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## Chapter 5

# Examination of complementary aspects of the models and preference factors in institutions

### 5.1 Common features of the three models

The various quality management models analyzed in this study require the organization in question to have a quality management system. This is obligatory under the ISO 9001 model, that is to say such a system must be in formal operation in the organization. This is not a strict requirement for Accreditation or for National Awards or Excellence Prizes, but in practice such a system must be in place in these contexts too because the evaluation criteria that are used focus specifically on quality assurance and continual improvement mechanisms for mission processes.

All the models are geared to helping organizations to generate and maintain systems that lead to total quality, that is to say quality in all parts of the organization. This means that the organization is conceived of as a system rather than as a collection of parts in which one part might be defective without affecting the others or the organization's mission. The way that this objective is attained is different in each of the models.

All three models ask, implicitly or explicitly, how they can overcome so-called "structural disconnection" or "*lack of coordination between the activities and objectives of people who operate in separate functional units, and the existence of numerous ill-defined areas and jurisdictions in varied and complex processes*". In the Integrated Educational Quality Model (MICE - Modelo Integral de Calidad en Educación) this question is asked in a more concrete way: How can objectives, processes and results be adapted and matched with each other?<sup>1</sup>

All the models have the concept—in some, like the awards, it is implicit, and in others like the ISO 9000 and accreditation it is explicit—that having a good

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<sup>1</sup> Manes, Juan Manuel: "Modelo Integral de Calidad...", op. cit.

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quality management system in full operation is a better guarantee of achieving good results in the management's mission, and consequently of delivering excellent products and services to customers.

All parties involved wish to promote continual improvement in organizations, and self-evaluation and external evaluation make it possible to clearly identify opportunities for improvement, to draw up plans to overcome deficiencies that are exposed, to ensure better performance in processes, and therefore to achieve results that satisfy customers.

The processes of the ISO 9000, accreditation and awards (and the EFQM and Baldrige scheme) all involve the same main steps, and these can be summed up as (a) self-evaluation in the institution, (b) external evaluation, (c) final evaluation, and (d) public recognition by a duly authorized body. As was explained in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this book, these "stages" are called by different names, have different requirements and involve different procedures, but in a general sense, in one way or another, the methodological and operational schemes of the three models all have these stages.

## **5.2 Complementary aspects of the three models**

Some experts assert that as the different models develop over time they become increasingly complex as regards requirements, and have an ever-widening range of objectives. This development can be seen as a sequence that passes through (a) legal constitution of the formal structure, (b) the certification of processes and systems, (c) the accreditation of systems and results, and (d) the recognition of excellence in management.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, when the initiative is taken to develop an institution or training programme using this sequence, it has to go through the following process, (a) compliance with a group of minimum requirements with respect to its structure to be able to operate legally, (b) the development of its quality management system and the certification of this with some international standard like the ISO 9000 family, (c) accreditation under the official procedures of the country in question, if there is a system that corresponds to the nature and level of the institution or programme, and (d) the application of a management excellence model, with or without the aim of going in for a quality award or management excellence award.

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Quite apart from the suitability or need to follow this sequence, and in the light of the descriptions in the previous chapters of the study, there does not seem to be any technical reason why an organization should not apply different quality management models at the same time or one after the other. In fact, some vocational training institutions in the region do just this, although they differ as to their motivation and aims for doing so.

We can distinguish at least three possible scenarios:

- a) Organizations that develop their quality management systems applying a combination of two or more models, for reasons that are strictly technical.
- b) Organizations that apply various models at the same time but to different processes in the institution's mission, to comply with national standards such as the INACAP and the IPLA in Chile.
- c) Organizations that apply two models, one after the other, because the first is a formal requirement to be able to accede to the second.

The SENAI in Brazil is a good example of the first scenario. The general aim of its management excellence programme is to “...*institute a national programme and a methodology for developing management for excellence based on standards and awards that are recognized in the market and through external evaluation, with reference to the criteria of the national quality award*”, and its specific objectives include “...*seeking certification for greater added value / and / widening ISO 9001:2000 and other certification that are pertinent to the performance of operational units*”. The key strategies of the programme include being compatible with the management excellence guidelines of the National Quality Foundation (FNQ - Fundación Nacional de la Calidad) and having an external evaluation based on the criteria and points systems of the national quality award.<sup>3</sup>

In the second scenario we find organizations like the INACAP in Chile, in which certification under the NCh 2728 Chilean Standard, which is the local version of the ISO 9001:2000 for technical training organizations (OTEC), “...*is only for the training area and also applies, apart from what is intrinsic to a quality management system, to the requirements of the SENCE to be able to operate as an OTEC*”.

On the other hand, it has “...*Institutional Accreditation corresponds to the Higher Education Area, and this is the result of the country itself set-*

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<sup>3</sup> SENAI, “Diagnóstico Nacional da Gestão para a Excelência no Sistema SENAI”. Presentation by Marcelo Mendonça at the 4th Latin American Quality in Education Congress. SENAI, Brazil 2005. (See [www.cinterfor.org.uy](http://www.cinterfor.org.uy) / IV Congreso).

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*ting up a national quality assurance system in which various institutions have been invited to participate”.*<sup>4</sup>

Similarly the La Araucana Professional Institute (IPLA - Instituto Profesional La Araucana), in Concepción, Chile, an organization that offers training services like OTEC and also technical undergraduate courses, has obtained certification for its quality assurance mechanisms in training under the ISO 9000 standards, the NCH 2728 and the UKAS international standard.

In 2005 the IPLA (the whole organization, not just the Concepción branch) underwent the institutional accreditation process for its undergraduate management and teaching, as prescribed by the National Accreditation Committee (CNAP - Comisión Nacional de Acreditación).

As to the third scenario, there is a possible case in Colombia that has not yet come to fruition. This is a system for the accreditation of institutions and work training programmes, and it is still in the design phase. In the consultation working document about this that is currently being studied by the Ministry of Social Protection, it is proposed that *“Accreditation will be awarded to institutions that after obtaining registered certification for all programmes (or a significant percentage of them), can certify the quality of one or more of their key processes for work training in the organization as a whole under international standards like the NTC ISO 9000:2000.”*<sup>5</sup>

To sum up, an institution can implement its quality management system using different combinations of the quality models available, and adapt them to its own specific situation in terms of mission, organization, size, quality philosophy, access to resources, legal requirements, financial needs, and projected positioning in the local, national or international context.

The use of various models is viable because of the common features and complementary aspects described above in this study.

### **5.3 Preference factors in different institutions**

In chapter 2, 3 and 4 we looked at the characteristics of the three models and the benefits that applying each of them brings to an organization. The perception of these benefits, and also perceived technical or economic or legal

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<sup>4</sup> E-mail reply from Sergio Schmidt Yuraszeck, INACAP Quality Certification Sub-Manager, in October, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Peña B., Margarita and González A., Liliana: “Propuesta para la Estructura...”, op. cit.

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advantages in each country, have an influence, and in some cases a decisive influence, on institutions' decisions about how to implement their quality management systems.

The SENA in Colombia, for example, opted to base its quality management system on the ISO 9000 family of standards for reasons that were (a) technical, (b) to do with policy, and (c) legal. The technical reasons were that the organization considered the model implicit in this family of standards to be very suitable as a guide to implementing a good quality system, and would therefore make the organization more competitive. The policy advantage was that acquiring certification under the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 would lead to international recognition for the institution's processes and centres. As to legal reasons, the SENA is a public body and is therefore obliged to implement a quality management system under the provisions of Law 872 of 2003, by which the quality management system in the executive branch of the public administration was set up, and also under the Colombian Public Management Technical Quality Standard NTCGP 1000: 2004, which in practice is the ISO 9001:2000 with additional elements to make it suitable for the specific situation of State institutions.<sup>6</sup>

In the INACAP in Chile, *"...the reason to choose one system or another is directly related to the kind of training activity the institution is engaged in. If this is training then certification under the NCh 2728 is suitable, as this is a SENCE requirement. If, on the other hand, it is for teaching the higher education area then the institution should opt for accreditation... Because the institution is involved in these two areas it has engaged in both processes"*.<sup>7</sup> In the former situation there can be no debate about preference as certification of this type is compulsory for all institutions that wish to register with the SENCE as OTECs, and by doing so have access to the resources that this organization channels into training activity. In the latter case, participation in the accreditation process is voluntary (as was explained in chapter 3).

In general, in countries that run accreditation systems, the reasons for organizations to participate in them can be based on the suitability (and necessity) of joining a national system that provides credibility with the public, and on being able to make available to potential users substantiated information about

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with an expert from the SENA National Quality Committee in Bogotá, November, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> E-mail reply from Sergio Schmidt Yuraszeck, cit.

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the quality of the services the institution offers, all of which amounts to an important competitive advantage in a highly competitive market.

An institution's preference for a particular system also depends on the legal possibility of accessing the formal benefits of one or other model. The model that involves the fewest restrictions is the ISO 9000 family of standards since it is designed for any kind of organization, whereas accreditation, on the other hand, involves participation parameters that are clearly delimited. This is the situation in Colombia and Chile, where accreditation is only available for higher education institutions and programmes. As was mentioned in section 3.4.1, Colombia is in the process of developing an accreditation system for work training institutions and programmes.

National quality awards (as is explained in chapter 4) are organized in categories of enterprises and organizations in such a way that it is not always easy for educational institutions to take part, since the definitions of components, criteria, customers and points systems may not be suitable or may generate conceptual resistance or involve operational restrictions. This is why it is important in the awards to have a separate category for educational institutions, as is the case in (at least) Mexico and Uruguay, or to have school management excellence awards such as the system being developed in Colombia.

Lastly, for many institutions that are under financial constraints the main preference factor when it comes to choosing one or other model to develop their quality management systems is the cost of participation and implementation. This applies whether their goal is certification, accreditation, going in for an award, or internal improvement to strengthen the organization.