QUALITY MANAGEMENT AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN THOUGHT

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to systematise the view of the human being from antiquity to modern times, to consider how anthropological philosophy can influence the discipline of quality management sciences in companies, and to demonstrate that the mentioned disciplines of sciences directly influence each other and how the human being is an important factor in the quality management process.

Design/methodology/approach: The human being can be considered as a common point of reference for philosophy and quality management science. The paper is a literature review of the achievements of philosophy regarding the human being and an attempt to link the quality management sciences with philosophy (philosophical anthropology).

Findings: Thanks to the development of philosophy, man is no longer treated merely as an element of a larger, complex whole or mechanism in which he acts as a mode. He is an individual, endowed with unique predispositions which, if properly managed, can bring enormous benefits not only to himself, but also to the working environment in which he functions and in his private life.

Originality/value: Considering quality and quality management in the context of a philosophy changes the perspective of how people are perceived in the work environment. The combination of quality management science and philosophy can allow a completely different dimension of business management to be discovered.

Keywords: management, quality, employee, human being, philosophy.

Category of the paper: Viewpoint.

1. Introduction

The concept of quality can be encountered as far back as ancient times. Since ancient times, man has followed quality, but the first mention of quality was made by Plato. He used the word poiotes - quality is the degree of perfection that things achieve. In doing so, Plato juxtaposed the concept of quality and beauty, which assesses the value of things (Mroczko, 2012). The definition of quality as such is difficult to grasp, since it usually refers to subjective feelings

and can change depending on, among other things, the stages of development of civilization or the awareness that a company acquires with the education of management and employees (Bielawa, 2011). However, if one were to look at what most affects quality, it is undoubtedly the human factor. Looking at the human being, whose sense of existence has been pondered by philosophers since antiquity, is an extremely important aspect in building the good name of enterprises. Therefore, there is no doubt that the discipline of management sciences (including quality) can be combined with philosophy and anthropology as sciences in which a key role is played by man as such, along with his emotions, thoughts, biological and psychophysical conditions. The question to be answered is, who is man? This question, which is strictly philosophical in nature, can prove to be the key to understanding the employee as a human being, which in turn can help understand how to manage people and processes so that the company's profit is as high as possible. The close combination of anthropological philosophy and quality management science in the available literature is rare. There are many sources in which the human being is placed at the center as a determinant of corporate success. In the modern world, companies are paying more and more attention to the employee as a human being, but this tendency is not often linked to the achievements of philosophers over many centuries. This topic was chosen because it enables a whole new discovery of both disciplines and makes it possible to merge aspects of the human being, his existence, even the meaning of life and noodynamics with economics and quality in a broad sense.

It should be remembered that the definition of profit is not limited to obtaining benefits only in the form of company revenues, but also includes intangible benefits, such as employee satisfaction with the workplace and the company's good reputation in the domestic and international markets. Understanding human beings in industry has many perspectives to consider when considering a company's operations (Grybauskas, Cardenas-Rubio, 2024), especially in an era of technological developments where people communicate with artificial intelligence or are completely replaced by automation and robotisation of processes (Frey, Osborne, 2017).

2. Literature review

The following part of the article will cover an attempt to clarify the definition of a human being. It should be borne in mind that there is no single, specific definition of man. Over the centuries, many philosophers have looked at man from different perspectives, which has resulted in a whole base of different meanings that define man's existence in the world. To begin with, it is important to realize that for the believer, the Bible is the first Book that explains the existence of man. It explains that man is someone created by God in the process of creating the world. Man is connected to God because he has a soul. On the pages of the Bible one can

encounter the evolution of thoughts about the soul of man, which in the Old Testament is referred to as ruah (almost divine spirit), and then nephesh (individual soul - psyche), while man is seen as a general whole that cannot be divided (Stachowiak, 1974). The New Testament, on the other hand, is a more broadly developed definition of man, where nephesh is switched to pneuma (that is, the spirit that directs man from within). Pneuma is inextricably linked to Christ and his actions.

The definition of man was dealt with by philosophers as far back as antiquity. Taking up the challenge of philosophically explaining what a human being is, in a time spanning antiquity, Socrates stated that the most valuable knowledge is self-knowledge (Olafson, 1995) According to Plato, the two elements that make up a human being are the body and the soul, while the soul has a threefold meaning. It can be sensually driven, sensually desirous and rational - the latter is characteristic only of man (Faggin, 1954). The soul makes the body live. *This is the only clue we have, indeed, that if any one of us desires when to know something in a pure way, he must liberate himself from the body and view reality with the soul alone*(...) (Plato, 2005) - Plato believed that the soul was responsible for man's cognition of the world. Another philosopher who pondered the theory of man was Aristotle. The soul cannot exist outside the body and is an eidos, i.e., a Form that performs its tasks through organs (i.e., through the body). Aristotle is the author of the phrase: *pantes anthropoi tou eid eidenai oregontai physei*, which translated means that *humans by nature desire knowledge* (Gogacz, 1969) and that cognition and knowledge come from the soul. The first humanists in antiquity were the sophists, the most famous of whom is Protagoras. He uttered the postulate, which reads as follows: *Antropos metros ton panton* (man is the measure of all things). What man sees or feels is an individual truth for each individual. Included in this sentence is the relativism of man's perception of the world.

In the 19th century, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, in his work Sein und Zeit, tried to explain that who man is today has been shaped by history, and he called man's existence Seiende, or being also referred to as Dasein. According to Heideger: *Diese Seiende (...) fassen wir terminologisch als Dasein* (Heidegger, 1984).

In 1913, Max Scheler, a German philosopher, published a paper entitled Zur Phaenomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefuhle. In his publication, he presents the view that man is only able to know what he has previously loved. Love is the bridge between man and the world, and man's ability to love opens up new possibilities for him (Scheler, 1913). Only man has the ability to love, and because of this he is able to connect with nature, with knowledge of the world, and this is something that distinguishes him from other beings living on Earth.

Man can also be called by the term *rational animal* (Krąpiec, 1991). The characteristic is that man is responsible for the development of technology, but he would not be able to do this if he were not a herd creature. It is the presence of other people that allows the individual to develop in a dynamic way. An example is the research that was done in the post-World War II

period on newborns by physician Rene A. Spitz. He observed the development of a group of newborns who, although fed and washed, were deprived of contact with their mothers. It turned out that the lack of affection and maternal warmth wreaked havoc on the nervous system in such young children. After three months of separation from their mothers, the children became increasingly apathetic, the brain did not develop properly, weight began to drop, and the toddlers' contact with the environment was very limited. After five months, Rene A. Spitz observed the children taking on a so-called waxy face and limiting their movements to a minimum involving finger movements. Almost 40% of children treated in this way did not live to the age of two (Brzeziński, 2013). From the first days of life, a human being needs contact with his mother and with another human being in order to develop properly. The quality of life of a man who has been loved from infancy, in the subsequent stages until old age, allows him to fulfill his life to the fullest.

Man, in addition to being a rational and herd creature, can create art, culture and also uses symbols. Accordingly, man can be called by the term *animali symbolicum* (Cassirer, 1944). He is capable of abstract thought and of creating a reality in which he can contemplate. There is also an evolutionary-naturalistic theory of man. One can quote the words of J. Huxley, an English biologist. According to him, before man existed, progress *was a rare and capricious by-product of evolution. Man has the ability to turn it into the main feature of his future evolution and to direct its course in accordance with its intended purpose* (Huxley, 1947). It is through the process of thinking that man is able to manage not only himself, but also the enterprise, and it is on him that the quality of work in the enterprise depends. Management can make the workplace a *second home* for the employee or a place to which he does not want to return or perform his duties under a lot of stress, which in turn will affect the productivity of work and the quality of services provided. An interesting view on human spirituality is presented by Teilhard de Chardin, who uses the definition of noosphere to mean *a certain tension of consciousness on the surface of the Earth*. Teilhard de Chardin, as a philosopher and theologian, combined science and religion in his works and proved that these spheres of life not only are not mutually exclusive, but also complement each other, and that Christ *radiates to the entire universe as the highest, completely sovereign consciousness* (Teilhard de Chardin, 1984). He also operates a definition of human morality, which can be static or dynamic. Static morality, simply put, is the observance of moral principles. Dynamic morality strives for spiritual development. It is the presence of spirituality that characterizes man and distinguishes him from other creatures on Earth. Thanks to the development of morality, the development of civilization and industry is possible.

3. Research methods

An analysis of the available literature sources has been carried out to attempt a theoretical link between the two scientific disciplines - philosophical anthropology and management and quality sciences. Research regarding the 'measurement of the human being' in the context of philosophy and quality at the same time is limited, because the variables are difficult to define unambiguously in this case, nevertheless the common ground is the human being, who can be understood multifacetedly. A review of the literature regarding the eras that philosophy has lived through from ancient times to the present day has been carried out and, in this connection, an attempt has been made to trace the evolution of thought and concepts of human existence and to link these concepts to quality in its widest sense.

Mankind has known about quality since the earliest times. The first definition of quality was introduced by Plato, then Aristotle placed quality as one of the elements of reality, which also includes place and time (Hamrol, Mantura, 2002).

In ancient Rome, King Cicero introduced the concept of qualitas, which was later translated into other languages, including English - quality. Quality can be defined as:

- issue, which is *determined by the ability to satisfy customers and the intended and unintended impact on relevant interested parties. The quality of products and services includes not only their intended function and performance, but also their perceived value and benefit to the customer* (ISO 9000:2015);

- *perfection that cannot be achieved, but to which one must persistently strive* (Hamrol, Mantura, 2002);

- *fit for purpose* (Lock, 2002);

- *ability to satisfy stated and potential needs (of the customer)* (Griffin, 1998);

- *providing the customer with what he needs today, at a price he is willing to pay, at a cost we can sustain, uninterruptedly again and again, and providing him with something even better tomorrow. Quality is the degree of congruence between expectation and realization. (...) Quality is: invisible when it is good, impossible not to notice when it is bad(...)* (Lock, 2002).

It is important to keep in mind that the concept of quality and quality management systems are closely related to human beings. Quality has no right to exist without human beings. Many organizations are following the recommendations of ISO 9001, because quality management systems make a company gain a good reputation internationally (Gremyr et al., 2021). Quality management is regarded as a philosophy based on three pillars: techniques, principles and practice (Dean, Bowen, 1994).

Quality management systems are in close connection with people's commitment, implementation strategy, maturity of quality management (Poksinska, 2010). Also, the attitude of management has an impact on quality management systems in the enterprise (Coffey et al.,

2011). Involvement of employees and management in the continuous improvement of the enterprise is, in addition to the analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, business vision or processes, necessary for effective management of quality systems (Maguad, 2006). Proper quality management affects the mental health and functioning of employees and employers (Levine, Toffel, 2010).

Quality management has experienced several stages of development in its history. Quality Inspection (QI), whose era began in the early 20th century, consisted only of a technical look at the quality of products, i.e., sorting, finding sources of nonconformity, possible recovery and corrective action. The next stage in the development of quality management systems took place in the 1920s, when other aspects of quality began to be recognized (Rajkiewicz, Mikulski, 2016). The procedure for inspecting the skills of employees began, quality books and process supervision activities (so-called control cards) appeared. In the 1950s, the approach to quality management changed. Attempts to prevent defects and errors, instead of detecting them, began. Self-control processes began to play a large role, and the first enterprise quality plans, audits and certifications appeared.

Since the 1980s, quality management has become an indispensable part of running businesses, with leadership playing a significant role (Kaplan, 2001). According to Total Quality Management: the most important thing is the customer, and it is the customer's needs that should be the focus of quality management systems. The pursuit of quality is complicated by the fact that it can never be fully achieved, so standards have been created to guide companies to continuously improve their quality. The first standard was created in 1959 and was the US military standard MIL-Q-9858, reworked a few years later into the AQAP standard. The creation of subsequent standards led to the issuance of the ISO standardization that is popular today, the first standard of which was ISO 8402, which includes terminology, making it the basis for all ISO 9000 standards. Important standards in the ISO 9000 series include ISO 9001 (which contains requirements related to quality management systems) and ISO 9004 (which contains information and guidance on continuous improvement of the organization and the company's quality management systems).

Quality management should also not be limited to the human working environment. It is important to strive to improve the quality of life so that the employee is able to do his job properly. Quality of life consists of:

- Social quality of life (it can be internal and concern, among other things, views and beliefs, and external including family and other social groups).
- Professional quality (concerning qualifications, skills, material status and occupation).
- Quality of health (includes sports, other physical activities, mental health and nutrition).
- Quality of education and upbringing (concerning interests and personal development) (Goranczewski, Puciato, 2010).

Thus, quality management should be viewed from a broader perspective, encompassing not only the professional sphere, but also the private sphere of the employee. A decline in the quality of any of the components of quality of life can result in the deterioration of a person's functioning not only on the job, but also in society. The literature resources on philosophy and quality management sciences are rich in valuable items, but it is difficult to find measures or indicators to measure the degree to which the two scientific disciplines are linked (e.g. in the context of human functioning in the work environment).

4. Results

4.1. Antiquity

In ancient times, philosophers focused more on how the world was created than on man's being. They assumed that to understand man, one must first understand the world. The Pythagoreans believed that the human soul was immortal and believed in metempsychosis. Heraclitus of Ephesus made what is known as the humanist breakthrough involving the idea that man acquires wisdom by attempting to understand the logos derived from the gods and the cosmos (Wesoły, 1989). According to Parmenides of Elea, being is called that which exists and man can only think about what is, and truth can only be discovered by reason (Wesoły, 1992). Only the sophists (as the first humanists) turned their attention to human being in the most practical sense of its existence. They tried to answer the question, what makes a person successful in his life? One of the more famous sophists is Protagoras, who said that *man is the measure of all things, existing that they exist, and non-existing that they do not exist* (Niebrój, 2000). Referring to Protagoras' maxim - man is proof that in the world things can exist or not. Can this thought be applied to man's work environment? Can it be said that through an employee, an event at the workplace may or may not occur? Following this line of reasoning, one can come to a conclusion that seems obvious - if an employee has an accident, or if he avoids an accident, the event or lack thereof is directly related to the employee's behavior at the workplace. One can imagine a press on the shop floor turned on and a worker trying to repair or maintain it without first turning off the machine. In such a case, it is known with certainty that a tragic accident will occur because this worker failed to exercise caution. The lack of caution may be the result of a lack of proper training or a routine into which the worker has fallen. However, it is the employee's direct behavior in the performance of his duties that is the cause of the accident (or lack thereof). According to Plato, *experience allows one to direct one's life according to the rules of art, inexperience throws one into the play of fate* (Kuziak et al., 2004). The experience available to a company is the result of mistakes made by employees, but it is through these mistakes that safety management systems can be put in place to avoid further

accidents in the future. Without being aware of the consequences of one's actions, which is related to inexperience, a person is much more vulnerable to potentially accidental situations - an example of this is the brash driving behavior of some young drivers. For Socrates, human virtue (arete) is the highest good, which is not given to man from birth, but he acquires it in the course of his life. The good is useful (Kuziak et al., 2004). If virtue were understood as knowledge, which is a good, it could be inferred that ignorance is an evil. Often, poor quality of manufactured products or poor management of human resources is the result of ignorance.

4.2. Middle ages

Credo ut intelligam; intelligo ut credam (Kuziak et al., 2004) - I believe in order to know, I know in order to believe. At first glance, which is true, the words of St. Augustine can be adapted to the general existence of man in a world in which God's presence is strongly felt. Does this mean that this sentence can be considered in relation to jobs? For people who believe in God, who feel His presence, the answer will be simple. God is present in every moment of human life. He is also present in the performance of work. An attempt can be made to analyse a completely mundane situation, e.g. regarding training in occupational health and safety. Until a person experiences first-hand how important on-the-job training is, he will feel deep down that it is necessary, but only when he experiences certain situations in their living form will he come to the conclusion that he wants to prevent such situations. A person must get to know potentially accidental situations with their senses to believe that health and safety training is not only an invention of modern times. Another thing is that such training should not be a boring duty, but become an inspiration for each employee individually, which means that the employer should get to know his employees in a human way to ensure that each of them receives well-completed training. St. Augustine also said the sentence: *Si enim fallor, sum*, which translated into Polish means *If I am wrong, then I am*. What would health and safety training be if it were not for human error? In the case of an accident rate of zero, the safety function would be inherently unnecessary. It is thanks to the mistakes made by people over the years, at various workplaces, that it is possible to develop on-the-job training and training in the field of occupational safety in forms that are interesting for the recipients, not necessarily multimedia presentations, which are not as attractive as all kinds of games or other activities activating employees in this area.

4.3. Modern times

Running a business cannot take place without the application of certain moral and legal norms. Otherwise, the operation of such a workplace may cause a lot of harm to employees. Immanuel Kant, in his work entitled Critique of Practical Reason, says: *Two things fill my heart with ever new and ever-growing admiration and respect, the more often and persistently I reflect on them: the starry sky above me, the moral law within me* (Kant, 1984). It is the moral

law in people that makes the look at the employee take on a new dimension. It is obvious that good treatment of an employee by management will not eliminate human error during work, but it has a huge impact on the quality of manufactured products or services provided due to the well-being of people in the workplace. It should be borne in mind that although the accident rate cannot be completely eliminated at all, the number of accidents should be reduced to a minimum. As Arthur Schopenhauer said, *although every misfortune separately seems to be an exception, misfortune as such is the rule* (Kuziak et al., 2004). Accidents at the workplace should also be treated in this way. Each accident confirms a certain rule, but at the same time it should be considered individually for each injured party. Most accidents at work are caused by human error, but each one is a separate case, considered separately. Only by looking at the problem in both an individual and a "global" way can we understand it more deeply. A rational approach to the problem of accidents allows us to achieve a kind of freedom, the highest form of which is responsibility for another person. In this way, the words of Gottfried W. Leibniz can be applied to the work environment, who believed that *the more we are guided by reason in our actions, the more free we are – and enslaved, the more we succumb to passions* (Kuziak et al., 2004). Therefore, it is possible to imagine what the working environment of a man would look like if he was guided by his drives instead of reason. It is worth asking yourself whether it would be safe in such an environment? Would the quality and efficiency of work be greater or less? Or would the quality of the services provided be exactly the same as if the employee was guided by reason? If the last question were answered in the affirmative, there would be fewer accidents at work in each industry, and health and safety training would be unnecessary. The following scenario can be considered: the situation takes place on the assembly line of a car of a well-known brand. Each employee has a certain amount of time to perform their task, e.g. install a wiper, adjust the glass to the door opening, or tighten door handles. If even one employee started to function according to his whims, the car could leave the assembly line with a huge delay or not leave at all. This, in turn, would have disastrous consequences for the quality and good name of the company. Both on-the-job training and occupational health and safety training are aimed at organizing the employee's knowledge of how to behave in the workplace to avoid an accident. *Progress always remains a simple development of order* (Kuziak et al., 2004) - the words of Auguste Comte perfectly reflect the role of order in quality management systems. Thanks to proper organization and health and safety training, it is possible to implement safety and progress of the company, also in the quality of services or products. Organizing the rules of safe behavior at the workplace is tantamount to organizing the employee's knowledge on topics related to maintaining safety while performing professional activities, which in turn will translate into the efficiency of his or her work.

4.4. Present times

Each philosophical epoch is characterized by new thoughts about man. The human being, who is in the center of interest not only in philosophy or anthropology, but also in the field of quality management, is a component of the company's structure, thanks to which it can constantly develop on the domestic and foreign markets. It depends on the skills of a human how a given product will be produced, even if production is automated, because a human is also responsible for starting the devices. According to Ludwig Wittgenstein, *ambition kills thought* (Wittgenstein, 2000). How can this sentence be applied to the environment in which a person fulfills himself professionally? You can imagine a corporation in which only the results achieved by employees matter, at the expense of their mental and physical health. It is not difficult to guess that in the long run, employees will be laid off, which will result in lower profits for the company. Ambition and the desire for profit at all costs kill the thought of the employee as a human being. The employee becomes a machine to perform his work within certain standards and when he is not able to work out the standard, he will become useless to the company. This, in turn, will affect the good name of the company. An employee, feeling unfairly treated, may cause other potential employees to resign from participating in recruitment. *Every exact and especially scientific cognition is based on the obvious* (Krokos, 1984) – the words of Edmund Husserl can be quoted when returning to the thought of safety as an element determining the quality of work and the services provided or products manufactured in the company. What would health and safety training be if it were not for knowing what hazards exist in the plant? For example, a chemical laboratory worker working with carcinogenic and highly toxic substances will not need a demonstration on the hazards of the car assembly line, but on prevention or action if the substance gets into the eyes or on the skin. The person organizing the OHS training must first identify the hazards for a specific position. It is obvious, but thanks to such knowledge you can delve deeper into security issues, e.g. when working with hazardous substances.

5. Discussion

The contemporary view of man would not be the same if it were not for the influence of philosophy on the perception of the human being in subsequent epochs. Nowadays, society is increasingly paying attention to the role of humans in the work environment. It should be kept in mind that the development of industry and technology is associated with ever-increasing demands on human beings, such as a sense of purpose to be achieved (d'Alançon, 1994). The human being in the era of Industry 4.0 is beginning to be viewed differently in terms of the success of the company. Great attention is being paid, among other things, to the role of

leadership in the company (Gunasekaran, 2019). A human view of employees, and thus the creation of a friendly work environment, enables the development of professional competences of each employee in the workplace, and thus the quality of work improves. The quality of private life also improves due to the reduction of stress and the well-being of the employee, who is willing to return to work and function better at home. Increasingly, employers are using the term wellbeing to organize events to help employees take care of their mental health. Well-being is closely related to the quality of working life (including occupational health and safety) and has a significant impact on the productivity not only of the individual but also of the whole enterprise (Schulte, Vainio, 2010). There are many theories of how to define or measure human wellbeing, as well as concepts of how to obtain a state of wellbeing, but there is no doubt that wellbeing should be pursued (Sollis et al., 2022).

At the present time, it is impossible to measure by any method the extent to which anthropological philosophy can be combined with quality management science (human resources), but there is a common point between them, which is the human being. There are methods of measuring human capital in an organization. These include qualitative or financial methods of measurement, which use a variety of indicators, relating, for example, to age of retirement or salary levels (Lev, Schwarz, 1971). Perhaps in the future, the combination of philosophy and quality management will make it possible to discover new indicators or measures relating to philosophical or even transcendental issues linking human beings to quality in order to improve the quality of human functioning in society and the enterprise.

6. Conclusions

Mental health (meaning the proper care of the employee's mental comfort by the employer) is one of the most important, if not the most important, aspect affecting the quality of manufactured products or services. It is very important for companies to implement the idea of TQM and to consider more than just economic or technical aspects in their operations (Weckenmann et al., 2015). People and their specific needs are important (Wilkinson, Brown, 2007). Thanks to the development of philosophy, man is not treated only as an element of a larger, complex whole or a mechanism in which he plays the role of a cog. He is an individual, endowed with unique predispositions, which, if properly managed, can bring great benefits not only to himself, but also to the work environment in which he functions and in his private life. Quality management sciences can be combined with philosophy by human factor. It is important to remember that humans are complicated beings, so inventing the right measure or measures in this area can be complicated, but at the same time bring many benefits for the human comfort of the company, and therefore the organization in the future.

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