

The Role of Total Quality Management in Raising Service Quality of Libraries and Information Centres

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ABSTRACT: *The Stone Age did not end because there were no more stones but it ended because of continuous improvement (kaizen). If the Stone Age people could apply continuous improvement who are we to ignore it. Continuous improvement should be applied by everyone, organisations, nations and the world. Without continuous improvement, we become lagging behind and lose in this competitive improvement and lose our market share. There is therefore the need for libraries and information centres to adopt Total Quality Management (TQM) in order to ensure their importance as gateways for information. Failure to do this will result in them losing their competitive advantage in this world of information and knowledge economy. There is global information competition due to the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies and libraries and information professionals should run very first in order to stay in the same position. This paper defines quality and Total Quality Management. It explains the application and the role of Total Quality Management in libraries and Information centers to enhance service quality. The reasons for TQM failure are listed and solutions and recommendations given. This paper recommends quality culture in libraries and information centres.*

Keywords: *Quality, Total Quality Management, continuous improvement, kaizen, information, customer, libraries, information centres, information professional.*

I. INTRODUCTION

No organisation can progress, grow and be competitive unless it pays continuous attention to quality of its products and services (Kumar, 2003). Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive and structured approach to organisational management that achieves best quality of products and services through using effectively refinements in response to continuous feedback, and through using them effectively in order to deliver best value for the customer, while achieving long term objectives of the organisation (Edraw, 2016). Everyone in the organisation is involved in increasing and maintaining the quality of the services and products offered and every section, job and action should be continuously improved. This then calls for Total Quality Management. “Quality today has become the foundation for constant management innovation and leadership” (Feigenbaum, 2007:38). TQM is viewed as an organisation-wide philosophy requiring all employees at every level of an organisation to focus his/her efforts to help improve each business activity of the organisation. The job of improving and ensuring quality is no longer solely the responsibility of certain people or for departments of the organisation. It is the responsibility of everyone. This paper intends to establish the role of TQM in raising service quality in libraries and information centres. Libraries and information centres should not be left out in this journey of Total Quality Management, a journey a continuous journey with no destination.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTICLE

The objectives of the study are to:

- explain Total Quality Management
- indicate the new TQM paradigm
- demonstrate the role Total Quality Management in raising Service quality of libraries and information centres.

III. DEFINITION OF QUALITY

A quality is a characteristic that a product or service must have. For example, products must be reliable, useable, and repairable. Sharma (2003) avers that “quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy given needs”. Service should be courteous, efficient, and effective as some of the characteristics that a good quality product must have. Quality is a desirable characteristic. Products and services should bear ability to satisfy given needs.

IV. WHAT IS TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT?

Total Quality Management according to Thompson et al (2005:351) “is a philosophy of managing a set of business practices that emphasizes continuous improvement in all phases of operations, 100 percent accuracy in performing tasks, involvement and empowerment of employees at all levels, team-based work design, benchmarking and total customer satisfaction”. It is doing right things right for the first time and every time. Kinick and Williams (2011:526) proffers that Total Quality Management (TQM) is dedicated to continuous quality improvement, training and customer satisfaction. They add that its two core principles are people orientation and improvement orientation. Robbins and Coulter (2009:47) delineates that it is the management philosophy devoted to continuous improvement and responding to customer needs and expectations. These days of intense competition for the international markets, the word total in TQM has a broader meaning apart from organisational interpretation of getting everybody involved in the quality system. Now, total means the organisation should attend and keep satisfied the expectations of all its stakeholders in a balanced form. In this sense, every organisation has to attend four markets. Its:

- customers in the consumption market,
- shareholders in the capital market,
- employees in the labour market, and
- Community in the social market.

TQM is the art of managing the whole to achieve excellence.

V. TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

Libraries and information centres have to consider their stakeholders whenever services are planned and delivered. The concept of Just in Time has also to be used by the Libraries and information centres to deliver the services just in time. On the other hand, stakeholders provide the resources needed for the organisation’s operation and survival, such as money, skills, knowledge, time, permission to operate.

The TQM model is based on the hypothesis that company’s survival is only possible if a competitive level is achieved and maintained for each of the so called six dimensions of quality. These are as follows:

- product and service quality
- on-time delivery
- fair price
- employees satisfaction
- product and process safety
- environment conservation.

(<http://www.logistick-ledelse.no>-Total Quality Management as a Business Management Approach)

General guideline of total quality management should contain the following items.

- TQM is a customer focused approach
 - It is company wide strategy and involves everyone in the organisation
 - Aims at satisfying the customer or delighting them
 - Total Quality Management is methodical
 - Provides best quality product and satisfy them in a cost effective manner
 - Fundamental changes in basic beliefs and practices
 - Prevention of defects is the way and the target is zero defects
 - Provides meaningful measures of performance that guide the self-improvement efforts of everyone involved
- (<http://www.edrawsoft.com/TQM-Diagrams.php>)

The customer and the organisation should meet so as to communicate on what can be regarded as quality. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

A SIMPLIFIED TQM MODEL



(Source <http://www.skyenet.net-TQM>)

Figure 1

Figure 4.1 above shows the organisational realities, individual realities which include the internal and external customer coming together to form quality management realities.

Total Quality Management calls for total ownership. Everybody in the organisation accepts ownership and responsibility for quality. Thus, it involves every department and section. This makes everyone takes his or her part towards the achievement of the organisation's vision. However, Total Quality Management does not mean that after achieving the vision, the organisation has to stop there. It actually has to continue with the journey of continuous improvement as Total Quality Management is a journey and not a destination. Teamwork is given a priority. This then calls for organisations to use teams in solving problems. This results in Group Decision Support Systems, quality circles, knowledge sharing and effective communication and feedback.

VI. THE NEW TQM PARADIGM

The new TOM paradigm is based on customer value strategy, organisational Customer value strategy and continuous improvement.

6.1 Customer Value Strategy

Kureya and Undenge (2002:74) expounded that "customer value strategy refers to the whole business plan for offering value to customer". The new approach to customer value now differs from the old paradigm. Quality to customers now calls for the establishment of quality in the whole process of product designing and customer service. It is no longer the issue of looking at the end product or service. Value measurement is supposed to be linked to the customer. Sharma, (2003:152) posits that "the ultimate measurement of a product's value is that of the service it provides to its user. The quality of a product is also defined by its working condition when it arrives at the customer's site" In the old paradigm, internal measures, such as efficiency, productivity, cost and profitability were used by the firms. The new paradigm, although it calls for internal measurement, is linked to customer value. This then shows that customer consideration is very important in quality measurement and achievement.

Ahuja (2005:60) asserts that "customer satisfaction is important to the success of any business. The quality products and services are expected to yield satisfaction to customer and success to organisation". Thus "improving customer identification, conversion, acquisition, and retention" (Fitzroy and Hulbert, 2006). This shows that the quality is a value in which both customer and organisation claim to provide value for customer's money and time. This involves managing customer relationships in order to maximise their loyalty and thus improving profitability. The objective is to improve levels of customer satisfaction, boosts customer loyalty and increase revenue from existing customers in the face of high competition, high customer turnover and growing customer acquisition costs. Libraries and information centres, through a web site can give a section where customers can give their feedback so that their needs are quickly met and their problems are solved within a short period of time.

Partnership with suppliers and customers is called for. In line with traditional management, in the old paradigm the key external stakeholders was the shareholder and the key internal stakeholder was the firm's boss. Customers, suppliers, employees and others were not taken into account as stakeholders. (Kureya and Undenge, 2002:75). Internal customers and suppliers are also to be acknowledged in the new customer strategy. When internal customers are being satisfied, there would be positive effects on the external customer satisfaction too. A satisfied internal customer would be in a position to satisfy the internal and the external customer. Kotler (2005) posits that it is no longer enough to satisfy the customer but to delight him/her. Organisations have to motivate its employees so that they become willing to work on continuous improvement of products and services for the organisation. This would eliminate corruption within the organisation with some external customers.

6.2 Organisational systems

Total Quality Management helps in effective and efficient organisational systems. It supports the business process reengineering in the organisation. How a customer order is fulfilled, new products development, or customer accounts processed should operate without regard to functional boundaries as in the old paradigm. In the new paradigm, cross- functional approach should be applied. Customers do not care who does what as they just want quality service process and quality product process. For example if a library materials needs repair, customers do not care what department is responsible or who orders the parts, they just want the job to be done. The clients also do not care about your computer challenges, they just want quality products and services. So there is no need to blame the computer to clients. Each of the firm's processes should add value leading to Value Delivery Networks.

Libraries and Information professionals no longer need to be limited in job descriptions as required in the functional organisations. They can now exercise all their capabilities in the fulfillment of the organisational objective. For example, the librarian can also help the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department in web designing, thus, leading to synergy. This brings out one of Senge's (2000) discipline of team

learning thereby leading to the culture of team work. The call for team work has affected the old structure of organisations which are hierarchical and functional. Flat structures, matrix and network structures are advocated by the new TQM. However, some organisations, for example, are still maintaining hierarchical structures though they sometimes interlink for the attainment of goals and objectives. Total Quality Management promotes benchmarking which see organisations of the same industry learning from each other, hence leading to continuous improvements. This results in Knowledge Management Systems in the organisation, for example, acquiring different knowledge from various angles, hence leading to a well informed and knowledgeable organisation.

The use of technology in the old paradigm was focused on helping Librarians and Information professionals deal with complicated issues. In the new paradigm, technology is used to eliminate complex issues unlike dealing with them. For example, in the case of complicated decisions, technology leads to Group Decisions Support Systems of which experts help each other in solving managerial problems thereby bringing different choices to solve problems. In order to ensure that TQM is integrated to businesses' systems, there is need to have continuously trained human capital. The old paradigm concentrated on administering staff in terms of hiring, firing and handling other personnel issues. Now, the human capital is to be regarded as the most important resource as it is the only resource that can think. There is need for employee involvement and participation. Proper documentation, training of personnel, continual internal audits and management reviews are called for to instill order. Key performance indicators are identified. This enables the organisation to measure its performance, assess improvements, and monitor customer satisfaction and benchmark against the best in the industry.

6.3 Continuous improvement

Total Quality Management basically is all about continuous improvement (kaizen) in all the operations of the organisation. Librarians and Information professionals are not supposed to be comfortable with the status quo. Nicklos (2000) propounds that "toss out the rule book. Change, by definition, calls for a configured response, not adherence to prefigured routines". In the old paradigm, improvements were mainly driven by new product development as well as reacting to problems (Kuveya and Undenge, 2002). In the new paradigms improvements are an ongoing process. Improvement were not well planned but now there are well laid down plan for improvements. Long time before the concept of Total Quality Management, there was focus only on the end product or service and there was so much condemnation of the employee for defects hence the employees due to fear of condemnation, would through away the defects and start producing new items which was a waste of resources and affected organisations profitability. There were also punishments for making errors and the blame was placed on employees rather than on organisation's systems. This resulted in employees working under fear and ended up covering errors instead of bringing them to the management attention. The new paradigm blames error on organisational systems. The management holds itself responsible for not putting in place systems which eliminate error (Kuveya and Undenge, 2002). The new paradigm continuous improves every stage and involves everyone and every section in the organisation.

VII. THE ROLE OF TQM IN LIBRARIS AND INFORMATION CENTRES

The following are some of the roles of TQM in Libraries and Information Centres

- Continuously improve products and services
- User satisfaction
- Customer oriented
- Doing it right the first time
- focuses strongly on the importance of the relationship between customers (internal and external) and supplier
- developing the relationship of openness and trust among the employees at all levels in the organisation
- encourages innovation, makes the organisation adaptable to change, motivates people for better quality, and integrates the business arising out of a common purpose and all these provide the organisation with a valuable and distinctive competitive edge
- up to date Document Delivery Services
- really customised current awareness services
- reliable, authentic and relevant information.

VIII. REASONS FOR TQM FAILURE

TQM may fail because:

- Top management may see no reason for change.
- Top management may not be concerned for its staff.

- Top management may not be committed to the TQM programme.
- The organisation may lose interest in the programme after six months.
- The workforce and the management may not agree on what needs to happen.
- Urgent problems intervene.
- TQM may be imposed on the workforces, which do not inwardly accept it.
- No performance measure or targets are set, so progress cannot be measured.
- Processes are not analysed, systems are weak and procedures are not written down.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper brings up the following recommendations:

- Libraries and Information centres should practice Total Quality Management in order to raise service quality
 - Eliminate fear in library and information centres
 - Quality leadership is called for
 - Encourage innovation and creativeness
 - Continuous changes of clients' needs should be anticipated and met
 - Eliminate barriers between departments thus doing away with silo attitude in organisations
- There is need for continuous improvement
- Held a zero defects day to let all employees realise the need for improvement
- Recognise and appreciate those who are excelling
- Form quality improvement teams
- Identify the problem with the system before defects occur
- Quality culture in libraries and information centres is called for.



X. CONCLUSION

In today's global competitive market, the situation is to continuously improve products and services. This then calls for Total Quality Management in order for libraries and information centres to strategically position themselves in this world of information and knowledge economy otherwise they will lose their positions. This paper calls for the application of Total Quality Management in libraries and Information centres so as to improve service quality and gain competitive advantage. There is need to eliminate fear and avoid blame game. Systems errors should be detected before the error occurs and above all everyone should continuously improve and the continuous change of the clients' needs should be met.

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