

The development of quality standards in Albania

Eshija Adem Shehabi

Tetovo State University

Abstract

Quality standards as a quick and inalienable process for the development of a state or private organization affects the structure and efficiency of the management of the organization, the effectiveness of internal development that represents a quality product or service accepted by the client. Standards management is a documented process for the entire organization. Tests or lab analysis that guarantee the constant quality of products and services are only achieved with the application, implementation and certification of quality standards. Albania, as a developing country and on the efforts of a deeper integration in the international economy, must necessarily develop quality standards, as a key process in order to be competitive in the international market.

This manuscript analyzes the integrated local standards in accordance with international standards. According to the collected data and statistics these quality standards have contributed in the competitiveness in the international economy.

Keywords: Quality standards, organization, economic development, Globalization, SMC.

Introduction

Quality standards are considered as an instrument for the development of organizations, thus implementation of international standards is a prerequisite to ensure a quality product or service. Organizations cannot permit their focus to be only on the domestic market. Many industries are global and organizations have lower costs and greater awareness of their product brand. Organizations must take the necessary measures in order to be competitive in the international market. The delay of the measures could lead to exit from the market or decrease the competitiveness. This does not mean that organizations must operate in more countries to succeed, but in order to be successful, they may choose specific part of the global market and it would be unthinkable without the application of international standards.

Organizations that have a major involvement in the market for a long or short period, as mentioned above, apply international standards, set up their own standards and models, but for small and medium enterprises the application of international quality standards is inalienable (Shehabi, 2016).

The process of development of quality standards and globalization

Customer satisfaction is the mission and goal of any organization (Drucker, 2005). State institutions always operate on the basis of their legal status, but in order to meet certain needs of their society they start to apply quality standards to enhance credibility. Besides serving the civil society and organizations state institutions are

closely related to private or state organizations that provide services and products. To guarantee efficacy, implementation of international and local standards is mandatory for both parties and state institutions must provide assistance for private organizations to join international market. Foreign organizations also tend to enter our local markets. Thus, Republic of Albania besides agreements and memberships in various organizations and international and regional institutions for economic development should also help local organizations from the competitiveness of organizations that apply all domestic and international contemporary standards.

The main factor that relates domestic economy or economy of other countries is marketing. Marketing is a factor that affects the actions of the organization, such as: (internal factors the instruments of marketing and organization) and external factors: the market environment (Ristovksa & Merketin, 2014).

According to International Standardization Organization, the most known and worldwide used standard is the Quality management system ISO 9001, part of the ISO 9000. Standard ISO 9001 defines requirements for a quality management system that can be used in any large or small organization, regardless the field of its activity. So far, there are more than one million organizations certified with ISO 9001, in more than 170 countries. Standards set up standards! They bring change, facilitate quality attainment, provide safety, unify test methods and procedures and overall facilitate communication by defining what a "standard" is in terms of products and services. Standards are established by those who implement them in practice and know exactly why they are used. Standards have a significant contribution to economic growth.

- ❖ Standards encourage economic growth;
- ❖ Standards are producers instruments to implement legislation;
- ❖ Standards encourage the growth of competition;
- ❖ Standards facilitate trade by eliminating technical barriers;
- ❖ Standards provide the appropriate ecological level, sustainability and environment preservation¹

Quality standards development in Albania

Organizations with certified products and services have a considerable competitive advantage in the market. In order for them to be competitive also in the regional or international markets they must implement the international criteria. In Albania there are two state institutions, competent for quality and technical standards and the only ones who develop and represent domestic and international standards: DPS- General Directorate of Standardization and DPA – General Directorate of Accreditation (ekonomia.gov.al). DPS is in charge of the development and publication of quality and technical standards. DPA treats accreditation and development of organizations that exercise their activity on the basis of one or several standards such as testing laboratories, analysis laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies. DPS was established about 66 years ago (<http://dps.gov.al/> 01.09.2016).

Since 2008 DPS is a correspondent member of the international organization ISO -

¹ https://www.dps.gov.al/button_105.html.

International Organization for Standardization, DPS, an associate member of the IEC - International Electro technical Commission (iec.ch), and an affiliate member of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN, French : Comité Européen de Normalisation) & CENELEC-European Electrotechnical Committee for Standardization (cen.eu).

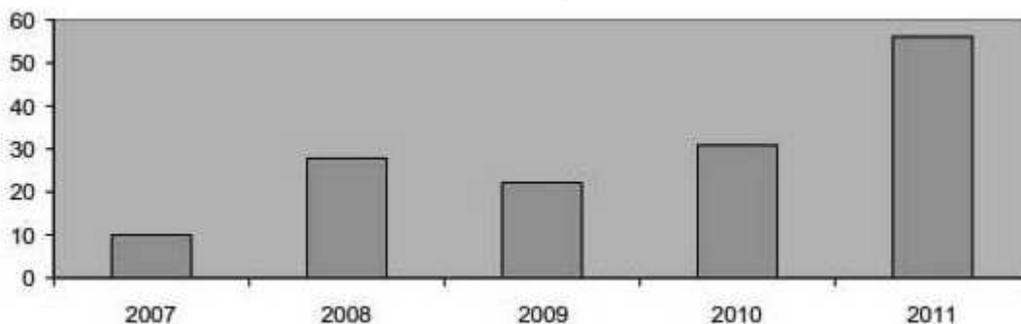
DPS is the first public institution certified with ISO 9001 in Albania (dps.gov.al).

Standards in Albania are known as SSH – Albanian standard; EN- European Standards, and international standard – ISO International Organization for Standardization (iso.org). In Albania the most used standard is ISO 9001, and then follows ISO 14001 environmental management system, ISO 22000 quality management system and food safety, etc.

The implementation of quality management system ISO 9001 and other quality standards enables the interior well-functioning of organizations through increasing efficiency and accountability, reflected in quality services and products and consumers satisfaction. Identification of market needs defines planning and quality policy. The definition of authority and the responsibility for specific phases of the work, improvement of interior communication, supervision documents, better management of human resources, more effective business processes, better interior organization, work monitoring, effective data analysis and success measurement lead to continuous improvement, corrective and preventive measures, improvement of collected statistics and effective costs monitoring (Shehabi & Lleshi, 2013).

Table+1, Progress of the development of accreditation

Source: Directorate of Accreditation report 2011.



From the last publication of DPA, until 2013 there are 33 accredited subjects, of which: 19 testing laboratories, 2 Bodies of management systems certification and 12 inspection bodies. These data are increasing compared to previous years.

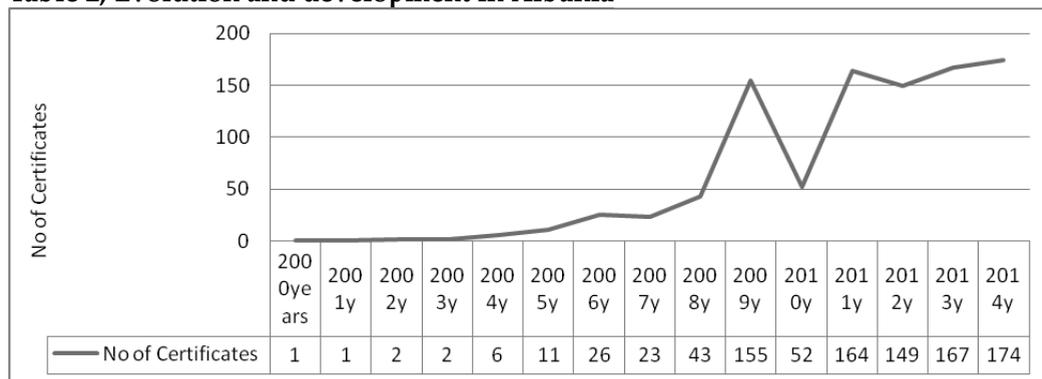
Improving quality standards is necessary to succeed in domestic and foreign market. The quality of products is related to consumers demand. The production process must meet the required parameters. Consumers are in search of products that meet their needs, at a reasonable price, regardless of the country of origin (Shehabi, 2016). The most required standards in Albania are those of construction, oil and petrol (SSH EN 590 and SSH EN 228), quality management standards for testing and calibration laboratories SSH EN ISO 9001, SSH EN ISO/IEC 17025, etc.

DPA depends on the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship and it operates under the Law No .116 / 2014 dated 11.09.2014 “On accreditation of conformity assessment bodies in the Republic of Albania”, DCM no. 667, dated 07.29.2015 - “On the organization and functioning of the DPA” and under the requirements of S SH ISO/IEC 17011 standard “General requirements for accreditation bodies which accredit conformity assessment bodies”. DPA aims to accredit and define the competences of conformity assessment bodies to carry out these activities: testing; calibration; inspection; certification of products; certification of management systems; certification of persons. DPA has signed the EA - MLA (mutual recognition agreements) in the field of testing with the Decision dated 2 October 2015. DPA is accepted on May of 2015 as a member with full rights in the European Organization for Accreditation. On 28.11.2008 DPA was assigned member with full rights in IAF (International Accreditation Forum). At a regional level DPA has signed a memorandum of understanding with counterpart institutions in Greece, Romania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Turkey, Poland, Hungary (<http://dpa.gov.al/> 01.09.2016).

As mentioned above on the introduction of the current situation, all Western Balkan countries are on their path towards European integration. As a consequence, joining the single market is associated with a high and powerful competition. Besides the several factors that affect enterprises development, such as economic and politic, a key element in the competitiveness in the international market is the quality of products and services, by meeting the national and international criteria. The most well-known international standard is ISO 9001. It is widely applied and assists the development and efficacy of organizations.

Besides preparing domestic organization for external markets, foreign companies will enter our market as well. Below are displayed graphics of the development of export-import trade between Albania and the European Union (Table 2) and the development of ISO certifications that increases parallel to the trade exchange between Albania and the European Union (Table 3).

Table 2, Evolution and development in Albania

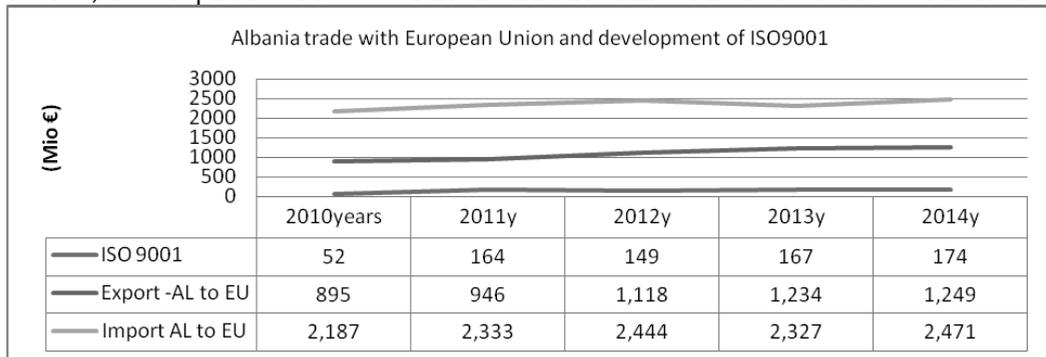


Source: iso.org

As seen above, quality standard development starts from 2000, with the first ISO 9001

standard. According to EAS International report of 2015, since 2007 organizations started to certified parallel with other standards. Food industry organizations besides ISO 9001 used also ISO 22000 – Food safety. Construction organizations along with ISO 9001 use ISO 14001 standards-Environmental management, and OHSAS 18001-Occupational health and safety, which indicates that the movement of the curve is accompanied with other standards. This progress on standards integration has been expanded in organizations with various activities, which besides being subject to laws for environment protection, food safety, occupational health and safety and laws on standards and product control, are also equipped with certifications. Is worth mentioning that in the European report on the Western Balkans, including Albania is noticed a decrease in export-import in the years 2009-2010. The same decrease is noticed for the certified organizations in 2009-2010.

Table 3, Development of ISO 9001 in Albania in terms of increased trade with the EU



Source: iso.org; Source Eurostat Comext - Statistical regime 4

The function of a production organization is affected by several factors besides quality standards, such as internal factors (quality standards included), and external factors (political, economic, technological, competition) (Raimi, 2008). According to ISO.org report, since 2000, application for quality management standard certification in Albania has increased. In 2009 are distributed 155 certifications. This figure was reduced to 52 certifications in 2010. Collected data from ISO.org indicates that years 2011-2013 had the same trend with 164-167 certifications in 2013 and 174 in 2014. The increasing trend of quality standards development such as ISO 9001, indicates the relation between quality products and services and the growth of exports towards EU market, compared to imports from the EU. In the above table is submitted the direct relation of quality standards and rapid growth of exports in the international market.

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper are presented the first steps that indicate quality standards development, based on the most applied standard, ISO 9001. This development has gone parallel with the increase on Albanian economy. Most of the organizations that apply ISO 9001, have integrated other standards, such as ISO 14001, ISO 22000 etc.

Analysis and reports reflected above indicate the relations between quality standards adoption and economic development. Organizations relate adoption of standards

with the quality of their products and services. This is a great benefit, but ISO 9001 consist on other several requirements, like management, documentation, types of registration, etc., in order to establish a high level of confidence between the contracting parties.

Quality services are related to standards and capacity. Supporting standardization, capacity building, education and training are necessary for quality services. Orientation, information and training of private sector to take reasonable decisions concerning investments and to create new standards must be the focus of policies to support quality.

Furthermore, quality services are related to industry and human resources. To have a competitive industry, is necessary to set up standards and increase capacity building. Our organization must adopt all the necessary standards to strengthen market position in the regional and global economy. This process is inevitable given the fact that Albania path is undoubtedly European Integration.

Businesses are familiar with the requirements for integration into the global economy. The need for their implementation process should be practical and scientific in order to affect the future development. Enterprises are aware of the importance of application and implementation of international and national standards and are prepared to apply them in the production process and technological development.

References

- Eshija, Sh. & Lleshi, S. (2012). *Globalization, Development, Management & Public Policy: A Perspective for Business Development*. Pristina.
- Arsovski, M. & Eshija, Sh. (2013). *Cilësisë dhe siguria e ushqimit parakusht për pjesëmarrje në tregun global*, Tetovo.
- Eshija, Sh. & Lleshi, S. (2013). *Ndikimi i sistemit të menaxhimit cilësisë në ndërmarrjet kosovare*, Tetovo.
- Eshija, Sh. (2016). *Quality Standards Impact in Marketing Activities in Food Organizations Industry in the Republic of Macedonia*. *Anglisticum Journal (IJLLIS)*.
- Eshija, Sh. & Memeti, S. (2016). *Quality Standards as Preconditions for the Presentation to the European Market*. *Anglisticum Journal (IJLLIS)*.
- Drucker, P. (2005). *Najvaznije o menadzmentu, izbor iz radova o menadzmentu* Petera F. Druckera, M.E.P Consult, Zagreb.
- Raimi, N. (2008). *Menaxhimi i Biznesit te Vogel*, Tetovo.
- Jovanovska, S. R. (2014). *Marketing teoria I praktika*, Skopje.
- Smith, A. K. (1993). *Total quality management in public sector*, *Quality Progress*, June.
- Gilbert, G. (1992), *Quality improvement in a defense organization*, *Public Productivity and Management Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1.
- ENISO9001:2008 "Quality Management System" Geneva, Swiss, 2008.
- Report of EAS International, 2015.
- European Union, *Trade with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Trade flows by SITC section 2010 – 2014 / Source Eurostat Comext - Statistical regime 4 -10.04.2015*.
- www.iso.org/iso/home/standards.htm
- www.dps.gov.al/images/upload/pdf/Informacion%20mbi%20%20DPS.pdf
- www.dps.gov.al/button_105.html
- dpa.gov.al/sq/faq/cili-eshte-ndryshimi-midis-akreditimit-dhe-certifikimit
- dpa.gov.al/sq/rreth-dpa