

Quality Management in Turkish Public Management: Challenges and Benefits

Hasan Alpay Karasoy (Associate Professor)
Selçuk University, Turkey

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Abstract

From the late 1970's onwards, traditional public administration was criticized because it does not meet the needs of developing and changing new world. Following this critique, a new approach to public administration was proposed under the name of New Public Management. The development of new public management changed the concept of the public service. Accountable, transparent, effective, and efficient services have become the basic principles of management. On the other hand, the term "quality" has also gained popularity in public administration. In this sense, Total Quality Management (TQM) was adopted to develop quality systems in public administration worldwide. Turkey has also adopted that system. In this study, the situation assessment of TQM process in Turkey was made through the presentation of strengths and weaknesses. The literature search is conducted to achieve this aim and it is obtained from the research that since quality management cannot be fully realized, there are some deficiencies in practice and in regulatory. In this context the regulatory process needs to be revised specially in terms of evaluating and auditing.

Keywords: Quality, Total Quality Management, Turkey

Introduction

Efficient public service is a crucial problem which come into prominence in the public management transformation process. From the great depression in the 1930's, it was began to propound a critique of the traditional public management which articulated a number of emergent dissatisfactions with it in terms of effective public services. In this context several public management approaches have developed. New public management is one of the crucial approach for public management and it put emphasis on efficient public management.

The new public management is applied different concepts and practices such as performance based which is measuring the outputs,

specialized form of governance, injection of market type mechanisms such as competitive, performance related pay and finally an emphasis on treating service users as customers and on the application of generic quality improvement techniques such as Total Quality Management (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017:10). The development of new public management changed the concept of the public service. Accountable, transparent, effective, and efficient services have become the basic principles of management. In the 1930s, new public management approach has forced the will of our government's quality service. For the purpose of adopting quality service system in an entire organization, Total Quality Concept was applied. During the implementation process, some important problems of the Turkish Public Management brought about major obstacles. In this study, recommendations for quality applications in public management and problems encountered through literature review were stated.

Quality

The concept of quality does not only include products but also services and how they are carried out. Today, government's services are based on customer orientation instead of citizen orientation. Quality represents the target of the customer, determined by himself and it also considers the needs of the customer in the competitive market (Ersen, 1997, 10). Quality, as it can be seen based on its explanation, is an important consideration at every stage of goods and services which aims to meet customer's expectations. However, this reveals a wholesale approach known as Total Quality Concept. Total Quality Management is an understanding that provides benefit to an organization or around the organization by quality oriented mentality through the participation of all members, aiming at achieving success through customer satisfaction (Muter Kayalidere, 2003, 103). Total Quality Management approach offers a model of developing modern and effective management system against conventional management. Therefore, the main characteristics of this management approach are (Özveren, 1997, 4):

- Focused on quality
- Team Work
- Process Approach
- Management by objectives
- Participatory management

The establishment of that management approach created by people brought about continuous improvement to the process and customer.

Nowadays, successful organizations are implementing this management approach in a rigorous way. Service or goods offered to customer are provided to customer in desired quality by using feedbacks gotten from the

audience and through the use of a continuous improvement in the Total Quality Management Philosophy.

Aims of the Total Quality Management

With a simple definition, the aim of total quality management is to ensure effective and efficient use of the organizations sources. However, this can be described as shown below:

- In understanding the effectiveness provided by quality, quality covers efficiency. Quality is concerned with good results, while efficiency is concerned with numbers of results.

- The target of quality is to reduce cost. If the costs are much higher, its reflection to the public will be much heavier. It aims to keep costs at the lowest level through the most economical manner with the zero-error principle.

- To satisfy relevant customers, enough continuity of total quality management is of significant importance. From production to strategy, plans and programs must be at every stage, but it must be continuous. The purpose of this is to satisfy the customer not for a short term, but for a long term suitable for their expectations and in providing continuity (Kazan & Ergülen, 2008, 103). Therefore, this continuity is called as "Kaizen". Kaizen is focused on processes, and focusing on customer is essential at every stage. (Sezer, 2001,170). As a result, by meeting customer's expectations, continuity is ensured.

- It is necessary to avoid wastage in organizations for the emergence of surplus. Therefore, sources of the organization must be used efficiently and well planned in all processes with total quality approach from purchasing to production and from production to sales.

Quality Management Process

Consequently, there are five (5) principles of Total quality process which is described briefly below:

Customer Orientation: This entails developing strategies to meet customer demands and to be separated from its competitors. Thus by providing customer satisfaction, there is a guarantee of achieving significant success of the organizations.

Continuous Improvement: Organizations which have adopted T.Q.M. philosophy have also adopted continuous improvement at every stage. Continuous development enables the rapid growth of vitality, motivation, and outputs (Ersen, 2004, 100). Through this dynamism, organizations prepare themselves against all conditions.

Leadership: To implement quality, it is important for the organization to adopt this approach from top to bottom. This, however, will be provided by

the leader of the organization. Leader adopts that process dynamically and provides opportunities to continue.

Participation: Employees should be involved in the understanding of quality regardless of their position. They should also encourage and maximize employees education through participation.

Analysis: This involves all the expression of all the transaction process of organization by measurable values. Thus, the data obtained express meaningful results to analysts, which will provide an opportunity to make the necessary interventions.

Turkish public management and quality

With the new public management approach, public services stability, transparency, and accountability have brought the performance metrics together. Performance service efficiency makes quality requirements in a broad sense. Continuous improvement of efficiency involves the implementation of the total quality management (Gedikli, 2001, 20). In other words, implementation of quality in public has become imperative. Despite the implemented public management reforms in our country, it is not at the desired point. Nevertheless, the Financial Management and Control Law No 5018 enacted in European Union Integration process has made our public management an important place in terms of quality. The reorganization of the audit of public expenditure is important for the integrity of the budget and accounting system (Arcagök et al., 2004, 13). With that law, it is intended to use the public resources effectively without wasting in accordance with the quality comprehension. Although public services are not for profit, quality of the service will enhance satisfaction (Balçı, 2003, 331). This satisfaction will improve quality comprehension.

Applicability of Our Country Applications

T.Q.M. applications are not at the desired point in our country. The most important reason for this is the lack of infrastructure of public management. Insufficient human resources and the lack of quality programs prevented quality policy (Tekin, 2004, 151). Also, political will, constitution, laws, administrative regulations required by T.Q.M. are inadequate (Tosun & Tosun, 1997, 54). Political administrations biased assignments, nepotism, appointments without merit, raises issues, and does not comply with the leadership and integrity principles of the T.Q.M.

In our public management, centralized management approach prevents the joint decision making and participatory management required by T.Q.M. Lack of the communication needed by governance forces the implementation of the concept of the T.Q.M.

In fact, the main problem is ignorance of the T.Q.M. approach as a culture and tradition in the public authorities. Fears such as bureaucracy density, increase of paperwork, and narrowing jurisdiction triggers that negative situation. This solid, inflexible hierarchical structure, can be changed with in-service trainings and regulations. These trainings must be able to cover not only the subordinates, but also cover superiors. Here, another important point is based on the fact that the recruitment to the public must correspond to the objective attributes, observance of the merit principle, and must be in accordance with the specified criteria. In achieving the goals of Turkish Public Management for the adoption of T.Q.M. as a management principle, personnel systems needs to be rearranged and reinforced with in service trainings. As a result, we can only eliminate the obstacles to quality.

Problems

As mentioned above, it is seen that there is a system problem in the implementation of the T.Q.S. However, these problems are briefly described below.

- The existence of the centralized structure is causing the ignoring of the needs of the citizens and their inability to meet demands adequately. Public officials work in this structure and they have made this negative management a habit. As a result, this habit results to expensive services for the citizens. Central system is causing untimely and late decisions and it also hinders public services.

- In our public management system, performance evaluations are not fully implemented. This is because evaluation is seen as a cover up for failure, intimidation with punishment, favoritism rather than skills, merit and awarding (Tosun, 1998, 93). Such performance evaluation also pulls down the motivation of the effective personnel.

- In our public management system, resistance is shown for such changes. Public officials adopted their procedure of work and layout as an habit. The structure of the organizations which these executives work precludes any of such changes because of their institutionalization (Akınoğlu, 1998, 138). This structure prevents the administrator to get out of the accustomed style of management. They perceive the results of the change as uncertainty and show resistance. To overcome this, individual and corporate contributions, provided by changes, should be discussed with executives through in service trainings.

- Our public managers encounter bigger problems which result to escaping from responsibility and not taking initiative when they met with other problems. This depicts that negative situation is a habit. However, T.Q.M. mentality requires intervening on problems quickly without disruption of the

service. In this process, it attempts to prevent the emergence of such problem anymore by considering the opinions of everyone involved.

- In order to become successful in T.Q.M., a people oriented approach must be taken into immediate consideration. Managers in our country should redirect their decisions of looking cute to take into consideration the demands of the politicians and seniors without analyzing the results of their decisions. This attitude prevents people-oriented active decisions and also reduces productivity.

- T.Q.M. has adopted a holistic approach and communication plays a very important role. In the process of the fulfillment of the public service, citizen's expectations should be absolutely considered. This reduces the waste of resources in terms of state and citizen. Communication levels must also be stimulated.

- Results in public services should be measured and these results should also be shared with citizens. Transparency will reinforce the confidence of both sides.

- Performance evaluations of the officials who are working in public service should be discussed through seminars and trainings. Thus, officials who have information about the details of the performance evaluation should pay more attention when working and this has a significant impact on efficiency directly.

- Applications of T. Q. M. in public should be analyzed permanently and these applications must be consistent with the institution's mission and vision. Also, these controls will help the organization to reach its goals.

Conclusion

Global competition affected, in positive sense, both private and public sector. T.Q.M. aims to achieve satisfaction which meets the expectations and needs of the citizens in a citizen-oriented way in public. By focusing on quality, it acts in an holistic way which all employees participates in. In our country, T.Q.M. based arrangements are carried out regularly in public sector. Nevertheless, these regulations did not fully meet desired results. In the public sector, it is necessary to solve these problems for the following reasons:

- To achieve the T.Q.M. philosophy and public management to the desired level in our country;
- To review regulations, laws etc. about public management again;
- To make regulations about resource usage by considering the hardness of resource usage today;
- To arrange the staff organization as appropriate to T.Q.M. from recruitment and promotion to performance evaluation;
- For the citizen-oriented management and the adoption of governance principles in public institutions;

- To identify strategies, especially for public authorities, for resistance to the changes brought by T.Q.M;
- In T.Q.M. process, it is necessary to increase level of communication and arrange in service trainings for all staff in a holistic approach.

Consequently, the implementation of T.Q.M. in our public management will face problems and difficulties absolutely. T.Q.M. needs to be brought as a management culture to ensure strategic management and appropriate decision making. So, when the government reduces costs, citizens will be satisfied from the service provided.

On the other hand, the institutions which are authorized for evaluating and auditing the TQM process should work more efficiently. In this respect, bureaucrats and the other decision makers believe and adopt this new concept of public management. For this aim, reluctant behaviors should be prevented by these authorized institutions in the public management.

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