



APPROACH, UNDERSTANDING AND IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF "QUALITY" AND ITS COMPONENTS FOR THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS

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Abstract *Quality is primarily a concept across various social issues of which the most important is the need or the utility value of a good. Therefore, the way quality is understood, conceptually and practically by itself and its components, by those who produce and sell goods, has an significant impact on how society relates to the concepts of standard of living respectively welfare. That is why, even if possession can be a good way of meeting higher needs, developing and selling goods firstly on the principle of utility, can contribute to the sustainable development of a welfare society.*

Key words:
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1. INTRODUCTION

The term "quality" has its origin in the Latin word QUALITAS derived from Qualis (who?, What kind?) Which has the meaning of "attribute", "feature", "property".

The modern history of the concept of "quality" begins with the XX-th century because during this period were discovered, developed and applied concepts, principles, methods, techniques and tools necessary to obtain, maintain and improve product quality.

The history of quality is linked to the history and organization of scientific disciplines. In this sense, product quality has become a notion of great importance. Factors that influenced the increasing importance of product quality are, in general (a) continued growth of technicality, (b) complexity and performance of products and services, (c) continued economic growth and

customer requirements of society and (d) increased competition between companies.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The scientific disciplines in which the concept of quality has seen an increasing and broad use are philosophy, logic, technical disciplines, economics, engineering, etc.. Within these disciplines the concept of quality has received various definitions. In economic practice, the notion of quality originally had the meaning of "artistic beauty", then "well done". Industrial production introduced the term "compliance", then the one of "quality of supply", in relation to consumer requirements.

Today, quality has become a complex notion, extremely difficult to define. However, some definitions show quality as being (a) the satisfaction of consumer requirements, (b) the compliance with

given specifications, (c) a zero defects situation, (d) a systematic approach to excellence, (e) the suitability for use or (f) product availability.

A definition of product quality, that is used not only nationally but also internationally, is the one given by the international standard ISO 8402/1994, according to which the "quality" of goods is considered to be *all properties and characteristics of a product or service which gives it the ability to satisfy the needs expressed and implied.*

But to express the quality of goods (of whatever nature they may be) *the more complex process of obtaining those goods can also be considered.* A situation in which the quality would represent *all the traits that define their value in use and express the extent to which needs of the consumer/user are met, based on technical, aesthetics and economic parameters, the usefulness and the efficiency of consumption/use.*

3. CURRENT GUIDELINES ON DEFINING THE QUALITY OF GOODS

The definition of product quality is based on five main orientations, mainly (i) a transcendental orientation, (ii) a product orientation, (iii) an orientation to the production process, (iv) a cost orientation and (v) a user orientation.

The transcendental orientation (i) considers quality a timeless entity, perceived subjectively by each individual. The product orientation (ii), opposite to the first, considers quality a size that can be measured precisely. Quality is defined as the assembly of quality characteristics of the product. In the orientation on

the production process (iii), the product is considered as being of "quality" if it meets the specifications.

In the orientation on costs (iv) quality is defined by costs and hence the prices at which products are marketed. Finally, in the user orientation (v), each client has individual preferences that can be satisfied by different quality characteristics of the products.

Under the principle stated in this last orientation, product quality can be seen as the "fitness for use", a concept introduced by Joseph, M. Juran (Olaru 1999). "Fitness for use" is achieved through the intercorrelation of many activities that assembled form a "spiral of quality" which represents the entire trajectory of creation of product quality (image above).

From this spiral can be drawn conclusions like the fact that (a) achieving a high level of product quality can be done by exploiting knowledge in several fields, the (b) being competitive an increase of the role of market research, customer preferences in design and product design is required and that (c) ensuring the compliance with the standards of quality requires a dynamic approach.

4. PRODUCT QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS

Quality characteristics are those properties (characteristics) of a product through which the degree of satisfaction of customer needs at some point is assessed.

Product quality characteristics are classified in different ways. Products with the same

destination can be differentiated through quality according to their usefulness and the degree in which they satisfy the requirements. Therefore quality characteristics should be identified and followed in the three stages of the product life: industrial, commercial and usage. Depending on these stages, quality characteristics are divided into characteristics of the process, basic features and operational characteristics.

Basic features and operational characteristics are usually researched in more detail. Accordingly, achieving quality requires establishing a relationship between requirements, property and features.

Quality requirements reflect the way requests from users during market research and social order at any given time are expressed. The most important quality characteristics are selected according to their contribution to the ability to determine the usefulness of the product at a given time.

Quality functions are the result of grouping two or more complementary and related features, expressing individual satisfaction or the one of a larger segment of consumers.

Parameters are expressing the size, the properties and quality characteristics of the products. Indices are expressing the relative values of the size of a property to the prescribed one or the reference one. Indices can be numerical (absolute relative value, limiting value, value range), and notional with or without degrees of comparison (white, whiter, sweet, soft, etc..).

The quality indicators are numerical expressions or notional functions of quality of products/services, having a larger coverage, at the product, batch or production level.

5. STANCES OF PRODUCT QUALITY

The stances of product quality can be highlighted in the main points of the logistical circuit of the product (supply, transportation, warehousing, storage, sale), expressing the stages for achieving quality. We find the quality of products in eight stances namely (a) designed quality (b) certified quality (c) prescribed quality (d) negotiated quality, (e) actual quality, (f) quality of manufacture (g) commercial quality and (h) as "ideal" or global quality (Burda, 2017).

Designed quality (a) expresses the individual property values at a level determined by comparing several variants of the product. Is the prototype implementation of common technical specifications. Designed quality reflects on the one hand, the extent to which the designed product meets (intermediate or final) customer requirements, and on the other hand, the possibility to use economically optimal technological processes in the manufacturing of products, so that the profitability objectives of the producer to be achieved. It has a role in preventing defects and saving human and material resources.

Certified quality (b) expresses the individual property values of a product, approved by a committee of experts and it has the character of a standard (reference). It is attesting that the product

can be manufactured in accordance with the quality parameters as designed.

The prescribed quality (c) is expressing the limiting values of the individual (selected) properties of the products, listed in the regulations, standards and specifications.

Negotiated quality (d) expresses the individual property values of a product, as agreed between the parties in a contract. In general it corresponds to the prescribed quality but it may also be higher. Failure to achieve negotiated quality generates trade disputes between the contractual parties.

The actual quality (e) expresses the level of quality determined at a certain point on the logistical circuit of the product (supply, transportation, warehousing, storage, sale) and compared with the contracted quality or the prescribed one. Making this comparison gives the level at which the manufacturer should fulfill its contractual obligations. While the real quality level is generally very clear when object of relations between firms, tending to match the prescribed and the negotiated quality, this level it is not as clear when object of relation between food producers and individual consumers. This lack of clarity can lead to consumer interests damages as a consequence of an inadequate response to consumer quality requirements. This probability is all the greater as the food market is more inelastic, a context usually generating a poor satisfaction of nutritional needs of the population.

The stances of quality in terms of supplier and recipient highlight certain features and

functions that express the main interests of producers and traders in the market.

In terms of the supplier (manufacturer) the quality of manufacture (f), or "technical quality", reflects the degree of conformity of goods with the technical documentation. More precisely the degree of conformity with the individual values of the technical characteristics (physical, chemical, mechanical) with the requirements of standards, rules, data sheets. This quality results from the production process and is determined by the production equipment, the management of the technological process, the quality of workmanship, and by the way in which control is carried out.

From the point of view of the recipient (client), commercial quality (g) expresses the consumer perception over food product quality. It influences client decision to buy a certain product and it is determined by the reliability, maintainability, the psycho-sensorial characteristics, length of the warranty period, the presentation (finish), packaging, technical assistance to the customer, the costs of maintenance and operation. Currently there is a trend between the near-purpose bridge the gap between the quality offered by manufacturers and applied by beneficiar.

"Ideal" or overall quality (h) must ensure consumer satisfaction regarding four explicit needs expressed by the five senses (taste, touch, sight, smell, hearing), by the ease of use and by the implied needs.

In carrying out trade with products, companies should consider the evolving nature of the actual quality. Thus, if inside the supply chain,

the actual quality of the products can be found in a given moment as static, often, actual quality evolution, as a result of the interaction between product and environment, determines its placing it in the position of dynamic quality (Banu 2008).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Quality is primarily a concept across various social issues of which the most important is the need or the utility value of a good. Therefore, the way quality it is understood, conceptually and practically by itself and its components, by those who produce and sell goods, has an significant impact on how society relates to the concepts of standard of living respectively welfare. That is why, even if possession can be a good way of meeting higher needs, developing and selling goods firstly on the principle of utility, can contribute to the sustainable development of a welfare society.

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