

LATENT IMPACTS OF CULTURAL ASPECTS ON NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES IN TURKISH PUBLIC SECTOR

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Özet

Yeni Kamu Yönetimi (YKY) yaklaşımı, 1980'lerden bu yana kamu sektöründe yönetimde yeni teknikler ortaya koymuştur. Gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan ülkelerin KYK uygulama evreleri değişiklik gösterirken, kamu yönetimi bilimadamları ve uygulayıcıları başarılı yeni yönetim uygulamalarını harekete geçiren faktörleri tartışmaya başlamıştır. Normları, inanç ve değerleri ile yönetici ve çalışanlarının davranış ve tutumlarını destekleyen uygun bir çalışma kültürü, yeni yönetim tekniklerinin başarısı için bir gerekliliktir. Yeni yönetim akımları büyük ölçüde gelişmiş ülkelerde ortaya çıkmış olduklarından, gelişmekte olan ülkeler KYK tekniklerini başarılı bir şekilde (kamu sektörlerine) tanıtmakta gelişmiş ülkelere göre daha fazla zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Bu çalışma, yeni kamu yönetimi prensiplerinin başarılı bir şekilde kamu organizasyonlarında uygulanabilmesinde günümüz Türk ulusal kültürü ve organizasyon kültürünün etkilerini incelemektedir.

Abstract

The New Public Management (NPM) has introduced new means of management in the public sector since 1980s. While stages of NPM practices have been various in both developed and developing countries, public administration scholars and practitioners alike began to discuss the driving forces of successful new management applications. The success of new management techniques demands an appropriate internal work culture whose norms, beliefs, and values are supportive of the attitudes and behaviors of managers and subordinates. Developing countries have faced more challenges in successful introduction of NPM approaches than developed countries, since new management ideas have taken roots mainly in developed countries. In this paper, it is intended to discuss how current aspects of Turkish national and organizational culture may affect the

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successful implementation of new public management principles in the public organizations by reviewing relevant literature.

INTRODUCTION

The successful adaptation of new management techniques depends on variety of factors in the organizational environment. While the financial, technological, and other material resources are very critical to the organizational success, the importance of the human resources function is increasingly being recognized. Furthermore, culture, "as one of the most powerful and stable forces in organizations (Scheir, 1996, p.23)" deserves a considerable attention in order to assure that the human resources of the organization are ready to carry new assignments when the organization tries to change its management approaches.

As new management ideas emerged in the West during last two decades, these developments have been followed by many developing countries that are willing to alter their management systems as well. In Turkey, the private sector has been pioneered in transforming its managerial perspectives towards contemporary management techniques since they have to severely compete with their national and international counterparts. Turkish public organizations were hesitant to introduce new management perspectives because of the lack of political, economical, and structural supports to take new initiatives. However, several individual governmental organizations have been currently interested in new ways of providing goods and services that will enhance the capability of public organizations and satisfaction of Turkish citizens.

Mendance and Kanungo (1996) raise the cultural-fit issue in adopting new management approaches to organizations in developing countries. According to them, programs that are highly successful in the developed countries of the West can fail in the developing countries, not because of any deficiency in or unsuitability of the programs, but because these programs have been uncritically adopted without any regard to their suitability to the internal work culture. The success of new management techniques demands an appropriate organizational culture whose norms, beliefs, and values are supportive of the attitudes and behaviors of managers and subordinates. An illustration for this point may be job autonomy perspective in developed and developing countries. Job autonomy is a highly valued non-economic reward in North America whereas this is not the case in developing countries where

rewards are usually about satisfying the social and security needs. In this paper, it is intended to discuss how fundamental aspects of Turkish national and organizational culture are critical to have the successful implementation of new management ideas in the public organizations.

1. New Public Management: A Challenge to Traditional Public Management

Developed mainly in the European context, the new public management is considered to be an umbrella concept of neomanagerialism that includes various managerial reforms for market efficiency, decentralization, devolution, customer satisfaction, and quality improvement. Regardless to reasons for applying the new management approaches, the ideas of the NPM and associated administrative reforms have spread around the world since 1980s. Some scholars has called it as a new paradigm; "A new paradigm for public management has emerged, aimed at fostering a performance-oriented culture in a less centralized public sector" (Mathiasen, 1999). Accordingly, the NPM has questioned the traditional bureaucratic paradigm.

Table 1: Doctrinal Components of New Public Management

<i>Doctrine</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
'Hands-on professional management' in the public sector	<i>Active, visible, discretionary control of organizations from named persons at the top, 'free to manage'</i>
Explicit standards and measures of performance	<i>Definition of goals targets, indicators of success, preferably expressed in quantitative terms, especially for professional services</i>
Greater emphasis on output controls	<i>Resource allocation and rewards linked to measured performance; break up of centralized bureaucracy-wide personnel management</i>
Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector	<i>Break up of formerly 'monolithic' units, unbundling of u-form management systems into corporatized units around products, operating on decentralized 'one-line' budgets and dealing with one another on an 'arms-length' basis</i>
Stress on private-sector styles of management practice	<i>Move away from military-style 'public service ethic', greater flexibility in hiring and rewards; greater use of private sector techniques</i>
Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use	<i>Cutting direct costs, raising labour discipline, resisting union demands, limiting 'compliance costs' to business</i>

Source: Hood, C. "A Public Management for all Seasons," in *Public Administration*. Vol. 69, Spring-1991, pp. 4-5.

All of the above NPM principles indicated by Hood (1991) refer a new style of public management that has greater focus on managerial discretionary by using private sector management tools, performance measurement via clear and measurable output/outcome indicators, decentralized government units that are capable of competition with their counterparts, and customer orientation to satisfy demanding citizens. In the literature, scholars have discussed whether NPM is a 'paradigm' or not since it was in general founded on a critique of bureaucracy inherited by traditional public administration (Yamamoto, 2003).

A number of public organizations in the US, Europe, and other developed countries (Canada, New Zealand and Australia) have undertaken the new public management efforts since 1980s. In the Turkish side, Turkish public sector organizations tended to be reluctant to introduce new management approaches due to the lack of sufficient political, financial, and legislative support of the central government. That was the second half of the 1990s when Turkish public sector had begun to pay considerable attention to the private sector management experiences as a way to improve the efficiency and the quality of public organizations. Also, real pressures from international organizations (IMF, the World Bank, the EU etc.) have been implicitly responsible for the ideas being spread and adopted in Turkish public sector. Nonetheless, more recently, new public management concepts have drawn the attention of Turkish scholars and practitioners.

1.1. The NPM in Developing Countries: Does Culture Matter?

Yes, with regard to the new public management, cultural differences are potentially important variables concerning perspectives about cultural change. The universal applicability of the new public management (NPM) and smooth implementation of it have been discussed in the literature in sense of transformation from bureaucratize administrative culture to entrepreneurial culture (Hajnal, 2004; Parker and Bradley 2000). This includes the transformation of the public organizations' culture, processes, and beliefs. Developing countries have faced more challenges in successful introduction of NPM approaches than developed countries. As stated by Mendonca and Kanunga (1996) "management techniques and practices which have evolved in the context of Western (developed) cultural values cannot be expected to take roots in the fundamentally different socio-cultural environment of the developing countries."

By focusing on developing countries experiences on NPM, public administration scholars and practitioners have tried to identify major points that have impacts on the successful implementation of new management approaches (Polidano, 1999; Manning, 2001). Findings in the literature show that developing countries are usually short of adequate public demands for better public administration, the civil service culture, and sufficient efforts toward systematic changes. In other words, NPM techniques have been successfully implemented in the developed countries since their citizen preferences lead to change and their capability of change by connecting formal to rules practical realities. These points must be carefully examined in both theoretical and practical level by public administrators in different developing countries to be able distinguish major driven factors for the successful implementation of new management techniques.

1.2. Management Initiatives in the Turkish Public Sector

The Turkish private sector's experience implementing ISO standards and moving through new management applications do not seem to differ from the experience of foreign counterparts. However, the Turkish public sector has its own unique way of undertaking quality initiatives, due in part to the fact that political, financial, and administrative aspects of the Turkish public sector have been greatly affected by two major economic crises and by public mistrust of politicians who have failed to deliver promised administrative reforms.

During the second half of the 1990s, while many developed countries had already made successful implementations, a wide range of Turkish public sector institutions began to discuss better ways of improving their effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of services by focusing on quality management systems and Total Quality Management. While the Public Administration Institute of Turkey and the Middle East (TODAI) organized two consecutive national congresses on quality management in public administration in 1998 and 1999, KalDer hosted an international conference on quality management in the public sector in 2000.

After intellectual level discussion on quality management in the public sector, a number the Turkish public sector institutions have implemented quality management practices since the second half of 1990s. However, these practices were mainly occurred at the individual, organizational, and departmental levels rather than being organized by the Turkish central government. Among other

Turkish institutions, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Turkish Military, the Turkish Police Organization, Turkish Fertilizer Industry, State Water Affairs, Turkish Locomotive and Engine Industry and Turkish Airlines have applied quality management principles by implementing quality initiatives in their particular departments and branches since 1999. Furthermore, local governments were also interested in quality management initiatives, and adopted quality principles (Ustuner and Coskun, 2004).

Nonetheless, these positive efforts have not reached their ultimate goal: providing successful examples of implemented management techniques at use in the public sector. The main obstacles to implementation were two major financial crises in 2000 and 2001 and chronic political instability caused by coalition party governments between 1997 and 2002. The result of November 2002 general elections provided a window of opportunity to public sector reformist in Turkish government. The current government has shown its concerns for public sector management reform and has paid considerable attention to already implemented techniques in public sector agencies as a part of Turkish style “re-inventing government” movement (The Prime Ministry of Turkey, 2003).

2. The Concept of Culture

A wide range of social sciences uses the concept of culture, so that it has different meanings in different fields (Groeschl and Doherty, 2000). While there are over 160 different definitions of ‘culture’ in the literature (Kroeber et al., 1985), the concept of culture can be defined in terms of a number of commonly shared processes; shared ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting; shared meanings and identities; shared socially constructed environments; common ways in which technologies are used and commonly experienced events including the history, language, and religion of their members (Schein, 1996; Pasa, Kabasakal, and Bodur, 2001).

The influence of culture on behavior was studied by Adler (1986) with an emphasis on cyclical relationship between values, attitudes, behavior, and culture. According to him, the behavior of people in any given group, organization, and nation is affected by the values and attitudes that they hold, and culture form a background that values and attitudes are developed. However, other social scientists (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 1993;

Hofstede, 1991; and Trompenaars, 1993) believe that not only values and attitudes, but also language, economics, religion, politics, social institutions, social classes and family structure, customs, aesthetics, education, and manners have reflections and effects on culture in the society (Darlington, 1996). In the same vein, culture in a society is usually observed in different layers based on the nationality, ethnicity, professionalism, organization, and group even though boundaries of culture are very obscure.

Two main approaches towards the application of culture and its consequences in a managerial and organizational setting are indicated in the literature as divergency theory and convergency theory (Joynt and Warner, 1996). While divergency theory assumes that elements such as differing values and behaviors, differing stages of economic development and unevenly distributed global resources will guarantee global diversity in cross-cultural management, convergency theory suggests that because of technology structure and a global orientation by many firms (and organizations), it is not necessary to practice cross-cultural management. In other words, convergency theory focuses on pragmatic issues that can make possible to adopt a "one best way" approach to the management of organizations world-wide.

Public administration researchers have begun to quest the convergency theory's assertion of "one best way" after receiving somewhat mixed results of new public management "experiences" in several developing countries (Plidano, 1999; Schacter, 2000; Manning, 2001).

In the next section, the study focuses on the concepts of national culture and organizational culture in the literature by paying considerable attention on the link between these two. Afterward, as an illustration of the discussion, Turkish national culture and organizational culture are reviewed in terms of NPM practices in the health sector.

2.1. National Culture

Cross-cultural researchers have placed a great deal of emphasis on value-orientation studies by describing culture in terms of particular value dimensions (Hofstede 1980; Triandis, 1989). Value orientation researchers believe that values are capable of broad influences on emotions, thinking, and behavior as well as standards that guide and determine action, attitudes toward objects and situations, and ideology. (Pasa, Kabasakal, and Bodur, 561-562).

By identifying and confirming cultural dimensions of values, several research projects have aimed to examine differences between national cultures. Hofstede (1980, 1983, and 1991) is recognized in the literature with his most frequently cited projects that seemed to distinguish four dimensions among cultures of the 53 independent nations. The following list presents these four cultural dimensions and their definitions:

Power distance defines “the extend to which the less powerful person in a society accepts inequality in power and considers it as normal. (Hofstede, 1984, p.390)”

Individualism assumes that “individuals look primarily after their own interest and the interest of their immediate family (Hofstede, 1984, p.390).” In other words, it is the relative importance of individual goals compared with group or collective goals.

Masculinity is “the extend to which the dominant values in society are masculine that the goals of men dominate those of women. Masculine cultures expect men to be assertive, ambitious, and competitive to strive for material success and to respect whatever is big, strong, and fast (Hofstede, 1984, p.390).”

Uncertainty avoidance defines “the extend to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations that they consider to be unstructured unclear, or unpredictable, and the extend to which they try to avoid such situations by adopting street codes of behavior, and a belief in absolute truths.”

Since national culture of Turkey will be discussed in the next section, Turkey’s rank on above four dimensions among 53 countries will be reviewed in the next pages of the study.

Another differentiation in the literature about national cultures has been made between developed and developing countries in terms of geographical location, economy, demography, and socio-cultural environments. (Hofstede and Bend, 1988; Mendonca and Kanungo, 1994) Developing countries tend to be located in specific parts of the world (i.e. East and West Africa, Central and Latin America, the Middle East and some parts of Eastern Europe) can be characterized by weak infrastructure, abundance of unskilled labor, low technological developments, political instability, rigid social structures, distinct gender roles, and strong religious influences (Pasa et al., p.562). Furthermore,

Mendanca and Kanungo (1994) indicate that generally developing countries can be identified as showing low individualist, high power distance, and high associative thinking while these are vice-versa in the developed countries.

2.2. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is defined by Edgar Schein (1992, 373-374) as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the organization learned as it solves the problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be thought to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.” He also adds that norms in the organization become a fairly visible manifestation of these (above) assumptions, although most members of a culture never question or examine these taken-for-granted set of assumptions lied behind the norms (Schein, 1996)”. He argues that senior management of the organization must pay considerable attention on the basic assumptions if they want to change their organizational culture.

Research on organizational culture indicates that culture is central to the change process and to the attainment of strategic objectives (Parker and Bradley, 2000). A lack of understanding of organizational culture in the public sector is a problem when management techniques associated with the new public management conflict with attitudes, values, and culture within public sector organizations. During the organizational change process, top managers must understand current organizational culture in their organizations in order to design unique organizational change strategies.

2.3. The Link between National and Organizational Culture

The link between national culture and organizational culture has been found very important in terms of cultural continuity and coherence between organizations and society within which they live (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Medanca and Kangu, 1994; Harvey, 1997; House et al., 2001). Findings in the literature indicate that societal values influence organizational practices, thought, the shared values, and the shared perceptions of organizational members. Accordingly, Hofstede et.al (1990) used twenty organizations in Holland and Denmark to examine the influence of national culture on

organizational cultures, and members' beliefs were found to differ according to their nationality.

In a similar vein, Kangu and his associates studied different national cultural values and their effects on organizational cultures in developed and developing countries (Mangence and Kanungo, 1994; Kanungo and Jeager, 1990). They point out that managers from developing countries are more likely to assume that their employees have an external locus of control; have limited and fixed potential; operate from a time perspective that is past and present oriented; and have a short time focus (Pasa et.al, 2001, 563). In addition, encouraging a passive or reactive stance to task performance; judging success on moralism derived from tradition and religion; favoring an authoritarian or paternalistic orientation; and accepting that consideration of the context overrides principles and rules are attitudes and beliefs of managers in developing countries.

2.4. Turkish National Culture and Organizational Culture

Hofstede (1980) described Turkish culture as being high on collectivism and power distance while being strong on uncertainty avoidance. Similarly, Schwartz (1994) found in his study on 34 cultures that Turkey ranked above the average in values of conservatism, hierarchy, egalitarian commitment, and harmony. Additionally, Kanungo and Aycan (1997) examined seven countries' paternalism values, and found that Turkey carry more paternalistic values alongside China, India, and Pakistan (Pasa et.al. 2001, p.567-568).

Kabasakal and Bodur conducted an extensive study on Turkish culture more recently as a part of the GLOBE study, which is "a multi-phase, multi-method project in which investigators spanning the world are examining the interrelationships between societal culture, organizational culture, and organizational leadership (Karasakal and Bodur, 1998; House et.al, 2001)." This study examined on in 61 cultures representing all major regions of the world.

GLOBE study used the nine cultural dimensions at both societal and the organizational levels. The following are the nine core GLOBE cultural dimensions (House et al., 2001):

Power distance: The degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally.

Uncertainty avoidance: The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules & procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.

Humane orientation: The degree to which a collective encourages & rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring & kind to others

Collectivism I: The degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action

Collectivism II: The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.

Assertiveness: The degree to which individuals are assertive, dominant and demanding in their relationships with others.

Gender egalitarianism: The degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality.

Future orientation: The extent to which a collective encourages future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning & investing in the future.

Performance orientation: The degree to which a collective encourages & reward group members for performance improvement & excellence.

Kabasakal and Bodur (1998) reported the results of survey of 323 high and middle level managers with respect to "how are" the current norms, values and practices and "how they should be in [Turkish] society."

According to the inter country societal "as is" [the current norms, values, and practices] rankings, Turkey is below the world average on gender egalitarianism (55th), uncertainty avoidance (49th), performance orientation (45th), humane orientation (40th), and future orientation (35th), while it is higher in collectivism (4th), power distance (10th), and assertiveness (11th). When inter country societal "should be" ratings are reviewed, they found that Turkey is below the world average in performance orientation (57th), assertiveness (54th), power distance (51th), and gender egalitarianism (37th), whereas it is higher in

future orientation (25th), and uncertainty avoidance (33rd) (Kabasakal and Bodur, 1998).

Kabasakal and Bodur's (1998) study has shown a rigorous combination of previous findings on cultural dimension of Turkish society. The following table was created to highlight Kabasakal and Bodur's findings:

Table 2: Level of Cultural Dimension of Turkish Society

	"As is"	"Should be"
High/Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collectivism - power distance - assertiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - future orientation - uncertainty avoidance
Low/Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - future orientation - gender egalitarianism - uncertainty avoidance - performance orientation - humane orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gender egalitarianism - performance orientation - assertiveness - power distance

Source: The table was created by summarizing the findings of Kabasakal and Bodur (1998), pp. 18-19.

Above results show that Turkish managers in societal level would likely be reluctant to support performance oriented, participative, and non-hierarchical management efforts if their organizations are involved new management practices. Although there is a consensus on the influence of national culture on organizational culture in the literature, some researchers in the literature believe that there is a possibility of contradiction between characteristics of subcultures in the same society (Groeschl and Doherty, 2000). For instance, Hofstede (1991) argues that religious values may conflict with generation values and gender values with organizational values in modern society.

Organizational level descriptions of GLOBE dimension were also reported by Kabasakal and Bodur's study with the respect to "how are" the current norms, values and practices and "how they should be" in their work organizations. Accordingly, the highest mean response is attributed to collectivism. Tendency towards power distance, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, and performance orientation is also found. Furthermore, lower humane orientation, assertiveness, and uncertainty avoidance are observed in the Turkish organizations.

When it is asked to the managers "how their work organizations should be", respondents indicated that they would like their organizations to be much more performance oriented, future oriented, more collectivist, more humane oriented, and more avoiding uncertainty (Kabsakal and Bodur, 1998). The managers also prefer to have less power distance.

These results shows that managers would be willing to support the new management efforts in their organizations if their organizations offered performance oriented, participative, and non-hierarchical management initiatives. Table 3 visually presents above findings of Kabasakal and Bodur (1998).

Table 3: Cultural Dimensions of Turkish Organizations

	"As is"	"Should be"
High/Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collectivism - power distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - future orientation - uncertainty avoidance - gender egalitarianism - performance orientation - assertiveness - collectivism
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - future orientation - gender egalitarianism - performance orientation 	
Low/Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uncertainty avoidance - humane orientation - assertiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - power distance

Source: The table was created by summarizing the findings of Kabasakal and Bodur (1998), pp. 18-19.

After comparing and contrasting their findings in societal and organizational level, Kabasakal and Bodur (1998) indicate that Turkish society is more collectivist, more masculine and less future oriented than its organizations. They believe that this result can be explained by the Islamic religion that is widespread in society. On the contrary, work environment necessitates fulfilling the requirements of the task and professionalism, and therefore would be less influence by Islamic attributes compared to society at large.

3. Management Initiatives in the Turkish Public Sector

The Turkish private sector's experience moving through new management applications does not seem to differ from the experience of foreign counterparts. However, the Turkish public sector has its own unique way of undertaking quality initiatives, due in part to the fact that political, financial, and administrative aspects of the Turkish public sector have been greatly affected by two major economic crises and by public mistrust of politicians who have failed to deliver promised administrative reforms.

During the second half of the 1990s, while many developed countries had already made successful implementations, Turkish efforts were still in the discussion stage. A wide range of Turkish public sector institutions began to discuss better ways of improving their effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of services by focusing on quality management systems and Total Quality Management. These positive efforts, however, have not reached their ultimate goal: providing successful examples of implemented management techniques at use in the public sector. The main obstacles to implementation were two major financial crises in 2000 and 2001 and chronic political instability caused by coalition party governments between 1997 and 2002. The result of November 2002 general elections provided a window of opportunity to public sector reformists in Turkish government. The current government has shown its concerns for public sector management reform and has paid considerable attention to already implemented techniques in public sector agencies as a part of Turkish style "re-inventing government" movement (The Prime Ministry of Turkey, 2003).

Additionally, In the case of Turkey, because of the contracts and combinations of East and West, having elements of modernity, traditionalism and Islam, Turkish society has shown unique cultural characteristics (Kabasakal and Bodur 1998). With its unique cultural characteristics and bureaucratic-professional structures, Turkish public organizations' cultural aspects deserve a careful examination in order to determine how we can manage to reach desired ends in following NPM principles. For instance, as mentioned in the very first pages, Turkish organizations have higher power distance in their organizations than their counterparts in many the developed countries. However, new public management ideas are usually based on employee empowerment in decision making process to create goal congruence between organizational and individual interests. Another example in the same line can be the level of

uncertainty avoidance and performance orientation in the Turkish public sector where both of aforementioned cultural dimensions seemed to be weaker than that of their Westernian counterparts. Therefore, Turkish public organizations ought to be very selective before adopting any new management approaches considering their unique cultural aspects which could have adverse impacts on new management initiatives.

3.1. As an Example: Turkish Public Healthcare Initiatives

In the Turkish public health sector, the fundamental elements of current traditional organizational culture are summarized as physician led, incremental, reactive rather than proactive, and inward looking rather than innovative. Moreover, present Turkish health sectors organizational culture essentially supports administration rather than management, is concerned with maintaining stability and the status quo rather than achieving improvement and change, and is focused on process and rules rather than aims and results (Ates, 2004). However, Ates also found out that there is a trend of cultural change within health authorities and individual hospitals of Ministry of Health (2004). Moreover, he stated that there is an emphasis on a more businesslike, entrepreneurial approach and toward more empowerment of the lower levels of hierarchy and devolving authority.

In recent years, Turkish governments have increasingly paid attention on the public healthcare sector. After a loan agreement between Turkey and the World Bank was signed in 1994, the Second Health Project was carried out in conjunction with the seventh five-year plan prepared by the State Planning Organization (covering 1996-2000) (Savas et al., p. 20) . Accordingly, many government hospitals run by different governmental institutions have begun to initiate quality assurance efforts by using ISO standardizations. The main goal of following ISO standards was announced as it was the first step of introducing total quality management principles in the public sector.

In the ideal world of successful NPM implementations, there should be an adequate mixed of performance orientation and future orientation in order to put greater emphasis on “output” and “explicit standards and measures of performance”. Moreover, there should be also a lower level of power distance and uncertainty avoidance, while having strong collectivism in order to have decentralized public organizations with ‘hands-on professionals’ who can use private sector styles of management practices efficiently.

However high dimensions of collectivism, power distance and relatively lower levels of performance orientation, uncertainty avoidance, and future orientation dimensions of Turkish organizational culture may have unfavorable impacts on the NPM efforts in the Ministry of Health. For instance, we can expect that members of the hospitals would be reluctant to take risks and accept organizational change because of relatively low level of uncertainty avoidance; respectful to bureaucratic structures and rigid role descriptions because of high level of power distance; less likely favor of personal appreciation or reward (performance orientation), but team oriented work environment because of high collectivistic character of Turkish national culture.

CONCLUSION

There is a growing body of research that organizational culture may be closely related to practices (Duster, 2003). It can be assumed that the organizational culture of hospitals in MoH is constantly affected by Turkish national culture, and therefore we must pay considerable attention on cultural components of organizations which help us to distinguish *organizational realities* from *popular rhetoric*.

After recognizing that developing countries have been facing greater challenges than developed countries in following NPM principles, officials and scholars of Turkish public administration must determine the strong and weak cultural dimensions of public organizations. In the same line, there are appeared to be five cultural dimensions of Turkish public organizations that have significant effects on the successful implementations of NPM, such as performance orientation, future orientation, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. The successful management implementation examples of the developed countries were typically taken place in the public organizations that have strong performance and future orientations while having low level of power distance and uncertainty avoidance. However, the Turkish public organizations show different organizational culture aspects from their counterparts around the World. The tendency of high power distance, low performance and future orientations may be identified as vital cultural dimension of Turkish public organizations that should cause cultural conflicts in implementing new management techniques.

This study highlights important findings on NPM initiatives in Turkish public sector by concluding that current Turkish organizational culture has

several unfavorable cultural dimensions in sense of NPM implementations. Hence, more rigorous empirical studies should definitely be needed to ascertain latent impacts of cultural aspects in Turkish public sector, if Turkish public sector is willing to alter its management by utilizing contemporary management approaches. This request is particularly important since cultural transformations require longer time periods and comprehensive efforts of all public sector personnel from senior managers to street level bureaucrats.

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