

## ***Quality Education***

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***Abstract:*** *This paper addresses the issue of quality education: the importance, the levels of training, the lifelong training, customer requirements, customer satisfaction, social and economic development. Based on the literature the study will demonstrate how quality is primarily a problem of education, of culture, of the present and of the future. We are moving towards a form of creation of value, a system in which value is not created by companies and shared with clients, but created through the collaboration of both parties. Referring to the two sides we will fully justify the need for quality education for the worker and the consumer of products / services.*

***Keywords:*** *quality education, quality culture.*

### **Introduction**

Arguments in favour of supporting our analysis started from two famous quotes from some of the famous world-wide quality researchers, including the American J.M. Juran:

- "The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the century of quality" (Juran);
- "Quality begins with education and ends with education" (Ishikawa).

***QUALITY is defined, planned, designed, measured, manufactured, controlled, evaluated, sold, transported, preserved, "consumed", guaranteed, certified, is contracted, is received, it is improving, it is falsified, advertised, promoted, etc. All we need is quality education. This is done primarily in the family, in schools and universities and ... in the lifelong training process!***

Globalization shows the size, the urgency and interdependent character of the problems facing the international community, the fact that this process is irreversible and requires *global reactions* to the resolution of which it is called to contribute every inhabitant of the planet. Under these adverse global reactions the teaching institutions and education are the main responsible to train people able to cope with these problems now and in the future.

The European Commission promotes integration of consumer education in the curricula of primary and secondary school supporting regional or national initiatives aimed at educating *young consumers* and encourage partnerships between specialists in science education and those of consumer protection, such as exchanges and transfers of experience and "best practice" between member states. There are also supported all transnational initiatives to educate adult consumers. The recognition and development of quality education must contribute more to training the population. We cannot talk about quality education without having expectations from *quality education*.

"Consumer education is an essential, even indispensable, but it is preliminary consumer information (about the characteristics of the supply of goods and services), since both conditions optimizing the selection that will provide, ultimately, the consumer." [3, 212]

## 1. Quality

**Quality concept** first appeared as a philosophical system - Aristotle's logic. Why do we need quality? For us: in order to differentiate ourselves. Why should we be different? The answer is: in order to survive as living organisms in a lively environment such as, for example, **life and the market**. The concept of "quality" was and is of great actuality, being called over a hundred definitions [17, 119]. These definitions have specified various representative aspects of quality: *excellence* (Socrates, Plato, Aristo), *according to the specifications* (Levitt, 1972 Gilmore 1974), produced *apt / appropriate / suitable* (Juran, 1974), *according to requirements* (Crosby, 1979), reaching and / or exceeding customer expectations (Grönroos 1983, Parasuraman et al, 1985), *value* (Feigenbaum 1991, Abbot, 1955), *avoiding losses* (Taguchi, 1989), *availability of a systematic approach by excellence*, etc. There is also the possibility of defining quality as *excellence, value, compliance with specifications* or recognition or *exceeding customer expectations*.

According to ISO 9000: 2015 quality is "***the extent to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements***". According to this definition:

- *Quality is expressed by a single characteristic but by a set of characteristics;*
- *Quality is not independent; it exists only in relation to requirements.*

*Quality* is a strategic instrument of global organizations management. Quality is the cornerstone of progress in a modern society and people (consumers) should have an effective right of access to quality.

The high volume of new knowledge about product and service quality, the importance and implications of the quality of economic and social indicators at micro and macro level, the introduction and improvement of international standards ISO 9000 are some arguments in favour of the need for each organization to make special efforts to ***professionalism in quality approach***.

Yvon Mougín, author of "La qualité, c'est facile" [13] believes that "by *qualitosophie*, culture and education must come to an understanding of three quality requirements (conditions not too hard to accomplish each day): ***to want*** to do / receive ***quality***; ***to understand*** the simplicity of the concepts concerning quality; to believe in the usefulness of concepts regarding ***quality*** ".

Quality must not result in additional costs. Delivery, evaluation / recognition / quality choice requires knowledge, information, education, standards, and consumer satisfaction.

### 1.1. Quality Culture

**Quality culture** is "a system of values that exist in an organizational environment that is geared towards maintaining and continuously improving quality" [7]. When it comes to quality culture we must refer to the culture of the organization / worker and consumer culture. Both must change from time to time. Change is a fundamental characteristic of the time. It occurs both in science and in culture, economics and management in attitude and fashion etc. This change occurred / occurs in quality having major effects on humans, the environment and business. The problem remains "resistance to change and complexity promote change in mentality, attitudes and behaviour [21].

Today one must live in a culture of intellectual (focused on information and ideas, innovations) and one manager (focused on people's satisfaction with the quality products and services offered). The need to accept change is generally regarded with wariness. Quality culture has three beneficiaries: the man, the market economy and ***management***. Quality culture cannot be achieved only through training that must begin early school years, high school and continued in all faculties and specializations. "Without a training program in quality and motivation cannot do anything," said Prof. Ion Stanciu [20, 8].

Responsibility for quality culture lies with public authorities, businesses, schools and universities, media, society as a whole. Motivation for quality means meeting the needs and interests of clients correlated with the objectives and tasks assigned by the manufacturer / the quality supplier. Lifelong learning, learning organization, which teaches consumers, should be taken seriously. We must refer

here to the role and will have to hold more and more knowledge in this century. "The main producers of wealth have become information and knowledge," says Peter Drucker [4, 58] which underlines how Japanese gave an excellent user knowledge they have imported or they have acquired. In Drucker's view, the focus of society is educated person. Moreover, business success is the fact of "knowing how to learn faster than your competitors" [24, 41]. Ishikawa Japanese and observed that "People create quality, not cars" and "quality begins with education and ends with education" [9, 7].

It is more and more said that *knowledge revolution* designating a fundamental change in the economy based predominantly on physical resources to the economy based predominantly on knowledge. At the core of this revolution is the crucial role that knowledge has in the modern economy. We must recognize that this revolution can have (and already had!) effects. Paul Roberts in his book "The End of Food" [19, 11], referring to food safety, shows that "despite the incredible productivity, almost a billion people, or about one in seven, are affected by" food insecurity " and the number is growing by 7.5 million per year ... Many of the methods that have created this wealth, such as industrial growth and intensive farming of animals using chemical substances, have degraded so much production capacity of natural systems that it is uncertain how are we going to feed the approximately 10 billion people who will populate Terra until the middle of this century. "

Quality cannot be separated from the quality of the manufacturer / supplier, of risks, of the working environment or the natural environment, of requirements and consumer culture, the culture of the organization, the job security and consumer safety, of prevent / resolve complaints etc.

## 1.2. Quality Education

Quality is today a problem of education. Why we need a strategy for quality education? We easily find answers to questions like: what should be done, how, when, where, who? The harder it is to answer the question what was done? All researchers argue that change is needed. The result may be the quality of education for the change.

Quality is primarily a problem of education. Only educated people can act with professionalism and can do things right the first time and every time. Promoting the concept of quality in education is a very top issue both in Europe and worldwide. Motivation is found in the four fundamental components of overall quality management strategy: legislative component, component management, motivational component, educational component.

Then, the quality of the crop is a problem. Quality culture allows understanding the need for quality and knowledge of what is good / new world. Yoke [25, 21] considers "quality culture in any organization there when targeted to the needs of all stakeholders and there are clear and efficient mechanisms to support all staff in an attempt to get a commitment to quality."

Thirdly, the quality is a problem behaviour [8, 8]. Making good products activity involving excellence, commitment, self-assessment, resume actions was conducted incorrectly, the return on aspects insufficiently clarified the tenacity at work.

*Man-quality relationship is reversible.* Society as a whole is interested in quality products and services. Genichi Taguchi's theory is that "the quality of a product is inversely proportional to the size of all harmful influences caused by the product of a company." The most important component of a successful program for the implementation of TQM, new generations of TQM [16, 259] is therefore quality culture [23, 15], or in other words, knowledge of quality management [15, 93].

*Quality education* has three beneficiaries: **pupils / students, stakeholders and society** as a whole. Performance requirements in all areas, including education, involve efforts to adapt or change. Educational institutions must respond to new challenges requiring flexibility, speed, complexity and provide both students' skills and tools to produce effective work / quality claims.

The high volume of new knowledge about product and service quality, importance and implications of the quality of economic and social indicators at micro and macro level, the introduction and improvement of international standards ISO 9000 are some arguments in favour of the need for each organization, including educational institutions, to make special efforts to address **professionalism in quality**.

The quality has a great impact at the individual level. Today people have become aware of the advantages of quality products and services that require to satisfy, to draw [10, 40], [12, 69], their expectations further tending toward continuous quality improvement life. But quality of life requires some preconditions [8, 9], such as: economic stability, accumulating a certain high average wealth and education. The individual we are talking about an organization's employees (including the manager) or *consumer / customer*.

- For *organizations*, quality is a goal that is achieved by people with some training and a culture of quality. "Quality must start with education. Organizations must invest to train employees at all levels to participate in the activities of continuous improvement, in order to facilitate changes in behaviour and attitude. They must decide what type of training, improvement is needed and how this training must take place." [1, 601]
- Consumer *behaviour* is particularly important. In a market economy it must be induced, cultivated and supported in all ways. It is necessary to fully comply with all rights established by numerous international consumers. These relate to security, information, selection, representation, redress, education, basic needs, and unpolluted environment.

Concern for studying the quality and / or quality management at the level of each citizen - as a producer and consumer of goods and services - has become a prerequisite for development through quality competitiveness of the Romanian economy in the world market.

An important step in this direction was the introduction 1-school curriculum of high schools in Romania technological discipline "Quality Management". Completing the discipline, must lead to the acquisition by students / graduates five specific components (which assume knowledge, skills and abilities appropriate):

- Work with specific terms of quality management;
- Knowledge of the functional components of quality management;
- Interpretation and implementation of the quality system in an organization;
- Knowledge and application of the recommendations of major international standards on quality management and environmental management and sustainable development principles;
- Knowledge of principles and methodologies and describing specific quality evaluation of products, services and processes.

Higher education plays a crucial role in education quality perfection, meaning that "universities are places where it is promoted and supported research based on free and independent thinking and the exchange of ideas" [23, 17]. A university with a quality culture can be defined as an organization with clear values and beliefs that promote "behaviour for total quality" [11, 1070].

***Who is interested in quality education?*** Lawrence Reavill [18, 59] developed a model of stakeholders to higher education in the UK. In its system, it can be identified 12 categories of stakeholders including: *student, employer, family, university and employees, suppliers of goods and services, trade and industry, society, government, etc.*

Quality education is a responsibility of all institutions and organizations. Education providers must send people (specialists) competent, and companies have to deal with ongoing training. "Teams do as an organization to be good. Individuals do as an organization to be extraordinarily good." [6, 228]

***Education*** must integrate into new trends and adapt their offerings to support new generations, updating and permanent finalities and resources to meet new challenges and at the same time, provide

them subjects of education skills and tools effective work for the near future in order to participate in making products and excellent service.

The main conclusion that emerges is that students should be interested, willing to receive quality education, quality culture to apply to future employment or the citizen consumer products and services. It remains to be seen quality results in culture and discipline.

Models of excellence in education quality is based on the premise that excellent results performance, customer satisfaction and the evolution of society are made by political leadership and strategies that are based Stakeholders, staff, continuous improvement through innovation, development and promotion of quality culture - Strategy SPICC [16, 69].

***Why is it necessary the quality for education?***

- To understand the concept of quality and its importance to each of us;
- To identify the factors that determines and influences the quality of products / services;
- To identify, measure and decide how characteristics of products / services bring us satisfaction;
- To analyse the quality of products / services relative to quality of life;
- To defend our right to quality;
- To be notified and respected as a consumer;
- To become a good manufacturer / supplier of products / services.

New dimensions of university and pre-university education must be based on knowledge change or more precisely, change of use of knowledge through "*integration of disciplines*" [26, 169] a preparation for "*environmentally friendly decisions*" [14, 485] *developing the capacity for acquisition, development and use of knowledge essential to the success of quality approach.*

**2. The Right of Consumer to Education**

*What is the consumer's right to education and why is it necessary?* "It is the right of every consumer (actually every citizen, as a consumer, regardless of age, education, social status etc.) to acquire certain knowledge / skills and to induce certain attitudes / behaviours so to be able to know and exercise - the best for him - the rights and obligations incumbent as a consumer." [3, 212]

Herein after there are listed some of the essential values and attitudes that must result from quality education:

- Stimulate interest and concerns for execution, evaluation and continuous improvement of the quality of products / services;
- Stimulate interest in the quality and safety of food;
- Awareness of the role and importance of environmental quality and human health;
- Understand the importance of rights and consumer protection;
- Environmental protection, endangered by pollution and resource depletion.

We believe that a *quality culture* and organizational learning approach will support efficient management in general and quality management in particular. To have the desired result, practice management impact on education quality should focus on building networks and strategic alliances between multiple parties / stakeholders: those who design, produce, evaluate the act of education in educational institutions, those who distribute continuing education, those who finance and those who benefit from quality education.

In our opinion, we are in the presence of a vicious circle in which producers take advantage of lack of awareness and attitude of consumers in relation to their rights and consumers, in the absence of appropriate cultures remain only at the level of discontent, doubts about the possibility rights them, which causes a low level of self-protection. The real change should start from the systematic education of consumers and producers in terms of quality, safety marketed products, attitudes towards

noncompliance producers / suppliers regulations in this area, coupled with increased interest from consumer authorities and a manifestation of individual civic or associative.

There is a European policy on consumer education. It is part of a "European policy to protect consumers" and aimed at "the acquisition by European consumers of those skills, attitudes and knowledge they need in order take the best decisions - about the selection, purchase and consumption of certain products / services - according to their own economic interests and the need to protect life and health." [3, 213] The most important target group is children and young people, given the triple their capacity as consumers, the spotter products / services and education vectors in the family. Consumer education must be permanent, that represent an ongoing process in the life of man.

### 3. The Future of Quality

The future of quality will be influenced by globalization, global responsibility, increase consumer awareness, training the workforce, an aging population, the growth rate of change. Continuous improvement of products / services and customer satisfaction remain the main goals of any organization. The problems should be solved with the words "*well educated and informed customer satisfaction*." In the centre of the new company is being educated person, faced with new demands, new challenges and new responsibilities. Educated person must be prepared to live in a global world.

Therefore, economic education and quality education must begin at an early age; not optional, but mandatory, and there anyway, it should not be transformed into an agglomeration of data. Pupils and students, citizens of today and those of future entrepreneurial spirit must have a flexible attitude towards risk, a correct perception of consumer rights and economic competition, a demanding attitude towards their quality of life. . *In such conditions of a great importance becomes the necessity of an innovative economic model based on diversity, innovation, co-operation which would accelerate the social-economic development of consumer co-operation* [22, 200]. An interesting vision is met to the American Society for Quality in 2011 which identified the following key points that may affect the future of quality [5, 18-19]:

- 1. Global responsibility.** The organization must be aware of its global impact of local decisions and realize how important they are for the planet totally unacceptable finite resources and increased waste. Overall responsibility also involves human rights, labour practices, and equitable exploitation of resources, practical consumer interests and contributing to society.
- 2. Consumers awareness.** With today's technology, such as the Internet, Twitter and Facebook, consumers have access to a wealth of information in relation to who can take purchasing decisions.
- 3. Globalization.** Globalization means not only an opportunity for the organization to enter new markets but also with a growing number of competitors.
- 4. Increasing rates of change.** Technology has hastened the rate of change, which brings new opportunities and threats.
- 5. Workforce of the future.** By knowledge workers and talent competition will increase along with technological advances. Organisations will have to make greater investment in training and education, to put more emphasis on professional certification, also will perform.
- 6. Aging population.** As people live longer, the organization will face higher costs for health care programs and social assistance.
- 7. Twenty-first century quality.** The organization is not the same as it was 50 years ago, or even five years ago. The organization is moving beyond its walls to acquire a new customer. Experience, demands and customer expectations will be priorities for the organization, rather than just quality product or service.
- 8. Innovation.** Innovation is central to organizational survival.

### Conclusions

All those responsible for *quality education* must:

- Understand and manage positive force for quality education;
- To take socio-human responsibility;
- Provide motivation to learn / appreciate / choose the quality of products / services;
- To print discipline while lifelong learning;

- Have a greater openness to the collaboration school- family;
- To form an open system, to provide training and to be accessible to all people, regardless of age or level of instruction.

New *quality education* must lead to new knowledge through *awareness and attitudes* (including skills and participation):

- of active economic agents;
- of some savvy consumers;
- of more cautious investors;
- of some responsible citizens.

Today's young people must be prepared both for the present and for the future. The classic system educator - receiver is no longer fully applicable. Technology is crossing the world. We can capitalize it in favour of *quality education*.

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