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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS AND QUALITY: CONFLICTS AND COMMON GROUNDS

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Abstract

Ethics and quality are intimately related to each other, as quality arises from three main factors, moral attitudes as a result of consciousness or awareness-raising, culture as a result of education and the use of know-how and the application of standards as results of learning and training. Ethics amount to fundamental moral attitudes, binding values and irrevocable standards. In this study, ethic and quality concepts which belonged to our intellectual agenda will be scrutinize. Then, the associations and contradictory of these concepts will investigate. For this reasons, the quality and ethics concepts as phenomena will look over according to enclosed cognitive associations and contradictory.

Keywords: Ethics, Quality, Conflicts

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's civilization is at a more advanced state than the societies that inhabited the earth in the past. However, progress does not necessarily mean that everything is proceeding towards the better. Only when the right tasks are performed in right ways, can the point attained be considered

progress. Nonetheless, mistakes may have been made in certain subjects rather than the rights. Or, when the right things are not performed via the right methods, the results achieved may not be the desired results. In this context, whether the contemporary civilization that we have attained today has brought prosperity and happiness to all mankind should be questioned. As a matter

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of fact, when optimistically stated, doing the right thing in a wrong way or choosing the wrong thing may be considered errors committed during the decision-making process. However, when mistakes that were made deliberately, not accidentally, owing to individual or political reasons are taken into consideration, concepts of ethics and morality will come to the foreground. In a pragmatic way, when the results obtained contribute positively to social benefit without doing damage to individual rights or when they contribute to individual goals without damage to the society or other individuals, ethical problems may not arise. On the other hand, another point that should not be ignored is compatibility with social ethics and norms.

Producing that which does not do damage to the individual or the society in accordance with socially-accepted principles falls within the scope of ethics while producing that which is right, error-free and beneficial is an issue of quality. In this context, when social progress and civilization are conceived together with dimensions of quality and ethics, they should be regarded positively. At this stage, maybe it would be appropriate to re-view quality from the perspective of ethics and ethics from the perspective of quality. When things are viewed from the perspectives of ethics and quality only, cognitive inconsistencies may arise in people's minds when they are obliged to make a choice within the context of the images of "good" and "bad".

Discussion of the phenomena of quality and ethics on a common ground may create an image of a re-exploration of social responsibility. However, it is an obligation facing us as humans in our struggle for civilization not to find that which exists as sufficient and endeavor to improve it further.

Therefore, we have to use the resources we possess efficiently by organizing our efforts in order to increase the benefits we will obtain through sources of wealth that civilization offers to us. In implementing this, we should uphold the rights of people with whom we share the world and pay heed to the quality of life of future generations from whom we have borrowed the world.

Efforts of human beings, whose existence began with a search for the good and the beautiful, form the essential dynamism of the civilization attained today. Man endeavors to create his own good with his faculty of selection. Today's civilization embodies this fluctuating experience that is directed forever towards the more beautiful and the better in concepts, phenomena and cultural elements. The faculty that enables man to distinguish the good from the bad will keep offering him the key to the unknown given that everything is in its usual course.

We have to achieve a balance between the struggle to reach the good and the right on the one hand and the efforts we make to attain the good and the correct on the other. The methods we may employ to reach the good and the right may be different. However, these methods must be good and correct and must create the same perceptual impressions for mankind. The controversies that have continued throughout history revolve around the dichotomy of ends versus means. Among these controversies, "reaching the good result taking the right path" yields us the relationship between ethics and quality.

When the phenomena of ethics and quality are discussed in different contexts, undoubtedly, paradoxical extensions will emerge. However, the attempt to raise quality from under the hegemony of capitalistic activities and free market

thinking to its true meaning in minds forms the objective of the present study. In this framework, the concepts of ethics and quality will be discussed and direct and indirect references made to ethics in applications of total quality management will be investigated.

2. ETHICS AS A CONCEPT

The total of principles, values, rules and customs that govern the relationships of people living in a certain society with one another and institutions is called ethics [1]. Ethics in its broadest sense seeks to answer the question of what is "right" for man and society. Business ethics, on the other hand, concerns the applications of ethical norms and rules in business life [2]. The term ethics has two meanings in our language. While the first states the rules and principles that people have to obey within a society, the second highlights philosophy of ethics. According to one definition, ethics is a total of traditional behavioral rules, laws and principles adopted by certain people in a certain period and governing individuals' relationships with one another [3]. Known as "Business Ethics" in English use, this term initially rose to the agenda in the USA especially in the 1960's and 1970's under the title of "social responsibilities of businesses" and in the 1980's it came to be known as "business ethics" in both the USA and many other countries. The roots of the word "ethics", which is used as an equivalent of the word morality in some western languages, derive from the Greek word "ethos". The words "morality", which means "virtue", and "moral", which means "ethical or conforming to ethics" was derived from the word "mos" in Latin. The origin of the word "ahlak" used in Turkish, on the other

hand, is the Arabic word "hulk".

While many authors distinguish between concepts of ethics and morality, others feel free to substitute one for the other. The difference between ethics and morality brings to mind the difference between music and musicology. We can argue that while morality is concerned with the good and the bad which guide our beliefs and actions, philosophy of ethics or ethics intend to explore from a philosophical perspective our beliefs, actions and experiences that are not "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong", and "ethical" or "unethical" beyond the concept of morality [1].

When the reasons distinguishing the definitions of ethics and morality are considered, it is observed that they stem from the fact that ethics is philosophy of ethics and morality is the topic of research of ethics. Theories of ethics focus, besides the essence and roots of morality and its functions in social life, on issues concerning the bases for cohabitation of people, norms and values of social life, relationships between individuals and society, and the purpose and meaning of individual life [4, 5]. While ethics concerns internal values that are a part of the institutional culture on the one hand, it shapes up decisions concerning social responsibilities about external environment.

Ethics has a philosophical depth that dates back to 2500 years. Controversies generated since the times of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have been improved and now appear as a series of principles of human management [6]. There are various attempts at definitions concerning ethics in foreign literature. Nonetheless, it is hard to encounter a clear definition of ethics in the studies and researches conducted. Ethics is defined simply as learning what is right or

wrong and doing the right thing [7]. Manning and Reece [8] define ethics as rules guiding behaviours and moral judgments; Keung [9] defines it as moral principles and standards embedded in individual behaviours while Beu and Buckley [10] define it as legal and moral judgments adopted by large masses and used in decision-making. Therefore, unethical behaviours can be defined as judgments that have a negative effect on others and are regarded by a significant portion of the society as unethical.

2.1. Business Ethics

Factors such as emergence of movements of globalization, corporate mergers that have occurred especially on an international level, employment of executives from different cultures and countries by multi-national companies, and attempts that aim to form standards about products and services and meeting customers' demands and expectations highlight significance of the formation, updating and sustenance of ethical values and policies besides existing legal regulations [11]. It is possible for businesses to exist within the social context of certain institutions as a kind of community through conciliation, understanding and shared values. The businesses' freedom of profit-making is limited to equal opportunity, honesty, frankness, and integrity [12]. Weaknesses in making ethical decisions may cost billions of dollars to businesses and do damage to their corporate image. Therefore, it is included within the subject of ethical management and administration [10]. With the spread of ethical practices in businesses, it has become a necessity to make a definition of ethics in respect of the business. Majority of the definitions are about ethics and business ethics. Woehr [13] defines

business ethics as cultural norms based on positive moral values aimed at doing a good job. Ross [14] on the other hand, defines it as a set of beliefs that encourage hard work, reject idleness, support thriftiness, avoid failure and inefficiency, and highlight perseverance, success and value. McNamara [7] defines business ethics as a set of rules and principles formed to do the right thing by distinguishing between the right and the wrong at work place.

Business ethics is determined by taking into consideration attitudes and expectations of directly relevant sections such as managers, employees, owners of businesses, local administrations and customers as well as the products and services offered. Another definition made in relation to businesses concerns managerial ethics. Administrative ethics appears as an action that requires justice, not equality, practice not theory and thinking the other not just the self. As regards the relationship between managers and employees, it is important, just as in human interactions, how the relationship is formed. Since employees consider the practices of managers, not their words, it is necessary that words and actions agree [15].

DeGeorge [12] in his classification divides ethics into three categories as normative, defining and meta-ethics. In his classification, he defines normative ethics as the righteousness, improvement and betterment of fundamental values of the moral system and basic principles while he expresses defining ethics as defining the morality of humans, cultures and communities and the efforts in this regard. Meta-ethics, on the other hand, analyses the causality of morality. Besides these three different categories, De George classifies ethics under the titles of special and general ethics. In this classification, while special

ethics focusses on solutions to problems in certain topics, general ethics accounts for the moral dimension of the human efforts in more comprehensive issues.

When theories of ethics are studied in terms of the historical process, they are handled within the framework of two approaches, i.e. teleological and deontological approaches. Whereas in teleological approach, whether an action is right or wrong is decided on the basis of the results of that action, deontological approach argues that responsibilities are independent of their consequences [16].

2.2. Ethical Principles and Ethical Codes

Controversies surrounding ethical principles continue to exist today as they did in the past. It is not clear according to what criteria the principles will be developed and on what principles they must be based. However, the principle of fairness in the development of principles, the principle of human rights and the principles of pragmatism and individualism are the principles that are usually taken as basic principles [5]. The principle of fairness emphasises the necessity for all decisions to be consistent, impartial and based on truths. The principle of human rights focuses on the existence of individuals, their unity and fundamental human rights. The principle of pragmatism, on the other hand, concerns deciding on the best decision for all.

Another important concept within the scope of ethics is the concept of ethical codes. Meigs and Whittington [17] state that ethical codes which gain professional virtue and which guide in sustaining a professional attitude are fundamental components of professionalism. Similarly, Flint [18] maintains that ethical codes are a set of rules

explaining the fundamental principles regarding correct modes of behaviour designed to keep the institutional prestige of professionalism for members of a profession.

Despite various different definitions attempted so far, there is as yet no universally accepted definition concerning ethical codes. All the same, three major themes are highlighted in recent definitions. The first is that ethical codes are an official and written document. The second is that the content of these documents are policies that can be defined as morally driven ethical standards, basic values, principles or the general state of an ethical orientation of an organization. The third is that these policies can be formulated to guide the behaviours of the employees and the organization as a whole [19].

External environment of the business, public authority and people and customers increasingly demand businesses to act in accordance with an awareness of responsibility and thus cause them to create ethical codes. Businesses may develop ethical codes under such pressure and begin to take an interest in ethics. Authors like Marnburg [20] and Schwartz [21] hold that reasons such as reducing legal responsibility while bringing public image to the foreground cause the use of ethical codes. Various studies have shown that ethical codes are used in businesses to solve ethical conflicts and teach employees ethical principles of the organization [22, 23].

There has been an increase in tendencies to establish ethical codes in terms of sectors in recent years. Businesses have agreed on the need for ethical codes in the formation of ethical practices [24]. Apart from these, there are other reasons for the increase in ethical codes. These reasons can be listed as below [25]:

- Ethical codes increase brands' prestige and image thereby creating a positive image for all aspects of the business.
- Ethical codes give the image that the business conforms to ethical principles.
- They bring together employees of the business around a common culture and values as stated in the codes and create a feeling of solidarity among employees of the organisation.
- When businesses violate laws, those that have ethical codes receive a reduction in fine.
- The use of ethical codes in developing countries contribute to development especially in African, Latin American and Asian countries that have different cultures and laws.

Today, organisations are obliged to know what they exist for and what principles they operate on. Modes of behaviour based on principles have become a pre-requisite for businesses to continue their existence [15]. After businesses began to adapt new forms of management that arose in an environment of international competition and concepts such as Total Quality Management to their own customers and the environment where they are located, attempted to establish standards concerning ethical codes. Although ethical code practices may bring success to businesses, it is not possible to attain success only through formation of ethical codes. Other factors that are effective in achieving success in businesses in respect of ethical practices should also be considered.

Ethical codes determine what is right and what is wrong, how they are formed and how businesses oversee those that comply with ethical codes and those that not. Ethical codes establish an organisational control system that encourages compliance with

ethical norms in daily organisational behaviours. Ethical programmes involving ethical codes standardise behaviours of employees. They restrict members' area of action with such rules and norms, increase predictability of their behaviours and determine perceived ethical needs that guide these behaviours [10].

In their research about seventeen experimental studies conducted to determine the relationship between ethical codes and individual behaviours, Loe et al [26] reported existence of a relationship between ethical codes and individual ethical behaviours in a majority of the studies conducted. Likewise, Schwartz [21] analysed nineteen experimental studies conducted on the effect of ethical codes on individual ethical behaviours and stated that only nine of these studies involved positive findings about a relationship [19].

The expectation in organisations towards the formation of ethical behaviours forces managers in respect of ethical behaviour management. Ethical behaviour management in organisations is composed of three stages. The first stage concerns managers' understanding of the ethical culture in their organisation. They are supposed to display behaviour that develops this culture in the second stage. In the third stage, ethical behaviour is maintained and made a part of the organisation. Some studies establish a strong relationship between ethical behaviour and ethical codes. Schwartz [21] regards the relationship between ethical codes and individual ethical behaviours as a black box. Certain approaches can be developed to define this black-box like relationship while analysing the conflict between the organisation and individual ethical behaviour. More specifically, ethical codes have the potential to influence

employees' individual ethical behaviours in two ways [19].

1. Making ethical behaviours official
2. Changing overall view of the organisation towards ethics

Organisations may impose ethical codes in order to regulate their employees' ethical conduct. With the determination of moral standards, ethical codes become effective in determining individual conduct in parallel to the ethical values of the organisation. From this perspective, ethical codes can be considered a control mechanism for the organisation. Therefore, they bear no characteristics different from rules and procedures stating what employees have to do and what not to do in special occasions. There is a strong need for a control system in order to determine whether these rules are obeyed or not. Unethical behaviours can be determined through such a system and necessary precautions can be taken for personnel who exhibit unethical behaviour. Ethical approaches do not only concern ethical codes. The effect of ethical codes on behaviours is expressed through a process. The most important factors in this process concern the reinforcement and renewal of ethical codes which enable employees to become aware of the ethical values of the organisation [19]. Institutionalisation of business ethics requires, besides the need for ethical rules to be written, development of ethical policies and programmes, support of senior management, ethical leadership and important changes in organisational culture and practices [27].

3. ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY

Quality is as old as the history of humanity

and the earliest records about history date back to years before the birth of Christ. Sanctions were imposed in some communities even in the primitive ages in order to standardize production. Pyramids of Ancient Egyptians and ancient remains of Greeks and Romans enlighten us about the historical roots of the perception of quality [28]. As it is understood from the remains dating from ancient civilisations to present day, quality is not a new concept. For example, the following statement is in Article 229 of the Laws of Hammurabi (2150 B.C.), which can be considered the earliest known quality certificate in history.

If a constructor builds a building for somebody and if he does not construct that building properly, and if the building he constructed collapses and the owner dies, then the constructor shall be executed.

In this manner, the sanction that a builder who does not construct a solid building which conforms to standards will face is stated. This article of the regulations points to quality as a standard, social responsibility as reciprocity and the moral balance he has to achieve between the effort he spent, the job he performed and his conscience. There are many such examples in history. For example, in Phoenician times, certain individuals had been employed to amputate the hands of those who made flawed production.

In the 13th century, "apprenticeship and artisan guilds", which was a senior professional organization that regulated and monitored business life and business relationships in society, prepared more comfortable and freer working conditions for the employees thereby operating for their happiness and prosperity. As an economic and social system regulating all production

and working conditions, guilds played a role as a significant control device in society. Although the concept of quality is old, widespread use of the word has a recent past. It arose from studies in the early twentieth century about the quality of materials and products used in production. Although there are various different definitions of the concept of quality in the literature, there is no definition agreed upon by all sides. Today, this concept is viewed and interpreted by different authors from different perspectives. Below are the definitions made in the literature about this concept. Nevertheless, it must be stated that lack of a common definition originates from the multinationality of quality as a social, psychological and technical phenomenon. This state, on the other hand, is a depth regarding the concept of quality.

The concept of quality enabled transition from a structure regarded as a factor independent of price in a market based on insufficient competition to a structure which companies view as a strategic source. In other words, it earned businesses a dynamic aspect [29].

3.1. The Concept of Quality

The concept of quality derives from the Latin word "qualitas" and means "thing". Cicero and other Greek authors are known to have used the word in the sense of "content" or "quality" [30]. Quality is neither an idea nor a substance, but is a concept related to both. Indeed, many authors argue that quality can not even be defined. An evaluation regarding the quality of something is a relative phenomenon and it is hard to come across an agreed upon phrase in definitions about what is quality. The use of the concept of quality in its modern sense dates back to the early

1900's [31].

Quality, in its dictionary meaning, means "highly good" or "excellence" [32]. Good quality is a precondition for perfection. In this framework, quality is attaining of high standards in satisfaction or accomplishing high standards as opposed to unrealistic and extremely bad satisfaction [33]. Despite the lack of an agreed upon definition of quality, some of the definitions best expressing quality can be cited as follows:

Shewhart [34] views quality as the "excellence of the commodity" and describes it as putting customers' prospective needs into measurable data for the design and production of a satisfactory product at a price that a buyer agrees to pay. Shewhart divides quality into two as "objective quality" and "subjective quality". According to Shewhart, quality is essentially subjective and varies from person to person. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to define quality as conformity with customers' demands.

Juran [35] avoids making a simple definition for quality and argues that making a simple definition will lead to a misunderstanding of quality and that it would be more appropriate to make a multiple definition. This approach, which involves product performance/satisfaction with the product and lack of flaws, is quite significant for a definition of quality. The first of these concerns properties of the product which will make users feel satisfied for buying the product. The second is related to factors that lead to complaints, repairs and returns as a result of customers' dissatisfaction with the product.

Philip Crosby [36] argues that the cost of bad quality may be high and much of this loss could be saved through processes that eliminate flaws and wasting. He defines quality as "satisfying needs at the exact

amount, neither high nor low and conformity with the requirements and specifications"[37].

Feigenbaum [38] defines product quality as follows: "The quality of a product is a combination of the features of design, production, continuity and presentation that aim to meet consumer needs at the most economic level possible".

Genichi Taguchi defines quality [39] as "the lowest damage a product causes in society after its distribution". On the other hand, European Organisation for Quality Control (EOQC) and American Society for Quality Control (ASQC) define quality as [40]; "the whole of characteristics that demonstrate the capabilities of a commodity or service to meet a certain need".

It has been defined in ISO 8402 Dictionary of Quality and ISO 9000 Series as; "Quality is the total of visible and distinctive properties of a commodity or product that has a capability to meet overtly expressed or unexpressed, hidden needs" [30].

Besides these definitions, the questions of "the quality of what" and "why quality" must be answered in order not to make gross errors in regard to quality. First of all, quality should be able to be perceived beyond its classic and narrow sense. Quality may enable a company to focus more on what it produces. The dilemma that leads to errors is focusing on quality itself in so far as to prevent change despite the indispensibility of the necessity and usefulness of quality in a classic sense. The usual response to this dilemma is that quality should be directed towards the objective of what is being done (in a broader sense) [41].

The concept of quality is a rich symbol that can be attributed different meanings. Therefore, the concept of "good" can in no way provide an exact equivalent of this. In

the 1900's, quality was used to mean as each worker's haphazard control of the product he produced at the final stage and in the sense of inspection after mass production. In the 1930's, on the other hand, it meant control of the product or service in accordance with pre-determined properties and criteria and correction of errors at the end of the production process.

Aside from these definitions, some scholars described quality as "concordance with standards, use, concordance with social and global environment, appropriateness of the cost and meeting of customers' real needs" [42]. According to another definition, quality is the property of your product which makes customers addicted to it. Exposing hidden needs, reasonability of the price or other additional properties may turn into an addiction for your customers as a source of appeal.

3.2. The Concept of Quality in Terms of Area of Application

The writing of the concept of quality involves two images (symbols) in the Japanese alphabet. The meaning of the symbols that form this concept are as follows: The first is read as hin and roughly means "product". The second symbol is actually from the Kanji Chinese, pronounced as shitsu and means "quality".

Indeed, the Japanese explain this second symbol as "Money contract" or "monetary value". Today, however, the meaning that the Japanese attribute to these two symbols together is quality as a concept, not just product quality [30].

The meaning that is ideally attributed to quality is the excellence of all factors (inputs, outputs, raw material, labor-personnel) used in the production of a product or a service. In



Figure 1. The concept of quality in the Japanese alphabet

other words, quality is taken to be synonymous with excellence (perfection) [43]. This multi-dimensional nature of the concept of quality makes it hard to be understood thoroughly.

The concept of quality may be attributed different meanings, but when it is defined by the customer or producer with certain complementary elements, it acquires a more significant content. These complementary elements are in a sense complementary features that affect quality. According to this, it is possible to say that quality is affected by the following factors [38]:

Quality of Design: This is the planning or design of a product to satisfy customers' demands and needs. This means, prior to the start of production, determination of features that defines and determine product in accordance with customer demands, and that quality characteristics that are set to ensure customer satisfaction [44] have the highest standards. All that is included or not included in the price can be handled in this scope.

Quality of Appropriateness: This is the criterion that tests concordance of products with quality of design. The difference between quality of design and quality of appropriateness indicates the existence of a flawed product or remaking.

Product Quality: It involves fulfilment of conditions that need to be satisfied during the design and planning of a product or service.

This is the stage that needs the most care for product quality. It indicates the conformity of a product that has been produced in accordance with the conditions as specified in technical documents with true properties of quality or specifications. It also indicates the product's conformity with its design. In this context, it would be appropriate to define product quality as performance of meeting customer needs and appropriateness level or predetermined conditions for a specific area of use [45].

Quality of Delivery (Distribution): This involves delivery or fulfilment of a promised (contracted) commodity/service at the promised time. It further indicates the product's conformity with specifications of quality in procedures like packing, transportation, installation and maintenance and repair that affect its image of quality. Manufacturer's guaranteeing the quality of the product after the customer has bought it and the solution in the interest of the customer, lack of guarantee which is called post-delivery services and which puts a product in the category of poor product if that product does not have it should be handled in this scope [46].

Relation Quality: relation quality is a kind of service quality affected by anybody who interacts with both domestic and foreign customers. This depends to a great extent on who it is implemented by and whom a relationship is established with.

3.3. Other Dimensions of Quality

Taken to mean forming standards for excellence in production and services as synonymous with excellence, quality in an ideal sense can be viewed as the degree of meeting needs, appropriateness for use and being able to meet demands. Here, the area

that quality features address involves customers who use the product. A reasonable price and quality features expressed by costs are based on values and in this context quality means "the best" in respect of certain customer demands [46]. In other words, capacity of use and the price of product are what the customer demands. The aforementioned issues are hidden systematically behind independent concepts within the scope of quality and good [30, 47].

To put it differently quality can be studied in two different ways, i.e. quality in fact and quality in perception [48, 49].

Quality in fact: It is attainment of excellence in the production of a commodity or service. This requires efficiency (doing the right things), effectiveness (doing the things correctly) and synchronizing these two (doing and completing the two at the same time) [32].

Quality in perception: The value of a commodity or service is so much as the price a customer is prepared to pay for it. Certain benefits are expected of the commodity or service that is desired to be procured in return for a payment. The relationship between the payment to be made for the product and the benefit expected to be obtained from the product determines value perception. In this context, quality in perception is how the product and service are perceived by the customer and is a relative phenomenon. The customer's decision about whether a commodity or service meets their expectations is the primary determinant in quality in perception. When a commodity or service meets customers' expectations, quality in perception is achieved. Given that services are abstract, heterogeneous and that it is hard to distinguish between their production and consumption, it is obvious

that there will be a difference in customers' perceptions about their expectations of quality. Factors such as reliability, sensitivity, efficiency, communication, interest, confidence and appearance [50] are major determinants for customers' perception of quality.

Quality according to customers and producers: The concept of quality can be viewed from various different perspectives. It may assume different meanings according to the area and place it is used. For example: quality for customer; is the purchased product or service's level of satisfying the needs. Generally, quality is taken by customers to mean increasing factors related to the reliability of a product. In other words, a customer may use quality as synonymous with reliability. For the producer, quality means meeting expectations of customers who are consumers of the commodity or service produced [51]. However, due to a lack of market excellence, the definition of quality in the market is formed on the basis of what producers think, not what customer needs are. There are certain criteria that we need to seek in a commodity or service concerning the quality of that product. They are given in the tables that follows [48, 49].

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS AND QUALITY

Although there may not be a logical relationship between ethics and quality, it might be argued that these two concepts should be mentioned together due to their common associations. These two concepts seem to overlap over a large area in terms of their word meanings.

When concepts of ethics and quality are discussed in different contexts, their complex and paradoxical extensions will no doubt

Table 1. Criteria for the quality of a product and commodity

	<i>Quality of Service</i>	<i>Quality of Commodity</i>	
Involves consistency of proficiency. It means implementation of service in a reliable and proper manner and as was promised.	Reliability	Performance	It means efficient, effective, and productive use of the product in accordance with the specified goal.
Expresses employees' serving customers immediately and being enthusiastic to help. (Punctuality, politeness, professionalism, smiling face)	Sensitivity /Response	Reliability	Is the continuity of the product's performance of use.
Means the business and the employee possess the necessary knowledge and skills in order to offer services.	Efficiency	Aesthetics	Is the impressiveness of goods and services, their appealing to senses and feelings and stimulating them
Involves ease of access and establishing contact. Indicates that waiting time for services is short and punctual.	Accessibility	Usefulness	Conformity of activities, plans, programs and the product with pre-determined standards, conditions and objectives, product's removing a shortage, its ease of repair.
Indicates politeness, respectability and friendliness of the employee who deals with the customer.	Courtesy	Continuity	Is the length of the product's use and replicability if necessary.. Easy solution of relevant problems and complaints are also related to this.
Means informing customers in a language that they can understand and listening to them.	Communication	Endurance	Indicates expiry date . Means adaptability to different markets and offering uninterrupted service for a service institution.
Involves a business' demonstrating that it is reliable, honest and attaches importance to customers' interests. Includes past performance and other abstract features, consumers' praise about the product and experience based on years.	Respectability	Security	Indicates that the product does not pose any dangerous risks for the customer.
Doubt, risk being away from risks are elements of physical and financial security.	Security	Excellence	Means meeting all obvious and clear needs and expectations and offering full satisfaction.
Involves spending efforts to know the needs of and about the customer.	Empathy	Environmental sensitivity	Indicates that a product designed with careful attention to the environment and the customer does not contain harmful and toxic substances and does not do damage to the environment when its expiry date is due.
Involves physical aspect of the service. Physical facilities, employee's appearance, tools and equipment used to offer services constitute physical elements.	Physical aspect		

appear. However, there is a relationship between cognitive meanings of these two concepts. While ethics seeks to answer the question "what is good and right for" man and society, it overlaps with quality. Business ethics, on the other hand, had been

previously defined as applications of moral norms and rules in bussiness life. In this context, it is possible to see the ethical aspect within the concept of quality when quality is regarded as raising and improving of the quality of business processes, and as

development of business processes and product features on the basis of respect for domestic and foreign customers. The etymological and conceptual affinity of both ethics and quality are quite obvious.

4.1. Relating Ethics to Quality

The behind expanding the concept of quality to relate to all social areas and processes is respect for man and society. In this context, it would not be an overstatement to argue that quality is embodiment of ethics. Quality may hold different meanings for different individuals just as ethics. Nonetheless, absence of studies investigating these two concepts together renders an exploration of this relationship difficult. We observe that quality is concerned with designs of good and bad that guide our likes and actions, that it brings to mind ethics in this respect, and questions our beliefs, actions and experiences via a philosophical rhetoric with attributes of "good" or "bad", "right" or wrong", "ethical" or unethical" by rising above morality just as ethics.

When we look at the reasons that make definitions of ethics and morality different, it is observed that ethics has a philosophy while quality concerns issues that are more life-like and concrete. Ethical elements concentrate on requirements for people's co-habitation, norms and values of social life, relationships between individuals and society, and the purpose and meaning of individual life thereby attempting to embody the quality of life. Ethics, like quality, is concerned with internal values on the one hand and shape up phenomena regarding social obligations of external world on the other.

So far, an attempt has been made to highlight parallelisms and similarities

between quality and ethics. Philosophically, distinguishing between these similarities and determining conceptual boundaries is another requirement. This difference between concepts will be dealt with under the following titles. However, we deem it useful to emphasise the common associations that both of these concepts create in people's minds. These shared qualities and conflicts are given in Figure 2 below.

Conceptually, ethics and quality serve the same purpose. Both concepts evoke what is good, fine and right. The objective that both these concepts wish to attain is to raise life standards for man. Whereas ethics endeavors to raise society and social standards to be compatible with human pride, the concept of quality concerns aims to raise life standards of man, who is the center of this social structure. In this context, ethics targets more macro-level goals in comparison to quality. However, it is difficult to argue that this parallelism between ethics and quality is not affected by views about application and diversity of individual objectives. The macro-micro difference that exists between ethics and quality generates two fundamental areas of difference. The first of these areas can be expressed as "ignored ethical issues" by bringing quality to the foreground and the second as "ignored issues of quality" by highlighting ethical issues. This differentiation between ethics and quality stems from preferences about individual and social priorities.

Aside from this, another dimension where difference deepens is profit-making. The nature of capital, liberal interpretations, free market conditions and the fact that competition regards quality as a means for profit-making contribute to the goal of raising life standards of a group of

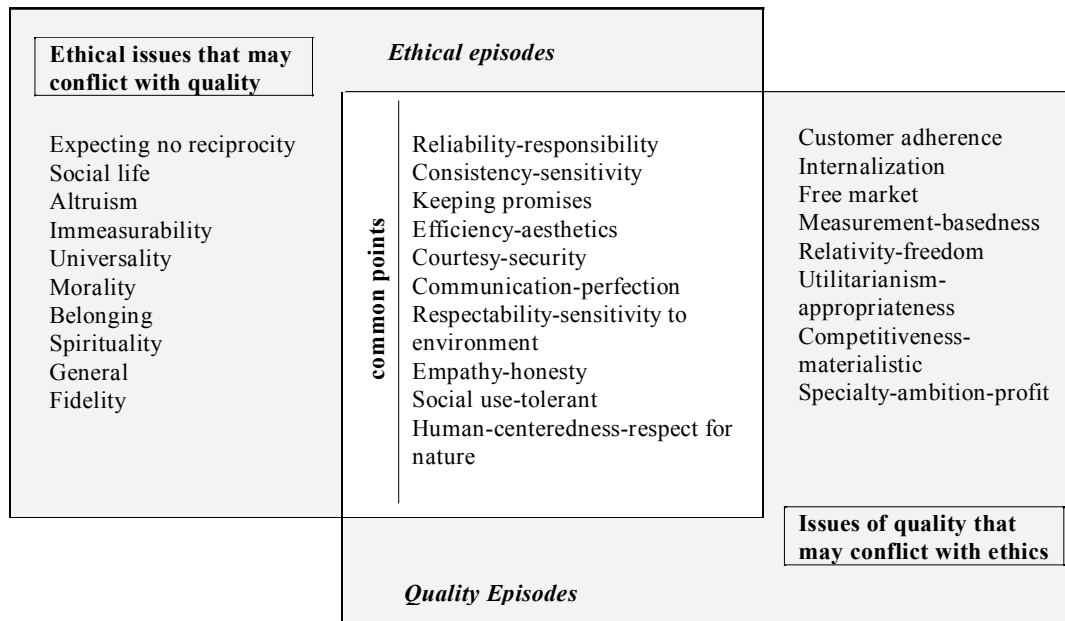


Figure 2. Ethics and quality in terms of shared qualities and differences

individuals, while they also have a negative effect on the standards of another group of individuals.

4.2. Distinguishing Between Ethics and Quality

Velayutham [52] states that main focus of ethical codes is quality and distinguishes between relevant fields of interest of ethics and quality. He points out that the primary concern of ethics is feelings, interests and ideals about feelings while quality is more focussed on product and service. He argues that codes consist of elements of ethics and quality, they basically concentrate on fundamental principles and are generally impractical, and their effect on professional applications is limited, goal-oriented and suggestion-oriented and holds that the main tendency of codes is to highlight quality rather than ethics.

Concepts of ethics and quality have various aspects that differ from one another.

These differences can be dealt with fewer than five fundamental principles, i.e. feelings, price, measurability, behaviors and decisions.

The first one that needs special emphasis is that while ethics is concerned with the effect of feelings on life, quality concentrates on one product or service only. This does not mean that a quality product or service does not have an effect on a life related to feelings. Nevertheless, feelings are secondary to the concept of quality. For example, if a product does not possess major qualities of a product or a service, this may give some damage to the user. On the other hand, not all of the properties of the product or services related to quality have an effect on people's feelings. This indicates that quality is more important. The idea of generalising an ethical case prevents individuals from giving random decisions. In contrast to this, the statement of quality refers to dependence on a single entity such as a product or service.

The second concerns a value-based approach and in this definition, quality is linked to price. It must be emphasised that the relativity of quality is different from the concept of relativity in ethics. The concept of relativity in ethics argues that concepts of good, bad, right and wrong have no universal standards [53]. Relativity recognises differences in various different cultures and time; it guides members of a certain ethical code at a certain time and in a certain country or countries. Relativity could be a necessary thought for study comparing different codes.

The third is that ethical expressions are usually explained in very general terms; for example, one must keep the promise he made to another. Conversely, terms of quality possess specific criteria for each feature. The peculiar nature of quality control and details that emerge through measurement contribute to quality control and quality assurance. Quality control is concerned with applications of probability and statistics on problems of product and service delivery; quality assurance, on the other hand, ensures effective realisation of quality control functions.

The fourth is that both ethics and quality are expressions of behaviors; ethics is concerned with behaviors that test morality [54], while quality is concerned with behaviors that test products and services. Ethical decisions assess what is good, bad, right or wrong; on the other hand, decisions of quality make assessments via standards on the basis of tests.

The fifth, whereas ethical actions and decisions are generally assessed on the basis of the actions of the first person or actor, decisions of quality are evaluated on the basis of the behaviors of third person (listeners or consumers). The approach of contract that aims to provide services

existing in ethics highlights behaviors of the first person; quality contract, on the other hand, pursues the approach of contract-based agreement that aims to provide services and highlights importance of the third person's behaviors. Differences between ethical expressions and quality expressions indicate a strong emphasis for a measurement of quality standards, which are opposite of ethical codes. While ethics emphasises improvement of character or virtue and education, quality movement makes significant emphases on techniques such as statistical methods. Moreover, ethics gives autonomy to people as a moral factor; quality, on the other hand, highlights appropriateness. Cost and price are in the center of ethical controversies; in contrast, they must be paid specific attention in quality assurance systems [29]. Differences between properties of ethics and quality have been summarised in Table 2. Briefly, the most prominent difference between ethics and quality is the direction of interest; feelings have priority in ethics, but in quality product and services are important [52].

The objective of quality assurance is not just to control or exhibit quality; instead, it also aims to build quality in every stage of production through programs or systems. Professional surveys concentrate on technical efficiency rather than individual moral values. Another question is whether a customer is concerned with a professional's moral values or technical skills. This could be expressed in the following terms: if ethics defines properties of character, then quality defines properties of technique. Due to the aforementioned reasons, today's interest in professional ethics might be related to its effect on the quality of professional services. While ethics involves issues related to people, quality involves issues about

Table 2. Distinction between ethics and quality

Ethics	Quality
Emphasis on sentient beings	Emphasis on product or service
Universalisable	Relative
General	Specific
Attitudes which are moral	Attitudes relate to taste
Attitudes of actor or first person to third person	Attitudes of consumer or third person binding on actor
Frequently non-measurable	Measurable
Defining feature of character	Defining feature of technique
Autonomy as moral agent	Lack of autonomy—conformance
Beyond price and cost	Price and cost based

Source: Velayutham S. [53]

products and services. This concept of quality overlaps with minimalist values of contemporary morality. When interpersonal tensions rise, especially when ethical values are concerned, a significant degree of dissatisfaction or disturbance emerges. On the other hand, fewer interpersonal tensions arise in quality assessments. Wolfe [55] points out those moral obligations of modern society equal financial obligations. Besides, sovereignty of state minimises our moral obligations in the formula of "taking care of others is not my responsibility, it is the state's". When we discuss quality, we make reference to quality control at the same time. We think about how we measure quality, what we are obliged to do to ensure quality and what remuneration we are to make for flawed quality. It is observed that, control, which is not one of the important features of ethics, and, consumer and modern technological society, which puts emphasis on measurability, achieve better harmony with properties of quality. According to Wolfe [55], the concept of quality, which highlights contracts that emphasise substitution of financial obligations for moral obligations, is more consistent with present day values. While punishment, which focuses on damage suffered by the user of a product or a service, is generally

considered financial compensation for insufficient quality, punishment for disobedience in ethics focuses on those who meet services [52]. The discussions above concern meanings attributed to ethics and quality and emphasise the differences between these meanings. Various properties and meanings that can assume quality and ethics might change the relationship between the two concepts.

5. CONCLUSION

Ethical worries, besides organisational interests within decision-making mechanisms of organisations, are concerned with the obligation to undertake efforts to maintain and increase social welfare as a whole. The context that renders ethics significant for businesses is the socialist point of view of today. Organisations may continue their existence for much longer periods by respecting people, society and environment, and integrating their perceptions about what is right and wrong with social norms. For, in societies that have gained a pluralistic status, power relationships have changed and power has been distributed among various groups that have differing interests. Therefore, each organisation, by virtue of its perception of

ethics, is obliged to be sensitive to expectations and demands of different groups and avoid giving harm to other sections of society while providing benefits for a certain section of the society.

Ethics and social responsibility that is supposed to develop in this context take shape in accordance with social demands and expectations. Therefore, in order to determine social demands, it is necessary to keep channels of communication open with the organisation, establish relationships with elements that could be influential in the formation of the expectations and demands of the environment, evaluate data obtained as a result of these relationships and determine efforts that could be made in the capacity of social responsibility. Briefly, adopting ethics sensibility as a quality policy will be gain proportional supremacy in competition.

Quality can overlap with ethical values when it offers benefits to both the producer and the consumer. Quality is a business strategy that targets profitability. In this context, if social benefits, respect for environment and future generations' right to life are ignored and if others' rights are risked in the interest of one group, the quality produced is far from being true quality. Businesses are to evaluate the effects of their activities on society by taking into consideration business ethics, expectations of internal and external environment and laws. If a business feels responsible for an unapproved activity or a negative act and makes an effort for a solution, this is socially responsible behavior. Public's awareness of these efforts is significant in terms of the promotion and image of the business. Therefore, quality should be assessed beyond the benefits it provides for only the producers and users of the product. It is argued that an approach of total quality thus adopted could benefit

society, not capitalistic and liberal aspirations

Businesses' establishing a feedback system that will monitor social performance and moral effects; informing the society, and public and other organisations about management resources, organisational activities and their possible effects on the public, displaying sensitivity towards ecology, contributing to employees' safety and health as well as to environmental and social health; socio-cultural supports and contributions displayed on a local, national or global scale, delivery of financial data to those concerned on time and in the correct manner, efforts to produce and present high quality products and/or services, a view of social marketing after sale and unrestrained communication with the consumer, in-service and other educational opportunities provided for employees, an approved human resources practice and an effective career management and employment of groups that need protection are important

Other precautions must be taken apart from education-but without ignoring the significance of education- in order to establish business ethics. We can summarise the precautions that must be taken in this regard as follows: Written rules of ethics and codes must be established about business ethics in the business. The organisation must determine "moral standards" on business ethics and act in accordance with these standards. Ethical behaviors and acts of the leader and senior administration will create a high level effect in the success of the efforts of ethics and quality. Therefore, the determination and practices of the leaders and the senior administration in this regard must form an example to all employees.

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