Library Management Excellence Model proposed on the basis of TQA (Thailand Quality Award) Criteria for Performance Excellence

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ABSTRACT

TQA (Thailand Quality Award) has been originated in 1996 by the cooperation of two government bureaus, i.e. Thailand Productivity Institute, Ministry of Industry, and National Science and Technology Development Agency, Ministry of Science and Technology, and the award was first presented to the winner in 2002. Each year the National Committee (NATCOM) of TQA considers and judges with reference to the award criteria of performance excellence and nominates the organization, in either business or non-business, which attains some level of excellence. Although the original purpose of the TQA criteria is to present the national award to high-performance organizations to motivate the productivity of the nation, the criteria can be adopted and applied to library management on its journey to excellent performance. The criteria is as the same world-class as the criteria of Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) of the United States of America, which has been accepted and applied to many parts of the world for many years. This article, based on TQA Criteria for Performance Excellence, proposes the excellence framework model, including the issue of sustainability, which can be applied for the development of library management. TQA Criteria for Performance Excellence consists of seven categories of processes and results, i.e. 1) Leadership 2) Strategic Planning 3) Customer Focus 4) Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 5) Workforce Focus 6) Operations Focus and 7) Results. The proposed model is developed from the analysis of these categories, their linkages and integration, so as to apply key requirements of the categories to use as an excellence framework for professional library management.

Keywords: library management, library performance excellence, Thailand Quality Award, TQA

1. INTRODUCTION

TQA (Thailand Quality Award) has been originated in 1996 by the cooperation of two Thai government bureaus, Thailand Productivity Institute, Ministry of Industry, and National Science and Technology Development Agency, Ministry of Science and Technology. The primary objective of the award is to present the award according to its criteria, as the motivation, to the organization in Thailand which performs excellent management. The first award presentation was in 2002 and since then the award has been widely recognized for more than ten years. At the beginning most organizations involved are industrial and in business sector. However the award has been spread into service business sector and some government sector, mostly starting with healthcare or hospitals. TQA criteria has been created on the basis of MBNQA (the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award) of the United States of America, which is the model criteria of excellence performance for many countries, such as Japan, Australia, Singapore, Philippines.
Although the original purpose of TQA criteria is to grant the reward to stimulate the standard quality of organizations, the idea of using the criteria to upgrade the quality of organizational performance is following. For this reason, the TQA Office and Thailand Productivity Institute have tried their best to share public with knowledge on the award and criteria to promote more the overall national quality.

The objective of this paper is to introduce TQA criteria as a management framework for excellence performance of the organization. The criteria does not tell how the organization has to perform but it tells what processes should be examined, because the way of performance depends on each organization’s different environment. The author has studied and analyzed the integrations of the requirements in the criteria categories, together with related topics in other management principles. Combined with the experiences as a library leader and a quality assessor in some organizations, the author has proposed a model of excellence management for the benefits of librarianship.

2. THE OVERVIEW OF TQA CRITERIA

TQA criteria consists of seven categories: 1) Leadership 2) Strategic Planning 3) Customer Focus 4) Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management 5) Workforce Focus 6) Operations Focus and 7) Results. The first six categories are classified as Process categories and the seventh is Result category. Each category has requirements in three levels: basic requirements, overall requirements, and multiple requirements, which show the level of the organizational performance. The categories are all related; categories 1-3 are the Leading triad whereas categories 5-7 are the Result triad, category 4 is the foundation of other process categories, and category 7 is the outcomes or results of the six process categories.

![Figure 1: Criteria for Performance Excellence Framework: A Systems Perspective (Based on Criteria for Performance Excellence 2013-2014, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, January 2013)](image-url)
3. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Before going into the categories, the criteria states that the organization should start with “Organizational Profile” which is critically important because:

1. It is the most appropriate starting point for self-assessment and for writing an application
2. It helps to identify potential gaps in key information and focus on key performance requirements and results
3. It is used by assessors in application review, including the site visit, to understand the organization
4. It may be used for an initial self-assessment. (Office of Thailand Quality Award, 2013)

The Organizational Profile is a snapshot of the organization, the key influences on how the organization operates, and the key challenges the organization faces. It consists of two sections.

3.1 Organizational Description

This section describes the organization’s operating environment and key relationship with customers, partners, and stakeholders.

3.2 Organizational Situation

This section describes the organization’s competitive environment, key strategic challenges and advantages, and the system for performance improvement.

4. THE CRITERIA CATEGORIES 1-7

4.1 Leadership

The Leadership category examines how the organization’s senior leaders’ personal actions guide and sustain the organization. The organization’s governance system is also examined and how the organization fulfills its legal, ethical, and societal responsibilities and supports its key communities. This category also mentions vision, values, and mission of the organization and how senior leaders communicate with workforce and encourage high performance.

4.2 Strategic Planning

This category examines how the organization develops its strategies and how the strategy development process stimulates and incorporates innovation. This category examines relevant data for strategy considerations such as strategic challenges and advantages, and concerns about strategic objectives, work systems and core competencies of the organization as well. Besides, the category considers strategy implementation, action plan development, and deployment with resource allocation, workforce plans, and performance measures and projections.
4.3 Customer Focus

Customer Focus category examines how the organization engages customers for long-term marketplace success. The engagement strategy includes listening to the voice of customers and building customers’ satisfaction and relationship via product offerings and communication mechanisms. The category also includes usage of customers’ information to improve and identify opportunities for innovation.

4.4 Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

This category examines how the organization selects, gathers, analyzes, manages, to improve its performance through the use of data and information at all levels and in all parts of the organization with agility, continuous improvement, and innovation. Besides, the category considers how the organization builds and manages its knowledge assets, including knowledge management, and ensures the quality and availability of needed data, information, software, and hardware for the workforce, supplies, partners, collaborators, and customers.

4.5 Workplace Focus

The Workplace Focus category examines the organization’s ability to assess workforce capability and capacity needs and build a workforce environment and supports conductive to high performance. It also considers how the organization engages the workforce to utilize its full potential, and how to develop and manage the performance of workplace in alignment with the organization’s overall mission.

4.6 Operations Focus

The Operations Focus category asks how the organization designs, manages, improves, and innovates its products and work processes and improves operational effectiveness to deliver customer value and achieve ongoing organizational success.

4.7 Results

The Results category examines the organization’s performance and improvement in all key areas: product and process results, customer-focused results, workforce-focused results, leadership and governance results, and financial and market results. Performance levels are examined relative to those of competitors and other organizations with similar product offerings. (OTQA, 2013).

5. INTEGRATIONS AMONG THE CRITERIA CATEGORIES AND OTHER MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Focusing on the leading triad categories, inevitably excellence must be started by and from the TQA criteria Category 1 Leadership. This is harmonious with Northouse’s writing that Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010). If everyone wants the organization to be
excellent, no one is more responsible than the senior leaders of the organization. Leadership is the critical point of start for the journey to organizational excellence. Category 1 is very closed to Category 2 Strategic Planning in terms of the leading concept guided by the mission, the vision, and the shared value of the organization. At first the leaders have to focus on the mission the organization is assigned by the parent organization. The mission or the responsibilities of the organization should be clear, in the same way as the vision and the value. One of the leadership practices Kouzes and Posner mention is “inspiring a shared vision”, that is to envision the future or create an ideal image of what the organization can become. (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The value, or the core value, or the shared value is the same meaning here, and it is what everyone in the organization holds on as the organization’s principles to behave together in the same respect.

The senior leaders should have strategic ways in creating the shared value for their use of strategic planning. Category 1 specifies that leaders must take personal action in deploying the organization’s vision and values through the leadership system. Leadership also links to Category 2 Strategic Planning in terms of change management, improving creativity, and setting goals, the same as mentioned by Hughes (2009), Kotter (1990), and Puccio (2011). It looks for innovative ways, even chances of taking risks to improve the organization. This is the evident relationship between Category 1 and Category 2 which links to Category 5, Customer Focus, as well.

Leadership involves a great deal on customers and stakeholders especially in an area of communication. Though leaders may not contact directly with customers and stakeholders, they must set forth the communication system for the best results of the organization’s performance. The system shows various means or channels of communication with involved persons and regularity or frequency. Other characteristics of leadership that may seriously affect stakeholders focus on legal and ethical behaviors. Organizations of today would never be accepted without CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities. Category 1 emphasizes important roles of leaders concerning ethics and morale, which are some parts of authentic leadership proposed by Terry (1993).

As mentioned earlier that Category 2 is closely related to Category 1, the organization would never be successful if leaders do not value the importance of strategic planning which is the intellectual way to bring every group of stakeholder to reach the organization’s goals and vision guided, or set as direction, by the leaders. Leaders of today must be inevitably strategic; they must have integrative thinking and can overcome barriers to change (Dess, 2010). They must realize and understand the social and technological forces that affect the organization’s strategic planning. (Parnell, 2014). To attain organization’s vision, good strategic leaders need ability to identify and articulate the business model the company will use (Hill, 2007).

Concerning customers and stakeholders in Category 3, leaders have to be aware of ethical treatments with balance among those groups. Like Dess (2010) explains, the governance mechanisms must ensure that managerial actions lead to shareholder maximization and do not harm other stakeholders. He also mentions leaders’ challenge in creating and maintaining an ethical organization that there are many benefits of having an ethical organization. As said before that in Category 1 leaders must take personal action in deploying values through the leadership system, being “Role model” is one key element of an ethical organization that Dess mentions as well. Ethical issues cover a wide range of topics, most due to potential conflicts between the goals of the enterprise or of individual manager and the fundamental rights of important stakeholders. (Hill, 2007).

The Category 3 Customer Focus is a very important source for strategic planning, Category 2. As described by Payne (2006), one of key cross-functional CRM (Customer
Relation Management) processes is the strategic development process. The organization has to collect voices of customers, together with other stakeholders, and their complaints to be resources for strategic planning of the organization each year. The information on customers’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction in related topics has to be assessed and used to develop strategies or fill the gap of organizational improvement.

One of the three strategies to be market leaders, as proposed by Treacy (1995), is customer intimacy, which is an essential part in Category 3 as building customer relationship. Besides, organizations must be clear about what kinds or segments of their customers, what are customers’ life-cycles, and what supports or channels the organizations give to those segments and various life-cycles. The specific groups of customers and stakeholders are to be defined, so as to set the clear strategic goals to reach easier. These ideas of Category 3 agree with Payne (2006) that two cross-functional CRM processes are the value creation process and the multi-channel integration process, that customers have different needs at different stage of the relationship life-cycle. Customer Focus is essentially associated with Leadership in terms of value creation process, communication, and ethical behaviors of leader as mentioned earlier.

The linkage of the leading triad categories to the results triad ones shows that the strategic plans are to be accomplished with human resource plan, in Category 5 Workforce Focus, and the work system, which is one of the strategic development processes, leads to work processes, the important parts of Category 6 Operations Focus. This means successful action plans depend on effective manpower management and work operation processes. These two factors, People and Operations, are interdependent simultaneously to get the desired results as the organization’s goals.

According to Kinney (1996), work is a series of processes; there is interrelationship of work processes, consumers, suppliers, and system improvement. The criteria Category 2 mentions the organization’s work system which are clarified in Category 6 as work process. The work processes must be designed to serve the consumers, or customers, in association with stakeholders such as suppliers, of the Category 3 Customer Focus. Work system and work processes are much related to products and services of the organization. To improve effectiveness and efficiency of the organization, Category 6 examines thoroughly the work process requirements and measurements.

Operations, or processes, without workforce do not work, but workforce without knowledge, or information, does some harm. Leaders must value the organization’s workforce and take care of them for the most satisfaction so that they feel engaged and make their best for the organization’s results. This shows the linkage of the requirements in Category 1 Leadership, Category 4 Information and knowledge, Category 5 Workforce, and Category 6 Operations. The relationship is the same as Pace’s basic concepts that the organization should recognize workforce, make them satisfy, and develop them continuously because they are human resources that bring success to the organization. (Pace, 1991)

The Category 4 is the foundation of TQA perspective system as shown in Figure 1. The processes of Leadership, Strategic Planning, Customer Focus, Workforce Focus, and Operations Focus have to be measured, analyzed, reviewed and improved systematically with the information technology and knowledge management of the organization. In accordance with Sleight (2000), IT system is a strategic skill to keep the organization ahead of its competitors as it is responsive, efficient, and flexible in the face of continuous and rapid change. Knowledge management treats intellectual capital as a managed asset from varieties of sources, including databases, websites, employees, and business partners, and cultivates that information. (Honeycutt, 2000).
6. SAMPLES OF MANAGEMENT BASED ON NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD

6.1 National Library Board Singapore Years 2001-2004

NLB (National Library Board) Singapore is one of the Singapore Quality Award winners in 2004. During the years 1995-2001, NLB had successfully transformed the public library system into a network of libraries that is convenient, accessible, attractive, and service oriented. The evidences of such success are as follows. The collection, the membership, and the physical space were doubled. Loan rate was increased from 14.27 million to 28 million books a year; queues were reduced generally from 60 minutes on average during peak period to less than 5 minutes. NLB operates the National Library and a three-tier public library system, which includes regional, community, and community children’s libraries consisting of: 1 National Reference Library, 3 Regional Libraries, 18 Community Libraries (9 located in shopping malls), and 18 Community Children’s Libraries. It also operates a “Library Supply Centre (LSC)”, a one-stop centre for procuring and processing libraries materials, and a “Network Operations Centre (NOC)”, which provides IT support services for library operations. NLB offers a number of services, both core services and other value-added services, to customers via the Digital Library Services. Key customers are members of the general public and others are arts community, researchers, statutory boards and government departments, business, schools and other libraries.

The senior leaders of NLB play very important roles in leading the organization, especially Dr. Christopher Chia, the Chief Executive. He realized that the transformation would rest on three key pillars or the three P’s: Purpose, Process, and People, which then became as a shared common belief. The mission is “to expand the learning capacity of the nation so as to enhance national competitiveness and promote a gracious society” and the vision is “to deliver a world-class library system that is convenient, accessible and useful to the people of Singapore”.

When new NLB was formed, they set three key pillars: Organizational leadership, Technology, and Human Resource. Thus we can see from the first that Leadership is the most important factor to go to excellence. Leaders of NLB focus on Strategic Planning as they set up the Corporate Planning and Review (CPR), quarterly corporate planning sessions, to cope with the faster pace of change. Customers are segmented as target groups and, by mechanisms for obtaining customers’ current and future requirements with environmental scanning activity carried out by the Strategic Initiatives and Research Division (SIR), NLB can identify opportunities to offer library services to customer segments. Customer relationship management is evaluated and improved and complaints are resolved effectively and promptly to promote customers’ satisfaction which leads to strategic and improvement plans.

NLB uses six key types of information to track performance: vision and strategy, learning and growth, internal business processes, financial, customer, and day to day operations. Comparative and benchmarking information is selected from IFLA, other public services providers, and overseas study trips.

To implement the organization’s strategic objectives and goals, NLB develops a 3-year human resource plan covering manpower planning training and development, compensation and benefits, and organization development. NLB values most to “Process”, one of the three P’s, which enables the organization transformation to one of the best library. They set the framework of process management and improvement to ensure that products and services meet customers’ requirements.
6.2 Khon Kaen University Libraries Years 2009-2012

KKU (Khon Kaen University) Libraries in the years 2009-2012 consist of 1 Central Library, 12 Faculty Libraries, and 1 Nongkhai Campus Library. The administration system is hybrid between centralization and decentralization. The important aspects of centralization are software system for OPAC databases and professional personnel development. The decentralization is defined with respect to each Faculty, including Nongkhai Campus, that the Faculty or Campus Library is located at. Each Faculty supports its library with the building facility, budget and some clerks. However, the growth of most Faculty Libraries depends on the cooperation between the Faculty and the Central Library.

With the concept and attention to use TQA criteria as the guideline approach for administration, the Library Director at that time introduced the criteria to the organization’s people who have only little idea of the criteria then. Some parts of the first meetings with all the libraries’ workforce were organized by the director giving lectures on basic TQA criteria. Besides, senior leaders or administrators such as the director, associate directors, assistant directors, team leaders of the libraries were sent to attend TQA criteria classes provided by inside and outside the university.

The Director worked very closely with the Associate Director for Planning and Information in strategic planning which took place annually and systematically. The process of strategic planning was set up around middle of each year beginning with the seminar of every group of stakeholders and the administrators. Thus, the customers’ and stakeholders’ requirements are cumulated together with other information needed for strategic planning. Then senior leaders meet to review and discuss the organization’s latest performance outcomes. The vision, mission, value, and organization culture are reviewed and developed if necessary. In this step, the organization’s strategies in accordance with those of the university have resulted. Team leaders are then assigned to organize meetings for other workforce to participate in strategic planning by proposing new ideas through action plans under the defined organization’s strategies.

Along with the strategies, senior leaders discuss the work system of the organization, review and develop it, and plan for work processes. Team leaders are assigned to revise the work processes for the effective and efficient outcomes. Senior leaders are responsible for human resource planning and management in terms of capacity, capability, selection, creating workplace environment and engagement eventually.

For every process of the management, information system is designed to help the process measurement so that there is enough appropriate information to evaluate and develop all the processes. The leaders also set the strategic ways to collect benchmarking data by signing MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with some other libraries and by visiting outstanding libraries abroad. To push the organization forward successfully, knowledge management process in many formats, such as CoP (Community of Practice), is used to stimulate to be learning organization with innovation.

During the years 2009-2012, many library operation results showed progresses by the concept of TQA criteria management. The number of walk-in users from 954 thousand went up to 1,581 thousand whereas the number of the organization website access rose from 1,054 thousand to 2,323 thousand and the database accesses from 155 thousand to 365 thousand. The research and reference services are multiplied three times from 4 to 12, and the proactive services, such as reachout-to-faculty training, rose from 9 to 31. The customer satisfaction rated from 83.15% to 88.77%. The organization workforce showed their satisfaction and engagement rating from 78.20% to 82.57%. Significant budget advancements are the expense for library resources procurement from 41.46 to 44.63 million baht and the saving expense
from resources sharing with other institutes rose from 3.24 to 3.53 million baht. In overall, the result marks given to KKU libraries after the yearly quality assessment according to the government criteria, from totally 5 points, showed 4.66 in 2009 to 4.83 in 2012.

7. THE MANAGEMENT MODEL OF LIBRARY PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

Derived from the analysis of the TQA criteria categories and other principle concepts in related topics, combined with management experiences in some libraries, following is the management model of library performance for excellence. The author would like to propose the proved model for the libraries which may be interested in quality performance. Starting from Leadership System, the organization follows the processes as the big arrows show while the Category 4 supports as foundation. However, the dash arrows show that every process affects the results.

8. CONCLUSION

TQA Criteria for Performance Excellence has been recognized as the highest standard as of the National Award. The criteria consists of seven categories, and it could be applied as management framework for the library which wants to improve and develop to be an excellent organization. If library leaders intend to upgrade their library’s quality, they may use the proposed model as a guideline with the given case studies. However, there are still some details of the requirements in each category to be studied more. Working for quality may take more time, but the coming results are always fruitful and appreciative.
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