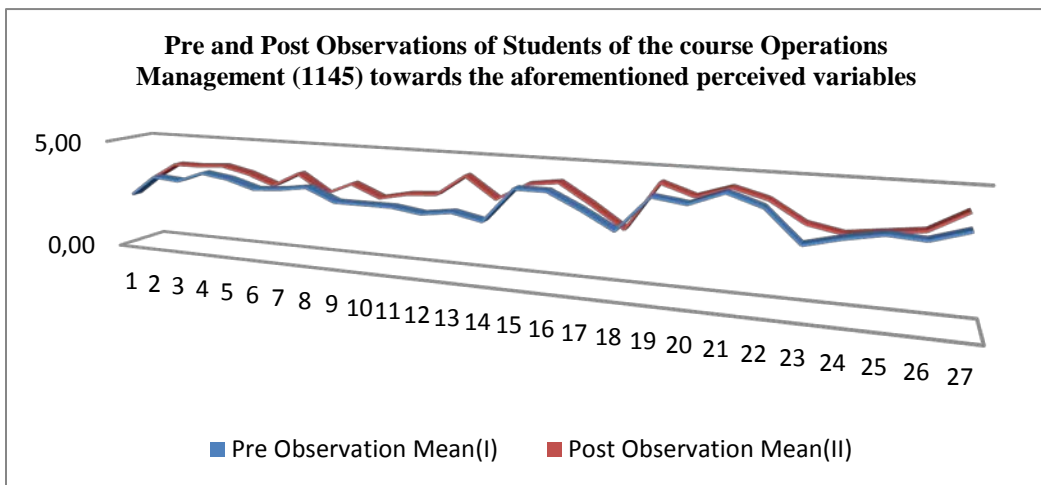
Figure 4.Graphical Presentation of Pre and Post Observations of Students of the course Operations Management (Group-1145) towards the aforementioned variables

Seeing is believing, students have personally seen and felt the pre and post impact in their life whether it is academics, social life or extra-curricular activities. The results are very encouraging and it is clearly manifested in the responses of the students

Recommendation/Strategies

SQC is a major step towards the journey of quality excellence especially when our university is determined to   improve quality of teaching and learning. Student's familiarization with Quality helps them to employ

various quality tools used by the today's businesses like TQM, Six Sigma, Lean, Kanban, Kaizen, Just in Time etc. Circle creates openness, transparency, integrity, equality, respect to all, and an urge for working together. These   are some points that students can imbibe in academia. Some of the recommendations and strategies for the College of Business Administration are as follows:

- SQC should not be misconstrued as a knowledge- oriented tool; it is a tool that invariably facilitates congenial learning and teaching environment.
- It builds trust, improves communication, relationship but is not a tool to assess and evaluate student's academic knowledge.
- SQC complements and supplements in achieving students intended learning outcome.
- SQC can be a part of the extra-curricular activities as it promotes soft skills of the students.
- SQC is an effective tool to take feedback about institution, administration, teaching, placement etc.
- SQC can be aligned to the vision of the university which supports community services by collaborative approach.
- SQC creates a culture of coaching and mentoring.

Conclusion

Student Quality Circle is a philosophy of continuous collaborative improvement process initially at the micro level which later expands in all directions. It is one of the most effective tools for students to get hands on feel about quality at the early stage of their career. Preaching and practicing quality will be a part of their lives. Business students in today's world are supposed to be thinking creatively, differently, independently, responsible, ethical, innovative, and having a knack for problem solving. In sum, quality can help in achieve their respective goals. By leveraging Student Quality Circle, colleges and universities enhance their quality management strategy without hampering the learning and teaching process. Reformers and academicians can further explore possibilities of implementing various quality tools for the success of all.

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