

SELF - EVALUATION AS A TOOL FOR MEASURING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Summary: In the article a precise profile of applying self - evaluation as a tool for higher education services assessment was given. It indicated the methodology, the conceptual model of service consumption assessment according to this tool, and it presented the advantages and disadvantages of applying the self - evaluation in service assessment. Moreover, one of the self - evaluation methods CAF was analyzed. The questionnaire classification by different criteria and the description of included questions was made. Some advantages and disadvantages of using the questionnaire in researches on the assessment of higher education services were indicated.

Keywords: self-evaluation, education in high school, consumption, self-assessment methodology, questionnaire classification

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, evaluation is more than having control or measuring functions. When used as a procedure of quality measurement, it fulfils many additional functions, such as (Majewski, 1999, p. 1-5):

- describing and explaining the examined reality,
- contributing to understand the examined reality by gathering some information about attitudes, experience, respondents' opinions expressed in their own categories.

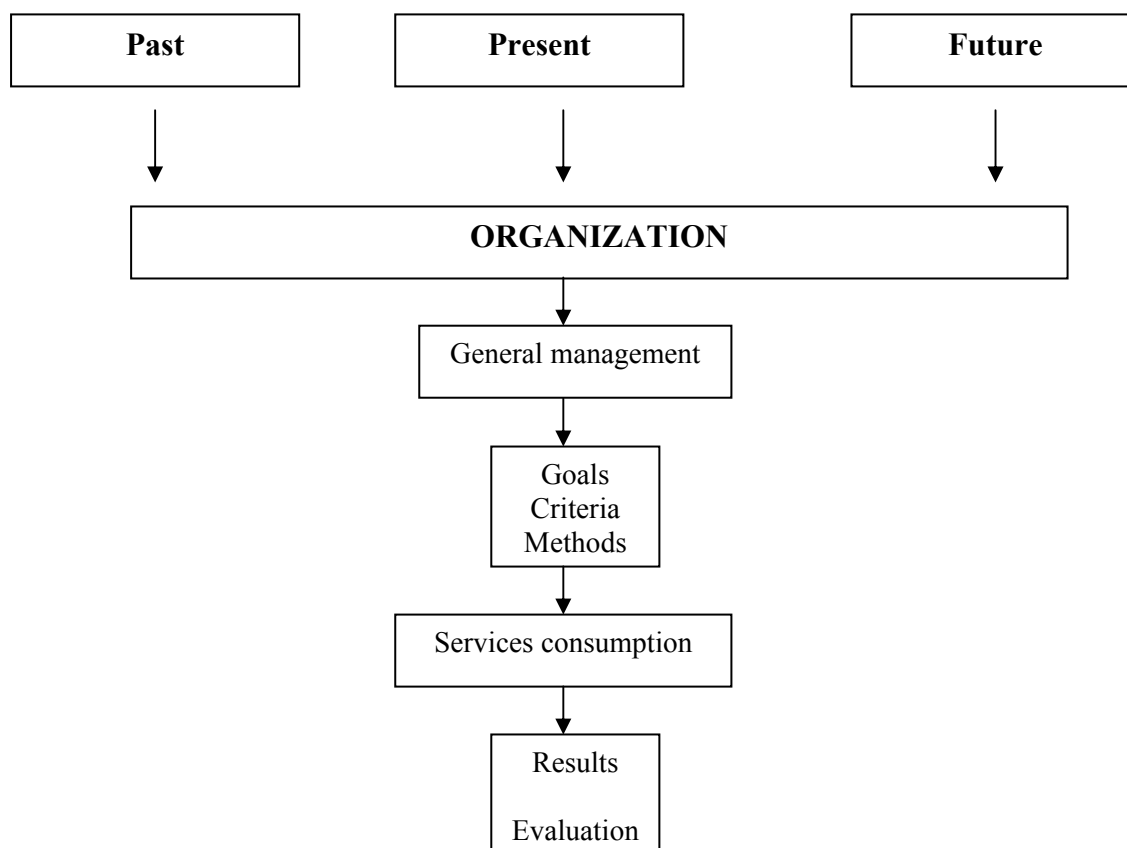
2. SELF-EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Self-assessment serves for measuring higher education services on different educational levels (as well in higher education) and it is close in meaning to evaluation. Evaluation is a continuous process of self-assessment, where a present condition is compared with the previous one and on this basis, some conclusions about the progress in improving educational services consumption may be drawn (Godzwon, 2007, p. 41). The evaluation features, which agree with a classic measurement, are (Godzwon, 2007, p. 41):

- setting evaluation criteria,
- using standardized qualitative methods,
- getting the opinion of different engaged groups, people.

According to the standard EN - PN ISO 9000:2006 (Norma PN - EN ISO 9000:2006, *Systemy Zarządzania Jakością, Podstawy i Terminologia*, 2006, p. 21) the organization's self-assessment is a wide - ranging and systematic review of organization's actions and the results of these actions which relate to the quality management system or perfection model. Self - assessment may provide a whole view on organization's functioning and maturity level of quality management system. It may also help the organization in identification of areas that need to be improved and in determining some priorities (see Fig.1).

Figure 1.: Conceptual model of consumption measurement according to the self-assessment tool



Source: own study on the basis of: Z. Godzwon: *Samoocena*, op. cit., s. 41; Polska Nagroda Jakości, Konkurs - Nagrody Zespołowe-Organizacje Edukacyjne, Komitet Polskiej Nagrody Jakości, Warszawa 2004, s. 5 - 11; S. Zapłata: Ocena systemu zarządzania jakością w organizacji, Przegląd Organizacji 3/2003, s. 36.

Self-assessment methodology according to Polska Nagroda Jakości (2004, p. 5-11) and Zapłata (2003, p. 36):

- it consists in complex, systematized , regular review of actions taken by an organization and reached results on the basis of a chosen model,
- it is an unformalized action, its result depends on the employees' engagement in realizing goals and organizational culture,
- it sets the degree of realizing goals and enables to find out about the actual state and to plan some further actions,
- it ensures the organization to have a systematized attitude to identify its advantages and some areas which need to be improved,
- it enables the identification of „good practices” and sharing the knowledge about them inside the organization and comparing with other organizations.

As far as educational service consumption measurement is concerned, in higher education the following self - assessments are used:

- reports prepared for the Accreditation Commission (they contribute to ensuring an appropriate quality, where the Commission decides if the educational offer meets the expectations accepted in educational standards and the major is credible),
- based on Perfection Model criteria - European Foundation of Quality Management, where the criteria of Polish Quality Prize for Educational Organizations were built.

Depending on goals, criteria, methods and frequency of carrying out the self - evaluation, its results enable to measure the progress and present a reliable piece of information for actions to be improved.

The advantage of his tool is a simple use. The self-assessment of the measurement of educational services consumption from the stage of setting the goals through the realization, effects' monitoring to drawing some conclusions gives the possibility of improving the actions taken in the process. Carrying out the evaluation with this tool in analogous, cooperating higher schools will give a good benchmark of educational services (Godzwon, 2007, p. 41).

One of the forms of self - assessment is CAF - The Common Assessment Framework (The Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Improving an organization through self-assessment, 2008, p. 8-12).

It is a tool of the complex quality management, inspired by European Foundation of Quality Management and the model worked out at Speer University. It is based on the thesis that achieving the desired results of actions of an organization, consumers, employees and the society depends on the leadership affecting the policy and strategy, employees, personal relations, resources and processes. According to this method, the organization is being observed and analyzed from different points of view within the confines of a complex results analysis process of its activity. The CAF method was designed for being used in different public sector organizations - at the national, regional or local levels, in different activities, such as: a part of the reform programme or improving the actions of specific organizations providing public services. In some cases, especially when big organizations are concerned, self-assessment may be carried out at the level of particular branches or departments.

CAF is a general method and there are no obstacles for its individualization - on condition that some basic elements will be kept: 9 basic criteria, 28 detailed criteria and scoring.

Criteria (leadership, strategy and planning, employees, partnership and resources, processes) dealing with organization's potential determine the activities that the organization is involved in and the way it achieves the desired results.

After analyzing some other criteria such as: activities' results in relations with clients, activities' results in relations with employees, social activities' results, crucial activities' results, their achieving on the basis of opinion surveys and internal indicators assessment is considered. Each criterion is composed of some sub - criteria. Sub - criteria (28 altogether) define the issues that need to be mentioned while making the organization's assessment. The CAF method gives the organization an important instrument that starts the process of a continuous improving. This method enables (The Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Improving an organization through self- assessment, 2008, p. 10):

- the assessment based on proves, using the criteria set presented in public administration units in Europe,
- checking if the assumed progress and initiating level were obtained
- achieving the cohesion of actions taken and consensus in the case, which ought to be done in order to improve the organization process,
- achieving the integrity between the attained results and the potential use,
- attract the employees' attention and encouraging them to the improvement process engagement,
- spreading the experience of good practices and sharing them inside and outside the organization,
- including different initiatives concerning the organization's improvement into everyday organization's activity.

Self-assessment and improvement activities in public organizations would be extremely difficult to achieve without obtaining credible pieces of information about different functions to be realized by these organizations. The CAF method encourages public sector organizations to collect and use the information, although such a piece of information is not available yet while making the first self - assessment. Self - evaluation can make teachers and students in a questionnaire.

3. CONSTRUCTION A QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire form is most often applied to the purpose of fast conducting examinations amongst populous communities. One of this peculiar type is written interview. The role of the investigator is to choose those who intend to submit to testing, distributing questionnaire forms, indicating the manner of their return and collect the returned questionnaires. The anonymity of filling the questionnaire, standard questions included in it, their order, make easier drawing data up as well and there are inducing to reflection of respondents over put problems taken in examinations.

In developing the questionnaire, you should consider:

- elements of which should be composed,
- form and content,
- appearance.

The questionnaire form should include:

- information about the institution conducting the research,
- concise information about the purpose of that task questionnaire,
- additional explanations , which character depends on the type of the questionnaire form.
- questions which refer at targets, for which the questionnaire form was constructed,
- instructions which concern it, how to respond to individual questions.

The form and contents of particular elements should take into account character of the questionnaire form and properties of potential respondents.

As for the construction of the questionnaire, it is necessary to follow these rules:

- questions must be clear, formulated based on the knowledge about the problem which they concern,
- questions should be formulated this way so that the respondent is able to give the credible answer,
- questions should be put so that they enable to obtain objective, comparable and verifiable data,
- questions shouldn't be formulated in this way to suggest an answer,
- should be kept proper sequence of questions posed, since they affect the quality of survey because they influence the quality of the questionnaire form,
- questions can have character closed off (supplied from above with predicted replies), half open (leaving the certain freedom to the respondent as for the reply), open (the respondent has complete freedom to answer).
- in case of closed or half open questions with the proposal of alternative replies it is necessary to use enough clear and rough choices to let the statement for possibly explicit dividing contents in the distinct way.

Because of the way in which it can be distributed questionnaires, are could talk about:

- environmental questionnaire forms, that is distributed directly by the interviewer in a particular environment
- press questionnaire forms, placed on pages of the newspaper or magazines,

- postal questionnaire forms, that the interviewer sends by post to the address of individual persons (institutions) selected for study

Questionnaire forms also are divided into:

- explicit, that is personal questionnaire forms or surveys that may indicate a clear evidence of respondent's person because of questions included in them,
- anonymous, that is questionnaire forms which aren't being signed, but also contain none of such questions which could reveal a person of the respondent in the moment, them where answered.

It is unacceptable to provide respondents with anonymity questionnaire form at the moment, it contains questions that can reveal who is the respondent (Sztumski, 1999, p. 142-151).

It is possible to point at the following advantages of applying the survey in examinations (http://mfiles.pl/pl/index.php/Badanie_sondażowe):

- possibly of fast examining the large community,
- saving time and resources,
- the role of the investigator is limited to the development of questionnaire form and choice of persons which he is going to examine,
- questionnaire form is an impersonal and anonymous, which allows for a more honest response test,
- reduction of the mistakes resulting from the influence of characteristics of the pollster or techniques adopted by him,
- the answers can be quickly assembled and analyzed.

However to the defects survey as a tool to measure should include (<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankieta>):

- in face-to-face conversations it is possible to take individual differences of respondents into account, in the questionnaire survey it is impossible, it would be hard to adapt the questionnaire to each of unidentified respondents.
- in each group are respondents who for different reasons aren't able well to fill in a questionnaire, many persons also have problems with written formulating its thoughts
- in every questionnaire form, there are questions which can trigger different associations at individual persons, what causes discrepancies in interpreting the reply,
- poll does not allow listing what the respondent says, and gestures, can't pick up signs of feelings of the respondents, only focuses on collecting quantitative data,
- low percentage of the reply, questionnaire forms can only fragmentary be filled up.

An external appearance of the questionnaire form is also significant. Its size should be such as to not discourage the respondent to comply with it. It must also be clear and transparent. Each task group, similarly to questions, should be clearly marked with letters or numbers, maintain adequate spaces between the lines, in order to give the opportunity for wider comment, especially when the questions open. When the questionnaire form has a lot of pages it is good to include in it one of the not-printed page, which may be helpful to the respondent to write answers to questions.

The questionnaire surveys are considered the most typical especially for sociology. They require the great research experience and a good methodological training.

4. CONCLUSION

Self-assessment and improvement activities in public organizations would be extremely difficult to achieve without obtaining credible pieces of information about different functions to be realized by these organizations. The CAF method encourages public sector

organizations to collect and use the information, although such a piece of information is not available yet while making the first self - assessment. Self-evaluation can make teachers and students in a questionnaire.

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