Quality Culture – Guarantee for Excellence

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Abstract: *The paper refers to the importance of quality culture and the need for quality education. We analyze the effects of quality culture on quality of life, consumer safety, customer / employee / manager satisfaction, performance in organizations. The Culture of quality leads to excellence.*
Arguments are put forward in favour of continuing education for quality, the existence of the learning organization, the consumer who must have a variety of knowledge about quality.
Keywords: *quality, culture of quality, excellence, quality education*

Introduction

About the need for culture and quality education speak the entire world's great qualitologists. All dimensional organizations need personnel to use, update, and continually improve their level of knowledge about quality. Deming, for example, refers to the organization's obligation to promote the education and self-education of all employees. In this respect, it proposes that a rigorous program of staff training be introduced in all departments, in line with the evolution of procedures, methods and techniques.

Although the concept of quality as a fundamental element of human behaviour has emerged since the beginning of its history, the concept of quality has been included in management science for only about three decades, when certification activity was initiated in Europe, and the quality actions were materialized at the level of each organization through organizational objectives and structures. As a result, the organization's management has enriched itself with a new area of quality management. *Quality culture is "a system of values that exists in an organizational environment that is oriented towards maintaining and continuously improving quality"* [14].

However, when it comes to quality culture, we need to refer both to the *culture of the organization / worker and to the culture of the consumer*. Both of them have to scramble from time to time. Change is a fundamental feature of time. It takes place both in science and culture, in economics and management, in attitude or in fashion etc. This change has also occurred in the QUALITY field with major effects on man, the environment and business. The problem remains "the resistance to change and the complexity of promoting change in mentality, attitudes, behaviour" [29].

The effects of quality culture are on the quality of life, consumer safety, customer, and employee and manager satisfaction. In organizations, the culture of quality leads to performance and excellence.

The evolution of the quality strategy and quality culture has been influenced by three directions [5, 19]:
  A. Quality development in the United States of America, whose top performance is *Total Quality Management.*
  B. Japan's Quality Movement (Japanese Quality Miracle) with the Japanese School, which is mainly characterized by the efficient operation of *Quality Circles and the Company's Wide Quality Control CWQC.*
  C. The European trend that can be characterized by orientation towards standards.

Today, man has to live in an intellectual culture (focusing on information and ideas, innovation) and one of the managers (focusing on people's satisfaction from the quality of products and services). The need to accept change is generally viewed with reluctance.

The culture of quality has three beneficiaries: *the man, the market economy and the management*. The culture of quality can be achieved only through a training that has to be started from the years of school, high school and continuing all the faculties and specializations. "Without a program of training and motivation in the field of quality, nothing can be done", Professor Ion Stanciu believes [28, 8]. The responsibility for quality culture rests with public authorities, economic agents, schools and universities, the media, society as a whole.

Motivating for quality means correlating the satisfaction of clients' needs and interests with the achievement of the objectives and tasks assigned to the manufacturer / service provider in the field of quality. Continuing learning, the learning organization, the learner of learning should be taken seriously. We have to refer here to the role that they have and will have more and more knowledge in the 21st century. "The main producers of prosperity have become information and knowledge" says Peter Drucker [8, 58], which also highlights how the Japanese have made an excellent use of the knowledge they have acquired or acquired. In Drucker's view, the educated person is the focus of society. In fact, success in business also means "learning to learn faster than your competitors" [32, 41]. And the Japanese Ishikawa observes that *"People create quality, not cars," and "quality begins with education and ending with education"* [18, 7].

As a key component of a successful TQM implementation program of new generations of TQM [25, 259], it is therefore the culture of quality [30, 15] or, in other words, the management of *knowledge of quality* [23, 93].The concern for studying the quality and / or quality management at the level of every citizen - as a producer and consumer of products and services - has become an essential condition for the development of competitiveness through the quality of the Romanian economy on the world market.

There is more and more talk of the knowledge revolution that marks the fundamental change from the economy based primarily on physical resources to the knowledge-based economy. The basis for this revolution is the determinant role that knowledge has in the modern economy. We have to admit that this revolution can have (and has already had!) negative effects. Paul Roberts in the book "End of Food" [27, 11], referring to food safety, shows that "despite our incredible productivity, nearly a billion people, about one in seven, are affected by" food insecurity ", and their number increases by 7.5 million per year ... Many of the methods that created this abundance, such as industrial animal breeding and intensive farming using chemicals, have so far degraded the production capacity of natural systems that it is unclear how we can feed the 10 billion people who will inhabit Earth by the middle of this century".

Quality can not be separated from the culture of the manufacturer / provider, risks, working environment or the natural environment, consumer requirements and culture, organization culture, employee security and consumer safety, prevention / resolution of complaints etc.

The quest for quality through people provokes cultural change on all four stages of quality: society, organization, processes / systems, products / services, a real "chain reaction". Professionals are learning that making a cultural change is centred on what Total Quality Management (TQM) is all about.

Quality culture has been the subject of many scientific papers or debates, but also of some models: Dotun & Kehoe [6, 930] - The quality culture model based on seven dimensions of the TQM System; Woods model proposing six values that lead to the creation of a culture of quality [30, 14]; Schein model based on tangible elements, conceptual assumptions, beliefs and values [30, 15], Yokebazat model on the orientation towards the satisfaction of all stakeholders and commitment to quality across the organization [33, 21].

1. Importance of Quality Culture

Qualitative world renowned (Deming, Juran, Crosby, Ishikawa) have highlighted the importance of *quality culture* in supporting the efforts of an organization that wants to be competitive. To be competitive, you need to be informed. "The business itself is not an isolated institution. He operates in a society and is influenced by both government and social values (culture)". Business as well as government and culture exist in society, influencing each other. *Business success* depends on quality culture. In fact, success in business also means "learning to learn faster than your competitors" [32, 41].

The *culture of quality* has three precise targets: *man, market economy and management* [26, 134]:
1. **Man** by:
   - Education,
   - Information,
   - Liability.
2. **Market economy** through
   - Quality of products and services,
   - Customer satisfaction,
   - Competition,
   - Legislation.
3. **Management** by:
   - Organization culture and knowledge management
   - Strategy, empowerment,
   - Human, material and financial resources,
   - Quality management system,
   - Knowledge management

The responsibility for quality culture rests with public authorities, economic agents and civil society.

The *culture of quality* adopted at the organization level must be based on a long-term vision and be characterized by *trust, creative thinking and investment in training*. In addition, this culture must be based on the fundamental principles of total quality management.

Trust. A culture of trust based quality can be translated into the reliability of the word or promise made by one party to another party [22, 507]. Trust is then the underlying assumption for the parties to meet their obligations. The multidimensional approach to trust reciprocally involves the following:
- ✓ Good communication;
- ✓ Increased sensitivity to defiance and diversity within the organization or in the external environment;
- ✓ Decentralization of decision-making power and greater autonomy of working teams.

Trust makes a significant contribution to the personal development of members of the organization, their ability to cooperate, to establish a better organizational climate, to the effectiveness of problem-solving processes and to improve performance in general. We must emphasize that trust allows the creation or strengthening of an organizational culture aimed at continuous improvement of quality and excellence.

Creative thinking. Creativity plays a decisive role in renewing and improving quality; it should be encouraged at all levels, but especially at the bottom of the processes that achieve quality. The advantages of small teams (5-8 people) have been demonstrated in many organizations. These teams, in which creativity is encouraged, contribute to improving the working climate, communicating between members, opening up more openly and freeing ideas. Creative thinking is well worth a proper management and empowerment of staff.

Investing in training. Undoubtedly, another element likely to contribute to the formation or / and enrichment of the quality culture in an organization is the formation and implicit investment in this activity. The objectives of the training programs may differ from one stage to the next. The quality culture of internal and external customers depends on the quality of products and services.

The training program is addressed to all members of the organization. The overall quality strategy must be understood by all employees to raise awareness, motivate them *to make good from the first time and to give the consumer the right place.*

2. Quality Culture Strategy

Today's *quality* is the prosperity of everyone. Why is a quality education strategy needed? We can easily find answers to questions like: what to do, how, when, where, who? It is harder to answer the question what has been done? All researchers claim that change is needed. The result of quality education can be the force of change.

Quality is primarily a matter of education. Only educated people work professionally and can do good things for the first time and every time. The promotion of the concept of education in education is a very current problem both in Europe and throughout the world. The motivation is found in the four fundamental components of the general management strategy: the legislative component, the motivational component, the **educational component.**

Then quality is a culture issue. The culture of quality allows understanding the need for quality and knowledge of what is good / new in the world. Yoke [33, 21] considers "the culture of quality in any organization that exists when it is geared to the needs of all stakeholders, and clear and effective mechanisms are in place to support all staff in trying to get a commitment to quality."

Third, quality is a **behavioural problem** [17, 8; 16]. The development of good products involves excellence in activity, involvement, self-evaluation, resumption of wrong actions, returning to insufficiently clarified aspects, work tenacity. The Human - Quality relationship is reversible. The whole society is interested in the quality of products and services. According to Genichi Taguchi's theory, "*the quality of a product is inversely proportional to the magnitude of all the unfavourable influences caused to society by the product". The most important component of a TQM success program implementation of new generations of TQM* [25, 259] *is therefore the culture of quality* [30, 15]*, or, otherwise, management of knowledge of quality* [23].

Quality education has three beneficiaries: **learners, stakeholders, and society** as a whole. Performance requirements in all areas, including education, require sustained efforts to adapt or even change. Educational institutions must respond to new challenges that call for flexibility, speed, complexity, and provide students and students with both skills and effective work tools to produce / claim quality.

The large amount of new knowledge about the quality of products and services, the importance and implications of quality on the economic and social indicators at micro- and macroeconomic level, the introduction and improvement of international standards ISO 9000 are just a few arguments in favour of the need for each organization, make great efforts for **professionalism in quality approach**.

Quality has a great impact on *the individual*. Today, people have become aware of the advantages of quality, demanding products and services that satisfy them attract them [19, 40], [20, 69], their expectations continue to improve continuously quality life. But the quality of life imposes some preconditions [17, 9], of which we mention: economic stability, accumulation of a certain wealth and medium high education. The individual we are talking about is the employee in an organization (including the manager) or the *consumer / customer*. Quality culture, quality education means consumer protection and safety.

What does the consumer's right to education mean and why is it necessary? "It is the right of any consumer (in fact, of any citizen, as a consumer, regardless of age, studies, social situation etc.) to

acquire certain knowledge / skills and to induce certain attitudes / behaviours so that to be able to know and exercise - best for him - his rights and obligations as a consumer". [7, 212]

Among the key values and attitudes that should come from quality educations are:
- Stimulating interest and concern for the continuous realization, assessment and improvement of the quality of products / services;
- Stimulating interest in the quality and safety of food goods;
- Awareness of the role and importance of quality and environment for human health;
- Awareness of the importance of consumer rights and protection;
- Protecting the natural environment at risk of pollution and resource depletion;

We believe that a *culture of quality and organizational learning* will support the process of streamlining management in general and quality management in particular. In order to have the desired outcome, the management of impact on quality education should focus on achieving networking and strategic alliances between several stakeholders / stakeholders: those who design, produce, assess education in educational institutions, and distribute the continuing education, those who finance and those who benefit from quality education.

In our view, we are in the presence of a vicious circle in which producers take advantage of consumers' lack of information and attitude in relation to their rights, and consumers, in the absence of an adequate culture, remain only at the stage of dissatisfaction, mistrust in the observance of rights which leads to a low level of self-protection. The real change should be based on the systematic education of consumers and producers on the quality, the safety of the products marketed, the attitude towards non-compliance of producers / suppliers with the rules in this field, coupled with increased interest from the consumer protection authorities and a manifestation of the individual or associative civic spirit.

In conclusion, all factors responsible for quality education must:
- ✓ Understand and manage the positive force of quality education;
- ✓ To assume the socio-human responsibility;
- ✓ Provide the motivation to know / appreciate / choose the quality of products / services;
- ✓ To impart the discipline of continuous learning;
- ✓ Have greater openness to school and family collaboration;
- ✓ Establish an open system that ensures training and is accessible to all people, regardless of age or level of instruction.

New education for quality must lead through awareness and knowledge of new attitudes (including abilities and participation):
- of active economic agents;
- of informed consumers;
- of prudent investors;
- of responsible citizens.

Today's young people need to be trained both for the present and for the future. The classical educator-receiver system is no longer fully applicable. Technology crosses the world. We can also capitalize on *quality education.*

3. Culture and Organization Culture

The human factor is the most important component of the quality system, with a decisive contribution to the success of the continuous quality improvement program. Quality must be an integral part of the culture of the organization. Developing quality culture requires a change in attitudes, skills and abilities of system actors. But it is acknowledged that this change is slow and must be planned as a process of evolution rather than a process of revolution.

In this case, the education system must have a long-term vision of the contribution of graduates to improving the quality of processes, products and services. Also, quality is more than a set of activities; it is a matter of attitude and organizational culture for performance. The Quality Management System in which young graduates will be involved must reflect management culture and culture for quality. The principles of total quality management must be transposed into the culture of the organization.

Over the past year, several studies address the complementarities between *innovation* and total quality. Nguyen [22, 497] states that "the sustainable development of the quality system depends to a large extent on the *organization's capacity to innovate, acquire knowledge and promote a model of excellence in order to establish that culture of quality encompasses all quality management practices"*. *Innovation is characterized by "step-ups" of performance provided the breaks are not too long.*

Continuous improvement enables the organization to adapt to the needs of customers every day. Maintaining the quality level is a state of satisfaction that can jeopardize the organization's competitiveness.

According to Harrington & Harrington, "Teams make an organization good. Individuals make an organization extraordinarily good" [13, 128].

An organization can only excel if it harnesses the full potential of each individual within it, stimulating its creativity, giving it pride and consciousness of its own worth. And the Japanese qualifier Ishikawa admitted that individuals are more productive and more efficient than teams in solving quality problems.

Other authors are of the opinion that although the individual's excellence decides the success or failure of the organization, an excellent *teamwork system is important and necessary*.

Austrian Wagner [34, 112] is of the opinion that "investment in human capital is a good investment if it is done for: training, climate setting, organization culture, quality of communication, motivation, creativity, spirit of innovation, lead people, apply in decision-making career planning etc."

Nguyen [22, 254] proposes a performance-enhancing policy (based on culture of quality, we add) consisting of four elements: participatory management, empowerment, recognition and rewards, job satisfaction. They represent SMC 'fuel' and are based on leadership engagement and involvement, identification (updating) of regulatory requirements and customer requirements (and stakeholders) as well as increasing staff involvement.

The culture of the organization is "the set of perceptions, values, attitudes, beliefs and hopes shared by an organization's environment" [24, 111], and culture of quality means "all accumulated or recognized knowledge, values of quality, it develops its own ability to survive in its external environment and administers its own internal affairs" [28, 56]. We define complex meetings at Goodman et all. [12, 60]: "*The culture of the organization is the set of values, beliefs and practices belonging to members of an organization. This culture unconsciously guides the functioning of the organization and, based on the assumed customs, shows how the organization wants itself to see itself in its environment. Quality culture is geared towards seeking excellence and improving quality*" [22, 84]. Meier defines the culture of the organization as "the set of ways of thinking, understanding, and action that are common to members of the same organization. The culture of the organization corresponds to a framework of thinking, a system of values and rules relating to organization that are fully shared by the actors of the organization" [21, 5].

"Culture has a strong influence on the attitude of men, but they can be changed with ease" [15, 179].

The qualitative culture refers to the organizational culture that intends to develop the permanent the qualities that are characterized by two distinct elements: on the one hand, the decoupling / psychological value of the values, the beliefs, the expectations and the compromise of the decality,

and, on the other hand, the structural / elemental elements of the processes that improve the quality and the co-ordination of the individual efforts.

Any organization that has succeeded in penetrating new markets achieves the benefits of understanding and using the differences specific to those markets. Importantly, the managers' multicultural competences, and not only, are needed to establish strong working and business relationships with employees, associates and customers. [1, 3-10]

There is a close link between TQM and the culture of the organization. Quality culture formation is an essential condition for continuous improvement of quality, for the introduction of new methods and technologies of quality management in an organization. Quality professionals have demonstrated that technology is not the key to continuous improvement of quality but leadership, which must change (if necessary) and capitalize on human potential to achieve performance. "A culture of quality requires careful attention, not annual repairs" [9, 172].

The vast majority of qualitative agree that TQM is, above all, a new philosophy, a new culture model of the organization, aiming to orientate all activities and processes to the client, to optimize them so as to bring long-term benefits.

For example, Demingse's "Demetse's 14-point program" is still of particular interest today. This program is about improving quality and productivity, and is intended to lead the organization, which Deming considers responsible for providing the framework for this improvement, of "14 points", insisting on creating a culture of quality as an essential goal of the quality program.

"An organization is the combined effort of some individuals. Increasing the degree of culture in quality implies, therefore, a change in behaviour at the individual level. TQM does not involve equipment and methods, but the way it is used" says G.M. Harington President of the International Academy of Quality.

The complexity of the concept of organizational culture is also given by the indisputable link between quality culture and performance. According to Nguyen [22, 92], "organizational culture is considered a key element of success or failure in quality".

Organizations with a favourable climate for quality culture, irrespective of their products or services, regardless of their size, have a number of common features [4, 25]:
- Employees are equally involved and authorized;
- Work is done in the team:
- Managers are equally engaged and involved; responsibility is not delegated;
- Sufficient resources are allocated where and when needed to ensure continuous improvement of quality;
- Rewards and the promotion system encourage the contribution to continuous improvement of quality;
- Customer messages are actively taken over to continually improve quality;
- Suppliers and customers are treated as partners;
- The existence of the value system is based on high performance standards for management and human resources for the products / services made;
- There is continuous, open communication;
- There is a habit of evaluation / self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

4. Efficiency of Quality Culture

On institutional culture, Professor Constantin Bratianu wrote: "Political organization and especially political politics are intrinsically linked to the institutional culture of the organization, while strategically related to strategic management" [2, 86]. The quality strategy requires an efficient quality culture.

Quality culture is characterized by:
- Continuous, open communication, [3, 87];
- Internal partnerships based on mutual support [3, 87];
- Approach to the problem and process work team [3, 87];
- Habit / desire to improve continuously for performance, competition and excellence [25, 201].

The main requirements and conditions for ensuring the quality culture's efficiency are:
1. Customer orientation;
2. Implementation of the overall quality concept;
3. Climate of responsibility, rigor, exigency, mutual respect, patience, professional solidarity, loyalty, transparency etc.;
4. Inclusion of all staff in a continuous training program;
5. Motivation of all staff by truth, respect, recognition of merits, material and moral rewards, etc.
6. Making products and services conform to the requirements;
7. Relevant documentation in the field;
8. Formation of computerized databases;
9. Provide clear, complete information, accessible to all staff;
10. Plan all activities so that no activity is left to chance;
11. Total quality control;
12. Improve the communication and transfer of information for all compartments;
13. Quantification of results for assessing progress;
14. Establishing partnerships, loyalty, transparency and loyalty with suppliers, with all stakeholders;
15. Team spirit, aware, aiming at the excellence of the institution and the excellence of the civil servant.

Conclusions

The main conclusion that emerges from the research is that citizens, managers, workers in all fields, students and students need to be interested, want to receive quality education, apply culture of quality to future jobs or as a consumer of products and services. It remains to be seen what the results will be through culture and quality discipline.

Models of excellence in quality education are based on the premise that excellent results performance, customer satisfaction and evolution of society are achieved through leadership policies and strategies that are based on stakeholders, staff, continuous improvement through innovation, development and cultural promotion strategy [25, 69]. The models of excellence are based on TQM principles. Undoubtedly, when we talk about excellence, we have to deal with two aspects:
- Attitude towards standard quality - quality management;
- Attitude towards improving quality, performance - excellence management.

The future of education and culture for quality seems to be directed towards "other performance" oriented towards the satisfaction of stakeholders, with models of sustainable development / corporate (social) responsibility [31, 129], [10, 700], [11, 298].

We believe that a culture of quality and organizational learning will support the effort to streamline the quality management and excellence management in particular and in general.

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