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# **Total Quality Management in Academic Perspective: An Overview**

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## **Abstract**

Management is considered as the indispensable institution in the modern social organization marked by scientific thought and technological innovations. It (management) is essential in one or the other form, wherever human efforts are to be undertaken collectively to satisfy needs through some productive activity, occupation or profession. Even, without the leadership provided by management, the resources of production remain resources and never become production. Although Total Quality Management (TQM) was initially applied as a management philosophy in the industrialized sector. But due to its success, this idea increasingly being applied in the service sector, including libraries. In order to be equipped with quality that helps in attaining the objective of institution. As quality has become one of the primary elements in global competition today. This paper attempts to present an overview of total quality management (TQM) in the library and information sectors. Besides this, study aims to highlight the possible ways of continuous improvements and challenges encountered by the organizations (institutions).

**Keywords:** Management, Quality, Education, Libraries, Challenges.

## **Introduction**

In the present era of information technology the art of management has become part and parcel of everyday life, be it at home, in the office or factory. As a result regarded as a significant development of modern times. As it (management) is an organized group activity to attain the possible ways of organizing, controlling, planning, directing to achieve certain goals especially in higher education which is important for social and economic developments of society (**Brennan & Teichler, 2008**). Although it (education) is the responsibility of the government and should be managed through national resources (**Rahman & Uddin, 2009**). That should work for better quality, will result in cost reduction and shorter delivery time to make users understand quality needs to be thoroughly managed. Thus enhancing service performance to customers. Apart from this, total quality Management (TQM) has emerged as a predominant business issue

over the past few years that has made possible achievements of modern management. In order to get more effective management of economic and social institutions that can improve the quality of life. Infact **Oakland (1989)** defined total quality management (TQM) as an approach that improves the effectiveness and flexibility of dealing as a whole. It is basically a way of organizing and involving t the whole organization; every department, every activity, every single person at every level. Even though TQM provides the overall notion that fosters continuous improvement in an organization-wide involving everyone and everything. Thus TQM is an enhancement to the conventional way of doing production. By analyzing the three words (**Total:** Made up of the whole, **Quality:** Degree of excellence a product or service provides. **Management:** Act, Art or manner of handling, controlling, directing etc.)

Therefore TQM is the art of managing the whole to achieve excellence (**Joshi, 2008**).

### **Role of TQM in Education**

Total quality management (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 client needs now and in the future. TQM combines fundamental management techniques, existing improvements and technical tools under a disciplined approach (**Talukder & Ghosh, 2004**). Although different individuals recognize the concept of quality in different manners. In education teachers are the major providers of educational services to the patrons i.e., students. So for teachers, view on quality environment is important. The perception of teachers, academic culture along with their expectation is taken. As quality measures and priority concerns for improvement in institution depends on it. Even the development of infrastructural facilities to maintain good reputation in society were also dependent on it (TQM). For which cooperation and support of community is essential. That creates academic climate should peaceful and encouraging (**Raizada, 2010**). Results in overall quality improvement of education. Because management in TQM means everyone is the manager of their own responsibilities (everyone in the institution- whatever their status, position or role is). Although technologies have brought tremendous changes in education and interpretation of the term quality. Still TQM advocates that everything/everybody in the organization is involved in the academic institutions for continuous improvement (**Thapa, 2011**). Besides this, leads to enhancing the quality of instruction. By collecting and analyzing feedback from users in

academic institution (**Kiilu & Otike, 2016**). Meanwhile, in traditional setting, the evaluation factors like building bond with students, challenges, student learning, provides timely feedback, and teaches fundamentals. However, students' perceptions are different when attending a traditional versus online classroom setting. This infers that synchronous and asynchronous settings require different teaching styles and different evaluation criteria (**Wright, 2017**)

### **Total Quality Management in Libraries**

TQM is now practiced in service sectors like library and information. Started since in the late 1980s and concept has become more relevant in the current technological era, due to the application of information technology in libraries and changes in information consciousness among users (**Raina, 1995**). Now the question arises, why libraries should adopt TQM. Since libraries are among the most ancient social and cultural institutions in existence. Although ancient libraries as well as modern ones have one thing in common: all of them have a body of information recorded on them and could retrieve information whenever needed. Such accessibility of information requires good organizational ability from those who are structure of the organization. Where desired information is retrieved in a timely manner to the users. Creation and maintenance of such a structure requires an effective management process that facilitates work towards the goal. Infact many libraries have implemented TQM successfully e.g. Harvard college library (created a task force which rewrote the library's statement and considered changes that develop a new organizational culture. Highlights the changing nature of staff and responsibilities in an era of pervasive change) (**Clark, 1993**). Further to enrich the quality of higher education, a country wide classroom programme should be launched through infrastructural development which can improve quality to make human resource productive (**Rafiei & Davari, 2015**). As it (Total Quality Management) in higher education aimed to emphasize the general principles involved and to point out how this approach has been and can be used to improve the quality of an academic institution. That is, to assess the way in which the institution is working as compared with a TQM approach and the weaknesses/strengths of the quality work can be recognized (**Todorut, 2013**). With this knowledge management is considered as one of the most useful solutions for academic libraries that can be adopted in order to improve their services to become relevant for their parent institutions in the present competitive and challenging environment (**Thanuskodi, 2010**). Even due to knowledge

Management in Libraries (Society) people have started realizing and using knowledge as vital competitor in controlling the economy of a nation. These modifications are also having the impact on functionality of major library centres which either will be fully or partially converted into the KM centres. Thus application of TQM is to identify service improvement techniques for an academic library systems and services. But requires change in the mental frame of the employees as well as the executives of the library; customer segmentation in terms of their needs; service strategy to each user segment within library constraints; and support from the top management of the library is must without this the quality can't be improved. Infact implementation of TQM involves a changed attitude of employees towards their work. Each employee has to contribute his or her best for achieving the objectives of the department which, in turn, are driven by the objectives of the library (**Akapo, 2011**). With the result a knowledge management initiative in libraries becomes imperative in order to harness the wealth, wisdom, expertise, and experiences embedded in the heads of such employees before they leave the library. This can be achieved through brainstorming, open discussions, and provision of productive ground for creativity, sharing of ideas, organizing workshops, conferences, identification and collectively finding solutions. Therefore there are a number of approaches that knowledge professionals can use in academic systems and make it possible to utilize the knowledge resources. Their general focus will be to enhance the accessibility and quality of knowledge, so that the organization will have an enlightened view of its environment. Librarians should follow and harvest the tacit and explicit knowledge of workers to the full advantage of the library. By acquisition of modern tools, updating skills and standardization, knowledge creation, knowledge capturing, knowledge sharing etc. Moreover the awareness of standards and specifications urges 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 quality work in libraries and information centers (**Obaid and Esam, 2012**). So that total quality management (TQM) is acknowledged as a management philosophy for improving patron satisfaction but there is no compromise regarding the success or adaptability of its principles in education. (**Asif, Awan, Khan and Ahmad, 2013**)

## Library services

Quality in library services is most effective in user-oriented services. In this regard **Talukder & Ghosh (2004)** made a comparison between TQM and library Science in respect of different attributes as summarized in **Table I**.

Attribute	TQM	Library Science
Definition	Customer oriented	User oriented
Priorities	First among equals of service and cost	User and Service
Decisions	Long Term	Long Term
Emphasis	Prevention	Prevention anticipation of demand
Errors	System	System/techniques
Responsibility	Everyone	Library personnel
Problem Solving	Teams	Professionals' teams
Procurement	Life cycle costs, partnership	User centric ( cost is implicit)
Manager's Role	Delegate, Coach, Facilitate	Delegate , Facilitate and mentor

*Table I: Relationship between Library Science and TQM*

## Why Total Quality Management (TQM) in Libraries

Library Management can be considered as the process of coordinating total resources of an organization towards the accomplishment of desired goals through the execution of a group of inter-related functions such as planning, organization, staffing, directing & controlling (**Kumar P.S.G, 2002**). Where TQM can gainfully applied. So that their principles, helps to achieve excellence in their performance and take pleasure in satisfying their clients. Besides this, **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 more convenient material  Simplify checkout of materials  Use flexibility in staff assignments  Develop cooperation  Ask vendors to give product demonstrations  Create interdepartmental library advisory groups  Improve the physical layout of the library  Track complaints  Develop an active outreach program  Open satellite offices  Publicize new or changed services  Develop user and staff training materials  Target services to specific group  Offer electronic document delivery  Follow the mission statements. In addition to this, **Sink (1991)** identifies the primary factors behind the need

for TQM as: the global economy; complex and dynamic resources (technology); customer orientation and expectations; and a shrinking feasible solution space for many critical problems, issues and opportunities. Also libraries can benefit from TQM in three ways: breaking down interdepartmental barriers; redefining the beneficiaries of library services as internal customers (staff) and external customers (patrons) **(Babu, 2002)**.

### **Benefits of TQM in Academic Libraries**

TQM approach identifies the key processes and quality characteristics, conduct training for the departmental functionaries in quality improvement tools and techniques, focuses on removing variations in both special and common causes to improve the level of performance and to make the processes error-free. The potential benefits of adopting TQM system compared to conventional quality system are numerous and can be outlined as follows.

□ Incremental changes lead to continuous improvement, quick solutions may yield only partial results □ Provides a method of improving services to users □ 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 □ Forces library managers to develop leadership skills **(Pradhan & Sribatsa, 2012)**. TQM also helps to focus clearly on the needs of the market. □ Facilitates to aspire for a top quality performer in every sphere of activity. □ It channelizes the procedures necessary to achieve quality performance. □ It helps examine critically and continuously all process to remove non-productive activities and waste. □ It gears organizations to fully understand the competition and develop an effective combating strategy. □ Develops good procedures for communication and acknowledging good work **(Lakhe & Mohanty, 2000)**.

### **Ways to Quality Improvement: -**

The evolution of TQM is the outcome of four major eras of development, as outlined by **(Garvin, 1988)**. He illustrates the evolutionary process where quality has moved from an initial stage of inspecting, sorting and correcting standards to an era of developing quality manuals and controlling process performance. The third stage was to develop systems for third-party certification, more comprehensive manuals including areas of organization other than production, and to use standard techniques. The present and fourth era of TQM is primarily strategic in nature and is based on continuous improvement as the driving force. Traditional

systems operated on the assumption that once a company achieved a certain level of quality, it was successful and needed no further improvements. We tend to think of improvement in terms of area of little variation, such as The Plan–Do–Study–Act Cycle (PDSA) cycle: describes the activities a company needs to perform in order to incorporate continuous improvement in its operation. Benchmarking is another way companies implement continuous improvement is by studying business practices of companies considered “best in class.” The ability to learn and study how others do things is an important part of continuous improvement. Infact the concept of continuous improvement is a critical success factor of any organization and should be used as the foundation stone upon which every successful TQM initiative should be built. Another view shared by **Handy (1994)**, who stated: “the world keeps changing. It is one of the irony of success that the things and ways that get you where you are, are rarely the things that keep you there. Although according to (**Udhav & Balaji, 2010**) TQM is based on • Correct action • Organization of events • Goal setting • Continuous improvement • Quality circle. In addition to this- 1) One objective: Continuous improvement 2) Three principle: Customer focus, Process improvement & Total involvement. 3) Six Supporting elements: Leadership Education & Training Supportive structure Communication Reward & Recognition Measurement. Has been considered as the important aspects of TQM. On the other hand **Jurow & barnnard (1993)** identify four barriers to the adoption of TQM in libraries. 1) Vocabulary: objections to terms such as “total” “quality and “management” which imply that high standards are not already being met. 2) Commitment: TQM takes several years to implement and requires a long term commitment by library managers 3) Process: Our culture tends to be impatient and we try to solve problems quickly, contrary to TQM and 4) Professionalization: Professional ethics very rarely can be seen.

### **Challenges**

The quality assurance of educational systems has always been a real challenge with the development in the educational components of the system such as curricula, instructional methodologies and educational technology. Thus, a new framework for implementation of successful learning, new concepts related to the quality assurance strategies in conventional as well as technology based educational systems namely blended learning need to be introduced. The focus on the critical quality assurance factors that affect teaching and learning in a blended learning system should be shifted (**Hajraf & Sharhan, 2012**). Libraries are no exception, especially as in their case the pace and the volume of changes which they have to deal with is

doubled by the complexity of information needs and requests of users through up to date products and services (**Porumbeanu, 2010**).With the result TQM faces new challenges due to diversity in nature of students and educators, large and multileveled classrooms, technological advances and new paradigms in educational content and delivery (**Thapa, 2011**). Although expert recommendations for implementing change were needed. As it is a challenge to identify feasible and effective implementation strategies for quality improvement effort. Further a gap analysis of the requirements for achieving sustainable development in education need to be done. That will reduce challenges ( lack of strategic leadership, Low demand from external an internal stakeholders) in implementing sustainable development in education. (**Kowar and Mal, 2013**). On the hand developing human capital that enhances a successful and competitive organization requires huge investment. Though most organizations spent huge sum of money in their production lines and equipment without considering the minds that manages them. It is necessary for organizations to equal infrastructural development with manpower development in order to avoid choas (**Adedapo, 2016**). Therefore a published taxonomy of implementation strategies should be used to establish consensus on terms and categories for quality improvement (**Waltz, 2014**).

### **Conclusion**

Total quality management can be helpful in overcoming from lack of management which causes disorder, confusion, wastage, delay, destruction and even depression. Managing men, money and materials in the best possible ways helps in making people capable of joint performance, to make their weakness irrelevant. It creates harmony in working together with equilibrium in thoughts and actions, goals and achievements, plans and performance, products & markets. It resolves situations of scarcity, be they in the physical, technical or human fields, through maximum utilization with minimum available processes to achieve the goal. While as 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. Education sector should empower their libraries to develop campus-wide knowledge management systems. As it is now time for libraries to reposition themselves in the central stage and lead from the front in knowledge management.

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