### Application of Six Sigma and Quality Management Ideas to the Development of Business School Mission Statements: A Content Analysis

**Shirley Mo-Ching Yeung** 

Heng Sang Management College, Hong Kong

Through understanding the SIPOC of Six Sigma (defect control concept) and Quality Management System concept of ISO, linkage is found between these concepts and mission validation mentioned in nine most relevant papers on mission of business schools in the past ten years. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the application of system thinking and quality management concept into mission visualization. The first finding is the role of system thinking and quality management concept in mission validation for value creation. The second is the incorporation of academic research findings and accreditation requirements into curriculum design and mission statement to cater the needs of students, industries and the society. As a result, these qualitative results are summarised into a "Model of Visualizing Mission" for further validation.

### Introduction

Under the dynamic and competitive world, innovative ideas not only drive business performance, but also develop confidence of one self. Students have been taught how to develop innovative ideas through thinking out of the box. In fact, educators themselves also need to be trained up with innovation in designing curriculum, in delivering modules and programmes, in assessing students' learning outcomes and in validating mission statement of the institutes that they work for. Because of heavy administrative work, educators seldom have time to release themselves from heavy workload to generate fresh ideas in curriculum design, in assessment, and in quality assurance work. Moreover, school management also devotes much of their time in routine school administrative works without measuring their mission statement comprehensively. As a result, the aim of this paper is to explore how system thinking and quality management concept can help educators validate school mission. With validation of mission statement, achievements of school can then be explicitly spelt out with confidence established to the public.

In the past, the school management defined their mission statement without much participation from faculty members. As time goes by, decentralization outweighs centralization. Mission statement is now an outcome of the school management and the faculty members. Involving faculty members in the process of determining mission statement, the mission statement will be more realistic to achieve. This paper starts from literatures of system thinking of Six Sigma, quality management concepts to literatures of mission statements; and ends in applying system thinking and quality management concepts into realizing the mission statement.

### Leadership and Mission Statement

Humphreys (2005), Longstaffe (2005) and Sidani (2007) mentioned about the importance

of saying and behaviour of leaders, especially under organizational change, to inspire change of mindset and positive behaviour of followers. Transformational leaders should explicit spell out their visionary statements to their followers for aligning with activities held within or outside an organization. Leaders need to make sure that followers understand the meaning of activities for cultivating sustainable social responsible organizational culture. Consideration of context is a must when setting vision, mission, goals, strategies for building and maintaining positive organizational culture.

Longstaffe (2005) pointed out the key principles for leadership are: 1) describing current realities to inspire and mobilize actions from followers for achieving goals; 2) developing an emphatic heart for getting followers' attention, respect and commitment; 3) communicating clearly for the direction that leaders have set; and 4) walking the talk – matching words with behavior. Hence, leadership, strategy and synergy should be found in the inter-related systems of general and task environment; and the subculture of different individuals with different personalities. Therefore, the most critical consideration of school management is to educate faculty members to have a sense of shared direction with respect, commitment and behavior to create value for the society. This is what Clark and Corbett (1999) mentioned about performance management targets, implementation and results.

To our understanding, the direct customers of educational services are students and parents. However, the indirect customers - employers and the society also need to be well taken care of. Educators help cultivate students with values, knowledge, attitude and appropriate skills to meet the needs of the dynamic world. Hence, the needs of students, parents, employers and the society shall be embedded into the mission statement. And, all these elements shall be specific, measurable and realistic so as to make the public understand what have been committed for, what have been aimed at, and what have been done by the institute. Mission statement can be regarded as a direction to lead the school to grow. Palmer (2008) has quoted the following eight mission statement components of Pearce and David (1987):

- Identification of target customers and markets;
- Principal products or services;
- 3 Geographic domain;
- 4 Use of technology;
- 5 Commitment to growth, survival, and profitability;
- Key elements of the organizational philosophy;
- 7 Self-concept; and
- The school's desired public image.

According to Palmer (2008) and De Jong et al. (2007), missions help unify internal stakeholders - faculty members and students with external stakeholders - accreditation body, employers and the community to establish an identity of the institute. In response

to increasing transparency of school performance and quality education, institutes have begun to validate their mission statement with information on world ranking, on students' employability, on programme recognition, on teacher qualification...etc. However, Palmer (2008) mentioned that there was no definitive guidance on what elements should be included for an effective mission. This motivates the researcher to explore the use of system thinking and quality management concepts into visualizing mission statement. The researcher intends to take a post-secondary institute in Hong Kong as a case study to analyze how system thinking and quality management concepts can link up with mission statement in the process of designing curriculum.

### Six Sigma and Quality Management Concepts

As curriculum design activities are situational – based on the needs and wants, requirements and expectations of stakeholders, using system thinking for building interrelationship of components in curriculum design is very important. Metcalfe (2006) mentioned that human behavior is very situational.

A fundamental driving principle behind Intuit's Six Sigma is to incorporate employees, customers and shareholders into the improvement process (Przekop, 2006). Apart from these stakeholders, the basic management skills of planning, organising, directing and controlling are also important in the process of SIPOC of Six Sigma. Among a variety of methods under the concept of Six Sigma, SIPOC is the focus of the paper as the flow of suppliers (S), inputs (I), processes (P), outputs (O) and customers (C) can guide educators logically to monitor and measure elements in curriculum design. Yeung (2009) brought up the idea of Metcalfe (2006) that the main advantage of system thinking is to shift thinking from the object to an inter-relationship of components. Therefore, educators should develop system thinking through the use of quality management concepts, like using SIPOC to link up pedagogic activities and student performance. Wedgwood (2007) further pointed out that SIPOC was a powerful tool for change management with agreed scope and process.

According to Yeung (2009), 'Sigma' was a symbol meaning how much deviation exists in a set of data. It is used to identify the number of defects within the production process. For service industries or social service organizations in relation to organizational culture, it can be interpreted as defects in working relationship, communication and management that affect the organizational performance. Eckes (2003) mentioned that the fundamental use of Six Sigma was to improve both effectiveness and efficiency at the same time. It is a technical measure of the number and the kind of unhappy customers per million opportunities:

"Six Sigma is a measure of customer satisfaction that is near perfection. Most companies are at the two or three sigma level of dissatisfaction Occurrences per million customer contacts." (Eckes, 2003)

Eckes (2003) brought up that a process was defined as a series of steps and activities that take inputs provided by suppliers; add value and provide outputs for their customers. Management needs to measure the existing sigma performance of each of their processes.

This is especially crucial in curriculum design as a number of processes affecting students' learning are involved directly and indirectly. School management not only identifies the processes, but also monitors the performance. And, the performance is supposed to add value in each process from suppliers (faculty members and administrative staff) to final outputs (student performance) with a final destination of achieving their mission statement

### **Quality Management Concepts for Mission Validation**

Three kinds of quality – product-based, function-based and value-based were put forward by Koslowski (2006). Educators need to have a shared mission statement from its stakeholders and determine the key elements - curriculum, teaching and learning activities, and assessment methods to fit into the statement and to highlight the focus of quality on programme (product), or meaning of schooling (function) or on value created to students (value). These key elements shall link up with the expectations of stakeholders for uniqueness, for compliance, for recognition, and most important of all, for quality of students. The focus of quality has to be clearly defined and linked up the mission as it affects the monitoring mechanism of the learning processes. Collecting evidence to demonstrate quality is a fad under an emerging culture of and transparency and competency.

Under the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) and International Organizational for Standardization (ISO), "Continual Improvement" has been realized among management practitioners working in business and non-business sectors. No matter what kinds of organizations they are in, management professionals have tried different ways to enhance their product, service, process, and people performance for maintaining market competitiveness.

"People who choose to enter the educational profession need to decide where they can make the biggest impact on the future." (Lamperes, 2005)

The eight principles "Leadership, Involvement of People, Factual Approach, Process Approach, System Approach, Continual Improvement, Mutual Benefit Supplier Relationship and Customer satisfaction" of International Organizational for Standardization (ISO) focus on management commitment with quality objectives, system conformity, continuous improvement and customer satisfaction. Under the general principles of ISO, "Direction" and "Continual Improvement" have been realized as core elements in management, no matter business or non-business sector. In the past decade, management have tried different ways to enhance their product, service, process, and people performance to meet or excel customers' requirements with an ultimate aim of maintaining market competitiveness.

In order to have quality in teaching and to generate positive learning outcomes, educators need to know the needs and expectations of parents, students, prospective employers and the community, the key elements in a delivery process of a meaningful module. Alignment shall be found among mission, programme objectives, module objectives, pedagogical activities, assessment methods, learning outcomes, local and international programme validation requirements (if required).

The researcher has summarized the key elements of SIPOC of Six Sigma, ISO and mission literatures to locate answers for the following research questions:

- 1 What are the characteristics of system thinking (SIPOC)?
- 2 How does system thinking (SIPOC) link up with quality management concepts (ISO)?
- 3 How do SIPOC and ISO concepts drive mission validation?

### Methodology

This research begins with system thinking of SIPOC in Six Sigma and quality management concept of ISO and ends with literatures on mission in business schools. The main purpose of the study was to show how SIPOC and ISO provide a direction for school management in determining and validating their mission statement for transparency and improvement.

According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2003), content analysis is a study of textual messages of human behavior in an indirect way. This helps researchers generalize findings, predict the future, understand attitudes, values and cultural patterns of an organization or a country. Examples of textual messages are: textbooks, essays and articles from various sources. When interpreting or making inference of documents received, the researcher follow the ideas of Babbie (2001) to trace, think, investigate and internalize information collected from relevant documents.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 demonstrates the key concepts of SIPOC of Six Sigma, ISO and literatures on mission in the past 10 years. The characteristics of system thinking are linkage of activities and communication with stakeholders within a process. The system thinking of SIPOC can link up the importance of quality management concepts, that is putting customers' requirements into the processes of SIPOC – supply of competent faculty members in curriculum design; and inputs of programme validation criteria, communication with industry practitioners, involved stakeholders and quality administrative staff members for quality education.

With the use of system thinking of SIPOC and ISO, mission statement can be validated in the following ways:

### **Process of Determining Mission Statement**

It is realised that school management needed to consider "Suppliers" and "Inputs" in determining mission statement. The ISO clauses of 6.2.2 competency, 6.3 infrastructure, 6.4 working environment, 7.4.1 purchasing information, 7.6 monitoring equipment are the "Suppliers" elements while ISO clauses of 5.1 management commitment, 7.2.1 Determination of requirements related to the product, 8.2.3 monitoring process, 8.4 measurement and analysis are "Inputs" elements.

After considering the above, school management can clearly identify itself to be a teaching institute, a research institute or an institute of balanced approach; a technologyfocused institute or a soft skill focused institute with an emphasis on influencing students' attitude

### **Process of Designing Curriculum to Fulfill Mission Statement**

During the "Process" of designing curriculum, ISO clauses of 5.5.3 internal communication, 7.1 product realization requirements, 7.2.3 customer-related communication, 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 process of validating products and services, 8.4 data analysis need to be well taken of with contextualised inputs of the teaching and research performance as these exert influence in the curriculum design, especially modules with applied knowledge.

### **Process of Validating Mission Statement**

The "Outputs" and "Customer" elements of SIPOC trigger the school management to gather evidence to validate the focal points of mission statement. The evidence can be learning outcomes, attributes and employability of students, qualification and teaching or research performance of faculty members; and the image conveyed to the public.

"Outputs" elements related to ISO clauses are 8.2.1 customer satisfaction, 8.5.1 improvement, 8.5.2 & 3 correction and corrective actions while the "Customer" elements are 8.2.1 customer satisfaction.

The elements of SIPOC, the clauses of international-recognized ISO requirements and literatures on mission concern the linkage of the mission statement, the use of quality policy and quality objectives ("Suppliers" and "Inputs") to drive process and system performance with documentation and data to support and to measure ("Processes") the accomplishment of learning goals ("Outputs" and "Customers") defined in the mission statement. This aligns with the literatures on mission in the past 10 years that leaders should have new thinking ("System Thinking with Quality Management Concepts") for shared mission with strategic plans of incentives to motivate faculty members to design and to deliver meaningful programmes/ modules. This can be summarised into a 3-level model ("SIPOC") to visualize mission statement as outlined in the Figure 1.

No matter the mission statement focuses on quality, on product/ service or value; on research/ on teaching or on becoming a balanced institute, system thinking and quality management concepts can help measure the mission statement and can drive the performance of faculty members and students, to make institutes more transparent and accountable for continual improvement.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

Literatures on mission have made contributions in bringing up the importance of having lateral and flexible thinking on top of system thinking for curriculum design to meet challenges in the dynamic world. Hence, educators need to be aware of the followings for fulfilling mission statement.

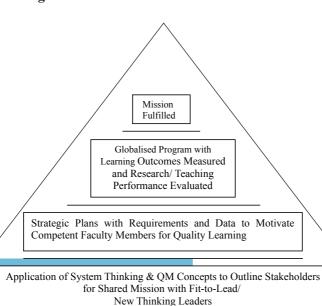
- 1 Cultivating a mindset with system thinking and quality management concepts;
- 2 Defining and linking up the key elements of mission statements with strategic plans and communication to relevant process owners;
- 3 Designing relevant control mechanism to measure the performance to fulfil accreditation requirements and finally to measure the mission statements as a whole.

### Limitations and Future Studies

The limitations of this study are the methodology deployed. Data collected is basically qualitative which may not suffice to validate mission statements. Future studies with quantitative and longitudinal data might help to gain a better understanding on the validation work of mission. If data can be collected from different institutes with different mission statements in different regions, such as developed and developing countries, teaching institutes and research institutes, the results will be more useful as a more comprehensive picture can be derived.

The results presented in this study suggest that the management of higher education institutes shall have their faculty members exposed to system thinking and quality management concepts to measure their intended learning outcomes and to make their mission statements come true. This is the main contribution of the study with impact of quality assurance in higher education.

Fig. 1 Model to Visualize Mission Statement



## Table 1 Integrating ISO - Quality Management Concepts / SIPOC - System Thinking and Literatures on Mission

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ISO	ISO 9001: 2008	SIPOC of Six Sigma	Mission & Business School 2000-2010
9001	Requirements		(9 articles)
4 🔏	Quality Management System	Suppliers - Competent faculty members and experienced administrative staff members	Honeycutt et al. (2010)  "Teaching and research performance importance levels differed based on institutional mission Chairs allocated different priorities to faculty member service activities based on mission." (pp. 203)
JL		Inputs - System thinking	Smith & Rayment (2009) "Leaders need to establish a mission and objectives for their organization which take into account the changing circumstances, and includes consideration of UGIs (Urgent Global Issues) (pp.29)
7.	Management commitment	(Plan, Do, Check, Act of 150)  - ISO 7 principles - System thinking (Second Towns Decome October 1	"Following Barrett's (2003) arguments, sustainability must include an organization's financial viability, but this new mission has to be broader than containing purely financial considerations." (pp.29)
8.4	Measurement and Analysis	Catphilos, inpus, 110ces, Outpus and Customers of Six Sigma) - Key elements of mission statement defined by school management and faculty members Date current considerate mission for	"The term global here means extension over the whole world, and coverage of a whole group of items. Thus a global approach is one that goes beyond organisational or national boundaries, and is holistic in that it considers the physical, mental and spiritual fitness of individuals, groups and societies." (pp.29)
1.0.0	Continuous Improvement	- Data support to various mission to transparency and improvement - International and regional programme validation criteria, government regulations and industry requirements	"We argue that spirituality tends to be largely ignored in current business. We accept that it is a complex and contentious area but we believe that failure by leaders and decision-makers to consider and adopt valid stances and approaches in these areas is a root cause of some contemporary global and local issues. A focus on the spiritual aspect of business includes raising leaders' awareness of issues that are bigger than their organisation and specific role." (pp.30)
			Mudambi et al. (2008) "Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of the research mission of universities, no previous work has investigated the research productivity and research strategies of Asia Pacific business schoolswe rank Asia Pacific business schools is severally and productivity in three areas: 1) 24 leading business journals; 2) 7 top management journals; 3) 5 Asia Pacific management journals" (pp. 171)
			Palmer & Short (2008) "Mission statements are an increasingly important component for accreditation of universities and colleges of business. Thus, understanding similarities and differences in the content of mission statements of business schools is especially timelyOverall, there was considerable variance in the content of organizational missions. Using a previously established framework to analyze mission content, we found business school missions generally lacked comprehensiveness." (abstract)
			"Strategic planning begins with identification of the organization's mission so that stakeholders can be

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اللاستش			aligned with the organization's desired direction Declarations of mission are viewed as an important statement about the organization's central, defining purpose—its reason for being. Further, mission statements have an important influence on goal congruence between the organization and its employees. As written documents, however, mission statements are subject to organizational leaders attempts toward impression and legitimacy management. (454/455)"
			Pearce and David (1987) were the first to systematically explore mission statement characteristics and their implications for business. An important outcome of their research was a typology of eight mission statement components that included 1) identification of target customers and markets, 2) principal products or services, 3) geographic domain, 4) use of technology, 5) commitment to growth, survival, and profitability, 6) key elements of the organizational philosophy and 7) self-concept, and 8) the school's desired public image.
	:11		Kerby & Weber (2000) "During the past decade both state legislatures and accrediting agencies have begun requiring universities and academic programs to provide evidence that they are fulfilling their stated missions." (pp. 202)
			"Prior to the 1980s, most assessment was by reputation or resource evaluation. Outcomes assessment has been the trend since the 1990s. The AAC/SB used the resource evaluation model until new accreditation standards were issued in 1991. These standards shifted the emphasis from the adequacy of resources to the accomplishment of the institutional mission, a commitment to continuous improvement, and the establishment of processes designed to keep the system working between accreditation visit. Although the standards do not refer to outcomes assessment directly, they clearly indicate the need for such assessment." (pp. 202)
			Yunker (2000)  "Business educators began linking AACSB accreditation with 'significantly above average' performance, rather than 'performance at or above a reasonable minimum standard In any event, the new AACSB accreditation standards were proclaimed to be 'mission-linked'. Business schools were given the option of promulgating educational excellence, as opposed to research excellence." (pp. 349)
4.1	General requirements (item) - Measure, where applicable Analysis and	Inputs - International and regional programme validation criteria, government regulations and industry	Stanton et al. (2009)  "The results show that faculty generally support the idea that researching and publishing improve teaching, and that aftitudes toward the usefulness of research relate positively to both research efforts and to research success in the form of published journal articles." (pp.37)
	improvement	emonombo	"The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2003) has recently enacted more stringent standards in order for business schools worldwide to earn and

### Table 1 Integrating ISO - Quality Management Concepts / SIPOC - System Thinking and Literatures on Mission continued

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J [1]	Explain more on: - Outsourcing - Control - Risk and impact - Outsourced processes is responsibility of the organization		maintain their accreditation. I hese standards focus on increasing the number of peer-reviewed journal publications achieved by faculty members during a 5-year window. In its white paper on deploying academically qualified faculty (AACSB 2006, p. 1), AACSB states that faculty should be "active scholars through their research and other development activities that support the maintenance of their intellectual capital in the teaching field." One of the primary justifications given for this increased emphasis on publications in colleges of business is that research results in more effective teaching, the premise being that faculty members who are actively engaged in research are more likely to remain current in their discipline and that, in turn, results in enhanced teaching effectiveness and student learning (AACSB, 2008)." (pp.37/38)
	<u>;[]</u>		Yunker (2000)  ".research productivity is much more reliably and accurately assessed than is teaching effectiveness."  (pp. 349)
4.2		Processes  Data support to validate mission for	Yunker (2000) "Most business schools, if pressed, can muster a certain amount of anecdotal evidence and survey data
4.2.1	General – Documentation Requirements QMS documentation	Outputs - Student employability	to show that their recent graduates have achieved acceptable first jobs and that their older graduates have achieved an acceptable level of career success. But the deficiencies of this type of information about the output of the school are so well know that self-study reports supporting applications for AACSB accreditation The presumption is that if the inputs are good, the output is (probably) good."
	also includes records	Customers	(pp. 350)
4.2.3		- Student success	
	documented procedure Control of		
4.2.4			
	documents" relevant to QMS controlled		
	Control of Records Customer focus		
5.1	Management Commitment	Processes - Understanding expectations and criteria	Honeycutt et al. (2010)  "To ensure that faculty members understand research expectations, marketing chairs should: clearly
5.3			communicate expectations, provide a list of acceptable journals, given faculty members blocks of time to work, meet regularly with faculty to resolve problems and honestly appraise publication."
			(pp. 212)

## Table 1 Integrating ISO - Quality Management Concepts / SIPOC - System Thinking and Literatures on Mission

# Table 1 Integrating ISO - Quality Management Concepts / SIPOC - System Thinking and Literatures on Mission continued

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	Smith & Rayment (2009) "Using a systematic, logical approach to decision making has its weaknesses, and it is also necessary to include soft system and intuitive approaches such as lateral thinking and Mind Garnes (Rayment, 2001). Challenging assumptions, flexible thinking, unconventional approaches and suspending judgments all come into this approach and are important in developing new ways of thinking." (pp.32)	"According to Hawawini (2005), one of the most pressing issues facing business schools is the effect of globalization on business education. Whilst there is debate on how to respond to this phenomenon, we agree with Lorange (2002) who suggested that business schools' response has to be proactive and they have to lead change – 'drive the market' as he terms it. Business schools have to lead the development and promulgation of new ideas, developing leaders 'fit to lead' in the new environment, rather than relying on existing philosophies and striving to meet demands from the marketplace."	"This situation exists despite increasing calls for business schools to change their approach and programme content. As an example of these calls, Cornuel (2007, p. 90) from the European Foundation for Management Development stated. The top business schools of the future will train their students to meet the increasingly complex worldwide demands by challenging management education; they will implement substantial changes in the way they prepare the next generation of leaders." (pp.32)	Honeycutt et al. (2010)  "Business schools also employ in-class evaluations by peers and chairs, and need to ensure that peers are trained and standardized criteria and ratings are agreed upon. Many schools also give weight to unsolicited students comments, which are wholly subjective. The AACSB, however, has instituted assessment of learning goals without defining 'learning'. The current situation suggests that marketing chairs should work with their faculty to define learning along with identifying knowledge, understanding marketing theories, modes, applying knowledge, using analysis and critical thinking to solve problems, working to evaluate outcome of learning"
	Processes - Implementing policy, objectives and analysing data to support mission statement - Documentation based on the requirements.	needs, expectation of stakeholders		Processes - Implementing policy, objectives and analysing data to support mission statement - Documentation based on the requirements, needs, expectation of stakeholders
	Document Control Record Control Product Realization Design inputs to validation of change Control & Validate	production and service provision Monitoring Process & Product		Quality Objectives/ Product Realization/ Monitoring Process/ Measurement and Analysis
لاس	4.2.3 4.2.4 7.1 7.3 7.5.1/	2 8.2.3/ 4		5.4 7.1 8.2.3 8.4

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Contact email address: shirleyyeung@hsmc.edu.hk



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