

Application of Total Quality Management in Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

In the recent era it could be noted every organization strive to perform and excel in such a manner to withstand in the highly competitive world to please their customers. Library and Information Science is no exception to it and hence they also engage in the attempt to satisfy the stakeholders of all kinds seeking the learning resource centres. Almost majority of libraries across have begun to implement Total Quality Management Systems in their organizations and started to continuously improve their services to the customers. TQM is one of the most power tools which act as a management tool which methodically come into sight to offer outstanding quality products and services to stake holders. Due to dynamic changes in the field of Library and Information Services, academic libraries have been necessarily forced to learn the methods and materials of different formats to exhibit excellent performance to satisfy their customers through fulfillment of their needs of information. All the efforts in quality improvements and excellence in performance shall be successfully achieved with the help of highly competent library professional and other human assets involved in the process. The paper is an attempt to make the readers to understand the importance of TQM, an effective system that could enhance the performance of academic libraries with the aid of earlier research and literatures.

KeyTerms: TQM, Quality Assurance, TQM culture, Benefits of TQM, Customer Focus, TQM in Libraries, ISO 9000.

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INTRODUCTION

During the recent decades, Total Quality Management (TQM) had witnessed an extensive acceptance as a channel to gain and maintain the competitiveness in the global market place by most organizations of different nature. Globalization issues have prompted the move to ensure quality, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been propelled quickly to adopt quality models and standards with an intention to survive in the increasingly global market. Indeed, across the globe, HEIs have made unyielding progress in adopting quality models and institutional self-assessment approaches. In the United States, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), and in the United Kingdom, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model, have been adapted for the Higher Education sector and institutions within the sector are recognizing their benefits.

Due to the consequences of technological and scientific

revolutions, the sheer quantity of knowledge and information is expanding exponentially and increasingly varied student population are burgeoning, the quality of training for teachers and the quality of teaching in higher education institutions demands top priorities. Seymour admits that education, and in particular, higher education itself, is also being driven towards commercial competition imposed by economic forces.

LIBRARY AND ITS CHANGING FACADES

Library and Information is not new as what we understood in our sense, but it was in existence from the ancient times and is as old as the origin of education in the olden days. The entire human civilization until these days had experienced three waves of social change, viz., the age of agriculture, the age of industrialization and the age of information. Throughout the world libraries that are most modern are 'hybrid' libraries characterized by print and electronic collections, manual and ICT (information and communication technology) based



services. It cannot rest up at this stage. It has to move beyond their traditional role and supposed to function as custodians of books and integrate new methods of storage and transmission of information into an already existing structure. All these modern libraries must link the users with the information they seek. It was observed that the recent times users of library expect more from libraries than ever before.

Hence there is a necessity of the libraries turned to become committed by offering high quality services to all its users. Most of us during the earlier days thought that higher rate of resource consumptions, purchasing, stocking and storing of new books in the institution premises is deemed to quality improvement process. In the present situation the above approach doesn't hold well enough as it is invalid. Today quality improvement in the Library and Information Service is to offer the needed information to the users at the required and appropriate times. This could be possible only through a total and comprehensive transformation in the existing system to the modern ones by understanding the specific user needs and the types of information required by them and to satisfy the stakeholders at the utmost level. In the recent years it is strongly believed by most library professionals and educational institutions, that Total Quality Management implementation could provide the desired goals of the stakeholders and as well as the organizational objectives. Due to these reasons TQM is regarded as the most popular mechanism that could transform any organization in different spheres and hence becoming trendy among the modern libraries.

As a corollary the level of expectation among the users started to increase manifold and thus forced libraries to confront higher level of changes. In turn they started to indulge in the attempt of improvisation of the quality in its services.

In the present context due to increasingly tight budgetary restrictions, library managers are under high pressure to fully exploit available resources. Therefore, several libraries and information services have adopted quality management practices in recent years. Among the various initiatives implemented include ISO 9000 standards Johanssen¹⁵, 5S movement Taipei Municipal Library³², and benchmarking Zairi & Hutton³⁵, Garrod & Kinnell¹², Garrod & Kinnell¹³, Buchanan & Marshall⁵. By adopting quality management, the library's image and service quality can be improved, and librarians can increase productivity while focusing on the customer's needs, Johanssen¹⁷.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN LIBRARY: EXERPTS

Arora³ has stated the library as the 'heart' of the academic setup. As like Arora a similar view was expressed by Tayabas³³. Both these authors have mentioned in their work that the libraries play at the centre of the stage in all the functional aspects of University: in teaching, research and extended activities.

In order to achieve the academic excellence and developments there is a strong urge for the quality improvements and modernization of libraries. The changes in higher education across global level is highly dynamic and hence libraries under the thrust and uncontrolled by various factors. This is due to technological changes, revolutionary effects in information technology, policies such as globalization, internationalization process and the global business in higher education. In consequence libraries search the means to become highly

competitive and to stay at the center stage in managing and offering services through the library and information services. At this juncture most libraries have started to focus not only in offering quality service but begun their journey in the upfront side by adapting quality management systems.

Customers believe and encourage organizations who could strongly assure them with quality and timely services. Therefore, in the recent decades quality assurance becoming a strong mantra among every organizations to sustain in their operations and in their growth process. Quality Assurance is the systematic process through which the entire process could be monitored, evaluated during the course of offering products and services to the end users. Hence, quality assurance is well recognized at all levels in the organization. In effect to this recognition, organization has started to evolve suitable policies, attitudes, action plans and procedures that are essential for providing quality services as promised and that could raise the level of confidence among the stakeholders.

The most popular worldwide quality management systems and well recognized by most organizations at the global level is ISO 9000. It is a system that offers a promise to the end users that they will be offered with quality products and services conforming to the international standards. Based on the standards fixed by ISO, organization must decide quality objectives and policies and should also strictly adhere to the same without any defects. Once when the organizations realized the need for quality assurance, evolved suitable policies and objectives then it could be ascertained that that organization started to implement quality management system in their organization.

QUALITY

Quality is primarily concerned with meeting the wants and needs of customers. One of the key and enduring definitions is that, 'quality is fitness for purpose'. Quality can be described as doing the right thing, in the right way on right time as well as doing it right the first time and doing it right every time. In the context of the Library, it can be described as:

- Q - Quest for excellence of knowledge
- U - Understanding the user's need
- A - Actions to achieve user's demand
- L - Leadership quality for Librarian
- I - Involving all staff
- T - Team spirit in achieving common goals
- Y - Yardstick to measure progress

TQM CONCEPTS

Zalinawathi reported that TQM is the process through excellence in performance could be achieved. TQM is defined as both a philosophy and a set of guiding principles that represent the foundations of a continuously improving organization. It is the application of qualitative methods and human resources to improve all the processes within an organization and exceed customer needs now and in the future. According to this author, TQM incorporates all fundamental management techniques, existing improvements, and technical tools under a disciplined approach.

Churchill & Paul⁸ during 1980's brought about a business process of continuous improvement to satisfy customers needs. On due implementation of TQM, the promises of the organization could be successfully be attained in by integrating customer satisfaction and operational aspects of the business.

Handy¹⁴ stated Total Quality Management as 'the world keeps changing. It is one of the paradoxes of success that the things and ways that get you where you are, are seldom the things that keep you there'. He also opined that organization while successfully implement TQM initiatives often focus on continuous improvement determining the related critical success factors as the basis.

During the implementation process of TQM, it is essential to have a strong support from all levels of management. This will lead not only to the smoothest implementation but also help organization to successfully attain what they expected to achieve during their operations. If there are pitfalls while implementing TQM or when it is not fully received the support of the top management, then all the efforts taken in this regard would become unfruitful results to the organization. This was identified as the common cause for the failure of TQM programmes by, Schein²⁸. It is the essential responsibility of senior management teams to extend their high level support to TQM initiatives. Once when this happens, it would raise level of confidence among the employees so that the efforts in implementing TQM initiative would fetch the desired results at ease. In every TQM programmes, there are two primary aspects such as: employee empowerment and the other are being employees' involvement in the process. This was rightly pointed out by, Torrington & Hall³⁴ stating that "difficulties experienced in adopting TQM have mainly focused on people issues".

TQM PRINCIPLES

According to Galyani Moghaddam¹¹ TQM is the application of a number of activities with perfect synergy. The following are the most important elements of any Total Quality Management Programme:

- Customer-Driven Quality.
- Top Management Leadership and Commitment.
- Continuous Improvement.
- Fast Response.
- Actions Based On Facts.
- Employee Participation.
- A TQM Culture.

CUSTOMER-DRIVEN QUALITY

In the recent years, most organization primarily operates their business focusing the target customers as they are the sole and fulcrum of the business. Their primary object is to keep their customers feel happy forever based on the saying "Customer is the King". Hence while TQM is likely to be implemented they focus all their programmes towards the customers despite internal and external constraints. These organizations strongly have a faith that successful implementation of TQM and perfect adoption definitely would help to meet their customer's expectation. They consider that once if the customer is satisfied or delighted with the offering of the organization, that would be because of the

successful TQM programmes. According to Stark¹⁸ the TQM organization is sensitive to customer requirements and responds rapidly to them. In the TQM context, "being sensitive to customer requirements" goes beyond defect and error reduction and merely meeting specifications or reducing customer complaints. The concept of requirements is expanded to take in not only product and service attributes that meet basic requirements, but also those that enhance and differentiate them for competitive advantage. Each part of the organization is involved in total quality, operating as a customer to some functions and as a supplier to others.

TQM LEADERSHIP

Stark¹⁸ Associates explains that TQM is a way of life for an organization. It has to be introduced and led by top management. Attempts to implement TQM often fail because top management does not lead and get committed - instead it delegates and pays lip service. Commitment and personal involvement are required from top management in creating and deploying clear quality values and goals consistent with the objectives of the company, and in creating and deploying well-defined systems, methods and performance measures for achieving those goals. These systems and methods guide all quality activities and encourage participation by all employees. The development and use of performance indicators is linked, directly or indirectly, to customer requirements and satisfaction, and to management and employee remuneration.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

American Society for Quality¹ outlined continuous improvement as 'Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort to improve products, services or processes'. These efforts can seek 'incremental' improvement over time or breakthrough improvement all at once. Among the most widely used tools for continuous improvement is a four-step quality model-the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle, also known as Deming Cycle or Shewhart Cycle:

- Plan: Identify an opportunity and plan for change.
- Do: Implement the change on a small scale.
- Check: Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference.
- Act: If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess your results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again.

Other widely used methods of continuous improvement- such as six sigma, lean, and total quality management - emphasize employee involvement and teamwork; measuring and systematizing processes; and reducing variation, defects and cycle times.

Continuous or Continual?

The terms continuous improvement and continual improvement are frequently used interchangeably. But some quality practitioners make the following distinction:

- Continual improvement: a broader term preferred by W. Edwards Deming to refer to general processes of improvement and encompassing 'discontinuous' improvements i.e., many different approaches, covering different areas.



■ **Continuous improvement:** a subset of continual improvement, with a more specific focus on linear, incremental improvement within an existing process. Some practitioners also associate continuous improvement more closely with techniques of statistical process control.

FAST RESPONSE

Stark¹⁸ describes that fast response as the one that help organization to achieve customer satisfaction, by properly responding rapidly to the changing customer needs. It means that shorter product and service introduction cycles. These can be achieved with customer-driven and process-oriented product development because the resulting simplicity and efficiency greatly reduce the time involved.

Simplicity is gained through concurrent product and process development. Efficiencies are realized from the elimination of non-value-adding effort such as re-design. The result is a dramatic improvement in the elapsed time from product concept to first shipment.

ACTIONS BASED ON FACTS

Fact-based decision making or actions is the one that organization practice in order to know how well an organization is performing, data on performance measures is necessary. TQM requires that an organization continually collect and analyze data in order to improve decision making accuracy, achieve consensus, and allow prediction based on past history.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

All employees participate in working toward common goals. Total employee commitment can only be obtained after fear has been driven from the workplace, when empowerment has occurred, and management has provided the proper environment. High-performance work systems integrate continuous improvement efforts with normal business operations. Self-managed work teams are one form of empowerment.

ATQM CULTURE

In a TQM effort, all members of an organization participate in improving processes, products, services, and the culture in which they work. The methods for implementing this approach come from the teachings of such quality leaders as Philip B. Crosby, W. Edwards Deming, Armand V. Feigenbaum, Kaoru Ishikawa, and Joseph M. Juran.

TQM IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

TQM is at present not emerging as one of the management technique, but also felt very essential by several organizations and disciplines. Just like other organization, Library and Information Services had also felt the vital aspects of TQM and need for the implementation of TQM. The application of TQM in Library and Information Services had started to gain importance in the late 1980's. The application of Total Quality Management in Library and Information Centers seems to be a very recent origin but it is not so in the Indian context wherein Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, father of Library and Information Science stated in his Fourth Law 'Save the Time of the User' has direct implication of what is advocated in TQM approach as enunciated by Raina²⁶.

In India, very rarely studies have been conducted on Total Quality Management in the University Library System. Certainly we do find a few studies attempted on Corporations R&D Libraries and fewer Special Libraries.

Stuart & Drake³¹ deals with benchmarking and Total Quality Management in academic libraries focusing on valued service to customers as competition from alternate information sources reveals the inadequacies of traditional service. Georgia Institute of Technology, Library and Information Center devised a version of TQM to focus attention on customer needs and provide content based, value added information services. As the primary agents in customer interaction, front line staffs are driving innovation and the marketing of services. Statistical quality control to assess information transactions adequately are not yet worked out and anecdotal evidence of success or failure is still the primary measure of service success.

Rout²⁷ had commented that Total Quality Management principles are yet to be applied in the libraries of India and this new approach to library management can be adopted to achieve success in the library operations and programmes. Further discusses the implementation of TQM in university libraries and suggests a TQM model to bring a total quality approach for a customer-focused library and concludes with a remark that TQM is likely to bring about greater participation of employees in information management activities in university libraries.

Meera²¹ states that TQM is a people-focused management system that aims at the continual increase in customer satisfaction at continually lower cost. It is not a tool in itself, but the tools and techniques for Statistical Process Control form an essential part of TQM exercises. The study describes Process flow diagrams, Pareto diagrams and Cause-effect diagrams, and their applications in the management of libraries and information centers and other techniques of TQM, which can also be used in the library environment but need statistical computations.

Many libraries have implemented TQM successfully. Harvard College Library created a task force which rewrote the library's vision statement, and considered changes that would have to be made in order to develop a new organizational culture- one that 'highlights the changing nature of staff roles and responsibilities in an era of pervasive change' Clack⁹. With the help of consultants, Harvard learned about TQM, and found that its principles of service excellence, teamwork, ongoing training and skill building, process/systems focus, continuous improvement, and cooperation across boundaries could help them make the changes they needed.

The Oregon State University Libraries also decided to test TQM. Two small teams, the Shelving Team from the stack maintenance unit, and the Documents Team from the government publications unit worked with outside facilitators. Each team surveyed users and staff and found that some issues, perceived as critical by staff, were not perceived as critical by customers and therefore needed rethinking in terms of TQM. The Shelving Team, which wanted to address the problem of long lasting shelving backlogs, found that the shelves, who worked alone on the floors, felt isolated and unmotivated to make progress. Using this information, the teams devised a plan for servers work in small groups and have an assigned floor. The result was an increased 'esprit de corps', tidier mantelpiece, and fewer backlogs Butcher⁶.



Sirkin²⁹ suggests some ways a library might use the principles of TQM to enhance library services.

- Create service brochures and information kits.
- Conduct a user survey about library services.
- Improve signage.
- Change hours of operation.
- Provide a more convenient material return.
- Simplify checkout of material.
- Use flexibility in staff assignment.
- Co-operate with local government.
- Ask vendors to give products demonstration.
- Give new staff a through orientation.
- Create inter departmental library advisory groups.
- Improve the physical layout of the library.
- Track complaints.
- Develop an active outreach programme.
- Open satellite offices.
- Publicize new or changes services.
- Develop user and staff training materials.
- Target services o specific groups.
- Offer electronic document delivery.

BENEFITS OF TQM IN LIBRARIES

Miller & Stearns²² if implemented carefully, quality management principles yield positive benefits to the libraries such as:

- Incremental changes lead to continuous improvement-quick solutions may yield only partial results.
- Forces library managers develop leadership skills interested of replaying on power within position to obtain results.
- Increase staff participation in decision-making, thus increasing the feeling of ownership of decisions and directions once charted.
- Improves the level of training given to staff, thus increasing skills.
- Helps break down barriers between library departments and improve communication within the organization.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes with an idea after perusing various literatures stating that Total Quality Management is a way wherein it could any management for improving its effectiveness, efficiency, flexibility and competitiveness among the libraries as a whole by making each and every employee to get involved with an intention to improve the performance of the organization in all spheres. This eventually keeps the customers feel happy and highly satisfied with the services offered by the organization. Libraries can also excel in its performance by maintaining the Quality standards and conformities as prescribed in TQM Principles employing necessary tools and techniques. In the recent years it was noted that TQM has increasingly being practiced in libraries of developed countries for last two decades. In effect to the implementation and regular adoption of TQM, libraries were able to establish a culture of continuous

improvement and started to offer quality product and services. Indian libraries started to practice TQM which is in the nascent stage and still expected to grow in the years to come.

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