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# Total Quality Management (TQM) for Improving Quality Service in University Libraries: A Conceptual View

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# Total Quality Management (TQM) for Improving Quality Service in University Libraries: A Conceptual View

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*Abstract: Nowadays, libraries are passing challenging time in providing quality services for its users. Libraries are service organizations dedicated to their users and Quality management is the basis for library management in general. Libraries and librarians are required to demonstrate to top management of the university that they are getting a good return on their investments in the library. This paper highlights the importance of total quality management in university libraries, deals with TQM objectives, aims to focus on how they can provide better quality services to its users with limited resources in using TQM effective management tools and principles. As such, a conceptual view has been built for the utilization of TQM in university libraries.*

*Keywords: TQM, Library Management, Quality Services.*

**Introduction:**

Library is the heart of any educational institution. The purpose of university libraries are to support teaching, to research and to promote services for enhancing research and development ability. Each university library needs to provide correct, prompt and effective service. Libraries are committed to provide proper and high quality of services to its users at any moment. The goal of university libraries is to maintain a level of service quality and to satisfy readers at all times. Hence, it is necessary to determine the level of technical and reader services, as well as the measurement of service performance and service quality techniques to better understand readers and provide better services. In the past consuming more resources, buying more books and moving to large premises were considered as improving quality. But that approach is not valid today. One of the good solutions to improve quality is to provide right information to the right user at the right time. These require a thorough change in the approach –an approach based on user satisfaction. Libraries are service organizations dedicated to their users. By formulating a strategy plan, and following it with a commitment to continuous quality improvement, library managers can transform and improve their organizations.

TQM is the preferred method to increase the user satisfaction. It is believed that this can be achieved by implementing TQM. So, the tools and techniques of the total quality management can be applied to develop quality services in university libraries. The

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methods of TQM embody the management system of modern university libraries. TQM embodies certain values and approaches which are common and already established concepts in libraries. Nowadays library users demand faster and better service. The success of university libraries depend on delivering excellent service to its users. Total quality management system involves all employees and users for continuous improvement of all aspects of the organization and integrates the quality principles into the culture and activities of the organization. TQM emphasizes the fact that: "prevention is better than cure" constantly watch the problems and prevent them so that there would be no complaint from the user. To accomplish high quality service everyone needs to contribute to the process. TQM is a new management concept wherein quality in university libraries are the driving force of the entire activity cycle from beginning to end.
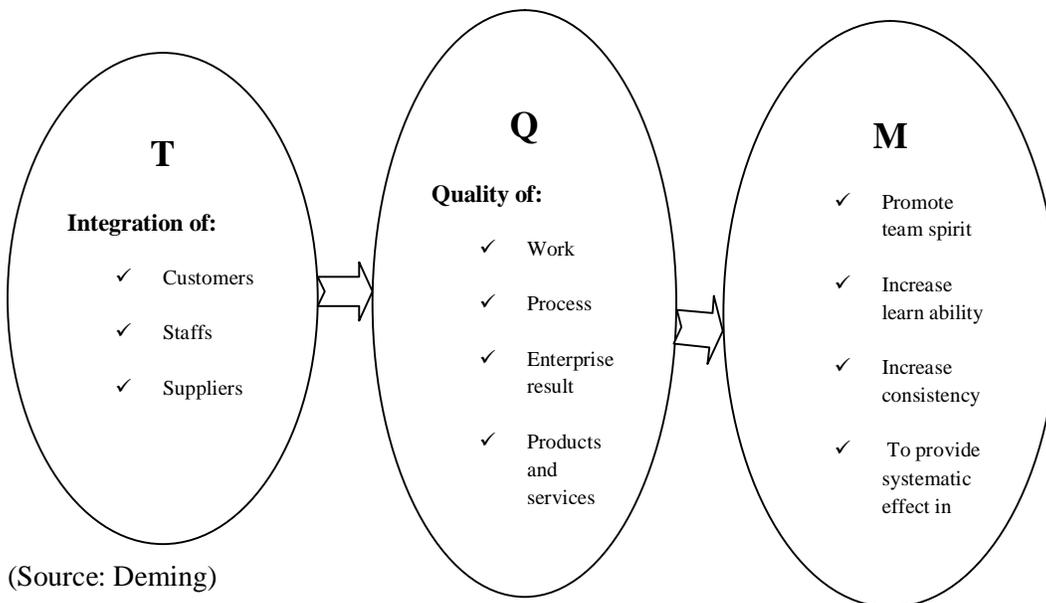
**TQM stands for:**

**T**otal: Made up of whole;
**Q**uality: Degree of excellence of a product or service
**M**anagement: Manage (art of manner of handling) + Men (users, staffs) +
T (Techniques)

In 1950s, the Japanese asked W. Edwards Deming and American statistician and management theorist rediscovered as(http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/total-quality-management/overview/overview.html):



**T**

**Integration of:**

✓ Customers

✓ Staffs

✓ Suppliers

**Q**

**Quality of:**

✓ Work

✓ Process

✓ Enterprise result

✓ Products and services

**M**

✓ Promote team spirit

✓ Increase learn ability

✓ Increase consistency

✓ To provide systematic effect in

(Source: Deming)

## Review of Related Literature

Review of literature plays a vital role and important unrefined materials for building up a total infrastructure of a specific subject area in any type of research study. To determine service quality for a library, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of library services. Einasto (2009) highlighted several features that are shown in the following:

i. Library services are shifting to the Web environment.

ii. It is getting difficult to predict what kind of library services will be requested in the future.

iii. The goal of a library is not to make a profit but to satisfy reader's needs for information.

iv. Libraries compete with other departments for gaining financial resources.

v. The financial support of an academic library would depend on the academic communities' satisfaction with library services.

vi. Library services do not have a measurable price; consequently, libraries can't be compared in price but in their service quality.

Feignbaum (1983) advocates that the development, maintenance and improvement of quality in any types of organization depend on satisfied customer.

Oackland (1989) says TQM is an approach to improve the effectiveness and flexibility of business completely. It is an essential way of putting the entire process in order at every level i.e. individual level, department level and organization level.

As advocated by Tobin (1990), TQM is the totally integrated effort for gaining competitive advantage by continuously improving every facet of the organizational culture.

According to Kanji and Tambi (1999), TQM is a process of continuously satisfying customer requirements at the lowest possible cost by harnessing the capabilities of everyone.

Landrum and Prybutok (2004) suggested three dimensions of service quality as the service environment, service performance, and service delivery or customer care.

According to Horowitz (1990), TQM is not a destination, but a journey towards improvement of the process.

Obaid and Esam (2012) conducted a study entitled application of TQM principles depend on the importance of some of the themes espoused by the total quality management in the libraries and information centers. The awareness of importance of the application of the standards and specifications that urges the quality and work to develop special programs for each of the types of institutions, information and training of all employees of such institutions on the various sections and departments that are closely associated in the development of the work of libraries and information centers.

The aim of this literature is to develop the readers' service quality requirements to link up with improvement techniques as the primary reference sources for university libraries through implementation of the tools and techniques of total quality management.

## Objectives of the study:

The study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

i)To assess use of the TQM by the readers of the University Library ;

ii)To examine whether quality services for the users of the library can be arranged through implementing TQM;

iii)To build some concepts for successful implementation of TQM in the Library .

## Research Methodology

The study covers working library professionals in the university libraries. TQM system examines the approach, deployment and outcome of results from this mainstream in the libraries (service, process, leaders and commitment). The study deals with secondary sources. It is a qualitative research. The study mainly deals with forming a conceptual view. Exact source from books, journal articles will be mentioned. Time period of the study is from December 2014 to March, 2015.

## Pillars of TQM in Libraries

Creech (1994) listed five pillars of TQM that provides a strong foundation for TQM managed organizations. This can become the focus of improvement in technical and vocational education for their transformation. The five pillars are:

1. Product (Service)
2. Process (Library materials process)
3. Organization (University libraries)
4. Leadership (Lead by the librarians)
5. Commitment ( Provide proper services)

As an explanation of the five pillars, the product (service) is the focal point for organization purpose and achievement. Quality in the product (service) is impossible without quality in the process. The right organization is meaningless without the proper leadership. Strong, bottom-up commitment is the support for all the rest. Each pillar depends upon the other four, and if one is weak all are weak.

## Applicability of TQM

The overall applicability of the Total Quality Management is to satisfy customers /users through its quality of services. To achieve this, the information professional should keep in mind the following steps to the delivery of information products and services:

(a)    Consider from the point of view of users (potential, or actual),

(b)     Provide information products or services according to the users' needs,

(c)     Satisfy an unhappy user, put special effort to make him a friendly and regular user,

(d)     Always treat the user well to ensure his remaining a user for a long time, and

(e)     The whole process by which create and deliver information or services must support the creation of user satisfaction and loyalty.

**Benefits of TQM in University Libraries**

Since TQM approach identifies the key processes and the key quality characteristics, conduct training for the departmental functionaries in quality improvement tools and techniques, and focuses on removing variations in both special causes and common causes to improve the level of performance and to make the processes error-free, it ensures spontaneous augmentation in the degree of involvement of all the functionaries. (Pradhan, Sribatsa, 2012).

➢ Incremental changes lead to continuous improvement, quick solutions may yield only partial results

➢ Provides a method of improving services to users in a period to similar resources

➢ It helps break down barriers between library departments and improves communication within the organization

➢ It improves the level of training given to staff thus increasing skills

➢ Increases staff participation in decision making, thus increasing the feeling of ownership of decisions and directions once charted

➢ Forces library managers to develop leadership skills interested in replaying power to obtain results.

**Principles of TQM in University Libraries**

The Principles of TQM are as follows:

1. Quality can and must be managed.
2. Everyone has a customer and is a supplier.
3. Processes, not people are the problem.
4. Every employee is responsible for quality.
5. Problems must be prevented, not just fixed.
6. Quality must be prevented, not just fixed.
7. Quality must be measured.
8. Quality improvements must be continuous.
9. The quality standard is defect free.

10. Goals are based on requirements, not negotiated.

11. Life cycle costs, not front end costs.

12. Management must be involved and lead.

13. Plan and organize for quality improvement.

**TQM in University Libraries**

TQM has proved very effective in the manufacturing and business environment and it will be profitable if the library profession also rises to the occasion and ponders over the processes and services where TQM can gainfully applied in research oriented libraries. It has been put forward by the proponents of TQM that their principles also hold good for any educational and governmental agencies. Those organizations which intend to achieve excellence in their performance and take pleasure in satisfying their customers will do well in adopting them. In most of the libraries, people are engaged in establishing and restructuring the routines, creating job descriptions, acquiring and organizing materials and doing odd jobs which do not contribute to the information functions.

Many libraries have implemented TQM successfully as Harvard college library created a task force which rewrote the library's statement, and considered changes that would have to be made to order to develop a new organization culture, one that "highlights the changing nature of staff and responsibilities in an era of pervasive change" (Clark 93').

Sirkin (1993) suggests some ways a library might use the principles of TQM to enhance library services:

- ✓ Create services brochures and information kits
- ✓ Conduct a user survey about library services
- ✓ Change hours of operation
- ✓ Provide a more convenient material return
- ✓ Simplify checkout of materials
- ✓ Use flexibility in staff assignment
- ✓ Ask vendors to give product demonstrations
- ✓ Give new staff a thorough orientation
- ✓ Create interdepartmental library advisory groups
- ✓ Improve the physical layout of the library
- ✓ Track complaints
- ✓ Develop an active outreach program
- ✓ Publicize new or changed services
- ✓ Develop user and staff training materials
- ✓ Target services to specific group
- ✓ Offer electronic document delivery
- ✓ Follow the library rules and regulations

## Significance of TQM in University Libraries

Libraries are among the most ancient social and cultural institutions in existence. Ancient libraries as well as modern ones have one thing in common: all of them have a body of information recorded on some type of medium and that information could be retrieved when needed. The accessibility of information requires good organizational ability from those who are in charge. The basic concern is to create a structure of the organization where desired information is retrieved and made accessible efficiently and in a timely manner to the users. Creation and maintenance of such a structure requires an effective management process that facilitates work toward that goal.

Over many centuries libraries have adopted many different management principles from business, industry, religion, and government. A library is a business that must be operated efficiently and well. A major difference is that most libraries are non-profit organizations. Management of vast amounts of information stored in different formats - printed, electronic, audio, video - requires use of the most modern management techniques.

Today technologies have changed our social and economic life. In the workplace methodologies change; people work at home or on the web with flexible timetables, and more and more virtual communities are emerging in different fields. The most important stakeholders in the library are customers, the providers of subsidies, staff, and other libraries. These stakeholders are interested, for various reasons, in the introduction of TQM. The introduction of TQM makes great demands on the staff. The following factors in particular need to be taken into account:

1. TQM involves a process of change and therefore requires of staff that they be ready to play a constructive role in that process.

2. TQM requires a basic reorientation from the media stock towards customers and markets. For TQM a result-oriented approach, not the input of resources, is of vital importance.

3. A strongly hierarchical organization with fragmented responsibilities is not well suited to the introduction of TQM since all staff needs to feel a responsibility for influencing quality.

4. The effort necessary for implementing TQM is at the same time rewarding for both staff and the institution: improvement of the institution in which they work a strengthening of that institution's position, and more opportunity of staff to influence their own work (Klaassen & Wiersma,2004).

The management of quality in libraries, a management method that allows the improvement of performance, has been the object of interest for the managers of these services. In this context, the identification of indicators that may take into account the social-economical and political context that permeate the reality of the information services is essential to better adequate the quality proposals.

**Quality Component of Library Services**

The library committee consisting of the Vice Chancellor as the Chairman, Pro -Vice Chancellor as the Vice-Chairman and all Heads / Deans of faculties as members, with Librarian as member secretary, meets once in four months to review the progress and problems in the library.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee the library conducted surveys on the use of books, journals and documentation reports by the counselors, learners at the Study Centre Libraries. Study revealed certain important points for consideration. These include:-

1. Lack of sufficient infrastructure for maintaining libraries at the Study Centers

2. Irregularities in the receipt of journals at the Study Centers

3. Good use of books / journals and documentation reports by the users and the learners.

Considering the difficulties, library committee has recommended for improvement of infrastructure for libraries at Study Centers and withholding subscription of books temporarily for the Study Centers. Journals for Study Centers are subscribed to improve course material, etc as well as quality research. Only then, it is possible to achieve Total Quality Management of the University, which helps it to achieve its motto of `Quality Education at doorstep'.

**Barriers to the adoption of TQM in University Libraries**

Though the advantage of adopting TQM in libraries is well acclaimed yet there are certain barriers to the understanding and acceptances of TQM in the libraries. These are: (a) Vocabulary barriers (b) Commitment barriers, and (c) Professional barriers, etc.

(a) **Vocabulary Barriers**: TQM uses a vocabulary which belongs to the discipline of publishers and libraries. Use of terms such as quality management, quality improvement, customer's satisfaction, etc. has drawn objections from the academic environments.

(b) **Commitment Barriers**: Adoption to TQM in libraries is a time consuming process as new areas have to be discovered and new models have to be developed for effecting total quality in various library operations. A considerable amount of time goes in leadership planning, understanding the customers, identifying the products and services to be improved and acquiring skills and training in implementing the plan.

(c) **Professional Barriers**: Information providers are averse to certain elements of TQM, its focus on information seekers. Library professionals have not taken kindly to the notion of submitting their services and practices which are based on sound tradition and standards to the whims and fancies of the not so informed users.

**Conclusion and Implications**: University libraries are perfect place to implement Total Quality Management (TQM). They are service organizations dedicated to their customers/users. By formulation a strategic plan, and following it with a commitment to continuous quality improvement, librarians can transform and improve their organizations. It is well known that TQM is a management method, which libraries can benefit from in several ways. Quality can be described right time as well as doing it right the first time and doing it right each time. It requires continuous improvement. In this context of the library, it can be described as:-**Q**– Quest for excellence of knowledge;**U**– Understanding the user's demand;**A**- Actions to achieve user's demand;**L**– Leadership quality for librarian;**I** – Involving all staffs;**T**– Team spirit for achieving common goal;**Y**– Yardstick to measure progress. For the effective utilization of the university libraries, TQM should be properly utilized so that quality of the services towards readers of the library can be attained.

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