



TUITION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION BY INTRODUCING A FEEDBACK INQUIRY HELD BY THE LECTURER

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ABSTRACT:

A feedback inquiry held by the teacher is suggested in this paper as a basic element in the teacher's work and a factor of tuition quality improvement in the higher education institution in conformity with the System of Evaluation and Keeping the Tuition Quality (SOPKO) and ISO9000-14000. The priorities and the tuition quality have been changed radically by introducing the quality control system in the higher school. However, this system requires unchanging lecturers' staff, school subjects and necessary equipment. The suggested questions give possibilities of monitoring the level of these indices by holding an unnamed inquiry with the students into every school subject and the corresponding lecturer. The purpose is every lecturer to hold this inquiry and to analyze the received information in order to make a self-evaluation of his own work. The new element in this enquiry is that it stimulates the lecturers' activity to monitor and keep the teaching quality and the students' estimation of this process.

KEY WORDS:

quality, management, education, quality management system, test.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem connected with introducing and keeping the quality management system in the European higher schools is solved long ago. The topic "Global quality management" has been discussed in a number of German higher schools for about ten years.

The globalization of this problem means that the high quality is required not only in the material (production) sphere but in the activities of the immaterial sphere – the public utilities and education as well. Therefore - in every human activity.

The binding requirement "The higher school works up and initiates a system for evaluation and keeping the high quality of tuition and the high qualification of the lecturers, including the students' opinion studying" is grounded in the Higher Education Law [1], which is the leading normative deed of the higher education. A quality management system based on [2] comprises the all requirements of [3], as well as the criteria and the tentative indices of National Agency of Evaluation and Accreditation.

The quality management system in the enterprises is a collection of documents which are rationally prepared and picked out in accordance with the production type /internal normative documents - procedures/. The manager of the

enterprise is responsible for the observation of these documents in general, and every participator in this process is responsible for his own work. Of course the conditions in the schools and enterprises are quite different. But this doesn't mean that the term "Quality" in the higher schools is devoid of sense. The students are admitted to study in university after an entrance exam which can be compared with the control of the raw materials in the process of production. The quality of the final product i.e. the graduated from the university depends from this control to some extent.

Their quality mostly depends on the quality of the learning process /lectures, tutorials, laboratory works, laboratory equipment, staff, etc. /

A well working quality management system in the higher school could give possibilities of its organizing optimization and could open ways of the quality improvement of the final results – the quality of education of the graduated specialists, in other words it would achieve the goal of its introducing. The earlier the organized and purposeful activity towards the quality of the higher schools begins, the greater their ability to survive in the coming national and international concurrence in the field of education will be. The sooner the lecturers realize their own responsibility in this process the better the higher school will be evaluated by the enterprises. Quality management means achieving and maintaining a certain level of quality throughout all stages of the educational process.

2. REQUIREMENTS OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION

Correspondent to the European standards ISO 9001-2000 the quality management of education is connected to the following main processes:

- Administration's responsibility
- Resources management – **tuition quality**
- Measurement, analysis and diagnostics
- Quality improvement

Responsibility of the administration

Very important for the quality tuition in the higher school is: the organization of the administration and the connections and communication between the separate hierarchical levels; the functioning of the administrative bodies at university, faculty and department stage; the connections with other higher schools in the country and abroad. Main instrument in the communication and organization is building internal information systems with input measurement scales for the quality and effectiveness of this process. Very important is the long-time development strategy of the higher school and the concrete purposes for its fulfillment.

The goals on quality as instruments must include planning the tuition process, determining prognostic valuations, choosing modern subjects and disciplines.

The principle of "Making decisions based on facts" (also included as one of the eight principles of ISO 9000-2000) must be followed in the management of the higher school. Basic forms of evaluating the process "Administration responsibility" may be the internal audits, self-assessment, external audits, accreditation results etc.

Quality tuition

This is the process which determines the quality characteristics of the exit, therefore evaluating and measuring its different stages is a very important task. Planning the educational process includes determining the qualification characteristics, curricula, schedule of the educational process, by using the gained experience and world practice, as well as European and world educational

standards. The assessment of the quality of the planned activity in the higher school is above all prognosis, analysis and making decisions for future periods. That's why as well as auditing teams and methods there must be a system for this assessment. This system can be an element of the information system and its realization is a main task of the higher school. This should also be made regarding the forms of education and the suitable schedules for them.

Implementation of the education (lectures, laboratory works) is the essence of the process in the higher school at the end of which we get the product "quality education". It is determined by the knowledge and skills acquired in the educational process like capacity, applicability in practice, endurance, actuality, creativity, professional and teaching.

Realization of the process should be on the base of the client's requirements "at the exit" of the higher school. The needed resources must be provided under the constant control of the administration

3. ANALYSIS AND DIAGNOSTICS

The tuition documentation (plans, curricula, examination system) can easily be controlled with their discussion and acceptance by the administrative organs of the higher school and this is already done quite successfully. However it is hard to monitor the level of the lecturers and the students' opinion on their lecturers and the way the certain material is taught. The inquiries made here are two-way because there is a lot of subjectivity. Often the more demanding lecturers are poorly evaluated by the students and vice versa – the more liberal ones with fewer requirements get the students' approval. The official inquiries carried by the respective quality commissions don't give reliable results, in other cases they are made for form's sake and a part of the results is again unreal. In search of the balance between lecturer and student and anonymous feedback test is offered. The test is carried out by the lecturer himself in order to get a maximum good idea on himself, on the students' opinion on his work and the way the "лабораторните или семинарни упражнения" are carried out. The information acquired can be used by any lecturer in order to improve the quality of his own teaching.

The test applied is for the lecturers' self-assessment, but when necessary it can be used by the quality commission or the higher school administration.

4. SAMPLE FEEDBACK TEST

Here a version of a feedback test is offered. It was carried out with the students of Technical College "John Atanasoff" – Plovdiv – pic1. The test was implemented with students on the subject "Elements of Precise Equipment" and the main reason for that were the low results of the students. The questions were prepared by the assistant who conducts the laboratory works aiming to better the tuition quality and the marks of the students. The test is open and can be filled with additional questions according to the specific needs. The data acquired from the anonymous inquiries processed using analysis based on the Pareto law. Using Pareto analysis of factors the diagram of Pareto can be drawn (constructed, erected) on groups of asked questions. It allows identification of the so called deciding few factors, which lead to worsening the quality of the whole production, in our case – the students. Pic 2 shows the графика of the actual percents of the students' answers and the diagram of Pareto. The deciding few factors according to the results of the inquiry are in the answers of questions №2 and №3 of the test.

According to 80% of the students the basic preparation is not enough for the discipline, 60% of them show the lack of connection between lectures and “лабораторни упражнения” as another main reason. The results from the answers of the other questions in the test are around 20%.

It is supposed that the students answered the test objectively, because it was carried out by the lecturer himself they were previously informed that it aims at bettering the results and the quality of tuition.

FEEDBACK INQUIRY	
on the subject.....	
1. Is the subject suitable to be studied from the students of the specialty “Mechanical Engineering”	yes no
2. Is the basic material sufficient.....	yes no
3. Is the connection between the lectures and laboratory works sufficient.....	yes no
4. Do you use internet in order to enrich the matter of the lectures.....	yes no
5. Please give a rating about:	
The material given in the lectures.....	2 3 4 5 6
Your lecturer.....	2 3 4 5 6
The matter of the laboratory works.....	2 3 4 5 6
The assistant of the laboratory works.....	2 3 4 5 6
The laboratory equipment.....	2 3 4 5 6

Fig.1 Sample feedback test

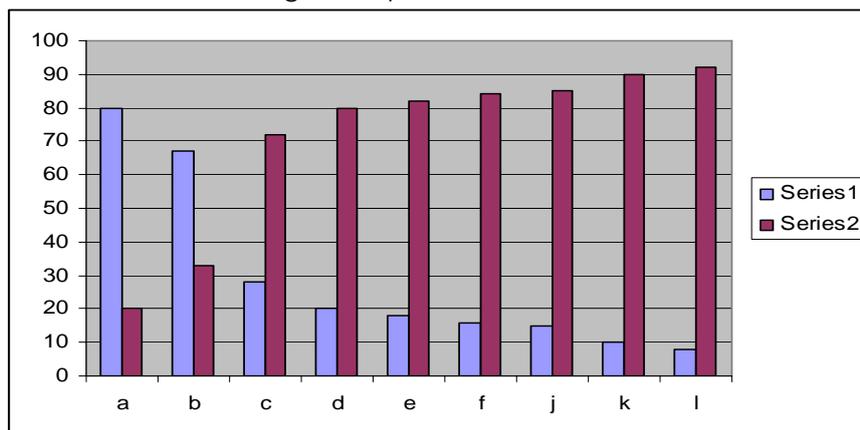


Fig. 2 Causative-consequence chart of Pereto

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. The test gives the possibilities of monitoring and sustaining of the tuition quality on every subject and for every lecturer.
2. The test gives notion of the negative causes of the bed tuition quality.
3. The test can be used when the specialties are accredited in order the students' opinion about their lecturers to be taken.

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