

Improving the Quality of Public Services in Ghana: A Lesson to be Learned from Implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the Public Sector



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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a framework of lessons to illuminate the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) in public sector management. TQM has been accepted as a management paradigm by many organisations throughout the world, and has led to quality movement in the private sector in the past. Today, quality movement has been extended to non-profit organisations. The paper outlines some lessons and posits an agenda for government of Ghana to embrace the quality movement revolution in the public sector as part of innovative governance of the government of Ghana. Innovative governance needs to be established in the context of new thinking in the public sector service delivery. The objective of the paper is to build a better and more general understanding of TQM implementation in the public sector of Ghana.

Keys words: *Continuous Quality Improvement, Quality Control, Quality Planning, Quality Trilogy and Total Quality Management.*

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"No nation has embraced" Total Quality Management, e-commerce and e-government with greater enthusiasm than Dubai. Such innovations have given Dubai a competitive edge and an accelerated growth rate that few could match" (Abdul Aziz A. LGhurair, 2016).



Introduction

Today, Ghanaians seemingly dream of life in Dubai because of the excellent public services enjoyed by citizens and visitors alike in that nation. The nature of citizens' needs with the way in which the government in Dubai has addressed them has changed substantively just over the last few decades and confirms a sound public sector governance.

Public Sector governance refers to how the state acquires and exercises the authority to provide and manage public goods and services. Public Sector is defined to cover organisations charged with providing services for the public, although increasingly, their roles are being transformed from actual production to provision using a variety of public and private entities, mostly financed with public resources or taxes. Such services must be guided by some notion of the wider public interest. Four types of organisations defined under Chapter 14 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana include: the Civil Service, regulatory agencies, public enterprises or parastatals and regional and/or local governments.

Over the last three decades, Ghana has undertaken several administrative reforms designed mainly to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery to enhance productivity in the public sector. In the area of performance management, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to establish an effective performance management culture that seeks to align objectives, targets and outcomes to organisational and national development goals.

The Public Sector Re-Invention and Modernisation Strategy that commenced in Ghana in 1997 to help to transform state institutions in accountability, performance framework and their relationship with the private sector and civil society, has failed woefully. The reform efforts have so far produced disappointing results and Ghana is still largely depending on incompetent, inefficient and wasteful public sector.

The development of welfare state and increasingly consumerist society and now the arrival of the 'information age' have altered and without doubt, raised citizens' expectations of public services. Indeed, at times, it seems that the public sector is destined to be continually playing 'catch up' with the private sector; as the later raises citizens' expectations of customer service, the former sadly seeks to manage the public sector 'expectation gap' that it creates (Boyne 2013).

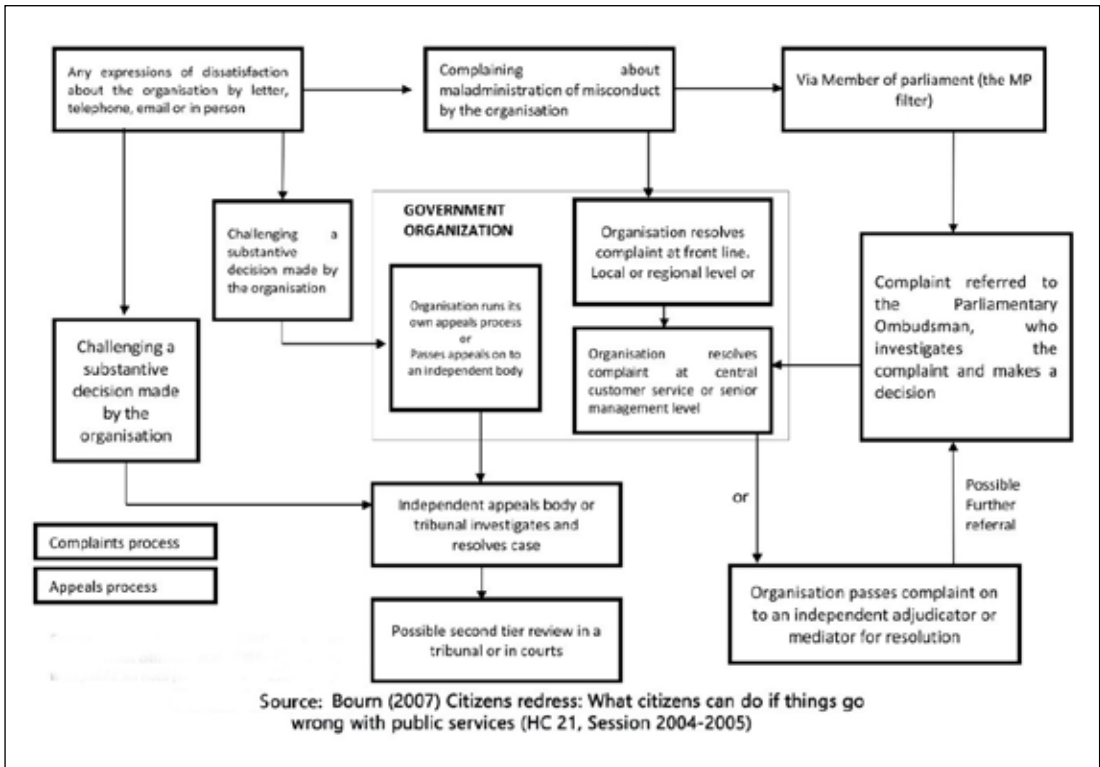
The problem is compounded by the appearance of what has been termed the 'sceptical citizen-consumer' and the increasing willingness of individuals to complain about their bin collection service or holes in the road. They also complain about their hospitals, schools, utilities, suppliers, etc. The public is calling for the promotion of a public service culture in which trust, openness, integrity and public interest are key centre-pieces. The citizenry are calling for prompt and effective redress for their complaints. Most governments in the developed countries are responding positively as illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts the possible interaction of the complaint and appeal processes in the United Kingdom. The goal of better public services is at the forefront of political debates worldwide, leading to the enactment of citizen's charter in many countries. Malaysia, since 1989, created The Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) to oversee implementation of quality management in the Malaysian Civil Service.

Despite the apparent desire to improve Ghana's public services, one constant theme has been that Ghanaian governments have failed to help themselves in the ways they have gone about implementation. In particular, successive governments have:

- contributed to some confusion as to whether citizens are customers, consumers or clients of public services, which in some cases has raised expectations which are difficult to meet;

- created complex, unresponsive systems and processes which have made services difficult to access;
- failed to deliver services in efficient (economical) and effective ways apparently not learning from past experience;
- been poor at communicating what is available and capturing the information needed from citizens to provide high quality services;
- failed to create incentives for staff to strive to enhance customer services or develop innovative approaches; and
- not developed adequate means of providing redress.

Figure 1: Citizens Redress System in UK



The New Order in Ghana

The government of the day embarks on some sort of change management in Ghana. The trend over the last few years towards what has been dubbed 'new public management' has been a number of positive changes in the delivery of public services. There has been a great focus on meeting the end needs of the users but with less concern about the means or processes of getting there. As opined by Peter Drucker, a modern day management guru,

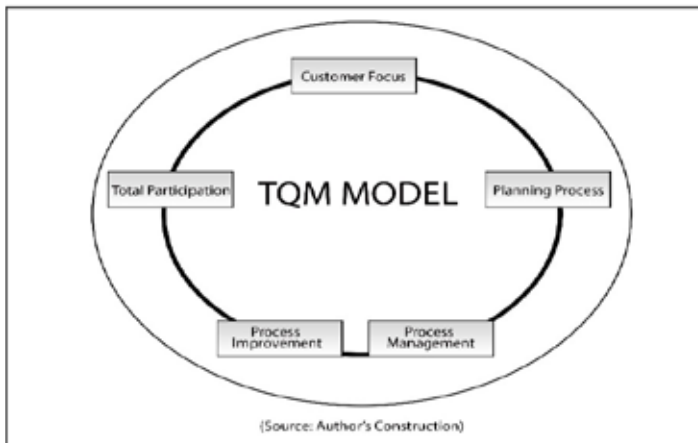
the leadership is doing the right things and it is time for the management and the bureaucrats to also do things right; hence the submission in this piece on lessons to learn by implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) in the public sector.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

Quality Management (QM) is defined as the application of a quality management system in managing a process to achieve maximum

customer satisfaction at the lowest overall cost to the organisation while continuing to improve the process. Quality Management system (QMS) is a formalised system that documents the structure, responsibilities and procedures required to achieve effective quality management. (Nelson et al, 2007). Total Quality Management (TQM) can be defined as a management approach to long term success through customer satisfaction. It is based on all members of an organisation who participate in improving processes, products, services and the culture in which they live and work. The methods for implementing this approach as depicted in Figure 2, are found in the teachings of such quality leaders as Crosby, Deming, Feigenbaum, Ishikawa and Juran (Nelson et al, 2007).

Figure 2: TQM Model



TQM is not just a step but a new style of working and thinking where dedication to quality and excellence is a way of life. TQM is never an accident, as it is always the result of high intention, sincere efforts, intelligent direction and skillful execution. During the past two to three decades, there has been a development of an ever-increasing interest in the application of tenets of total quality management in the organisations of the public sector.

A short literature review using the 'Publish or Perish' software was done to find out the most

cited research publications concerning the subject of this paper in the 21st Century. The following are the most cited studies with key issues within them:

- Pollith & Bouchaert (2004): The use of TQM technique as one way to manage the structure and process of an executive management.
- Rainey (2003): TQM in literature concerning public management.
- Hood (2000): TQM as one kind of reform in public sector
- Kaplan & Norton (2001): No special emphasis on quality management in the public sector.

There are many answers to explain what amounts to a groundswell of interest; but the fact that many governmental processes are by their nature repetitive, standardised, often error-prone and user-unfriendly has undoubtedly played a major determining role. It is precisely these processes which can be effectively, efficiently and economically transformed by the implementation of the philosophy and methodology of Total Quality Management (Brah et al, 2000).

A myth about the utility of TQM to the public sector has grown as high as the degree of interest in the approach developed. This myth, which is frequently voiced by managers in public sector organisations, is in many instances,

very deep-seated. It is the contention that TQM techniques which were initiated and developed to meet the demands of organisations in the private sector, especially those engaged in manufacturing, were incapable of adapting to the unique context within which public sector organisations operate, their objectives and the customers whom they serve.

The public sector seems to be reluctant to admit that it has consumers. Hospitals have patients, the prisons service has clients, schools have pupils

with parents and libraries have borrowers. In all these instances, public service providers reinforce the potency of their position: in that, the user is defined in terms of the profession which provides the service. On the other hand, private firms such as airlines, supermarkets or shoe shops talk about their customers. (Kirkpatrick, 1988).

It is true that service provided by organisations of the public sector does not constitute a material product like the output of the manufacturing industry. It is equally true that it entails many complex and psycho-physical events which are difficult to define with any great degree of precision. Yet, the inescapable fact is that in common with any product, a service is intended to result in a specific outcome or utility. It may be argued that the outcome is difficult to confine within limited parameters and difficult to measure in comparison with a manufactured good. However, both products and services are evaluated by customers and the basis of their evaluation is the extent to which the products or services meet their needs and satisfy their expectations.

Again, public sector managers do not have the advantage of a judgement as simple as market forces, since economic indicators of quality cannot be readily utilised in the not-for-profit context of public sector. This requires that steps have to be taken to ensure that customers' views are sorted out when it comes to the setting of standards for service and in evaluating their implementation. If this is not done assiduously as opined by Ellis 1998, Boyne et al 2002, then there will be found a situation all too common in the public sector today where the satisfaction of the customer is lost sight of by public service employees, many of whom are torn between the conflicting demands of their professional standards, their superiors, employing authorities and overbearing local or national politicians.

When considering the applicability of TQM to the public sector, there is the need to take into consideration the values of the public sector which perfectly fits TQM values. These are committed

leadership; focus on customers and processes; continuous improvement and everybody's commitment. The challenge faced by public sector managers is how to understand TQM principles and foster quality awareness amongst employees of public sector organisations. The question that has to be answered is on how we can create TQM awareness and environments that are conducive for quality improvement efforts in the public sector of Ghana.

Today, the combination of fiscal pressures and ever increasing public demand for improved quality of publicly funded services is driving public authorities to look beyond their traditional *modus operandi* to find new models of service delivery (Farazmond, 2005). At the same time, the reputation of public authorities is increasingly susceptible to the growing public intolerance of waste in any form – fraud, theft, corruption, inefficiency or poor project/ programme performance. It is refreshing to note that the government emphasises that public sector authorities must focus both on concern for failure and promotion of conditions for success in the provision of public services. In this connection, the use of TQM model is the answer.

Arguments in Favour of TQM Model

The public sector must search for and apply the appropriate private management techniques to improve its analyses and evaluations of service outcome. The New Public Management Movement has sought management reforms in government through the introduction of a new set of values largely drawn from the private sector and new techniques.

Today, there are more values integrated into public sector than in TQM and there are also values which could be regarded as compatible to TQM values. These are for example: accountability, businesslike approach, citizen involvement, user-orientation, effectiveness, efficiency and employees' self-development. Others are innovation, listening to public opinion, reliability and responsiveness. On the other hand, some values may be only public

sector values such as equal treatment, human dignity, justice, legality, neutrality and openness. It is said that “equity must be kept in the forefront of the public sector and efficiency must be subsumed under equity” (Deming (1986)).

An inescapable fact remains that there exist discernible differences between the “manufacturing” and “administrative” worlds. The challenge that confronts the public sector manager is the search for and the application of the relevant management model that causes the difference between the two worlds.

Similar to that of quality, is the major movement in the public sector over the past thirty years which has obliged its organisations to move from a formerly “administrative” culture to an increasingly “managed” culture (Keeling, 1972; Arnaboldi, 2010). Those who defended the continuance of administered public services maintained that the public service was unique and did not lend itself to the introduction of managerial practice developed within the realm of private sector organisations. There are arguments which have been advanced to indicate the characteristics of the public sector (Conti, 2016) namely:

- public sector organisations are not exposed to the competitive world market;
- public sector objectives are usually ill-defined and expressed in vague terms such as: ‘serving the public’;
- short term considerations (in most cases for political gains) make it difficult for them to engage in strategic planning;
- they are susceptible to greater and more open accountability;
- their functions are limited by statute;
- they are funded from taxation but not by charging the market price for their products and services; and
- certain services can only be provided by state and such services cannot be left to the vagaries of market forces for if such were the case, those services will not be provided.

Those favouring the management of the public services have recourse to convergence which they perceive to continue to take place between the public and private sectors. The thesis of the advocates of the convergence indicates that the distinctive features of the public sector have been increasingly blurred over the past few decades and that similarities with the private sector have become more pronounced (Lawton, 1991). They emphasise that:

- increasingly, organisations of the public sector charge for some of the services they render;
- the private sector also operates within an environment in which government policy and decisions have a direct impact upon its actions;
- constraints imposed by statutes are also a feature of the private sector; and
- joint public and private schemes and programmes (public private partnership) are the features of certain areas of activity.

Despite the differences that exist between the two advocates of both perceptions, they agree that change, whether it is viewed positively or negatively, favourably or unfavourably, is underway in the organisations of the Ghanaian public sector. Furthermore, they will probably concur that this change entails further movement away from public administration towards public management, although they may disagree on the magnitude and desirability of the movement which has taken place in other nations.

It is within the above context that the adaptation and implementation of TQM philosophy must take place and the “divide” between the public and private sectors both acknowledged and managed, using and understanding the following key characteristics (Mahoney et al, 1998; Bovaired et al, 2009):

- **Nature of Sectors:** the characteristics of product functionality, appearance, ease of operation and reliability can be objectively

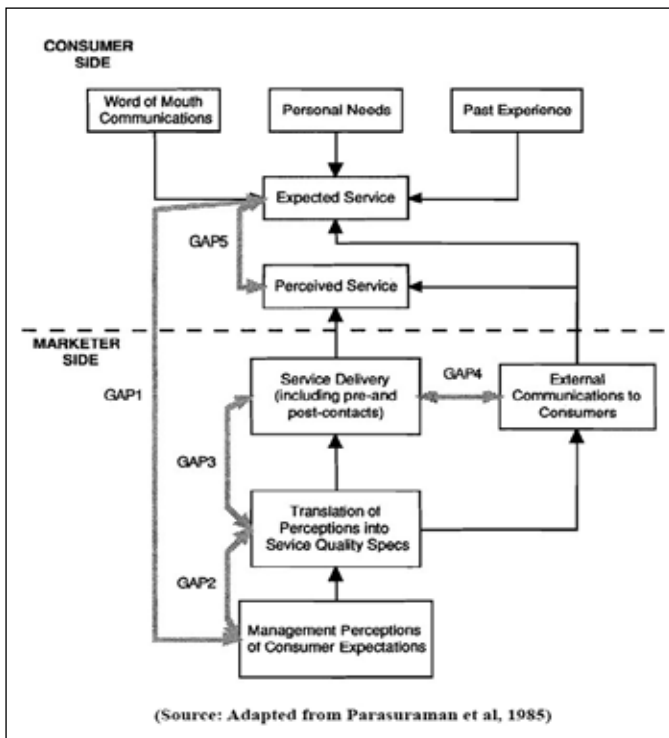
verified, measured and compared. Organisations in the service sector have to date only met with limited success when attempting to transfer such techniques and procedures into their environment. Technological expertise counts for less than personal interactions and the psychological impact of interpersonal dynamics is fundamental to the customer's evaluation of service quality.

- **Product Quality versus Service Quality:** despite similarities, fundamental differences exist and must be recognised. Service quality is perceived at a much deeper emotional level by the customer in public sector than in manufacturing.
- **Sector Division and Dilemma:** three underlying themes are identified as being pivotal to the understanding of the service quality dilemma, namely:

- The lack of tangible clues makes the evaluation of service quality more difficult for the customer than judging the quality of physical products.
- Customer perceptions of service quality are formed by comparing actual performance with expectations.
- Customer evaluation of service quality includes not only the final outcome but also the process by which the service was delivered.

Five key gaps which have to be bridged before a public sector organisation can offer a level of service quality which accords with the needs and expectations of its customer have been identified by researchers and defined and incorporated in the SERVQUAL model. In spite of some criticism of the model, it remains the most reliable tool available for the measurement of Service Quality.

Figure 3 –The SERVEQUAL Model



SERVQUAL was originally measured on ten aspects of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer and tangibles to measure the gap between customer expectations and the actual services provided at different stages of service delivery. Service business operators often assess the service quality provided to their customers in order to improve their service, to quickly identify problems and to better assess client satisfaction.

Gap 1: Customer Expectation vrs Management Perception

Managers do not often understand the features that customers associate with quality service. They also fail to appreciate the levels of performance that the customer needs and expects from those delivering the service. Such lack of understanding results in service provision that is not congruent with customer requirements and this means that the service is given a low quality rating by the customer.

Gap 2: Service Quality Specifications

Discrepancies frequently arise between managers' perception about customer expectations and the specifications which are established for service delivery because of intra-organisational constraints to which the managerial process is subject to in all organisations. These constraints are many and varied and encompass stringency in both material and human resource, that is, in the areas of finance, absence of employees on vacation, shortage in trained staff, managerial indifference and wide range of variability in customer demands. Generally, managers are aware of these constraints but are less able to surmount them, which consequently directly impact upon the customers' perception of service quality.

Gap 3: The Key Role of the Contact Person

The old adage, "you never get a second chance to create first impression", carries a particular pertinence here. Organisations are not able to fully standardise the attitude, dispositions, level of care and sense of responsibility which employees exhibit towards customers irrespective of the amount of customer care training that those employees receive. In this case, the performance of the employees may make it difficult for the organisation to consistently achieve the quality of service demanded by the customer and desired by the organisation.

Gap 4: Service Delivery vrs External Communication

The communication which a customer receives from an organisation influences both his/her perception and expectation of service quality. When organisations promise more than they can realistically deliver, customers initially raised expectation of service quality is subsequently lowered. Furthermore, if the organisation fails to notify customers of efforts to ensure service quality, a gap is then created which does not give positive impression about the organisation. The size and variation of this gap is a reflection of the discrepancies revealed in Gaps 1 to 4.

Gap 5: Expected Services vrs Perceived Services

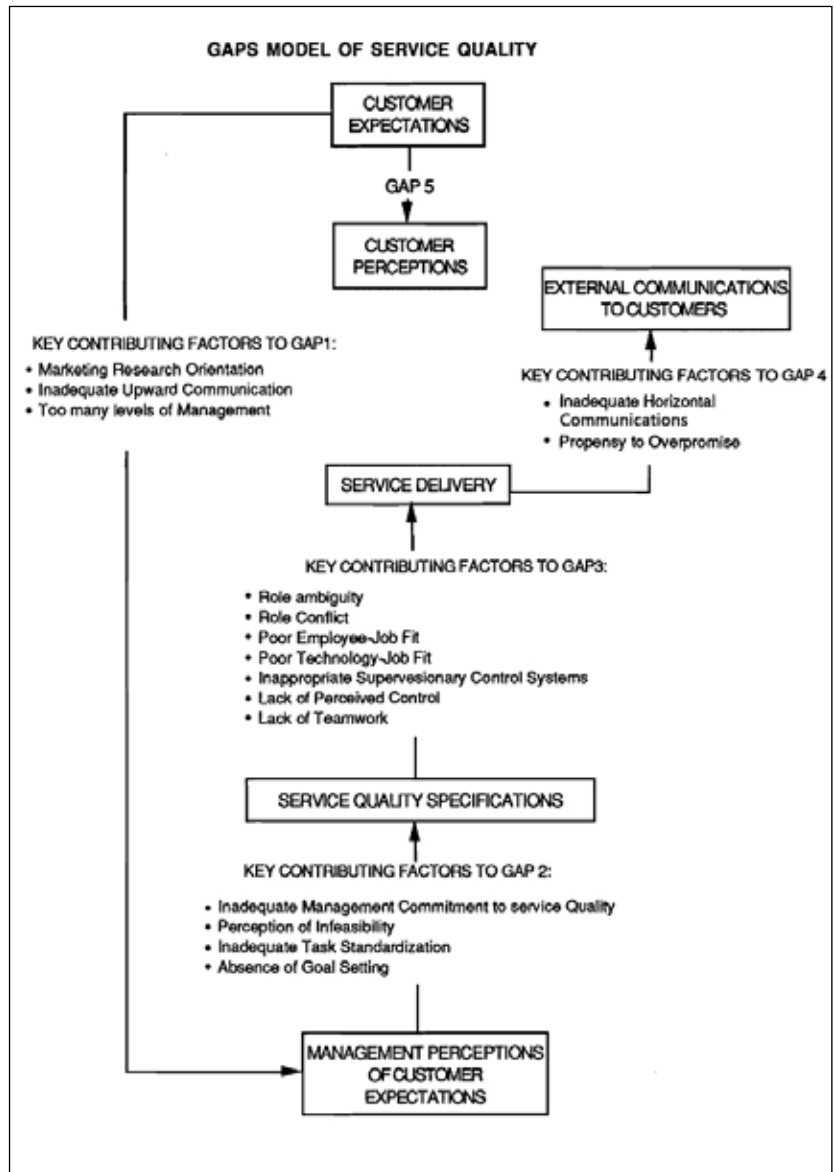
To deliver quality service means that an organisation must conform to customer expectations on a consistent basis so that in final analyses, when service provided is measured, it will be congruent with those expectations. However, judgments of high and low service quality of an organisation are subject to and depend on the customer's perception of actual service quality they are led to expect by its own personnel as depicted in Figure 4. It is the failure by management to take positive corrective action to close these gaps and to prevent their future recurrence that has permitted the distinction to be drawn between the traditional view of quality and a revised view of quality. The former is where the gaps have not been closed and the latter is where corrective and preventive action has been taken to eradicate them. To surmount the gaps, it is imperative on the part of the organisation to be precise about the characteristics that a high level of service quality comprises.

Service provision in the public sector is more complex than in the private sector because in the former, it is not simply a matter of meeting expressed needs, but finding out unexpressed needs, setting priorities, allocating often scarce resources and publicly justifying what has been done. Understanding and addressing the

characteristic of service quality will be a good start in applying TQM in the organisations of the public sector.

For more than thirty (30) years now, successive governments of Ghana have argued that the major task for the public sector is to improve the standard of public services. Numerous initiatives have been tried. It is a fact that whilst governments face constraints in what they can provide for their citizens, they nevertheless have not helped themselves by generally taking a bureaucratic approach to public service delivery. This has not given sufficient attention to the needs of users. There is a strong need to endeavour to reduce bureaucracy, understand users better and stimulate a culture of continuous innovation and improvement. These changes will not happen overnight. To make substantial progress, governments must pay greater heed to the lessons of the TQM implementation model. Malaysia is transforming its public sector with speed by embracing the implementation of TQM model.

Figure 4: Elaboration of GAPS Model of Service



(Source: Adapted from Ribeiro, 1993)

Characteristics of Service Quality

Customer expectations are what the customers think a service should offer rather than what might be on offer. A gap is created when the perceptions about service delivered do not match the expectation of the customer of public services (Parasuraman et al (1985).

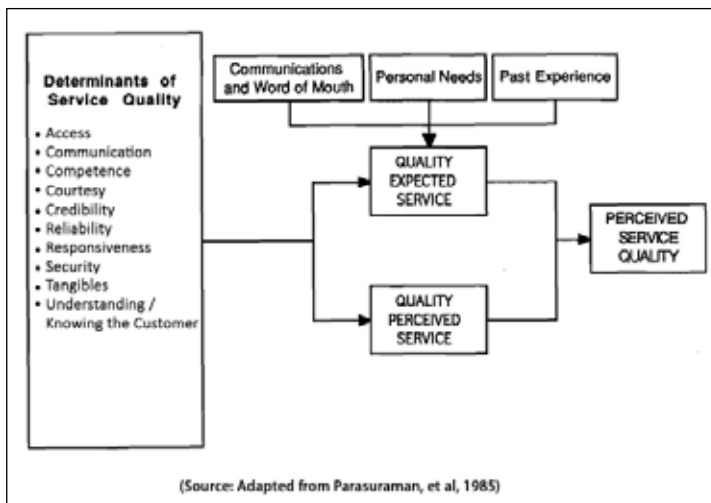
Research has proven that the “determinants of service quality” provide comprehensive coverage of the wide range of expectations (including features to be exhibited) that customers may demand of any service (Parasuraman et al, 1985; Boyne, 2003). The following are some of those qualities expected by customers of public services:

- **Access:** involves approachability and ease of contact.
- **Communication:** means listening to customers and keeping them informed in language

they can understand.

- **Competence:** means personnel of organisation’s possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service.
- **Courtesy:** includes politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of the organisation’s contact personnel (telephonist, receptionist, porters etc).
- **Credibility:** involves trustworthiness, belief and honesty.
- **Reliability:** involves consistency of performance and dependability.
- **Responsiveness:** involves the willingness, readiness and timeliness of employees to provide service.
- **Security:** is freedom from danger, risk or doubt.
- **Tangibles:** include the physical evidence of the quality of service provided.
- **Understanding/knowing the customer:** involves making an effort to understand the customer.

Figure 5: Determinants of Perceived Service Quality



The requirement placed upon public sector managers is that they design a service process which is capable of implementation by their staff. This must balance the customer’s expectation of service quality and also meet the organisation’s need to ensure a compromise with governmental legal structures. To surmount this hurdle requires the creation of a service strategy.

Managing, in practice, is described as “the service triangle”, that is, service strategy, people and systems all interacting with the customer to provide the key to service quality.

An effective service strategy exhibits a number of features:

- Vision: provides or articulates a clear and concise view of the desired future state from the perspective of both organisations and its customers
- Mission: identifies the balance between competing demands by clarifying primary objectives – what we do, how we do it, who we serve and how we serve them.
- Values: a value statement depicts how the organisation intends to serve its customers, both internal and external, and helps to define the balance between service to the customers and compliance with governmental structures.
- Key Issues: the service strategy identifies key issues and depicts the goal which must be attained if the vision is to be turned into reality.

Meeting citizens’ needs by way of providing and improving quality of public services is the essence of developing service strategy, particularly in the public sector. Service strategy as a tool helps to ensure that an organisation prioritises and manages its investment assets and revenues to deliver

effective services which provide value for money. It involves the maximisation of opportunities to realise synergies by ensuring alignment of the service strategy with local and national strategies, projects and initiatives. The service strategy is underpinned by principles, people and processes and leveraging on technology to follow through and provide excellent service delivery. Service strategy is a model where services are built around citizen’s (customer) needs but not organisational structures.

Table I depicts a number of key issues that are common to many service organisations, including those operating in the public sector.

Table I – Service Strategy Key Issues

i. Quality	vi. Infrastructure
ii. Delivery	vii. External relationships
iii. Safety	viii. Customer protection
iv. Cost	ix. Compliance
v. Organisational responsibility	x. Employee commitment

The key issues therefore, are those exhibiting some or all of the characteristics in Table 1 in that they are:

- important to the customer
- creating substantial cost out of the poor quality.
- happening frequently
- having substantial impact upon the organisation
- creating substantial delay

Analysing characteristics exhibited in the key issues helps to build services around known needs of customers. By discerning such key issues, the attention of the organisation is being actively directed towards areas of its current practices and processes, which are in need of improvement and change because of their poor quality; and which have the additional purpose of providing the organisation with areas where the setting of specific quality goals needs to be undertaken; and change implemented for the accomplishment of the vision statement.

The definition of the service strategy for an organisation leads to an understanding of changes in systems and behaviors that are necessary to achieve the vision. Definition of specific goals and behavioural changes will start to change the responsibilities of every employee in the organisation and is the first step towards

benchmarkable customer service. Additionally, a comprehensive audit must be undertaken as part of the strategy which will permit a thorough understanding to be gained of the environment in which the organisation operates and knowledge of its customers' needs expectations and perceptions. These key elements must be managed through what the guru in TQM, Juran, has termed the QualityTrilogy (1992). In order to manage the movement towards the establishment of a quality organisation, Juran's trilogy contends that the movement toward the attainment of quality in any organisation is secured through the successful attainment of three elements, namely:

- Quality planning
- Quality control
- Continuous quality improvement

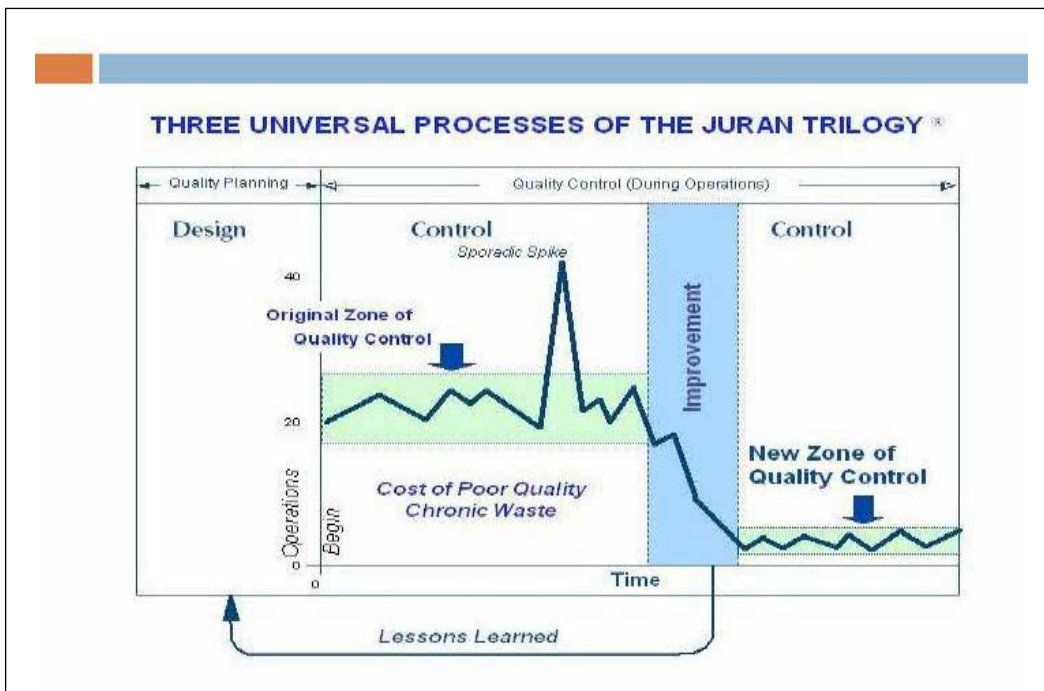
Each of the above three cardinal elements has associated with it a number of more specific

activities as per Figure 6, the attainment of which is imperative if the goal of Total Quality Management is to be reached.

Truly, managing for quality is done by three managerial processes of planning, control and improvement. Quality planning is the activity of developing the products/service and processes required to meet the customer's needs. Quality control process consists of the evaluation of actual quality performance, comparison of the actual performance to quality goals and acting on the differences. Quality improvement is a process aimed at raising quality performance.

Deming, another celebrated TQM guru, has developed a 14-point guideline for quality improvement that applies to any organisation. (Deming, 1996). In his opinion, his model can be applied to service industries as well as manufacturing.

Figure 6: The Juran Trilogy Diagram



Deming's 14 points, especially for services organisations, as following:

1. Create constancy purpose toward improvements
2. Adopt the new philosophy
3. Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality
4. Stop evaluating activities on the basis of price tag alone
5. Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service to improve quality and productivity and this constantly decrease costs
6. Institute training on the job
7. Institute leadership (see points 8 and 12) which aims at helping people, machines and gadgets to do a better job
8. Drive out fear so that everyone may work effectively for the company
9. Breakdown barriers between departments
10. Estimates exhortations and targets for workforce asking zero defects and now levels of productivity, because the bulk of the causes of low quality and low productivity belong to the system and lie beyond the power of the workforce.
11. Eliminate work standards on the factory floor and management by objective and numerical goals and substitute leadership
12. Make it possible to feel proud of workmanship. The responsibility of supervisors must be on quality and there should not be a manual merit rating or management by objective for people in management and engineering.
13. Institute vigorous programme of education and self-improvement.
14. Everybody should be put to work to accomplish the transformation of the organisation, as it is everybody's responsibility.

Deming's 14 point model contains some philosophical and programmatic principles which are transformative in nature and can help to transform organisations of the public sector.

Improving the Quality of Public Services in Practice It has been argued in a number of studies from

TQM implementation in other countries, Malaysia, in particular, that bureaucratic approach, overly complex and unresponsive arrangements, failure to learn from mistakes, limited incentives in the system to improve performance and poor feedback mechanisms through systems, have led to some poor quality service. (Abdullah et al, 2000) Lessons to be learned and the scope for improvement in public services center on public sector manager's failures to:

- show understanding of the customer in order to listen to them more;
- be proactive rather than responsive, anticipating needs rather than playing catch up;
- treat innovation as a routine part of service delivery;
- listen to front line staff who often know better than their seniors what customers want and need;
- make effective use of new technology;
- help citizens to make informed choices about things that matter most to them;
- build services around known needs; and
- ensure that there is accountability and transparency about performance.

They have also failed to pay attention to barriers to high quality services, which among others include:

- overly complex and unresponsive service;
- failures in delivery and in learning lessons;
- slow response to increasing social diversity and identifying customer needs;
- poor communication;
- few incentives to innovate; and,
- weakness in complaint and redress arrangements.

The public sector managers must pay special attention to the following steps for the implementation of TQM service system:

- Step 1 – Formulate the service quality strategy.
- Step 2 – Analyse service processes and define

quality measures.

- Step 3 – Establish process control system.
- Step 4 – Investigate the process to identify improvement opportunity.
- Step 5 – Improve process quality.

A preliminary step in TQM implementation is to assess the organisation's current reality. Relevant preconditions have to do with the organisation's history, its current needs, precipitating events leading to TQM and the existing employee quality to working life. If the current reality does not include important preconditions, TQM implementation should be delayed until the organisation is in a state in which TQM is likely to succeed.

Basic Steps in managing a transition to a new TQM system involve:

- identifying tasks to be done;
- creating necessary management structures;
- developing strategies for building commitment;
- designing mechanisms to communicate the change; and
- assigning resources.

Key lessons learned from TQM implementation in public sector organisations of some countries centre on the following:

- Public bodies offering a demand-led public service should be aware of capacity constraints and have contingency plans in place to cope with any likely surge in demand, taking full account of reasonable public expectations of service standards, likely cost and the level of risk.
- Public bodies providing demand-led services should ensure that their forecasting techniques, though necessarily imprecise, are nonetheless sufficiently robust to enable them to manage their business efficiently, for example, to enable them to plan their capacity needs.
- The business case drawn up to justify any new computer system or use of technology should test the likely financial cost of different

options on sufficiently wide range volumes and allow an informed judgement, taking account of the impact of any likely changes in policy.

- Public bodies should undertake a formal risk analysis before introducing new computer systems and have realistic plans to maintain services to the public if things go wrong.
- Project managers should plan for adequate testing of a new system before committing to live operation in particular, so that staff can learn and work that system.
- Pilot test of any system which is critical to business performance should be on a limited scale so that any shortcomings do not have a major impact on service delivery. Where pilot needs to be on a large scale to test operations at high volumes, the risks should be identified and addressed in contingency plans.
- Organisations should pay special attention to the interaction between the new system and those expected to use it and take into account users' views on the practicability and usability of the new system.
- Agencies should make a realistic assessment of whether they have the capacity to deal with potential problems and be prepared to seek early assistance from their parent departments and elsewhere if necessary.
- When service delivery is threatened, public bodies should have the capability to keep the public well informed, so as to avoid unnecessary anxiety and relieve pressure on services.
- Public bodies should have adequate systems for recording performance and ensure that they are in a position to claim any compensation due from contractors for failure to meet agreed performance standards, subject to appropriate risk-sharing within the partnership.

Full Implementation of TQM

When fully implemented, TQM is a vehicle for transformation with obvious applicability and

potential for the organisations of the public sector. Its impact will not be restricted to the processes by which services are delivered but will extend to directly impact upon the entire structure and behaviour of an organisation. Importantly, it will afford the customers of public sector (the citizens) a service of unrivalled quality.

Being proactive rather than responsive and anticipating needs rather than playing catch up, are very important for the public sector to embrace and implement TQM. Whether or not it does so greatly depend on how serious its intentions in that direction are. It is said that Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution. It represents the 'wise choice of many alternatives'.

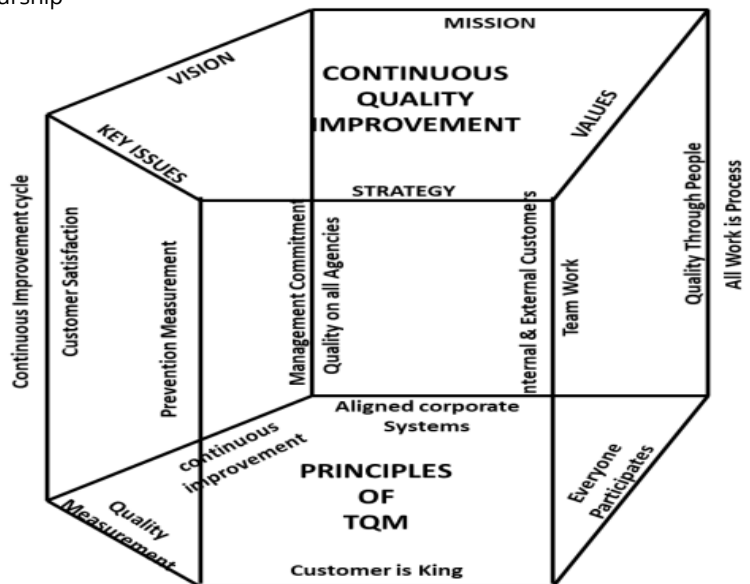
Although public sector organisations have vociferous resistance sometimes, they are increasingly impelled toward the criteria of excellence discerned as the hallmark for success in the private sector, namely:

- a bias for action
- get close to the customer
- autonomy and entrepreneurship
- hands on, value drive
- simple form and lean staff
- stick to the knitting

In addition to the above criteria for excellence, most managers in the public sector require more help in order to answer the essential question of how they can guarantee that TMQ will work in any organisation, whether public or private, service or manufacturing. The obvious riposte to such dilemma could well be most simple one, that is, to follow a tried and trusted implementation of TMQ which adheres to the accepted underpinning philosophy of TMQ (Fryer et al, 2007).

Such an implementation model must encompass both macro and contextual elements of TMQ, taking cognisance of the micro and operational elements of that approach to management. The former is the responsibility of top management; the latter is the responsibility of front-line workers. The middle management plays a crucial linkage role. At the same time, it is imperative that the macro and micro elements be interconnected to provide the holistic effect demanded by the word "Total". With these considerations very much in mind, the classic generic model adopted from Morris and Haigh, 1994 as depicted in Figure 7 is offered as a good example of holistic understanding of TQM.

Figure 7: TQM Implementation Model



(Source: Adapted-D.S. Morris & Haigh, 1994)

To return to congruent necessities and to move from administrations to management, will have to do with the style of management to be adopted by public sector organisations. Further, it informs about the kind of varieties of management approaches that will best fit the new environment in which they operate and the demands generated. In short, the question here is about how to bridge the gap which exist between current practice and the criteria of excellence discussed under TQM.

In part, the answer to the question is dependent upon the public sector/private sector mix that will be sanctioned by governments. It is unthinkable that any forward looking government, that is hungry for success and transformation will ever support an economy comprising only state-run enterprises or one exclusively comprising private organisations. The limitations of either of those "extreme" formulations are only too apparent. therefore, some form of mix is virtually inevitable. Whatever the proportion of public or private sector will be, success, as defined by governments, will be dependent on compatibility being achieved between the style of management of the public

and private sector organisations of which it is composed.

Conclusion

The task confronting the public sector today is one of adapting to the undoubted convergence which has taken place, largely under the influence of government policy toward them during the last three decades, between their managerial processes and practices and those of their private sector counterparts. Such a convergence is incomplete, the public sectors still do retain some of the features which have rendered them unique, but there is a growing weight of evidence to suggest that it has as a whole moved from an administered to a managed culture. The question which remains is the precise form of management that will be exhibited in this new culture. Whatever form it takes, it will certainly have to be different from that which has gone on before, since survival depends upon changing public sector management to achieve congruence with the changes to which the public sectors have been subjected. "Quality is not an act. It is a habit" (Aristotle n/d).

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