

# A Qualitative Study on Change Management in Primary Schools Award Winning and Non-Award Winning Schools Case in Study of TQM

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the need of change in primary schools and to reveal out the principals' experiences during the change process by taking the total quality management practices into consideration and finally give suggestions according to the results of the study. In this study by employing qualitative research method, semi structured interview technique was preferred. The sample of the study was composed of the school principals whose schools both received and could not receive Total Quality Management Award during the 2009-2010 academic year in Bornova, Buca, Gaziemir, Karşıyaka provinces of İzmir. The findings of the study revealed out that teams were formed up, documents were prepared, but the teams in the schools that took awards worked more actively than the teams in schools that did not take any awards. The principals in the schools with awards mentioned that they were aware of the works of the teams and provided the required equipment for these teams.

## Key Words

Change, Total Quality Management, Change Management.

In order to survive, organizations should develop themselves concerning the speed of information, changes in the management approaches, the cooperation among the institutions and also they should make planned, successful and permanent changes and improvements (Burford, 2003; Escalente, 2005; Özkan, 2004; Özmen & Sönmez, 2007). There have been various organizational change definitions in literature (Darrusselam, 2004; Escalente, 2005; Özdemir, 2000; Töremen, 2002). According to Owens (1987, p. 243) organizational change is a "planned, extraordinary, original effort that makes contribution to the organizations in reaching new aims and fulfilling the existing ones successfully. In the

process of change, there should be unity between the purposes of change and employees (Coventry, 1998; Çetin, 2002; Özkalp, 2001, p. 517; Özkan, 2004; Selçuk, 2004). Change management requires a dynamic cultural approach; it not only causes change in the culture, politics, structure and system of the organizations but also it determines the strategies to apply these changes (Düren, 2000; Helvacı, 2005; Taş, 2009).

Change management is conducted in five different levels which are, to determine the external and internal factors that compel change, to define change and aims, to prepare the available conditions for change and apply the programme, the assessment of change activities, and to get feedback (Kulu Şentürk, 2007; Kurşunoğlu, 2006). The most important tool to apply change in the organizations is total quality management. As total quality management is important for creating new organizational culture and providing personal development to employees, the primary schools should be restructured according

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Descriptive and content analysis were used in the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). In the analysis three activity levels were used which are decreasing the data, presenting the data, inference and verification (Türnüklü, 2000).

In the presentation of the data, intensity (different ideas), expressiveness (conformation of the themes), variousness and different samples criteria were used (Ünver, Bümen, & Başbay, 2010).

The main themes of the research were determined according to the research questions of the research and the levels of change management that are expressed by Kulu Şentürk (2007). The themes and sub themes after the data analysis are seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
*The Themes and Sub Themes After The Analysis*

<b>1. The perceptions about the determination of change</b>
1.1. The perceptions about the factors that need to be changed in the education system.
1.2. The perceptions about the factors that need to be changed at schools
<b>2. The perceptions about the preparation of change process</b>
<b>3. The perceptions about the application of change</b>
3.1. The perceptions about the obstacles that emerge out in the change process
3.2. The perceptions about the solution of the obstacles that emerge out in the change process
3.3. The perceptions about the control of the applications
<b>4. The perceptions about the application of the change at schools in the parallel of total quality management</b>
<b>5. The perceptions about the assessment of change process</b>
5.1. The perceptions about the assessment of change results
5.2. The perceptions about the fields that successful change is applied

## Results

### The Perceptions of the Primary School Administrators about the Determination of Change

**Perceptions about the Factors That Should Change in the Education System:** The first question in the semi-structured interview form is “What are the factors that should change in the education system?”. The primary school administrators mentioned the education program, the financial problems of the teachers and schools, the professional trainings, the structural problems of the schools, appointment system, placement tests, and in-service trainings as the factors that should change in the education system. All the primary school administrators whose school had taken the total quality management award emphasized the “placement tests” factor more than the others whereas all the primary school administrators whose school had not taken the total quality management award emphasized the “education program”.

**The Perceptions about the Factors That Should Change at Schools:** The second question in the semi-structured interview form is “What are the factors that have to be changed in your school?”. The primary school administrators mentioned the social, physical structure of the schools, success of the school, the parents’ quality, financial sources, the quality of the teachers, class size, and bilateral training as the factors that should change at schools. All the primary school administrators whose school have taken the total quality management award emphasized the “quality of the teachers” as the factor that has to be changed at schools whereas all the primary school administrators whose school have not taken the total quality management award emphasized the “parents’ quality”.

### The Perceptions about the Preparation of Change Process

The third question in the semi-structured interview form is “What are the preparations for applying change in your school?”. The primary school administrators mentioned the organization of social activities, creating technology classes, training of the parents, increasing the financial sources and physical facilities, obtaining suitable equipment, convincing the employees, motivating the employees, and in-service training as the preparation of change process. All the primary school administrators whose school had taken the total quality management award emphasized the “in-service training” as the preparation to make change whereas all the primary school administrators whose school had not taken the total quality management award emphasized the “education of the parents”.

### The Perceptions of Change Process Application

**The Obstacles That Emerge out in the Change Process:** The fourth question in the semi-structured interview form is “What are the obstacles that you face in the change process in your school?”. The primary school administrators mentioned the resistance of the employees to change, lack of financial sources, lack of physical area, not having total quality management culture, frequent circulation of teachers, and the general administration of Ministry of Education. All the primary school administrators whose school had taken the total quality management award emphasized the “resistance of teachers to change” as the most important obstacle in the change process.



Kıcıroğlu's (2010, p. 15) research results. These findings can be said to be indicative that school principals employed to try to motivate teachers and to mobilize social and physical factors for preparing the process of change.

Primary school administrators mentioned the subjects such as teachers' resistance to change, lack of financial resources and physical areas, not understanding the total quality management culture, and Ministry of National Education' general management approach as obstacles to change. The findings of this research supported the findings of Töremen (2002, pp. 199-201) and Helvacı and Kıcıroğlu's (2010) research. According to these findings, it can be said that the education system is not open to change and apt to resume the traditional structure.

Primary school administrators mentioned the subjects such as working on fund raising, organizing in-service trainings about total quality management, motivating total quality management efforts, including the teachers to decision-making process, providing tools and equipment, and persuading teachers to change as for solution to the obstacles confronted during the change process. The research findings of Taş (2009, p. 15), Başaran (1992), Çınar (2005), Helvacı and Kıcıroğlu (2010, p. 17), Argon and Özçelik (2008) and Ak (2006) are similar to this finding of the research. The reason for this can be thought to be the centralized administration of schools, school administrators' not having a right to state their ideas clearly about the budget and source the Ministry of Education provides.

Primary school administrators stated that they used three different control types to control the process of change in their schools. These control types were strict control, participant-loose control, and free control. Argon and Özçelik (2008, p. 76), Taş (2009, p. 15), Cenker (2008) and Kurşunoğlu (2006, p. 45) also referred to different control types of primary school administrators. As a result, the manager's monitoring and controlling of change can be said to be effective in the process.

As for the total quality management application at schools, primary school administrators mentioned the subjects such as the total quality management commissions, school development administration teams, technological equipment, cooperation of school and environment, delegation, planning, swot analysis, satisfaction surveys, and finding solutions. Yıldırım (2007), Şentürk and Türkmen (2009) and Şahin's (2006, pp. 10-11) research findings indicated that scho-

ol development administration teams did not work effectively. As a result, although school development administration teams had potential to perform change, according to the literature it can be said that they do not work effectively.

When assessing the change, primary school administrators mentioned that they have made successful changes in some subjects such as social and physical structure of the school, school's image, parent profiles of students, academic achievement, and school council works. This finding of the research is similar to the results of Ak (2006), Argon and Özçelik (2008), Kurşunoğlu (2006) research. The results obtained in this study indicated that primary school administrators are aware that changes in the schools should be permanent.

The results obtained from this study show that in the determination of the need for change, in the preparation of change process, application, and in the assessment of the change process every school has own unique features. Administrators of total quality management award winning schools indicated that they determined the need for change in time, did the necessary activities in order to start change, and prepared the suitable conditions. According to the school administrators, "the change performed with total quality management" was the change performed in the school's physical infrastructure.

The results also indicated that both the schools having taken total quality management awards and not receiving total quality management awards already established the necessary teams for total quality management, prepared documents within the framework of total quality management, but only in the schools that had taken awards, these teams worked more actively.

Finally according to the findings of this research it can be suggested that for applying the change process effectively at schools, different kinds of activities such as in-service training programs, seminars, courses should be organized for not only the teachers but also for the administrators to lead them to gain the necessary skills and knowledge about change management. Such activities should be better qualified and timing of them should be better-organized and necessary incentive activities should be provided for teachers to participate in. All employees who work in schools, parents of students, and school council members should be more conscious about primary school administrators' efforts towards change and innovation activities.



