

ROLE OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCES IN ORGANIZATIONS

İnsan Kaynakları İle İlişkisi Bağlamında Total Kalite Yönetiminin Organizasyonlar Açısından Önemi

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ABSTRACT

Organizations have transformed into more complex structures today due to constantly changing conditions in the business environment. Also, the challenges derive from the rapidly growing competition forced them not only to learn and control external environmental factors but also to focus on quality and human resources aspects to achieve success by gaining and sustaining a competitive power. In other words, it is a necessity for organizations to be aware of ongoing developments in their environment to continue its improvement process and ensure that their employees also keep up with this progress. Therefore, organizations need to implement effective Total Quality Management policies and human resources play a key role in planning and implementation of these policies at both organizational and individual levels. Within this context, impact of TQM for organizations will be examined in this paper within the context of its relationship with Human Resources Management.

Keywords: Total quality management, human resources management, organization, HRM, TQM

ÖZET

İş ortamındaki sürekli değişen koşullar nedeniyle günümüzde organizasyonlar daha karmaşık yapılara dönüşmek zorunda kalmıştır. Ayrıca, hızla büyüyen rekabetten kaynaklanan zorluklar, onları yalnızca dış çevresel faktörleri öğrenmeye ve kontrol etmeye değil, aynı zamanda rekabet gücü kazanarak ve sürdürerek başarıya ulaşmak için kalite ve insan kaynakları yönlerine odaklanmaya zorlamaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, kuruluşların, iyileştirme sürecini sürdürmek ve çalışanlarının da bu ilerlemeye ayak uydurmasını sağlamak için çevrelerinde devam eden gelişmelerden de haberdar olmaları bir zorunluluktur. Bu nedenle, kuruluşların etkili Toplam Kalite Yönetimi politikaları uygulaması gerekmektedir. İnsan kaynakları, bu politikaların hem organizasyonel hem de bireysel seviyelerde planlanmasında ve uygulanmasında kilit rol oynamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Total Kalite Yönetiminin kurumlar üzerindeki etkisi İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi ile ilişkisi bağlamında bu makalede incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplam kalite yönetimi, insan kaynakları yönetimi, kurumlar, IKY, TKY

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, all organizations are facing the challenges from increasing competitive pressure. The best way to keep up with the rapid change and development in the world is to gain competitive power by increasing the quality standards. This seems possible only with Total Quality Management (TQM) that has proven itself among one of the major innovations in the field of modern management considering its important implications for the effective management of people. Quality management is not a philosophy anymore that is only applicable to the quality of products and services but also to all other aspects of organizational activities (Tan, 2002).

Within this context, there is a close relationship between TQM and HRM in terms of continuous improvement of organizations because planning HRM policies and practices in alignment with TQM principles of the organizations would ensure reaching out to desired level of quality at organizational level through improving the performance of their employees. Therefore, adoption of appropriate TQM philosophies and their successfully implementation across the whole organization is critical for all

organizations to realize their corporate goals and objectives. Accordingly, impact of TQM on organizations will be examined in this study within the framework of linkages between TQM and HRM. First, concepts of TQM and HRM will be examined. Then, relationship between TQM and HRM will be described to understand the importance of why both fields are closely associated to each other in terms of quality aspects. Finally, role and impact of TQM on organizations will be examined that is followed by conclusion and recommendations in the last section.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Concept of Total Quality Management

There are several definitions of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the literature from different point of views. Therefore, it is not possible to define the concept with just one definition. TQM emerges as a continuous improvement process in order to meet the quality perception and expectation of people consists of a set of systematic activities that serves as a guide for all organization. From a broader perspective, TQM refers to all efforts to achieve quality-oriented activities in an organization with the contribution of employees at all levels. (Develioglu, et al., 2006).

As defined by Palo & Padhi (2005) as a philosophy and a management program, it is possible to describe TQM not only by the quality of the product or service point of view, but as a management approach that ensures customer satisfaction as well as quality products, continuous improvement efforts on the product and service are managed. Within this framework, TQM can be defined as a management approach that takes its power from people by making it a principle to work as a team by sharing a common goal, to create the highest values for customers, to support changes, to reward creativity, and to ensure excellence is the responsibility of all employees (Tekin, 2007). In a similar context, Isaksson (2006) defines TQM as “the efforts to meet and preferably exceed the needs and expectations of customers with the lowest cost through continuous improvement of labor, to which all those involved have a commitment, focusing on the processes of the organization.” In other words, TQM is considered as a management system in which it can manifest itself as the existence of common goals within the organization, working as a team in line with these goals, and sharing responsibility by all employees to offer the best to customers.

TQM is a process-oriented philosophy that requires organization-wide changes in organization processes such as production, decision-making, employee development, participation and involvement (Mehra, et al., 2001) (Abdullah, et al., 2009). For organizations, implementing TQM to achieve an optimal integrity requires cooperation between various internal and external elements. Therefore, the quality of communication and cooperation determines how the total quality and related philosophy is applied throughout the organization (Diemer, 1994). In the literature, there are a certain number of principles and techniques required to be followed to able to achieve successful implementation of TQM. It is also important to note that these principles should be adopted by all employees and implemented by whole organization (Turan, 2011). The most important of these principles can be given as leadership of the senior management, continuous improvement, and development (Kaizen), performance evaluation, measurement and monitoring, customer focus, teamwork and full participation, training, and prevention of errors.

Evolution of TQM dates back to 1926 in which used by Henry Ford in his book ‘My Life and Work’ as a new form of management. However, TQM has not managed to be popular until 1950s when Deming started to teach statistical methods and Juran started to teach quality management techniques to Japanese companies. Following the expansion of understanding of total quality aspects and issues from only quality of products into whole organizational level and success of Japanese companies implemented this approach, TQM started to emerge as a new management concept (Yong & Wilkinson, 2001) (Spencer, 1994). In 1980s, American companies after experiencing strong competition in the global market against Japanese companies, they associated their success with implemented TQM practices and they also started to focus on TQM. Since then, TQM started to be used by organizations to gain competitive advantage in the global market (Oakland, 2004) (Douglas & Judge, 2001).

2.2. Concept of Human Resources Management

The term ‘human resources’ was first introduced in 1817 by the economist Springer, and this term reached to its complete form following the ideas put forward by Taylor and Fayol in the business administration field. Storey (1989) defined HRM as ‘a set of interrelated policies with an ideological and philosophical underpinning’ that is comprised of several aspects such as a particular group of thoughts and assumptions,

a strategic factor affects decisions about people management and form the employee relationship and involves participation of line managers during the process. Boxall and Purcell (2003) describes HRM as a concept that consists of all activities associated to the management of employee relationships in organizations while Byars & Rue (2004) defined HRM similarly as set of activities that are designed to meet needs and coordinate human resources of organizations. However, HRM can be defined as the policies, practices and systems which have an influence on employees' behaviors, attitudes, and performance (Hollenbeck & Wright, 2011). In other words, the process which includes employing people, training and compensation of them, developing policies and strategies to earn their commitment and influencing practices of people in the company (Frasch, et al., 2009).

Evolution and development of human resources management practices date back to 1900s in which European economy was developing rapidly (Roetlishberg & Dickson, 1939). Rapidly growing economy of the era emerged necessity of a new different approach on the efficiency of human management practices in the rising labor market of the time. Considering the economies of the period focused on preparations for the First World War and the post-war period, wide range of skilled, well organized and disciplined labor force was required for the industrial production. Consequently, evolution and development in management of labor were driven by all the aforementioned factors which resulted in identification of four stages as welfare stage in industrial age, change of focus from welfare to personnel administration, evolution and development of personnel management and change to human resource management (Cuming, 1985) (Chruden & Sherman, 1984).

Development of HRM in understanding of today has been possible in a long period by going through several stages following the transition process from personnel management to human resources management. As can be seen in the literature, the development levels of HRM are addressed by various researchers with different perspectives (Tuncer, 2011). In personnel management, employees were considered as a cost element to be avoided for organizations due to perception of its limited function on just keeping records. However, with development of modern understanding, human resources started to be acknowledged as an important source of organizations that need to be developed rather than cost factors (Ogut, et al., 2004). Guest (1989) introduced some major policy goes to make a differentiation between both concepts by asserting that HRM is not only a replacement of personnel management, but it is a different concept. Differently from personnel management, HRM focuses on commitment and loyalty of employees to the organization to improve their performance, takes quality of employees into consideration in production of quality goods and services due to acknowledgement of their potential contribution for both organization and the customers, adopts a flexible approach in management of employees in all aspects and integrate HRM policies with strategic goals of the organization.

By the second half of the 1900s, with the development of technology and the increasing competitive environment and the influence of other environmental factors, the employees started to be considered as a source of competitive power that determines the production and service processes, ensures its coordination, and a key element that increases its value of organizations (Tuncer, 2011). Especially over the last twenty years, there have been major significant changes in HRM field that only increased importance of HRM more in the organizations of the new millennium. In the past whereas HRM was recognized as processing payrolls or filling enrolments forms of employees, now HRM has means of great importance as playing a critical role in business strategy of the organization on its road to achievement (Frasch, et al., 2009). Therefore, also HRM plays a key role in organizations today in achievement of business objectives. As a unique source for organizations, effective management of people are as important as any other quality, technology or strategic aspects for organizations because acquiring and retaining qualified human resources and increasing their productivity would have a direct impact on organizational performance as well.

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TQM AND HRM

Total Quality Management (TQM) and Human Resources Management (HRM) have been quite popular among the researchers from business management field especially during last a few decades due to their significant impact on organizational and individual performance (Boon, et al., 2007). Currently, there is a common agreement among the researchers on importance of role of HRM on successful TQM implementation in organizations. According to Herbig et al. (1994), both TQM and HRM seek to achieve similar objectives by focusing on productivity, profitability and motivation based on a customer-oriented

approach. They both aim to create an organizational culture based on high-performance systems (Ooi, et al., 2009).

Dependence of successful TQM implementation on human factors provides to be the common ground for both discipline fields as they both have a human-oriented approach. In fact, both TQM and HRM carry out their activities based on the systems that are in interaction with each other because in addition to the skills, knowledge and competencies of employees, there are also some other factors that affect the individual and organizational performance such as motivation, effective communication, continuous training, effective remuneration policies and corporate support for career development. Role of relationship between HRM and TQM and its importance in achieving the organizational objectives can be seen in these aspects. In this approach, employees are regarded as the key factor in the success of organization. The common objectives of both systems can be described as creating a long-term employee satisfaction and loyalty and to implement policies and practices in this regard. Therefore, it is necessary for HRM to be aware of TQM philosophies and adopt them as well (Tozkoparan, 2004).

Linkage between HRM and TQM also reveals itself in the implementation process of TQM philosophy due to its major role in its operational development and communication throughout the organization. HRM can also manage the change process at employees' level by developing and delivering training programs that would accelerate the adoption and adaptation process of TQM vision by the organization. Recruitment, selection, appraisal and reward management functions of HRM are other important aspects that help to build and implement a quality-based orientation in the organizations (Izvercian, et al., 2014).

Since it is one of main objectives of organizations to improve their production quality by improving their performance, efficiency and working conditions of the employees, this brings TQM and HRM even closer to each other. There is a two-way relationship between TQM and HRM since the successful implementation of TQM is carried out by human resources. In addition, TQM aims to satisfy needs of the employees, improve their motivation, personal and professional skills, and competencies, and create a reliable and healthy work environment as priority. In this context, HRM plays a critical role and needs to ensure that HR functions are designed in accordance with goals and strategies of TQM (Ozkan, 2006).

The relationship between TQM and HRM can be found in the use of two distinct systems, 'hard' and 'soft', by several researchers in the literature. While Evans and Lindsay (1996) separated TQM into two systems as 'management' and 'technical', management system consisted of issues related to HRM. As also suggested by Wilkinson (1992), 'hard' side of TQM consists of technical system such as production techniques, quality and statistical controls, design and deployment processes, 'soft' side of TQM was regarding human resources such as management of internal employee communication.

According to the researchers, high failure rates in the implementation of TQM in organizations mainly are caused by not paying enough attention to the critical role of HRM during the process. Total quality is described as a holistic concept that requires participation of all employees with motivation and dedication. And, this is where HRM plays a major role by playing a major role as a catalyst in the implementation of TQM by ensuring its internalization by the employees (Palo & Padhi, 2005) (Hubiak & O'Donnell, 1996) (Wilkinson, 1992). According to Wilkinson et al. (1991), HR issues should have the highest priority for senior management of organizations to ensure that all efforts of TQM can be realized effectively. The empirical study conducted on the role of HRM practices in TQM by Yang (2006) revealed that the high failure rate of TQM practices is closely related to management of HR practices. The data obtained from the respondents confirms that HRM practices significantly affect successful implementation of TQM. Results also showed that HRM practices improved employee and customer satisfaction by maintaining "quality awareness" and "corporate image". Therefore, organizations need to adopt more constructive approach of HRM and redesign its processes and functions in a way that will align with TQM principles and provide a strategic support (Hur, 2009) (Greasley, 2004). In other words, it is necessary for representatives of HRM department to participate into development, introduction, and maintenance processes of TQM to ensure that HRM can provide support to whole quality improvement process through orientation of HR systems and functions. Also, granting HRM department more decision-making authority would provide a positive contribution to the introduction and implementation of quality improvement initiatives (Palo & Padhi, 2005) (Vouzaz, 2004).

4. IMPACT OF TQM ON ORGANIZATIONS



As one of the major innovations in management field over the last two decades, TQM is recognized a comprehensive way that significantly improves the quality and organizational performance. Also, its major positive impact on both individual and organizational performance are widely accepted by the researches from the business management field (Ooi, et al., 2009)(Hunt, 1993).

TQM comprises of systems that can make organizations to gain and sustain competitive power through continuous improvement of human resources, quality of products and services, processes and environment (Jumenez & Martinez, 2009). Well-established performance management systems help to manage human resources effectively and improve their performance by supporting human resources activities and increase competitiveness internally across the organization. By monitoring the organizational activities and development of employees, training and development programs can be designed to improve their skills and competencies and align the individuals needs of the employees with organizational business objectives (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).

TQM enables organizations to monitor the quality aspects at each stage of their business operations both before the activities start and after the activities finish. Therefore, it does not only allow companies to improve their services continuously after determination of errors but also prevent them before it even occurs. Also, it ensures the participation of employees to the continuous improvement process of organization and helps to develop their skills and competencies that affects both individual and organizational performance positively as well. In addition, TQM provides a great contribution to the productivity of organizations through its practices implemented each stage of production activities to ensure that every single activity is carried out according to the TQM principles. In alignment with the assumption that the participation of all employees directly affects the productivity of the organizations, TQM practices are carried out by targeting the full participation of all employees and continuous activities and trainings are planned and delivered to improve the performance of employees and increase their efficiency are provided (Karta, 2018) (Turkan, 2018).

From TQM point of view, organizations have two types of target customers: external and internal. The employees of the organization as internal customers, and the external customers who buy products and services of the organizations are both critically important for the success of organizations. Overall, satisfaction of both customers through adoption of TQM practices would provide organizations a competitive power.

There are several researches in the literature investigated the impact of implementation of TQM and HRM practices on organizations. Results from the empirical study of Yang (2006) on high-tech companies in Taiwan showed that organization performance and its quality was affected by TQM practices positively. Implementation of both HRM and TQM practices had significantly positive effects on satisfaction of employees and customers as well as quality awareness and company's corporate image. Compensation, training, employee development, culture and quality control were other TQM and HRM practices had positive impact on quality performance. According to the empirical study conducted on the relationship between TQM and HRM and its impact on the organizational performance by Daoud (2012), it is revealed that HRM practices, such as training and development, employee career planning, recruitment and selection have a major role on the implementation of TQM and HRM and TQM practices together have a significant impact on organizational performance. Saizarbitoria (2006) was another researcher who found a positive direct correlation between TQM practices and organization performance. As also asserted by Abdaziz (2015), TQM strategies focus on improving customer satisfaction can also directly affect the organizational performance significantly.

Although there are also some researchers, such as Dooyoung et al. (1998), who opposed the prevailing opinion of the majority by arguing that TQM practices could keep organizations from achieving their objectives, substantial amount of findings showed that TQM practices have a positive impact on organization performance by increasing customer satisfaction and quality performance of products and services.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In rapidly increasing competitive business environment, it has become an important target for organizations to be able to respond to swift changes in demand with instant and high-quality products with lowest costs possible. Also, rapid growth of organizations created more complex organizational structures and caused

emergence of more challenges. To be able to achieve success, organizations recognized that they need to analyze external and internal factors in their business environment, be aware of ongoing changes and developments, and keep up with them by ensuring a continuous improvement process to sustain their competitiveness in the global market.

Although external environmental factors are also critical for success of organizations, there is more emphasis on the human resources nowadays as they are recognized a unique source of competitive advantage that cannot be replicated by other organizations in case of they are utilized efficiently and effectively. Considering the importance of acquiring and retaining highly qualified human resources, organizations should continue their investments on human capital by providing them required knowledge and continue improving their skills and competencies through trainings. This can only be achieved by TQM and HRM departments working in alignment with each other in organizations.

A dual approach on TQM and HRM can provide even more positive impact for organizations considering that they serve to meet similar corporate objectives. Therefore, an integrated strategic approach among TQM and HRM departments would ensure a better coordination and help to improve organizational performance. As asserted by Redman and Matthews (1998), survival of organizations highly depends on successful integration and management of these departments. Therefore, it could be more effective to design TQM and HRM in organizational structure under the top management so that they can carry out their activities in cooperation by adopting and following same quality principles.

It can be concluded that implementation of TQM through HRM practices and policies can have a positive impact on gaining and sustaining competitive advantages for the organizations by improving provided quality of products and services and reducing costs. Also, TQM enables to create an organizational culture, in which the motivation and continuous participation of the employees are realized, to meet customer expectations at the highest level through continuous improvement and development and to increase the market share by providing competitive power to the organization.

However, the challenges emerge when it comes to the implementation stage of TQM principles. Therefore, it is noteworthy that considering the major role HRM plays in implementation of TQM philosophy and principles, positive impact of TQM on organizational performance and competitiveness can be realized only if HRM can be successful at managing the development, communication and operational processes of TQM among the employees because successful implementation of TQM and achieving its goals are only possible if it is learned and adopted by all employees. As suggested in several empirical researches in the literature, a particular strategic approach of HRM is necessary for successful implementation of TQM principles.

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