



SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR OPTIMIZING THE IMPACT OF ETHICS AND VALUES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Mrs. M. Suvarchala Rani

Research Scholar , Gitam University, India & Assistant Professor, Bhavan's Vivekananda College of Science, Humanities and Commerce , Sainikpuri, Secunderabad TS .

Abstract

Prior it was believed that civilized attitude, good manners, ethical code of conduct were some of the traits displayed by an educated person. With the expansion of educational sector, the standards with respect to academic evaluation and its criteria have been raising significantly. But there has been a significant decline in the character, moral values of students who are exiting from educational institutions. This paper applies systems approach which uses components of inputs, throughput, output and feedback in enhancing ethics and values in educational sector. Here an educational institution is considered as a single, unified, purposeful entity composed of interrelated parts. The systems theory has been used as a way of comprehending underlying relationships and which require explicit responsibility for forming decisions in terms of the entire organization. This paper applies systems approach and suggests that any activity of any organization affects the activity of every other part of an organization. According to the systems approach all the levels of an educational institution are interdependent, interrelated and interconnected; therefore the ethics and values at top level would influence all the other levels which ultimately affect the student's community. An attempt is made to suggest that using systems approach; if educational institution is considered as a system then all the sub-systems should work in synergy to help the students in providing quality education and shaping their character to become good citizens with concrete ethics and value orientation as well as intellectual advancement.

Keywords: Ethics, Values, Systems approach, Education, Synergy.

1. Introduction

In educational institutions comprise people with varying roles to be played. They have to work together in a coordinated manner for achieving institutional goals. A prior beliefs centred round the concepts that civilized attitude, good manners, ethical code of conduct were some of the traits displayed by an educated person. With the expansion of educational sector, the standards with respect to academic evaluation and its criteria have been raising significantly. But there has been a significant decline in the character and moral values of students who are exiting from educational institutions.

Systems approach uses components of inputs, throughput, output and feedback in enhancing ethics and values in educational sector. Here an educational institution is considered as a single, unified, purposeful entity composed of interrelated parts. The systems theory is used as a way of comprehending underlying relationships which require explicit responsibility for forming decisions in terms of the entire organization. Systems approach suggests that any activity of any organization affects the activity of every other part of an organization. According to the systems approach all the levels of an educational institution are interdependent, interrelated and interconnected; therefore the ethics and values at top level would influence all the other levels which ultimately affect the community of students.

This paper depicts the application of Systems theory which uses the principles of interdependency, interrelatedness and interconnectedness to influence various levels of an educational sector which finally affect the students as a group.

The objectives of the study have been set as follows:

1. To study the conceptual framework of systems theory and its relation to educational institutions.
2. To study the various factors affecting ethics and values in educational sector.
3. To study the application of systems theory in enhancing ethics and values in educational sector.
4. To understand the ethical and moral issues which are encountered in educational sector.

The study is based on secondary sources which include the concerned literature on the subject and World Wide Web.

In this paper, Section 2 gives the literature review. Section 3 develops the systems approach for education system, which is the main crux of this study. In Section 4, the ethical issues are dealt with, using systems approach in educational institutions. Section 5 gives the conclusion.

2. Literature Review

The general systems theory was proposed by the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, L.V. (1968). He identified the need for a unified and disciplined inquiry to understand and deal with increasing complexities which are above the realm of a single discipline. It requires the system to be explored scientifically, with understanding, and controls. The components of the phenomena and interrelations need to be investigated.



Systems theory is used to develop unifying principles by integrating the parts. It can be viewed from different perspectives, focusing on the structures and functions of the system, viz., open system, holistic view, goal-directedness, and self-organization (Pask, G. 1984). Reigeluth, C. et. al. (1993) developed a systems theory assuming that – (1) the basic quality of a part depends on its relationship to the whole; (2) the design of a system and its parts is based on the view of the whole system and its link to the environment; (3) The systems design needs coordination and integration. The parts of the organization operating at a specific system level have to be designed interactively and simultaneously. It requires coordination. Interdependency across all levels of the system points to integration.

According to Banathy, B.H. (1991), from the point of view of a system, the instructional system is an open one that interacts with the educational system. It is an interdisciplinary aspect enlaving different fields, such as education, knowledge of computer applications, communication, and psychology, among others. Further, when the systems approach is applied to instructional design, it brings out an extensive analysis of the components that facilitate carrying out the instructional goal and the transformational process connecting inputs, output and the feedback which have interaction with the components. His study further states that looking from the systems angle, an examination of the processes and components of the instructional system will not be sufficient to have a comprehensive understanding of the system holistically. This will shift the attention from the components of the design, such as instructional strategies, selection of media and development of the material to implementation. The way in which the system adopts the instructional innovation and how the change occurs are the critical issues. The systems theory gives an overall perspective for designers to assess the resistance to change. This will enable the designers to understand the ramifications of the educational systems.

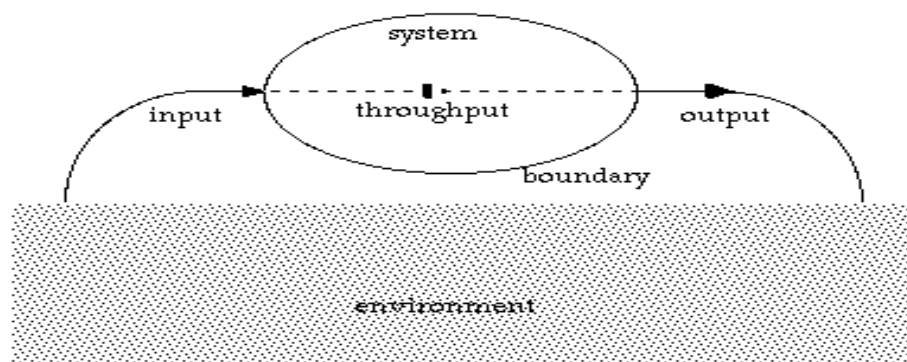
Banathy, B.H. (1996) recommends that besides giving attention to the functional structure of the system, there is need to look at the system from two other aspects. The first is to examine the instructional system in congruence with the community and the society at large. The second is to find out what the instructional system does over time. These are in alignment with the study of Reigeluth, C. et. al. (1993) regarding the systems design. They point to the need for exploring educational change and its renewal from the broader perspectives of the society to design a new system. When education is approached from this point of view, the horizon gets enlarged. This helps to develop broader view of education in the social context.

With a systemic change, the interrelationships and interdependencies that exist among the components of the educational system can be identified. Then, the desired changes that take place in one part of the system due to changes in other parts can be found. Also, the interrelationships and interdependencies that exist between the educational systems and the community can be studied. The community comprises employers, employees, social service agencies, religious establishments, parents, and others. All the stakeholders get the benefits that accrue from the effort regarding change (Jenlink, P.M. et. al. 1996).

3. Systems Approach

A system can be defined as an inter-related set of elements which are functioning as an operating unit (Senge, 2006). As depicted in Figure 1, an open system mainly consists of five basic elements (Scott, 2008): those elements are the inputs, a transformation process, outputs, feedback, and the environment. These elements are elaborated below.

Figure 1: Systems theory: Components in the Education Sector



Source: <https://masscommtheory.com/theory-overviews/systems-theory/>

3.1 Inputs

Systems use three types of resources such as human resources, financial resources and physical resources. Human resources include management, administrative staff, teaching and non-teaching employees. Financial resources are the capital to finance the various operations. Physical resources include infrastructure, facilities and equipment.



3.2 Transformation Process

The interaction between management and staff (teaching and non-teaching), staff and students is discussed as a transformation process. This throughput process includes the internal organizational operations. The various activities performed by the management, staff (teaching) within the organization's structure will affect educational institution's outputs.

All the actors in an institution should work in synergy to help the students in providing quality education and shaping their character to become good citizens with concrete ethics and value orientation as well as intellectual advancement.

The ethical and moral aspects have to be examined where all the actors (Management, staff, students) in educational institutions when work in synergy in shaping the character of the students to become good citizens with ethics and value orientation.

3.3 Outputs

In the educational institutions, the outputs are the students who undergo the various transformational processes to come out as able citizens who can contribute to the society.

3.4 Feedback

Feedback is a key component for the success of educational institutions operations. Negative feedback is also called as correction deviation feedback which can be used to correct deficiencies in the transformation process or the inputs or both, which in turn will also have an effect on the output.

3.5 Environment

An educational institution is an open system which interacts with the environment which includes the social, political, and economic forces that fall upon the organization. Thus educational institutions find it necessary to manage and develop internal business operations while simultaneously help to monitor the environment and anticipate and respond to external demands.

Educational institutions function with an amalgamation of people who have specific functions to perform. They are envisaged to work together in a coordinated manner to achieve institutional goals. This involves certain underlying features viz., (1) involvement of many people; (2) the functionaries have to be outcome-directed; (3) the people have to attain their goals through proper collaboration; (4) they constantly interact with their external environment; and (5) all educational institutions are open systems with linkages to the external environment.

Systems theory is used as a way of comprehending underlying relationships which require explicit responsibility for forming decisions in terms of the entire organization. Systems approach suggests that any activity of an organization affects the activity of every other part of the organization using components of input, transformation, output, feedback, and external environment. According to the systems approach all the levels of an organization are interdependent, interrelated and interconnected and they ultimately affect the whole organization.

4. Ethical issues using Systems Approach in Educational Institutions

The ethical issues in educational institutions, broadly, are: (1) hiring the right staff with quality and objective method of teaching; (2) improper performance appraisal systems for students and staff; (3) discouraging academic research and innovations among staff; (4) lack of well structured great quality education; (5) lack of infrastructure and facilities; and (6) wide gap between industry and academia interface.

The systems approach can be used for hiring the right staff who can serve as a role model for the students. It would affect positively the interaction process of the students in terms of learning and development to turnout the right students with proper ethical and moral standards.

Proper evaluation of students and staff would lead to a more objective study where the faculty and students become motivated and a positive environment is encouraged to prevail. This promotes to get more confident as well as intellectually advanced students.

The staff when equipped with proper academic research and innovations would provide high quality education and in turn students are turned out to be more efficient, high performance-oriented and achievement-conscious individuals.



A well-structured education in terms of syllabi formation and proper teaching and learning modules would create able citizens with all the required inputs to be successful in both personal and professional life.

Providing proper infrastructure and facilities would churn the thought process of the students and a positive educational environment would bring out creativity and innovativeness.

And finally, a quality educational institution should constantly update itself with the changing needs of industry so that the students passing out from the institutions are ready for the industry at the go. Thereby, the institutions bridge the gap between industry and academia requirements.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, if an educational institution is considered as a system then all the sub-systems should work in synergy to help the students in getting quality education and shaping their character to become good citizens with concrete ethics and value orientation as well as intellectual advancement.

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