



## Total Quality Management and Corporate Social Responsibility Theoretical Model applied to a Higher Education Institution: The Case Study of the University of Évora

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** *The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the application of a qualitative and theoretical tool for the evaluation of Quality Management and Social Responsibility applied to Higher Education Institutions, specifically to the University of Évora, Portugal.*

**Methodology:** *The elaboration of the qualitative and theoretical model was based on the content analysis of two scientific articles on the theme of Social Responsibility and Quality. The articles in question were "TQM and CSR Nexus" of Ghobadian et al., published in 2007 in the International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management and "The Corporate Social Responsibility Audit Within the Quality Management Framework" of van der Wiele et al., published in 2001 in the Journal of Business Ethics. A relational analysis between the philosophies of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), quality excellence models and the elements of the TQM process, aspects and elements of the social responsibility process and CSR audit tools was done. The model resulting from the relational analysis was then applied to the University of Évora (UEv), which allowed us to analyze this case study.*

**Result:** *The model was successfully applied to the University of Évora and the results obtained revealed the importance of Quality Management and Social Responsibility on the general managing of the institution to achieve a sustainable and promising future for all stakeholders (among others, students, workers, employers and society in general).*

**Conclusion:** *The model has proved to be successful in providing useful information for a sustainable management of the University. It is shown that in a sustainable way both concepts and practices of TQM and CSR have evolved and have conjugate, making possible the improvement of the institution performance.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Higher Education Institutions, Models of Excellence, Total Quality Management.*

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## 1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions are organizations with customers, employees, equipment and a great variety of stakeholders. As organizations, they need to be sustainable and have high quality standards to make the difference and become more competitive.

To evaluate Social Responsibility and Quality there are several tools available. According to van der Wiele, Kok, McKenna, & Brown, (2001) the discussion on social responsibility started with Friedman. Friedman (2009), states that "the direction in which policy is now moving, of permitting corporations to make contributions for charitable purposes and allowing deductions for income tax, is a step in the direction of creating a true divorce between ownership and control and of undermining the basic nature and character of our society. It is a step away from an individualistic society and toward the corporate state". Social responsibility of organizations is not charity. The interest in this issue is growing not only on enterprises but also in academic organizations, namely in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). "Similar to corporations, the question of what motivates universities to commit to their social responsibilities exists.

However, in the lack of any specific law obliging universities to consider social responsibilities as their core policies, and any incentive for considering social practices as a KPI for universities' performance measurement, the social practices of universities seem to be more voluntarily-based and still unexplored" [26]. On the other hand, the problematic of Quality Management is being a more debated subject in HEI. "Higher education (HE) environments across the globe are frequently described as turbulent and dynamic" [4]. The changes that are occurring pushes HEI to get more quality and to search for a way to evaluate it. Models of Quality Management applied to industry or enterprises are being tested on HEI.

## 2. Quality and Social Responsibility

The concept of Quality is part of the new paradigm of modern society. The cultural evolution of a people can be demonstrated by the evolution of that concept.

The quality movement dates back to the 20s of last century [8]. So it turns out that Quality is a theme discussed for several years now. The initial idea arose in the United States of America, during the World War II, where the quality control of the produced and sold weapons was crucial to the success of this industry.

Due to the complex environment and structure of Higher Education the measurement and management of quality has created a number of challenges. Around the world, Higher Education Institutions adopt a variety of quality management practices mainly drawn upon from existing models applied to industry. The protagonism of Higher Education in stimulating national economic growth and the value of international students to national economies intensifies the need to ensure quality within Higher Education. These forces demand that quality assurance processes are both rigorous and transparent, and that quality enhancement initiatives are decisively embedded in any quality management programme [2].

Social responsibility is the recognition that business activities have an impact on society and that this impact is considered in management decision making [26]. The social responsibility theme has been being treated since 1953. It began at the hands of Howard Bowen, with the issue of his work Responsibility of the Businessman [6]. In 1958, in contrast to Bowen's ideas, Levitt states that the role of the companies is to generate profits and that the function of ensuring social welfare rests with the State. In the 60s of the last century the expression proposed by Bowen "social responsibility of businessmen" changes to "corporate social responsibility" [7]. The theme of Corporate Social Responsibility is thus present, since companies began emerging [5].

Frederick (1960) argues that social responsibility includes a public attitude towards the human and economic resources, so they are not placed in a restricted way at the disposal of the interests of private persons and companies. It is also during this period, that another school of classical thought



argues that the organization exists to maximize profits and dividends and obey the rules [13]; [19]. Davis (1973) defined Corporate Social Responsibility as the organization's commitment to analyze the effects caused by the decision-making process, going beyond legal obligations and resulting in social and economic benefits. As seen, CSR definitions vary. To Frederick (1986), CSR is fundamentally an obligation of the organizations to work for social promotion. For Preston and Post (1975) CSR is the extension of entrepreneurial role that goes beyond its economic goals. Carroll (1979) provides a definition where the organizations' social responsibility covers economic, legal expectations, ethical and discretionary aspects that society has of organizations at a given point in time.

According to Nejati, Shafaei, Salamzadeh, & Daraei, (2011), universities, as the centers of knowledge generation and sharing, play a very important role in solving world's problems by ensuring sustainability. Basu and Palazzo (2008) and Benavides-Velasco et al. (2014) claim that there are several reasons for a company to implement CSR: to provide a specific response to requests from stakeholders, to improve business performance, to enhance corporate reputation, to generate customer loyalty or to anticipate legal sanctions.

There is a moral obligation to preserve the planet and there is no excuse for doing nothing to improve the environmental state of the world and this also applies to institutions of higher education [9]. Jabbour (2010), states that higher education institutions can cause "significant environmental impacts".

### 3. Relational analysis

The work of the quality gurus suggests a strong link between the movement of the ideals of quality and ethical theory and concepts based on virtue, equity, rights and free conceptualisation of ethics. Commitment, integrity, participation, trust, honesty, property and reward the efforts of those who are directly or indirectly involved, within and outside the organization are emphasized elements in the work of Crosby, Deming, Duran and Ishikawa [17]; [16]. According to the work of Ishikawa and Taguchi, the values of TQM defend the greatest virtues [16].

The strength of the TQM is based on the combination of success established between the scientific school of management which does not assume that people adapt to the system and the social school of management related to human behavior which is based on the premise that employees are honored, and thus the correction is replaced by cooperation. The employees are allowed to take the initiative and participate in decision-making processes relevant to them and if there is no transgression against organizational values there is no place to sanctions. The organization is seen as a system of cultural interrelationships instead of a set of tasks, processes and procedures [16].

The results obtained by the implementation of TQM in an organization, are beneficial and an added value for them. Ghobadian, Galleary, & Hopkins (2007) identified a study on the 90th from the United States Accounting Office (GAO) where it is revealed that by the implementation of TQM, companies had superior financial performance, improved relationships of employees, improved operating procedures and increased customer satisfaction. Analyzing the principles of CSR is obvious that many of them are consistent with the principles of quality management, continuous improvement, organizational commitment, social and stakeholders needs [15]. It is Knowles (2011) which states that on the heart of both, relies the respect for the individual, integrity, decency and justice.

In addition to awards such as the EQA and MBNQA, there are international quality standards such as the ISO 9000 series for quality and ISO 14001 for the environment. Whether the premiums either the rules are since its implementation, motivating factors of stimulating companies to manage in quality. Ghobadian, Galleary, & Hopkins (2007) argue that, despite the apparent differences in the definitions of TQM and CSR throughout history and in-depth development of the concept of TQM, there is considerable overlap between the values that underpin the two concepts. The novelty of CSR and the low diffusion levels, mean that there is less experience with the implementation of elements of the processes of social responsibility. Moreover, some of these elements are common elements to the



map TQM and therefore they can be implemented as part of TQM processes. This will require some adjustment and require the rethinking of TQM elements.

TQM and CSR are considered potential sources for achieving sustainable competitive advantage [3]. Based on other authors, Benavides et al. (2014) states that TQM is a management philosophy widely recognized that focuses on the process of continuous improvement in organizations to promote additional value to customers and meet their needs, bringing profit and productivity. Companies are also encouraged to behave in a socially responsible manner. Ghobadian, Gallear, & Hopkins (2007) state that the Total Quality Management and Social Responsibility, have a common philosophical root and the values that both defend, show a significant overlap. Moir (2001) argues that both TQM and CSR share similar ethical anchors. The elements of TQM and CSR overlap in fact, significantly, but there are differences.

#### 4. Conclusions

TQM can be used as an enhancer factor of the development of an ethically sensitive corporate culture. Models such as the MBNQA and EQA / EFQM incorporate a social responsibility element and management practices compatible with the defender of the ideals of CSR [18]; [22]; [16]. The relation of both models to social responsibility is ground in three fundamental aspects: the existence of a clear organization's mission statement; the organization is clear in the public debate; and the existence of ethical codes [27]. TQM and CSR result of the organization act properly. TQM can be used as an accelerator for the spread of CSR. Integrated coexistence of both in the organization is important.

The model resulting from the relational analysis was successfully applied to the University of Évora, which allowed us to analyze this case study. UEv it's an institution with no certification on quality or social responsibility however has a very well defined mission, values and awareness that quality is a characteristic of today's society, which must always be present in the actions of citizens and institutions, with particular responsibility in universities. For that reason UEv created in 2006 the pro-rectory for quality and innovation policy, with the aim of promoting, monitoring and supporting quality improvement initiatives. This HEI it's aware of its social responsibility, which is mirrored in its values, namely, respect for human dignity; academic freedom; individual merit; the rigorous performance of any tasks; the democracy underlying the decision; and, the absence of social, ethnic or religious discrimination. It's obvious the concern about quality and social responsibility however it's still missing the formal commitment that a certification can give to be internationally recognized as a Quality and Social Responsibility Institution with higher standards of demand on both.

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