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67. DOES THE ISO 9001 TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SPECIFICITIES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ORGANIZATIONS

Abstract: In recent years implementing a normalized quality management system becomes more and more popular even with small organizations. The purpose of this article is to present the organizational impact of implementing the requirements of ISO 9001 for small and medium-sized enterprises. The study was conducted in March and April 2014 using a technique online survey. Based on the results of the study and review of the literature indicated that the implementation of standardized quality management system has a positive impact on the achievement of the objectives in the area of quality, but do not take sufficient account of the specificities of small and medium-sized organizations.

Keywords: ISO 9001, quality, small and medium-sized organizations

JEL Classification: L1, M2

1. Introduction

Standardized quality management systems are readily implemented by organizations regardless of their size, industry or business profile. This is due to the fact that their idea that is seeking to meet customer requirements and its comprehensive service becomes a priority. This fact significantly affects the increase in popularity of standardized quality management systems, which were originally implemented only in large manufacturing companies (Malindžák, Zimon, 2014; Malindžáková, Rosová, 2014) a currently on their implementation they are increasingly turning to small and medium-sized enterprises.

The publication focuses on ISO 9001, which due to its versatility is addressed to every type of organization (Wolniak, 2013). The versatility of ISO 9001 is undoubtedly its strength (Sampaio, Saraiva, Guimaraes Rodrigues, 2009), but increasingly also becoming a target of criticism. Some researchers consider that when ISO 9001 is aimed at any organization, it did not really take into account the specifics of any of them. In addition, a high degree of generality of ISO 9001 makes specific requirements may be different and not always properly interpreted by individual organizations (Pacana et al., 2014), which may adversely affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. According to the author small and medium-sized businesses belong to the organization in which ISO 9001 standard does not always work. With this view correspond to the results conducted by Psomasa and co-authors (2010), which highlight a number of barriers to the implementation of the system by smaller organizations. It should also be noted that small and medium-sized organizations incurring relatively large financial outlays on the development, implementation and improvement of the system (Šatanová et al., 2015) are counting on substantial profits in the management area (Poksinska et al., 2006; Okręglicka, 2016). However, we should be aware, that the implementation and certification of the Quality Management System is an investment. The cost incurred during system's implementation, operation and improvement phases can be a significant burden on small and medium-

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sized organizations, often beyond their financial capacity. It is believed that this is due to the fact, that ISO 9001 requirements do not fully take into account among the other things, the following barriers faced by a small and medium size firms (Zimon, 2015):

- flat, single-level organizational structure
- inadequate value of equity limiting company's ability to self-finance or borrow funds for development projects
- unfavorable treatment by financial institutions
- limited ability to attract right mix of personnel,
- limited access to the latest technologies,
- development and compete based on flexibility and adapt quickly to changing market conditions.
- lack of clearly defined objectives and strategies.

It is worth noting, however, that in the literature many authors suggest that the implementation of ISO 9001 brings many benefits to both external and internal to each type of organization. Therefore, the main objective of this publication is to examine the ratio of representatives of small and medium sized organizations to a normalized quality management system in accordance with ISO 9001.

2. Methodology of the research

The main objective of this publication is to examine the ratio of representatives of small and medium sized organizations to a normalized quality management system in accordance with ISO 9001. The study was conducted in March and April 2014 using a technique online survey. Surveys were sent to a group of 150 small and medium-sized organizations carrying out their activities in the southern Polish. For the analysis classified 30 correctly completed questionnaires survey. In the study group there were 12 small and 18 medium-sized organizations. The research tool was a questionnaire, which consisted of 15 questions, both open and closed and it is addressed to representatives of the board of the organizations. The paper assumes the following research hypothesis:

- It is assumed that the ISO 9001 standard does not fully take into account the specifics of smaller organization.

3. Analysis of the results of research

The first question concerned the feelings of the respondents regarding the consideration of ISO 9001 specifics of small and medium-sized organizations (Figure 1).

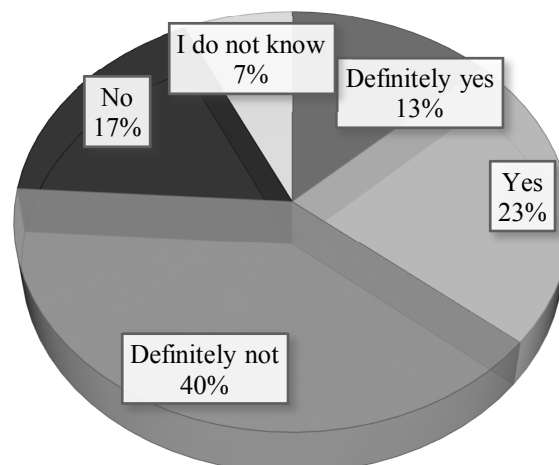


Figure 1. Does the quality management system take into account the specificities of small and medium-sized organizations?

Source: Own work

Analyzing the distribution of responses it can be seen that more than half of the respondents (57%) say that ISO 9001 does not fully take into account the needs and constraints of small and medium-sized organizations. Respondents justify their statement claimed that:

- small and medium-sized organizations do not have sufficient financial resources to fully meet the requirements of ISO 9001,
- there is a need to use the services of consulting firms, which are relatively expensive and their level is not always satisfactory (Semenescu, Badarau, 2014),
- the meaning and role of the certificate is slowly becoming widespread, and now it is no longer such an effective marketing tool which was 10 years ago, and smaller organizations can not afford to implement inefficiencies,
- ISO 9001 and the more systems industry should implement large companies on an international scale.

On the other hand, 36% of the representatives of the Management Board consider that ISO 9001 sufficiently takes into account the specificities of smaller organizations. Respondents from this group pointed out that ISO 9001 leaves a large enough freedom to create documentation that can develop a system which takes into account the needs of a particular organization. However, they indicate the need to use the services of qualified consultants and the requirement for substantial commitment to the process every employee, regardless of position - which is not easy in smaller organizations where workers are much burdened with responsibilities. Respondents also suggested that the quality management system brings many positives after a few years of implementation and should be patient. Consequently, the first few years companies have to spend on continuing improvement, streamlining procedures and conducting continuous adjustments developed system documentation (Briscoe et al., 2005). These views are also confirmed by the results of research conducted by Boirala and Heras-Saizarbitoria (2015) on a group of 65 organizations.

The next stage of the research process was an attempt to answer the question to what extent the quality management system contributed to the achievement of the objectives adopted in the policy of quality (Figure 2).

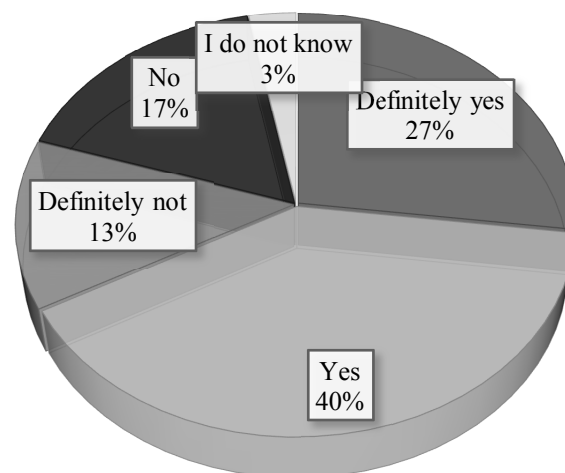


Figure 2. Did the quality management system affect the achievement of the objectives of quality?

Source: Own work

Distribution of the results shows that the vast majority almost 70% of respondents considers that the quality management system has contributed to achieving the objectives in the area of quality. Respondents emphasized that the mere requirement to develop quality policy and its inclusion in the organization's strategy was very important element influencing the growth of pro-quality awareness both managers and employees. Respondents pointed out that ISO 9001 particularly affect the achievement of the objectives in the area:

- improve relations with customers,
- organize activities through the requirement that a system procedures,
- improvement of internal communication - similar results obtained in this regard Melão and Guia (2015),
- improve the forms of communication (both within the organization and with customers and partners).

It is worth noting that the proportion of respondents, who claim that ISO 9001 does not take into account the specificities of smaller organizations, admitted that it helps, but some considerable scope to achieve the objectives in the area of quality.

The analysis also shows that 30% of the organizations quality objectives have not been achieved. An in-depth analysis allowed to establish that partly resulted from improperly constructed quality policy, which was adopted targets with a high degree of generality, partly from the lack of involvement of top management and employees. This does not change the fact that quite a significant number of the organizations proved inefficient system, which puts into question its continuation quality management system primarily should you effectively and efficiently.

In order to deepen the analysis asked respondents the question about weaknesses in the system from the point of view of small and medium-sized organizations (It was an open question). Based on analysis of the responses it can be said that the most important barriers to the implementation of ISO 9001, according to the respondents may include:

- the significant costs associated with maintaining the system - more than half of the representatives of the Management Board highlighted the that these costs are so high that as a consequence of it may lead to violations of economic efficiency of enterprises,
- the very idea of the process approach, which in smaller organizations does not apply,
- the problem in the development of clear procedures due to the fact that employees of smaller organizations often perform duties carried out in different departments, or their responsibilities often undergoes changes,
- staff shortages,
- the resistance of workers and negative attitude to the new rules and procedures.

The last question was to determine whether the studied organizations decide to maintain the system and implementing the requirements of the new ISO 9001: 2015 (Figure 3).

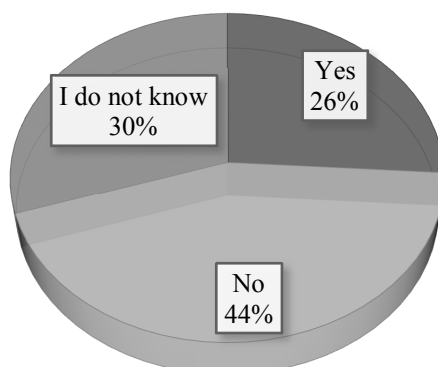


Figure 3. Do you choose to implement the requirements of ISO 9001: 2015?

Source: Own work

Representatives of the management in 44% of cases declared that the quality management system not fully met their expectations and therefore ensuing fact will not seek an extension of the certification. The main reason for this decision was too high costs in relation to the effects, lack of capital and the obligation to comply with the requirements of the standards mandatory for organizations to develop a number of unnecessary documents. Similar conclusions are based on studies came Vital and Skotnicka-Zasadzień (2007), who recognize that the financial problems and bureaucracy are the most important factor leading to the resignation of a certified quality management system. In addition, respondents says that by far the preferred solution for small and medium-sized organizations to use only selected solutions proposed by ISO 9001 without the need for a certificate. This solution can significantly reduce system maintenance costs (Raßfeld et al., 2015), also leaves more flexibility in the creation of the system (Venkatesh, 2014; Kafel, Sikora, 2014; Zimon 2016; Lisińska-Kuśnierz, Gajewska, 2014), which is a significant advantage for smaller organizations.

Moving on to the next part of the question most respondents claimed that, although not yet know the changes to be introduced by the latest amendment, however suspect that will continue to be a set of general guidelines, addressed mainly to the larger manufacturing companies. Do not inclusive of,

however, that after a full hearing with the new standard (which in the course of the research was not yet available) may verify their decisions. It is worth noting that a significant proportion of respondents (30%) have not yet determined whether it will implement ISO 9001: 2015, but they still have two years to make that decision and this period are planning to spend on in-depth analysis of the proposed changes and scrupulous calculation of the costs associated with further modification of the system.

According to the author it can not be excluded that the ISO 9001: 2015 will be enjoyed by a relatively high popularity among smaller organizations due to the less emphasis on documentation and new/reinforced approaches like consideration of organizational Context and (relevant) Stakeholders, Risk Based thinking and Knowledge Management (Fonseca, 2015).

4. Conclusion

Small and medium-sized organizations undoubtedly are forced to look for new solutions and ideas to improve their functioning. Based on the study and analysis of the literature is difficult to answer the question of whether the quality management system according to ISO 9001 is recommendable to small and medium-sized enterprises? However, the research process has allowed the following conclusions, which may affect the decision stuff in implementation of the requirements of ISO 9001:

- small and medium-sized enterprises, in most cases have to face the problem of lack of financial resources, infrastructure and qualified staff to develop and maintain a highly effective and efficient quality management system,
- In most cases, system maintenance costs are still too high,
- with the help of qualified consultants in parts of the organization we were able to implement a system of management's expectations,
- implementation of standardized quality management system improves the efficiency of achieving the objectives in terms of quality,
- representatives of small and medium-sized organizations do not have sufficient knowledge about the changes made in ISO 9001: 2015, which (for the moment) are the skeptical.

Adopted in the working research hypothesis can be considered true because:

- the majority of respondents considered that the ISO 9001 does not take sufficient account of the specificities of small and medium-sized organizations.

The results presented in the work may be helpful for the management of small and medium-sized organizations considering about the decision to implement a quality management system according to ISO 9001. According to the author, smaller organizations may consider the option to implement the requirements of the quality management system according to ISO 9001, which will not be certified. It should be emphasized also that due to the relatively small number of organizations surveyed, the results should be treated as some tips that will require further research and reflection

It should be remembered that in September 2015 the norm of ISO 9001: 2015 was published which was significantly modified in relation to ISO 9001: 2008. Perhaps the changes will lead to increased interest in ISO 9001 among small and medium-sized organizations. It will surely be an area worthy of further research and reflection (Zimon, 2016).

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