

SQCs in Turkey as “İmece Circles”

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Abstract The history of Total Quality in Education and Students’ Quality Circles in Turkish educational institutions is introduced through “İmece Circles (İCs).” The history dates from the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, and industrial quality-focused reforming actions in the 1980s. The Total Quality implications of the Ministry of National Education in 1990s will be discussed, with an account of the efforts of the writer as the Director of the Turkish Center for School of Quality and the Director General for Turkey for the World Council for Total Quality and Excellence in Education. The theory, practices and outcomes of nearly 2,000 ICs will be reported. Among the key innovations has been “Total Quality Management,” and its implementation, through various methods and tools, in different settings such as “Quality Circles.” The article concludes with some recommendations.

Keywords İmece circles · Students’ quality circles · Turkey

*“Theory and Research illuminate Practice, and Practice informs Research.”
Zmuda, Kuklis and Kline, 2004:3*

1 Historical background

1.1 Changes in the new era

Since the beginning of the 20th Century, world citizens have witnessed drastic changes. Two World Wars, and rapid improvement in communication and information technologies, increased the speed of change and psychological chaos. Managerial systems started to look for new solutions, to increase productivity. Total Quality Management (TQM) was accepted as the only way by many industrial leaders after the Second World War. It was the main reason for the rebirth of the Japanese people and Japanese industry. Through fathers of Total Quality, techniques and tools were shared; sample cases were publicised and those organisations who internalise not only the methodology but the philosophy of “continuous improvement” have gained great success. The new movement started in the production sector of the industrial world and moved to service sectors like education.

Nations are now competing with each other to attain world quality leadership. Quality is not just about words. Quality in any sphere can only be accomplished by commitment, hard work, good communication, effective leadership and love. Quality people are not a matter of chance, but result from a constant and continuous effort to groom them. People with commitment, positive outlook and leadership abilities have a pioneering role.

One good sample of such charismatic leaders is Mustafa Kemal, who is also known as Atatürk, the father of the Turkish nation. Turkish society experienced “Enlightenment” as a

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