Quality Assurance as a Main Theme in Bernard Shaw's
*The Doctor's Dilemma*

Inst. Ansam Riyadh Almaaroof. Ph.D.
College of Education for Humanities - Tikrit University

**Abstract:**

Quality assurance is one of the most recently tackled subject regarding business and profession. George Bernard Shaw as a playwright and a social reformer presents many vital themes throughout his plays. This paper hypothesizes that Shaw predicted and exposed Quality Assurance in his plays before it has formally appeared. Thus, the paper aims at shedding light on the theme of quality assurance as has been tackled by Shaw.

The paper is limited to Shaw's play, *The Doctor's Dilemma*. To analyze the selected text, the paper follows the formalistic approach as a tool of discussion. The paper presents an introduction to Quality assurance, Shaw, and the play. Then a discussion of the play is exposed. Finally a conclusion which sums up the results occurs.

**Introduction:**

Quality Assurance is one of the most important themes that may appear along the line through the live of human beings for it contains the core of the whole life. Life without seeking perfection in doing things makes deeds senseless. Thus, Allah subhanhu wa taalah says:

"He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving;" (Sorat Al-mulk, 2. Shakir. Trans. In http://www.el-moslem.com/telawa.php?id=48) and prophet Mohammed blessings of Allah upon him says, "Allah will be pleased with those who try to do their work in a perfect way" (narrated by Al-Tabarany in http://majles.alukah.net/t68655/) The core of life, in this sense, is to distinguish between good and bad deeds. Thus, your deeds are to be distinguished. Although Quality Assurance is one of the crucial demands in the Islamic Religion, but it does not appear throughout life as an aspect that can be measured or evaluated until 1940s when William Edward Doming(1900-1993), An American Engineer and scientist, who is
regarded as a father of Quality Assurance established the term and put its foundations as a science in 1940-1945. (Doming, 1993, p. 132.)

W. E. Doming says, "A bad system will beat a good person every time." (http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/wedwardsd672626) Of course, this statement renders the ideology of the writer and clarifies that society is in need for Quality Assurance to protect people and their rights.

Quality Assurance can be defined as "an organization's guarantee that the product or service it offers meets the accepted quality standards. It is achieved by identifying what "quality" means in context; specifying methods by which its presence can be ensured; and specifying ways in which it can be measured to ensure conformance."(ESS Quality Glossary 2010, Eurostat, 2010. In http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/!PORTAL.wwpob_page_show?_docname=2344300.PDF on 10/3/2016)

Accordingly, ISO sees Quality Assurance as "a part of quality management, on condition that buoyancy that quality necessities (needs or expectations that are declared, commonly indirect or mandatory) will be satisfied. Moreover, it can be defined as a component of quality management and is concerned with providing confidence that quality requirements will be satisfied". (AS/NZS ISO 9000:2006: Quality management systems— fundamentals and vocabulary, June 2006, p.9 in http://www.defence.gov.au/jlc/Documents/DSCC/Australian%20Standard%20ISO%209000.pdf.on 11/3/2016)


On the other side, it may "encompass any activity that is concerned with assessing and improving the merit or the worth of an intervention in the field of VET or its compliance with given standards." (Adapted from Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. OECD, Paris, 2010.in http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf. on 11/3/2016)
Methodology
This paper principally espouses a mixture of Social and formalistic approaches according to which The Doctor’s Dilemma is regarded as the representation of Shaw’s thought and portrayal of medical treatment in early 20th century.

Discussion

The Doctor's Dilemma, a play by George Bernard Shaw is first staged in 1906. It is a play about a problem of a moral side. It is about dilemmas made by limited medical resources, and the struggle between the needs of private medicine as a craft and a mission.

George Bernard Shaw in his play, The Doctor's Dilemma mentions a very crucial issue regarding business and profession on the tongue of SIR PATRICK. When he says," All professions are conspiracies against the laity". (Act I, 18). This statement proposes a theme which is linked to the profession's ethics, In this regard, some adversaries may say that this is just a statement that occurs in the discourse of the play and it does not represent the playwright's opinion. The answer is that Shaw, the playwright, has the same vision and it is mentioned under the title of The Doctors' Conscious in "Preface on Doctors" which precedes the play in which he says that:

"All that can be said for medical popularity is that until there is a practicable alternative to blind trust in the doctors, the truth about the doctor is so terrible that we dare not face it. "(Shaw, p. 3, 1909.)

The above mentioned statement clarifies that it is George Bernard Shaw in his play, The Doctor's Dilemma and its preface is the first playwright who predicts the need for putting criteria according to which one can be regarded good or bad in his profession. Because if there is such a criteria for medical profession, it is necessarily applicable for other professions as well. These Criteria, later on, are to be called Quality Assurance.

In a specialized study about Quality Assurance, Funk and Dammann have mentioned many elements as being essential for achieving Quality Assurance, among them are; decision-making, ensuring the protection of people and the environment, and evaluation of performed measures.(Funk and Dammann, 2007, P. 2) The central theme of the play-- which is in any time, there will be treatments that are so rare or very expensive that not all the people have them. Who is to decide, and on which base is the decision to be made?--remains current.

Here a question is to be asked, what is the relation between ethics and Quality Assurance? The answer is that one of the major components of the
Quality Assurance of any profession is the profession's ethics. M. Halisa, O. Akova and H. Tagraf, specialists in Quality Assurance says:
"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." (2007, Pp.127 - 145)

Quality is something to be measured according to certain features, however, it is quite clear that when the ethical side occurs it needs no so much measurement tools. In this sense:

"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."(Ibid)

This is what The Doctor's Dilemma exposes throughout the choices made by its hero, if one can calls him a hero!. Decision making, in this regard, is another factor of Quality Assurance. (Divjak How to connect (integrate) QA to the decision-making processes at all levels? in http://www.eua.be/Libraries/pqc/Plenary_4_Divjak.pdf?sfvrsn=0. Retrieved on 18.4.2013).

The medical ethics are six as they are mentioned in Everyday Medical Ethics and Law which are declared by British Medical Association Ethics Department as follows:

1- **Self-determination** – When patients have the intellectual ability to make choices, their decisions should be valued when they do not negatively influence the rights or safety of others.
2- **Mental capacity** – exercising their autonomy, people need to have the intellectual ability to recognize and evaluate the options to be able making a choice. Health experts may need to make sure that patients have the intellectual ability to use their self-sufficiency, when such choices have main life-changing results.
3- **Honesty and integrity** – Health experts are necessary to be honest and to act with honor. Their dealings should never be intentionally to betray the patients. Transparency is demanded.
4- **Confidentiality** – All patients are permitted confidentiality, but not in absolute way, especially if other people are consequently at grim danger of harm.
5- **Fairness and equity** – treating all similar cases the same way, Fairness to patients can be seen as a concern when conflicts of interest
come up and doctors' professional decision risks being inclined by issues such as the viewpoint of private benefit.

6- **Harm and benefit** – philosophy of maximizing assistance and minimizing hurt are among the trickiest features of modern medical ethics, although the ‘Hippocratic’ promise to benefit patients with minimal hurt remains essential to medical ethics. (Sommerville, 2013, Pp25-6)

To apply the medical ethics to the selected text, the discussion goes on. In the Preface to the play, Shaw writes that "The truth is, hardly any of us have ethical energy enough for more than one really inflexible point of honor." (Shaw, 1909, P.14) Here, Shaw claims that each one has his own self-esteem as appears in the eyes of the people around him/her. This self-esteem is what decides the ethical red-line far from which one cannot go. Thus, the ethical matter is not easily determined for it is very subjective issue.

The play starts on the day when Ridgeon, a doctor of a prominent research, is being knighted. His friends congratulate him in a party. Sir Patrick, a great old medical doctor; was among the friends as well as Walpole who is a hostile doctor; Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington, who is a charming doctor; and Blenkinsop who is a threadbare and sincere public doctor. Each of these guests has his own favorite theory of illness and treatment.

Mrs. Dubedat who is a young woman hopelessly seeks help from Ridgeon to her husband. Ridgeon has originated a way to treat consumption by "stimulating the phagocytes by evident." Ridgeon rejects her quest, then he accepts because Dubedat is an artist and Ridgeon adores his wife.

Meeting Mr. Dubedat, however, the doctors discover that the artist is a deceitful husband. Ridgeon finally decides to cure Blenkinsop who suffers from consumption too. He refers the artist to be cured by Bloomfield Bonington. This deed insure his death. Justifying his behavior as a plan to make Dubedat die before his wife shows clearly what an irresponsible doctor he is. The plan goes on and Dubedat's reputation as an artist flies as the doctor has designed.

This comedy which Shaw names a "tragedy", tackles a case of rare medical resources. Which man of the two will Sir Ridgeon save? Blenkinsop, a truthful physician who works hard for the sake of the poor or Mr. Dubedat, who is a sociopathic artist.
On the second level, this comedy shows an irony that the doctor has resolved the patient's dilemma by a fascinating ethical twist—he explains that Dubedat's death will be of benefit for it will enhance his reputation and make him famous. It will, in fact, primarily do good to Ridgeon. Themes regarding aspects arouse within the general framework of the play—the science value, the core of the medical profession, and what this paper concerns with is Quality Assurance.

Quality Assurance was not declared as a specific subject at Shaw's time. Nevertheless, a "Preface on Doctors" of about 67-page (1909) precedes the play in which Shaw talks in details about the general British inadequacy of medical treatment. He proposes ideas for improving medical care system, among these ideas is the socialized medicine. Throughout the preface, he tackles two animal researches (vivisection) and vaccination. Although disagreeing with Shaw's disbelieve that vaccination was efficacious but via his disbelieve he predicts the need for a system of Quality Assurance in medical field.

In the first page of Shaw's preface to the play, he reveals that"

"Scandalized voices murmur that these operations are unnecessary. They may be. It may also be necessary to hang a man or pull down a house. But we take good care not to make the hangman and the housebreaker the judges of that. If we did, no man's neck would be safe and no man's house stable. But we do make the doctor the judge, and fine him anything from sixpence to several hundred guineas if he decides in our favor".(Shaw, 1909, p. 1)

Doing some actions to pursue one's personal benefits is a very malevolent behavior that is empty of being ethical or charitable. This sort of behavior is what Shaw intends to point to in the above statement.

The following monologue said by Mrs. Dubedat shows clearly how brutal Sir Ridgeon was when he decides not to treat her husband, Mr. Dubedat in the right way.: 

"MRS. DUBE DAT: I had a great many dreams; but at last they all came down to this. I didn't want to waste myself. I could do nothing myself. ... I prayed Heaven would send me one. I firmly believe that Louis was guided to me in answer to my prayer. ... If I lost faith in him, it would mean the wreck and failure of my life. ... You must cure him: you must make him quite well again for me. I know that you can do it and that nobody else can. I implore you not to refuse." (Shaw, 1911, Act III, P. 50)
In a conversation between Mrs. Dubedat and Louis, Shaw exhibits the vision of the ordinary people towards doctors as well as his own view as opposites. Mrs.:
"MRS DUBEDAT. I want nothing but you, dear. [She gives him a caress, to which he responds so passionately that she disengages herself]. There! be good now: remember that the doctors are coming this morning. Isn't it extraordinarily kind of them, Louis, to insist on coming? all of them, to consult about you
LOUIS [coolly] Oh, I daresay they think it will be a feather in their cap to cure a rising artist. They wouldn’t come if it didn't amuse them, anyhow. ?"(Shaw, 1911, Act III, P. 36)

The playwright reveals that though some naïve people think positively about the doctors, yet, many others have a negative—according to the playwright correct — vision. In this sense, it is not a hidden matter that the doctors’ reputation is very notorious in the British society at Shaw's Time.

Conclusion
It is a fact that following the social ethics as well as making the decision in a certain direction which proves to be correct are two major components of Quality Assurance. George Bernard Shaw, throughout his play, The Doctor's Dilemma (1906), successfully portrays that the profession ethics and decision- making are vital for the prosperity of the society. Hence, it is clear that his play was a prophesy that there should be some system that is able to put things in certain formula to determine how professions are to be evaluated, and people protection to be guaranteed.

Applying the medical ethics to what is exposes in The Doctor's Dilemma, one easily finds that most of these points are broken down by the doctor. Four out of six point in the medical ethics manifestation are broken by the doctors in The Doctor's Dilemma. Mental capacity – exercising their autonomy is the first point as Sir Ridgeon take the decision not to cure Mr. Duobedat with no regard for the plea of the patient and his wife. Honesty and integrity is the second point that is broken when the doctor intentionally betray his patient and his wife and dares to make a decision that it is better for the artist to die and not to be saved. The third point is Fairness and equity which is broken by Sir Ridgeon when he decides not to tell the truth to the patient and to deal with Mr. Duobadat not as the same as other patients. The Fourth point, Harm and benefit, is also broken when the doctor does not make any commitment to the oath of the medical profession when he care only about his own benefit and not to the patient's.
The results of the analysis is the collapse of the characters of the physician in the play. They are unable to keep their oath as medical entourages because they disobey the points of their general duties based on the medical ethics.

In this sense, the paper throughout discussion reaches the conclusion that Shaw is the first playwright who predicts the need for Quality Assurance system to rule and evaluate professions of various kinds.

References:

ضمان الجودة كموضوع أساسي في مسرحية مشكمة الدكتور

لورج برنارد شو

م.د. إنسام رياض المعروف
جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

الملخص:

ضمان الجودة من المواضيع الأكثر حداثة التي تم تناولها في مجال الأعمال والمهن. جورج برنارد شو ككاتب ومصلح اجتماعي تناول العديد من المواضيع المهمة من خلال كتاباته. تقترح هذه الورقة أن برناردشو قد تنبأ بأهمية وجود ضمان للجودة للمهن وعرضها بشكل تفصيلي في مسرحية "مشكمة الدكتور" كما أنه خصص المسرحية بشكل كامل لهذا الموضوع قبل ظهوره كموضوع معترف به بشكل رسمي. تهدف الورقة لتلقيض الضوء على موضوع ضمان الجودة كما تتناوله برنارد شو. والورقة مقدمة لدراسة مسرحية "مشكمة الدكتور" وتحليل النص.

كما أن الورقة هي عبارة عن مزيج من النقد الشكلي والأخلاقي. تقدم الورقة مقدمة لموضوع ضمان الجودة، برنارد شو، ومسرحية "مشكمة الدكتور". تبدأ الورقة بمناقشة وتحليل للمسرحية. كما وتختتم الورقة بملخص لنتائج البحث.

كلمات مفتاحية: ضمان الجودة، برناردشو، مشكمة الدكتور، النقد الشكلي.