

Analysis of the Impact of the EFQM Excellence Model on the Organizational Performance of Moroccan Universities: An Exploratory Methodological Approach

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Abstract

The evolution of the public sector in Morocco has considerably reshaped the performance of Moroccan universities over the years. This transformation has been catalyzed by the introduction of a culture of public performance research. Moroccan universities have thus adopted a managerial approach, putting in place performance measurement mechanisms to meet the new challenges. However, these current mechanisms, while meeting the requirements of the supervisory authorities, are not sufficient to effectively guide strategies, given the ambiguity of objectives linked to the multiple missions of public universities and the many stakeholders involved. These performance measurement systems are therefore far from providing an adequate framework for steering organizational performance. This study examines the impact of the excellence model on the organizational performance of Moroccan public universities. It adopts a methodological approach that separates the different dimensions of organizational performance, based on the EFQM excellence model. This model considers elements such as leadership, policy and strategy, staff commitment, partnership, and resources, which directly and indirectly influence the organizational performance of Moroccan public universities. This exploratory approach combines multi-case study and intervention research to identify the main factors contributing to the development of organizational performance in a given institution.

Keywords: Moroccan universities; Public performance; Management culture; EFQM excellence model; Organizational performance

1. Introduction

The current socio-economic environment is characterized by ever-increasing competition between companies, with a growing number of companies from emerging countries offering products featuring cutting-edge technology at highly competitive prices. In addition, the pace of technological change is accelerating, affecting virtually all business activities. In the same vein, Mevellec (1988) points out that we are living in an age when the problem is to produce what we can sell, rather than to sell what we can produce. To this end, companies need to set themselves high targets in terms of quality and speed of development for new products and services.

his requires mastery of various technological and organizational changes, and the ability to innovate.

Ansari (1999), points out that an organization's survival depends on transformations in both organizational structures and managerial practices, with a view to optimizing production. Just-in-time (JIT) systems, material requirements planning (MRP), Six Sigma, enterprise resource planning (ERP), total quality management (TQM) - one of the best forms of operations management practices - have received a great deal of attention over the past two decades (Jung and Wang, 2006).

Quality performance has always been a strategic factor in business success, but nowadays it is necessary to compete successfully in the marketplace. Many organizations have adopted continuous improvement approaches to meet these requirements. With the increasing adoption of a range of quality standards and new management systems. Notably, the emergence of Total Quality Management (TQM), Business Process Reengineering (BPR), Lean management, Six Sigma, performance monitoring... and so on. The list goes on and on, but on the whole, they share many of the principles and elements of total quality TQM. In the same vein, David et al (1999), point out that the challenge of production has totally changed (the need for quality, the demands of product differentiation, meeting deadlines and costs). As a result, new organizational approaches have been proposed in recent years to help control organizational performance and meet new production objectives.

Within this framework, the objective of this research is as follows: First, we try to understand the concept of TQM in its general acceptance. Secondly, we explore the importance and challenges of TQM in the context of public organizations. Likewise, we attempt to analyze TQM practices and processes, to understand the factors favoring the emergence and implementation of innovations, as well as the obstacles hindering the capacity for innovation within Moroccan Public Organizations. In addition, we attempt to explain the impact of TQM on the performance of Moroccan public organizations in general, and the Moroccan Public University in particular. Finally, we propose some lessons and recommendations for establishing a genuine model of organizational excellence adapted to the context of Moroccan public university organizations.

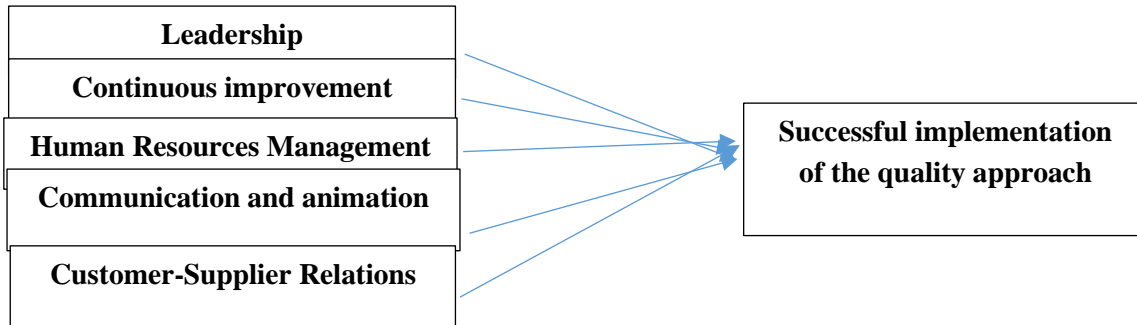
2. Theoretical framework

2.1. TQM: foundations and basic concepts

What do we mean by quality? Defining quality is a difficult task. The term has been around for some time. Juran (1995), in his book "A history of Managing for Quality", points out that quality management is not a recent phenomenon. Texts dealing with quality control and standardization go back a long way, and the term quality has been transformed into Total Quality Management. The definition of the word has been neither clear nor convincing since it first appeared. Its definition remains ambiguous and presents many equivocations. The meaning varies according to the situation in which the term is used, and also according to the vision of the authors. However, as Glasser (1992) points out, even if it seems difficult to define what we mean by the quality of an object, we can even recognize it when we see a quality object. Martin (1993), for his part, describes a real-life experience that illustrates the difficulty of reaching a consensus on the definition of quality.

The concept of quality first appeared in the 60s in Japan, and more specifically in the early 80s in the USA and Europe. A business management concept developed by Edward Deming is at the origin of this quality, of American origin, called Total Quality Management. Ansari (1990) points out that the development of TQM is associated with other authors, notably Juran, Crosby, Ishikawa, Taguchi, etc., without forgetting that the development of the concept is linked to the contributions of management experts such as Peter Drucker and Mc Gregor, and the Japanese school.

Figure 1: The main stages in the total quality approach



Source : Personal development

Table 1. Economic performance criteria according to Morin et Coll (1994)

Items	Définitions
Productivity	Quantity or volume of production of the main good or service, which can be measured at three levels: individual, group or organizational. Data from registers, evaluations and direct observation of work are used to measure it.
Production	The organization's ability to consistently and predictably deliver the products it is supposed to produce.
Efficiency	Report reflecting a comparison of a certain aspect of a unit of performance with the associated costs.
Profit	Sum of sales revenue less costs to be paid and obligations to be fulfilled. Percentage return on investment or percentage return on total sales are sometimes used as an alternative measure of profit.
Quality	Attributes of the organization's main product, measured in terms of rejection, loss and yield rates
Growth	Rate of increase in total workforce. Plant space. Assets, sales, profits, market share and number of innovations. Measuring this rate requires a comparison between the organization's present state and its past state.

This is a relativist approach. Several examples developed by the authors (R.G. Eccles 1991; R.F. Zammuto 1984; M. Keeley 1984) illustrate this assertion.

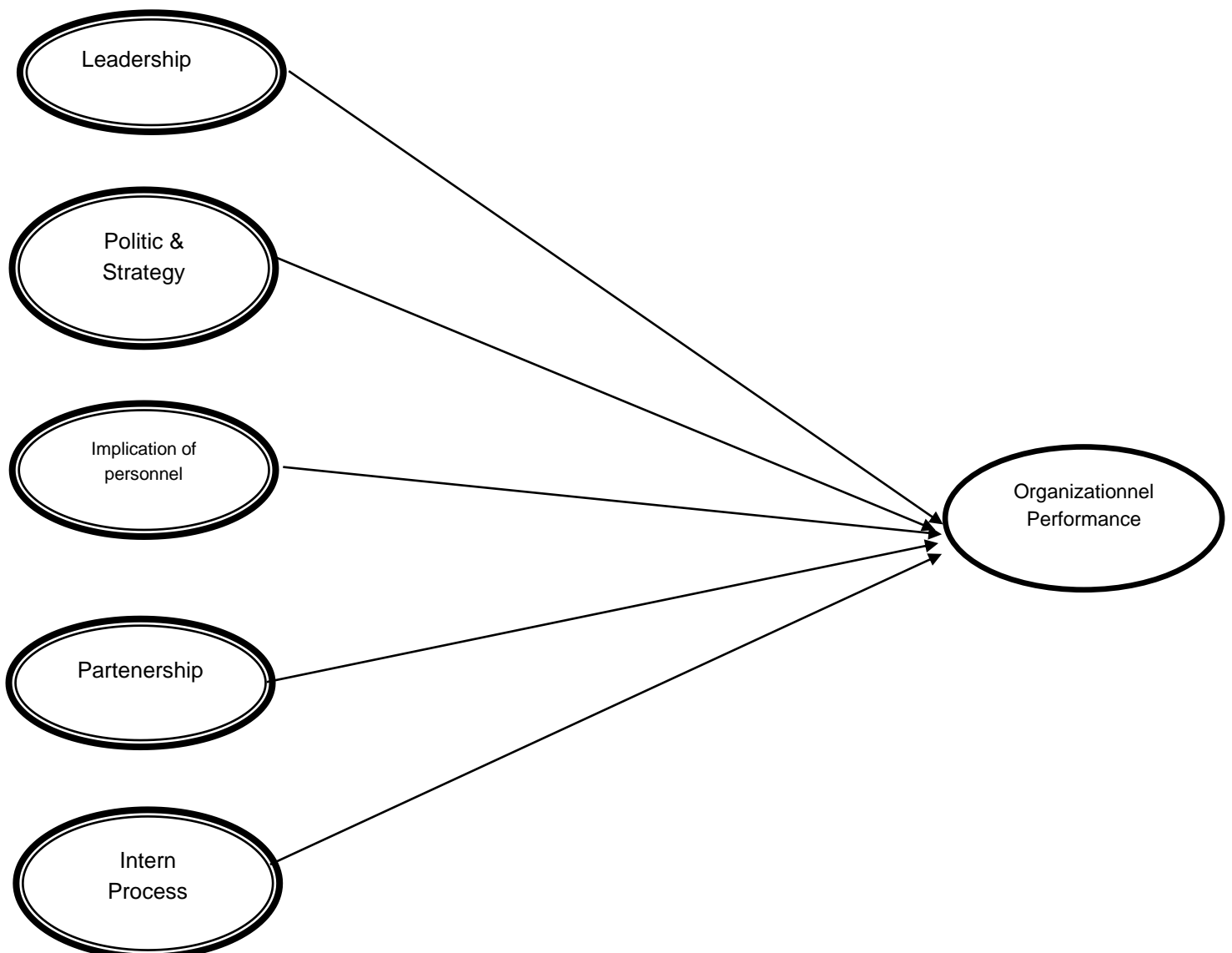
2.2. EFQM Excellence Model

Evaluating the performance of universities is a complex process, requiring in-depth analysis of the different approaches adopted by these institutions. The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model of organizational excellence provides a structured framework for assessing performance, based on several categories of indicators. These categories are defined according to the organization's key axes, such as leadership, policy and strategy, staff involvement, partnership and resources, and internal processes. In this study, we examine the performance indicators and attributes associated with each axis of the EFQM model, in the specific context of universities. The aim is to understand how these different aspects contribute to the overall performance of universities. The effective implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) is a key objective for many organizations seeking to improve their performance and competitiveness in the marketplace. TQM encompasses a set of principles and practices designed to promote quality, efficiency and continuous improvement at all levels

of the organization. In this study, we examine the definitive model of the relationship between key TQM factors and organizational performance. The figure below synthesizes the results of previous research and establishes a visual representation of the interactions between the various TQM elements and their impact on overall organizational performance.

This figure is of particular importance in understanding how aspects such as leadership, employee commitment, process and resource management, as well as quality culture, combine to influence organizational success. By providing a clear and concise overview, the definitive model helps practitioners and researchers better grasp the underlying mechanisms that govern TQM effectiveness in various organizational contexts. In this introduction, we will take a closer look at the structure of Figure 1, highlighting the key elements of TQM that contribute to organizational performance. This analysis will provide valuable insights to guide decision-makers in their efforts to implement and improve TQM practices within their organizations.

Figure 2. The definitive model of the relationship between key TQM factors and organizational performance



Source : personal development**1. Research methodology**

The question of methodology should not be treated as an independent phase of the research process, especially the theoretical aspects (Pettigrew, 1973). Research methodology has constituent links that require its inclusion in a research strategy.

Our objective is formulated in such a way as to adopt a research strategy based on a dual theoretical and empirical space. The transfer of management tools from one context to another, adding the importance and role of the organizational context in this process, occupies considerable theoretical space. All these questions have been of interest to management science researchers for several years, and their work cannot be ignored. The empirical space which is the subject of our problematic stems from the interaction between a management tool and a category of organization which decides, at a given moment, to implement it. This interaction may be interpreted solely in terms of a formal, abstract logic, or it may involve a direct link with the train's actors and the observation of concrete situations within the organization.

In our work, we have opted for a quantitative methodology and a case-analysis approach, at the crossroads of the two classic approaches: the hypothetico-deductive approach, based on a positivist paradigm, and the inductive approach, based on a constructivist paradigm. Both approaches offer advantages and disadvantages. The constraint associated with the hypothetico-deductive approach is that it offers little or no flexibility for examining new or unforeseen facts that emerge in the course of research work, even if these facts are relevant and important. It should be noted that in management research, it is difficult to meet the statistical requirements for generalization prescribed by traditional scientific approaches. This difficulty is becoming increasingly apparent in public-sector organizations, due to their heterogeneity. This poses a problem if the ambition of the research is to acquire an intimate knowledge of the phenomenon under study, and also to observe it more closely and deeply. The inductive approach proposes, at the outset of the research, to go around existing theories in order to focus ultimately on field observation. This approach provides both the structure and the framing the researcher may need.

R. Yin (1990) positions the case study as an autonomous study strategy, defining it as “an empirical inquiry that examines a contemporary phenomenon within its actual context, and for which multiple sources of data are used”. He believes that this approach focuses on understanding the dynamics present in a single environment. It is limited to a specific field of investigation, and allows for the collection of a wide variety of data. This approach therefore seems to us to be the most appropriate for our research object. It has enabled us to examine the theoretical field first, and to position ourselves in relation to previous work that more or less touches on our field of research. It will enable us to formulate a problem and research hypotheses that will form the basis of our study. At the same time, it provides us with sufficient proximity to study the relationship between TQM, university performance, organizational performance and the impact of the EFQM excellence model on the performance of Moroccan public universities.

Our field research will begin with an exploratory study, which began with a series of semi-directive interviews based on an interview guide sent out in advance. We interviewed 71 managers (authorizing officers, sub-authorizing officers) who responded positively to our request. Our contacts also included directors of schools and institutes, and general secretaries of academic establishments. The objectives of this approach are to :

- Identify our research questions and issues as clearly as possible;
- Formulate hypotheses relating to our research; observe TQM practices in the university context;

- Understand the general context of public management, and more specifically that of the reform of state public administrations;
- Identify the existence, or non-existence, of a national doctrine in terms of performance management in these administrations.

The choice of methodology and epistemological positioning is a decisive step in carrying out research. These choices determine the production and quality of knowledge. In our research, we will adopt a hypothetico-deductive approach based on the positivist paradigm. Based on a literature review and theoretical background, we will formulate hypotheses that we will attempt to confirm or refute on the basis of data collected through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was distributed to authorizing officers, sub-authorizing officers and general secretaries of Moroccan public universities and academic establishments. Data analysis will be carried out using SPSS software. The aim will be to test our research model by validating or rejecting our research hypotheses. This will enable us to answer our research question, and consequently ensure that the reality observed during our survey corresponds to the model we have prepared (see appendix n° :01).

The working hypotheses

The five research hypotheses attempt to demonstrate.

Hypothesis 1: Leadership would have a positive impact on university performance.

Hypothesis 2: Internal process would have a positive impact on university performance.

Hypothesis 3: Partnership and resources will have a positive impact on university performance.

Hypothesis 4: Policy and strategy will have a positive impact on university performance.

Hypothesis 5: Personnel would have a positive impact on university performance.

The 5 Research Hypotheses attempt to demonstrate.

Hypothesis 6: The adoption of a TQM approach will have a positive impact on the performance of Moroccan public universities.

Table 2. The exploratory sample of our study

Type d'établissement	2021-2022
Faculties of Shari'a, Al-Logha Al Arabia and Oussoul Eddine	4
Faculties of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences	18
Faculties of Juridical and Political Sciences	2
Faculties of Literature and Humanities	13
Faculties of Languages, Arts and Humanities	1
Faculties of Languages, Literature and Arts	1
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	1
Faculties of Science	12
Polydisciplinary Faculties	13
Faculties of Science and Technology	8
Faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy	7
Faculties of Dentistry	2
Engineering Schools	21
Ecoles Nationales de Commerce et de Gestion	12
Ecoles Supérieures de Technologie	15

Faculty of Education	1
King Fahd College of Translation	1
Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Santé	1
Ecoles Normales Supérieures and Ecole Normale Supérieure de l'Enseignement Technique	7
Higher Schools of Education and Training	5
Sports Science Institutes	2
University Presidencies	12
Total	160

2. Results and discussion

Table 3. Model results

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		standardized coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Standard error	Bêta			
1	(Constant)	0,328	,069		4,850	,000
	PERSONNEL	0,726	,079	,716	9,179	,000
	LEADERSHIP	,745	,099	,725	7,538	,000
	PS	,157	,037	,168	4,309	,000
	PROCESS	,857	,082	,834	10,448	,000

The table provides an exhaustive analysis of the coefficients associated with a multiple regression model, enabling relationships between several independent variables and a dependent variable to be explored. Each unstandardized and standardized coefficient is accompanied by its standard errors, T-values and significance levels (Sig.). Unstandardized coefficients (B) express the magnitude of the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, while standardized coefficients offer a measure of their relative importance, taking into account the scale of the variables. T-values assess the significance of each coefficient, with a high value indicating statistical significance when the associated probability (Sig.) is low. The constant represents the effect on the dependent variable in the absence of all other variables, and its significance underlines an intrinsic impact. Independent variables such as personnel, leadership, policy and strategy, as well as processes, all have significant coefficients (Sig. < 0.05), indicating their substantial contribution to the dependent variable. The high standardized coefficients suggest a significant influence of these variables on the dependent variable, with Beta values above 0.5 for personnel, leadership and processes.

In conclusion, the multiple regression model used appears significant in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. The variables studied play a decisive role in its determination. However, further analysis may be required to better understand the causal relationships between these variables and to assess the robustness of the model in various contexts.

Results of assumption testing

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of different axes and approaches on university performance.

To this end, a set of hypotheses has been formulated, seeking to determine whether aspects such as leadership, internal processes, partnership and resources, policy and strategy, personnel, as well as the adoption of a TQM approach, have a positive impact on university performance.

Table 4. Validation of hypotheses concerning the impact of axes on university performance

Hypotheses	Results
Hypothesis 1: The Leadership axis has a positive impact on university performance.	Validated
Hypothesis 2: The Internal Process axis has a positive impact on university performance.	Validated
Hypothesis 3: The partnership and resources axis has a positive impact on university performance.	Validated
Hypothesis 4: The policy and strategy axis has a positive impact on university performance.	Validated
Hypothesis 5: The people axis has a positive impact on university performance.	Validated
Hypothesis 6: The adoption of a TQM approach has a positive impact on university performance.	Validated

Analysis of the research results shows that all the hypotheses formulated were validated, demonstrating that each axis and approach studied have a positive impact on university performance. These results underline the importance of leadership, internal processes, partnership and resources, policy and strategy, people and the adoption of a TQM (Total Quality Management) approach in improving overall university performance.

In summary, this study confirms the effectiveness of different strategies and practices for strengthening the performance of academic institutions, offering valuable guidance for decision-makers and practitioners in the field of higher education.

3. Conclusion

This article represents a significant contribution to understanding the performance of public universities in Morocco, filling a gap in the literature that was dominated by studies focusing mainly on the historical aspect of the Moroccan university. Based on the contingency approach and stakeholder theory, it broadens the field of knowledge by proposing innovative perspectives. The methodological rigor of the study has been enhanced by adapting the measurement scales and checking their quality as applied to the sample. In addition, the evaluation of constructs in a dyadic approach, combined with a dual qualitative and quantitative study, enriches our understanding of relations between academic institutions and the supervisory ministry.

This research provides managers with a better understanding of the performance and implications of the relationship between academic institutions and the supervisory ministry. It also identifies the factors that have a significant impact on performance in the Moroccan context, helping managers to take strategic action to improve the performance of their institutions. However, several limitations have been identified. The lack of opportunity to assess the quality of the responses provided and the difficulties in accessing information from public universities in Morocco have hampered the collection of comprehensive data. In addition, the sample size remains limited, although consistent with other similar

studies, which could limit the generalizability of results. For future research, the use of advanced statistical methods such as structural equation method is recommended for further analysis of data. It would also be appropriate to consider the development project of the public institution as a contract between the head of the institution and the ministry in charge, and introduce new variables to better understand the determinants of public academic institutions' performance. In addition, a comprehensive approach that integrates all university data would provide a more complete picture of financial management and results.

APPENDIX 1. SURVEY AND ITEMS TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM)

I. The contribution of TQM on the performance of higher education institutions: case of the Moroccan University.

This questionnaire, conducted as part of a doctoral thesis, is addressed to managers of Moroccan academic institutions. It serves as a tool for collecting information for research into the contribution of TQM to the performance of higher education institutions. In order to carry out this academic research project, we would like to thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire in a frank and direct manner. Please be assured that the information collected will remain strictly anonymous and confidential and will only be used for this research project. Laboratory of Economic and Logistic Performance. Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences of Mohammeda. Hassan II University of Casablanca.

1-Not yet started

2- Some progress

3- Considerable progress

4-Fully realized

I. Identification

You are of sex:

- Male
- Female

Your age group

- [30 - 40 [
- [40 - 50 [
- [50 - 60 [
- [60 - 65 [

You were a

- Head of school
- Secretary-General
- Your institution
- Faculty of Economics, Law
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Other Faculty
- Ecole Supérieure

Other (to be specified)

II-Total Quality Management

1. Leadership

Code	Item	1	2	3	4
LEA1	However, several limitations have been identified. Lack of opportunity Does the entire management team engage personally and visibly in developing a strategy that defines the organization’s vision, direction and culture				
LEA2	Does the management team ensure that an organizational structure and process management system is in place to deliver expected and progressing results?				
LEA3	Does the management team show, by example and action, that it supports and promotes the values of its organization? Are these values widely accepted and recognized throughout the organization?				
LEA4	Are all managers sufficiently available to staff and engaged in positive and timely recognition of individual and team efforts to drive improvement				
LEA5	Are all managers engaged in meeting students and other external stakeholders and actively involved in promoting partnerships and improvement initiatives with them?				

2. Politics et Strategy

Code	Item	1	2	3	4
PS1	Does your organization use sufficient and relevant data to define its strategy and operational plans? Does this data include internal process performance, requirements and student satisfaction?				
PS2	Are your strategic objectives fully supported by your procedures, action plans, goals and resource allocation?				
PS3	Could the majority of your staff list their scope objectives and know their plans to achieve them in their own field?				
PS4	Is it fair to think that the organization has the capabilities and methods to detect when it should change its strategies, even if the president changes?				

3. Personnel

Code	Item	1	2	3
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PER1	Are the personnel plans (recruitment, training, development) directly derived from the internal needs of the institution and are they able to assume their implementation?			
PER2	Does your organization ensure that the staff it recruits meets the needs and values of the organization? Is there an evaluation process (respected by staff) that ensures consistency of objectives with the needs of the organization			
PER3	Does your organization have a process that involves all staff in delivering improvement? Delegation of responsibilities (decision-making) without jeopardising the organization?			
PER4	Is there an effective horizontal and vertical communication system with the institution’s staff and do they agree to recognize that they are well informed and their opinions valued			

4. Partnership et Ressources

Code	Item	1	2	3	4
PR1	e partnership relationships developed through a proactive and structured approach? Do these partnerships identify and implement new projects at the institutional level				
PR2	Does your organization ensure that all relevant information, including data on process performance (student satisfaction) and benchmarks, is reliable, up-to-date, quickly accessible and easily usable by staff?				
PR3	Does your organization have an approach to ensure that the allocation and use of financial resources reflects and supports its strategic vision, goals and values while ensuring the organization has a sustainable success?				
PR4	Is there a systematic method for identifying and implementing new or alternative technologies and optimizing knowledge to benefit services				

5. Process

Code	Item	1	2	3	4
PRO1	Does your organization have a system in place to ensure that all activities are being implemented to produce services that meet the requirements and standards (e.g., through ISO 9000 and ISO 14000)				
PRO2	Is there a reliable method to understand the client’s (student) perceptions, needs and expectations				
PRO3	Does your organization have a systematic and thorough methodology (e.g. audit to assess the degree of implementation and effectiveness of all systems in place to conduct and control its activities?				
PRO4	Are the back-office or support activities () well documented, controlled and continuously improved				

6. Attributes of the performance

Code	Item	1	2	3	4
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AP1	Managing knowledge: defining and refining students' future knowledge and occupations				
AP2	Manage students: define student volume and supply courses (student recruitment plan, validation of applications)				
AP3	Plan: manage human resources (permanent administrative and teaching staff recruitment plan)				
AP4	Manage technical resources: hardware and software investment plan				
AP5	Managing relations with the external environment: defining actions of partnerships with the business world in order to define needs				
AP6	Maintenance management and annual investment in equipment				
AP7	Plan short-term maintenance and adopt short-term capacity				
AP8	Planning student placements				

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