

FOOD QUALITY IN ALL ITS FORMS

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Abstract: : Increasing the quality of particular importance lately was driven mainly by increased competition, continuously increasing demands of customers and society, the increasing complexity of products and processes for their preparation. Quality of products and services is the result of a complex conjugate of economic, natural and social factors which are closely linked. It is a concept with a very wide use, making them extremely difficult to define in terms of science. Quality, utility, quality poses, are some of the approaches in this paper .

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1. DEFINITION AND EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY

The interdisciplinary concept of "quality" has led many disciplines such as philosophy, economics and technical to define and give a different meaning of the term.

In philosophy, the quality represents the "ownership or mode of being, good or bad, of a person or thing" or "all traits and essential aspect, under which he is subject, this phenomenon, and not another." In logic, the term is used as a "logical criterion, then the predictive judgments fall into affirmative and negative." In economic practice, the concept of quality was initially significance of artistic beauty, and in terms of production craft, the "well done", "satisfying customer", "product availability", "a systematic approach to excellence," "conformity to specifications", "suitable for use" etc.³⁸.

David A. Garvin, a professor at Harvard Business School revealed five main guidelines in defining product quality: transcendent, to product, to process, to costs, to the user.

Transcendent orientation. Under this guidance, Quality is an entity represents timeless, absolute, perceived subjectively by each individual. Such an approach does not allow a clear definition of quality items and its measurement

Product orientation. This is totally opposite of transcendent orientation, quality is considered a size that can be measured precisely. It is defined as ansamble of the characteristics of quality of the product.

³⁸ Maxim, E., - *Managementul și economia calității*, Editura Secom Libris, Iași, 1998

Orientation towards production process. Quality is from the perspective of manufacturer. For each product are specified requirements that to be met. Product is considered quality when it correspond within specifications. Any deviation from specifications means a reduction in quality. But for a user, the product may meet the specifications, but not quality.

Costs orientation. Product quality is defined thru costs and hence prices in that are commercialize. A product is considered to be quality when providing certain performance at an acceptable price.

User orientation. This orientation considered product quality as to be the ability of the to be suitable for use. Each user has individual preferences that can be satisfied by different quality characteristics of the products. Quality is seen through correspondence with customer requirements, requirements on functionality, cost, delivery, safety, reliability, environmental compatibility, service, cost of use, consultancy etc. All of these contribute to achieving product quality.

The ISO 8402 standard defines quality as “the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear upon its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs.” According to this definition:

- entity is what can be described and considered individually as being: a product, an activity or a process, system or person and a combination thereof.
- the quality is not expressed by a single feature, but by a set of features;
- The quality is not independent, it exists only in relation to customer need.
- Needs are expressed - that means that are formulated in economic contracts provider-consumer type either in standards, they expressing and ensuring "an optimal level for the community in whole" - or implied, when in certain situations are identified and defined.

According to **SR EN ISO 9000:2008**, quality is "the extent to which a set of inherent characteristics meet the requests" And within this new definition:

- The quality is not expressed by a single feature, but by a set of features;
- Quality requirements exist in relation to consumer.

In the standard meaning, the term "quality" can be attributed adjectives such as "poor", "good" or "excellent" and the term "intrinsic" in opposition to the "attribute" means something that exists as a permanent feature³⁹.

Quality has not a static character, strictly delimited to a particular request, but it has a dynamic character as its content evolves in step with practical needs, historically determined, both extensively (when varying number of features) and intensive (characteristics are improved product / service).

In addition to achievements in science and technology and engineering excellence, we can mention other factors that determine the dynamic nature of quality such as market trends, emergence of new demands of consumer research, design materialize, which therefore constitutes a dynamic commercial offer, namely:

Something that was good sometime, can not correspond to the present□ and, even more so in the future;

Something that is typical in a market or market segment can be□ completely refused elsewhere or in the future.

The dynamic nature of quality is given by the time evolution of the level of the main characteristics of the products, the consistency on their economic and technical

³⁹ SR EN ISO 9000:2001 – *Sisteme de management al calității. Principii de bază și vocabular*

circuit, from the supplier to the trade and from here to the consumer . On this route designed and manufactured quality may change, usually in a negative way, because the same factors specific to the movement of goods: packaging, handling, transport, storage, etc.

Product quality reflects increasing economic development and civilization and contribute to the increases well-being and quality of life.

Produsele și serviciile – sub influența necesităților umane, a științei și tehnologiei – evoluează calitativ, schimbându-și în mod sistematic în timp caracteristicile și modul de a fi percepute de către consumatori.

Regardless of the diversity of these changes, it is important to operationalize the concept of product quality through specific elements which lists terms specific meanings merceological quality domain Among the most commonly used terms of this type in the marketing of goods, it highlights: the quality of the product unit, quality of batch, the features, quality characteristics, quality indicators, technical parameters, quality indexes, quality requirements, defects and nonconformity.

Product quality is assessed in relation to its own specified model (designed approved) prescribing in a standard or norm. This view is especially important for the end user purchaser.

Batch's quality is assessed by the degree to which quality is reflected in the corporate unit of goods produced and is estimated by the proportion of the poor quality of the lot. This concept is particularly important in the contractual relations between the three partners: supplier, carrier and recipient.

Quality requirements are defined as being expressions of needs, the characteristics of an entity expressed in quantitative or qualitative terms, to enable execution and examination of entity.

Quality requirements relate equally to the market, the contractual and company requirements.

Particular importance is given to define the quality requirements of the company, which are obligations arising from laws, regulations, rules, codes etc.. also aims essentially to protect life, health and the environment.

The defect is a failure to satisfy requirements or reasonable expectations of intended use, including those relating to security. Noncompliance is deviation or absence of one or more quality features to the conditions specified. Initial difference between "non-compliance" and "defect" is that certain specified conditions may differ from conditions of use. The distinction between these two terms is considered important because the defects liability question to the product, incumbent, usually the manufacturer.

2. HYPOSTASES OF GOODS' QUALITY IN THE MARKETING PROCESS

The activities related to the movement of products and production relationship - consumer generated, in practice, a number of concepts and meanings deriving by quality called by some authors quality hypostases.

Quality, with a complex and dynamic character, must be regarded as a technical-economic category with manifestations and specific possibilities of transforming in operational elements, facilitating communication between operators.

Quality is found throughout the production logistics and movement of products in many specific hypostases of each phase of product movement, incorporating differences in content and implications for economic activity. These "facets" of quality

reflects how they are perceived and translated to beneficiaries regarding on product quality requirements during the technical-economic circuit of goods, starting from the preliminary specification, continuing with design and manufacture, ending with meeting these requirements use of the product to customer.

In relationships between providers and beneficiaries in practice, there are usually following quality's hypostases: designed quality, approved quality, prescribed quality, contracted quality and real quality⁴⁰:

Designed quality and approved quality of one product must meet the requirements of customers / consumers in a country, area, region, etc.. We find it in the design stage / main approval prototype product variants.

Prescribed quality is found in the product standardst (SR EN ISO, SR, SF, SP) or other normative documents.

Contracted quality is quality that is agreed by the contract partners.

The delivered quality represents the beneficiary requirements under the contract requirements at the time of delivery. Such of quality is found in the analysis bulletin or statement of compliance, quality certificate, technical certificate accompany the consignment of goods shipped (delivered).

The real quality of a product / batch is given by the quality of the product after delivery, as that have to meet the requirements of customers / consumers.

Optimum quality is the quality of a product to the highest level on the global / national at a time. (it is found in the product that reigns supreme in the world).

All these facets of quality must be equal, ie there is no difference between them.

The quality hypostases in terms of supplier and recipient, highlight certain characteristics, which expresses the main interests of producers and retailers on the market such:

Technical quality (industrial) expresses the consistency of the individual values of the properties (usually technical and functional) requirements to the standards and regulations in force, leaving the secondary plan other properties. It express the views of the manufacturer.

Commercial quality expresses the extent to which all sensory characteristics, the variety of its product range, the size of the warranty period, the activity of "service", the presentation and packaging, size and operating maintenance costs etc. satisfy consumer needs. This aspect represents the point of view of the consumer and is very important in making purchasing decision.

Between these two situations, there is currently a closer tendency because they are interrelated to each other for the sale of products in a competitive market.

Most products are not consumed where they are produced. Between production and consumption are a number of operations (packing, loading, shipping, transportation, unloading, storage, etc.) that are supported by the products and that can influence, usually negative, batch quality. Also, even if the conditions for carrying out these operations are correct, the quality may change due to the lability of the chemical composition of the product. Following are highlights two facets of quality, ie the statical quality or the actual quality of the lot, determined at a time and the dynamic quality, respectively the time evolution of quality product batch. The practical importance of dynamic quality resulting from its implications in a number of activities

⁴⁰ Definition in SR EN ISO 9000/2001;

such as contracting, in determining the amount of quality features and delivery schedules, in determining the validity period and perishability, and taking correct action organization transport, storage and preservation of consignments.

In the practice of commercial activities operators will meet frequently with these facets of quality, having to operate with them in contractual relations.

Due to the specific activity for enterprises producing, the designed quality and prescribed quality are strategy operated in issues of quality and for quality assurance are critical contracted quality and delivered on time to the businesses operated contracted real, static and dynamic quality.

1. Some of the hypostases of quality can be more important at a given time, for example, in contractual conditions, but usually, it is considered that all contribute to the overall quality of the product.

3. THE CONSUMER AND ITS DEMANDS ON QUALITY

The client is the recipient of a product or service and it may be: user, beneficiary, purchaser or ultimate consumer.

Product quality is a fundamental requirement of competitiveness and quality assessment is a personal right of the consumer, because it has a direct effect on quality of life. The quality of a product can be defined as "best fit order" or only consumers can discover the real quality of a product, they are the ones who use it daily or consum it.

Today, consumers are increasingly exigent to product quality. They formulate a number of requirements on reliability and maintainability characteristics psycho, economic and sanogenetic etc products. They also want to be informed correctly and completely to knowingly choose products. Consumers expect their needs to be met through quality products.

Adressing quality of classic and modern point of view, we find that the concept of quality of products has expanded from simple content according to the documentation, to the market requirements, consumers, quality and expanded the scope of physical products the full range of products and services to consumers, quality requirements identified user needs, the consumer, some of which are expressed (in the contract), others are implicit, such as aesthetics, ease of use etc.

Quality can not be achieved only through rigorous and responsible contribution of all factors that ensure its construction in the industrial process, from marketing research to meeting consumer and end of product life cycle.

The main consequence of this approach is the concept of quality as perceived by the consumer who relies on two main arguments, namely:

- No longer limited quality, simplistically, compliance with product specifications, but it must be in accordance with consumer needs. Given this, we deduce that for achieving a level of quality an organization must first determine the specific needs of the consumer segment which is intended product / service ;

- Quality should be based not only on the elements that contribute to the production and control of them, but especially the items within the scope of use, in other words, quality is "fitness for use".

Consumer perception is that determines his attitude in the future to buy from the same company ⁴¹. For this reason, all organisations activities must be directed by consumer desires and continually need to follow his reaction to product quality.

The quality of products and services is, for the consumer of today, more than ever, essential criterion to prefer one company that has established itself in terms of quality.

Most consumers change their preferences for certain products because of their low quality and then, due to price or other reasons. Typically, the consumer is willing to pay extra to get better quality.

A product to be request to consumers is not enough to be only good quality, but more important is to match price with quality. Consumers have a choice (depending on the quality / price) necessary product which is generally so designed and constructed as not to endanger the health and life or the quality of the environment.

Typically, when the price / quality ratio is higher, the chances of a product to be sold are higher. Unsalable items usually exhibit a quality / low price is low quality due to either price too high, or both causes simultaneously.

Quality is the best argument to sell, although the price is often a decisive factor. Quality as fitness for purpose of a product, as seen, are by far the most important measures for customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, the quality will rely increasingly more on what is desired by the consumer ultimately

4. CORRELATION BETWEEN USE VALUE - QUALITY OF FOOD

In the "Thematic Dictionary of economic ideas", the notion of "value" is defined as: "an expression designating the intrinsic aspect of any economic good competition consists in the various categories of interests (producers - producers. Producers - consumers, purchasers - buyers), so in a social relationship, and expressed through price"⁴².

The ansamble of a product's functions give it use value, its utility. Thus, the utility of a product is given by the real or alleged ability of a good to satisfy a human need by using his time on the physical, chemical, psycho, which are intrinsic characteristics of food. All these properties useful function configures a product, utility itself.

The other features, the extrinsic, such as product image, consumption habits, and so on, determines expected utility, since they are purely human considerations, personal or group characterized by subjectivism.

Value in use, as evidenced by the above, is the synthesis properties (characteristics) seeking compliance with requirements, pre-formulated expectations. But any good but will also present properties that are undesirable conformity with the specifications, that such deficiencies of quality.

This whole complex of properties of a food, its features and shortcomings and inconsistencies in requirements, make quality product. Depending on these foods can fit into various classes, as it complies with the specifications.

⁴¹ **Chisnall, P., M.,** - *Marketing: a Behaviourial Analysis*, Second edition, The McGraw-Hill Marketing Series, London, 1985

⁴² **C. Petcu,** *Dicționar tematic de idei economice*, Editura Economică, București, 2000;

Properties of food are prescribed in standards, any negative deviation from their values can make the product unusable. Of these, the most important are the properties of psycho, physico - chemical and microbiological. Microbiological properties may not be listed in the standards, but then legislation governing their level.

Food functions originate in the value in use (consumption) itself, being a manifestation of this, the role of food in the nutrition and health status of the population is achieved through a wide range of functions that are manifested in several ways and interrelated structure, chemical composition and properties of the product.

As food functions were determined to be: nutritional, plastic, energetical, catalytic protective and sanogenesis, therapeutic and psycho-aesthetic, hygienic-sanitary and symbolic function, all of which are directly related to product quality.

In Commodities science, utility in large sense (or use value) includes real utility and expected utility and utility narrowly refers to the function of a product useful. In narrow sense, for consumer is useful the product that best fits their immediate needs, the current, its quality being the one prescribed in standards or other specifications (rules, laws).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The interdisciplinary concept of "quality" has led many disciplines such as philosophy, economics and technical to define and give a different meaning of the term. David A. Garvin, a professor at Harvard Business School revealed five main guidelines in defining product quality: transcendent, to product, to process, to costs, to the user.

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