Quality Based Education and the Stakeholders’ Expectations

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Abstract: Education for quality has three categories of beneficiaries: students, stakeholders and the overall society. This paper addresses issues related to the importance of quality culture at college graduates and students. The second aspect is linked to the identification and satisfaction of the parts involved in education for quality of graduates. The research shows that there are major differences between what is required and the expected results, at the theoretical and practical level, from the part of the educational systems and the way in which knowledge is accepted and used by college graduates and students.

Keywords: quality, education, stakeholders and quality culture.

"Quality starts with education and ends with it".
Kaoru Ishikawa (1915-1989)

Introduction
Performance requirements in all areas, including education, involve sustainable efforts to adapt or change. Educational institutions must respond to new challenges that require flexibility, speed, complexity, and provide learners with both skills and effective work tools in order to produce/claim quality. The sheer volume of new knowledge about the quality of products and services, the importance and implications of quality on economic and social indicators at the micro and macro level, the introduction and improvement of international standards ISO 9000 are but some arguments in favour of the need for each organization, including educational institutions to make special efforts in addressing quality in a professional way.

Quality has a significant impact on the individual. Today people have become aware of the benefits of quality products and services and they ask them to give them satisfaction and to be attractive, [15, 40], [17, 69] their expectations tending further, towards a continuous improvement of quality of life. But quality of life requires some preconditions [9, 9] such as: economic stability, accumulation of certain wealth and a high level of average education.

For organizations, the quality is a goal that is achieved by people with some training and a certain culture of quality.

1. Quality Culture
Quality culture must be based on a long-term vision and characterized by trust, creative thinking and investment in training. In addition, this culture must be based on the fundamental principles of the total quality management (TQM).

In order to make a characterization of the strategy for quality education, we must also refer to the role of knowledge in this century. "The main producers of wealth have become information and knowledge," says Peter Drucker [5, 58], which underlines how Japanese gave excellent use to knowledge that they have acquired or imported on mastering quality. In Drucker's view, the focus of society is the educated person. And Japanese Ishikawa noted that "people create quality, not
equipments" and "quality begins with education and ends with education." [12, 7] Quality is primarily a matter of education. Only educated people can act with professionalism and can do good things at the first time and every time. Then, the quality is a problem of culture. Quality culture allows understanding the need for quality and knowledge of what is good / new worldwide. [28, .21] believes that quality culture in any organization as existing where there is an orientation towards the needs of all stakeholders and there are clear and effective mechanisms to support all staff in trying to get a commitment to quality.

In the third place, quality is a matter of behaviour [9, 8]. Making good products involves business excellence, commitment, self-assessment, resuming actions that were performed incorrectly, reviewing the issues insufficiently clarified, and tenacity at work. Relation People-Quality is reversible. Society as a whole is interested in quality products and services. According to Genichi Taguchi's theory "the quality of a product is inversely proportional to the size of all the negative influences caused to the society by the product."

Organizations with a favourable climate for the cultivation of quality, regardless of the products or services provided, regardless of their size, have a number of common features [2, 26]

- Employees are equally involved and authorized;
- The work is done in teams;
- Managers are equally engaged and involved; responsibility is not delegated;
- Sufficient resources are allocated where and when needed, to ensure continuous improvement;
- Rewards and promotion system encourages contribution to continuous improvement;
- Messages from clients are taken actively to a continuous quality improvement;
- Suppliers and customers are treated as partners;
- The existence of value system is based on high standards of performance for management and human resources, for the products / services performed;
- There is a continuous open communication;
- There is familiarity as concerns assessment and continuous improvement.

The most important component of a successful TQM program implementation, of the new generation of TQM [22, 259] is, therefore, quality culture [24, 15] or otherwise as the management of knowledge about quality [20, pp.93]

2. Education for Quality in Colleges and Universities

The concern for study quality and / or quality management, at the level of every citizen - as producer and consumer of goods and services - has become a prerequisite condition for developing competitiveness through quality of the Romanian economy on the global market. An important step in this direction was the introduction within the curriculum of the technological colleges in Romania the subject "Quality Management". Studying this subject should lead to the acquisition from the part of the college students / graduates of five specific components (which assume appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities):

- 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 most important recommendations of the international standards on quality management and environmental management and sustainable development principles;
- Knowledge of principles and specific methodologies and describing quality assessment of products, services and processes.

Some basic values and attitudes that should result from attending a school curriculum based on "Quality Management" subject can be:

- Stimulating interest and concerns for achieving, evaluating and continuous improvement of quality;
- Protecting the natural environment in danger from pollution and resource depletion;
- Awareness of the role and importance of environmental quality for human health;
- Awareness of consumer rights and protection.

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Higher education plays a crucial role in improving education for quality, in the sense that "universities are places where it is promoted and supported research based on free and independent thinking and the exchange of ideas." [24, 17]. A university with a quality culture can be defined as an organization with clear values and beliefs that promotes "a total behaviour in favour of quality" [16, 1070]. In the last twenty years in higher education there were introduced subjects able to develop and enrich the quality culture.

3. The Approach for Quality Through People

The human factor is the most important component of the quality system, with a significant contribution to the success of continuous quality improvement program. Quality should be an integral part of the organization's culture. Developing quality culture requires a change in attitudes, skills and abilities of the actors of the system. But it is recognized that this change is performed slowly and should be planned as an evolutionary process rather than a process of revolution.

In this case, the educational system must have a long term vision in terms of graduates' contribution to improving the quality of processes, products and services. The quality is more than a collection of activities: it is a matter of attitude and organizational culture for performance. Quality Management System in which will be involved the newly graduates also must reflect the managerial culture and the quality culture. Total quality management principles must be translated into the organizational culture. In recent years, several studies have dealt with the complementarities between innovation and total quality. Nguyen [19,497] shows that "sustainable development of quality depends to a large extent on its capacity to innovate, to acquire knowledge and to promote a model of excellence in order to establish that culture of quality able to cover all quality management practices. "Innovation is characterized by" climbing stairs "of performance provided that break be not too longContinuous improvement allows the organization to adapt daily to customer's needs. Maintaining the level of quality is a state of contentment that can endanger the competitiveness of the organization.

According to Harrington & Harrington "teams make an organization to be good. Individuals make an organization be extraordinary good "[8, 128]. An organization can excel only if capitalizes the full potential of every individual within it, stimulating creativity, and giving individual reasons of pride and making them aware of their own value. Ishikawa, the Japanese specialist, recognized that individuals are more productive and efficient than teams in solving quality problems.

Other authors believe that although individual excellence decides the success or failure of the organization, it is important a necessary to exist an excellent system of teamwork.

The Austrian Wagner [30, 112] believes that "investment in human capital is a good investment if it is done for: training, creating the climate, organizational culture, quality of communication, motivation, creativity, spirit of innovation, development of abilities to lead people, aptitude to make decisions, career planning etc. ".

The approach of quality through people produces cultural changes on all the four steps of quality: society, organization, processes / systems, products / services, a true "chain reaction". Experts suggest that achieving cultural change is centred on what is Total Quality Management (TQM). Famous worldwide experts in quality (Deming, Juran, Crosby, and Ishikawa) noted the importance of quality culture in supporting the efforts of an organization that wants to be competitive. To be competitive you have to be informed. "Business, in itself is not an isolated institution. It operates in a society and is influenced both by the government and social values (culture) ". Business the same as Government and culture exist in society influencing each other. Business success depends on the quality culture. Moreover, success in business is the fact of "knowing how to learn faster than your competitors" [26, 41].

Quality culture in recent years has been the subject of many scientific papers and debates, but also of models: Dotun & Kehoe. [4, 930] - The quality culture model based on seven dimensions of TQM System; the Woods model which proposes six values that lead to the creation of a quality culture [24, 14]; Schein model based on tangible items, conceptual assumptions, beliefs and values [24, 15]; Yoke
Nguyen [19, 254] proposes a policy of strengthening of the performance consisting of four elements: participatory management, empowerment (empowerment), recognition and rewards, job satisfaction. These are the "fuel" of the Quality Management System and they are based on the commitment and involvement of the management, on the identification (updating) of the legislative requirements and of customers’ (and stakeholders’) demands and on an increasingly staff involvement.

4. TQM and Education

The total quality management (TQM) “focuses upon customer” mentioned Deming [27, 9]. Products and services are designed to be "fit for the designed purpose” [13, 67] "as it is defined by the client” [14, 64]. Customer (who has a stake in the organization) is crucial for the concept of responsibility of stakeholders that dispose in an equal part of present day quality oriented education. In other words, the graduate should be able when becoming employed to achieve / improve products / services in the workplace. Romanian graduate is a consumer of products / services, as a European citizen he/she has rights and obligations.

Total quality management in education has traditionally focused on the product / process model. This model follows the analogy with output (production):

- Input = college students / students
- Process = educated
- Product = graduates
- Quality control = evaluations
- Customers / stakeholders = employers / consumers, society.

In this first model the stakeholder occurs to be the employer, because he/she is considered to be he client of education institutions.

The Total Quality Management also includes a service / process model. Education is perceived as a service to college students / students who procure it for themselves. In this model the primary stakeholder model is the one that learns how the service can be useful to the individual, he/she being the client. Both models appear to be too narrowly focused to be useful for an educational institution which must identify and work with multiple stakeholders and some might be considered as more customers.

Continuous improvement and innovation as noted in Figure no. 1 form the genesis of these enablers.

Figure no. 1 The Interaction of Business Activities [11, 648]
5. Stakeholders’ Models

It is imperative that educational institutions harmonize their curricula taking into account the interests of the external stakeholders. During this period of recognition of the best practices and benchmarking, it is logical that these institutions, as part of the continuous improvement of life system, establish effective strategies on a medium and long term to go beyond the stakeholders’ identification and management. This should include identifying the added value according to these strategies. In this Special paper we argue the idea that accountability towards stakeholders is an integral part of the way in which education institutions maintain excellence in educational products and services. Models are needed to identify the stakeholders and the latter ones should be permanently consulted. We must always continue to find models that can help both in involving the young human resources in the workplace, and also to the continuous improvement of behaviour as consumer with all rights respected.

5.1 Stakeholders

Our previous studies [21, 58-61; 22, 132-136] made it possible a review of models’ literature used to identify and manage the interests and expectations of stakeholders who contribute or receive secondary and higher education. Mandatory requirements were established for these institutions in order to prepare college students / students in the view of the recognizing of the stakeholders’ interests. It has also analyzed the idea that accountability to stakeholders is an integrated part of the way in which an educational institution maintains excellence in its educational products / services.

Within the current higher education and pre-university environment, in which organizations have to be both competitive and cooperative available, in order to satisfy more demands from many stakeholders, it makes sense to have a strategy for how could this be best accomplished. This section examines the patterns that can be used to identify and manage the interests and expectations of stakeholders who contribute to, or benefit from, tertiary education.

While there are many definitions of stakeholders, the following two definitions were adopted for this study:

- Persons or group having an interest in the performance or success of an organization which normally includes: customers, owners, employees, contractors, suppliers, investors, unions, partners or society (ISO 9000:2005);
- Stakeholders pay for the organization or activity, benefit from it, or both. The extent to which this is true varies from stakeholder to stakeholder [23, 56].

5.2 The English Model

Lawrence Reavill developed a stakeholder model for the higher education system in the United Kingdom. He relates his system that identifies 12 stakeholder categories:

1. The student - benefits from the transformation and is a customer who directly or indirectly funds the university;
2. The employer - benefits from the student/college student transformation process and is a customer;
3. The family and dependents of the student - may be contributing to the student’s costs or directly benefiting from the potential improved living standard of the graduate;
4. Universities and employees;
5. Suppliers of goods & services - a customer and a beneficiary;
6. Secondary education sector - a customer;
7. Other universities - are mostly thought of as competitors, but could be collaborators;
8. Commerce and industry - these are indirect beneficiaries;
9. The nation - an indirect beneficiary;
10. The government - the owners with the power to abolish;
11. Taxpayers, national and local;
12. Professional bodies that guard the entry standards into a profession.

This model is comprehensive and useful for identifying stakeholders considering their direct / indirect relationship with the educational institution.
5.3. The Added Value of the Stakeholders

It is important for schools to look beyond the creation of some effective systems for identifying stakeholders and management in order to clearly identify the mutual benefit and the added value of these relationships. Mitchell & Elia [18, 875] describe a systematic analysis of stakeholders in eight steps. This model is applied to identify the dynamics of stakeholders and establish added value for undergraduate and higher education institutions.

The eight stages are:
1. Develop a stakeholder map;
2. Prepare a chart of specific stakeholders;
3. Identify the stakes of the stakeholders;
4. Prepare a power versus stake grid;
5. Conduct process level stakeholder analysis;
6. Conduct a transactional level of stakeholder analysis;
7. Determine the stakeholder management capability of the "organisation";
8. Analyse the dynamics of stakeholders.

Conclusions

Education must integrate the emerging trends and adapt their offerings to support new generations and permanently updating the aims and resources to meet new challenges and at the same time, give the education subjects effective work skills and tools for the near future, in order to participate in the achievement excellent products and service.

The main conclusion that emerges from the research is that students should be interested, should be willing to receive quality education, to apply quality culture at their future jobs or as a citizen consumer of products and services. It remains to be seen what will be the results of quality culture and discipline.

Models of excellence in quality education based on the premise that excellent results on performance, customer satisfaction and the development of the society are made by management policies and strategies based on stakeholders, staff, continuous improvement through innovation, developing and promoting quality culture - Strategy SPICC [22, 69]. Models of excellence are based on the principles of TQM. Undoubtedly, when we talk about excellence we must address two issues:

• Attitude towards quality standard - quality management;
• Attitude towards improving the quality of the performance - management excellence.

The future of quality education seems to be directed to "a kind of performance" oriented to stakeholders satisfaction with type models of the kind of sustainable development / corporate responsibility (Limited) [25, 129; 6, 700; 7,298].

New dimensions of higher education and college education must be based upon changing knowledge or, more precisely, change of use of knowledge by "integrating subjects" [29, 169], getting ready for taking "environmentally friendly decisions" [19, pp.485] , developing the capacity of acquisition, development and use of knowledge essential to the success of the quality approach.

We believe that a quality culture and of organizational learning will support the efforts to streamline the management in general and quality management in particular. To get the desired result, the practice of a management with impact on education for quality should focus on building networks and strategic alliances between multiple parties / stakeholders: those who design, produce, evaluate the act of education in the educational institutions, the ones that distribute the continuing education, the ones that fund and those who receive quality education.

In our opinion, we are staying in a vicious circle in which producers take advantage of the lack of awareness and attitude of consumers in relation to their rights, and consumers, in the absence of an appropriate culture, remain only at the level of dissatisfaction, distrust in the possibility to respect their rights, there resulting low level of self-protection. The real change should be based on systematic
education of consumers and producers in terms of quality, safety of products marketed the attitude towards the non-compliance of producers / suppliers to the rules in this field, coupled with an increased interest from consumer protection authorities and a manifestation of individual citizenship or associative one.

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