

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLS DESIGNED FOR THE MANAGERS OF THE PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION UNITS

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ABSTRACT

The research constitutes an investment approach in terms of being aware of the importance of the quality assurance and monitoring it in the public and private schools.

We have done so in shaping the theoretical dimensions regarding the policy of the quality assurance in education in national and European space, addressing the quality management as part of the general management. Starting from this situation, we presented the representative schools of the general management, those which can guide the setting of the quality management models in different areas of the social life, including the education. On a pragmatic level (and as elements of own contribution) we drafted the guide for the development and implementation of the quality assurance system as a useful working tool for managers in the process of securing, monitoring and assessment of quality.

INTRODUCTION

The research presents a new tool designed for the managers of the Romanian schools, for helping them, the human resources involved in the field of quality assurance in education and the organization, for setting up, implementing and developing a functional quality assurance system for their school. The paper has four sections: Introduction, Material and Methods, Results and Discussions and Conclusions. The research has the aim to draw attention and to show that in the area of quality assurance in education, proper, specific and personalized tools can be developed in sink the school profile and environment.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research methodology emphasizes the main dimensions of the context of developing and implementing a quality management system, while identifying and addressing the issue to be researched in the field of the quality management at the pre-university level.

The research conducted has followed as general objective the analysis of trends of the quality policies and the quality management systems in the school units. Regarding the specific objectives, they were focused on: the presentation of some implementation models of the quality systems in education, in the European and national area; identifying the perception of the managers and teachers on the quality management at the pre-university level in Bihor County; the elaboration of the guide for the implementation of the quality system in the Secondary Education.

RESULTS AND DISSCUSIONS

In conducting the research, we valued the theoretical model proposed by Gronroos Christian, are presentative of the Nordic School of Marketing, which offers a complex perspective of the marketing services: the external marketing (it adjusts the promotion of services to the beneficiaries), the internal marketing (providing the conditions for the qualitative services), the interactive marketing (providing the qualitative services to the beneficiaries). According to this model, the quality of the service can be determined in reference to the beneficiaries' expectations as the real performance of the service provided.

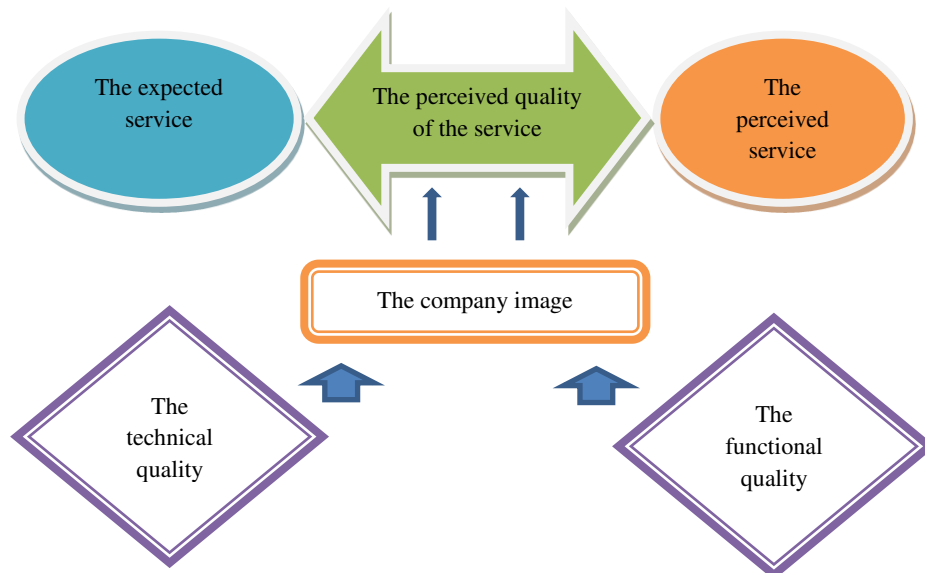


Figure 1.1. The Quality Model of the service, after Gronroos
Source: Balog, A., Badulescu, G., 2008

We made a search phasing, where each stage has some specific objectives and activities, as described in the table below:

Table 1.1. The Research Phasing

THE STAGE/THE OBJECTIVE	THE ACTIVITIES/THE RESULTS
<i>Phase I. Building a database on the implementation of quality systems at national and European level.</i>	The presentation of some practical models of management concerning the implementation of the quality system based on the study of the relevant literature and social documents in the Romanian and European area.
<i>Phase II. Describing the relevant actors' perception on the system of the quality insurance and monitoring.</i>	The application of questionnaires to the managers of the education institutions in Bihor, as implementers of the quality system; application of interviews to the teachers handling specific tasks in the quality assurance in the school.
<i>Phase III. The development of a strategic model for the effective implementation of the system of quality assurance in the Secondary Education.</i>	The realization of an implementation model of the quality system in school units (own contribution) and a guide for managers to ensure the quality implementation, based on the self-contribution and the relevant literature studied.

The analysis and the interpretation of data obtained through the questionnaires applied to the managers of high schools and post-secondary schools (public and private) and by applying the interview to the teachers who are part of CEAC and other committees involved

in the quality assurance, have achieved two important objectives with a high quality utility in the school organization:

1. **The guide for the development and the implementation of the quality system in the Secondary Education schools.**
2. A new configuration model of the quality responsible structures: **Departmental Structure of the Quality Assurance in the Pre-university Education Units (SDAC).**

We proposed a quality implementation guide for the secondary education, which constitutes an effective tool for school managers. The guide is divided into three sections: the management, the organization section, the human resources section, each section indicating the specific stages and description.

Table 1.2. The quality implementation guide – for school managers

THE GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY SYSTEM IN THE SCHOOL ORGANISATION		
SECTION	STAGES	DESCRIPTION
THE MANAGEMENT SECTION	1. The Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the knowledge of the main legislative and methodological and marks (The National Education Law, The Law of the Quality Assurance, The Quality Standards for the authorization and the accreditation of the schools); - the realization of a benchmarking process in approved and formal terms, to identify those aspects of the competitive market which can guide the effective marketing policy of the school; - the study of the quality assurance models in other countries, i. e. the models that have been validated by practice in those countries. - the analysis of the internal environment of the school organization in terms of human resources skills.
	2. The Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the development of an intrinsic system for quality assurance, by the manager/the management team taking into account what defines the school's identity (the profile, the mission, the vision, the management strategy); - the accomplishment of the related quality policy documents (such as: the strategies, the reports, the operational plans); - the development of the life-long learning plan of the school, stating the forms of training, including in the field of the quality.
	3. The Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the establishment of roles played by the “quality professionals network” in each department of SDAC; - the accomplishment of the activities and the processes required by the quality policy at

		the national and organizational level.
	4. The Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applying their own evaluation tools; - the elaboration of the new standards, specific to the school organization, to ensure the relevance to the activity and the profile of the school. The proposals will come from every department of SDAC. - promoting the peer review evaluation of the quality of the school organization made by the external evaluators.
	5. The Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the questionnaires to investigate the perception of the direct and indirect beneficiaries and partners in regards to the school activity.
	6. The Valorization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the interventions on the project management documents and strategies, due to feed-back received (timely interventions, due to the evolution of the organization and problems directory, which requests it). - assessing the organizational progress following the implementation of the recommendations and measures contained in the peer review with external evaluators reports and the departments reports.
THE ORGANISATION SECTION	1. The Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the application of opinion questionnaires, to the members of the school organization (teaching, non-teaching and auxiliary employees); - the investigation of the roles that the employees want to assume in the organization or the SDAC; - The identification of the knowledge needs and interests of partners and at the community level.
	2. The Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the realization of a departmental structure to ensure and monitor the quality, for the streamlining of the implementation process of the own quality system (The Department of the Quality Assurance in Management, The Department of the Quality Assurance in the Paideutics Endeavour, The Department of the Quality Assurance in the External Relationships, The Department of Quality Assurance in the Pedagogical Research, The Department of Quality Assurance in Counseling, The Department of Quality Assurance in Administration);

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proposal of an activity time table of the departments within the school community; - the elaboration of a marketing strategy to ensure the credibility of school organization.
	3. The Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building the beneficiaries' and partners' trust, through formal activities in the field of education, recreation and social; - counseling the direct and indirect beneficiaries in regards to the educational services provided by the school, promoting their active involvement and proposal of the activities to be included in the school organization offer; - to meet the deadlines from the quality assurance departments timetable.
	4. The Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the application of some formal and non-formal assessment tools, specific to the quality field.
	5. The Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the completion of the reports by each quality assurance department, and their presentation in non-formal frames through various categories of activities.
	6. The Valorization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the identification of some measures to build a high quality profile of the school, through direct consultation with the members of the school and through the analysis of the evaluation reports from each quality assurance department or of the analysis reports made by external evaluators after the peer review.
THE HUMAN RESOURCES SECTION	1. The Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying the knowledge needs and interests of staff; - identifying the suppliers of the life-learning programs with respect to the field of the quality.
	2. The Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proposal of the quality standards specific for school organization; - the completion of the measurement plans regarding the streamlining of the quality, through the direct involvement in the decision, of the actors from the school communities.
	3. The Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the assurance of the internalization of the culture of beneficiary centered evaluation; - the realization of some debates on the quality politics.
	4. The Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the active involvement in implementing and applying the formal assessment instruments; - the implementation of the measures

		proposed by external assessors in the peer review reports.
	5. The Feedback	- the organization of some debates on the activity calendar of the departments.
	6. The Valorization	- the internal and external dissemination of the results, the proposals and the recommendations contained in the reports of the departments, namely the peer review reports of the external assessors.

CONCLUSIONS

We must specify that this guide refers to the elements with a significant role in the quality assurance endeavor in Secondary Education units.

The school organization development becomes **possible, sustainable and necessary on a competitive market**, because the quality management and the quality assurance system have assumed this fundamental part.

A school of good quality is that which trains and forms school leavers capable to be active from a social and professional point of view, who develop an authentic partnership with the community, who have an **organizational culture** well anchored in the valuable register assumed by the school community.

The creation and the promotion of **self-assessment culture** is a necessity both from the perspective of the national quality policy and from the international ones, being an important ingredient of **the successful organization and of the organization that learns**.

The aim of the quality assurance is to contribute to the **organizational development**, not to set up sanctions. The promoting and supporting actions for the quality make up a framework to identify some concrete measures of stimulating the innovative and constructive approaches. The school organization which ensures the quality proves a great supporting attitude in relation with the **organizational changing**. The quality management has as the main aim to **direct towards the performance** and to maximize it.

It is necessary to promote some **adequate policy** which also promotes in a formal framework the culture of the quality in the school communities.

For an effective implementation of the quality assurance strategies, it is mandatory that the **quality system** to be known and informed about by all the members of the school community, to include useful documents, easy applicable during the school organization activities.

In this respect we considered very useful to recommend an instrument for school managers, **the guide for the development and implementation of the quality in the educational institutions**, which is to be perceived as a tool and a working instrument of the managerial practice. It suggests fields of study and analysis, directions for activities in the quality assurance area, accounting **I contribution to the quality management system in educational institutions**.

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