

RETHINKING THE QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ORIENTED TO SUCCESSFUL LEARNING: CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Purpose -to study how the educational organizations provide the quality assurance seeking to ensure the successful learning.

Design/methodology/approach – Rapid environmental change, globalization and competition create new challenges and requirements for educational organizations. The organizations strive to meet the demands of a wide range of stakeholders and this refers to the fact that the subject of quality receives increasing attention and the quality issues are relevant not only for educational organizations but also for learners. The paper presents Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification (LQW) model: the framework and main features reveals the context of the whole quality system, based on eleven obligatory quality areas and their requirements. The quality evaluation research done by using the inductive cognitive methods discovers the main advantages and problematical fields of two different kind educational organizations in Lithuania by providing successful learning. The evaluation of each of eleven quality areas allows to get the common view of quality understanding which leads to the potential of the organizations by implementing quality assurance concept.

Findings – Research findings indicate from one side, the individual approach of each of two different educational organizations to the implementation of the successful learning concept, on the other hand, reveal the common issues due to the general social-economic context.

Originality/value – The paper provides the new, not standard approach to quality assurance which relies more on the quality criteria defined by the educational organization. The approach is based on reflection and not on formalization. The empirical research shows the relativity of successful learning concept and the main hindrances and weaknesses for the quality assurance due to the organizational and general context.

The paper is based on the material of the Leonardo da Vinci innovation transferring project “Crossnational quality management in continuing learning for people with low educational attainment in the European context” (“Länderübergreifendes Qualitätsmanagement in der Weiterbildung für Personen mit niedrigem Bildungsstand im Europäischen Kontext”) (No 2009-1-PL-LEO05-05039).

Keywords: Education quality, quality assurance, successful learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

Europe aims to become the most competitive economic player in the world, and all the instruments—including human resources—have to adapt to and accommodate this basic principle [20]. The attempts to link education and training with personal development and economic growth can be seen widely not only by the politicians at European level [6], but also in the scientific literature underlying that investing in education is an investment in the future [2; 14; 5; 17; 25; 26]. In the past 20 years, following rapid economic development, the education system in Lithuania has been expanded quickly. Currently, the educational organizations and the potential learners are concerned with not only education quantity but also education quality.

The perception of quality is multilateral: quality means different things to different people [11; 9] and from the perspective of quality's dimensions (input, process and output) and from the perspective of the stakeholders, there are many views of quality [10]. The coexistence of many understandings of quality in education sector is a justification for a plenty of quality management models. However, some of these models are appropriate for the educational organizations only in part. Responding to the challenges to facilitate the individuals participation in economic and social life, the educational

organizations need to focus on the perspective of the learners and on the final result of learning process – *the successful learning*.

In the context of a new approach highlighting the idea of the successful learning the Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification (LQW) model is the only quality development process which is focused on the successful learning of the learners – it means that learners are treated as a determinant of quality [23; 28; 29; 7]. The LQW model introduces a continuous cycle of quality development and combines internal and external quality management evaluation. Central and unique to the LQW model is the necessity to define successful learning right at the start of the quality process [28]. The logic of the Learner-Oriented quality development is that work on quality is a long-term project, the main aim of the LQW model is to ensure the permanent rethinking of quality assurance.

The paper is organised as follows. It starts by presenting the service quality and identifying the quality in education sector. Then, the necessity and the possibilities by implementing the quality management system are defined. Afterwards, Learner-Oriented quality development and certification model is introduced: the main features of the model enable to understand the logic of this model. Further the paper reveals 11 obligatory quality areas of the LQW model: the sense and the requirements are presented. Finally, the findings of two case study and some conclusions are presented. To carry out the study we gathered information from a self-evaluation reports of two educational organizations.

2 GENERAL CONCEPTION OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION SECTOR

The review of scientific literature allows to draw the conclusion - quality is one of the many concepts in the social sciences that is extremely difficult to define [15; 8]. At its most basic, quality has been defined as “conforming to requirements” (Crosby, 1984), the second series of definitions state that quality is about fitness for use, a definition primarily based on satisfying customer’s needs (Juran, 1984) [21]. Due to the customer interaction in service delivery, each service act is unique. This leads to a lack of standardization, which means that service quality can vary considerably from one situation to the next within the same organization [12]. Recognizing the role of the customer in the service delivery process and the lack of standardization, it is important to study quality in each specific situation [16].

Education quality is rather vague and multi-dimensional concept and cannot be easily assessed by only one indicator: some may emphasize the quality of inputs to the education systems whereas others emphasize the quality of processes and outcomes [4]. Borrowing the ideas from total quality management and system approach, Cheng (1995a) defined education quality as follows: education quality is the character of the set of elements in the input, process, and output of the education system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations [4].

The stakeholders are crucial to understand the quality, since each group of stakeholders (parents, learners and other) places different demands on the educational sector. In that context, one of the greatest challengers for educational organizations is to recognise and respond to competing demands [19]. The educational organizations should therefore strive to meet the demands of a wide range of interested parties whose satisfaction must be assured if the service is to be considered credible [18]. Whereas the quality must be judged on the assessment of the consumer of services, educational quality literature tends to emphasize quality as a „stakeholder-relative“ concept [9].

According to Zech (2007), quality in education depends on the reason for training and the ultimate quality of the learning process, in terms of value, usefulness, meaningfulness and ability, can only be measured by the learner: only he can see the impact, the training has on his life. Despite the close interaction between the educational organization and the learner, learning is and always will be a process determined by the learner. Referring to this statement, quality management, which allows educational organizations to provide competent support during the learning process is in demand.

3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

When the continuing education sector is organized as a market, the responsibility for quality assurance belongs, first of all, to providers. Service quality literature suggests the importance for educational organizations to monitor the quality of the services they provide in order to commit themselves to continuous improvements [3]. Moreover, the development of quality represents the development of the organisation. Zech (2007) highlights that the use of a quality management system

is standard in continuing education organisations nowadays and there are more than enough reasons for the systematic development of quality: the social situation is rapidly changing; the environment in which people learn and the motivation of the learners are different and specific; financial resources are shrinking; the demands placed on employees are increasing. Referring to Guellali (2008), with the implementation of a quality management system there are many possibilities and it is obvious that based on different conceptions of education quality and different concerns about achievement of education quality, different organizations may use different strategies to achieve education quality.

As it was mentioned before, learning is a process determined by the learner and from the standpoint of quality assurance, learners as a determinant of quality are not sufficiently integrated [10]. In a similar way, Zech (2007) pointed that learning as the »Product« is different as compared with other products due to one reason – the end result - the successful learning cannot be produced by the educational organisation, but it is the duty of the learner himself to acquire the knowledge. Hereby, it is significant that the development of quality in the organisation is driven forward based on a definition of successful learning. This special situation means that a separate quality management system is required and limits the transference of procedures from other well-known quality management systems. Reetz & Heldmann (2006) highlight that for other branches designed quality models as ISO 9000 and EFQM do not correspond to specific requirements of continuing learning organizations. According to Douillet (2008), Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification model is the only one specially for continuing learning organizations established quality development and certification model. Zech (2007) emphasizes that Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification is the only quality development process which is focused on the learners and the definition of successful learning is the central theme of the whole quality management process.

3.1 Overview of Learner-Oriented quality development and certification model

Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification (LQW) model is currently the most widely accepted quality management system for continuing education in Germany and Austria. LQW was funded from 2000 to 2005 within the framework of several projects organised by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of Germany. At the end of 2009 there were 573 organizations which took part in development and certification process and got the LQW certificate. The LQW certificate is valid for 4 years period and re-certification, which becomes necessary after this period, includes in principle the same conditions as used during the first certification.

On purpose understanding the LQW, it is required to present the main features of the model [28]. First, the LQW model represents the quality development process which is focused on the learners. It means, that the learner as a »knowledgeable producer« is the focus of all efforts to improve quality. Second, the central theme of the whole quality development process is the definition of successful learning. By defining successful learning, the organisation has to change its viewpoint to that of the learner. Third, the LQW model does not involve linear processes, but consists of a number of concentric circles. Fourthly, the LQW model proposes the unification of the assessment process with the promotion of development. Firth, the LQW model promotes continual development of quality, because at the end of each period of quality development, the organisation must decide where it wants to be four years later, i.e. at the time of re-certification.

The steps involved in the quality process by implementing LQW model explain the nature of the model and represent the quality cycle. The quality development process begins with an internal evaluation – the outcome of this evaluation is *the self-evaluation report*, in which the organizations focus their identity and which expresses this identity. Based upon an internal evaluation each organization describes the existing quality processes, an evaluation of those processes and proves compliance with the requirements. The self-evaluation report is subject to external evaluation by LQW trained auditors during *an audit visit*, which is an attempt by auditors to interpret and understand the self-evaluation report in a hermeneutic way. If this report complies, the quality cycle is completed by *a final workshop* and the formation of strategic development goals for the next quality period (see Fig. 1) [28].

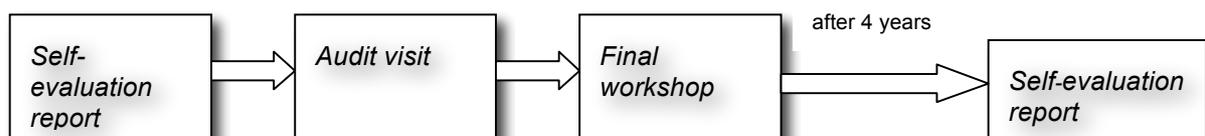


Figure 1. The chain of quality development and certification process

As it was mentioned before, central theme of the whole quality development process by LQW is the definition of successful learning. Whereas with the implementation of a quality management system the idea on successful learning is in demand, the concept of successful learning should be explained deeper.

The educational organizations putting into practice the LQW model right at the beginning creates its own definition of successful learning: it must be included in the preliminary phase of the quality development process and be part of the mission statement. **Successful learning** can basically be measured as an increase in the knowledge of a subject and it identifies what the learner can, at least, achieve by using the services of the educational organization. The definition of successful learning is based on the organisation's understanding of customer needs and should not be a theoretical definition. Despite the significance of the definition, it is worthwhile to stress, that, referring to Zech (2007), the definition of successful learning represents the ideal situation, upon which the organisation bases all its operations. However, to the outside world, the educational organisation indicates, with this definition, what it deems successful learning to be as well as the services offered as a guarantee. This factor allows for the potential learners to compare the offer of success to their own expectations and to make decision concerning learning.

Summing up, it could be stated, that due to the fact that learning is self-managed process and the educational organizations just provide the opportunity and support, definition of successful learning becomes the main focus, upon which all quality procedures are based.

3.2 The quality areas of the LQW model

The quality development and certification using the LQW model encompasses 11 obligatory quality areas (QA). The content of the whole quality system, based on the 11 quality areas and their requirements is the section of the organization's self-evaluation report (see Fig. 2).

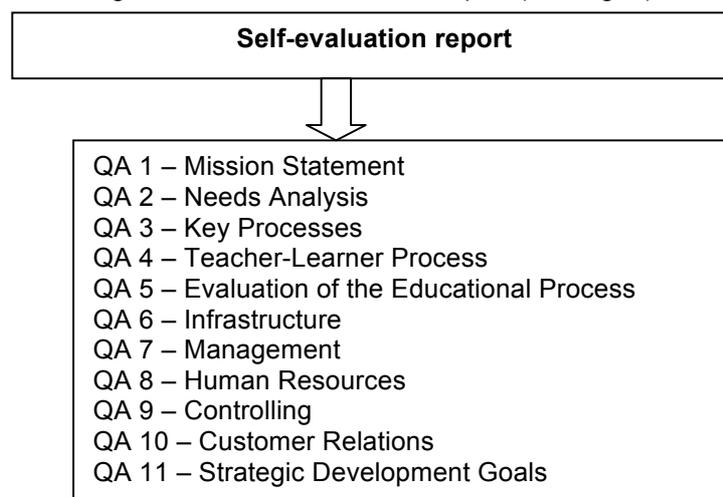


Figure 2.The Quality areas of the LQW Model [28; 29].

Every quality area has different *specifications*, *requirements* and *proof possibilities*. The specifications are not a basis for the checking system, but are examples or ideas on how to understand the requirements. However, the requirements are the checks for the certification process and the organisations are expected to show that the minimum requirements have been met. It is worthwhile to state, that the requirements are non-negotiable, they must be complied with and are necessary for a successful conclusion to the certification process. The requirements of the LQW model have one special feature – formal requirements are presented, without the organisation having to conform to a specific design. Actually, apart the obligatory requirements, the organisations have the possibility to set their own minimum requirements.

In order to get common understanding about quality areas and the requirements, the brief description of each area is further presented [28]:

QA 1: Mission statement. The mission statement reflects the identity of an educational organisation and provides a framework for managing the organisation. The mission statement contains statements about organization's mandate, values, customers, goals, skills, services, resources and includes a

definition of successful learning. 5 requirements of QA 1 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: the mission statement contains references to all eight previous mentioned specifications (mandate, values and so on); it is created as part of an interactive process; it is presented in written form; it is communicated internally and available to the public and the responsibility for revisions of the mission statement is defined.

QA 2: Needs analysis. The attention is focused on the application of suitable procedures and tools to meet the demands not only of the learners but also the community. A clearly defined needs analysis allows for the educational organization to update its training offer in order to meet new expectations and challenges. 2 requirements of QA 2 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: tools, procedures, frequency and extent of the needs analysis are described and justified based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning; analyses are evaluated and based on the results, recommendations for change are made.

QA 3: Key processes. The key processes are those fundamental processes which lead the educational organisation to the creation and implementation of specific training offers and services. It is crucial to underline that the key processes refer to the work processes of the whole organisation. 4 requirements of QA 3 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: key processes for the organisation are defined and documented; responsibility for the processes is defined; the interfaces within the processes and in particular between the key processes are described; arguments for the relevance of the key processes to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.

QA 4: Teacher-learner process. This quality area covers the expertise, didactic, methodology, social, personal and advisory skills of the pedagogical team, also the contents, objectives and methods of learning. 7 requirements of QA 4 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: customers are informed about the content, goals, methods, instructor qualifications and the obligations of participation; instructor profile, selection and recruitment processes are defined; the qualifications and competences of the instructors are documented; work methods which promote individual learning processes are described; the organisation describes how it proves that successful learning occurred; instructors receive advice, training and support from pedagogical professionals; arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.

QA 5: Evaluation of the educational process. Evaluation of the educational process means that the training given by the organisation is internally checked and evaluated using some tools. 3 requirements of QA 5 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: tools, procedures, frequency, extent of the evaluation are described and based on the mission statement and the definition of successful learning; analyses are evaluated and based on the results, recommendations for change are made; the instructors are informed of the results of the evaluation.

QA 6: Infrastructure. It is acknowledged that the whole environment in which learning takes place influences the success or failure of the learning process. By accepting this fact, the conditions within the context of learning relating to the rooms, technical equipment, time, materials and media are important. 7 requirements of QA 6 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: quality criteria for locations and furnishings are defined; locations and furnishings are regularly checked by the organisation based on the defined criteria; quality criteria are defined for the working conditions of the employees; the organisation regularly checks the working conditions based on the defined criteria; the organisation identifies what improvements have been made, where necessary; the availability and functionality of media (machines, tools, etc., where necessary) is guaranteed and regularly checked; arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.

QA 7: Management. Management is a service to the organisation that guarantees the functionality of the organization and in the QB 7 it will be checked how management promotes cooperation to deliver performances by the organisation. 7 requirements of QA 7 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: the organization structure is presented; management principles are agreed on and documented; the decision-making processes are defined and documented; tools and procedures for internal communication are described and implemented; goals are defined, documented and checked; responsibilities for quality development are clearly defined; arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.

AQ 8: Human resources. This quality area includes all measures concerning planning, operations and development of the staff, whereas high quality work is only possible when the employees are well qualified and satisfied. 8 requirements of QA 8 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: job specifications are available and updated; staff profiles are available and updated; new competence requirements are systematically analysed; development progress sessions with the employees are carried out regularly; a systematic training plan for all groups of employees exists; training is offered, results are documented and evaluated; databases of all freelance employees exist and are regularly updated; arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.

QA 9: Controlling. Controlling includes all tools needed to check the performance of the organisation based on its goals and thereby assists in the decision-making process. 5 requirements of QA 9 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: a reporting system based on the organisation-specific criteria will be defined and justified; parameters, key performance indicators and qualitative indicators of success are defined and justified. They are regularly updated, evaluated and recommendations are made; financial management procedures are defined, described, justified and based on operating efficiency; regular internal audits are carried out and recommendations based on the results of the audit are made; arguments for the relevance of these quality instruments to the mission statement and the definition of successful learning are presented.

QA 10: Customer relations. A relationship with customers determines the success of organisational performance: winning new customers is just one direction of organization's activities, another one is taking care of the existing customers. Customer relations is concerned with how the business conditions are designed with regard to the customers and communicated to the public. 5 requirements of QA 9 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: the most important customer care processes are defined and justified; business terms and conditions, including consumer protection measures, are publicly available; enrolment process is defined and enforced; suggestions and complaints are received, evaluated and, where necessary, acted upon; justification of the content and format of information provided to customers is available.

QA 11: Strategic development goals. Strategic development goals are the longer-term and comprehensive goals of the organisation, which determine the position of the organisation, within a defined time period. 3 requirements of QA 10 must be fulfilled by organization and described in self-evaluation report: regular evaluation/development workshops take place; quality development goals are collected systematically and documented; strategic development goals for the whole organisation are suggested in the self-evaluation report.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Yin (1994) research strategy should be chosen as a function of the research situation, while both qualitative and quantitative methods involve weaknesses and strengths [1]. It is very important to get a persuasive research result, therefore the choosing of one or several suitable methods can be the vital part of the research work [24].

Qualitative enquiry often takes the form of a case study. Referring to Merriam (1998), Shahalizadeh & et. (2009) argue that the case study is designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning which are involved. According to Yin (1994), case study is the preferred research approach when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, similarly Hyde (2000) states that case study is simply an in-depth study of a particular instance, or a small number of instances. In here, we choose to use the case study method. We think that the case study approach will give us the best opportunity to understand the quality development process of two educational organizations.

Two educational organizations implement quality development system using the LQW model and according the nature of the LQW model have described the organizations itself in the self-evaluation reports. These two self-evaluation reports are the object of analysis and the conclusions are draw based on the statements about the proceedings and results of the development of quality in organizations. The organization A deals with continuing education for adults with higher education degree. The organization B provides courses for unemployed people.

5 FINDINGS

The analysis of self-evaluation reports of two educational organizations reveals similarities, differences and peculiarities of these two organizations. The analysis allows to state that the requirements of some QA are fulfilled by both organizations, some requirements are fulfilled just by one organization, whereas in some QA both organizations have difficulties with quality development. This notice lets to divide 11 QA in three groups: 1) Quality areas, where both organizations show that the requirements have been met; 2) Quality areas, where both organizations show that the requirements haven't been met; 3) Quality areas, where differences between the organizations exist.

Quality areas, where both organizations show that the requirements have been met:

QA1 Mission statement. Both organizations provide the description of the internal system of organizations and determine values, customers, services and resources. By defining the definition of successful learning both organizations perceive it as an ideal, which the organization uses to orient itself and its business practices and which is an indication to potential customers of what services they can expect. The organization B says: "successful learning is not just to learn how to perform job better but to learn entirely new skills. We seek that after courses 80% of unemployed get job", while the organization A emphasises the development of the leader. Both organizations confirm the employees of these organizations were involved in formulating the mission statement and this fact leads to commitment for putting the efforts by achieving the general organizations goals. The organization A states: „During meetings and discussions the mission statement with the definition of successful learning were created“. In summary, organizations A and B have determined the successful learning concept which reflects the originality of each organization and clearly defines the aims.

QA6 Infrastructure. Infrastructure covers 2 things: the conditions within the context of learning and working conditions of the employees. Both organizations improve infrastructure and fulfil all requirements concerning this quality area. This fact has an influence on the improvement of educational process by both organizations.

QA8 Human resources. The link between human resources and organizational performance is widely discussed in scientific literature [22]. Whereas it is acknowledged that human resources and human resource management impact the organizational performance, so both organizations treat QA 8 seriously and fulfil all the requirements. However some distinctions are visible: the organization A more often analyses new competence requirements, alike the training in order to improve not only the performance of the individual employee, but also the organisation occurs more often. In the organization B the development progress sessions with the employees are carried out regularly and the training based on the new or changed tasks and goals of the organisation is organized, just the extent and frequency are not so broad as in organization A. Hereby both organizations recognise the potential for their employees to be a source of competitive advantage.

QA9 Controlling. The analysis of self-evaluation reports allows to conclude that both organizations control the ways how the performance of organizations operates, particularly financial management procedures are defined, described and justified.

QA10 Customer Relations. Recognizing that the ways the organization deals with customers have an impact on survival and long term competition, both organizations treat learners (primary customers) as partners and all processes which deal with customer relations seek to orient to the needs of the customers. The organizations define the most important customer care processes and ensure two-way communication, i.e. organisation to customer and customer to organisation. According to analysis of self-evaluation reports learners protections measures are indicated and additionally potential sources of information that could be presented to the organisations' customers are presented. The main peculiarity of the organization A lies in very strict rules regarding enrolment process, meanwhile the peculiarity of the organization B is the complain analysis system. In summary, both organizations confirm that customer relations are the key element for survival of the organization.

QB11 Strategic development goals. Both organizations present strategic development goals for the whole organisation, which are based on the tendencies of external environment and related to the guidelines of core competencies development.

Quality areas, where both organizations show that the requirements haven't been met:

QA2 Needs analysis. The review of the self-evaluation reports enables to draw the conclusion that both organizations confront with difficulties by defining the needs of potential learners. Although the organization B describes tools (questionnaire), procedure, frequency (1 time each quarter), it still

admits that the information about the personal needs of target groups is not sufficient and explicit: even the needs analysis indicates that unemployed people want to acquire one or another profession, but after they are not so much keen on attending some courses.

Even more complicated for both organizations is to forecast and to react in time to social development trends. From the self-evaluation reports it is evident that they lack the procedures to clarify the demands of future market. Due to this fact some learners after finishing studies or courses have difficulties to integrate into labour market.

Both organizations are big and despite the fact that the processes are operating well only a modest progress could be seen: the feedback is formal and the number of discussions are too small. Moreover the source of the discussions is the personal initiative of staff members. Due to this fact the information is not collected and no reaction to needs of environment appears. Besides, there is no information about the reaction to the requests of employees.

QA3 Key processes. According the LQW model each organization have to choose and describe the key processes on this own responsibility. The key processes of organization A are: 1) the preparation of innovative, market-oriented programmes and delivering them to the market; 2) providing of the fluent learning to customers. The key processes of organization B are: 1) informing the learners about situation on labour market and professions in demand; 2) providing the advices to the learners on choosing the profession; 3) providing special programmes for integration to labour market.

Although each individual organisation decides for itself which central processes are most important, but the analysis lets to state that both organization focus with problems defining the interfaces within the processes and in particular between the key processes. From the viewpoint of context and time it is not clear enough the duties and responsibilities the employees who perform tasks one after another. In organization B is not self-explanatory the line between duties of employees who provide just information and employees who provide the advices. According to the logic of the LQW model in order to perform the tasks effectively and efficiently it is not enough to define the key processes and the responsibility, the coordination the functions is at the core of quality development process.

QB7 Management. The organization without management can not survive. This fact is essential by implementing a continual development of quality. The analysis of self-evaluation reports exposes that both organizations do not fulfil all 7 requirements of QA 7. For both organizations the structure of companies and the decision-making processes are clear, similarly main management principles are agreed on internally within the organizations. Although work goals are set for all departments and jobs within both organizations, but the responsibilities for quality development are not clearly defined.

In quality area 7 the difference between two organizations arises: the organization B do not have the appropriate tools and procedures for internal communication. This lets assume that in organization B not all staff members are aware of all information relevant to their jobs and that decisions are not made known within the organisation. The self-evaluation reports enable to acknowledge that organization A has tools for internal communication, however is not clear enough if these tools are appropriate for management, especially in times when flexibility and quick reactions are needed. However both organizations confirm that management contributes to determining the sustainable long-term position of the organization.

Quality areas, where differences between organizations exist:

QA4 Teacher-Learner process. The quality of the teacher-learner process is determined by the competences of the instructors, the interactivity between teachers and learners and the specific elements of the learning process [28]. The organization A deals with quality area 4 well: the learners receive information on instructor qualifications, quality of the teaching processes and indicators of successful learning, whereas the organization B still needs to describe and to prove work methods which promote individual learning processes and how the instructors receive advice, training and support from pedagogical professionals.

QA5 Evaluation of the educational process. Both organizations present their tools and procedures for the evaluation of the educational process. According to the logic of the LQW model, especially in quality area 5, it is important to remember that the self-evaluation report contains not only statements about the procedure itself, but also the results of the evaluation. As the result of this requirement the main difference between two organizations lies in making conclusions: the organization A is open for changes according to satisfaction of learners, the organization B tries to avoid changes. This could be explained taking into consideration the type of organization: the organization A deals more with young

generation, the organization B deals with unemployed and long-term unemployed whose expectations are not always very high and organization itself is not interested in meeting new challenges.

6 CONCLUSIONS

1. Quality means different things to different people, regarding service quality the focus has been very much on satisfying the customer. However by implementing quality management systems in education field learners as the determinant of quality are not sufficiently integrated although the learners have a considerable influence on their own transformation and on the success of the educational processes. With the implementation of a quality management system there are many possibilities, however the Learner-Oriented Quality Development and Certification (LQW) model is the only quality development process which is focused on the learners and the definition of successful learning is the central theme of the whole quality management process.

2. The analysis of two self-evaluation reports reveals that the requirements of some quality areas are fulfilled by both organizations, some requirements are fulfilled just by one organization, whereas in some quality areas both organizations have difficulties with quality development. On one hand both organizations are very similar (providing the educational services; quite a big number of staff), but on the other hand the target group of each organization differs: organization A provides services for people with higher education degree, organization B provides courses for unemployed. The specificity of organizations impacts the outcomes of quality development process: the formal procedures and processes in the big organizations work well, however there are some weaknesses related to the gathering of the information and the reaction to customers needs.

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