

Towards Better Quality in Healthcare and Operations Management: A Developmental Literature Review

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Abstract : This work presents the various perspectives, dimensions, components and definitions given to quality in the operations management (OM) and healthcare services (HCS) literature in time, highlighting gaps and learning opportunities between the two disciplines through a thorough search into their rich and distinct body of knowledge. Greater and new insights about the general nature of quality are obtained with findings such as in OM, quality has been approached in six fairly distinct paradigms (excellence, value, conformity to specifications, attributes, satisfaction and meeting or exceeding customer expectations), whereas in HCS, two approaches are prominent (Donabedian's structure, process and outcomes model and Lohr and Schroeder's circumscribed definition). The two disciplines views on quality seem to have progressed much in parallel with little cross-learning from each other. This work then proposes an encompassing definition of quality as a lever and suggests further research and development avenues for a better use of the concept of quality by academics and practitioners alike toward the goals of greater organizational performance and improved management in healthcare and possibly other service domains.

Keywords : healthcare, management, operations, quality, services

Conference Title : ICEOPM 2018 : International Conference on Engineering, Operations and Production Management

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : February 19-20, 2018