Education Quality Management: A Way Forward to Promote Sustainable Development Goals by Encouraging Wellbeing’s and Discouraging Inequality Among the Societies

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Abstract. The objective of this study was to promote sustainable development goals through education quality management. The role of wellbeing and inequality was also considered. To attain the objective of this study, a survey was preferred. Survey questionnaires were distributed among the universities of Thailand. Total number of 382 survey questionnaires were used in survey. Partial Least Square (PLS) was preferred to analyse the collected data. Findings proved that education quality management has positive role to promote sustainable development goals in Thailand. In addition, it is found that education quality management has positive role to enhance wellbeing and decrease inequality among the society which ultimately effect positively to promote sustainable development goals. Increase in wellbeing increases the sustainable development goals, however, increase in inequality decreases the sustainable development goals. Therefore, government of Thailand should focus on university education quality management to promote sustainable development goals by encouraging wellbeing’s and discouraging inequality among the society.

Keywords: Inequality, Quality Education, Sustainable Development Goals, Wellbeing

1. Introduction
Higher quality management in education is most important to achieve because it has central role in community development. [1-2] Particularly, quality education in higher educational institutions are playing vital role to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) in various countries [3-4]. Better quality management initiatives at universities lead to the wellbeing and reduces the inequality among the societies which has significant contribution to attain the SDGs. It requires certain level of quality in education to produce quality students which contribute to the community development programs.

However, in case of Thailand, the quality management in higher educational institutions requires significant effort to achieve a certain quality level. Universities lacking in performance is the indication towards low quality education. Thai government should launch the quality revolution and implement various quality management initiatives like total quality management (TQM), ISO 9000 series, 5S, and Customer Charter as a means to promote quality [5]. These initiatives will lead to the SDGs in Thailand by improving the wellbeing of people and decreasing the inequality.

Various studies are available in the literature which carried out research on quality in higher education institutions [6-9], however, these studies did not consider the role of education quality management to promote SDGs. Thus, a gap is existing in the literature which lead the author to carried
out the current study. Therefore, objective of the study is to promote sustainable development goals through education quality management. The role of wellbeing and inequality was also considered.

Theme of the study is based on the idea that education quality management has positive role to increase the wellbeing of society which lead to the SDGs. As it is also clear from literature that quality of education lead to the wellbeing [10], because the education has positive role to increase the quality of life [11]. The other part of the study is based on the concept that education quality management decreases the inequality among the society which increases the probability to achieve SDGs. Stephens, Markus, and Fryberg [12], Arshed, Anwar, Hassan, and Bukhari [13] and Panori and Psycharis [14] also found that education reduces the inequality. The relationship between education quality management, wellbeing, inequality and SDGs is shown in Figure 1.

2. Literature Review

The current study is based on the quality of education at higher educational institutions like universities. Higher education institution is defined as courses that provide the degrees, postgraduate as well as diploma programs in which institutions can be categorized into public and private [15]. In this study, higher education institutions correspondence to the public higher education institutions (universities) those are fully funded by the government under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Thailand were considered. In Thailand, most of the public universities are facing the issues of education quality management. Therefore, focus of this study is education quality management among universities.

Quality is widely studied aspects of operations management and marketing research [16-17]. The concepts of quality can be defined into three sub-categories; quality, quality management and quality management practices. In short, quality best defined as satisfied as well as being loyal by clients. In other words, quality is reaching customer desires and demands or their perceived in product or service that achieved an acceptable degree of excellency. A broader perspective definition is “conformance to requirements”. The best way to define quality is based on the representative who acts on behalf of other persons or organizations. It means that the word of quality implies different things to different people, evaluation and setting [18]. To sum up, quality is defined as “the degree to which a product or service conforms to a set of predetermined standards related to the characteristics that determine its value in the marketplace and its performance of the function for which it was designed.” In general, the quality management is all scene of management function that sets and enforces the quality policy.
and procedures. Quality management is the management procedure that central to actions of the quality assurance. Therefore, the integrative view of quality assists the idea that quality is the concern of all management of organization, not only based on quality manager.

Generally, quality management is defined as a set of processes and resources. This set is functioning harmoniously aims to achieve objectives that related to customer satisfaction. As the customer satisfaction is key to achieve performance [19]. This study operationalized the term of education quality management with the given definition by Tricker [20] that quality management best determined as a system of interconnected processes, to establish a quality policy, quality objectives, and to achieve the quality education. The systems perspective involves with the practices for understanding that product and service quality are the outcome of the interactions of numerous variables, including machines, labour, processes, planning as well as management. In education, quality is heavily based on the quality education. Therefore, the systems perspective also put concentration on management to fix the quality problems. In other words, quality management offer the model for continuous development to enhance organizational performance in increasing satisfaction amongst the students and other parties. It also renders self-confidence (organization and customers) on their abilities to supply products/services that systematically satisfy the needs.

Quality management can be considered as most important research themes in the area of operations management [21]. At the beginning, the area of operations management focused primarily for manufacturing production [22], and most of the past quality scholars have started and focused their early works in this setting [23] and missed the service sector like educational institutions. Furthermore, they classified product quality into various characteristics such as reliability, durability and performance. In higher educational institutions, the product is based on the education output. In short, these dimensions cover at various operations, ranging from the inspection process on purchases parts and raw material to the inspection of final output before delivering to customers. However, the conversion to service-driven institutions has made a key shift in manufacturing sectors [24]. Consequently, the pressure of global competition on profitability, employment, and other resources causes the demand for higher quality in services. This competition has now been widely extended to other sectors including organizations in the service and public sectors. In brief, the field of operations management has expanded to service systems includes all the functions and departments of the organization, particularly the education sector.

Quality initiative being the responsibility of all employees in the organization and is not limited to the manufacturing department alone [25]. In fact, most of the previous scholars in service quality are from marketing arena. According to Vargo and Lusch [26] marketing area shifted from a goods-dominant perspective (touchable) to services-dominant perspective (untouchable), and the associated consequences to the service organization need to be fully understood. To sum up this section, in many companies, service has been important and profitable part of the business for a long time, but until recent research in quality management mainly focused to manufacturing organizations especially on production and product development [27] and ignored the education sector. Quality management were analysed in both sectors (manufacturing and service), but scantily research in the service institutions [28]. Thus, more studies are required to bridge this gap specifically for the higher education institutions.

Quality management in higher education is problematic to recognize. This is because the phenomenon of quality management in higher education are initiated from various business practices. In the quality movement, quality is totally based on customer. For example, as a result of fund dedication from government and globalization issue in education [29], higher education institutions are diverted from the core purposes. Despite the fact that there is a tremendous number of publications on quality management subject, the scholars always misrepresented or misunderstood on the concept of quality. Obviously, quality management definition in higher education institutions constituting several perspectives such as excellence, fitness for purpose, money value, stakeholder views and achieving the objectives [30]. Furthermore, most of the issues in defining quality management among the higher education institutions grow from the problem of recognising the customer. Many scholars in
higher education ignore the central question of “who is the customer?” when defining quality. For example, definition of quality management is “fitness for purpose”. The “fitness for purpose” framework focuses on examining quality management in higher education institutions at the organizational level. In other words, the greater quality of higher education institutions is based on how they set their objectives and distinctly exceeding these objectives which is important to achieve SDGs.

Education quality management has crucial role in SDGs. United Nations affiliate states planned a set of SDGs which will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as reference goals for the international development community. To achieve these goals, quality of education has important role to play. A good quality education at university level effect significantly on community development programs. It creates the awareness among the general public and lead to the welfare. Education quality management helps to achieve the SDGs by increasing the wellbeing and decreasing the inequality among the societies.

There are various benefits of quality education among universities. One of the important benefits is that quality education has significant role in the wellbeing of the society. It is also evident from previous studies that quality of education lead to the wellbeing [31], as the education has positive role to increase the quality of life [32-33]. Increase in the quality of education increases the wellbeing which lead to the SDGs. Particularly in the Thailand, a significant effort is required to boost quality of education to promote SDGs through the promotion of wellbeing. Previous studies proved that education and wellbeing have significant association [34] which can promote SDGs. Therefore, wellbeing has important role to achieve SDGs.

Along with the wellbeing, inequality also plays significant role in achieving SDGs. Increase in the inequality among the societies generally discourages the SDGs. Therefore, significant efforts are required to overcome the issue of inequality. Quality education is one of the instruments which may lead to decrease in inequality and increases the probability to achieve SDGs in Thailand. Generally, social inequality is one of the major threats. Social inequality is considered by the presence of unequal opportunities as well as rewards for diverse social positions within a society. There is a significant association between education and inequality [35]. It is proved by the literature that inequality can be reduced with the help of education [12]. Education also has the ability to reduce income inequality [36]. Therefore, significant evidences are available which shows that education can reduce the inequality, which may lead to the SDGs. Therefore, from the above discussion, following hypotheses are proposed;

**H1.** Education quality management has positive effect on SDGs.

**H2.** Education quality management has positive effect on wellbeing.

**H3.** Education quality management has negative effect on inequality.

**H4.** Wellbeing has positive effect on SDGs.

**H5.** Inequality has negative effect on SDGs.

### 3. Method

This study obtained the data from professors of the universities that can represent the department (academic and non-academic). The selection of professors from each department was grounded on their working experience with various quality initiatives as well as their service to the departments. Consequently, when top management gives quality management the highest priority, it conveys to employees in the organization that quality is critical. This mandate from top management pass through professors which helps to develop the awareness about the significance of quality education and increase the employee’s promise to attain higher performance through better education quality management. In short, they are most familiar with their department in term of practices and organizational performance results. Therefore, professors are the best respondents in context of this study. Addressing survey to suitable respondents is key because of the fact that the unsuitable respondents had been a foundation of imprecise response in using the survey method.
In this regard, 382 questionnaires were distributed among the university professors in Thailand. Total 205 questionnaires were received with valid response and used to get results. Area cluster sampling was used because it is suitable to cover larger population [37]. Partial Least Square (PLS) was used in this study for data analysis. Additionally, Likert scale was used to collect the data. All the measures of variables, namely; education quality management, wellbeing, inequality and SDGs were adapted from previous studies.

4. Result and Discussion
Data screening is highlighted in Table 1. It indicates missing value, outlier and normality of the data. Data has no outlier and missing value. Normality is shown through Kurtosis and Skewness. However, normality as no role while examining data by using PLS. Because PLS is suitable to handle small sample and non-normal data [38-39].

Table 1 Data Screening

|    | Missing | Mean | Median | Min | Max | SD | Kurtosis | Skewness |
|----|---------|------|--------|-----|-----|----|----------|----------|
| EQM1 | 0       | 3.208 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.503 | 0.466    | 0.877    |
| EQM2 | 0       | 3.25  | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.447 | 0.782    | 0.931    |
| EQM3 | 0       | 3.176 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.465 | 0.417    | 0.76     |
| EQM4 | 0       | 3.144 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.382 | 0.581    | 0.704    |
| EQM5 | 0       | 3.227 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.515 | 0.278    | 0.704    |
| EQM6 | 0       | 3.148 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.48  | 0.457    | 0.821    |
| EQM7 | 0       | 3.042 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.425 | -0.21    | 0.438    |
| WELL1 | 0        | 3.218 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.355 | 0.51     | 0.689    |
| WELL2 | 0        | 3.125 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.449 | 0.168    | 0.644    |
| WELL3 | 0        | 3.097 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.508 | 0.146    | 0.674    |
| WELL4 | 0        | 3.236 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.409 | -0.137   | 0.534    |
| WELL5 | 0        | 3.171 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.372 | 0.223    | 0.565    |
| INE1 | 0       | 3.042 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.352 | -0.188   | 0.547    |
| INE2 | 0       | 3.167 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.305 | 0.36     | 0.618    |
| INE3 | 0       | 3.148 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.429 | -0.061   | 0.695    |
| INE4 | 0       | 3.194 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.427 | 0.145    | 0.683    |
| INE5 | 0       | 3.222 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.332 | 0.3      | 0.698    |
| SDG1 | 0       | 3.259 | 4      | 1   | 7   | 1.612 | -0.69    | 0.2      |
| SDG2 | 0       | 3.208 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.724 | -0.746   | 0.341    |
| SDG3 | 0       | 3.306 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.903 | -0.826   | 0.408    |
| SDG4 | 0       | 3.301 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 2.034 | -1.071   | 0.444    |
| SDG5 | 0       | 3.162 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 2.059 | -0.928   | 0.544    |
| SDG6 | 0       | 3.204 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.976 | -0.872   | 0.534    |
| SDG7 | 0       | 3.306 | 3      | 1   | 7   | 1.699 | -0.602   | 0.443    |

First step of PLS-SEM is highlighted in Figure 2. It is based on confirmatory factor analysis. Factor loadings of all the items were examined. It is found that all the items have factor loadings above 0.7 which supported internal consistency. Factor loadings of all items are shown in Figure 2 and Table 2.
Figure 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 2 Factor Loadings

|                         | Education Quality Management | Inequality | Sustainable Development Goals | Wellbeing |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| EQM1                    | 0.892                        |            |                               |           |
| EQM2                    | 0.901                        |            |                               |           |
| EQM3                    | 0.895                        |            |                               |           |
| EQM4                    | 0.902                        | 0.899      |                               |           |
| EQM5                    | 0.919                        | 0.925      |                               |           |
| EQM6                    | 0.929                        | 0.932      |                               |           |
| EQM7                    | 0.874                        | 0.911      |                               |           |
| INE1                    |                              | 0.894      |                               |           |
| INE2                    |                              | 0.925      |                               |           |
| INE3                    |                              | 0.932      |                               |           |
| INE4                    |                              | 0.911      |                               |           |
| INE5                    |                              | 0.894      |                               |           |
| SDG1                    |                              |            | 0.862                         |           |
| SDG2                    |                              |            | 0.903                         |           |
| SDG3                    |                              |            | 0.919                         |           |
| SDG4                    |                              |            | 0.917                         |           |
| SDG5                    |                              |            | 0.936                         |           |
| SDG6                    |                              |            | 0.929                         |           |
| SDG7                    |                              |            | 0.889                         |           |
| WELL1                   |                              |            |                               | 0.888     |
| WELL2                   |                              |            |                               | 0.898     |
| WELL3                   |                              |            |                               | 0.868     |
Construct reliability and convergent validity is presented in Table 3. It is clear that all the variables have composite reliability (CR) above 0.7, average variance extracted (AVE) is also above 0.5 which confirms the convergent validity [40]. Furthermore, discriminant validity is highlighted by presenting cross-loadings in Table 4.

### Table 3 Reliability and Validity

|                                | Alpha | rho_A | CR   | AVE  |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Education Quality Management  | 0.962 | 0.962 | 0.968| 0.814|
| Inequality                    | 0.95  | 0.95  | 0.961| 0.833|
| Sustainable Development Goals | 0.965 | 0.965 | 0.971| 0.825|
| Wellbeing                     | 0.934 | 0.934 | 0.95 | 0.792|

### Table 4 Cross-Loadings

|                                | Education Quality Management | Inequality | Sustainable Development Goals | Wellbeing |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| EQM1                          | 0.892                         | 0.846      | 0.583                         | 0.827     |
| EQM2                          | 0.901                         | 0.86       | 0.586                         | 0.833     |
| EQM3                          | 0.895                         | 0.85       | 0.617                         | 0.862     |
| EQM4                          | 0.902                         | 0.834      | 0.648                         | 0.806     |
| EQM5                          | 0.919                         | 0.842      | 0.638                         | 0.861     |
| EQM6                          | 0.929                         | 0.871      | 0.633                         | 0.842     |
| EQM7                          | 0.874                         | 0.782      | 0.603                         | 0.785     |
| INE1                          | 0.839                         | 0.899      | 0.581                         | 0.821     |
| INE2                          | 0.846                         | 0.925      | 0.565                         | 0.808     |
| INE3                          | 0.855                         | 0.932      | 0.592                         | 0.847     |
| INE4                          | 0.858                         | 0.911      | 0.64                          | 0.845     |
| INE5                          | 0.854                         | 0.894      | 0.656                         | 0.837     |
| SDG1                          | 0.669                         | 0.628      | 0.862                         | 0.684     |
| SDG2                          | 0.61                          | 0.605      | 0.903                         | 0.655     |
| SDG3                          | 0.626                         | 0.625      | 0.919                         | 0.645     |
| SDG4                          | 0.559                         | 0.556      | 0.917                         | 0.579     |
| SDG5                          | 0.624                         | 0.605      | 0.936                         | 0.651     |
| SDG6                          | 0.589                         | 0.582      | 0.929                         | 0.632     |
| SDG7                          | 0.648                         | 0.623      | 0.889                         | 0.675     |
| WELL1                         | 0.819                         | 0.797      | 0.663                         | 0.888     |
| WELL2                         | 0.799                         | 0.789      | 0.629                         | 0.898     |
| WELL3                         | 0.827                         | 0.827      | 0.636                         | 0.868     |
| WELL4                         | 0.832                         | 0.842      | 0.636                         | 0.912     |
| WELL5                         | 0.823                         | 0.801      | 0.609                         | 0.883     |

Structural model in Figure 3 highlighted the hypotheses testing. In this process, t-value and beta value was analysed to examine the relationship among variables. The hypotheses having t-value below 1.96 was considered as not supported. However, the hypotheses having t-value 1.96 or above are
considered as supported. It is found that all the hypotheses have a t-value higher than 1.96, thus, all the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5) are supported. Results are shown in Table 5.

![Figure 3 Structural Model](image)

**Table 5** Hypotheses Results

| Hypothesis                                | β    | M    | SD   | t Statistics | P Values |
|-------------------------------------------|------|------|------|--------------|----------|
| Education Quality Management -> Inequality| -0.932 | -0.932 | 0.055 | 16.97        | 0        |
| Education Quality Management -> SDGs     | 0.162 | 0.161 | 0.073 | 2.248        | 0.035    |
| Education Quality Management -> Wellbeing| 0.922 | 0.921 | 0.011 | 81.541       | 0        |
| Inequality -> SDGs                        | -0.004 | -0.008 | 0.002 | 2.03         | 0.043    |
| Wellbeing -> SDGs                        | 0.561 | 0.559 | 0.11  | 5.1          | 0        |

Education quality management shows positive effect on wellbeing and SDGs. However, it has a negative effect on inequality which indicates that education quality management decreases the inequality. Inequality has a negative relationship with SDGs. Moreover, wellbeing has a significant positive effect on SDGs. Additionally, r-square ($R^2$) is 0.514 which is moderate as per the recommendations of Chin [41].

5. Conclusion
The objective of this study was to promote sustainable development goals through education quality management. After conducting a survey among universities of Thailand, findings of the study proved that education quality management has a positive role to promote sustainable development goals in Thailand. Better quality education has a vital role to promote sustainable development goals. Moreover, it is investigated that education quality management has a positive role to enhance wellbeing and decrease inequality among the society which ultimately effect positively to promote sustainable development goals. Quality education effect positively on people’s wellbeing by reducing the level of inequality within the societies. Increase in wellbeing and decrease in inequality is the sign of awareness among
the people which lead to the community development. Increase in wellbeing increases the sustainable development goals, however, increase in inequality decreases the sustainable development goals. Therefore, government of Thailand should focus on university education quality management to promote sustainable development goals by encouraging wellbeing’s and discouraging inequality among the society. Additionally, university should focus to provide quality education which will lead to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

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