

## TQM IN GREECE: THE CASE STUDY OF AN ACADEMIC LIBRARY

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are a powerful tool for education and research. The library's significance in the university has been underlined by all studies because it takes part directly and effectively in institution's life.

The historical, cultural and educational environment affects library development in general and university libraries in particular.

The history of the Greek academic libraries starts since 1837 with the establishment of the first university in Greece. The new university was located in a small building in Athens. A room of this building was devoted to the library.

For decades the university educational system in Greece was negative in attempts at developing central university libraries.

Today in Greece there are 18 Universities and 14 Technical Educational Institutes. Both types of educational establishments compose the higher education in Greece. At these institutions there are in total 226 libraries.

The educational system of Greece is divided into three levels:

- a. Primary education
- b. Secondary education
- c. Higher education which includes as it has mentioned the Higher Education Institutes(AEI) and the Technical Educational Institutes(TEI).

For candidates who want to take a place in one of the higher education institutions there is a national competition every year. The studies are free of charge for all educational levels.

Central and Departmental libraries are the schemes which serve the academic community.

So far, there is no legislation, which will respond to the general operation issues of the academic libraries in Greece. Ad hoc organizational issues are solved within the university context. This might be one of the major issues in discussion about TQM in libraries in Greece.

There are two categories of staff in libraries. The first has permanent contract with the university. This staff category supports all administration posts. The second one has a temporary contract, which means that they cannot officially take any administration post. In NTUA, there are 5 persons who have permanent contract and 20 persons with temporary contract.

Recently in Greece the second staff category is the largest group of employees in the academic Libraries. This situation affects seriously the work effectiveness since decision-making is a matter of a small group of employees within the same library.

### 2. SECOND FRAMEWORK SUPPORT PROGRAMME 1995-1999 FOR GREECE

The Greek academic libraries work within an organizational, financial and technological environment, which is constantly changing. The pressure to respond to these changes demands a different organizational structure.

The European Union comes to support efforts for effective changes in libraries infrastructure as well as the organizational framework by funding programs for re-organization in the public sector.

The annual budget for the university libraries is part of the University's budget. The Senate and the library committee take the decision about the allocation of the funding.

In recent years, due to E. U. programs there is a high increase in the total expenditures for libraries. For example the National Technical University of Athens Central library has taken for the period of 1995-1999 a huge amount of money through the European

program, which reaches the 400,000 ECU. Unfortunately we cannot manage to take full advance from all these funds because the lack of a TQM system.

The Second Framework Support Program is the major funding scheme in Greece the last 5 years given for supporting the main national infrastructure projects. Libraries were one of these sectors that have been supported financially. Unfortunately the conditions for funding through the European program did not require the introduction of any TQM system in the libraries. It was only the internal organization framework for each one of the libraries that was completed as a basic requirement throughout the funding period.

The majority of the funding was proposed by each of the institutions to be given to information technology infrastructure in libraries. Thus a big reorganization period started for the academic libraries in Greece. The main components of this technological reorganization are:

- a. New library systems (software and hardware)
- b. CD-ROM networking in the campuses
- c. Collection development
- d. Staff training

In the context of this program for library re-organization it is important one to see the special action to the development of the academic libraries union catalogue. This action has a particular value for the academic libraries in Greece since the proposed consortium for the union catalogue would promote the collaboration between the libraries. This action is still in progress.

According to this action, there is a double status for the library:

- a. The Horizontal action The library as part of a group The union catalogue
- b. The Vertical action The library as unit The bibliographic works

For the accomplishment of aims to achieve the implementation of the union catalogue three major decisions were taken:

- a. Every part of the program was discussed in the context of a special committee, which had to report the final conclusions. These committees consisted of members of the academic communities, both librarians and teaching staff. The mission for each of the committees is to present the current situation, reporting the final results and proposing possible solutions. Questionnaires were sent out to the library professionals in order to have a precise perception of the current situation.
- b. The preparation of technical reports for the Ministry of Education to declare all decisions.
- c. The preparation of organization charts.

This action is actually running on second year and the first positive results have been noticed in the libraries' functions and services.

### **3. THE NTUA CENTRAL LIBRARY**

Organization of the NTUA Central Library began in 1914. It is the first library in which a classification system was developed. Since 1996, the Library is located in two different campuses. The first at Patission campus contains the collection of the architecture faculty. The second (Central Library) is located at Zografou campus, has a collection of 30.000 volumes of books and 50.000 volumes of periodicals. The collection grows every year at the rate of 4.000 books of which 500 books constitute a special research collection.

The Central Library will be transferred into a new modern eight- floor building in the beginning of 2000.

At Zografou campus there are also small collections of books and periodicals at departmental libraries. All these libraries create administration problems. The Central Library has in general the supervision of all NTUA libraries.

The library automation system supports all library functions, OPAC, circulation, acquisitions and serials. Also a CD- ROM network permits online access to bibliographic databases throughout the campus as well as through dial up access The home page developed by the library staff is a effective gateway for accessing information on the daily library life

by providing access points to various services. A well-established inter-lending system serves further bibliographic requirements of the academic community in collaboration with the national academic libraries network and the British library Document Supply System.

Other activities of the Central Library include: staff training seminars, participation in the national programs including the 'Horizontal Action' for the development of Greek academic libraries union catalogue, participation in TEMPUS programs.

The NTUA Central Library runs a large-scale funded project that aims to development the library services as it has already mentioned above. Funding for this project is provided by E.U. through the Greek Ministry of Education.

### **3.1. Organization chart** (see figure 1)

At the academic library of NTUA, the management based on the library's organization framework.

Everyone knows the beneficial influence from the implementation of this organization framework at the administration level. The staff knows exactly the work structure and the job tasks. This is very important because the staff works within a system, which offers to employees a complete idea of objectives and tasks. Task specification within the library offices promotes better collaboration and work effectiveness.

The NTUA Central Library is an independent service within the University supervised directly by the Vice-rector and the Senate.

- a. The director of the library is at the head of the administration hierarchy. The director has the responsibility for the effective function of the library and it is the link between the library and the library committee.
- b. The assistant director assists the director in the daily run of the library and furthermore he/she is responsible for the library budget.
- c. The library committee proposes to the Senate on central library issues. The role of the library committee aims to:
  1. Work on the necessary policy framework in order to give the decisions needed for further library improvements.
  2. Design all required steps for specific decisions for the library organization.
  3. Propose the expenditures allocation to serve all specific aims on collection development and information technology implementation.

The committee consists of:

- The Vice Rector of academic affairs
- One representative from each faculty
- Three representatives from the teaching staff
- The director of the library
- The head of each library department

The tenure of the committee is three years.

- d. The departmental libraries are aimed to change the next years from the present situation to a new one that will be a small collection of reference material.
- e. The historical library. The collection of this library is composed of the historic material (books and serials) of the NTUA. Books and periodicals who has published before 1950. The mission of this library is to preserve this special collection.

### **3.2. Library's staff**

*Library staff categories are:*

- a. Qualified librarians
- b. Qualified staff from other professions
- c. Information science expertise
- d. Non-qualified technical staff

Work structure

The library structure is based on departments and offices.

**a. *Collection's department and financial management***

This department is responsible for collection development and collection development policy and financial issues. It is the link between the library and the academic community. This department consists of four offices:

1. Acquisitions office is responsible for analyzing the needs of the academic community and receiving books on order.
2. Documentation office is responsible for the bibliographic work.
3. Serials office is responsible for the serials collection.
4. Electronic documentation office, which supports all electronic library work.

**b. *Department for user services***

This department is responsible for ensuring all necessary work structure to satisfy end-user requirements. Material circulation, co-operation with other libraries, user education and interlibrary loan are among others the basic activities of this department.

This department consists of 3 offices:

1. Reference office
2. Circulation and interlibrary loan office
3. Audiovisual collection office

**c. *Department of technical support***

The mission of this department is to support the library electronic services.

The library automation, the network, the digital technology, the bibliographic databases on CD-ROMS, are of the main work responsibilities, of this office.

This department consists of two offices:

1. Software and network office.
2. Materials maintenance office. This office supports material preservation, the bookbinding and the shelving.

The implementation period for this Organization framework has started recently. We work within this new work structure the last year.

Libraries are the ideal places for the implementation of TQM. Using this tool, library's managers can transform and improve services provided by libraries.

Briefly, I would like to resume the basic principles of TQM:

1. take library decisions after careful analysis of the data
2. respect staff's idea
3. empower people and give them the appropriate authority in taking decisions

The TQM is not a 'quick fix' procedure and requires a long-term commitment by library managers. For NTU the good results of TQM have just been appeared.

TQM as a system of thinking and acting within an organization requires an internal continuous effort based on the belief that work structures must be under consideration not as fixed methods but as conditions for human resources development and work effectiveness.

There is no TQM system introduced in the academic libraries in Greece but there is a tendency towards the specification of new organization frameworks which will respond to the cultural, educational and research conditions in the specific national context.

**4. CASE-STUDY FOR LIBRARY MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN GREECE**

According to the results of a research on the academic libraries in Greece, the management practices in libraries are out of date by contrast with practices in most other European Union universities libraries.

The management is low efficiency, fact particularly negative for the academic libraries' objectives.

Of the 150 libraries that responded to the questionnaire of the survey, 107 have library committee. For 87 of these libraries the term library committee means one or two members of the teaching staff to whom the responsibility has been given for supervision to the daily library work.

The analysis of data shows that most faculty and laboratory libraries belong to this category. In most departmental libraries the department creates a library committee with three to five members. The role of the library committees is not clear in all libraries. A central library committee is responsible for policy determination, literature provision, co-ordination between central and departmental libraries, implementation of financial projects, etc. The general feeling is that these committees play a role of liaison between the library and the department. Many libraries committees do not forbear to interfere in affairs of the library and in such cases the library committee acts as an administrative rather than advisory body.

In most libraries the librarian's role is to present the topics for discussion only and not to participate as a full member of the committee.

By contrast with the situation in Greek universities, university and library administrators in universities of other members of the E.U. have put the improvement of communication as one of their first priorities.

A major question to be answered by Greek universities is which organization pattern should they select for the efficient running of their libraries. What is evident in all Greek universities is the need for better co-ordination of existing libraries.

In every university, all libraries need to be under the authority and control of the director of libraries and their staff should belong to the library staff rather to the departments or faculties.

Conclusively I would like to say that the Greek universities need to move from decentralized structures of their libraries to more centralized ones. The central library functioning principally as centre of a system. The departmental libraries could be for the support of research needs and the central library for students and multi-subject material. For the Greek universities with many departmental libraries the merging of departmental libraries into larger units may offer a full range of services and could be properly staffed.

The quality management for the libraries deserves special attention. The philosophy and management methods have started to implement since the appearance of the private office of documentation and services.

Also there are special interest for surveys in the field of quality management. With this method we can find ways and systems for the implementation of quality management in libraries.

## 5. QUESTIONNAIRES

One of the most important principles of TQM is to conduct surveys on users needs. Only with this method we are able to identify ways to improve library's daily run.

According to this method, the Central Library of NTUA, has conducted a number of surveys on user needs. Two of them are presented below:

The first survey was about the central library services. This survey is sent out to all members of the academic community.

The second survey was about the collection development of audiovisual material and electronic media and is intended only to teaching staff.

The data collection has been completed and the data processing are in progress.

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Figure 1

NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS  
CENTRAL LIBRARY  
ORGANIZATION CHART

