

Quality Management in Libraries: An Outline

Chitra Sharma

Librarian, Hindu Girls College, Jagadhri, Haryana, India

Abstract: Quality issues have always been quite challenging in service sector like library and in this context, derived from industrial applications, modern quality techniques can be extensively adapted and experimented within edification. Quality techniques are philosophies intended at nonstop perfection of routine of diverse characteristics related to customer fulfillment. A library is part of once-over organization which delivers products face-to-face to the client. Libraries have always been committed to give a high value of services to its users. A library needs together to convince its users and to confirm to its grant organization that it is significance asset. The librarians must manage staff, information in several supports, and technical activities to produce quality services. With this in mind, the present work has attempted to explore some aspects of quality aspects in relation to library science in India.

1. Introduction

In industrialized concern, the client is distant, where as in service organization like an library, maker and user meet face to face. Quality issues have always been quite challenging in service sector like library (Fitch et al., 1993). With this, increasing potential of users for enhanced services have forced libraries to sight quality as an effective means of incorporating quality upgrading into their related services. Effectively implementing value practice in libraries requires an understanding of applying appropriate quality techniques. Libraries have always been committed to provide a high quality of services to its users (Anderson and Zwelling, 1996). One of the good solutions to improve quality is to provide right information to a correct user at accurate time. This requires a through change in the approach – an approach based on user requirements and user satisfaction. From the perspective of library services, adopting quality programs increases the effectiveness of the library and satisfies increasingly higher customer expectations and it is believed that this can be achieved by implementing any quality techniques. Well implementing quality management in libraries and in order services requires an understanding of the following:

- The sole individuality of library action
- The environment of contact among librarians and clients
- The creation of suggestions on the application of proper quality running concepts and techniques.

2. History and Origins of Quality

The word 'Quality' has been derived from the Latin word 'quails', meaning 'what kind of'. However, it is a difficult and elusive term to define, as it has a wide variety of meanings and connotations to different people. Berry et al., (1990) explain that, 'quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs'. The concept of quality can be traced back to ancient times. Significant discussions about quality or good practice were initiated by Socrates, Plato and other Greek philosophers. The ideal to the Greeks was *aretê* or excellence. The quality movement could be said to have originated in medieval Europe where craftsmen began organizing into unions called guilds in the late thirteenth century. These guilds were responsible for developing strict rules for product and service quality. Until the early nineteenth century, manufacturing in the industrial world followed this craftsmanship model. A division of craftsmen's trades occurred in Great Britain in the 1750's which resulted in the factory system which eventually developed into the Industrial Revolution in the early 1800's. This divided the craftsmen's trades into specialised tasks and forced craftsmen to become factory workers. Inspection became the guarantee of quality and became a separate job to the manufacture of the product with the onset of Taylorism in the early part of the twentieth century.

From the 1920's some manufacturers began to include quality processes as part of their manufacturing cycle and the emphasis began to change from inspection to quality control. World War II brought increased recognition of quality in manufacturing industries and military applications. A quality revolution in Japan followed World War II: the Japanese began applying the lessons learned in producing military goods produced for export. Quality stalwarts W. Edwards Deming and Joseph M. Juran lectured extensively in Japan. As a result, the Japanese became leaders in quality by the 1970s. Japanese manufacturers began increasing their share in American markets, resulting in widespread economic effects in the United States.

The U.S. response emphasized not only statistics but approaches that embraced the entire organization – a movement that became known as Total Quality Management. Several other quality initiatives followed. The ISO 9000 quality system standards were published in 1987. The Baldrige National Quality Program and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award were established by the U.S. Congress in the same year.

3. Concept of Quality

With a variety of meanings and connotations attached to it, 'Quality' is a difficult and elusive term to define, having thus been referred to as a 'slippery concept'. It is slippery because it has a wide variety of meanings. The word implies different things to different people. Much confusion over the meaning of quality exists, because it can be used both as an absolute concept to convey status and positional advantage and as relative concept when measuring against a specification (Smith, 1993).

The following are some of the most common definitions of quality.

- Quality is fitness for use. - Smith (1993).
- Quality is conformance to requirements. – Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003)
- Quality is a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and suited to the market. – Reeves and Bednar (1994)
- Quality is in its essence a way of managing an organisation. – Ellis (1993)
- Quality is meeting customer requirements. – Engelkemeyer (1993)
- Quality is a system of means to economically produce goods or services, which satisfy customer requirements.

Adamantidou and Kouri (2000) categories definitions of quality under the following headings:

- Excellence
- Value
- Conformance to specifications

From the conceptual point of view, definitions of quality can be categorized as either philosophical or operational (Anaba 2001). At last, the roots of quality definitions can be divided into four categories, namely:

- Quality is excellence.
- Quality is value.
- Quality is conformance to specifications.
- Quality is meeting and exceeding customer expectations.

4. Facets of Quality Management in Library

The more recent years have seen newer supervision concepts introduced and applied in many university libraries. This indicates that today's libraries, under the demands for change, are adopting approaches from external librarianship. However, while other business marketing trends have influenced library management, quality management (QM) is not as much mentioned as before. "Sirkin" suggests some ways a library might use the principles of total quality management (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.
- ◆ Follow the mission statement.

Quality is the basic philosophy and requirement of library service and all libraries strive to deliver the highest quality of service (Golnessa and Mostafa, 2008). A quality service is one that fully meets the expectations and requirements of the users (Harvey and Green, 1993). Quality library services mean satisfying the query of each and every user accurately, exhaustively and expeditiously (Hong, 2006). Jayamalini (1999) defines that a quality service in library is said to be one, which satisfy the users' expectation resulting a good experience. Jyotirmoy (2008), defines quality as a set of characteristics of a library system that makes it able to satisfy the needs of the users. Lidia and Marzena (2005) stressed that several major features of total quality management (TQM) are highly relevant for libraries, such as:

- the emphasis on customers
- the delegation of work
- the involvement of staff at all levels
- process rather than function

Jyotirmoy (2008) described that TQM was initially applied as a management philosophy in the manufacturing sector. Following its enormous success, this philosophy is increasingly being applied in the service sector, including libraries. Siraj Nissa Begum (2003) described Total Quality Management is a management approach centered on quality, based on the participation of an organization and aiming at long term success. This is achieved through customer satisfaction and benefits of all members of the organization and society. Pao-nuan et al. (2000), explain that Quality in library service has become an important aspect of today's most competitive time. Quality, though, important in any process, but in libraries it is drawing attention of management, users and staff altogether because of the pressure of growing technologies, expectation of users, high maintenance costs, increasing information resources cost, and reducing budget.

5. Libraries Should Adopt QM

Libraries wanting to continuously improve their service quality and completely satisfy customers must create a customer oriented culture in their organization. It is the quality of library services that decides on the perception of the library within its parent institution and the society. The most important stakeholders in the library are customers, providers of subsidies, staff and other libraries. Quality library services mean satisfying the query of each and every user accurately, exhaustively and expeditiously. These stakeholders are interested for various reasons, in the introduction of QM. The introduction of QM makes great demands on the staff. The following factors in particular need to be taken into account.

- QM involves a course of alter and then involve of staff that they be ready to take part in a constructive role in that process.
- A strongly hierarchical organization with fragmented responsibilities is not well suited to the introduction of QM since all staff needs to feel a responsibility for influencing quality.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the literature review of quality management systems and its relevance to libraries. From the review of the current status of quality improvement activities in libraries, it is very necessary for librarian to understand the users, what they want, how they want, and when they want the documents and information. QM implementation requires patience and tolerance as it is a time-consuming process and of course, it is not easy to change an organization. Consequently, accomplishment of QM is not a certification of the peak quality but it is a stair in the accurate track.

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