

The Plus Value In Health Sector: Total Quality Management

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Abstract

Total Quality Management (TKY) is a method which aims to obtain correct product and service initially and at the beginning of the process and to repeat this process over and over, to activate the organization as a whole, to make the organization gain the flexibility and competitive power. Total Quality Management brings the processes appealing to all activities under control and provides the continuation of service quality in each level. Hence, the hospital managements as they take humans into account as their first priority are to put the system of Total Quality Management into practice so that they can render this service as a value. This system will enable the hospitals to have more productive, efficient and competitive structure.

The criterion that separates health sector from the others is the fact that it is directly related to the human life based service area. So, the health sector services are to be given utmost care and the service quality is to be as high as possible. That the service which is in the framework of Total Quality Management will make the hospitals institutionally successful and competitive is an undeniable fact. The objective of the study is to lay an emphasis on the importance of Total Quality Management for hospitals, and to create awareness, and to reveal the implicational differences with the other sectors as well.

Keywords: Quality, Total Quality Management, Perceptual Service Quality

1.INTRODUCTION

The businesses must strive hard to compete with the other ones and to develop sustainability. Therefore, the firms must develop perpetually, search for perfection, and compete with zero error. Within this context, the term quality occurs as a concept to be laid emphasis. The term quality is the philosophy that makes all the employees potentials higher than expected and embraces the needs and the expectations of the customers with the organization.

Total Quality Management is tried to be implemented in the hospital management rapidly as a service sector. The health services are an area of service which is crucial and which does not accept any error and which is directly related to the human life itself. When compared to many other state services, the health services are to be given utmost care than the others and

it is inevitable responsibility to suggest it with the highest quality (Yüksel, Sadaklıoğlu, 2007).

Health services consist of a great many multidimensional and comprehensive processes including its offer, financial issues, providing processes all which is to be analyzed by shareholders elaborately as well. So, the assessment of the services quality of health institutions can be achieved only through examining all these procedures holistically (Zerenler, Öğüt, 2011).

2.The Quality in Health Sector

The hospitals where the health services are provided are the organizations in which all types of health services are produced economically and constantly as well as educational, research and community health care services are carried out without any concern for profit, and they are as complex institutions in which various types of inputs are converted into useful outputs (Sevin,1999:181). In this context, Total Quality Management is based upon the idea to meet the needs and expectations of the patients on time. Therefore, from the perspective of Total Quality Management, both the employees and patients are of great significance and the organizations are to take into account this issue (Gurnani, 1999).

The elements of quality in health sector can be regarded as “patient happiness” and can be defined as the whole procedures that include correct diagnose, correct treatment, the services with smiling face, clean hospital, fresh atmosphere, convenient price and so forth and that aim to the happiness of the patients (Morgil ve Küçükçirkin, 1995: 33).

The implementations of the total quality management that initiated in 1980s, patient satisfaction is taken into account the important dimension of quality in providing health services and the feedbacks of patients in this process gained importance too. The perceptions and the assessments of patients on service quality depend upon not only their own preferences but also their friends’ impact on the choice of hospitals and their advices which is demonstrated through the researches (Pres, 2002:88).

Currently today, in parallel to the increase in the educational, cultural, and social level of the communities, the questioning of the health services come to the fore. In the past, the patient profile as a customer who accepts the pill and the decision of a doctor without any hesitation is replaced by those who want more information about his health, who search, and who consider the other alternatives to be treated by other doctors. This case actually makes the hospitals’ job more difficult as the days pass on the basis of satisfying the patients as customers (Yanmaz, 2005).

Bringing the quality upon the agenda frequently on health services has various reasons. Among these, the three of them are preliminary. On account of the fact that the health services are the ones which are mostly provided by state, the state itself play a very effective role in this process. Secondly, customers and the other shareholders have demands on health quality. Lastly, the interest occurs as a result of the priorities of hospitals. The role of the state as a service provider has increased the interest in the studies of quality. Initially, many

governments take over the financial issues, today they are concerning with organization, management, and quality and many countries also take over responsibility on quality amendment (Kunst ve Lemmink, 2000: 1124).

The studies on quality in health services have differences with the other businesses for the characteristics of the service itself. The health businesses have characteristics as stated below (Kiyimir, 1995:15):

Each patient has strikingly different from one another in terms of diagnostic and treatment procedures. The demand for particular times to hospitals cannot be estimated correctly.

The hospitals cannot adapt themselves to the changes in the demand in a short of time.

The production of the services cannot be stocked up. They are consumed when it is produced.

The division of labour and specialization brings about an increase in the labour cost.

The certificate given to guarantee the quality of the services in terms of all the procedures included is named after ISO 9000 quality security system. The ISO 9000 certificate is composed of these features as mentioned below (Efil, 1999: 218).

Table 1. The Series of ISO

<u>The Name of The Standard</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
ISO 9000	Quality management and quality assurance standard choice and user manual
ISO 9001	Quality systems-design / development, production and a model for quality assurance
ISO 9002	Quality systems, and a quality assurance model for production and in the business
ISO 9003	Quality assurance model in the latest treatments and experiments
ISO 9004	The manual for quality management and quality systems
ISO 9004-2	The quality guide dictionary for services
ISO 9005	Quality dictionary
ISO 10011-1	The quality systems scrutiny, guidebook and scrutiny
ISO 10011-2	The quality systems scrutiny, the criteria for quality system scrutiny

ISO 10011-3	The quality systems scrutiny, guidebook and scrutiny programs management
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Source: EFİL, İ., **Toplam Kalite Yönetimi ve ISO 9000 Kalite Güvence Sistemleri**, Alfa Basım Yayın Dağıtım, İstanbul, 1999.

By means of forming a system compatible for ISO 9001 quality assurance system, its management enables more systematic and controllable way of working. And this implementation makes the institution gain respect due to the fact that it has the most well known standard all over the world (http://www.standartkalite.com/saglikta_kalite_akreditasyonu.htm).

3.CONCLUSION

Total quality management is on the fore owing to patient rights, ethics, the implementation of health services in plan, the motivation of the employees, the following of service takers' and shareholders' full satisfaction and assessment, taking into account the results, the assessment of the services in regards to quality is possible to be achieved only through quality management perception. The increasing knowledge level of the patients as well as their expectations paves the way for an increase in the importance of Total Quality Management (<http://www.saglik.gov.tr> Retrieved: 01.02.2012).

The Total Quality Management studies are directly related to the diagnosis, treatment and treatment procedures. The health systems are to apply diagnostic and treatment procedures in line with scientific norms and standards on the one hand; on the other hand, the expectations and the wishes of the patients are not to be ignored in the service providing processes. In spite of the fact that it is not reached certain definition on the health service quality, in the discussions, it is ascertained that it is focused on the fulfillment of the customers in terms of social, cultural, and economic ways. (Devebakan, Yağcı, 2005).

The researchers conducted reveal that the customers share their satisfaction with a minimum number of 6 while they share their dissatisfaction with 25 people. The main idea that lies behind the customer satisfaction is to satisfy the customers and to make them loyal to the institutions for their further needs. The privatization of the state hospitals which is on the agenda today, the main basis of customer satisfaction in both state and private hospitals is to overlap the customers' expectations and the services of the institutions provided.

The implementations of Total Quality Management in Health Services are the set of procedures through which the hospitals get familiar with their deficiencies and define them and determine the policies and strategies for the improvement of service quality which will direct the feedbacks of the patients (Songür, 1998).

It is strategically important to give all the employees in the hospitals the educations of total quality management for them to carry out the responsibilities, to qualify the general service of hospitals and to satisfy the patients as well. In this context, it is actually of great importance to give education considering the factors that create dissatisfaction among the patients. The utmost care given to the patients, giving necessary information to them depending upon their expectations, being patient and kind to them will go up the service quality that the patients perceive (Zerenler, Öğüt, 2007).

Moreover, the implementation of the Total Quality Management will stem in positive results such as the effective use of the insufficient hospital resources, the decrease of the financial issues, the increase the rivalry capacity of the employees, the increase in the satisfaction of the patients and employees. Through quality in service providing, the motivation and the job satisfaction of the employees, the modernization of the management and organizational procedures, the rationalism in the decision making mechanisms, the documentation of information systems, and lastly the operability of the communicational mechanisms are expected. In addition to these, via quality, it is aimed at patient satisfaction, the development of team spirit with team work and more than anything else “Common Good” (Aslantekin ve diğerleri, 2007).

The important thing to be concerned about Total Quality Management is the fact that these procedures will not bare results in a short of time. The study conducted in 1991 by American General Accounting Office, it was put forward that the implementations of the Total Quality Management will result in its usefulness after 2.5 years on average (Terziovski and et al., 1999:916).

The managers of the health institutions can only increase their institutions’ power of competition and performance only when they are aware of the patients’ expectations and the performance of the service given.

To sum up, providing reachable and continually renovated health service will increase the level of satisfaction of both employees and customers, in other words, patients.

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