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## Assessment of Total Quality Management on Performance of Chuka University Library, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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### Abstract

*Academic libraries are service oriented organs whose focus is to fulfill users' information needs and demands. Library users have different information needs that if not effectively attended to, can lead to information obesity especially with the current massive information available on the internet. There is therefore need for total quality service provision in libraries to support research and curriculum delivery improvement. Total quality management (TQM) is an approach that ensures that all members of an organization work together to continuously improve the processes, products, services and the culture in which they operate. This leads to long-term success through customer satisfaction. The aim of the study was to assess application of total quality management on performance of library operations and services at Chuka university library. The study was guided by three objectives namely; (i) to identify TQM practices employed at Chuka University library, (ii) to determine the relationship between TQM and performance and (iii) to establish TQM strategies that could improve performance at library. Mixed methods using an online survey questionnaire and interviews were employed for data collection from 200 respondents comprising library staff and users. Quantitative data was statistically analysed while qualitative data was thematically processed. Results showed that library management at Chuka University employs total quality management that included provision of effective, efficient quality and timely services geared towards improvement of organizational performance and customer service. We recommend that fact based decision making, strategic and systematic approaches be adopted to enhanced continuous service delivery at the University library. However, to ensure effective total quality practices, effective communication, employee involvement and good leadership are necessary.*

**Keywords:** Library, Performance, Total Quality Management, University, User Satisfaction

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## **Introduction**

Total quality management (TQM) is a management approach that originated in the 1950s (Munyao, 2017) and ensures that all members of an organization work together to continuously improve their culture of operation to achieve long-term success through customer satisfaction and loyalty. The key objective of TQM is “doing the right things, right the first time, every time”. According to Chandra et al. (2015), TQM was originally applied in the manufacturing industries, but is now becoming recognized as a generic management tool applicable in service, public sector organizations, libraries and information centres to achieve competitive advantage.

Many organizations have embraced excellence as a standard for operating business premised on customer focus, total employee involvement, integrated system, continuous involvement, fact based decision making and continuous communication (Dei and Anane, 2020). To ensure application of these practices, good organizational leadership is required to achieve high productivity, increased innovativeness, improved employee morale and customer satisfaction.

## **Background Information**

Library operations refer to functional services provided to users. This is split into three key areas namely; Technical services that focus on selection, ordering, payment and processing of information materials; readers service that are intended to oversee day to day user support aimed at maximizing utilization of information resources and provision of excellent library services. Chanda et al. (2015) asserted that library operations should be provided in such a way that users are thrilled to use library resources more and more after every library experience. The focus is therefore to improve performance through application of TQM practices.

Since the role of academic libraries is to offer quality services that helps the library and the parent institution to attain her goals in teaching, learning and research. Technological changes have promoted information explosion that has not only provided enormous information to users, but it has left them confused. Information obesity has forced some users to access unauthenticated sources of information. It is for this reason that libraries in universities must provide quality services to the users on a continuous basis to protect them from the confounding.

### *Objectives*

The study sought to (i) identify TQM practices employed at Chuka University library, (ii) determine the relationship between TQM and performance and (iii) establish TQM strategies that improve performance for the library.

### **Review of Literature**

#### *Total Quality Management Practices*

Continuity of every organization is highly dependent on loyal customers. It is the responsibility of an organization to meet the needs of her clients. This calls for continuous application of total quality management practices in all process, products and services. Dei and Anane (2020) asserted that activities applied should satisfy customers efficiently and cost effectively through maximization of potential of all employees in a continuing drive of improvement.

Quality in libraries and information centres refers to provision and delivery of the right information to the right person at the right place and at the right time (Dei and Anane, 2020). It is critical that libraries develop systems, strategies and philosophy that would enable them to enhance quality. According to American society of quality (2018), there should be guiding principles to enhance quality in libraries focused on good leadership, employee empowerment, strategic quality planning, customer delight and continuous improvement.

#### *The relationship between Total Quality Management and library performance*

All aspects of library management that include administration, collection development and services to users need adequate attention from management for effective and efficient services to users. TQM is therefore the best approach that libraries should adopt to improve delivery of services and support the needs and demands of users.

#### *Total quality management strategies*

It is the intention of any existing library to keep improving its performance to satisfaction of users. This requires well thought out and working strategies improvement of internal systems, standardization of work, satisfaction of customers and human resource management among other others.

#### *Improvement of internal systems*

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Success of TQM in libraries is dependent on a culture that ensures effective customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, problem solving and team work (Subbiah, 2020). Libraries considering implementation of TQM therefore need to adopt open and cooperative culture that runs through the entire top management.

#### *Standardization of work*

Processes in libraries need to be standardized to promote operational efficiency and success Subbiah (2020) observed that identification and evaluation of critical processes that drive an organization are vital for continuous improvement of systems that are fundamental to TQM.

#### *Satisfaction of customers*

Right from the beginning, key focus in libraries should be to meet the expectation of the users. Thus, the objective of each library should be to provide quality to the existing customer's right from the first time and all the times. This requires commitment from the management, staff, and availability of funds to support operations.

#### *Human resource management*

TQM is a people centered approach to management. It involves commitment of every employee. Full employee commitment can only be achieved by appropriate human resource management structures among them timely and proper communication channels, cordial manager's relationship with the subordinates and employee participation in decision making.

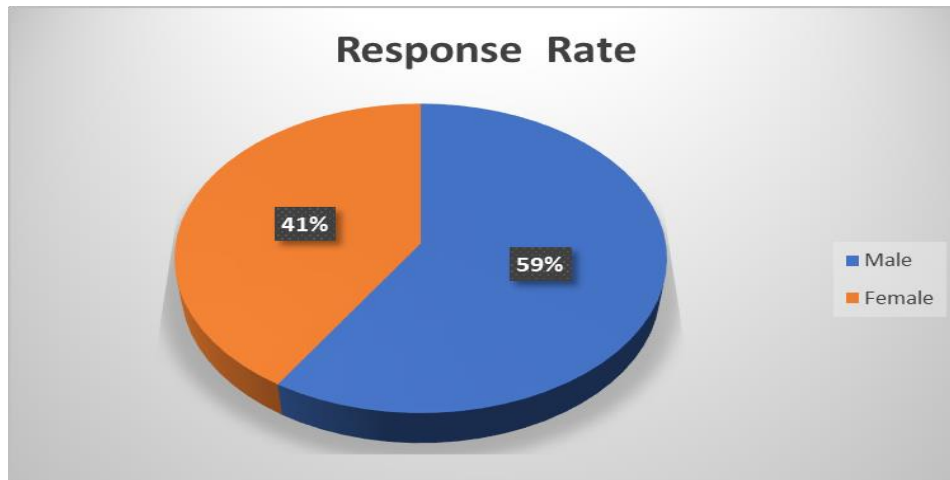
### **Methodology**

A descriptive research design was used and a mixed method approach employed. An online survey questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data from a target population of 400. Sample size of 200 respondents comprising library staff and users was used as determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table for small sample. Random sampling method was used to select 196 user respondents for the questionnaire while purposive sampling was used to select 4 head of library sections for interview. Quantitative data was statistically analysed while qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Information was presented using pie charts, tables and graphs.

### **Findings of the Study**

#### *Response Rate*

The response rate for the study was 61 (31%) for quantitative response. On the other hand, qualitative response was 2 (50%). Response rate was made up of 59 % males and 41 % females

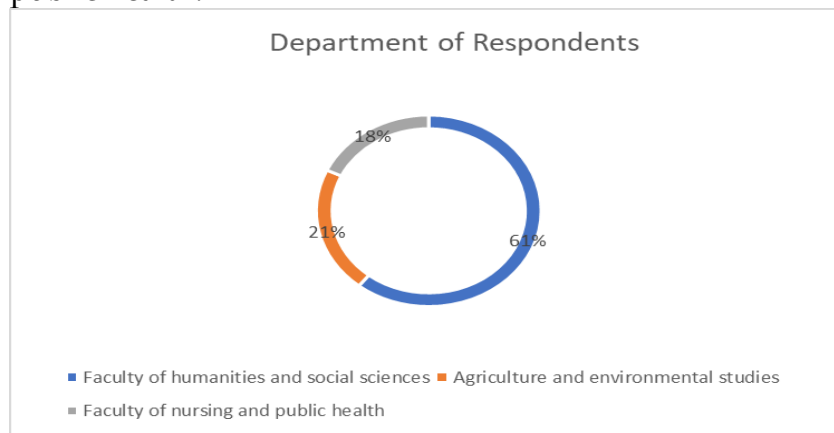


(figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Response Rate

***Department of the Respondents***

37 (61%) the respondents belonged to the faculty of humanities and social sciences 13 (21 %); agriculture and environmental studies had 13 (21 %) and 11 (18%) faculty of nursing and public health.



**Figure 2:** Department of Respondents

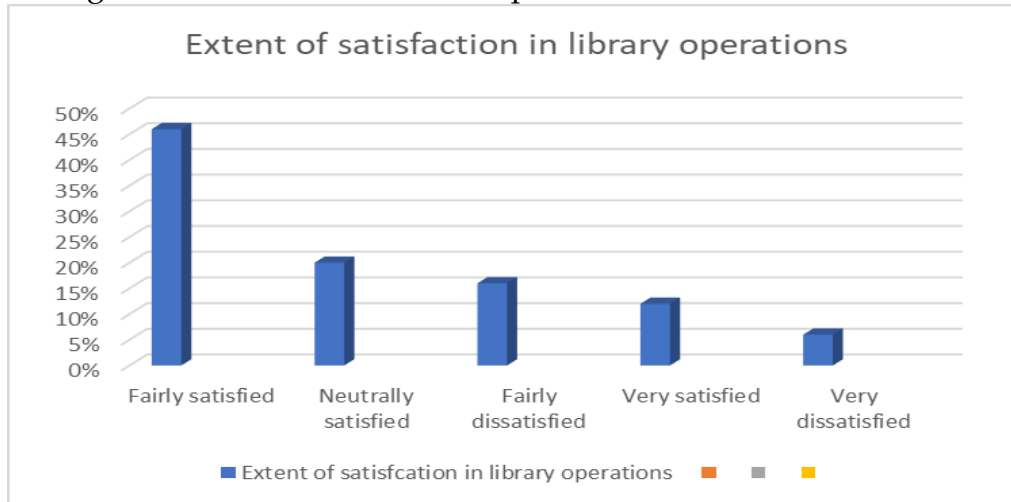
***Frequency of Library Visits***

The (42 %) of respondents visited the library several times a week; 15 (23%) once a week; 9 (15%) rarely 7 (12 %) once a month; 3 (5%) daily; while 2 (3%) never visited the library. These observations demonstrate that most of the respondents frequently visited the library hence were most probably aware of the total quality management practices in the library.

*Interviewee 2: Indicated that "Visits in the library varies from one user to another and that there was high flow of users during the middle of the semester and towards the end of the semester when examinations are ongoing.*

### *Extent of satisfaction in library operations*

29 (46%) of respondents were fairly satisfied with operations in the library; 12 (20 %) were satisfied; 10 (16 %) fairly dissatisfied; 7 (12 %) very satisfied while 3 (6%) of respondents were very dissatisfied. Having majority of the respondents being satisfied implies that total quality management is practiced at Chuka library.



**Figure 3:** Extent of satisfaction in library operations

### *Total Quality Management Practices*

The findings of the study revealed existence of total quality management practices at Chuka University library. Majority of the respondents 22 (44 %) identified continuous improvement as a key practice. Other existing quality management practices were rated at as follows: continuous communication 13 (24%); customer focus and quality leadership 12 (14%); integrated system, team work and staff commitment tied at 10 (12%), while fact based decision making was rated by minority of respondents 4 (6 %). These findings imply that there is need to continuously improve application of total quality management practices at Chuka University library.

These findings are in line with previous reports that committed leadership, continuous improvement, team work are key practices to enhancement o user satisfaction.

### *Relationship between Total Quality Management and Library Performance*

All respondents agreed that total quality management affects performance of the library. 25 (50%) indicated that TQM affected efficient library operations and services, improved performance 20 (30 %), meeting user needs 10 (12%) and 6 (8 %) better user attention.

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*Interviewee 1:* Indicated that Total quality management as a leadership tool greatly affects every performance in the library in terms of effectiveness and efficiency” and *Interviewee 2:* Indicated that “Total quality management has a direct effect on effectiveness of meeting user needs and that non application of TQM leads to poor performance and user dissatisfaction.

### ***Total Quality Management Strategies***

28 (32%) of respondents identified continuous improvement; 12 (27%) good organizational culture, 10 (22%) excellent leadership, 8 (10%) total employee inclusion and 3 (9 %) identified systems audit as key to improving library performance.

*Interviewee 1:* Indicated that “Excellent leadership, organization culture and continuous improvement are applied in the library”; and that other strategies such as employee inclusion and system audit” should be adopted.

*Interviewee 2:* Indicated that “Excellent leadership and continuous improvement are applied in the library” and that system audit should be adopted”.

These findings strongly suggest the need for unending provision of quality service and improvement.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To achieve improved performance in libraries, there is need to have a high level of awareness and understanding the benefits of effective quality management practices, positive attitude change, effective communication, employee involvement and good leadership. There is need for information professionals to be responsive resourced and expeditiously embrace total quality management as an effective tool to improving operations and services.

The study concluded that total quality management practices are employed at Chuka university library for effective operations and services provision. Therefore, there need for continuous improvement for improved services to the users and to ensure effective TQM practices for improved performance in academic libraries.

There is also need for professional development through training to enhance customer service skills, provision of upgraded computers, adoption of new technology, and systematic approach and systems audit.

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