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Total Quality Management in managing municipality offices. Analysis of the conditions for implementation

Abstract

Decision to discuss the subject of the conditions for the implementation of TQM in municipality offices was dictated by the following: a gap between the state of research and the need for organisational solutions and problems in management of municipality offices, relatively small number of publications on management methods and conceptions used by managers in municipality offices, "liberalisation" of part of services provided by municipalities and increased social importance of services offered by those organizations, specific perception of quality of those services by Polish citizens, which is influenced by former political system. Municipality offices most often have ISO quality management system in place or are in the process of its implementation. Many of them attach very great importance to quality, which translates into a level of customer service and on the customers' perception of the office. The question arises: what now? Offices already have ISO in place, apply in practice the principles of quality management, but is this all that should be done? There is certain shortage, as the quality management system compliant with ISO standards might be a part of the Total Quality Management in the efforts to improve the organization.

Despite considerable experience on the practical side of local government, there are no studies, which attempt to approach the issue comprehensively and coherently, as well as synthetic studies and assessments of individual segments of local government economy (e.g. financial management, assets management, etc.). Few presentations (typically of mechanical transmission to the local government economy) of methods for managing typically market-based enterprises are very shallow and are characterised by too far-reaching methodical simplifications.

In connection with the undertaken subject of comprehensive quality management in the municipality offices, the aim of the paper is to determine the possibilities and conditions for implementation of the Total Quality Management concept in the management of municipality offices.

The aim of the conducted research is to identify scientific conceptions and methods of management used in municipality offices, as well as determine whether TQM is among them. In light of the formulated goals, it is also important to determine the conditions which must be met by the municipal authorities, so their management could implement TQM.

The first chapter features the characteristics of the public sector and shows how the local government functions in Poland, with particular emphasis on municipalities. It defines the types of sectors and compares organizations from public and private sector, while taking into account the accompanying conditions and the role of stakeholders. It presents types of tasks of municipal authorities and their connections with public services provided by municipalities. Customers of municipal office are characterised, including their types and roles. Also the issue of quality in public services is considered, and factors influencing that quality are identified.

The second chapter concerns the quality management in local government and state government. It presents the stages of change, taking place in public institutions. It characterises the approach to management of public institutions, particularly focusing on administration and New

Public Management. There are selected concepts and methods of management focused on quality, which could be used in municipality offices. One of the subsections deals with standardised quality management systems. It is demanded both by the vastness of the issues, as well as common use of quality management systems compliant with ISO standards in municipality offices. This section ends with presentation of quality problem in local governments in selected countries: Great Britain and other European countries, USA, Japan, Canada.

The third chapter describes comprehensive quality management through TQM. It presents the origins of the concept, its basic elements, principles and rules. It extracts factors for the implementation of TQM resulting from closer and further environment of municipality offices, as well as from within the organization. Considering the past achievements of science concerning this concept, I propose a plan for implementing TQM, taking into account mainly assumptions of Oakland's TQM model, Deming's principles and proposals of L. Gaster. Chapter ends with showing the benefits and problems, connected with TQM implementation process.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the analysis of the conditions and possibilities of application of the TQM concept in local government units. First part of the chapter presents municipality offices in the context of their public services. Characteristics of municipalities chosen for the research considered selected economic figures and local development indicators. Evaluation of possibility to implement TQM in municipality offices required defining their internal and necessary conditions (future changes) needed for the TQM to be implemented in offices.

The result of realisation of the set goals and verification of the assumed hypotheses was the presentation of own assessments and conclusions in chapter three and four, and their synthesis in the summary.

Key words:

Quality, public services, continuous improvement, organizational culture

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