# EVALUATING HRM PRACTICES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE 1ST CAF IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC HOSPITAL OF SERRES, IN THE REGION OF NORTH GREECE

**Maria Oikonomidou[1], Ilias Konstantinidis[2]**

**Abstract**

*The organization manages, develops and releases the competences and full potential of its people at the individual and organization-wide levels, in order to support its strategy, planning and effectiveness of process operation. Thus, for the implementation of the organization's strategy, it is necessary to find the causes of the HRM problems in order to overcome the weaknesses, to avoid the threats and to exploit the opportunities of the environment. Evaluation is undoubtedly an important process of monitoring the practices that are being implemented and their impact on employee satisfaction and organizational performance. However, the evaluation needs to follow a holistic approach and a course of continuous improvement of quality in an evolving dynamic environment of continuous change and responsiveness of services to citizens and society. The need for resource utilization and accountability has led to the use of models for monitoring quality and efficiency in public administration.*

***Key words:*** *TQM models/tools of Public Administration, CAF Self-assessment, HRM practices, Employees' satisfaction, Citizens' perception, and Organizational performance.*

This study explores the Human Resource Management (HRM) and its applications under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Moreover, the investigation examines the impact of HRM practices on public sector employees' attitudes, behavior and organizational performance in the region of Northern Greece. It is undertaken within the CAF, as the first European quality management instrument specifically tailored for and developed by the public sector itself. It is a general, simple, accessible and easy-to-use model for all public sector organizations across Europe, and deals with all aspects of organizational excellence and the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). We rely on primary data drawn by the workforce of a Greek Public Hospital which implements for the first time CAF. A printed questionnaire was distributed to the workforce of the nursing service of Serres Public Hospital. The setting of this study is provided by, comprising all departments and focusing on nursing staff's perceptions and performance. The questionnaire is based on:

1. CAF criterion 3 distributed to the CAF self-assessment team (the CAF self-assessment team consists of 20 members who represent all the nursing staff from all sectors, departments and hierarchical levels). The self-assessment group collected documentary evidence on HRM enablers that indicate the implemented HR practices, which support employees to contribute effectively and productively to the organization's overall mission, vision and to the accomplishment of the organization's objectives. The implementation of CAF facilitates the self-assessment of HRM enablers in order to obtain a diagnosis and a definition of improvement actions.

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2. CAF criteria 7.1 distributed to all employees (220 completed questionnaires) in order to capture employees' perception concerning the HRM practices implemented. The contribution of employees should be maximized through their development and involvement and the creation of a working environment of shared values and a culture of trust, openness, empowerment and recognition. Can HRM enablers predict employees' satisfaction?

The evidence of the analysis suggests that a significant number of the variables defining the so called HRM enablers affect HRM results on employees' attitudes and organizational performance. The analysis of the data revealed the relatively medium implementation of HRM practices (Programming, Development and Empowerment of nursing staff). In addition, employees assessed their satisfaction as well as their perception on HRM Efficiency, at medium scoring levels.

Moreover, significant outcomes of the survey are the employees' demographical characteristics on their perception and attitudes. The impact assessment of their office department on their performance, after controlling the quality of HRM variables, most probably reflects the differences in the degree of difficulty of the work environment and working conditions, depending on the department, as well as the management styles among the managers of the departments. Furthermore, the analysis showed that there is a correlation between the factors under study, so that HRM practices/enablers can predetermine employees' satisfaction and their performance. Thus, human resource development and involvement are prominent enablers among the explanatory variables while their perception and performance are measured by the CAF.

Finally, public organizations communicate better their mission and organization's objectives and motivate more their workforce through the implementation of TQM under a framework. Both self-assessment group perception and employees' perception showed that CAF implementation (as a TQM tool) communicates and supports the mission and the Organization's strategy and increases the Organizational Performance. The employees at all hierarchical levels are the essence of an organisation and argue that their full involvement through CAF implementation enables their abilities in favor of the organization’s benefits. CAF encourages organizations to assess themselves from different angles at one and the same time – a rather holistic approach to analysis. This means that by its very nature, involvement of the employees is vital.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Greece faces an immense, perhaps a unique and increasingly urgent challenge. In the face of growing social and political discontent, the future crucially depends on the government's ability to link short-term austerity measures with a long term vision and structural reforms, aimed at restoring growth and improving the population's welfare. These reforms depend on a well functioning public administration. Strong measures, starting now, to improve the effectiveness, accountability and integrity of the public administration, which is "fit for purpose", are a priority. The success of reforms, such as: fiscal consolidation, debt reduction, assessment and improvement of public, is at stake. There is an urgent appeal to Greece to implement reforms, in order to make the best use of its resources for sustainable growth. However, there are strong objections and intense confrontation to the implementation phase of the basic reforms - the so called assessment or evaluation in Greek Public Administration.

The current research investigates the Human Resources Management (HRM) and evaluates the performance of public hospitals under the Total Quality Management (TQM) framework for continuous improvement of Greek public administration. One of the most important fields of public services for population's welfare is public health. Specifically, thorough a research over the international trends on HRM, it reveals the best practices in favor of customers/citizens and employees alike, as well as the organizational performance. Research findings shed enough light into the positive effects of a recognized TQM tool for evaluating HRM and adoption of the principles of excellence as well as its impact on employees’ satisfaction.

Managing the organization and managing people is increasingly important in times of change. Thus, for the implementation of the organization's strategy, it is necessary to find the causes of the HRM problems in order to overcome the weaknesses, to avoid the threats and to exploit the opportunities of the environment. Evaluation is undoubtedly an important process of monitoring the HRM practices that are being implemented and their impact on employee satisfaction and organizational performance. However, evaluation should provide responsive services to citizens needs and follow a course of continuous quality improvement in an evolving dynamic environment of continuous change. The need for resource utilization and accountability has led to the use of models for monitoring quality and efficiency in public administration: EFQM Excellence Model, Balanced Scorecard, Malcolm Baldridge Award, ISO 9000 Series, Business Process Reengineering, SERVQUAL etc.

This study investigates HRM practices and their results under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). CAF looks at the organization from different angles (citizens/customers, people and society are achieved through leadership driving strategy and planning, people and HRM, partnerships, resources and processes) at the same time: the holistic approach to organization performance analysis. This paper will aim to explain how the use of the CAF model can strengthen the level of staff participation as part of the process towards becoming a mature, high-quality and well performing organization. Overall, CAF can be perceived as a means of encouraging participation through co-decision on general policy, using direct informal participation. This means that by its very nature, involvement of the employees is vital. If people are not involved in the diagnosis of their organization and in the formulation and prioritization of the improvement action plan as the result of the self-assessment, it will be very difficult to gain their ownership of the reform afterwards.

## 2. THEORETICAL PART

### 2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The most important resources of an organization are its people. Steve Jobs (CEO) and co-founder of Apple *Inc*., argued that: "If you want to hire great people and have them stay working for you, you have to let them make a lot of decisions and you have to be run by ideas, not hierarchy. The best ideas have to win otherwise, good people don't stay".

Modern companies face new challenges, such as increasing worldwide competition, managing change and new technology, and developing intellectual capital and containing costs at the same time. Additionally, during economic and social crisis, HRM is essential for increasing organizational performance while saving material resources. Although sources of competitive advantage such as natural resources, technology, economies of scale, and so forth, create value, the resource-based argument is that these sources are increasingly easy to imitate. If that is so HRM strategies may be an especially important source of sustained competitive advantage (Pfeffer, 1998). The concept of the HR system as a strategic asset has implications for both the characteristics and the effects of such a system. It is generally agreed that various human resources functions should be integrated into the overall strategic management process of the organization (Singh, P., 2008). All organizations will have to respond successfully to the above challenges for creating and maintaining added value. The crucial factor in effectively addressing these challenges is a motivated, well-trained and committed workforce. It is proposed that superior organizational performance is achieved when employees exert themselves on behalf of the organization (Purcell, 2009), or, to put it another way, when employees work harder, smarter and accept more responsibility (Pfeffer, 1998). According to Michail M. Dimitrios (2013) management’s open communication, payment, training incentives and job security are balanced by employees’ drive to higher quality and greater output. There is an increasing interest in the notion that complementary ‘bundles’ of human resource (HR) practices enhance organizational performance (Marchington and Grugulis, 2000) and according to advocates of this approach, impact positively on

organizational performance regardless of industry and context (Pfeffer, 1998; Huselid, 1995). Respect and fairness, open dialogue, empowerment, reward and recognition, care and also providing a safe and healthy environment are fundamental to building the commitment and participation of people on the organizational journey to excellence. Successful HRM and leadership promote people's engagement, motivation, development, and retention. In the context of TQM, it is important to realize that only satisfied people can bring the organization towards satisfied customers.

Public organizations provide services to citizens, aiming at serving the public interest rather than increasing their profits and providing quality and direct services to citizens and society. However, under economic and social crisis, the role of Public Administration is twofold: on the one hand, public sector should serve the public welfare and satisfy the citizens and society and on the other hand should undertake measures for cost reduction. Mr. Jaak Aab, Minister of Public Administration of the Republic of Estonia, refers that "In addition to citizen-driven demands, governments have to cope with the aftermath of the financial crisis, environmental and climatic issues, increasing energy costs, changing demographics, and the liberalization of trade. There is now an expectation that achieving "value for money" in the public sector is business as usual and not an exception or a one-off objective (Bosse J., Burnett M., Rongione C., Scholtens H., 2017).

This research investigates the implementation of HRM practices and their benefits for the public sector in Greece. Barney (1995) argues that HR practices provide organizations with a sustainable source of competitive advantage. HR challenges and the appropriate organizational culture and structure in order to achieve continuous quality improvement could be supported with the implementation of quality models by skillful HR managers in order to achieve quality in practice. These policies could be supported by recognized international tools for continuous evaluation and organizational improvement. These tools can motivate and develop human resources, shaping and monitoring the appropriate organizational enhancement quality culture. CAF is a TQM tool developed by the public sector for the public sector, inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). According to European Commission's Expert Group on Public Sector Innovation, (2013), under CAF implementation, employees manage changes and reforms, as the result of the self-assessment, as their ownership since they can be involved in the diagnosis of their organization and in the formulation and prioritization of the improvement action plan. As a tool of TQM, CAF subscribes to the fundamental concepts of excellence as initially defined by EFQM, translates them to the public sector/CAF context and aims to improve the performance of public organizations on the basis of these concepts. These principles make the difference between the traditional bureaucratic public organization and the one oriented towards Total Quality.

According to CAF (2013), this model follows a full improvement process within the organization and has five main purposes:

1. Introduce public administrations into the culture of excellence and the principles of TQM;
2. Guide them progressively to a fully-fledged PDCA (PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT) cycle;
3. Facilitate the self-assessment of a public organization in order to obtain a diagnosis and a definition of improvement actions;
4. Act as a bridge across the various models used in quality management, both in public and private sectors;
5. Facilitate bench learning between public sector organizations.

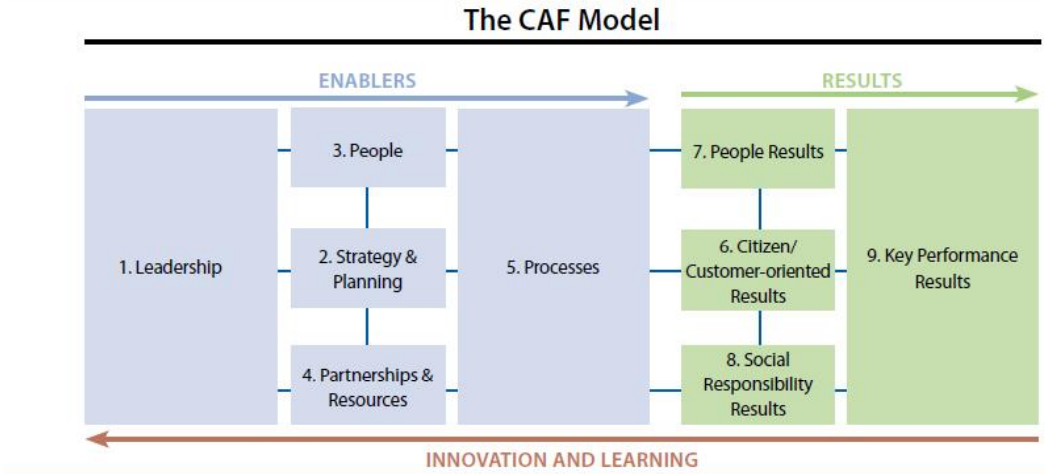
**Figure 1. Principles of excellence**




***Source*: The Common Assessment Framework (CAF 2013), Improving Public Organizations through Self-Assessment**

Public Organizations that are starting to implement the CAF have the ambition to grow towards excellence in their performance and want to introduce a culture of excellence in the organization. Effective use of the CAF should, in time, lead to the further development of this type of culture and thinking within the organization.

**Figure 2. The CAF Model**




**Source: The Common Assessment Framework (CAF 2013), Improving Public Organizations through Self-Assessment**

Criteria 1-5 deal with the managerial practices of an organization: the so-called Enablers. In criteria 6-9, Results achieved in the fields of citizens/customers, people, social responsibility and key performance are measured by perception and performance measurements.

## 2.2 THE MAIN CONCEPTS

The role of HRM practices as enablers and their outcomes could be investigated under the CAF framework. Verification of cause-effect links is of fundamental importance in self-assessment, where the organization should always check for consistency between a given result

(or set of homogeneous results) and the 'evidence' collected on the relevant criteria and sub-criteria on the enabler side. This research sheds light into HRM practices (HRM enablers) relevant to people planning, development and involvement and their impact on employees' perceptions (HRM results).

1. HRM ENABLERS: The CAF criterion 3 deals with HRM practices. The Assessment of HRM enablers is divided into 3 parts mentioned below, according to what the organization is doing, in order to:

a) Plan, manage and improve human resources transparently with regard to strategy and planning. A strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment is a key part of strategic planning in an organization. Effective HRM enables people to contribute effectively and productively to the organization's overall mission, vision and to the accomplishment of the organization's objectives - FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION. This research involves regular analyses of current and future HR needs and the development and implementation of a HRM policy with objective criteria - FACTOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - regarding recruitment, career development, promotion, remuneration, rewards and the assignment of managerial functions. Furthermore, it shows particular attention to the human resources needed for the development and operation of e-Government and net services - FACTOR INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - (e.g. by providing the necessary training and framework).

b) Identify, develop and use competencies of people aligning individual and organizational goals. When the organization creates frameworks to allow employees to continually develop their own competencies - FACTOR TRAINING, to assume greater responsibility and to take greater initiative, so that people could contribute to the development of the workplace. This can be achieved by ensuring that they associate their own performance goals with the strategic objectives of the organization and also by involving them in the establishment of policies related to the recognition and rewarding of people - FACTOR RECOGNITION AND REWARD.

c) Involve employees by developing an open dialogue and empowerment, supporting their well-being. People's involvement is creating an environment in which people have an impact on decisions and actions that affect their jobs. FACTOR MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT focuses on the ability of managers and employees to actively cooperate in developing the organization, breaking down organizational silos by creating dialogue, making room for creativity, innovation and suggestions for improving performance. The proper execution of HR policies depends upon all leaders and managers throughout the organization demonstrating that they care about people issues and wellbeing and that they actively promote a culture of open communication within transparency.

2. HRM RESULTS: The CAF criterion 7 deals with people's/employees' perceptions and attitudes about HRM practices. The assessment of results measures: what the organization has achieved to meet the needs and expectations of employees through the results:

- ✓ People's results are the results the organization is achieving in relation to the competence, motivation, satisfaction, perception and performance of its people. It is important for all public sector organizations to systematically measure employees' perception of the organization. The research on employees' perception includes relevant HR factors:
- ✓ Results regarding FACTOR MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT:

People's involvement in the decision-making process, strategic objectives and improvement activities.

- ✓ Results regarding FACTOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS:

The perception of the working conditions (e.g. how to deal with conflicts, grievances or personnel problems, mobbing in the workplace) and the organization's culture (e.g. the promotion of transparency between departments, units, etc.).

✓ Results regarding FACTOR INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES:

The design and management of the different processes of the organization based on new technologies, as well as the organization's approach to changes and innovations.

✓ Results regarding FACTOR TRAINING:

The perception of the career and skills development and the access to and quality of training in relation to the strategic objectives of the organization.

✓ Results regarding FACTOR RECOGNITION AND REWARD:

The perception on the organization's top and middle management's ability to implement an effective recognition policy (e.g. setting goals, allocating resources and rewards aligned with the recognition of individual and team competences and efforts).

✓ Results regarding FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:

The perception on the organization's top and middle management's ability to communicate organizations' mission and strategy to the workforce as well as monitor and measure employees' and organizational performance in accordance with the strategy objectives.

## 3. RESEARCH GOALS & RESEARCH FIELD

The most important factor for implementing the measures and reforms is their adoption by the public sectors' workforce and their introduction to an appropriate organizational culture. The CAF as TQM framework aims to be a catalyst for a full improvement process within the organization, introduce public administrations into the culture of excellence and the principles of TQM and facilitate the self-assessment of a public organization in order to obtain a diagnosis and a definition of improvement actions.

This research seeks the implementation of HRM actions, under a TQM framework in public organizations and is specialized in its execution in Greek Public Administration. The hospital of Serres was chosen since it applies CAF for the first time in order to explore the practices-enablers and their results on employees and Hospitals' Performance. HRM practices and their impact on employees perception measurements results is the content of the present study. The field of this research is the nursing service due to the large number of the sample that consists of all the Nursing staff (300 employees) and their direct contact with the patients/citizens and the medical staff of the organization. The selected sample ensure an objective and representative reflection of the nursing service, taking into account parameters such as age, gender, family status, educational level, professional experience, employment category – sector – specialty, position held, duties exercised within the organization etc. In order to achieve those characteristics, this study on hospital meets the CAF implementation requirements and the sample consist of all nursing staff.

The CAF as a TQM tool includes a specific framework for the measurement and evaluation of HRM relating with the performance, efficiency and continuous improvement of a Public Organization. The main three goals, mentioned below, are relevant to HRM practices and policies used in the nursing service of Serres Public hospital and their HRM results through CAF implementation.

### GOAL 1

The aim of the current research is to approve that the improvement actions on HRM, based on CAF support the organizations' mission and strategy and improve organizational performance. Furthermore, self-assessment through CAF can manage any problematic area by creating a mid-term improvement program, supporting the strategic management in prioritizing actions and outlining of the action plan, based on primary research data.

It is the first time (in 2018) that Serres Hospital implements the CAF tool according to a fully-fledged PDCA (PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT) total quality cycle in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each function and service. Moreover, the Serres Hospital implements Management by Objectives and monitors the achievement of the organizations' strategy objectives at least four times a year, within the CAF framework. After the CAF implementation, the organization can further develop the policy for quality in its operation in cooperation with the Directorate of Quality and Efficiency of the Hellenic Ministry of Interior in order to develop a cooperation network and exchange information and experiences with other National and European agencies, which have implemented the CAF. It can also participate in international events concerning implementation of Total Quality Management methods in Public Administration or even use the CAF as a benchmarking tool to compare its performance with other agencies, at national and international level. In any case, the CAF can be the tool for organization's induction in Quality Systems, since this shall definitely lead them to administrative improvement in the whole range of their activity.

The 1st aim of this research is to prove that CAF can be perceived as a means of encouraging participation through co-decision on general policy, using direct informal participation, monitor HRM enablers and increases HRM Results and employees satisfaction. Thus, CAF implementation (as a TQM European tool) supports the mission, the Organization's strategy and Organizational Performance.

**GOAL 2**

In this study, the description of the existing administrative and operational level on HRM is carried out through CAF Criterion 3. The existing HRM practices are assessed by the self-assessment group. A list, provided by the CAF self-assessment group and the Top Manager with all relevant documents, evidence-based data and information needed, is used to assess the organization. This study has the aim to detect the absence or presence (the extent HR practices exist) and to describe the HRM practices implemented through the CAF questionnaire of criterion 3. According CAF (2013), in the context of total quality management, "successful human resource management and leadership promote people's engagement, motivation, development, and retention and it is important to realize that only satisfied people can bring the organization towards satisfied customers. The 2nd aim of this research is to investigate the operational level of HR enablers/practices.

**GOAL 3**

In this study, the perception measurements where the employees are asked directly (e.g. via questionnaires) and their satisfaction, were carried out through CAF Criterion 7. The assessment of the organization by employees themselves reveals the key words of evidence about strengths and areas for improvement, regarding the management systems used by the supervisors/managers, the main nursing procedures performed, the work responsibilities distributed, the allocation of resources, their participation in the formulation of the objectives of their department and their general satisfaction by the organizational culture and working environment. Thus, HR results come from CAF sub-criterion 7.1 which measures employees´ perceptions and assesses whether they perceive the organization as an attractive workplace and whether they are motivated in their everyday work to do their best for the organization.

The 3rd purpose of this research is to approve the impact of HRM practices on HRM results and organizational performance. More specifically, aim of this research is to find correlation between core HRM practices (Enablers) and HRM results.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH & SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The approach of the subject was carried out with the quantitative method.

A) The depiction of the existing operational level on HRM Enablers/Practices was carried out through the assessment of CAF Criterion 3 (HRM enablers) by Self-Assessment sub-group of the Nursing service. In Serres Hospital there are Self-Assessment sub-groups one for each service: a. Nursing service, b. Administrative service, c. Medical service

In this study, the research field is referred to the nursing service of the hospital. The questionnaire CAF criterion 3 distributed to the CAF self-assessment team (20 members). According to CAF (2013) which Serres Hospital implements, the self-assessment group should be as representative of the organization as possible in order to be able to provide the most accurate and detailed internal perspective of the organization. The members of the Self-Assessment Group come from a wide range of the organization departments, from different sectors and personnel categories and have different professional experience. During the 1st CAF implementation, the top management involvement provides additional information and increase the likelihood that organization's strategy has ownership of CAF implementation process and the improvement actions identified, under the right framework.

Self-Assessment sub-group of the Nursing service reflects and analyzes the current situation by collecting evidence-data based information and documents. All the members have agreed after a series of appropriate training and discussion on the rating and the appropriate documentation. A process of dialogue and discussion - indeed essential as part of the learning experience – through meetings were taken place in order to reach consensus, as it is very important to understand why differences regarding the strengths and areas of improvement and scoring exist. Finally, the group met and agreed on the strengths, areas for improvement and reached consensus regarding the final scoring.

B) Employees' perception measurements are obtained by filling out the questionnaire of CAF sub-Criterion 7.1 in a printed form. The questionnaire distributed to all employees (220 completed questionnaires) in order to capture employees' perception concerning the HRM practices implemented. The field of this research is the nursing service and consists of all the Nursing staff (300 employees). Results regarding the overall perception of the nursing stuff assess whether people perceive the organization as an attractive workplace and whether they are motivated in their everyday work to do their best for the organization. It is important for all public sector organizations to systematically measure people's perception of the organization and the HRM practices. Employees´ perceptions are reflected in the questionnaire replies on the application of HRM practices and procedures that support the organizational mission and strategy and their impact on employees´ satisfaction.

In employees' survey, answers were subjected to processing and respective classification (a fact significantly facilitated by the "close" character of the questionnaire) by the Assessment Group and were taken into account in the final scoring of CAF Criteria. The questionnaire was used as pure as in the CAF (2017) guide and was supplemented by some demographic characteristics in order to draw conclusions from this research.

### 4.2 ANSWER SCALE

The so called "close assessment questions" have been selected, to be answered on the basis of a proposed and predetermined list of words, since this facilitates answer processing and classification and assists the responders attention to be focused on crucial points (How to Implement CAF, 2017). The answers to each question are given on a six- grade scale (grading from the lowest to the highest level) in order to match the respective scoring scale of the CAF Criteria – Sub-criteria - Factors under analysis, so that the conclusions of answer processing can be homogenously and coherently combined with the scoring of the Assessment Group. Such scale is as follows:

NOT AT ALL (reflects the lack of any satisfaction regarding an activity, its absolute insufficiency and ineffectiveness).

VERY SLIGHTLY (reflects minimum satisfaction regarding an activity, low level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

SLIGHTLY (reflects satisfaction regarding an activity, median level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

MUCH (reflects satisfaction regarding an activity, a good level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

VERY MUCH (reflects a high level of satisfaction regarding an activity, a very good level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

ABSOLUTELY (reflects excellent satisfaction regarding an activity, an excellent level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

**4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESIS**

Analytically, this research seeks the issues below under the CAF framework:

a. CAF criterion 3 which refers to "HR ENABLERS/PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED" distributed to the CAF self-assessment team (the CAF self-assessment team consists of 20 members who represent all the nursing staff from all sectors, departments and hierarchical levels). This research investigates the specific questions below reflecting the relevant factors. HR enablers/practices deal with developing and implementing a clear policy containing objective criteria with regard to recruitment, fairness of employment, equal opportunities, promotion, remuneration, rewards, evaluation, involvement and the assignment of managerial functions. Therefore, Criterion 3 produces the following factors assessed by the self-assessment group:

1a. HR PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION - question 3.16

2a. HR PRACTICE: TRAINING - questions 3.9 and 3.10

3a. HR PRACTICE: RECOGNITION AND REWARDS - questions 3.8 and 3.23

4a. HR PRACTICE: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - questions 3.3 and 3.5

5a. HR PRACTICE: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - question 3.7

6a. HR PRACTICE: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - questions 3.19 and 3.20

b. CAF criteria 7 which refers to "HR RESULTS or EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS" distributed to all nursing staff (220 completed questionnaires from 300 distributed) in order to capture employees' perception concerning the HRM practices implemented. This research investigates the specific questions below reflecting the relevant factors. HR results deal with the satisfaction or positive perceptions of employees which should be maximized through their effective management, development and involvement and the creation of a working environment of shared values and a culture of trust, openness, empowerment and recognition. Therefore, Criterion 7.1 produces the following factors assessed by the nursing staff:

1b. HR RESULT: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION - question 7.18

2b. HR RESULT: TRAINING - question 7.19

3b. HR RESULT: RECOGNITION AND REWARDS - question 7.7

4b. HR RESULT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - questions 7.5 and 7.16

5b. HR RESULT: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - question 7.10

6b. HR RESULT: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - questions 7.3 and 7.17

**1. RESEARCH QUESTION**

Is there a relation between the factors 1a. HR PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION (question 3.16 - assessed by the self-assessment team) and the relevant factor 1b. HR RESULT: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION (question 7.18 - assessed by employees)?

**HYPOTHESIS 1.** There is a relation between the factor 1a. HR PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION and the relevant factor 1b. HR RESULT:

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION. The specific HR practice can predict the employees' satisfaction by this practice.

**2. RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is self-assessment teams' perception concerning the implementation of CAF (TQM measurement tool) on organizational performance - question 3.16 To what extent does the average of respondents (self-assessment group) believe that CAF supports the organization's mission and strategy and increases organizational performance?

What is employees' perception concerning the existing evaluation system for employees performance -question 7.18-?

**HYPOTHESIS 2.** Employees are not satisfied by the existing evaluation system and CAF implementation (as a tool of Total Quality Management) can support better communication of organizations' mission and strategy to the workforce as well as monitoring and measuring employees' and organizational performance in accordance with the strategy objectives.

**3 & 4. RESEARCH QUESTION**

| 2.TRAINING | 3.RECOGNITION AND REWARDS | 4.EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES /FAIRNESS | 5.INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES | 6.MOTIVATION /INVOLVEMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.9 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.19 |
| 3.10 | 3.23 | 3.3 | 7.10 | 3.20 |
| 7.19 | 7.7 | 7.16 | | 7.17 |
| | | 7.5 | | 7.3 |

Is there a relation between the HR enablers/practices implemented (factors-criterion 3 assessed by the self-assessment team) and the relevant HR perception results (relevant factors-criterion 7 assessed by employees)?

2a. HR PRACTICE: TRAINING - the self-assessment group assesses questions 3.9 and 3.10

2b. HR RESULT: TRAINING - employees' perception on question 7.19

3a. HR PRACTICE: RECOGNITION AND REWARDS - the self-assessment group assesses questions 3.8 and 3.23

3b. HR RESULT: RECOGNITION AND REWARDS - employees' perception on question 7.7

4a. HR PRACTICE: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - the self-assessment group assesses questions 3.3 and 3.5

4b. HR RESULT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - employees' perception on questions 7.5 and 7.16

5a. HR PRACTICE: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - the self-assessment group assesses question 3.7

5b. HR RESULT: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - employees' perception on question 7.10

6a. HR PRACTICE: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - the self-assessment group assesses questions 3.19 and 3.20

6b. HR RESULT: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - employees' perception on questions 7.3 and 7.17

**HYPOTHESIS 3.** There is a relation between the HR practices implemented (2a, 3a, 4a, 5a and 6a factors assessed by the self-assessment team) and the relevant HR perception result (2b, 3b, 4b, 5b and 6b factors which show employees' satisfaction).

Can HRM enablers/practices (2a, 3a, 4a, 5a and 6a factors assessed by the self-assessment team) predict the relevant HR perception results (2b, 3b, 4b, 5b and 6b factors which show employees' satisfaction)?

**HYPOTHESIS 4.** The HR enablers/practices can predict the employees' positive perceptions and satisfaction.

## 5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

At this point it is important to mention that the questionnaire answers were statistically analyzed and was determined the grade of accuracy of the survey results conducted via this questionnaire. The grade of accuracy depends on the size of population or responders' sample, the number of questionnaires actually answered the objectivity of such answers etc. During classification, accuracy of the survey results was estimated at high levels (Cronbach a=0.944). For this reason this survey have taken into account the following:

- The size of responders' sample.
- The number of questionnaires completed. The grade of answer' s objectivity.
- The grade of answer's documentation

For the correlation of the under-investigation factors, the averages of the answers per factor were compared. This research has drawn conclusions from the results-number of most responses per answer scale were also found.

The analysis of affinity indicators (Pearson r) among the questionnaire factors were found to positively correlate to a large extent with each other.

Conclusions were also drawn from the demographic characteristics of the employees' sample (answers of the criterion 7.1).

Then, a series of Linear Regression analyzes were performed to seek if the factors of criterion 3 related to HRM Enablers can predict the factors of criterion 7 that are reported in the HRM Results. In general, HRM Enablers factors were statistically significant variables in the employees' satisfaction estimations.

## 6. CONCLUTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Public administrations all across Europe are, more than ever before, being challenged by society to demonstrate and improve their added value to sustain and further develop the social welfare state. In these times of socio-economic crisis and austerity, the policies of effectiveness, operational performance and quality are crucial factors in responding to the changing needs and expectations of citizens and society. Greece faces an immense, perhaps unique and increasingly urgent challenge and needs to reform in depth, reconciling emergency measures with long lasting reforms. The measures and reforms under CAF (European TQM tool) framework could lead to a well functioning public administration and improve, in a holistic approach, all the operations and the structures of public bodies. There are cause-effect links of fundamental importance comparing a given HR result (or set of homogeneous results) with the 'evidence' collected on the relevant factors on the enabler side - HR practices. Moreover, employees' demographical characteristics on their perception and attitudes are significant. The impact of the department they work on their performance, after controlling for the quality of HRM variables, most probably reflects differences in the degree of difficulty of the work environment and working conditions depending on the department as well as in the management styles among the managers of the departments. Analytically:

This research sheds light into the existing evaluation system and its improvement by CAF implementation in the case of Serres Public Hospital. FACTOR ASSESSMENT /EVALUATION was assessed at high scoring level by the self-assessment team. On the other hand, the employees' perception on the existing evaluation system for their performance and its contribution on organizational performance was assessed at low scoring levels. Probably, employees' lack of satisfaction with the current evaluation system is due to the fact that they react to change, especially when it refers to their evaluation. The results from the improvement action plan after the CAF report and better communication of the core principles of Total Quality Management may help

them to overcome their fears that its new implementation causing. Finally, all the members of the self-assessment group answered that CAF implementation (as a TQM tool) communicates and supports the mission and the Organization's strategy and increases Organizational Performance. According to self-assessment scoring, measurement through CAF brings about the necessary improvements as perceived by employees and shareholders themselves.

Furthermore, the evidence of the analysis suggests that a significant number of the variables defining the so called HRM practices, affect HRM results on employees' attitudes since it showed that there is a correlation between the rest factors below, so that HRM practices can predict employees' satisfaction and organizational performance. The analysis of the data revealed that the self assessment team perception on HRM practices implementation (fairness, innovation training, recognition and motivation of nursing staff) can predict employees' satisfaction as well as their perception on HRM Efficiency.

FACTOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS was assessed at high scoring level by both the self-assessment team and the nursing staff. Employees' perception on the working conditions (e.g. how to deal with conflicts, grievances or personnel problems, mobbing in the workplace) and the organization's culture (e.g. the promotion of transparency between departments, units, etc.) was assessed at high scoring level. Most employees consider the handling of equal opportunities and fairness of treatment and behavior in the organization is satisfactory (160 answers much-absolutely).

FACTOR INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES was assessed at low scoring level by both the self-assessment team and the nursing staff. It shows particular attention should be given for improvement on development and operation of e-Government and net services (e.g. by providing the necessary training and framework). Improvement actions should be implemented in order to fill the gaps and achieve the desired results on the design and management of the different processes of the organization based on new technologies, as well as the organization's approach to changes and innovations.

FACTOR TRAINING and 3.FACTOR RECOGNITION AND REWARD were assessed at low scoring levels by the self-assessment team. On the other hand, employees' perception on the career and skills development (the access to and quality of training in relation to the strategic objectives of the organization) was assessed at very low scoring levels. The scoring levels regarding recognition and rewards of employees' perception were very low, too. Their perception on the organization's top and middle management's ability to implement an effective recognition policy (e.g. setting goals, allocating resources and rewards aligned with the recognition of individual and team competences and efforts) need to be revised through implementation of improvement actions. When the organization creates frameworks to allow people to continually develop their own competencies and identify and reward their efforts, people are motivated in their everyday work to do their best for the organization and contribute to improvement of organizational performance.

FACTOR MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT was assessed at high scoring levels. In addition, most employees assessed their involvement in the decision-making process, strategic objectives and improvement activities as well as the existence of mechanisms of consultation and open dialogue at medium-high scoring levels, too. This research proves that, CAF first implementation in Serres Hospital can be perceived as a means of encouraging participation through co-decision on general policy, using direct informal participation and involvement. CAF encourages organizations to assess themselves from different angles at the same time – a holistic approach to analysis. This means that by its very nature, involvement of the employees is vital. Developing and involving staff in management activities is a key part of the rhetoric of all TQM tools, which acknowledge that quality improvement can only be successful when employees have the necessary skills and authority to participate. When the organization creates frameworks to allow people to assume greater responsibility and to take more initiative, people contribute to the development of

the workplace. Moreover, involving employees by developing open dialogue and empowerment supports their well-being. Employees at all levels are the essence of a public organization and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organization's benefit. Both the self-assessment team and nursing staff agree that the contribution of employees could be maximized through their development and involvement and the creation of a working environment of shared values and a culture of trust, openness, empowerment and recognition. Thus, effective management and leadership under a TQM framework enables people to contribute effectively and productively to the organization's overall mission, vision and to the accomplishment of the organization's objectives. The holistic approach of CAF simply means that all the composition elements have a reciprocal impact on each other:

- the left part of the model (the enablers – causes) and the right part (the results – effects); and
- the holistic relationship between the causes.

Finally, this research has drawn conclusions and gathered information by recording the strengths and weaknesses on HRM practices in Serres Hospital and their results on employees' satisfaction. The most important reason for using CAF is to identify internal factors for organizational performance, sustainability and continuous improvement. Thus, this study investigates the areas where best HRM practices and positive HRM results are present, as well as problematic areas with negative effects on performance that need to be improved. Allocating a score to the CAF Criteria 3 and 7.1 accomplished our purpose to identify Good Practices as indicated by high scoring on HRM Enablers and Results. High scoring on Results are usually an indication of the existence of Good Practices in the Enablers field. The results of this study form the basis for the improvement action plan and the formulation of strategic objectives of the hospital so as to be able to follow developments, to respond to continual changes of the external environment by utilizing most of its resources. Moreover, CAF assessment facilitates the benchmarking of the specific Public Organization with other similar organizations of EU Member States under the same framework.

All these measurements can be used to continuously enhance organizational learning in terms of the HRM policies. Employees at all hierarchical levels are the essence of an organization and argue that their full involvement through CAF implementation enables their abilities to be used for the organization's benefit. CAF encourages organizations to assess themselves from different angles at the same time – a holistic approach to analysis. This means that by its very nature, involvement of the employees is vital.

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# ANNEX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

As mentioned above, CAF was used as a questionnaire in this paper. Particularly, the Criteria 3 and 7 that refer to HRM Enablers and HRM Results respectively. Each of the above criteria includes some questions, which have been defined as the factors in this particular survey. HR practices/enablers (Questionnaire Criterion 3) was assessed by the Self-Assessment group:

**Criterion 3: HR**

Self-assessment group uses formal documents and evidenced-data-based information for answering the questions. The questionnaire is comprised by 23 questions.

Consider evidence on what the organisation is doing to...

***Sub-criterion 3.1 for the self-assessment group***

**Plan, manage and improve human resources transparently, with regard to strategy and planning:**

3.1 To what extent are the existing and future needs for human resources analyzed taking into account the needs of the Public Authorities involved?

3.2 To what extent does human resources development policy take into account future responsibilities and social criteria?

3.3 To what extent are there objective criteria relating to recruitment, promotion, remuneration, rewards and allocation of administrative functions being implemented?

3.4 To what extent is the adequacy of appropriate human resources ensured in order to achieve the mission of the organization and the balancing of tasks and responsibilities?

3.5 To what extent are the criteria for human resources recruiting, rewards, promotions ensure equal and fair treatment?

3.6 To what extent are Job descriptions used for the recruitment and development of the organization's employees?

3.7 To what extent is the necessary training and the necessary work framework for the people involved in the development and operation of e-Government services and network services provided?

***Sub-criterion 3.2 for the self-assessment group***

**Identify, develop and use competences of employees aligning individual and organisational goals:**

3.8 To what extent are the skills, abilities and knowledge required at individual and organizational level recognized?

3.9 To what extent is there an agreed policy of developing skills at individual and organizational level, taking into account special cases?

3.10 To what extent is it designed to develop modern vocational training programs for Public Organization employees based on existing personal and future operational needs?

3.11 To what extent do older employees or/and heads of the Public Organization help or guide younger people to effectively perform their duties?

3.12 To what extent is the internal mobility (within the public organization) or the external (to other) mobility of the employees promoted?

3.13 To what extent are modern training methods used? (using multimedia, on-the-job training, e-learning, social media)

3.14 To what extent are educational activities monitored in relation to costs and the resulting benefit?
3.15 To what extent is the necessity to promote female career and the necessary projects to be considered?
3.16 To what extent do you consider that the implementation of a TQM Model or Measurement tool under a framework can improve employees' and organizational performance?

***Sub-criterion 3.3 for the self-assessment group***
**Involve employees by developing open dialogue and empowerment:**
3.17 To what extent is there a culture of open communication, dialogue and encouragement of team-work in the organization?
3.18 To what extent are there any consultations held between the top management and representatives of trade unions and their results are determinant to organizational improvement?
3.19 To what extent are the appropriate conditions created for the submission and promotion of employees' suggestions, initiatives and proposals?
3.20 To what extent are the organization's goals and their assessment indicators determined upon an agreement between different levels of hierarchy?
3.21 To what extent staff surveys on employees satisfaction are being conducted and the latter are satisfied with their working conditions?
3.22 To what extent is emphasis given on the needs of socially disadvantaged workers and people with disabilities?
3.23 To what extent is a policy for non-wage benefits and rewards for employees designed and implemented?

**Criterion 7: HR Results**
The questionnaire of HR perception Results is assessed by the Nursing Staff and comprised by 19 questions.
Consider what results the organisation has achieved to meet the needs and expectations of its people through...

***Sub-criterion 7.1 for all the employees of the nursing staff***
Results of measuring the perception of employees for the organization
7.1 To what extent is the organization's activity considered to be positive for the wider social environment, within which it operates?
7.2 To what extent do you find citizens' participation in decision-making about the vision, mission and values of the organization satisfactory?
7.3 To what extent do the employees of the Public Organization know the objectives of its operation?
7.4 To what extent do you consider satisfactory the level of staff awareness of potential conflicts of interest and ethics?
7.5 To what extent is the allocation of responsibilities among the employees of the Public Organization satisfactory?
7.6 To what extent do you find the way in which the Public Organization is managed satisfactory?
7.7 To what extent do you consider that individual and team efforts of employees are rewarded by the Public Organization?
7.8 To what extent do you consider satisfactory internal mechanisms of dialogue-communication within the operational framework of the Public Organization?
7.9 To what extent do you find the administrative procedures followed by the Public Organization in its day-to-day operation satisfactory?

7.10 To what extent do you consider satisfactory the administrative modernization efforts made by the Public Organization?
7.11 To what extent is the housing space of the Public Organization and its working environment satisfactory?
7.12 To what extent does the Public Organization facilitate its employees in trying to address personal problems?
7.13 To what extent does working hours of the Public Organization facilitate the conclusion of personal and family needs of employees?
7.14 To what extent is working overtime in special circumstances not mandatory, but with the consent and willingness of the employees?
7.15 To what extent does the Public Organization address issues such as comfort, hygiene and safety at work satisfactory?
7.16 To what extent does the Public Organization treat employees on the basis of the principle of equality?
7.17 To what extent do you consider as an essential means of motivation, the involvement of employees in the decision-making process on issues of effective functioning of the Public Organization?
7.18 To what extent does the existing staff assessment system constitute a means of stimulating human resources and helps the effective functioning of the Public Organization?
7.19 To what extent does the Public Organization systematically develop the capabilities, knowledge and skills of human resources in relation to the objectives set? (eg the development of IT skills combined with the goal of increasing electronically supplied services)

**Criterion 7.1 - Demographic Characteristics of nursing staff**

| Age: | [Answer:] |
|---|---|
| 0 | 18-25 |
| 1 | 26-35 |
| 2 | 36-45 |
| 3 | 46-55 |
| 4 | 56-65 |
| 5 | >65 |
| Gender: | [Answer:] |
| 0 | Male |
| 1 | Female |
| Educational Level: | [Answer:] |
| 0 | Primary Education |
| 1 | Secondary Education |
| 2 | Technological Educational Institute |
| 3 | University |
| 4 | MSc – Master |
| 5 | PhD – Doctorate |
| Professional experience: | [Answer:] |
| 0 | 0-10 |
| 1 | 11-20 |
| 2 | 21-30 |
| 3 | 31-40 |
| Internal Mobility: [Have you been moved within the hospital to another department / clinic in the last two (2) years?]: | [Answer:] |
| 0 | NAI |
| 1 | ΌΧΙ |
| Rotation: [if yes, how many years have you been completed in the previous department/clinic?] | [Answer:] |
| 0 | <2 |
| 1 | 3-5 |
| 2 | >5 |
| Hierarchical Position : | [Answer:] |
| 0 | Director of Nursing Service |
| 1 | Sector/Division Head of Nursing Service |
| 2 | Department Manager/Supervisor of Nursing Department |
| 3 | Deputy Department Manager/Supervisor of Nursing Department |
| Sector/Division : | [Answer:] |
| 0 | Pathological sector |
| 1 | Surgical sector |
| 2 | Mental Health sector |
| 3 | Laboratory sector |