

A Use of TQM Techniques in Academic Libraries

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Abstract

User satisfaction and fulfillment of the information is very important in the qualitative management of libraries. The basic idea of TQM is commitment to continuous improvement which is equally applicable to libraries also. Today all kinds of organizations are becoming customer oriented to survive in this world. TQM is the integration of all functions and processes within an organization in order to achieve continuous Improvement of the quality of goods and services. Libraries have always been committed to provide high quality of services to its users. This paper discusses the concept of TOM and its application to the library services.

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Introduction

The TQM was coined by A. V. Freingbaum in 1983. Total Quality Management (TQM) consists of organization-wide efforts to install and make permanent a climate in which an organization continuously improves its ability to deliver high-quality products and services to customers.

Now a day's quality improvement in the Library and Information Service (LIS) is to offer the needed information to the users at the required and appropriate times. This could be possible only by understanding the specific user needs. In the recent years it is strongly believed by most LIS professionals, that Total Quality Management implementation could provide the desired goals of the patrons well as the organizational objectives. Due to these reasons TQM is regarded as the most popular mechanism and hence becoming trendy among the modern libraries.

User's satisfaction and fulfillment of the information needs is very much important in the qualification management of all types of libraries. User is centered in each and every activity of today's libraries. TOM is one of the management concepts which were used initially to maintain the quality in products of industries. TOM is a new philosophy of management, which is also applicable to the modern libraries to enhance the quality of its overall working. TOM also emphasizes the need for top management commitment to quality improvement, a

reduction in processes and procedures, and the elimination of rework by doing the work right the first time. TQM in college libraries indicates the management of college libraries yielding qualitative services. TQM was extended to all service oriented institutions like year port, banking insurance and libraries. TQM was first originated in Japan, immediately after the 2nd world war. But the TQM approach received recognition in the other parts of the world only during the past two or three decades.

TQM is based on

- **One Objective:** Continuous Improvement
- **Three Principles:** Customer focus, process improvement and total involvement
- **Eight Key Elements:** Ethics, Integrity, Trust, Training, Teamwork, Leadership, Recognition and Communication.

Definitions of TQM

Following are some definitions of TQM.

Total Quality Management can be defined as "an organized scientific approach towards continuous improvement of quality involving everyone in the organization covering every function aimed towards total customer satisfaction". (Mukherjee, P. N. 2006).

TQM is a way to managing to improve the effectiveness, flexibility and competitiveness of a business. (Prof. John Oakland 1989).

British Standard BS 7850 which offers the following definition:

"Total Quality Management: Management philosophy and company practices that aim to harness the human and material resources of an organization in the most effective way to achieve the objectives of the organization.

Importance of TQM for Libraries

Being service-oriented organizations, libraries are struggling to give the best to their users. Due to wide range of user's demands and compare to limited resources best quality library services are difficult to manage. In this scenario TQM could be the advocate that causes librarians to examine issues such as leadership, staff empowerment, incentive programs, work simplification, innovation, and performance evaluation.

Library users can only describe quality by the characteristics of the service or product they encounter. Quality is what one needs and wants, not what you think is needed or what is convenient for you to deliver. From user perspective the criteria for judging satisfaction with a service can be a service is available at the moment it is needed, or the information supplied is exactly correct the service is of a high quality, and it is delivered by professional, well trained staff.

To enhance library services library might use the below mentioned ways based on principles of TQM:

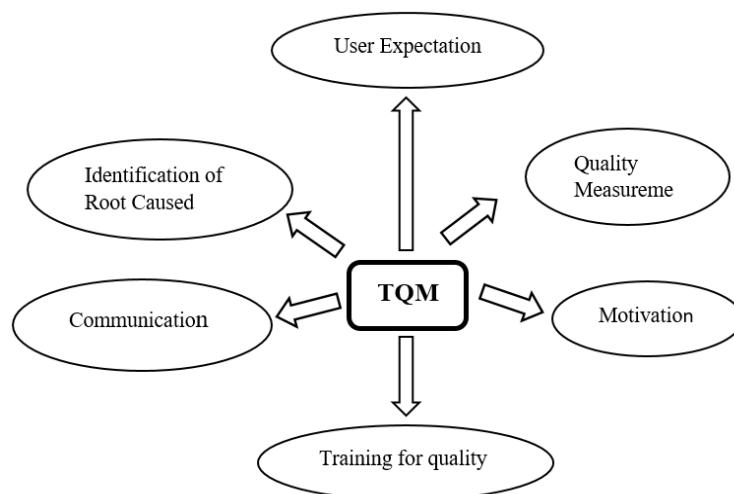
- Produce information service brochure and kits.
- Conduct a user survey about library services.

- 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 training to new staff a through orientation.

Specific Benefits of TQM for Libraries

1. TQM helps us to maintain qualitative library and Information services.
2. TQM helps us for assessing user's needs and expectations in an appropriate way.
3. TQM helps to libraries improve the image of the library staff and assists in public relation.
4. TQM helps for the development of the qualitative library collection
5. With the help of TQM any positive action can be taken with the use of commonsense general knowledge, public relation skill.

Elements of Total Quality Management: The philosophy of TQM is based on understanding customer needs and improving customer service and satisfaction. If the quality of product or service is as per the expectation of the customer than both organization and user will be satisfied and the whole impact will go the society. The main elements of TQM are as follows.



1. Focusing on User Expectations

Identification of user's expectations regarding any service is very important for rendering efficient and effective library and information service to user's community. While knowing the users expectation library activities should know the accountability availability and appearance of service offered by the library from user's point of view.

2. Developing a Quality Measurement System

This task is associated with funding measurement that will help to understand users dissatisfaction and productivity of library service while developing quality measurement system it is necessary to specify some quality standards so can the quality of service should be measured. Every library service should be properly analyses and then establish some standards for quality measurement.

3. Identification of Root Causes

User satisfaction negative feedback, conflicts in reading library service, problem in interaction with the users are some symptoms of poor quality. The real cause of this problem is usually hidden and difficult to identity. The real cause may be poor techniques insufficient training staff or poor management practice.

4. Developing a Communication System

Quality management is an information related management system. An efficient communication system is an important requirement for the functioning of quality management system. A good communication system must be developed that a give up to date information about users needs and expectations from various library services. There should be proper communication among users and library staff.

5. Employee Motivation

One of the most challenging questions facing every manager is how to motivate the employees. The role of employee is very much important in quality management. Allowing employees to be involved in the decision making process is one of the important ways to motivate them to work towards the quality improvement.

6. Training for Quality

Quality management is a new culture and a new way of thinking, so without education and training such changes of culture cannot be achieved. So necessary training and education are very important in the quality improvement process. More importantly all other library staff have to be educated to understand the importance of quality, user satisfaction.

Conclusion

In the present scenario of information technology, the requirements of the users are increasing unpredictably and in order to please them the quality of the services should be enhanced. This can be achieved only through the execution of Total Quality Management which empowers libraries to be more supple and reachable. Libraries are the service organizations devoted to their users. By following a strategic plan library managers can transform and upgrade their organization in order to effectively deal with the challenges of the 21st century. The conventional methods of providing services have now been replaced by ICT and seriously guided by total quality management tools and techniques. TQM plays very important role in Quality Management in the libraries. It helps in the growth of the proficiency of the library staff which deliver effective and efficient services to the users. The implementation of TQM needs endurance and patience as it is a laborious process. The course of execution Total Quality Management involves a conceptual transformation in library professionals and a cultural change in organizational processes. Teamwork is mandatory under healthy Leadership for the successful execution of Total Quality Management in Academic Libraries, periodic training should be given to the library staff in order to keep them acquainted with the information technology.

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