

THE NEED OF TOTAL QUALITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: *In this work I have approached elements related to need of total quality in public administration field. I explained the total quality concept and total quality management concept as a strategy for continuous improvement of quality in public administration field.. We have also shown the importance of organizational culture to develop and implement total quality management. Throughout my paper I have presented and expressed the need of quality in the public administration area, starting from these considerations: the incidence in the economy, limited resources, reaffirming the democratic values, the legitimacy of the public area and the citizens' pressure.*

The total quality management supposes a continuous improvement of public services and processes as well as the creation of a management system focused on quality, which adds value to the customer citizen's perception by creativity and participation of the entire staff in this effort.

Keywords: *quality, strategy, performance, total quality management, public administration.*

Introduction

The concept of quality was completed with that of total quality. Total quality is a way of approaching of an organization, close to an elite working, highlighting all the forms of performance and the relationship between partners. It is a social revolution, both at work and also a rigorously efficient approach, to professionalism and success.

Total Quality Management is a powerful strategy of the organizations on long-term that determines a continuous improvement of the quality of products and services, as well as of the leadership ability to meet the needs of customers and, at the same time to create conditions to increase the indicators of economic performance.

Total quality management means the management of all the elements of an organization – processes, practices, systems, methodologies – and of all those who are involved or damage in any way the quality of product or service. [6]

The main goal of TQM is to create within the organization a climate in which all the resources are used creatively and efficiently and which gives the staff confidence in management. Some features of total quality management are considered to be essential [3]: change, customer orientation, communication, continuous improvement, corrective measures, cost of poor quality, the organizational structure of network type in the process or case management, imagination, creativity, IT, organizational culture, team, orientation towards the future.

Thus, implementing TQM in the organization generates competitiveness on the market, its competitiveness, which is supported by the following aspects [5]:

- TQM calls for innovation, flexibility and a financial potential;
- TQM, by its leverages, consolidates the motivation and creativity of employees, creating, thus, a greater potential of innovation;
- TQM allows a better control of processes in the planning, design, distribution areas, contributing to a greater flexibility;
- TQM achieves high quality services, the respect for the time limits of delivery, all these at competitive prices and the strengthening of the position on market.

In the concept of TQM the quality on market of an organization means more than the quality of its products and services. It includes the quality of each and every employee, the quality of work collaboration between the internal departments of the company and between the company and the outsiders, the company policy on quality.

TQM is a complex process, not a certain program, which has a methodology applicable to both firms producing goods and services and to those of services and which means to achieve the following functions: planning, organization, management, control, quality assurance, quality improvement. [7].

Thus, planning is the establishment of some specific tasks for each department, area, person, and the necessary means. All these are based on the knowledge of internal and external customers' needs in order to meet them frequently, constantly and tending, permanently, to overcome their expectations.

Organizing involves the establishment of an appropriate administrative structure, integrated into the existing one, which allows the operation of the qualitative system.

The management mobilizes the human resources through reasons for quality by the adoption of a style which stimulates the personal initiative to solve the problems that arise in the workplace.

The control measures the results and compares them with the objectives to determine deviations above or below. Quality assurance is a system of measures for building quality and preventing defects.

The improvement of quality assures the growth of the activity and processes effectiveness and efficiency to obtain benefits for the organization and customers.

All these functions contribute to the achievement of TQM goals materialized in satisfying the common needs of customers by exceeding their expectations, to achieve a competitive position on market through increased productivity and continuous improvement of quality, the construction of a total system of management by involving all the employees.

“*This journey to perfection*” [4] represented by TQM leads us to a higher quality offered to the customer at the lowest cost, and at the same time to get a profit and to an economic stability of the organization.

Landmarks related to total quality management in administration and public services

Currently, total quality and, implicitly the total quality management is increasingly projecting as a competitive strategy, which is becoming more evident in services in general and administration and public services in particular.

Not long ago, administrations and public services remained outside these concepts until it was reached at a crisis in the public administration and public services area. This situation has led to a rethinking of their role and mechanisms of management. Thus, it is increasingly seen an attempt to adapt and introduce methods and instruments of quality management in the public sector by simply copying or by appropriate adjustments, based on the characteristics and features identified for this sector.

This new approach involves an advance and, through this, it is recognized that the bureaucratic model does not meet the present economic, social and cultural conditions. In addition to this, the low number of possibilities forces us to efficiency, meaning to the success of public objectives at the lowest possible cost, optimizing the use of available resources.

On the other hand, it is necessary to show that any organization is inserted in a concrete environment depending on which will have to define its mission and goals. It is necessary to establish a process of adjustment to this environment, adaptation, in general, since it is changeable and uncertain.

A cultural change is also outlined that is alluded to with the greatest requirement for the citizen, in what concerns the public administration. It is about taking quality services and activities adjusted to needs and expectations.

These necessary changes in the public need an answer based on current models of quality, understood as a philosophy of an integrated management, as long as in their application, specific features of public administration are taken into account. But this should be done only by introducing new methods and models of management in any public or private organization.

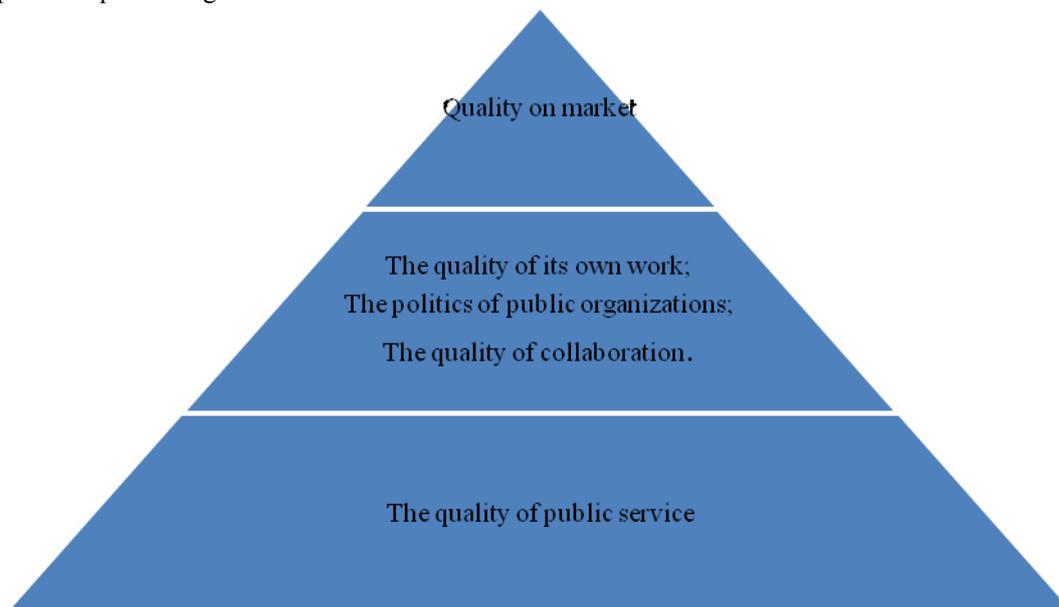


Figure 1 TQM pyramid in public administration

TQM approach in the public institutions from Romania supposes a succession of general and specific activities, thus [1]:

- The elaboration of an internal audit;
- The casual analysis of the audit results;
- The formulating of recommendations;
- Creating an internal system of quality;
- Implementing the new system;
- Monitoring the implementation;
- The permanent adaptation of the public institution and administrative authority to the new requirements of the administrative system and the served market system;
- The evaluation of results;
- Formulating the proposals of improving the new system of public management based on quality.

The TQM basic coordinates have a special particular relevance for the organization management in general and for the organizations in the public sector they refer especially to:

- ✓ considering quality a fundamental parameter in the process of satisfying the customers' requirements;
- ✓ creating a system within the organization through which the supplier can achieve a high level of products and services as expected by the customers;
- ✓ the establishment of a standard of performance named “zero defects”, which can become an essential objective;
- ✓ considering the fact that a criterion of quality measuring is its cost.

The total quality management in public administration must be focused on a series of principles, according to figure number 3:

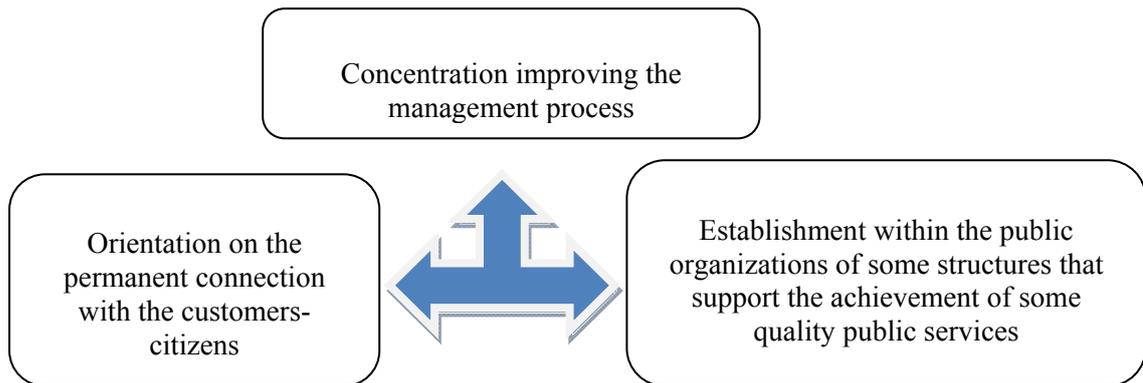


Figure nr.2. The basic principles in the public administration area

The concerns of public managers in developed countries for a continuous improvement of quality for the services offered determined the focusing of attention to creating an organizational culture and a management system through which this objective becomes a priority in the structure of the objectives system of the public organizations they run.

The need of TQM in public administration

The need for a quality management system focused on quality, which leads to a long-term success in public administration, is supported by the following: incidence within the economy, limited resources, reaffirming democratic values, legitimizing the public domain, the citizens' pressure [2].

In what concerns the *incidence within the economy*, the central public and local administrations have an important role in the global economy because they represent 1/2 of GDP in most countries in Europe. Thus, public administrations, which act after the total quality criteria will be a model, emphasizing cultural values to stimulate the search for efficiency and quality in other areas than strictly the public ones.

Limited resources plus the current economic crisis and the attempt to reduce the public deficit require an efficient management of all the categories of resources. On the other hand the citizen is becoming more demanding, both in public services and in the management of taxes, which, in one form or another are paid. It requires high quality, performance, but the means do not grow equally.

The reaffirmation of democratic values – once the equality of rights and indicators before the law being established, the emphasizing of democratic values will require the correlation of the public administrations and state's activity with the demands of social needs and requirements.

The responsibility of public bodies must have in addition the objective of some adequate public plans, taking over the idea of improving services at a lower cost.

In the current concept of quality, the citizen who uses the public services is the protagonist, the one who evaluates and, every action must take into account its expectations, requirements and needs. Also, the quality of various public services must be evaluated by the citizen-customer, who ultimately must become the authentic judge of the quality of services. We affirm therefore that the society and citizens are those who really require the standards of public services evaluating their performance and thus, they reaffirm the democratic values.

It implicitly appears the condition that the various measures should increase the democratic accountability of the political leaders, because they must recognize the wide range of stakeholders who must be actively involved in the evaluation of the public programs.

The legitimacy of the public domain. At present, it tends to believe that the public domain is inherently inefficient, losing therefore the acceptance by society. Among the causes of this perception of the reduced efficiency of public organizations, we can mention:

- contrast between expectations regarding the existent efficiency in public and private organizations. In the first case, these tend to be specific and established in terms of setting their own objectives, while within the public organizations, the political changes can generate breaks in the outlined plans to reach goals and even within the objectives themselves;
- very often we meet an exaggeration regarding the mistakes in a service within the public administration.

Also, a poor administrative activity or a doubt reflected in a communication environment has an important repercussion, disrupting the public opinion on political or administrative field, to a greater extent than the reaction that an equivalent situation would cause to a private enterprise.

To change the critical and negative public opinion, which is in a society regarding the organizations within the public administration, it is necessary to increase productivity and the quality of public services, which makes them competitive in cases where competing with private organizations (health, education, etc.).

The pressure of citizens. Lately, with the increasing population, the relationship the citizens had with the state and public administrations has evolved, moving it from the status of the beneficiary to that of court that has rights and who claims to receive certain services or supplies.

We can say that, in general, the citizen is more and more informed, enjoys a higher cultural level, is aware that he supports the state and public administrations with its taxes, direct or indirect, and therefore expects a response to its requirements.

It is essential for administration to determine the needs and expectations of citizens to establish policies to allow their satisfaction, thus, being able to take up the challenge of a company more and more demanding, aware of its rights and the ability to choose.

The methodologies the total quality management involves deal with this problem, allowing a correlation with the requirements and an improved management as a philosophy and method.

In the regard of local bodies, we can say that they possess certain characteristics that make them particularly permissible to implement new ways of management. In this respect, a number of reasons may be listed, which make it possible and, moreover, even necessary to implement the changes concerning the manner of management:

- ✚ Municipalities are part from a market environment, more than any other administration. Public services and the quality of life it offers are elements which determine the citizens to make a difference among cities;
- ✚ They have a direct relation with the citizen. This can take part in and influence more directly than over other administrations;
- ✚ The activity and services it provides are in direct contact with the citizen;
- ✚ In addition, the presence of a greater organizatoric flexibility in local organizations allow a simpler change in the management and implementation of the new models.

Implementing TQM in the public sector means giving up the traditional pyramids, and the old traditional culture, preoccupied more with procedures than performance, gave way to the new system of management [8].

Conclusions

For the public administration from Romania to join the quality standards that characterize the public administration in EU countries, especially in terms of quality of public services, the legislative harmonization must be limited to the essential requirements, and the application of legislation to regard the citizen as the more demanding customer of public services.

The transition to more adequate techniques for Total Quality Management is imposed, such as: developing the relation of the administration with the citizen and the knowledge of his priorities and desires; preoccupation for an efficient communication from the public official and for his training; the impulse to a change of culture; developing new procedures for the regulations writing and reviewing, which are a representation of processes in public administration, development that supposes the recognition of their important role in achieving objectives; the application of information technologies.

A lot of specialists consider that we live in an economy dominated by speed and global influences, often in real-time, of communications and information, no matter the distance. They believe that its basic traits are globalization and digitization characterized by giving intangibility to transactions, both commercial and direct investments [7].

In these circumstances in which economy, markets, operations, businesses become global, the quality management and first of all the total quality management should be reconsidered

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