

## QUALITY LEVEL OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

After 1980's in Turkey, total quality management approach is tried to be applied primarily in education and in private and public sectors. The purposes are to continuously improve and reform every individual's work in education and workforce in sectors, to satisfy the requirements and expectations of the consumers, to assess the performance of the workforce according to the universal standards and to build a society adhering to the principal of constant learning and achievement.

In our post modern world, societies and human beings are growing in a complex way, and communication and leading-edge technology have been affecting the every phase of human life. Most of the organizations, institutions and foundations encounter these alterations and innovations. One of these alterations is the total quality management. The philosophy of quality has dominated the management of all organizations in today's world (Ahn and Oak, 2001).

After the positive results of the total quality management in business world, it is stated in the literature that this approach is capable of solving the problems and improving the effectiveness of school. Total quality management, which is applied in business world and which maintains high level of productivity, has also been employed by educators and the quality of education for all students is tried to be improved (Hernandez, 2001).

When we consider the changes caused by total quality in education, they can be classified under the following titles:

1-Student's Role: in TQM, managers provide student participation in education.

2-Teacher's Role; TQM changes the teacher's attitude in the context of his relations both with the managers and with the students. Teachers are in need of taking education into account from the student's perspective; on the other hand, group work is greatly under the responsibility of managers. They transfer some of their responsibilities, and this strengthens the teachers.

3-Testing and Evaluation: Instead of using standard test and assessing the student development, the student's development is tried to be evaluated during a school term. Instead of evaluating a teacher during a class session, the teacher's performance during a year is evaluated (Weaver, 1992).

Quality is fairly important for the people who benefit from the product and service of an organization. Quality includes productive usage of the physical structure of goods and services, productivity and reliability rate and using the production sources fruitfully. The quality level of an education system can be increased by the quality balance of an education programme, human sources, student services, social and cultural environment, education technology, and student-school-industry cooperation. When quality management in education is stated, the first thing that comes to the mind is that making no mistake in educational training. Training a human without a fault is possible with: Inputs (training programme, educators, other staff, money, education instruments). These inputs are required to be faultless or of high quality before the education process starts; Education process: (programme, methods, practice, feedback etc), outcomes (achievement of students, academic, social, cultural, sporting etc.), enrolling higher education, entering business life, in-service training programmes and success of the staff ( employer's satisfaction).

Quality is a kind of management approach to make the organization more qualitative. Furthermore, quality is an administrative approach which enables creating a pleasant working atmosphere and a stimulating environment in which promotion is encouraged. Quality is enhanced by applying some of the principles. These principles, which are developed by Edwards deming, Joseph M. Juran and Philip Cosby, are as follows: 1-Vision, Mission, 2-Connection of systems, 3-leadership: creating quality culture, 4-personal developments, 5-reality-based developments 6-Distributing decision making authority, 7-Cooperation, 8-Planning the variation, 9-Leadership is supporting the quality culture.

When quality is concerned, it is fundamental to see the workers as partner not as inferiors. Workers work together and feel themselves stronger. Formed teams have positive effects. First, plenty of people take part in decision making process and decisions are put into practice better. Second, team members learn each others' opinions continually. Third, much more accurate information and activity come from a group. Next, the mistakes are known and combined. Last, risk taking is common because of the unifying power of the group. There are two types of teams at schools: first one is called permanent team and second one is called temporary team. Permanent team (as a programme and teaching to a specific age group) focuses on a specific activity, but temporary team focuses on short term goals and this team separates when the task is over. Management team is one of the most common team. Generally it includes managers and mid-level managers. Manager team is responsible for extensive politics, mission, or making decision. Management team can be established at schools and the team can be helpful for managers in decision making, problem solving and planning processes. Two facts are important in quality team. These are loyalty and relationship. These facts form the culture of the team. In a strong culture, a team includes purposefulness, powerfulness, suitability and satisfaction. Relationship put together the energy, ability and knowledge among members. Loyalty is the feeling of togetherness in a group (Oswald, 1996).

Constant quality development requires making decisions on facts, consciously knowing interior and exterior customers and examining their inputs, and requires a systematic organization analysis. Moreover, it entails an open communication with the organization. It also trains the staff, makes team work common, and gives importance to relationship. Constant quality development in education focuses on student and classroom activities and evaluates educator's feedback (their studies and their needs)(Wolverton, 1994).

Quality development is the standard form of developing an organization and training the school-staff. Almost

in all countries, the focus of school organizations in quality development is seen in mixing up with politics studies. In the context of quality development, topics that are not important for old leaders but important for new leaders can be listed as follows:

1-Power of vision, 2-Creating shared values,

3-Being a consultant of successful managements, joining vision and flexibility, 4-Feedbacks on performance are important.

There are four main elements in any organization that support quality. These are;

1-Attitude and participation of the administration; quality is being supported and placed by it.

2-Professional quality management; quality council, established in the organization, directs the quality.

3-Participation of the staff: staff is given a detailed training about the quality perception. Thus they adopt this view.

4-Recognition: it is planned to support the staffs achievement and effort, and different stages are established in the organization. Besides these four elements, process management of the quality perception, focusing on customers, universal responsibility and error prevention qualities can also be mentioned (Weis, 2001).

In the perception quality, the management of the organization and the attitude of the staff change, the staff is encouraged and reinforced. Researches are carried out in order to increase development in the process, product and services. Responsibilities are accepted to solve the problems. Lankard, (1992) states that there are five important factors in quality reformation. These factors are listed as follows; 1-decision making, 2-developing an organization, 3-focusing on the customer, 4-adapting to the process, 5-constant reforming.

Quality is a preferred approach in constant performance development. In fact, quality means being attuned to the needs. It means covering all necessary activities that are essential for a product, for a service and for the mechanism of an organization. If a management is in favour of quality, it should convey its plans clearly and leadership should aid staffs achievement through being in cooperation with education climate. Moreover, quality prevents the repetition of errors occurred in the system before. The purpose of quality is zero mistake.

Necessary components of quality are quality in the purpose, quality in understanding, quality process and quality output. Quality in understanding is seen both in output (e.g. an academic programme which meets the student's needs) and in process (e.g. the situation of the programme, hardware and organization).

Quality output describes the desirable results. A qualitative process describes the stages in all functions from beginning to end, and an effective study to reach the desired goals. The first job of a manager to maintain quality is to remove all of the handicaps that prevent a qualified job process. For that reason, managers should be good listeners. As a second job, a

manager should make necessary corrections in the process when there is something wrong. In order to do this, it is essential to change the faulty habits of the staff working in this process. Third job of a manager is to establish cooperation instead of competition; and this also requires some sub-level changes. Managers should be honest to their staff as a fourth job and lastly, the importance of developing the education should be understood (Ellen and Lawrance, 1992).

National Educational Ministry in Turkey, published a "Total Quality Management Directive" instruction to establish quality perception in education institutions (NEMT, 1999). According to this directive; total quality practices will be realized within a plan or a project, and necessary measures will be taken enabling participation of the sides who benefit from educational services, enabling participation of the sides taking part with their heart and brain foregrounding teamwork using the sources efficiently and effectively. The grade of achieving the goals will constantly be measured, and the staff will be properly trained in education management improving the quality and enabling perfection in the service provided. The staff will be provided with an environment enabling them to use their full potential. The understanding of developing individual-developing organization will be widespread through taking into account of the continuous change of age. The workers will adopt an approach in that the improvisation of the quality is the duty of the whole staff. It will be known by everyone that improvisation is only possible by alteration. The job satisfaction of the workers will be taken into consideration by establishing the balance between personal and institutional goals.

In order to achieve those goals, quality council and quality development teams were formed under the scope of total quality management project. The quality council consists of at least five people who are capable of solving the critical problems of school and who have adequate knowledge and talent under the presidency of headmaster. This council;

a) Ensures the coordination of the total quality management project.

b) Selects the head of the quality development team

c) Establishes work principles of the quality development team

d) Supports the work of the quality development team and provides it with a variety of sources and work environment

e) Makes a strategic plan for the unit according to the present case analysis given by the quality development team

f) Evaluates the results of the activities done by the quality development team.

During the process of total quality management project, the quality development team built by the headmaster consists of three people. The team appraises the measures to be taken so as to improve the quality of services, procedures and work of school in three criteria;

1 -The improvements to be carried out by school,

2-The improvements to be carried out by the approval of the minister,

3-The improvements to be carried out by the alteration of low. Then, the team informs the council about the results of the evaluation.

#### Statement of the problem, Goals and Method of the study

Total quality management has been applied for approximately five years since 1999. Increasing the productivity level of the performed practices and what quality consciousness means in practice lie as a question to be answered. In this research; what the quality level of the primary schools in Turkey is, in consequence of all the practices, establish the base for the problem. The goal of the research is to evaluate the workings of the school and that of primary school managers and teachers from the perspective of knowledge and analysis, strategic quality planning, development and management of human resources, quality process management, customer satisfaction and leadership variables.

In this research, the case study which intends to describe a present situation as it is and which defines the subject matter, the event the person or the object as they exist in their own conditions was employed. The sample of the research consisted of managers and teachers who attended the manager training course organized by the Ministry of Education, Kayseri National Education Ministry in 2002-2003 education semester. 48 of the sample attending the course are vice-school managers and 102 of them are teachers. Again, 39 of them work in the village or town, 49 of them work in the county and 62 of them work in the city. The development of data gathering instrument.

The questionnaire technique used in the research as data gathering instrument. In the research; the questionnaire of Iowa university lecturer William K. Poston's research called "comprehensive study of factors impacting perceived quality in school organizations: findings from research on quality assessment in Iowa school districts (William, 1997) was used.

The original form of the questionnaire was obtained from William K. Poston via e-mail. The required permission was received in order to do the Turkish translation of the questionnaire and to do the reliability and validity study on Turkish teachers and managers. The original form of the questionnaire was translated into Turkish, then both with the original and Turkish form of the questionnaire; were examined by 6 lecturers who are expert in the field of language, content, research methodology and measurement and evaluation. Through

their suggestions, after some alterations were made on the format of the Turkish questionnaire, the questionnaire was given the last shape.

In order to measure the construct-validity of the questionnaire, factor analysis was applied. In factor analysis, the factor value of the items were expected to be .35 or higher than that. Then, in order to identify the factor structures of the questionnaire, varimax technique was employed.

The coefficient of total correlation of the items were used in order to determine to what extent each item analyzed the quality level of schools, and then, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was employed to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Factor analysis which was done in order to determine the construct-validity of the questionnaire was firstly begun with 45 items. When the first results of the factor analysis were applied, it was seen that the factor value of 9 items was under .35 or it has high value in more than one factor. After these items were taken out, the analysis was repeated, as a result, it was seen that 36 items were collected in 6 items and only in one factor they had high load value.

In the conducted study, it was seen that the eigenvalue changed between for the first factor 15,34, for the second factor 2,26, for the third factor 1.63, for the fourth factor 1.51, for the fifth factor 1.31, and for the sixth factor 1.07. when the eigenvalue of the factors was taken into account, a rapid decrease was observed. In this situation; it was thought that the questionnaire was one-factored. The factor analysis results, depending on one factor, are shown in table 1.

**TABLE 1. FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE SCALE OF THE EVALUATION OF SCHOOLS QUALITY LEVEL**

Items	Communalities	Component	Total correlation of the items	Items	Communalities	Component	Total correlation of the items
1.	52	60	57	19.	68	76	72
2.	72	59	57	20.	73	56	54
3.	69	57	54	21.	76	67	64
4.	67	49	47	22.	75	45	42
5.	63	60	57	23.	74	69	66
6.	67	66	63	24.	58	68	65
7.	63	77	75	25.	68	58	56
8.	49	54	51	26.	62	59	57
9.	62	66	63	27.	69	69	66
10.	46	62	59	28.	64	61	58
11.	61	63	60	29.	58	60	58
12.	66	71	68	30.	62	71	69
13.	66	69	67	31.	67	70	68
14.	69	68	65	32.	73	75	73
15.	54	62	60	33.	72	78	75
16.	61	71	68	34.	54	62	59

17.	67	77	73	35.	71	74	72
18.	64	68	66	36.	34	36	41

the eigenvalue of the first factor; 15,34 the total variant it explains =%42,6 The alpha-reliability coefficient = .96

As it is seen in the table, the first factor loads of the items change between .36 and .77. the eigenvalue of the first factor is 15.34, the total variant it explains is %42.6. Also the total correlation of the items change between .41 and .75. This shows that the discrimination level of the items are high. The alpha-reliability coefficient is .96. this finding shows that the interior-coherence level of the scale is high.

Data-gathering instrument was applied to 150 school-managers and teachers who attended the manager training course conducted under the management of Ministry of Education, Kayseri National Education Administration. Grading of the statements in the questionnaire were determined as: 1-1.78="never", 1.80-2.59=few, 2.60-3.39=medium, 3.40-4.19=many and 4.20-5.00= too many. Finding and interpretation

Statistical analysis of the research's data which were collected through information gathering instrument, was made by using SPSS packet programme in computer. The evaluation of the quality of the schools was determined getting the means of their ideas which were obtained by the items covering the issues as primary school managers, teachers, school, knowledge and analysis, strategic quality planning, development and management of human resources, quality process management, customer satisfaction and leadership. Then, in order to determine whether it made any difference according to "duty" variable, the t-test was used. Moreover, to determine if it varies according to "residential district" variable, one-way variant analysis was employed. The obtained results are shown in tablo 2.

In the interpretation of findings that were obtained as a result of the analysis, the following method was applied: the items which contain differences between the ideas of the groups formed in items of duty and residential district were interpreted in detailed way, but the items which didn't differentiate interpreted as a whole.

**TABLE 2. THE FINDING PERTAINING TO DUTY AND RESIDENTAL DISTRICT VARIABLES OF THE QUALITY LEVEL OF THE SCHOOLS ACCORDING TO PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGERS AND TEACHERS**

1	Managers N=48		Teacher N=102		t-value	Village-town N=39		County N=49		City N=62		F value
	X	sd	X	Sd		X	sd	X	sd	X	sd	
1.	2,50	1,34	2,83	1,07	1,49	2,75	1,18	2,66	1,15	2,75	1,14	,91
2.	2,55	,99	3,02	1,08	2,23*	2,55	,86	2,82	1,14	3,08	1,12	,08*,k-il
3.	2,19	,92	2,60	1,02	2,11*	2,44	,94	2,48	1,04	2,55	1,04	,89
4.	2,27	,91	2,42	1,05	,73	2,44	,90	2,38	1,01	2,34	1,08	,90
5.	2,25	1,20	2,71	1,20	1,97*	2,68	1,13	2,61	1,38	2,50	1,18	,78
6.	2,02	,81	2,06	,92	,21	2,00	,96	2,20	,00	1,96	,77	,41
7.	2,25	,93	2,50	1,03	1,26	2,58	,94	2,46	,04	2,34	1,03	,57
8.	2,77	1,04	2,75	1,13	,13	2,93	1,06	2,84	,26	2,58	,97	,30
9.	2,63	,99	2,53	,96	,56	2,72	1,03	2,66	,00	2,39	,91	,23
10.	2,47	1,08	2,51	,87	,21	2,72	,95	2,51	,99	2,39	,81	,28
11.	2,08	,96	2,46	,88	2,15*	2,31	,84	2,48	,02	2,27	,89	,52
12.	2,08	,96	2,31	,93	1,25	2,03	,77	2,33	,05	2,29	,95	,38
13.	2,11	1,06	2,10	,83	,01	2,34	,76	2,10	,91	1,98	,92	,20
14.	1,80	,82	1,96	,98	,87	1,72	,84	2,07	1,01	1,91	,96	,32
15.	1,72	,74	1,83	,80	,74	1,79	,81	1,82	,72	1,81	,80	,98
16.	1,91	1,10	1,93	,99	,09	2,06	1,13	1,94	1,12	1,84	,89	,62
17.	2,19	1,14	2,20	,96	,06	2,44	,98	2,23	1,13	2,05	,92	,22
18.	2,08	,96	2,09	,93	,08	2,13	,87	2,02	,90	2,10	1,00	,87
19.	2,19	1,11	2,38	1,00	,91	2,58	1,01	2,30	1,15	2,20	,93	,26
20.	1,91	1,05	2,14	1,16	1,01	2,00	1,06	2,28	1,25	1,96	1,07	,37
21.	2,25	1,15	2,50	1,20	1,06	2,58	1,08	2,46	1,41	2,27	1,12	,49
22.	1,55	,87	1,59	,91	,24	1,44	,63	1,79	1,08	1,48	,86	,17
23.	1,94	1,04	2,15	1,07	,99	2,06	1,09	2,05	1,12	2,10	1,05	,97
24.	1,91	1,07	2,01	1,01	,47	1,96	,90	2,12	1,00	1,86	1,01	,43
25.	1,61	,93	1,66	,85	,30	1,51	,78	1,64	,93	1,63	,83	,79
26.	1,91	1,02	1,71	,93	,99	1,75	,83	1,76	1,18	1,75	,84	,99
27.	2,30	1,09	2,07	,98	1,15	2,20	1,01	2,20	1,23	2,00	,85	,53
28.	2,30	1,11	2,34	1,09	,20	2,48	,73	2,28	1,27	2,27	1,15	,68
29.	2,66	1,37	2,92	1,15	1,08	2,72	1,25	2,94	1,39	2,86	1,09	,75
30.	2,58	1,18	2,71	1,07	,62	2,48	1,29	2,74	1,16	2,75	,94	,51

31.	1,91	1,15	2,09	1,09	,83	2,03	1,20	2,12	1,23	1,96	,95	,77
32.	1,97	1,05	2,05	,99	,41	2,00	,88	2,02	1,20	2,05	,96	,97
33.	1,86	,99	2,08	,95	1,19	2,10	,81	2,17	1,12	1,87	,93	,29
34.	1,94	,94	2,11	,86	,85	2,13	,87	2,02	,98	2,06	,83	,87
35.	1,80	,92	2,00	,92	1,07	1,93	,96	2,10	,96	1,81	,86	,31
36.	2,61	3,45	1,86	,82	1,93*	2,00	,88	2,05	,91	2,13	2,76	,94

\*<.05

It is possible to state that there was no difference between the ideas of the groups which were formed in terms of duty variant to evaluate the quality level of schools (in order words school managers and teachers had used similar statements), and depending on the findings obtained from items, it can be concluded that; In primary schools;

1-Quality policy is conveyed to all staff at medium level.

2-The state,together with job and other organizations, encourage the student and the staff at lower level to enhance the quality.

3-Methods can not be developed adequately to collect data about organizational performance from various sources.

4-Decisions are not made through the analysis of the results and collected data. 5-Quality development is a result of the medium-level analysis and collected data. 6-The quality of the programmes and services is compared at medium level with other systems of the school.

7-Planning process is associated with daily activities at lower level and again at lower level; all teachers and support districts are included.

8-The information received from the staff and the environment is used at lower level in strategic planning.

9-The groups formed in school, are used at lower level in planning that include all levels of the staff.

10-The staff is not trained sufficiently about conscious quality education.

11-Staff teams are not used in solving regional problems.

12-Reinforcement, risk taking and creativity are not encouraged and supported.

13-Groups and individuals are not given opportunities to support quality aims and plans.

14-The plans of professional development are rarely used in the development and education of the staff.

15-She staff is not sufficiently encouraged to develop their own performance.

16-Staff s performance is not measured regularly.

17-Expressing the ideas in the process of programme planning and distribution is encouraged at mid-level.

18-Advisors are not used in order to update the content and process of the programmes.

19-The findings and the results of the performance are not shared with school and staff freely.

20-Performance control of the school activities and programmes are not carried out regularly.

21-The number of the activities and consulted advisors doesn't increase constantly.

22-Schools don't get in touch with graduates,and no information about their situations is requested and no analysis is made.

23-Student' talents are identified and developed at low level.

24-The quality of the services such as education sources, materials and education is developed at low level.

25-The quality of the school is compared with the quality and performance of other schools at mid-level.

26-Complaints and wishes of parents and students are taken into consideration at mid-level.

27-Researches to get feedback from students and parents are carried out at low levels.

28-The satisfaction of school and staff is not observed sufficiently.

29-Standarts are not defined clearly and the staff isn't adequately trained to acquire abilities to communicate with students and parents.

30-Developing the knowledge per year and combination of the processes is at low-level.

10

31-Determination of the future of the students and contacting for programme development is not sufficient.

Besides, the items on which managers and teachers have stated different ideas depending on duty variant can be interpreted as;

1-Primary school managers state that they agree with (x=3.02) median and teachers with (X.-2.55) median to the item "city, county and school managers are concerned with enhancing the quality in school"

2-Managers state that they agree with the item "city, county and school managers attach importance to the activities out of the school to enhance the quality" at mid-level with X=2.60 median and teachers at lower level with X=2.19 median.

3-Managers state that they agree with the item " informations in school are conveyed to everybody in a systematic way" at mid-level with X=2.71 median and teachers at lower level with X=2.25 median.

4-Primary school managers state that they agree with the item "quality instrument and techniques are used in normal planning process" with X=2.46 median and teachers with X=2.08 median.

5-managers state that they agree with the item "programmes that will help people interested in school are prepared" with X=1.86 median at lower and teachers at mid-level with X=2.61 median.

It is seen that managers agree with the first four items among five more than teachers. The reason of this, for the first two items, can be attributed to the fact that the communication of the managers with national education managers is more, and for the other two items it can be attributed to the fact that managers are at management degree. The reason why the teachers mostly agreed with the last item in which the difference occurred can be attributed to the fact that they communicated more with the parents.

When the quality level in the primary schools is evaluated from the point of residential district variable, it is seen that there is only one item difference and in the rest of the 35 items, a parallel situation has been observed. The item in which the difference occurred according to the residential district is "city, county and school managers are concerned with enhancing the quality in school". According to the obtained findings, while city, county and school managers are more concerned with enhancing the quality of the schools in the city, they are concerned with enhancing the quality of the schools in the villages and towns at mid-level. When we consider the last 35 items, it is possible to say that quality level of the primary schools in a village, town, county and city is at low and mid-levels.

#### CONCLUSION VE SEGGESTIONS

Generally it can be said that quality level of primary schools is not at desired level considering the evaluations of primary school managers and teachers foregrounding the fields of knowledge and analysis, strategy planning, human sources management and development, quality process management, customer satisfaction and leadership. Since 1999, it can be stated that total quality management applied at primary schools and quality development teams, established for this purpose, are not functional, and their legal existence isn't put into practice. The following items can be suggested for the school, school managers and teachers in order to have quality consciousness and to offer product and service quality: 1-In order to ensure quality at school, school managers and teachers should be conscious of the subject and they should be encouraged about it.. In order to realize this, school managers should be enabled to show leadership and with this purpose, legal flexibility should be provided.

2-Information and results obtained from environmental organizations should be possible to use in planning, decision making and practice.

3-Teams formed at schools should be turned into functional teams and teams should be active about decision, planning, motivation and enabling in and out customer satisfaction. 4-Manager, teacher, parent, students and environmental forces should form an information synergy and this information should be used in the development of staff and parents. 5-The connection of school with people, who form school's environment, groups and organizations should be increased. The primary focus should be on the development of both city schools and county schools.

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