THE ROLE OF QUALITY AUDITORS: FACILITATION OF IDENTIFICATION, SYSTEMATIZATION, DISSEMINATION AND TRANSPOSITION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANIZATION

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Introduction

The creation of focused, strategically and internally consistent systems of operations does not guarantee competitive success for contemporary organizations. They are forced to continuously improve their operations systems in order to follow moving productivity frontier. Organizations apply different methods for improvement of their operational excellence. Some prefer breakthrough improvement by business process reengineering, six sigma methods, some elaborate more incremental improvement approach using Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM is methods for creation of continuous incremental improvement system of organization in order to improve operational excellence of organization. ISO 9000 series standards since year 2000 and excellence models are based on methodology of TQM and can hardly be separated from it. There were 982 832 (ISO, 2008) organizations in the world including 991 (LST, 2009) organizations in Lithuania with quality management system created and certified according to the requirements of ISO 9000 standard. Such a way of implementation of TQM is different from others, because organizations can certify (initiate procedure checking whether all requirements of the standard are satisfied or not and get an official certificate indicating that) the created continuous incremental improvement system. These quality management or operational effectiveness improvement systems are certified by accredited organizations performing certification as a third party in the form of independent audits. Audits are performed by auditors of certifying institutions. These auditors are called non-financial auditors (Power, Terzovski, 2007) or quality auditors, how they will be called in the article.

Scholars have analyzed the role of auditors of certifying institutions. According to scientific literature it is evident that due to their approach they can be split into two groups. Auditors of the first group try to check the audited organization's quality management system's conformity with standards (Bettes, 1993; Williamson, et al, 1996; Rao Tummala, Tang, 1996; Chan, et al, 1996) and auditors of the second group try not only to check the system's conformity with standards but also to support improvement of the audited organization's quality management system (Ingman, 1991; Chan, et al, 1993; Sakofsky, 1993; Rice, 1994; Fiorentino, Perigord, 1994; Gardner, 1997; Walker, 1998; Peters, 1998; Karapetrovic, Willborn, 2000, 2001; Terziovski, Power, Sohal, 2003; Blackmore, 2004; Terziovski, Power, 2007). Namely the second auditors group is dominant in the market of certification.

But how do quality auditors facilitate improvement of quality management systems, thus of certified / being certified organizations? Different organizations have different levels of maturity of quality management systems and different levels of quality management culture: generic approach to facilitation of improvement is not possible. Moreover legitimating of decision if organization's quality management system conforms to requirements of ISO 9000 standard or not (if a certificate should be issued or not), with all financial consequences for organization, depends on impeccable reputation of auditors. From the perspective of impeccable reputation, direct advice of improvement of present quality management system of organization is not practical, because organizations could misunderstand the advice, or it could not provide expected effects because of complexity of situation. They, also, cannot disseminate the best practices from organization to organization, because of strict confidentiality commitments. The dissemination of the best practices may disrupt present competitive situation. Though different authors emphasize that auditors contribute to improvement of organizations' quality management systems, but the explanation and means of such improvement are not evident. Considering this we ask by formulating ***scientific problem of an article***: by what means do auditors of certifying organizations contribute to continuous improvement of quality management system of certified/being certified organization? ***Research objective*** is certifying organization auditors' role in certified/being certified organizations trying to contribute to their continuous quality improvement. ***Research methods*** are literature review and field research. All data for the research was collected using the method of semi-structured interview.

Scientific significance of the research: certifying institution auditors' role in certified/being

certified organization's trying to contribute to their continuous quality improvement is explained. They contribute to certified/being certified organizations' improvement of quality management system by facilitating gradual increase in organization's quality management knowledge by initiating identification, systematization, dissemination and transposition of quality management knowledge of organization.

Quality audits and two different approaches to quality auditing

Quality audit is a tool for assessing the effectiveness of quality assurance efforts and for the evaluation of compliance with applicable quality standards. In performing auditing activities, quality auditors must independently and objectively collect and verify audit evidence. After that they must evaluate this evidence against audit criteria and report their findings. EN ISO 19011:2002 is an International Standard that provides guidance on the principles of auditing, managing audit programmes, conducting quality management system audits and environmental management system audits, as well as guidance on the competence of quality and environmental management system auditors. These guidelines define an audit as a systematic and independent examination to determine whether quality assurance activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives (BSI, 2002).

Scholars identify two very different attitudes of quality auditors to quality audit. The authors who belong to the first group are of opinion that quality audit is closer to inspection and quality control than it is to quality assurance. To this group belongs Bettes D. C. (1993) who affirms that the external auditor is interested only in checking the operation of the system and it is not the auditor's job to involve staff in improving the system, far less to develop an attitude of continuing improvement. Williamson A. et al. (1996) survey results showed that auditors concentrate primarily on the task of deciding whether or not an organization's quality system is effectively documented and implemented and place less emphasis on the outcomes of the system. Rao Tummala V. M. and Tang C. L. (1996) also have notion that certification process is formal process and it consists of an audit of the implementation of company's documented quality system and success of audit depends on the number and the nature of the non-conformances found during the audit. Summarizing the views of the first group of authors can be used a characterization stated by Chan F. Y. et al. (1996) that the auditor who merely inspects and verifies by means of a checklist and predetermined questions practices inadequate and outdated auditing and takes the role of an inspector, not an auditor. In the opinion of this group the essence of auditing is the collecting, analyzing and judging of objective evidential material.

Another group of authors emphasize very opposite attitude of quality auditors. Karapetrovic S. and Willborn W. (2001) have opinion that quality audit is meant to facilitate and support improvement by identifying any shortfalls and/or effective practice for sharing. ISO 9000 quality systems and quality audits are valuable support to management and quality audits are being used for the primary purpose of continuous quality improvement, and not for strict compliance to stated requirements (Gardner, 1997; Walker, 1998; Karapetrovic, Willborn, 2000). Chan F. Y. et al. (1993) argue that the new role of the quality auditor should contribute to the improvement of the organization's overall quality management system. Ingman L. C. (1991) takes the view that the quality audit should be used as a means of strengthening the quality system by removing barriers that may impede the continuous improvement process. Peters J. (1998) also affirms that dynamic and flexible auditing can indeed induce improvement, whereas static auditing will only serve to ensure compliance to a minimum standard. Blackmore J. (2004) proposes opinion that how auditors conduct the audit (based on their personal characteristics and training) is of great importance. Rice C. M. (1994) identified a number of skills that quality auditors should employ before, during and after an audit, including effective communication, empathy, the use of objective criteria, to focus on the system, its problems and the ability to build working relationships. Fiorentino R. and Perigord M. (1994) and Sakofsky S. (1993) affirm that quality auditors must take on a new role that emphasizes continuous improvements throughout the organization. Terziovski M., Power D. and Sohal A. S. (2003) also found that the auditing style has an insignificant (positive or negative) effect on business performance. They claim that the quality auditors are expected to provide a more facilitative auditing style. As a result many researchers in this field and case studies of certified organizations are beginning to see that the quality auditor can play a crucial role in improving the performance of the organization by adopting a more facilitative style, rather than an inspector's style which focuses on non-conformance to the ISO 9000 standard. Four years later Terziovski M. and Power D. (2007) found that organizations can effectively use ISO certification as a means of promoting and facilitating a quality culture, where the quality auditor is an important player

in the process. These findings show that the role of the quality auditor in the ISO 9000 certification process is important.

But having evaluated the very different level of certified/being certified organization's quality management knowledge, auditor's quality management knowledge, confidential commitments of certifying institutions' auditors, their objective for impeccable reputation, it becomes unclear how they contribute to and support continuous quality improvement of the certified/being certified organizations. In the next chapter we will address this question in detail.

The role of quality auditors

Certifying institution's auditors hold communication of different content with certified/being certified organization's workers, and the content of this communication depends on the stage, that is, certain defined actions: presenting a request for certification, primary evaluation, evaluation for certification, certification, surveillance and over-certification audit which are taken during every stage. In these stages the essence of auditing is the collecting, analyzing and judging of objective evidential material in order to produce required decision: whether organizations' quality management system conforms to requirements of the ISO 9001 standard. *We state that besides doing they contribute to certified/being certified organizations' improvement of quality management (operational effectiveness improvement) system by facilitating gradual increase in organization's quality management knowledge by initiating identification, systematization, dissemination, transposition and creation of quality management knowledge of the organization.*

The auditors of certifying institutions have a certain level of quality management knowledge (QMK). The different certified/being certified organizations have very different levels of QMK, but it is supposed that the auditor, as an expert, has deeper knowledge of quality management. The common concept of organization's knowledge according to Stankevičiūtė J. (2002) is a holistic category of higher abstract level, outlining collective knowledge that is constantly changing because of interaction of organization members' and groups' implicit knowledge and conveyed information. Following the definition of organization's knowledge, quality management knowledge is collective knowledge of an organization of how to implement requirements of ISO 9001 standard and other quality management activities. The level of organization's quality management knowledge determines means and ways how organization implements ISO 9000 series standards requirements and quality management related activi-

ties. The requirements and related activities in organization reflects its quality management knowledge, thus they are implemented in most efficient and effective way from the viewpoint of the organization. Therefore, level of quality auditors' quality management knowledge will generally exceed level of organizations' quality management knowledge. From the perspective of quality auditor and based on his level of quality management knowledge, local implementation of ISO 9000 series standards requirements and related quality management activities in the organization may be treated as best practices or weak/to be improved practices. Best quality management practices are means of satisfying of requirements of ISO 9000 series standards and other quality management related activities in efficient and effective way according to quality auditors' quality management knowledge. Simultaneously weak/to be improved quality management practices are means of satisfying of requirements of ISO 9000 series standards and other quality management related activities in inefficient and ineffective way according to quality auditors' quality management knowledge.

Quality management auditors initiate gradual increase of organization's quality management level, which results in more effective and efficient quality management in the organization, thus increased operational effectiveness. The increase in quality management knowledge of organization is achieved by initiating quality knowledge management activities. Knowledge management activities comprise identification, systematization, dissemination, transposition and creation of knowledge (Coombs, Hull, 1998; Skyrme, 1999; Despres, Chauvel, 2000; Grant, 2000; Stankevičiūtė, 2002).

Following Stankevičiūtė J. (2002) we propose such definitions of quality management activities:

- Identification of quality management knowledge is the identification of existing case studies, best, weak/to be improved practices and news on quality management of organization's workers and their groups.
- Systematization of quality management knowledge is the transferring of existing case studies, best, weak/to be improved practices and news on quality management of organization's workers and their groups to the written or electronic form and their storage enabling multiple usage.
- Dissemination of quality management knowledge is the dissemination of case studies, best, weak/to be improved practices and news on quality management of the organization's workers and their groups to the other workers of the organization, their groups or subdivisions.
- Transposition of quality management knowledge

is the transposition of case studies, best, weak/to be improved practices and news on quality management of the organization's workers and their groups to the other workers of the organization, their groups or subdivisions participating in their successful implementation.
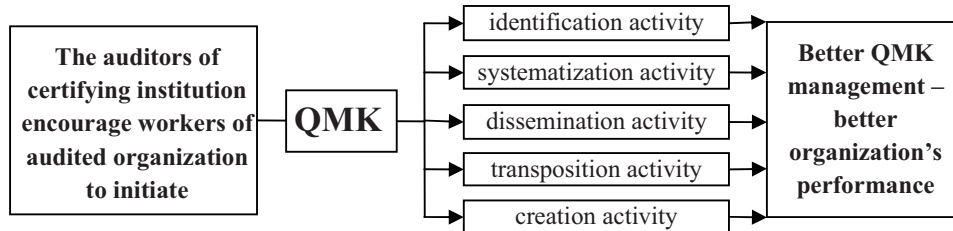
• Creation of quality management knowledge is the creation of new ideas how to resolve weak/to be improved practices, outgrowth, process, technique, concept, practice and others in quality management of organization's workers and their groups.

We summarize arguments in the model presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The model of emergent communication

During audits auditors initiate identification and systematization of existing best practices and weak/to be improved practices, what allows identifying the level of quality management knowledge of organization. They also initiate dissemination of best practices from one process or department of organization to another, what enables sharing of quality management knowledge. Auditors initiate transposition and creation of quality management knowledge by requesting to improve weak/to be improved practices of organizations. Such facilitation and initiation of activities of management of knowledge of quality management result in increased quality management knowledge of organization. The increased quality management knowledge of organization result in more efficient and effective quality management practices, what leads to increased operational effectiveness of organization and better performance. Such a cycle is continuous because quality audits are performed periodically and hypothetical end increase of quality management knowledge will be achieved when quality management knowledge level of organization will become equal to that of quality auditor.

Such a hypothesised role of quality auditors may be captured by putting forward these propositions, which will be verified by empirical research.

P1: During the audits QMS auditors encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK identification activity.

P2: During the audits QMS auditors encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK systematization activity.

P3: During the audits QMS auditors encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK dissemination activity.

P4: During the audits QMS auditors encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK transposition activity.

P5: During the audits QMS auditors encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK creation activity.

Research methodology and results

The research method for this study was field research. The main motivation for doing field research was to provide a reliable method to determine quality auditor's experience. The use of this methodology enabled us to observe events in their natural setting and report them in a systematic way. This type of research involves a method in which we were listening to what is said and questioning, over some period of time. To achieve our research aim we, as field researchers, used additional technique (qualitative method) – semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews involved conversations with selected certifying institutions' auditors and selected workers of their audited organizations. Semi-structured interview was used to collect qualitative data by setting up the interview that allowed an auditor and workers of their audited organization the time and scope to talk about their opinion on research questions. For our research we constructed two semi-structured interview questionnaires: one questionnaire was created for auditors and another for workers of audited organizations.

To summarize the results of our research (semi-structured interviews) we established criteria for approval of the propositions. If more than half of respondents in their replies confirmed the proposition – it is approved. If more than half of respondents denied it – it is denied. With this attitude we analyzed and summarized the results of our semi-structured interviews. All positive responses of representatives were marked "+", all negative responses were marked "-", and all responses not supported by examples were marked "+/-". Then we

were summarizing the results of this research, and we treated the "+/-" mark as a negative answer.

Primarily our research involved activities for definition of research framework. First, the quality management system certification market in Lithuania was analyzed. Second, the dominant certifying institutions were selected for further research.

The first step resulted in the identification of quality management system certifying institutions that were certifying quality management systems in Lithuania. We collected all the information about certifying institutions and their certification results (certificated quality management systems) from the data published on the website of Lithuanian standardization department.

The second step resulted in the selection of dominant certifying institutions. This selection was made by counting how many quality management systems each of these institutions has certified. The results showed that four certifying institutions dominate Lithuanian quality management system certification market. These four institutions overtake more than 90% of this market. These results were used in the next step of this study – semi-structured interviews with auditors of selected certifying institutions. A semi-structured direct questionnaire was developed and used in the interviews with auditors of certifying institutions. According to propositions operationalization the first interview questionnaire was constructed. The main indicators of propositions were quality management case studies, best quality management practices and quality management news.

In the third step, auditors of four dominant certifying institutions were contacted and asked for a personal interview to talk about their auditing in details. In each of these companies at least 2 semi-structured interviews with auditors were carried out. But if some of their answers were different, then 1 or 2 more auditors were interviewed until specific tendencies were revealed. The research was ended after completion of 11 semi-structured interviews during which specific tendencies were revealed. The average duration of the interview was approximately 51 minute.

In the fourth step, on the basis of the results of the semi-structured interviews with auditors of certifying institutions the questionnaire for workers of audited organizations was developed. Such a decision was made with the aim to specify and verify the results of the semi-structured interviews with the auditors. Therefore, on the basis of the results of the semi-structured interviews with the auditors of certifying institution we made second operationalization and constructed the second interview questionnaire. The main indicators specified were good quality management practices and weak/to be improved quality management practices, problems, threats and their causes. The definition of the first indicator: good quality management practices are compliance with ISO 9001 standard requirements and other quality management related activities by efficient and effective means. The definition of the second indicator: weak/to be improved quality management practices are compliance with ISO 9001 standard requirements and other quality management related activities by non-efficient and non-effective means.

In the fifth step, when we already had the second questionnaire, we selected and contacted organizations audited by one of the certifying institutions selected and investigated at the beginning of our research. Therefore, we made 6 semi-structured interviews with workers of audited organizations. The average duration of the interview was approximately 47 minutes.

Results of the semi-structured interviews with auditors of certifying institutions are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. ***Results of semi-structured interview with auditors of certifying institutions***

		Indicators	Summarized answers
P1	Identification of	Quality management case studies	8/11 – yes;
		Best quality management practices	1/11 – yes/no;
		Quality management news	2/11 – no.
P2	Systemization of	Quality management case studies	8/11 – yes;
		Best quality management practices	1/11 – yes/no;
		Quality management news	2/11 – no.
P3	Dissemination of	Quality management case studies	6/11 – yes;
		Best quality management practices	4/11 – yes/no;
		Quality management news	1/11 – no.
P4	Transposition of	Quality management case studies	6/11 – yes;
		Best quality management practices	3/11 – yes/no;
		Quality management news	2 /11– no.
P5	Creation of	Quality management ideas	2/11 – yes;
		Quality management practice	5/11 – yes/no;
		Quality management concept	4 /11– no.

According to the criteria established before this research, results in Table 1 show that four of five propositions were proved. Propositions P1 and P2 were not only confirmed, but also this research revealed that the auditors of a certifying institution not only encourage workers of the audited organization to initiate QMK identification and systematization activities, but also directly participate in them. Propositions P3 and P4 were confirmed, the auditors of a certifying institution encourage workers of the audited organization to initiate QMK dissemination and transposition activities. Proposition P5 was unconfirmed; the main reason was that there was no demand for this QMK creation activity. If the workers of certified/being certified organizations needed a decision they would create it themselves.

One of the most important findings is that the auditors encourage workers of audited organizations to initiate QMK identification, systematization, dissemination and transposition activities through the identification and systematization of good or weak/to be improved quality management practices, problems, threats and their causes. If an auditor identified a good quality management practice he always notifies this aspect to the workers of the audited organization and encourages them to do identification, systematization, dissemination and transposition activities. If an auditor identified a weak/to be improved quality management practice or some problems, threats and their causes he does the same actions but if there is a need for innovative solutions he will additionally encourage creation activity.

During these semi-structured interviews two tendencies were observed. First – representatives of certifying institutions sort of divided into two groups. Representatives of the first group stressed the significance of communication in the informal interaction between them and workers of certified/being certified organizations. The answers of this group to the question of why they support such communication with certified/being certified organizations workers, are: *"This is our attitude to the auditing process…so we would like that…that the workers of other certifying institutions would think like that…that the guild of the auditors, which is in Lithuania, would be the guild of the auditors, not the inspectors. Therefore, there is no unity of ideas among certifying institutions…This situation mislead customers, they don't understand what is the mission of auditors. Is the auditor who came, "putted pluses" and went out good, or is the auditor who came, worked sincerely and showed direction where they must go, if they want to grow, good? This is the actual auditing", "I believe…we believe that auditing process must involve both: prescribed and emergent communication. How else can we add value for our customers during the audit process, if we couldn't informally present our observations to them?", "Because during this difficult period it is not enough to verify system compliance with the standards… in this period customers want to receive more than written recommendation in the report of audit, they want to hear our verbal findings all the time during the audit", "We have an opinion that during quality audit we must facilitate and support improvement of customer management system by identifying shortfalls… So we develop emergent communication with our customers", "In order to support the emergent communication with customers it is not enough to be non-formalist ... you need to have a lot of experience to be able to see and to indicate the right direction ... and if you don't have such experience ... then ... what benefits can you bring to your customers?", "Here is a strong competition among certifying institutions ... therefore ... if we want to have customers we must offer more than a certificate. So we seek to add value during our audit process. Of course we cannot consult our customers, but we can motivate them to develop certain activities, the results of which affect performance and further development of the system".* Representatives of the second group treated the mentioned interaction only as communication where they have to carry formal dialog with workers of certified/being certified organizations. The answers of this group to the question of why they do not support informal (more flexible) communication with workers of certified/being certified organizations, are: *"Our task is to check, to inspect customer's quality system ... our work is the formal process in which there is no place for consulting ... consultants ... they must to do this work ... before", "Customers buy from us service of certification, not the service of consultation", "Generally, we try to eliminate all observations ... because too often misunderstandings happen with our customers, they don't understand what our auditor keeps in his mind", "Customers need a certificate, they don't require anything more from us".* Second, as we have mentioned earlier, representatives who belong to the first group encourage workers of audited organizations to initiate QMK identification, systematization, dissemination and transposition activities through the identification of good or weak/to be improved quality management practices. The result of this interaction between auditors of certifying institutions and workers of certified/being certified organizations is continuous quality improvement.

According to our distinguished (specified) indicators summarized results of semi-structured interviews with workers of audited organizations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Results of semi-structured interview with workers of audited organization*

		Indicators	Summarized answers
P1	Identification of	Good quality management practices	6/6 – yes.
		Weak/to be improved quality management practices	
		Problems, threats and their causes	
P2	Systemization of	Good quality management practices	5/6 – yes; 1/6 – no.
		Weak/to be improved quality management practices	
		Problems, threats and their causes	
P3	Dissemination of	Good quality management practices	4/6 – yes; 2/6 – no.
		Weak/to be improved quality management practices	
		Problems, threats and their causes	
P4	Transposition of	Weak/to be improved quality management practices	1/6 – yes; 5/6 – no.
		Problems, threats and their causes	
P5	Creation of	Weak/to be improved quality management practices	2/6 – yes; 4 /6 – no.
		Problems, threats and their causes	

According to the criteria distinguished before this research, results in Table 2 show that three of five propositions were proved. Propositions P1 and P2 were proved again. So we can claim that the auditors of certifying institution not only encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK identification and systematization activities, but also directly participate in them through identification and systematization of good or weak/to be improved quality management practices, problems, threats and their causes. Proposition P3 was proved again. So we can claim that the auditors of certifying institution encourage workers of audited organization to initiate QMK dissemination activity. Propositions P4 and P5 were unproved.

Summarized results of proved or unproved propositions from semi-structured interviews with certifying institution auditors and workers of audited organizations are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. *Summarized results of proved or unproved propositions*

	Auditors of certifying institution	Workers of audited organizations
P1	+	+
P2	+	+
P3	+	+
P4	+	-
P5	-	-

As seen from Table 3 there is one discrepancy between propositions proved and unproved by semi-structured interviews with auditors of certifying institution and workers of audited organizations. This discrepancy is with proposition P4, because auditors proved the existence of it while workers of audited organization unproved the existence of it. The main reasons of this discrepancy are two. The first reason is that auditors set out high requirements for their work, so they are paying their attention to many aspects one of which is QMK transposition activity that they try to encourage if there is any need for it. Therefore auditors' answers to the questions about QMK transposition activity are positive. The second reason is that workers of audited organization represented progressive organizations with high quality culture. Therefore in this case there was no need for auditors to encourage QMK transposition activity because the workers of audited organizations perform it themselves. In both cases *i*ncidentally the same reasons determined that the proposition P5 was unproved.

Conclusions

1. The increase in quality management knowledge of organization is achieved by initiating quality knowledge management activities. Knowledge management activities comprise identification, systematization, dissemination, transposition and creation of knowledge. Therefore, auditors contribute to certified/being certified organization's improvement of quality management (improvement of operational effectiveness) system by facilitating gradual increase in organization's quality management knowledge by initiating identification, systematization, dissemination and transposition of quality management knowledge of the organization.

2. Certifying institutions get important role in quality management knowledge activities, as most of them are initiated through interaction between certified/being certified organizations and certifying institutions. According to the results of our research we can verify that the auditors of certifying institution encourage workers of audited organization to initiate quality manage-

ment knowledge identification, systematization, dissemination and transposition activities.

3. According to the results of our research we can also verify that the auditors of certifying institution not only encourage workers of audited organization to initiate quality management knowledge identification and systematization activities, but also directly participate in them through identification and systematization of good or weak/to be improved quality management practices, problems, threats and their causes.

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Summary

The role of quality auditors in order to facilitate continuous improvement of quality management system of organization is analyzed in this article. Previously scholars reported that quality auditors contribute to improvement of quality management system of organization, but having evaluated the very different level of certified/being certified organization's quality management knowledge, auditors' quality management knowledge, confidentiality commitments of certifying institutions' auditors, their impeccable reputation, it becomes unclear how they contribute to and support continuous quality improvement of the certified/being certified organizations. Therefore it was proposed that quality auditors contribute to certified/being certified organizations' improvement of quality management (operational effectiveness improvement) system by facilitating gradual increase in organization's quality management knowledge by initiating activities of identification, systematization, dissemination, transposition and creation of quality management knowledge of organization. The part of the statement predicting emergence of facilitation of quality management knowledge management activities in organization was empirically tested by field research. Results showed that auditors of certifying institution initiate identification, systematization, dissemination, transposition of quality management knowledge of organization. The results also suggest that quality auditors personally perform identification and systematization of quality management knowledge of organization.

Keywords: certification, quality audit, quality auditors, role of quality auditors, quality management.

KOKYBĖS AUDITORIŲ VAIDMUO IDENTIFIKUOJANT, SISTEMINANT, PLATINANT IR PERKELIANT ORGANIZACIJOS KOKYBĖS VADYBOS ŽINIAS

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas kokybės auditorių vaidmuo siekiant nuolat tobulinti organizacijos kokybės vadybos sistemą. Įvairių autorių nuomone, kokybės auditoriai prisideda prie organizacijos kokybės vadybos sistemos tobulinimo, tačiau, įvertinus labai skirtingą besisertifikuojančių / sertifikuotų organizacijų kokybės vadybos žinių lygį, auditorių kokybės vadybos žinių lygį, sertifikavimo įstaigų auditorių konfidencialumo įsipareigojimus, nepriekaištingą reputaciją, neaišku, kaip jie prisideda ir palaiko nuolatinį kokybės gerinimą sertifikuotose organizacijose. Todėl buvo pasiūlyta, jog kokybės auditoriai prisideda prie besisertifikuojančios / sertifikuotos organizacijos kokybės vadybos sistemos tobulinimo, laipsniškai didindami organizacijos kokybės vadybos žinias ir kad tai jie atlieka inicijuodami organizacijos kokybės vadybos žinių identifikavimo, sisteminimo, sklaidos, perkėlimo bei kūrimo veiklas. Iš šio teiginio suformuluotos penkios prielaidos, kurios buvo tikrinamos atliekant empirinį tyrimą, panaudojant pusiau struktūruoto interviu metodą. Remiantis tyrimo rezultatais nustatyta, jog sertifikuojančių įstaigų auditoriai inicijuoja organizacijos kokybės vadybos žinių identifikavimo, sisteminimo, sklaidos bei perkėlimo veiklas. Per tyrimą taip pat nustatyta, jog sertifikuojančių įstaigų auditoriai ne tik inicijuoja organizacijos kokybės vadybos žinių identifikavimo bei sisteminimo veiklas, tačiau ir patys jose tiesiogiai dalyvauja.

Prasminiai žodžiai: sertifikavimas, kokybės auditas, kokybės auditoriai, kokybės auditorių vaidmuo, kokybės vadyba.