

REVIEW SCIENTIFIC PAPER

RECEIVED: 27. 04. 2024.

ACCEPTED: 22. 05. 2025.

UDC: 005.6:351.074(497.11)

005.6:351.074(612)

COBISS.SR-ID 171299081

doi: <https://doi.org/10.61837/mbuir030125024m>

## THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: EXPERIENCES FROM SERBIA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIBYA

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**Abstract:** Establishing a quality management system in public administration is expected to improve the functioning of the public sector and the efficient provision of public services to citizens. In institutionally regulated countries, public administrations are familiar with and apply the principles of quality management in their operations, especially in Western European countries with a developed tradition of administrative law. Although evidence suggests that management techniques grounded in quality management principles are essential for effective management, their implementation in the public sector of insufficiently institutionalized countries remains underdeveloped or entirely absent. This paper aims to identify the institutional mechanisms that impact the effective implementation of public policies in line with quality management principles in public administration, using Serbia's experience to draw potential lessons for Libya. Although Serbia is still in the early stages of applying quality management in public administration and lacks many institutional mechanisms necessary for its implementation, it demonstrates a distinct administrative tradition, greater organizational autonomy, and more effective public policy coordination—offering valuable lessons for the development of public administration in Libya. There are also numerous similarities between the two countries—for instance, both are facing a lack of oversight regarding the achievement of goals outlined in management strategies and the execution of action plans. Therefore, this paper provides recommendations based on the experiences of developed EU countries, which could serve to improve the public administrations of both Serbia and Libya.

**Keywords:** quality management, public administration, quality standards, knowledge management

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern concept of managing public administrations implies introduction and permanent implementation and improvement of the quality management system as a basic prerequisite for monitoring world trends in public administrations. Public administration bodies should work in accordance with the legitimate expectations of users of their services. This model is difficult to clearly define, both for public administration employees and for citizens; however, any failure in its functioning will be readily noticed by both groups. Good governance is a newer administrative doctrine that was developed and started to be applied in developed democracies during the nineties of the last century. A defining feature of this doctrine is its approach to state administration, which seeks to develop best practices and standards of conduct that reflect the core principles underpinning the concept of “good governance.”

The essence is that greater effectiveness and efficiency of public administration is expected, together with other elements that are key to good governance, such as a greater level of democracy in the work of political and administrative institutions, greater openness in the work of administration, as well as greater transparency in the unfolding of political and administrative processes, the important role of citizen participation in political and administrative processes, and the stronger engagement of civil society associations in the process of public management. In this context, management is expected to embrace new dimensions of leadership by establishing mechanisms for organizational learning and knowledge management. Implementing a knowledge management system represents a strategic decision made by the organization's leadership. The quality management system in public administration includes the organizational structure, procedures, processes and resources and is set up in such a way as to prevent the occurrence of non-compliance in all processes, with the simultaneous aspiration towards continuous improvement - from the recognition of user requirements and expectations, through all stages of service

realization. The aim of this paper is primarily to highlight the key aspects of modern quality management and its impact on organizations, i.e. the changes that occur through the implementation of the quality system in the public sector. In addition, the fundamental concepts behind the implementation of a quality management system in Serbia's public administration—currently undergoing sectoral reforms as part of its European Union accession process—will also be presented. Steps aimed at public administration reform include the establishment of ethical standards, prevention of corruption, use of information technology, improvement of internal control mechanisms and internal communication, as well as transparent management of human resources focused on quality. Through the research problem, we will examine the functioning of public administration in Libya with the aim of uncovering the underlying causes of its challenges. We argue that there are numerous similarities between the public administrations of Libya and Serbia, which are the focus of this study—particularly in areas such as the inadequate approach to and regulation of administrative system issues, personnel policies, public service ethics, and the organization of human resource management. By examining the broader context and existing challenges, we will seek to identify concrete measures that can support successful reforms in the implementation of quality management systems. At the very least, the goal is to highlight ways to mitigate or eliminate negative impacts, while also opening up new questions and topics for future research.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Every business system must have a quality management system in place to ensure a consistent level of product or service quality and to effectively oversee and control that quality. Total quality management is a philosophy, i.e. an approach shaped by a set of tools and processes whose outputs bring consumer satisfaction and continuous improvement of product performance. In this paper, we study the application of quality management in the public sector. Numerous authors have followed the

application of techniques and tools developed in the private sector in the management of public organizations, which traditionally use management models developed in the private sector [11]. Although public and private organizations differ, employee involvement, teamwork, training needs analysis, and career management can all be applied in all organizational practices [7]. Quality management is also related to a strategic approach in managing the organization, an approach to managing changes and emergency situations, and a significant segment includes risk management procedures and documenting the most important risks [12].

The establishment of a quality management system in public administration should improve the functioning of public sectors and thus enable more efficient provision of services to citizens. "Quality public administration means achieving the most desirable results in the best possible way" [6]. Although the quality system represents a new management system in public administration, this does not mean that public administration was not oriented towards quality in the past. Quality has always been important in public administration, even if often implicitly, but its significance has evolved over time. Traditionally, scholars have identified three main phases in the development of quality management within public sector organizations [6]:

- quality in terms of compliance with norms and procedures;
- quality in terms of effectiveness, and
- quality in terms of client satisfaction.

Proponents of quality management believe that large private companies and large public institutions have the same bureaucratic problems, especially in the part related to human resource management, but many experts believe that it is not possible to implement the system that exists in the private sector in public because they operate differently [13]. When examining the implementation of quality management systems, one of the biggest challenges lies in public administration sectors that are heavily influenced by political interests. The introduction of the

quality system in various public agencies and institutions has shown that a business-oriented quality system works best in public agencies and institutions that operate under market conditions - as public enterprises.

The modernization of public administration in developed market-oriented countries has conditioned the creation of organizations with a public-private ownership structure. As a result, the lines between the public, private, and non-governmental sectors have become blurred. In other words, the public sector no longer operates as it once did.

However, as previously mentioned, the quality system works quite well in public companies, agencies and institutions with a certain market character. However, the central level of government, ministries and other sectors of public administration, with a strong focus on creating the political scene in a certain country, have difficulty accepting and implementing the quality management system and generally fail to work in line with the principles of quality management. What does not differentiate the private and public sectors is that both should aim for continuous improvement in the quality of service delivery to users, as well as the overall quality of the organization.

Quality management is precisely a systemic approach to management focused on the continuous improvement of business processes and systems, with the ultimate goal to consistently enhance value for the user and achieving the principle of excellence. The quality system and the organization's strategy and plans are inseparable components of an integrative, comprehensive, holistic approach to the organization that is oriented towards the user/customer [29]. It is necessary to constantly set new goals and gradually, over time, approach those goals. In this way, the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization, that is, the entire system, would be improved. All this constitutes a process of quality improvement in public administration. To improve the overall quality of public administrations, public sector organizations need to possess the following characteristics [29]:



- separating strategic public policy from operational management,
- focusing on the results rather than solely on processes and procedures,
- orientation towards the needs of citizens, not the interests of organizations or bureaucrats,
- active participation of citizens
- transformed managerial culture.

By accepting such a management concept, it is possible to pay sufficient attention in development strategies to each less developed or underdeveloped local community. “Thanks” to the market economy, the question of the development of a certain local community is left to the market mechanism [31]. Whether a local community will succeed in boosting its efficiency, local employment, and economic growth—more or less than other communities in the country—is a question that cannot be answered solely by government strategies, but must be addressed within the community itself. The approach to implementing a quality system varies significantly for each organization, particularly in public administration, which is marked by a wide range of unique characteristics. This is evident when comparing public administration bodies in Serbia with those in Libya, both of which are the focus of this paper.

Emphasizing the importance of the satisfaction of service users-citizens has enabled the development of a business philosophy in which all employees (administration but also public officials) and all internal business processes strive for continuous improvement as their main goal. The orientation of public administration organizations towards a quality management system resulted from the need to improve the work of administrative bodies and their employees and increase citizen satisfaction. Quality as a term in public administration indicates that it is a dynamic category that is in constant development. In this context, decision-makers in public administrations should proactively anticipate potential challenges and identify all sources of resistance within the city administration to the introduction and implementation of the TQM philosophy, approaching the process with a

clear and visionary mindset. Steps toward reforming public administration include establishing ethical standards to prevent corruption, improving internal communication, leveraging information technologies, and managing human resources transparently with a focus on work quality. It is crucial to identify organizational changes stemming from the “new” management philosophy, recognize any shifts in the organizational structure, pinpoint sources of employee resistance, and develop strategies to prevent such resistance from obstructing the implementation process [18]. For a more modern and effective municipal administration, this entails improved efficiency, accuracy, courtesy, accountability, and trust—all leading to greater benefits and satisfaction for citizens as service users. A key factor in achieving this is the introduction of standardized processes and procedures for monitoring and controlling the quality of both services and work processes. The goal of obtaining the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) certificate improving the work of public administration, and providing faster and more efficient services of public organizations as a public service for citizens. When it comes to ISO 9000 quality standards, we are essentially referring to the adaptation of existing Quality Management Systems (QMS) or Total Quality Management (TQM) to internationally recognized and widely accepted standards. ISO standards represent a codified approach to operations—written guidelines on how to perform tasks and prepare relevant documents—and, in essence, outline how public administration should function.

Standards imply unified procedures that are carried out in the municipal administration, describing the exact sequence of actions in the implementation of the procedure and individually describing each of them [19]. The quality management system in public administration includes the organizational structure, procedures, processes and resources and is set up to prevent the occurrence of non-compliance in all processes, with the simultaneous pursuit of continuous improvement - from the recognition of user requirements and expectations,

through all phases of service implementation. Internal quality checks and system reviews by management are used to monitor system performance, monitor effects, analyze conditions and identify opportunities for improvement. The documentation of the quality management system (book, procedures, instructions, records) is a support system for the implementation of processes in the municipal administration. According to its structure and scope, the documentation is adapted to the needs of the processes taking place in the municipal administration and the qualifications of the employees they use in their work. It is important to note that the introduction of TQM in local administrations often brings with it a range of additional challenges, most notably the frequent politicization of public administration operations. The establishment of new work principles is met with resistance from bureaucratic structures, often autocratic leaders who have political parties behind them, who resist any changes.

It is a very common case, especially in countries with non-democratic regimes and in transition processes, to employ people who are politically suitable, or have the support of political or other so-called “quasi elites” who resist any changes. The Total Quality Management (TQM) system in public administration organizations—just like in market-oriented organizations—requires the development of a new organizational culture in which the service user, i.e., the citizen, and their satisfaction take center stage. However, this shift is often difficult for public administration bodies to fully embrace.

### 3. RESEARCH CONTEXT

This paper focuses on identifying the institutional mechanisms that influence the effective implementation of quality management policies in public organizations. By analyzing these mechanisms, we aim to draw lessons for Libya, based on the experiences and reform processes undertaken in Serbia's public administration. Although Serbia lacks many institutional mechanisms necessary for the successful horizontal implementation of quality management systems—both at the central

level and particularly at lower levels of government—some progress has been made. This is largely due to the fact that the introduction of a quality management system is one of the requirements for EU accession and aligns with established European best practices.

With this paper, our primary goal is to present the CAF model (Common Assessment Framework), which effectively contributes to strengthening institutional excellence. By doing so, we aim to encourage researchers in Libya to explore and promote policies related to quality management in the country's public administration. In particular, the paper highlights the role of central authorities and the importance of coordinated government efforts in quality management. It emphasizes the need for appropriate institutional mechanisms to support the implementation of context-specific quality management models within Libya's public sector.

The reform of public administration in Serbia aims to create a public administration based on the principles of the European administrative space, that is, an administration that provides high quality services to citizens and the economy and positively affects the standard of living of citizens. The reform is based on the principles of decentralization, professionalization, rationalization and modernization. The support of the EU is also reflected in the improvement of institutional and personnel capacities for the implementation of the reform in the field of public policy development and public administration reform in general. The European Public Administration Network (EUPAN - European Public Administration Network) is relevant for quality management in the public administration of the countries of the European Union, which cooperates among member states to achieve quality public services and effective quality management in public administrations in Europe [9]. The main purpose of the network is to ensure cooperation between European public administration, to enable informal, flexible, transparent and consistent dialogue with the aim of making public administrations more relevant, more focused and giving clearer results [9]. The basic values that are the motto of the

EUPAN network are professionalism, cooperation, innovation, commitment, sustainability and transparency in public administration institutions. The strategy adopted in 2022 should contribute to solving common challenges for network members in order to contribute to [9]:

- “Greening” of public administrations;
- Attractiveness;

Sharing knowledge between generations/inter-generational cooperation;

- Digital transformation and its associated challenges (teleworking, right to disconnect, cybersecurity, use of artificial intelligence, interoperability of services and digital solutions, etc.);
- Trust in and resilience of public administration;
- Efficiency, effectiveness and performance measurement of public administrations.

It should also contribute to the promotion of the common values shared by the member states of the European Union and its institutions. The most relevant product of the EUPAN network is the Common Assessment Framework CAF, which represents the first European tool for quality management and which was especially designed for the public sector and developed by the public sector [4]. It is a general, simple, accessible model, easy to use and intended for all public sector organizations. It deals with all aspects of organizational excellence and strives for continuous improvement. The CAF-model has now been revised and improved in order to better respond to events and developments in public administration and society. The updated content in the CAF 2020 version primarily focuses on digitization, agility, sustainability, and diversity [4]. The goal of the CAF model is to improve performance and achieve excellence in public administrations by using quality management techniques. It provides a self-assessment framework that is similar to the TQM-Total Quality Management model, but adapted to the public sector. CAF is a quality management tool developed by public administrations and intended for public administrations. It basically aims to introduce public administrations

to the principles of total quality management through the use of self-assessment based on the cycle formulated by Deming’s Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), which aims to help public sector organizations to [25]:

- improve the quality of services through assessment processes in order to obtain a “diagnosis” and improve the provision of services;
- “bridge” various models and methodologies of good management, because the CAF model can serve as a transitional solution for organizations that have not yet implemented any of the quality systems, or if the organization has an implemented quality system, it can serve as a control mechanism;
- enable comparison between organizations and to introduce benchmarking in public sector organizations.

This model can be applied to the entire organization, or to a certain part of the organization, but it must always be implemented as a whole system, and not segmented through the selective application of certain criteria. In addition, it can be applied at all levels of state administration, and most importantly, it can be used as a systemic program during reform processes. By applying the CAF model, the EU member states first of all tried to solve the issue of variability of administrative systems, establishing common criteria and a unique assessment method, so that the results are comparable, mutually acceptable and applicable with the aim of planning common policies. With the technical support of the Public Administration Reform Support Project within the Sector Reform Agreement for the Public Administration Reform sector, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government was the first institution in Serbia to introduce a quality management system through the European CAF model, back in 2021, with the aim of improving the institution’s performance [8]. Through a simple-to-apply methodology, the Self-Assessment Group from each institution looks at various aspects (leadership, strategy, human resources, finances, partnerships, processes, impact on society, internally and externally achieved results



and user perception), then makes proposals for improvement measures and activities in a relatively short period of time, without additional costs for the institution. By awarding the CAF mark, after successful implementation, the institution becomes recognizable for its commitment to quality and excellence. With the aim of familiarizing public administration institutions in Serbia with the CAF quality management model and making its application accessible to all interested institutions, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government launched the CAF website as part of the public administration reform support project. In addition to basic information, this website also contains a questionnaire with guidelines for self-assessment intended for institutions that decide to implement CAF, as well as an invitation from the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government addressed to all interested public administration institutions to apply for support during CAF implementation.

The analysis of the problem revealed that, although Serbia has made progress in recent years, there is still significant room for improving the quality of public policies and regulations [2], which is primarily reflected in the removal of existing shortcomings such as: unnecessary burden that regulations create for citizens and the economy (in the form of costs and overregulation in some areas), insufficient capacities of the public administration to collect, analyze and process data (which is reflected in the quality of public policies and regulations), insufficient coordination of public policies (primarily hierarchical inconsistencies of planning documents and non-compliance of planning with the budget), as well as insufficient public participation in the creation and monitoring of the implementation of public policies and regulations [2].

At the end of last year, the application was improved, so now aggregated financial data related to the progress achieved within the reform processes are available. In the previous two years, trainings have been continuously conducted in order to identify future CAF facilitators from the ranks of the public administration for whom, within the project, the necessary

training would be organized and quality management skills developed. The public administration reform strategy (2021-2030) obliges the Government of Serbia to introduce CAF in 10 institutions by 2025 [26]. Serbia's commitment to EU membership implies the establishment of efficient public administration through the modernization of public administration, which requires the application of innovative management models, such as the CAF model, which is widely used in the territory of the European Union.

### **3.1. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS - SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AS RECOMMENDATIONS OR INCENTIVES FOR DECISION-MAKERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

Political relations between Serbia and Libya have traditionally been good. Libya was one of the most important Arab partners of the former Yugoslavia and Serbia, and the backbone of that cooperation was construction, the military industry and healthcare. Political dialogue has stalled in recent years. Membership in the European Union (EU) is Serbia's strategic goal and among the requirements that the European Union places for the future members, there is the strengthening of capacities and the professionalization of public administration. This is important for the European Union primarily to ensure that future member states are not only able to adopt EU legislation but also to implement it effectively in practice. Strengthening public administration capacity also enhances a country's ability to enforce its own domestic laws, which it has independently enacted.

In terms of institutionalization, regulation and improvement of strategic management of public policies, the Libyan government faces unique challenges. On the one hand, there is extremely limited regulatory capacity, accompanied by a workforce with a low level of knowledge and skills [1]. On the other hand, the constant flow of oil revenues has made the reform less effective and less urgent. In the last few years, the weakening of the institutions of

the central government of Libya has been evident in terms of a number of governance indicators, which has resulted in a reduced ability of public institutions to provide key public services, as well as law enforcement [30]. It is also evident that local government structures are increasingly taking responsibility for basic services, security and law enforcement, thus weakening vertical ties between institutions [28]. The largest number of employees work for the public administration in Libya, about 2.9 million workers, i.e. more than half of the working-age population [20]. Thus, a large amount of oil revenue, or 42% of Libya's GDP, is channeled into public wages [3]. Capital investments amount to only 10.8% of GDP [3]. According to a study by the Libyan Organization for Policies and Strategies [23], the following stands out as the most prominent indicators of inefficient governance in Libya:

- Inability of the government to efficiently and responsibly control the state administration.
- Failure of public administration in Libya to effectively manage public institutions.
- Failure of territorial decentralization to ensure even regional development.
- Lack of awareness and training on compliance with the principles of effective management.
- Lack of developed governance models that correspond to Libyan institutions and the local political, economic and social environment.
- Ineffectiveness in the fight against corruption in various public institutions.
- The inefficacy of the bureaucracy and the inability to adopt new trends, methods and management techniques.

Libya is yet to develop a strategic framework for public administration reform within which it would align and coordinate priority actions in the direction of achieving the goals of sustainable development. Libya also needs capacity to collect and analyze the data necessary to develop strategies and monitor progress [15]. One of the most important weaknesses is the unclear role between central government administrations and local administrations. There

is a tendency to duplicate functions in favor of central levels of government and a clouding of vision and perception deepened by the failure of free governance and independent finance [5]. For these reasons, the authors of this paper aim to present the results of research conducted between May and June 2022 within the Ministry of Education, Science, and Finance in Libya. This research, carried out as part of a doctoral dissertation titled "Strategic Management of Human Resources in the Public Sector of Libya," focuses on assessing the efficiency of Libyan public administration in the context of quality management" [21]. Empirical research was conducted in 3 ministries and a municipality in Libya. The sample included 165 top and middle level managers. The results of the frequency analysis of the sociodemographic variables of the respondents show a balanced sample according to the gender structure. The sample is representative, as more than half of the surveyed managers have a university degree, while more than a third have a master's or doctorate in a relevant field. Most respondents have more than 20 years of work experience. In addition, the largest number of respondents are positioned in sectors within the ministry that participate in the planning and drafting of strategic documents, so certainly based on their answers, a conclusion can be drawn with certainty about the current situation in the field of strategic human resources management in the framework of public administration in Libya. The findings suggest it is noteworthy that civil servants in Libya's public sector largely anticipate that they will be expected to adopt innovations or acquire new knowledge in the future, particularly in relation to IT skills. This is in line with the trends expected of civil servants in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to improve communication and digital skills. From the point of view of the implementation of the strategy in the organizations where the research was conducted, the answers indicate that the central government has the greatest impact. The research thus corresponds with the results obtained by the project implemented by the EU with the aim of determining the real state of human resources at



the local level [16] and the degree of decentralization of authority and responsibility. Despite efforts to decentralize power, it is evident that these initiatives have not been fully established in practice. Part of the questionnaire that was given to the respondents refers to the degree of evaluation of skills that are needed for quality management in public sector organizations and whether there is a classification of skills and what competencies they include. The results show that each ministry has its own classification of necessary knowledge and skills. Respondents from municipalities answered that there is no classification. Some top managers from ministries responded that there is a single classification for all ministries and organizational levels, except for civil servants. It is clear from this that the classification in most cases exists for top managers and civil servants.

Competencies represent a person's capacity (knowledge, skills, attitudes, traits, and abilities) to perform a job effectively. The practices of institutionally regulated countries in the field of human resource management in public administration are that the proposed competence framework should be such that it can be applied in all key areas of human resource management in state administration (recruitment and selection, training, development, performance evaluation, rewarding). Due to the different nature of work between central government bodies and public administration bodies at the local level, the proposed framework in each state should ensure a balance between the needs at the central level, through the definition of general principles, values and competences, and responsiveness (flexibility) on the local level [17], so that the personnel units of the authorities/organizations can, through the application of the competency framework, take into account local specificities and needs. Modern human resources management addresses not only the needs, interests, and demands of organizations and institutions but also those of the employees engaged in a diverse range of activities. Planning focuses on the future, while control reviews the past—both of which are essential and interdependent.

It is interesting that top managers (that is, the highest level of managers in the public administration of Libya) value behavioral competencies to the same extent, which are defined as a set of necessary and desirable work behaviors for a civil servant to perform his work effectively and with quality, namely: innovation, organizational skills, personal development, strategic thinking. In addition, they place great importance on functional competencies, defined as the essential and desirable knowledge and skills that a civil servant applies to perform their duties effectively and with a focus on quality. Senior managers equally value these competencies as critical for work in state administration, including achieving results, communication, digital literacy, and problem-solving abilities. [22]. Civil servants in reference positions did not respond to these questions, leading the author to believe that they either do not see themselves as responsible for determining the knowledge employees should possess, or they adopt an overly formal mindset, believing they should only focus on completing the tasks assigned to them and that they have a certain resistance to the changes that are set and required from employees in the public administration [24].

The obtained data can also be used operationally: what to change, where to start, how to hire people, and the like. First of all, changes must be implemented on a broader social level. Libyan society, in general, must develop the human resources management system at all levels and build better general criteria for professional selection and development of personnel in the public administration sector and design more adequate professional training programs. Currently, in Libya, according to the interviewed managers, representatives of trade unions, working groups of representatives of several ministries and the Centralized Organizational Unit for Personnel Management are represented in the development of the analytical framework for the public sector. The responses indicate that in Libya there is a lack of effective coordination at the political level, or that the coordination

mechanism itself is overly complex [21]. In this context, it is necessary to establish coordination mechanisms at the political and administrative level, as well as to increase the effectiveness of their coordination through all levels of government.

The time horizon for human resources planning is 2 to 3 years, and it is not integrated with budget planning. Given this timeframe, the planning can be classified as short-term human resource planning. It can be concluded that there is no long-term human resources planning in Libya, and the lack of an integrated approach clearly reflects this. We can conclude that there is a huge lack of knowledge that indicates the necessity of improving, first of all, budget planning with the aim of more effective and efficient management in local communities, on the basis of clearly defined priorities, the transparency, monitoring and deviations in spending planned funds. The majority of surveyed managers believe that the standards and goals of managers are only partially or formally present, but not essential. The assessment of human resources capacity includes analyses of the official system prescribed by law and by-laws, with a special emphasis on the area of employment, professional development, training and development of personnel, central personnel records, personnel management, internal labor market and human resources units. On the central level, this means mapping deficiencies and "bottlenecks" in the area of human resources management through the analysis of regulations, practices and processes, and for the purpose of improving the knowledge management model of employees, i.e. for assessing the situation, determining the causes of problems and improvements.

From the point of view of human resources management, the author's conclusion in the research is that it is necessary to improve the conditions in which employees want to work, to adapt to changes, to provide services according to the needs of citizens and to achieve the best results.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF LIBYA**

To achieve its goal of implementing quality management policies in public administration, Serbia began developing a unified framework to improve the quality of work within public institutions, known as the CAF model (Common Assessment Framework), which represents a tool for total quality management (TQM - Total Quality Management), i.e. a tool for self-assessment. The joint assessment framework is inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the model developed at the German University of Administrative Sciences in Speier [10]. With the introduction of the CAF model, public policy holders recognized the importance of quality management. The goal of the model is to improve the performance of public sector organizations by using quality management techniques. The CAF model is an aid to public sector organizations to understand and use quality management techniques. It is suitable for creating reform plans that are tailored to the organization and have internal support. The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government has introduced CAF 2019/2020 as the first example of this framework being applied in Serbia at that moment [27]. The implementation began as a pilot project, supported by the Regional Center for Quality Management – ReSPA (Regional School of Public Administration). The aim was to align the CAF model with Serbia's ten-year public administration reform strategy, specifically focusing on improving the efficiency of services provided to citizens. The experts who worked on the introduction of quality management believed that the reform of service provision cannot be implemented only by legalistic measures, through the adoption and implementation of laws, but rather by giving the necessary longer approach to work in public administration. In this sense, CAF can be a useful tool. Serbia is only at the beginning of the process of implementing the CAF model,

and it was and still is a learning process. It is a self-growing process that can improve feedback from users, as well as the culture of communication and relations with end users with confirmed progress in work performance, which is why the Ministry of Public Administration has decided to enter a new CAF cycle in 2021. Moreover, in parallel with the pilot project, there are plans to introduce the CAF model in 10 additional institutions over the next two years [27].

In order to implement the model, resources are required (people, time, equipment, money). Also, leaders should be reminded that during self-assessment, employees must not be held accountable for opinions that conflict with the leader's opinion, so that the whole process would be successful. The goal of the CAF model is to uncover objective facts, rather than just the information leaders want to hear. However, its implementation may face resistance—not only from leadership but also from employees. When filling out the self-assessment questionnaire, employees should answer as objectively as possible. Employees may recognize self-assessment as an assessment of their work, not the processes taking place in the organization. To address potential concerns and eliminate any doubts among employees, training sessions are being conducted. According to managers involved in the implementation and application of the CAF model, its methodology serves as a foundation for delivering quality public services and for driving continuous improvement in daily operations. They view the CAF model as a modern, simple, and engaging tool, whose preparation and application contribute not only to the improvement of daily work processes but also to the strengthening of team spirit. Additionally, the CAF methodology allows for an in-depth identification of key processes and the development of effective strategies to enhance them using a variety of tools. These are the reasons why the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government are strongly encouraging, through their pilot project, other public administrations to introduce CAF,

among other things, because its application can significantly improve daily work.

The introduction of the CAF model in Serbia is challenged by a lack of experience, knowledge, and at times, financial resources. To support its successful implementation, it is essential to ensure the availability of technical, human, material, and other necessary resources. Most importantly, efforts should focus on raising awareness and fostering a culture of quality within public administration institutions as a key part of the broader reform process. Although progress has been made in Serbia in previous years, there is still room for improving the quality of public policies and regulations, which is primarily reflected in the removal of existing shortcomings such as: the unnecessary burden that regulations create for citizens and the economy (in the form of costs and overregulation in some areas), insufficient capacities of public administration for data collection, analysis and processing (which is reflected in the quality of public policies and regulations), insufficient coordination of public policies (primarily hierarchical inconsistencies in planning documents and inconsistencies in planning with the budget), as well as insufficient public participation in creating and monitoring the implementation of public policies and regulations.

All the mentioned problems, regardless of differences, also apply to the public administration of Libya. Like in Serbia, the public administration in Libya should strive to apply examples of good practice of consultative processes. In Serbia, these efforts align with EU standards, as part of the country's accession process. The guidelines provided through EU initiatives offer a solid foundation—outlining principles, tools, and examples—on how various stakeholders involved in the development, review, and evaluation of public policies and regulations can, through a robust consultative process, contribute to the effectiveness of administrative reforms. Libya requires comprehensive governance reforms across all areas of public administration. The needs for support in this process are both significant



and demanding, reflecting the complexity and scale of the challenges facing the country. Areas requiring support include the following: institutional reform and initiatives to seek support, including international institutions. To successfully implement changes, the authors of this paper emphasize that human resources play a crucial role. It is essential for them to actively participate in and contribute to modernization efforts, responding effectively to new social, economic, and technological developments. The recommendation for the increase of the effectiveness of public administration depends on the success of professional development of employees in the public services of Libya. That is, from the development of a system that should adequately monitor and measure performance and perform adequate reallocation of resources, to identify key factors that are an obstacle to increasing the efficiency of organizations in the public sector.

The analysis of the situation in the field of human resources management and the presented research results indicated that there is some progress in the strategic aspect in general, such as the willingness and interest of employees in the public administration of Libya to achieve efficiency in work, for cooperation and cooperativeness. However, a strong political will is still needed to effectively work on the depoliticization of the public service, decentralization and optimization of state administration, and effective implementation of managerial responsibility, including the delegation of decision-making. By summarizing the results, we can conclude that the function of human resources management in public administration, through the activities that fall within its domain, should create preconditions for the implementation of the Quality Management System in the public administration of Libya. Additionally, it should facilitate the updating of employees' knowledge and competencies to meet the evolving needs of public services. It should also promote an organizational culture that fosters the development of a "learning organization" by enhancing employee motivation for both sharing knowledge and acquiring

the necessary skills. In this context, the authors of this paper emphasize that education should not be seen as a burden or pressure on employees, but rather as a crucial and necessary step demonstrating their willingness and interest in improving work efficiency. If a positive experience with training is established, it is likely that public administration employees will be more willing to participate in projects related to the implementation of quality management systems.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The modern concept of management in the public sector implies the introduction and continuous implementation and improvement of the quality management system as a basic prerequisite for monitoring global trends in public administrations at all levels of government. The quality management system in public administration includes the organizational structure, procedures, processes and resources and is set up to prevent the occurrence of non-compliance in all processes, with the simultaneous pursuit of continuous improvement - from the recognition of user requirements and expectations, through all phases of service implementation. In order to achieve its goal of implementing a quality management system in public administration institutions in Serbia, significant progress has been achieved in the past years in the area of evidence-based policy development and the establishment and coordination of the strategic framework of public administration reform. The new strategic framework is based on well-founded analyses, the goals of the reform are clear and complemented by good indicators, and the operationalization is foreseen through a realistic action plan. Serbia recognized the importance of establishing quality management and recognized the CAF methodology as part of the overall tool for management, for efficient provision of public services, and also for improvements in daily work. The CAF model is a modern, simple and interesting tool, the preparation and application of which means the improvement of daily work processes and the strengthening of team

spirit. The CAF methodology enables in-depth identification of key processes, and then finding effective ways to improve them through various tools. Although Serbia is at the very beginning of implementing the principles of quality management in public administration institutions, some lessons can be learned for the public administration of Libya, at least when it comes to the basic institutional mechanisms required for the implementation and implementation of this process. Although the two countries belong to different groups of administrative traditions, there are certain similarities, especially when it comes to the numerous problems faced by both public administrations, and their overcoming can be used for the exchange of experiences in administrative reforms. The key factors for both public administrations are the reform of the public sector and the construction of efficient functioning of the public administration. Competent employees play a decisive role, and the basic principle should be the right person - at the right place, at the right time - all the time! In both countries, regulatory reform is necessary in terms of improving the business environment and reducing the financial burden for citizens and the economy, strengthening public administration bodies in the domain of data collection, processing and analysis, so that the regulations and public policies are based on data in service of improving the lives of citizens and the economic environment, on better and more responsible planning and capacity development of civil society organizations for participation in the creation of public policies and regulations. In Serbia, significant importance is placed on establishing e-administration and a unified information system as part of the reform processes. These systems play a crucial role in monitoring implementation, coordinating public policies, and reporting, greatly simplifying the reporting process to state authorities and enhancing transparency and accountability. A lot of work is also being done to improve the analysis of the effects of regulations and public policy documents. Analysis of the effects is important because it shows us how and who is affected by the measures we implement, and how effective we were in doing so (ex post analysis). These are

all legal and experiences that can be of great importance for the public administration of Libya and that can be transferred to public policy holders through consultative processes. Good practices in the public administration of Serbia also refer to increased transparency and inclusiveness of the planning process in state bodies and institutions. However, there is still work to be done. The strategy of communication with citizens and non-governmental organizations must be improved. A significant achievement is the unification of the process of preparation of planning documents. Analysis and reporting have become mandatory, with clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of various officials in the process. Public participation in the preparation and discussion of documents has been reaffirmed; however, additional training is needed for state officials in areas such as citizen engagement, organizing public discussions, and particularly in determining the appropriate duration of these discussions. The greatest challenges in Serbia's reform processes are the public's lack of trust in the system and its procedures, as well as the limited willingness of citizens to engage with these complex policies. Public administration in Serbia must work to "earn" citizens' trust and demonstrate that consultations are meaningful—that every comment and suggestion holds value. In Libya, key problems have been identified as significant state involvement in the economy, high unemployment, political culture issues, weak state administration, an unstable post-war environment, and a lack of a clear development vision. Given Libya's unique political, economic, and social context, we recommend a gradual approach to public sector reforms. This should involve the state administration, inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, capacity building, performance measurement, comprehensive reform planning across all critical areas, and clear prioritization. An important recommendation is that the reform should be unified for all ministries. The public administration of Libya can follow the experiences from Serbia in certain reform processes and examples of good practice, but it can improve numerous processes.

An important segment of the reforms is also related to decentralization. The possibilities offered by the decentralization of power are reflected in the improvement of infrastructure and the improvement of services on the local level, the end of marginalization, the approximate equalization of the distribution of wealth. Therefore, the establishment of quality management in public administration addresses not only the needs, interests, and demands of organizations and institutions but also those of the employees engaged in a wide variety of activities. Planning is looking into the future, and control is looking into the past. One cannot do without the other. In some subsequent research, it is possible to see where the changes should be

implemented, that is, what to change, where to start, and how to direct the reform processes. It is clear that changes must be implemented on a wider social level. Libyan society, in general, needs to further develop its personnel management system at all levels by establishing clearer criteria for the professional selection and development of public administration staff, as well as designing more effective and tailored professional training programs. For both countries, the recommendation is to establish a system of employment and career advancement that is based on expertise, competence and merit and that is not subject to politicization, in order to have a strong state administration both at the local and national level.

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## KONCEPT UPRAVLJANJA KVALITETOM U JAVNOJ UPRAVI: ISKUSTVA IZ SRBIJE I PREPORUKE ZA LIBIJU

**Rezime:** Uvođenje sistema upravljanja kvalitetom u javnu upravu predstavlja značajan korak ka unapređenju efikasnosti javnog sektora i kvalitetnijem pružanju usluga građanima. U zemljama sa razvijenim institucionalnim okvirom, naročito u zapadnoevropskim državama sa dugom tradicijom javne uprave, principi upravljanja kvalitetom već su integrisani u procese donošenja i sprovođenja javnih politika. Nasuprot tome, u državama sa nedovoljno razvijenim institucionalnim kapacitetima, kao što je slučaj sa većinom tranzicionih i postkonfliktnih društava, implementacija ovih principa je slabo razvijena ili se uopšte ne primenjuje. Cilj ovog rada jeste da identifikuje ključne institucionalne mehanizme koji omogućavaju efektivnu primenu principa upravljanja kvalitetom u javnoj upravi, kao i da na osnovu iskustava Republike Srbije ponudi preporuke relevantne za unapređenje javne uprave u Libiji. Iako se Srbija još uvek nalazi u ranoj fazi institucionalizacije upravljanja kvalitetom, određeni pomaci su ostvareni kroz unapređenje administrativne autonomije, bolje koordinacije javnih politika i jačanja organizacionih kapaciteta, što može predstavljati vredan izvor pouka za zemlje koje se suočavaju sa sličnim izazovima. Istovremeno, identifikovane su i zajedničke slabosti pre svega nedostatak sistemskog praćenja realizacije strateških ciljeva i akcionih planova. Polazeći od komparativne analize, u radu se iznose preporuke zasnovane na praksama razvijenih članica Evropske unije koje mogu doprineti modernizaciji javne uprave u obe zemlje.

**Ključne reči:** upravljanje kvalitetom, javna uprava, standardi kvaliteta, institucionalni mehanizmi, upravljanje znanjem