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A MODEL APPROACH FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

In order to achieve a standard architectural accreditation system, the educational and practicing processes must be analyzed by considering input-outcome mechanism. What are the contemporary needs for an international organisation? Is it possible to separate the whole system into parts? Do we need any modification in the educational system in order to have a global character? Or do we have to organize an international professional team for the evaluation of different cases of knowledge and experience that complies with scientifically proven standards of accreditation? How can we develop an innovative approach for different stages of functioning and transition of mental formation ?

To cope with all of the above facts, a new model is presented. The model is "changing the existing accreditation approach and placing a much more practical system to cover the new needs, such as being flexible, dynamic, adaptable The aims of creating such a model are;

1. Concentration on designing and decision processes of the accreditation,
2. Adapting the results into the regional or global scale.
3. Achieving a better architectural education system.
4. A continuous accreditation system parallel to a continious education system.
5. A practical approach in defining the contents and the techniques of evaluation of the diplomas or degrees.
6. During the realization process, the achievment of the *Social Practisioners* and *Property Manager Architects* .

Key words : accreditation, architectural education.

Introduction

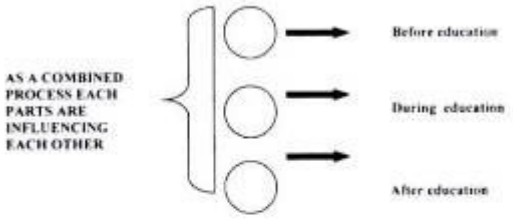
The basic problem in accreditation for any case, at any phase, is finding a way of evaluating the subject that is presented, wholly but not partially. If we merely think about the basis for accreditation of architectural programmes by searching about curricula, the outcome may mislead us. Because, in this process, there are many different conditions which influence each other and present the different levels of standards. That's why we should consider the stages before education, during education and after education totally.

In a country the education system is limited with the whole running system, such as socio-politic, economic, strategic, etc. All systems are closely interrelated with each other. So it is hard to change one or modify without creating any impact on whole system.

As it is known, accreditation is a static entity in itself. After having a sample, there are rigid measuring scales and techniques which can be applied easily. Sometimes we try to find if there are some similarities between two programmes. Sometimes we run after mathematical calculations or correlations. But actually the process must be more dynamic. There are many different knowledge or experience levels. Some of them are very easy to measure or compare, some are very complex and unmeasurable. The demand coming from the practitioners may be totally different from the educators. The needs may differ according to local, regional or global standards.

As it is stated above, we are in trouble with our present applications. So the practical way for achieving a new system is analysing the input-outcome mechanism of the whole programme. The basic aim of this study is to find some hints to approach the problem from different sides and to create a new model which may enlarge our vision about the subject.

On one side of the model, when we look at the curricula of different architectural schools, we see that, there are some basic similarities. Each has compulsory or elective courses and some additional practices. There are also different application principles. For example some of them start with basic design, some tries to have knowledge accumulation before having any design course. (Fig.1)



On the other side of the model, when we look at the graduates, practitioners, we see that there are some who are acting as designer, as project managers, as construction managers, etc. Or some are not working in their field. All of these differentiations may be perceived at the accreditation of the same or different education schools or different candidates. On this formation, the curricula has some influences or roles on the end products, but not as clear-cut as it is hoped by the educators.

What are the companies approaches during the employment of a professional. They create some limitations according to their own capacities. Some ask for an honour degree from such and such famous university, or also require an experiencing term. Some ask for the differenet evaluation stages. All of these approaches are time consuming actions and creating some other wastes (such as socio-

economic, psychologic).

The other interesting side is that, the people are always arguing that the real defect lies in preliminary education systems.

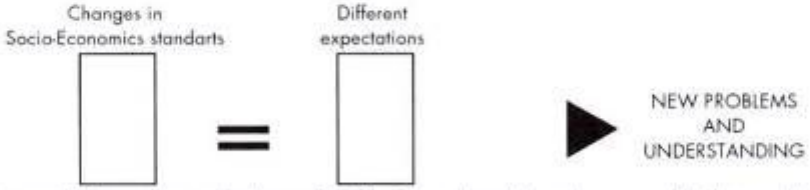
At this point, it is clear that nobody is hopefull about the present situation. That's why, the problem is to create a systematic model which will solve many of the above problems.

The basic principals of this new model are; being very dynamic, easily applicable, considering local, regional or global needs altogether, having self-proofs or guarantees for running or achieving outcomes, very flexible in adapting itself to very different cases.

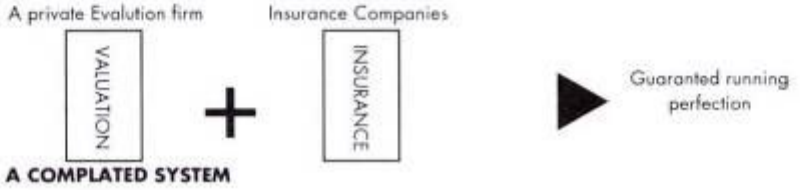
The problem should not be only the evaluation of the universities and accreditation of their programmes, because there are many different input potentials parallel to different human being characteristics too. All of these system may influence countries' future expectations. So we must directly evaluate outcomes (here the graduates) instead of only evaluating their origins (education). (Fig 2)

Evaluation Process Should Include

Another important factor is the *TIME* dimension? Any one of us wants to be accrediated properly, according to a standardized, neutral system. By this, we hope to adapt ourselves to a practising medium. But is this the beginning of a calm and peaceful, comfortable life? Is it endless? The answer is no. Because of the dynamism of a professional life, changes in socio-economic standarts and parallel to this, different expectations, creates new problematic cases. In order to answer to all of these problems, the model should be structured as dynamic as possible. That is; the model can be an open system which only evaluates and classifies the people who wants to work professionally in the field. So each difference in the knowledge or experience of the worker or firm may be scientifically reflected to each other simultanously. (Fig.3)



This organisation may be realised by a private firm. The auto-control can be managed by the accuplated insurance companies. The running perfection of the system is guaranteed by these two firms together. (Fig.4)



The companies will be able to choose their staffs according to the perfermance levels of these evaluation firms. If the working quality of a firm is good and secured, the insurance company may reduce the fee. So the whole system lock itselfs automatically for perfection in any means of accreditation.

However the system is aiming a perfection, there are some missing parts that we must complete as soon as possible. For example, there is the Chamber of Architects in Turkey. But the necessarry law and application principles are not sufficient to approve and perfectly applie to the whole system. If there is an attempt to establish this private organisations, it is hoped that parallel to these, some private universities may be established or existing ones may revise their systems accordingly.

As a result of this systematic approach, it is hoped that, there won't be any more orientation problem in the architectural profession. Architects working in different fields could automatically orient themselves to any levels of any field, at any time when they improve their knowledge or capability standards. With the inputs of this new approach, students, according to their own wishes or preferences, may adapt themselves to the right fields at right time intervals of studies which they can be much more successfull.

System

Accreditation is an evaluation process. As it is the same in any process, there are also many different stages in this process too, that we have to analyse them deeply and combine all of the incomes and/or outcomes in order to achieve the synthesis. There are sub or main decision stages. In any decision, the total success depends upon the study boundaries. If we try to cover a very limited area, than the other influences create so many superimpositions which may affect the total system critically. For accreditation, at least, we must consider the stages before, during and after education. We also must cover the interesting characteristic behaviour of the humanbeing.

The other important factor is creating *a continuous accreditation system parallel to a continious education system.*

Before Education

As it is known, the whole capacities of a man begins to sprout immediately after it gains the earliest embryo level. This continues during the whole childhood period, including nursery or primary schools' level. Family, socio-economic or psychological environment influences this process positively or negotively.

During Education

Man may change all of his/her behavioural aspects during secondary, high school or university education levels. There are some concrete, some flexible occurances in the mental accumulations. The static and dynamic processes are critically in balance. But there are risk factors according to the applied education system and standard types. For instance, as it happens in an architectural design studio. A student coming from high school directly may not have a real adaptation. But there should be a transitional preparation for the new dynamic designing process.

After Education

When a young person has the degree or diploma in any field, everybody, including the relatives, friends or the social environment, without considering any of the negative impacts on the future mental activities, charge the rigid roles as if there is sufficient muturity to cope with practicing.

Other important elements of the proposed system approach are human charecteristics, related supply and demand mechanisms and the decision flexibility.

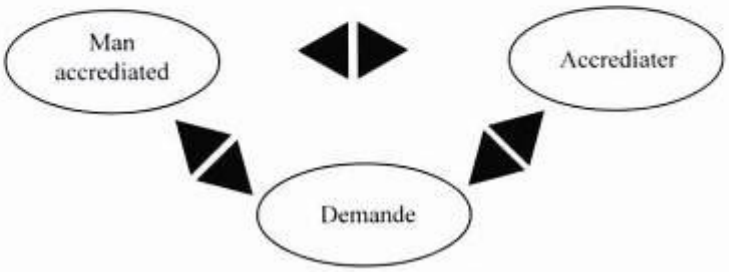
Human Charecteristics

Each one of us know that having the perfection in any field, is not possible. But we automatically tend to aim for it. As a humanbeing we always have the gradual changes in our productivity capacities during whole life related to various influencing factors.

So in any accreditation process, there must be an evaluation technique created, which will measure the different potentialities besides our own existing knowledge capacities, capabilities, including future probabilities alltogether.

Supply and Demand Mechanism

There are three different partners in any accreditation process. First one is the man who is accrediated e.i. the supplier, the second one is the accrediater, e.i the mediator and the third one is the accreditation is for, e.i. the demander (client). (Fig.5)



The problem is to create a happy result, an optimum which fits to all among these. For example; having a new professional group who are able in translating clients'expectation to the designer or explaining the conceptual basis in designer decisions to the clients for achieving a better utilisation in any means, such as cleaning the materials or maintaining some components etc. For achieving this, we look for scientific, neutral, practically applicable and safe & guaranteed solutions. How do we manage this multi-sided system? We must accept that;

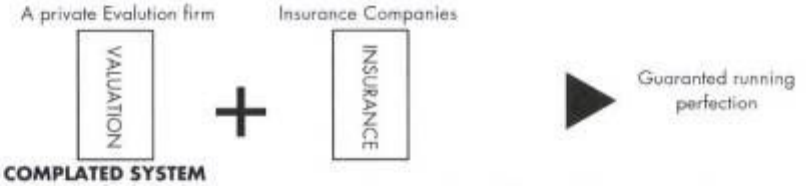
1. Accreditation is a very complex entity. It is not enough to pay attention merely to the curricula in the universities. The process must cover whole life, with all of it's relations, to individuals or to society. At the same time with the whole resources.
2. Accreditation needs scientifically prooved systems, and professional adapters. The bureaucratic relations (as it exist in YÖK) or the goodwills may not realise a proper evaluation.
3. Not static but dynamic applications needed. They must be totally scientifically based system approaches, including statistical, accumulative and neutral researches. The classification should be realised according to supply & demand mechanism in the field.

Decision Flexibility

Proposed system should have the maximum flexibilities in compansating the various inputs and outcomes towards the evaluation of the harmonious productivity with humanbeing, with social needs of the public without causing any waste in any natural resource. The rigid decisions should not cut a dynamic hidden tiny potential of any accrediated personality at any time interval for the sake of its basic pecularities.

A Practical Organisation

All of the facts presented above show that we must symplify the approach. If we do not concentrate ourselves to find an accreditable program for different expectations, we may easily think about endless freedom in an architectural education for having various charecteristics in the outcome. Now, the problem is finding self-guaranteed and poverfull system to have not any doubt about the classification of the different quality features. Actually, this is not a new system in the world, but, it is new for Turkey and it is tried to have certain revised sides to adapt it to our needs properly. In United States or in other capitalist systems they use to apply this successfully. Here there are two different parts acting together for locking the system automatically to produce best outcomes. These parts of the whole system can be established with the valuation and the insurance companies. (Fig.6)



A COMPLATED SYSTEM

These private companies must act scientifically, properly and honourably, because otherwise in a very short period the relative demand amount tend to be zero. In order to be advisable, these firms corrosponds frequently with each others. If the result of any evoluation of the standards of a professional architect is scientific and acceptable then the insurance fee can be set proportionally. Otherwise decisions may not be clearly defined. The amount of an insurance fee can be low or high. If the standard of an architect is high in any means, such as theoric or practical accumulation or organisation standards etc., then there is minimum risk factor and in return the insurance fee can be minimum. On the other side, if the standard is low, the risk factor and fee become high.

One may argue that, due to the behavioral aspects of the evoluation firm, information about architect's standard can be misleading. But in this case the firm immediately loose its persuasiveness. That means that it is very important for a firm to have real scientific standard for having an acceptable authoritative.

In order to achieve perfect results from this system, there should be some decision corrections realised during the application steps related to performances of the candidates by creating some checking list mechanisms. Other related subjects such as running methodologies or principles can easily be presented after this system is activated.

Conclusion

In an accreditation, the input-outcome mechanism runs as a black-box. If we achieve a good accreditation system, this does not mean that it will bring a perfection in an evaluation process. The simple evaluation process applied in any step of a professional process will create much more valuable outcome and if we consider time dimension, it will be more realistic in essence.

The proposed new model had three basic concepts; first one was the continuity, e.i the dynamism of the system and the other was creation of a mature level of demand in the society and the third, the last one was the autho-prooved guaranty. (Fig.7)

This open system may solve all of the failing parts of the education system. The relations of input-outcome mechanism will automatically change the scopes of the universities' education planners'. Because of the nature of the natural race, each student will improve his/her education capacity automatically. The product quality demand coming from people will force the students to learn more, the students will create a stress on achieving better education curricula and contents in return. The system will lead all the professionals into a very dynamic continuous education process, so the quality and the actual performance of the professionals can be realised at a maximum level.

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