

Application of Total Quality Management Approaches in the Academic Libraries of Public Sector Universities

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Abstract:

This study tried to examine what quality means in academic libraries across the public organizations and what were the provisions in public sector for the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) approaches. Two aspects from TQM approaches including unwavering focus on user and continuous improvement in organization were selected covering access and appearance, atmosphere, resources, and services in public sector academic libraries. Research evolved indicators of quality for libraries of public sector universities, and then judged those indicators on the approaches of TQM. The population of research study was the librarians, faculty members and researchers from academic libraries particularly in public sector universities. For this descriptive type of research, tools were check list and questionnaire. Data analysis reflected that all respondents agreed that user was a prime focus in libraries, but on the aspect of continuous improvement of library, they all consented that this aspect requires a positive re-fix. Recommendations drawn were that there may be a focus on library user to meet his demands through continuous improvement of different aspects of libraries keeping in view the quality indicators to bring academic libraries up to the standards of Total Quality Management.

Key words: TQM, Library, unwavering focus, application, continuous improvement, indicators

Introduction

A good, well-resourced library is a warehouse for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual advancement and elevation of the people of a society. It is a vital element of the absolute well-being of the citizens and that of the nation at large. People acquire education through certain institutions, schools, agencies, welfare bodies, museums, and organizations, and library is the most outstanding of such institution! A school, a college, and any university of a society can never alone impart education; each of them is dependent upon a library—a centre of wholesome education for concrete and ultimate knowledge.

An academic library is an entity in any academic institution that provides an organized compilation of printed and other material, a staff trained to provide and interpret such material as required to meet the demands of user for his educational work (Carey and Williams from instruction section of Academic Library Survey of IPEDS 2003). In relation to research, libraries gather the information as per interest of university faculty and researchers who are using library. Libraries make sure that the resources required for research are identified regardless of location and their access is facilitated to the user.

In academic libraries Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high plans, sincere endeavors, intelligent direction, and skillful execution, along with many choices of alternatives (Foster 2006). Generally, the service quality of an academic library has been described in terms of its collections, its size and various service contents. The development of traditional orientation, to focus on collection, is no longer adequate to satisfy readers in the present era. One of the ways to improve quality is to provide right information to a right user

at right time. This requires a thorough change in the approach – an approach based on user requirements and user satisfaction. Management science has supplied many principles for effective implementation of plan of action and getting maximum benefit by utilizing minimum resources in order to achieve the quality and meeting the international standards of higher education. Among all the management principles, total quality management (TQM) is recognized as an important management philosophy because it has been used very successfully in the development of systems (Winn and Green 1998).

Review of Related Literature

Quality in higher education is a multidimensional thought, which includes different roles in an institution. So, any structure of judgment for quality should consider the quality of teachers, infrastructure provided to students, student support services, curricula assessment and resources (Isani and Virk 2005). Library has a unique role in obtaining mission of university by providing access to the selected portions of global intellect through services (Kavulya et al. 2004). Total quality management is a set of tools, and process which brings customer satisfaction and continuous improvement of quality education. Aune (1998, 8) defines TQM as the management approach of an organization centered on quality, based on the participation of all its members and aiming at long term success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the organization and to society. Total quality management offers both a process and a system to produce dynamic change in organizations.

Basic Laws or Approaches of TQM

TQM requires following approaches to be implemented in

library services:

- A committed and involved management to provide long term top-to-bottom organizational support.
- An unwavering focuses on the customer both internally and externally.
- Effective involvement and utilization of the entire work force.
- Continuous improvement of the business and production process. (Khera & Sharma 2012)

These concepts outline an excellent way to run an organization. Key aspects of TQM approaches taken for library in this study are:

1. Unwavering focus on user of the library
2. Continuous improvement of libraries.

An Unwavering Focus on the User

User listening is a continuous process, but in many respects, it is usually not well interpreted in many organizations. Users may be internal or external, depending on whether they are located within or outside the organization. (Kanji et al. 1999; Chang 2002; Cole 2002). Managing quality in a service organization like an academic library, customer satisfaction means fulfilling expectations. Librarians must find out what readers want and concentrate upon providing it. Designing an appropriate service means asking,

- Who are the customers?
- What do they want?
- What can the organization provide? (Siraj u Nisa 2003)

The focus on the users will improve the organization's image. Quality begins and ends with the user-to build a real quality advantage everyone in the organization must learn to know the user. First last and always the user focus is the indicator of quality.

Continuous Improvement of the Library

The second pillar of TQM applied to library is the total dedication to continuous improvement, personally and collectively (Dongre 2012). Several authors suggest that continuous improvement in library can play a major role in the success or failure of organizational change programmes in general and those involving TQM in particular (Hendricks & Triplett 1989; Kanji 1998; Easton & Jarrell 1998; Davidson et al. 2000; Sinclair & Zairi 2001). TQM is "a system of continuous improvement employing participative management and centered on the needs of customers" (Jurow & Barnard 1993). The continuous improvement cycle in library consists of establishing user requirements, meeting the requirements, measuring success, and continuing to check users' requirements to find areas in which improvements can be made (Dongre 2012).

Quality Pursuits of Higher Education Commission in Pakistan

Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept, which includes all the related functions and activities that form part of the academic life in a university system. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan has a view to guide higher education policy and to assist universities and degree awarding institutes in the pursuit of quality education at the seat of higher learning, both public and private. Its objective is to work with the academic community for qualitative and quantitative improvement of higher education and to aid in the socioeconomic development of Pakistan. In the National Education Policy of Pakistan (1998-2010), the problem of quality education is analyzed and it is suggested that:

quality of higher education shall be improved through measures, such as, academic , revision of curricula, strengthening the libraries and laboratories, liberal grants,

institutional capacity building, staff development, resource allocation, research funding, improvement of infrastructure and better students support services in the institutions of higher education.

Realizing the issues of quality, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) were established in the public sector universities for improvement of their academic, teaching and learning standards (HEC, 2010). But even the missions, objectives and future plans of public sector universities do not reflect any improvement in access, appearance, atmosphere, services, resources and management of libraries.

Rationale of the Study

Pakistan needs very significant improvement in the quality of higher education and considerable enhancement of its capacity. The importance of higher education for the state has become a crucial asset. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan though established QEC and even set standards of quality for public and private institutions, but quality indicator for libraries were not established. Keeping in view the gap in the existing conditions, present study was designed.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. To examine the application of TQM approaches in the libraries of public sector universities.
2. To analyze the perceptions of librarians about application of TQM approaches in the libraries of public sector universities.
3. To explore the views of users of libraries about application of TQM approaches in the libraries of public

sector universities.

Research Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature. Research population comprised of Librarians of central and departmental libraries of a public sector universities offering research, faculty members of public sector universities and researchers currently enrolled in different programs of universities. 20 librarians, 44 faculty members and 44 research scholars were the total sample of study. It was convenient sample in nature. Based upon literature review, the framework having two approaches is developed for the study. These two approaches can be measured with the help of a check list and a questionnaire designed as instrument of data collection. Data was collected personally through visits to these universities in different times. In context of the social-economical and political conditions in Pakistan the identification of indicators is done.

Keeping in view the TQM approaches the following indicators were established:

S#.	TQM Approaches	Performance Indicators	
1	Unwavering focus on user	1.1 Physical Space	1.7 Collaboration.
		1.2 Easy access	1.8 User-centered service
		1.3 Conducive atmosphere	1.9 Access to collections Printed, non printed
		1.4 Physical atmosphere	1.10 Diversity
		1.5 Intellectual freedom, rights	1.11 Currency to support the Research
		1.6 User privacy confidentiality	1.12 Maximum opening hours
2	Continuous improvement in library	2.1 Updating with recent trends	2.4 Continuous access to periodicals (5/week)
		2.2 New services (CAS, SDI)	2.5 Continuous access to leading

newspapers (at least 10/day)

2.3 IT infra-structure

2.6 Access to Digital library and downloading

Table: TQM indicators for Libraries of public sector universities

Source: Standards for libraries by Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), 2011& HEC Affiliation criteria for degree awarding institutions.

Data Analysis

The analysis of check list was carried out by using percentage and for questionnaire mean score was calculated. Percentage and mean were calculated by using MS Excel.

Tables & Findings of Research

The main findings can be summarized as follows:

An Unwavering Focus on the User

Statement	Yes	No
In order to provide the best possible access to library service, library remains open for 24 hours.	5%	95%
Library building is clearly identified by exterior signs	90%	10%
The library is accessible for all users, minimizing barriers for users with physical limitations and disabilities.	85%	15%
Library has sufficient furniture for users.	95%	5%
Library books reserve is sufficient to meet the needs of all the students.	40%	60%
Library resources are sufficient to meet the needs of all students.	60%	40%
Reference desk is fully equipped with current books.	40%	60%
Circulation service of library is very quick	90%	10%
Library acquires books on demand of students/teachers.	95%	5%
Queries of students are answered promptly.	100%	0%
Library has sufficient computers for students and staff.	35%	65%
Total	66.8%	33.1%

Table 1.1 Responses of Checklist from librarians regarding Application of TQM in the Libraries of Public Sector Universities

Statement	Disagreement	Agreement	Mean
Library remains open for 24 hours.	85.2%	14.7%	1.8
The library is accessible for all users, even with disabilities.	48.8%	51.1%	3
The library provides silent study atmosphere.	17.0%	84.0%	4.2
The Library provides individual desk space for study.	39.7%	60.2%	3.3
Interior atmosphere of library has comfortable temperature.	61.3%	38.6%	2.9
The lighting level of different areas of library is appropriate.	19.3%	80.6%	3.9
The physical area of the library is organized for convenient use of all users.	44.3%	55.6%	3.2
Library provides comfortable furniture for ease of all type of users.	23.8%	76.1%	3.9
Library book displays are prominent.	6.81%	93.1%	4.2
Library books reserve is sufficient to meet the needs of all the students.	51.1%	48.8%	3.1
Reference desk is fully equipped with current books.	61.3%	37.5%	2.7
Circulation service of library is very quick.	37.5%	62.5%	3.3
Library acquires books on demand of students/teachers.	54.5%	45.4%	2.7
Library has sufficient computers for students and staff.	57.9%	42.0%	2.6
Total	40.6%	52.6%	3.24

Table 1.2 Responses of questionnaire from users regarding Application of TQM in the Libraries of Public Sector Universities

Research data of check list for the component unwavering focus on user indicated that majority (66.81%) of the respondents agreed that user is a prime focus in libraries of public sector universities. Research data of Questionnaire for the component unwavering focus on user indicated that mean score of the responses was 3.24. Calculated mean score exhibited the response towards agreement that user is a prime focus in libraries of public sector universities.

Continuous Improvement of the Library

Statement	Yes	No
Library updates its collection frequently.	80%	20%
Library is fully automated.	20%	80%
Library has Wi-Fi Facility.	25%	75%
HEC Digital library access is provided to the user.	35%	65%
Facility for online downloading is provided to students.	10%	90%
Library offers resource sharing facility.	15%	85%
Library provides Current Awareness Service (CAS) to its users.	5%	95%
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services are part of library services.	10%	90%
Library receives appropriate budget to manage financial needs.	25%	75%
Library keeps a suggestion box/ register for users.	25%	75%
Total	22.7%	68.1%

Table 2.1 Responses of Checklist from librarians regarding Application of TQM in the Libraries of Public Sector Universities

Statement	Disagreement	Agreement	Mean
Library updates its collection frequently.	38.6%	63.3%	3.1
Library is fully automated.	77.2%	22.7%	2.2
Library has Wi-Fi Facility.	72.7%	27.2%	2.2
HEC Digital library access is provided to the user.	58.1%	41.8%	2.9
Facility for online downloading is provided to students.	57.9%	42.0%	2.7
Library offers resource sharing facility.	69.3%	30.6%	2.2
Library provides Current Awareness Service (CAS) to its users.	62.5%	38.6%	2.5
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services are part of library services.	65.9%	35.2%	2.3
Total	61.9%	38.3%	2.5

Table 2.2 Responses of questionnaire from users regarding Application of TQM in the Libraries of Public Sector Universities

Research data of check list for the component continuous improvement is provided to the libraries of public sector universities indicated that 74.21% librarians disagreed that library receives continuous improvement in public sector universities while 25.78% agreed with this.

Research data of questionnaire for the component continuous improvement is provided to the libraries of public

sector universities indicated that mean score obtained is 2.5 which fall in the range of disagreement. It was found that users disagreed that library receives continuous improvement in public sector universities.

Discussion

Data analysis and findings reveal that the achievement of user satisfaction by providing him/her an unwavering focus is one of the important aims of TQM approaches. It is also one of the critical success factors for implementation of TQM approaches in the libraries of public sector universities. According to the analysis of first component of check list and questionnaire, the responses showed that there is a tendency towards unwavering focus on user of libraries in public sector. Less disagreement from users suggests that their requirements are met. Hence libraries of public sector universities have positively adopted the procedure of customer satisfaction though the level is not up to the mark but the direction is accurate.

The core issue that distinguishes the philosophy of TQM approaches from other quality system philosophies is a continuous improvement strategy, meaning that the improvement processes in any of the organization's activities never ends. The researcher observed that the adoption of a continuous improvement strategy needs a successful implementation of the quality system and then proceeding to further improve it. According to the analysis of second component of check list and questionnaire, the responses showed that there are fewer tendencies towards continuous improvement of libraries of public sector universities. Strong disagreement from librarians and users suggests that their requirements are not met. Hence libraries of public sector universities have not adopted the process of continuous improvement.

Recommendations

On the basis of the literature and the empirical study in the process of “Application of Total Quality Management approaches in the libraries of public sector universities, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

- i- At international level, libraries remain open 24 hours to facilitate students, faculty members and researchers so that they can meet their needs at any time. It is therefore recommended that libraries in the public sector universities in Pakistan may provide services 24 hours without any break. Libraries with these services as a part of TQM culture may become a centre of facilitation for library users.
- ii- Library needs an atmosphere that is conducive for mental recreation and innovation. Research work demands peace of mind and full concentration on the issue. It is therefore recommended that accessories to regulate the internal atmosphere may be installed to provide user an atmosphere conducive for creativity and research.
- iii- A well-stocked and well updated library fills the appetite of researchers. Shortage of subject related books and reference books put a full stop in journey of research. It is therefore recommended that there may be quick acquisition of quality books.
- iv- Libraries update their collection but books are not acquired on demand/ need of researchers and faculty members. Their suggestion may be helpful in acquisition of more focused, particular and demand based books. Therefore it is recommended that books in public sector libraries may be acquired on demand of researchers/ faculty members.
- v- Reference services need regular updating of current books, new journals, periodicals and newspapers.

Public sector libraries may be equipped with new volumes and other recent updating.

- vi- Full automation of libraries is the part of TQM continuous improvement culture. Students are given access to online downloading in the pursuit of related material of research and electronic libraries help them search their concerned material from all the web sources. It is hence suggested that automation of library, increase in number of computers, access to HEC digital library and online down loading facility may be provided to the users to help them in research work.
- vii- At international levels in libraries where TQM culture is followed, relatively new and recent concepts of library services are in use. Resource sharing facility, current awareness service (CAS) and selected dissemination of information (SDI) services are the part and parcel of library facilitation for users. Thus it is recommended that if these new and recent concepts of library services may be provided to the users it may not only keep them updated but may also save the time of researcher from being filtering the data of his/her interest from all new updates.
- viii- Budgetary provisions hamper progress of public sector libraries towards implementing TQM in all aspects of libraries. Therefore it is recommended that there may be appropriate allocation of funds with its timely provision for libraries in public sector universities.
- ix- Last but not the least the study manifests that libraries are not at par with international standards. There is lack of necessary basic facilities. It is therefore recommended that quality assurance cells may devise strategy and plans with in libraries of public sector universities that these remain fully equipped

with latest books, research journals and periodicals to quench the students' academic thirst. There may be a quality check and balance system especially for libraries as per international rules to make public sector libraries a place where Total quality is managed in all aspects.

Conclusion

From the review of studies already conducted by Begum (Nisa 2003) TQM in Academic Libraries, Dongre (Sudesh N. 2012) Total Quality Management In Library, Jayamalini (1999) An Overview of TQM in Libraries, Chang (H.H.2005) The Influence of Continuous Improvement and Performance Factors in Total Quality Organization, Saroja (G) & Sujatha (G) in Application Of Total Quality Management To Library And Information Services In Indian Open Universities and Sharma (N.S) and Khera (D) 2012 in TQM - An overview of TQM in libraries and the existing conditions of quality improvement actions in libraries, it is manifested that Libraries are apt places to implement TQM being educational service organizations and many benefits can be taken from this approach if implemented in its true spirit. Many libraries are practicing quality in the form of Quality Assurance, Continuous Quality Improvement, User Satisfaction, etc. but still there is a room for improvement in the implementation of TQM approaches in higher education institutes in Pakistan.

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