

Article Arrival Date**25.11.2024****Article Published Date****20.12.2024****HOLACRACY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION CENTERS:
PARTICIPATIVE AND FLEXIBLE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES****Dr. TURAN BAŞKONUŞ**Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University, Turkey <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8932-7656>**Abstract**

The aim of this article is to evaluate the potential of holacracy as a model that can provide solutions to the problems encountered in the management structures of special education and rehabilitation centers and to analyze this model as a management approach applicable in such centers. Special education and rehabilitation centers play an important role in the education and integration of individuals with special needs into society. However, the management structures of these centers in Turkey are generally established on centralized models, which leads to various problems in terms of the effectiveness and sustainability of services. The planning deficiencies, personnel shortages, coordination problems and weaknesses in control mechanisms brought about by centralized structures indicate that there is a need for improvement in management processes. In this context, the holacracy model offers an approach based on flexibility and participation as an alternative to traditional management systems. Holacracy aims to create a more democratic and agile management structure by basing decision-making processes on roles rather than individuals. The application of this model in special education and rehabilitation centers can offer advantages such as increasing the effectiveness of individualized education programs, increasing the motivation of employees and responding quickly to local needs. However, there are difficulties in the transition to holacracy, such as the adaptation of employees to the new management model, the flexibility of leadership roles, and the necessity of technological infrastructure. Therefore, strategic planning, personnel training, and public-private cooperation are of great importance in the transition process. The holacracy model is considered a strong alternative that can increase quality and support a sustainable structure in the management of special education and rehabilitation centers.

117

Keywords: Special Education, Rehabilitation Center, Holacracy

Introduction

Due to changing work environments, organizations and individuals operating within them are faced with increasing complexity and uncertainty. This has led to increasing calls to explore and adopt new organizational designs, structures, and practices, and has become a topic that management is heavily focused on today (Bolin & Härenstam, 2008; Puranam et al., 2014). In this context, innovative concepts such as "Holacracy" (Robertson, 2015), a management system that distributes authority and decision-making processes among self-organizing teams instead of traditional hierarchies, have emerged in the practitioner literature (Schell & Bischof, 2022). Special education and rehabilitation centers undertake vital roles such as the education, rehabilitation, and integration of individuals with special needs into society. These centers provide individualized services, allowing each individual to realize their potential. However, the management structures of special education and rehabilitation centers in Turkey are mostly built on a centralized model. This situation reduces the flexibility to respond to local needs, while also limiting the effectiveness and sustainability of services (Smagulova, 2009).

In this context, the holacracy model can be considered as a management approach that can solve the current problems of special education and rehabilitation centers, especially with its flexibility, participation and agile structure (Robertson, 2015). Holacracy is a management model that aims to overcome the limitations of traditional hierarchical structures and to provide more flexibility, autonomy and participation by distributing authority throughout the organization (Krasulja, Radojević, & Janjušić, 2016). At the center of this model are self-organizing teams called "circles". Circles function both as independent units and as part of larger organizational structures. This structure increases organizational flexibility, speeds up decision-making processes and strengthens employee collaboration (Robertson, 2015).

118

Management Problems in Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers

The management processes of special education and rehabilitation centers are of great importance in terms of the effectiveness and sustainability of educational services. However, various deficiencies and problems are observed in basic management functions such as planning, organization, guidance, coordination and control in these centers (Smagulova, 2009). In most centers, the failure of trainers and therapists to attend regular in-service training limits their professional development, which negatively affects the quality of service (Memduhoğlu, 2010). The inadequacy of control and supervision mechanisms causes the quality of service to decrease. In particular, the lack of supervision processes negatively affects both employee performance and the compliance of services with standards (Smagulova, 2009).

Introduction and Basic Principles of the Holacracy Model

Holacracy is an organizational model based on flexibility and participation, developed as an alternative to traditional hierarchical management systems (Robertson, 2015). In this model, decision-making processes are based on roles rather than individuals, which allows individuals to use their talents more effectively. Holacracy aims to reduce bureaucratic barriers and offer innovative solutions by contributing to organizational structures becoming more agile (Bernstein et al., 2016). Especially in sensitive sectors such as education and health, holacracy can create a democratic management approach by encouraging the active participation of individuals in processes. In educational institutions, clarifying the roles of teachers and administrators allows them to play a more active role in decision-making processes (Brown, 2020). Traditional hierarchical management models often limit decision-making processes to a centralized framework, which can negatively affect employee satisfaction (Semmer et al., 2015). Holacracy, on the other hand, offers a more agile structure, allowing employees to actively participate in decision-making mechanisms (Robertson, 2015; Mosamim & Ningrum, 2020). Employee roles are defined dynamically and can be updated according to the needs of the organization (Weirauch et al., 2023). This flexibility, unlike traditional static job descriptions, increases organizational adaptability and efficiency (Bernstein et al., 2016; Mosamim & Ningrum, 2020).

119

One of the basic principles of Holacracy is the "Holacracy Constitution", which provides a clear definition of roles and authorities within the organization. This constitution offers a more participatory and process-oriented management model instead of centralized leadership by distributing authority among individuals. Employees having independent decision-making authority in their own roles provides flexibility in solving organizational problems and accelerates decision-making processes (Koestler, 1990; Robertson, 2015; Farkhondeh & Müller, 2021). Holacracy stands out as an effective solution, especially in rapidly changing and uncertain business environments. Pioneer companies such as Zappos have optimized their business processes and increased employee satisfaction by stating that they have adopted the Holacracy model (Sunny, 2014; Thomas & Silverstone, 2015). At Zappos, the removal of hierarchical structures and the adoption of a collaborative structure based on equal levels increased the agility of the company and enabled the development of innovative business processes (Frei, Ely, & Winig, 2009).

However, there are some difficulties in implementing Holacracy. The strict rules and high level of formalization of this system can lead to information overload and slow decision-making processes. In addition, employees who are accustomed to traditional management systems are likely to resist such a change (Bernstein et al., 2016). Therefore, implementing Holacracy in large-scale and complex organizations may require significant training and adaptation (Krasulja et al., 2016). It can be stated that Holacracy is an innovative management model that can help modern organizations successfully exist in the changing business world, but the success of this system depends on its implementation in a way that is compatible with the organizational culture and the active participation of employees in the process.

Holacracy Model in Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers

Holacracy can be defined as an approach in which power and decision-making authority are distributed among individuals and teams by abandoning traditional hierarchical structures in organizational management (Robertson, 2007; Mosamim & Ningrum, 2020). In this model, individuals work within the framework of predefined roles and these roles serve the goals of the organization as functional units (Weirauch et al., 2023). Holacracy makes leadership a process rather than a person or position, which provides greater flexibility within the organization (Bernstein et al., 2016; Weirauch et al., 2023).

120

Holacracy increases motivation and strengthens organizational commitment by encouraging individuals to work in a system based on their roles (Robertson, 2015). This system adopts a participatory management approach instead of central authority and contributes to the acceleration of decision-making processes (Bernstein et al., 2016). Holacracy is an innovative management model that has the potential to make management processes in special education and rehabilitation centers more flexible and participatory. This model offers significant advantages in terms of redefining tasks based on roles and providing greater participation of employees in decision-making processes (Demir-Arıci, 2024). In addition, holacracy has the potential to improve service delivery in rural areas with its capacity to respond quickly to local needs (Smagulova, 2009).

Another advantage of the holacracy model is its potential to strengthen public and private sector collaboration. This supports the sustainability of services by ensuring more efficient use of resources and encourages community-supported management approaches (Memduhoğlu, 2010). However, there are some difficulties in implementing the holacracy model. The lack of clear definition of new roles and responsibilities can complicate the functioning within the organization (Bernstein et al., 2016). In addition, the lack of technological infrastructure and

the high cost of training programs can be a significant obstacle for small-scale special education centers (Demir-Arici, 2024).

In complex structures such as special education and rehabilitation centers, holacracy allows employees to be involved in decision-making processes with a participatory approach. Employees in these centers often have individual expertise, and a hierarchical structure can make collaboration between expertise difficult (Mosamim & Ningrum, 2020). The Holacracy model enables these specializations to be organized dynamically thanks to its circle structure and supports each individual to play a more active role within the organization (Weirauch et al., 2023).

Holacracy is a management model that positively affects employee satisfaction. It has been stated that employees perceive fewer "illegitimate tasks" and are appreciated much more (Weirauch et al., 2023; Semmer et al., 2010). As a result, employees' sense of being valued within the organization increases, which supports individual-organization harmony (Mosamim & Ningrum, 2020). Holacracy provides employees with greater autonomy by giving them the freedom to determine their own tasks, which reduces the risk of conflict in many organizations along with transparency (Schell & Bischof, 2022; Weirauch et al., 2023).

Increasing public-private cooperation will enable both more efficient use of resources and improvement of service quality (Smagulova, 2009). Holacracy has the potential to implement a more flexible, democratic and participatory management approach in special education and rehabilitation centers. This model, which aims to eliminate the deficiencies of centralized structures, can increase the effectiveness of individualized education services and provide a sustainable management approach (Robertson, 2015). Holacracy offers a strong alternative for both increasing quality and creating a participatory management culture in private educational institutions.

Holacracy is a management model that makes organizational structures more transparent, flexible, and employee-focused. Especially in special education and rehabilitation centers, the implementation of this model can increase employee satisfaction and productivity. However, for holacracy to be implemented successfully, employees must clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and show full commitment to organizational goals (Robertson, 2007; Mosamim & Ningrum, 2020; Weirauch et al., 2023).

Results and Discussions

The Holacracy model offers an innovative solution for implementing a more democratic, flexible and employee-focused management approach in special education and rehabilitation centers. While the restrictions imposed by centralized structures negatively affect the service quality and efficiency of these centers, holacracy stands out as a model that can provide solutions to these problems with its flexibility, participation and agile structure. This model increases the autonomy of employees by accelerating decision-making processes and thus strengthens motivation and satisfaction.

Holacracy aims to increase organizational harmony and efficiency through role-based dynamic structures, while ensuring that individualized education programs are implemented more effectively and that personnel work with higher motivation. At the same time, it contributes to more efficient use of resources and improvement of service quality by offering the potential to strengthen public-private cooperation. However, the applicability of this model depends on the adaptation processes of employees, investments in technological infrastructure and organizational culture change.

Especially in small-scale special education centers, the transition to the holacracy model requires careful planning and a strong support mechanism. It is important to implement comprehensive training programs and cultural transformation processes for employees to adapt to this model. In addition, the development of technological infrastructure stands out as a critical element for the effective implementation of the holacracy model.

As a result, the holacracy model has the potential to create a more democratic, flexible and sustainable structure in the management of special education and rehabilitation centers. This model can not only improve management processes, but also significantly support the integration of individuals into society by increasing the quality of services. However, careful planning, cooperation between stakeholders and transformation processes designed in accordance with the organizational culture are required for the successful implementation of holacracy.

References

- Arıcı, İ. D. (2024). Anarşist kuram çerçevesinde eğitimde yönetim düşüncesi ve uygulamalarına yöneltilen eleştiriler: Yönetimde Holakrasi. *Alanyazın*, 5(1), 71-83.
- Bernstein, E., Bunch, J., Canner, N., & Lee, M. (2016). Beyond the holacracy hype. *Harvard business review*, 94(7), 8.
- Bolin, M., & Härenstam, A. (2008). An empirical study of bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic characteristics in 90 workplaces. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 29(4), 541-564.
- Brown, C. (2020). The rise of alternative management models in education. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 28(3), 1-18.
- Farkhondeh, M., & Müller, B. (2021). Holacracy: A new way of organizing? *Management Revue*, 32(4), 302–317. <https://doi.org/10.5771/0935-9915-2021-4-302>
- Frei, F. X., Ely, R. J., & Winig, L. (2009). Zappos. com 2009: Clothing, Customer Service and Company Culture. *HBS Case*, (610-015).
- Koestler, Arthur (1990). *The Ghost in the Machine*. London, Penguin
- Krasulja, N., Radojević, I., & Janjušić, D. (2016, October). Holacracy-the new management system. In *Proceedings of the international scientific conference, Njs, Serbia* (Vol. 13).
- Lee, M. Y., & Edmondson, A. C. (2017). Self-managing organizations: Exploring the limits of less-hierarchical organizing. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 37, 35–58.
- Memduhoğlu, H. B. (2010). Yönetim olgusu ve eğitim yönetiminde temel ilkeler. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 28(3), 387-400.
- Mosamim, P., & Ningrum, S. (2020). Holacracy and hierarchy concepts: Which one is more effective in an organizational leadership and management system?. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 5(12), 257-271.
- Puranam, P., Alexy, O., & Reitzig, M. (2014). What's “new” about new forms of organizing?. *Academy of management Review*, 39(2), 162-180.
- Robertson, B. J. (2015). *Holacracy: The revolutionary management system that abolishes hierarchy*. Penguin UK.
- Schell, S., & Bischof, N. (2022). Change the way of working. Ways into self-organization with the use of Holacracy: An empirical investigation. *European management review*, 19(1), 123-137.

Semmer, N. K., Jacobshagen, N., Meier, L. L., Elfering, A., Beehr, T. A., Kälin, W., & Tschan, F. (2015). Illegitimate tasks as a source of work stress. *Work & Stress*, 29(1), 32-56.

Smagulova, L. (2009). *Özel Eğitim ve Rehabilitasyon Hizmetleri Yönetimi* (Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Uludağ Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Çalışma Ekonomisi ve Endüstri İlişkileri Anabilim Dalı.

Sunny, A. (2014). *Zappos Holacracy*. *People's Lab blog*, MSL Group.

Thomas, R. J., & Silverstone, Y. (2015). Empowering employees at Zappos. Accenture.

Weirauch, L., Galliker, S., & Elfering, A. (2023). Holacracy, a modern form of organizational governance predictors for person-organization-fit and job satisfaction. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 1021545.