APPLICATION OF GENERIC QUALITY MANAGEMENT MODELS IN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

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In the context of intensive discussion regarding the effectiveness of internal studies’ quality management systems implemented by universities and the potential of generic quality management models developed outside of higher education to contribute tangibly, this paper aims to perform the analysis and comparison of specific and generic quality management models applied by universities within the European Higher Education Area and to discover whether generic quality management models are relevant for European universities of today and how can they be applied. Methods of document analysis, modelling, classification and comparative analysis have been employed for the research. Results reveal that some elements of generic quality management models can compensate weak points of specific ones. Thus, the approach for European universities of how to integrate these different models is proposed in the paper.

Keywords: quality management, European universities, ESG, institutional and study programme accreditation, ISO 9001 standard, EFQM excellence model.

JEL Codes: I23, L20, M10.

1. Introduction

In the European Union high expectations together with ambitious goals and targets are set regarding its education systems. During the last decade, considerably more attention was brought to the quality of higher education and, as a result, the development of external and internal quality assurance systems has emerged in the field. However, major trends of today – as massification and globalization of higher education – do not allow to put quality questions aside. Moreover, the analysis of European higher education quality assurance practice showed important weaknesses of developed quality assurance systems itself. As stated in the report commissioned by the European University Association, all the efforts for quality assurance not necessary led to tangible studies’ quality improvements: “the overall impression remains, based on the site visits and the Stocktaking Report, that the introduction of new national external evaluation procedures has caused some institutions to pay much less attention to their own internal accountability procedures, thus leading to a compliance culture” (Sursock, 2010, p. 63).
Increasing need to strengthen internal studies’ quality management systems resulted in attempts to adopt widely used generic quality management models for higher education institutions. In 2010, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in-cooperation with partners introduced official education sector oriented version of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) which was initially developed for public sector institutions based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model. Meanwhile, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published first guidelines for educational institutions regarding the application of its requirements for quality management systems back in 2003. Most of European higher education institutions preferred approach of ‘integrated quality management model’ that should cover national and European requirements and recommendations for higher education institutions, as well as, effective quality management techniques tested over time in many (other than education) sectors. Nevertheless, these integrated models tended to become ‘heavy’ with many different quality management procedures (e.g. mixing internal audit with self-assessment), extensive data collection, analysis and reporting (e.g. expanding the circle of regular survey respondents from classical ‘clients’ to wide range of ‘stakeholders’ or including additional areas (processes) for analysis and evaluation). Another frequently suffered aspect of their effectiveness was poorly established link with external quality assurance procedures, i.e. accreditation. In the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), this issue was addressed by developing standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance which were published for the first time in 2005 as Part 1 of the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG). Notably, not only the ESG provided inter-connections between internal and external quality assurance but, also, with intensive discussions on its clarity, applicability and usefulness across European higher education community and multiple revisions (last one was finished in May 2015) Part 1 of the ESG became strong ‘competitor’ to generic quality management models adopted for higher education institutions. Taking into account these circumstances, the following question for more in-depth analysis arises: “how much generic quality management models are relevant for European universities of today?”

This paper aims to discover whether generic quality management models are relevant for universities within the EHEA and how they can be applied. Therefore, the following tasks are set: 1) to analyze and summarize specific and generic quality management models applied by European universities; 2) to compare ‘scope’, ‘design’ and ‘content’ of analyzed specific and generic quality management models; 3) to propose approach of how European universities could develop effective internal studies’ quality management system using analyzed quality management models. For the research, methods of document analysis, modelling, classification and comparative analysis have been employed. Document analysis was performed to identify quality management models that are used by European universities, to reveal other authors’ views on their practical application aspects, advantages and disadvantages, as well as, to find out how other authors suggest to use them for studies’ quality management. Modelling method has been used to determine the way analyzed quality management models work and to construct suggested approach (model) of their ap-
plication. Classification method has been employed to categorize (for comparison purposes) analyzed quality management models according to a set of features found in scientific literature. This method, also, has been employed to classify standards and guidelines of analyzed quality management models into a groups (different university activity areas) which were used for the comparison of models’ comprehensiveness. Lastly, method of comparative analysis has been used to contrast analyzed quality management models and to distinguish their similarities and differences.

2. Concept of University Studies’ Quality

A. I. Vroeijenstijn (1995) stated that the concept of quality is not new and that it has always been a part of the academic tradition. Despite this, there is no single definition of quality in higher education, since it is multidimensional and dynamic concept. There are many debates on how studies’ quality should be judged and a lot of different concepts are suggested in scientific literature, among them: ‘quality as exceptional (highest) standards’, ‘quality as conforming to standards’, ‘quality as meeting client expectations’, ‘quality as fitness for purpose’, ‘quality as effectiveness in achieving institutional goals’, ‘quality as transformative process’, ‘quality as value for money’, ‘quality as added value’.

Before massification of higher education began, the concept of ‘quality as exceptional (highest) standards’ was dominant. This concept is associated with such quality features as “outstanding teachers, high moral values, excellent examination results, the support of parents, business and the local community, plentiful resources, the application of the latest technology, strong and purposeful leadership, the care and concern for pupils and students, a well-balanced and challenging curriculum” (Sallis, 1993, p. 2). D. Green (1994) explaining the concept of ‘quality as exceptional (highest) standards’ refers to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The author highlights a drawback of this concept by concluding that, if all institutions were judged by the same criteria as those used to judge Oxford and Cambridge, most would be continually condemned as poor quality and by questioning whether it would be desirable, if possible, to make every institution like Oxford and Cambridge.

Therefore, many authors today in the context of higher education support the concept of ‘quality as fitness for purpose’. D. Woodhouse (2006) argues that this concept embraces all the other definitions of quality. “If you set out to do something exceptional, then Q = FFP (‘quality’ = ‘fitness for purpose’) aligns quality with being exceptional; set out to transform students, and Q = FFP becomes quality as transformation; set out to add value, and Q = FFP becomes quality as value-added” (Woodhouse, 2006, p. 11). The author concludes that “for a complex organization, the ‘purpose’ is likely to be a composite concept, set out in a range of statements, such as the mission, goals, objectives, specifications, and so on, but the concept of first identifying the purpose, then setting out to achieve it, is conceptually the same” (Woodhouse, 2006, p. 12).

Presented arguments stress the importance of understanding well a context in which university operates and identifying its mission first of all. For instance, there will be considerable difference in terms of university studies’ quality policy and aims
between universities that choose a profile of ‘research university’ and those that preferred to carry a mission of ‘teaching university’. While ‘research university’ will focus its academic activity on fields with highest scientific potential, strive for international recognition and most talented master and doctoral students, ‘teaching university’ could be more labour market and community oriented, e. g. preparing highly qualified specialists based on labour market needs, creating and transferring new knowledge and technologies to local business, fostering culture, arts and sports in a region.

3. Development of Internal University Studies’ Quality Management System

Quality management could be defined as “a set of actions of the general management function which determines the quality policy, aims and responsibilities and realises them within the framework of quality by planning, control, ensuring and improving the quality” (Development..., 2001, p. 1). Quality management models provide guidance on what actions should be taken to ensure and improve the quality, as well as, indicate activity areas that are important for ensuring and improving the quality. In order to reveal specifics of quality management in higher education, the analysis of quality management models applied by universities and their comparison are provided further.

3.1. Analysis of Quality Management Models Applied by Universities

Part 1 of the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (hereinafter – Part 1 of the ESG). It was developed in the context of the Bologna Process by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EAQA) in cooperation with partners. First edition of the ESG was published in 2005. Part 1 of the ESG provides standards and guidelines for internal studies’ quality assurance that are applicable for higher education institutions operating within the EHEA. Standards and guidelines provided in Part 1 of the ESG cover the following areas: “Policy for quality assurance” (1.1), “Design and approval of programmes” (1.2), “Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment” (1.3), “Student admission, progression, recognition and certification” (1.4), “Teaching staff” (1.5), “Learning resources and student support” (1.6), “Information management” (1.7), “Public information” (1.8), “On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes” (1.9), “Cyclical external quality assurance” (1.10). Notably, facilitation of student learning instead of teaching, development of student admission, progression, recognition and certification system (called ‘student life cycle’) and the importance of cyclical external quality assurance in line with the ESG are highlighted in Part 1 of the ESG after revision in 2015.

Regarding practical implementation of Part 1 of the ESG, several aspects should be taken into account. First of all, the original purpose of the ESG is to provide “generic principles rather than specific procedures” (Crozier, 2011, p. 16). As a result, there is a great inconsistency to which extent universities apply standards and guidelines provided in Part 1 of the ESG. For example, it is stated that higher education institutions should publish graduate employment information. Some universities
in regards to this provide very general statistics and a few ‘successes stories’ while others publish full annual accounts of their graduate destinations. In the report commissioned by the EAQA the following need is stressed: “to raise awareness and ownership of the ESG even further, particularly amongst faculty staff directly involved in the student learning and teaching process” (Crozier, 2011, p. 23). This suggests that, even if progress with the ESG in universities is tangible, there still is a room for improvement. Futhermore, M. J. Rosa et al. (2012) reveal another aspect of Part 1 of the ESG application. Authors are concerned that “in a sense if HEIs [higher education institutions] will go for the implementation of the ESG ‘tour court’ they risk being implementing a rather operational quality assurance approach, while if they opt for their implementation via the adoption of a quality management model there is the possibility that quality assurance will become more developmental, hopefully leading to true quality enhancement” (Rosa, 2012, p. 142). Thus, EFQM excellence model’s approach of asking whether we do best as we can or even better than others instead of asking whether we do something or not could help to apply Part 1 of the ESG more effectively.

National accreditation (external evaluation) of universities and their study programmes – the example of methodology developed by Lithuanian accreditation body (hereinafter – SKVC methodology). Higher education institutions within the EHEA and their study programmes have to comply with external evaluation criteria set by national agencies in charge of quality assurance in higher education. These agencies are directed by standards and guidelines stated in Part 2 and Part 3 of the ESG. In Lithuania, which is a member of the EHEA, higher education institutions have to comply with provisions of the Methodology for Conducting an Institutional Review in Higher Education approved by the director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) on 25 October 2010 (Order No. 1-01-135). SKVC, also, provides recommendations supporting higher education institutions in self-analysis that is a part of external evaluation procedure. Apart from methodology and supporting recommendations for institutional external evaluation, SKVC has developed methodologies for accreditation (external evaluation) of new and on-going study programmes. Institutional external evaluation of Lithuanian higher education institutions covers the following areas: “Strategic management” (6.1), “Studies and life-long learning” (6.2), “Science and (or) art activities” (6.3), “Impact for the development of regions and country” (6.4). Study programmes are judged according to the following criteria: “Programme aims and expected study results”, “Programme design”, “Personnel”, “Material resources”, “Study process and its evaluation”, “Programme management”. Internal studies’ quality management system of university should take into account external evaluation criteria and procedures, since external quality assurance is a rigorous process of self-analysis and reporting, expert visits and feedback, quality improvement planning, implementation and follow-up. European standard EN ISO 9001:2008 (hereinafter – ISO 9001 standard). This standard is internationally most commonly used quality management model. It has certification scheme although certification is not a requirement. ISO 9001 standard sets requirements according which quality management system could be developed and maintained. It can be applied regardless of organization size and field of activity. Together with general requirements
(Chapter 4) that contain the application of ‘process approach’, ISO 9001 standard sets specific requirements in the fields of “Management responsibility” (Chapter 5), “Resource management” (Chapter 6), “Product (service) realization” (Chapter 7), “Measurement, analysis and improvement” (Chapter 8). Notably, there is the International Workshop Agreement on the “Quality Management Systems – Guidelines for the Application of ISO 9001:2000 in Education” (Reference No. IWA 2:2007 (E)). These recommendations guide how ISO 9001 standard can be applied in educational services providing organizations.

Regarding practical application of ISO 9001 standard, it is important to understand that “ISO 9000 [ISO 9000 is a series of standards to which ISO 9001 standard belongs] only sets the standard for the quality system; it does not set the standards that the institution or its learners should be achieving; what ISO 9000 can do is to assure that there are systems in place to deliver those standards once they have been decided” (Sallis, 1993, p. 54). For instance, whereas Part 1 of the ESG encourages ‘student-centred’ learning, teaching and assessment, ISO 9001 standard suggests to set requirements for learning, teaching and assessment. Also, it is essential the way quality management system based on ISO 9001 standard will be implemented. T. Csizmadia (2006) conducted the analysis of quality management at Hungarian higher education institutions. Results showed that the main obstacles to successful internal studies’ quality management system according to ISO 9001 standard implementation are lack of leadership commitment, no real changes, quality management ‘on paper’, orientation towards certificate, no sufficient resources dedicated, resistance of older academics, documentation prepared by quality management centre with little consultation with faculty, lack of competence in the field of quality management. Despite these shortcomings, it should be stressed that ISO 9001 standard provides tested over time concrete quality management procedures (control of non-conforming products (services), corrective and preventive actions, internal audit, etc.) and suggests how quality management responsibilities could be assigned (management representative, process owners, etc.).

**EFQM Excellence Model 2013** (hereinafter – EFQM excellence model). EFQM excellence model is quality management model based on self-assessment. Practitioners of this model can participate in ‘excellence’ awards organized by the EFQM or other organizations. EFQM excellence model sets evaluation criteria for different areas of organization activity and is widely used as ‘diagnostic’ tool encouraging performance improvement. Lead by this model, organizations assess their processes (called ‘enablers’) and ‘results’. EFQM excellence model comprises of 9 criteria. Criteria evaluating ‘enablers’ are “Leadership”, “Strategy”, “People”, “Partnership and resources”, “Processes, products and services”. Criteria for assessment of ‘results’ are “Customer results”, “People results”, “Society results”, “Business results”. As it was mentioned earlier, the EIPA adopted EFQM excellence model for education sector. Newest edition of adopted model (“CAF & Education”) was published in 2013.

Overall, EFQM excellence model is useful due to the fact that it helps organizations to establish links between different organizational areas. For example, A. Wilger (1997) found out that most higher education institutions have effectively linked quality assurance and strategic planning, however, links between quality as-
urance, strategic planning and budgeting are often weak. Using EFQM excellence model such issues could be addressed, as it covers all of these areas. EFQM excellence model’s comprehensiveness (coverage of different areas of organization activity), on one hand, is an advantage, but some authors see this as a disadvantage or potential threat. The problem with many self-assessment checklists is that “by listing all the possible criteria for excellence they create an image of perfection that can appear impossible to achieve” (Sallis, 1993, p. 145). Since EFQM excellence model covers many aspects of organization, also, the risk of notthreatening well educational processes and results is frequently highlighted.

Input-Process-Output model (hereinafter – IPO model). IPO model could be applied for holistic analysis of university studies’ activity. In Lithuania, the Netherlands and other countries IPO model is used to construct national education monitoring systems, i.e. systems of performance indicators. T. Csizmadia (2006) uncovered what ‘input’, ‘process’ and ‘output’ are in the context of higher education. According to the author:

- ‘input’ involves ‘external influences’ (governmental expectations and the requirements of accreditation agencies), ‘demands’ (student expectations and the requirements of academics, employers, alumni and the (regional) society), ‘resources’ (students, staff, facilities and money, as well as, reputation);
- ‘process’ consists of ‘governing processes’, ‘academic processes’ and ‘support processes’;
- ‘output’ could be measured by performance on standardised tests, employer assessment of graduate performance, entry level salary of graduates, employment rate of graduates, ranking and reputation of university by external sources.

C. Chua (2004) completed research on perceptions of studies’ quality using IPO model. Analysing perceptions of different groups (i.e. students, parents, faculty members and employers) regarding the quality of education, the author founded out that students as being most important considered ‘process’ and ‘output’ categories, parents – ‘input’ and ‘output’ categories, faculty members treated all 3 categories as being important and employers thought of education quality in terms of ‘process’ and ‘output’. Based on this research results, C. Chua (2004) suggests that an integrated quality model would be a better model for addressing issues regarding to education quality and that IPO model serves as an entry point into such a future system of quality assessment. It should be added that IPO model embraces ‘value-added approach’ to quality in higher education, as it allows to compare ‘input’ with ‘output’ (e.g. improvement of student capabilities throughout education process).
3.2. Comparison of Introduced Quality Management Models: ‘Specific vs. Generic’

The purpose of the comparison of introduced quality management models is to reveal how these models work and to distinguish their similarities and differences. Scope, design and content of analyzed quality management models are being compared. ‘Scope’ defines model’s application area, while ‘design’ determines the purpose of application, the way model is being applied and by who. Finally, ‘content’ describes model’s comprehensiveness in terms of different standards, guidelines or evaluation criteria that it covers.

For the comparison of scope and design of previously introduced quality management models, T. De Bruin et al. (2005) proposed maturity model features were adopted. As can be seen in Table 1, 2 specific (i.e. developed for higher education studies’ quality assurance and improvement) and 2 generic (i.e. used in various sectors, including higher education) models are compared. Notably, IPO model is not included in the comparison, since yet it is not applied independently as a framework for internal studies’ quality management system development.

Table 1. Comparison of selected quality management models’ scope and design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality management models</th>
<th>Part 1 of the ESG</th>
<th>SKVC methodology</th>
<th>ISO 9001 standard</th>
<th>EFQM excellence model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>Generic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Internal stakeholders</td>
<td>External and internal stakeholders</td>
<td>Internal stakeholders</td>
<td>Internal stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of application</td>
<td>Quality policy; Design, approval, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of study programmes; Application of student-centred learning, teaching and assessment; Core process (student admission, progression, recognition and certification) management; Management of teaching staff competence, learning resources and student support; Information management and public reporting; Cyclical external evaluation and follow-up in the fields of “Strategic management”, “Studies and lifelong learning”, “Science and (or) art activities”, “Impact for the development of regions and country”; Self-analysis of study programmes in the fields of “Programme aims and expected study results”, “Programme design”, “Personnel”, “Material resources”, “Study</td>
<td>Institutional self-analysis in the fields of “Strategic management”, “Studies and lifelong learning”, “Science and (or) art activities”, “Impact for the development of regions and country”; Self-analysis of study programmes in the fields of “Programme aims and expected study results”, “Programme design”, “Personnel”, “Material resources”, “Study</td>
<td>Quality policy; Quality objectives; Process management; Systematic procedures (control of non-conforming products (services), corrective and preventive actions, internal audit, control of documents and records); Management of staff competence, infrastructure, work environment; Requirements for study process, development and improvement in the fields of “Leadership”, “Strategy”, “People”, “Partnership and resources”, “Processes, products and services”, “Customer results”, “People results”, “Society results”, “Business results” (could be assisted by external party); Quality improvement plans; Internal follow-up procedures; ‘Excellence’ awards (if participation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Part 1 of the ESG, ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model are used to serve the needs of internal stakeholders (management of university and faculties, students, teachers), i.e. their needs to ensure and develop studies’ quality, whereas SKVC methodology additionally serves the needs of external stakeholders (government, parents, pupils, employers), i.e. their needs to know objective information about university performance, quality of its study programmes.
In regards to application methods, Part 1 of the ESG are similar to ISO 9001 standard, since both defines standards and guidelines that help to manage quality. In conceptual and research paper of V. V. Azaryeva et al. (2007), the way of integrating concrete provisions of Part 1 of the ESG into principal framework of ISO 9001 standard is proposed. As for SKVC methodology and EFQM excellence model, they share similar application principles, since both are applied as evaluation tools that describe what should (could) be achieved. The main difference between Part 1 of the ESG and ISO 9001 standard is that Part 1 of the ESG suggests how study programmes, their delivery methods, study process organization should be developed, but does not provide procedures to ensure this, whereas ISO 9001 standard does not provide guidance on the development of named aspects, instead it suggests to set requirements and gives procedures to ensure that established requirements are met. Some of these procedures (methods), e.g. control of non-conforming products (services), corrective and preventive actions, internal audit, setting quality objectives and monitoring of their implementation, could be and are employed in studies’ activity. However, as revealed by other authors, such as process management (making detail process descriptions, monitoring operational indicators of process implementation), as well as, making all the records required by ISO 9001 standard could appear too bureaucratic at university. Since learning, teaching and assessment are primary matters of efforts, competence and methods (at lesser extent of processes), process management could be more suitable for study process organization, governing (planning and control) and support (IT, public procurement, etc.) processes. As for differences between SKVC methodology and EFQM excellence model, EFQM excellence model is more suitable for institutional (or departamental) assessment while SKVC methodology are developed to cover both institutional and study programme levels. Since SKVC methodology do not provide good practice examples, proposals for development are mainly based on external experts’ experience. EFQM excellence model (especially public sector version developed by the EIPA) covers good practice examples that could be used for improvement planning, but, also, self-assessment can be assisted by external party (experts). EFQM excellence model’s distinctive feature compared to SKVC methodology is that it captures change management principles (e.g. ‘bottom-up’ approach that is employed through involving employees to express their opinion and provide suggestions on how to enchant quality). At this point, it should be noticed that the application of SKVC methodology and at some extent of Part 1 of the ESG is driven by external requirements to do so, whereas ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model are voluntary.

In regards to ‘respondents’, EFQM excellence model demands widest spectrum of contributors, i.e. students, teaching staff, administration, representatives of government, employers and other social partners of university, as well as, society should provide their feedback. Narrowest circle of ‘respondents’ is required by ISO 9001 standard, i.e. it could be students as primary ‘clients’, process owners, management and management representative. Part 1 of the ESG and SKVC methodology are in-between option that considers both internal and external stakeholders.

As for presented models’ application in different organizational levels, it is recommended to apply Part 1 of the ESG in all levels (i.e. levels of university, its
faculties and study programmes). Notably, Part 1 of the ESG is suitable to apply it this way. SKVC methodology is applied at levels of university and study programmes, however, it could be used and for particular academic department (faculty) evaluation. ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model are applied at institutional (university) level and at departments’ level in order to detect differences and share, if any, good practices. These models could be applied at study programmes’ level, but for this concrete requirements of study programmes design, implementation, etc. should be defined.

In the case of ISO 9001 standard, compliance with requirements are evaluated to identify areas for improvement. SKVC methodology assesses performance identifying whether evaluated activity is not satisfactory, satisfactory, good or very good based on detected strengths and weaknesses. EFQM excellence model is based on maturity evaluation identifying stages (developing, advanced, etc.). Part 1 of the ESG does not set how its implementation should be measured, therefore, compliance with set standards and guidelines could be evaluated or, as previously advised by other authors, an approach that would encourage countinuous development, e. g. performance or maturity type of evaluation.

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Regarding analyzed models’ application intensity, ISO 9001 standard is comparatively most intense with annual reviews by external party and re-sertification every 3 years (if certification preferred). Least intense would be SKVC methodology suggesting accreditation every 3 or 6 years depending on previous evaluation results. For universities (or their study programmes) accredited for 6 years, self-assessment every 2–3 years as proposed by EFQM excellence model could be a wise choise to stay up-to-date. ISO 9001 standard’s cycle of one year, also, could be an option, but availability of resources to act upon identified issues should be considered carefully in order to not waste time of analyses that lead nowhere.

Further, the comparison of selected quality management models’ content is provided. The comparison of models’ content is based on detail analysis of standards, guidelines and evaluation criteria that selected quality management models consist of. All standards, guidelines and evaluation criteria identified in analyzed models were combined and then grouped in 9 categories that correspond different fields of university activity. This allowed to evaluate the comprehensiveness of each model in 9 different fields of university activity. In Table 2, “0” indicates that in analyzed model particular field of university activity (e. g. “Performance and change management”) is weakly or not addressed at all, “+” indicates that analyzed model provides some requirements or guidance on particular field of university activity and “++” indicates that in analyzed model particular field of university activity is addressed extensively.

As can be seen from Table 2, generic quality management models, namely ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model, overall cover more different standards and guidelines in the fields of “Performance and change management”, “Quality management” and “Human resource management” compared with analyzed specific quality management models. These specific quality management models, namely Part 1 of the ESG and SKVC methodology, on the other hand, seem to be more comprehensive in the fields of “Studies’ activity (design and content of study programmes, methods of learning, teaching and assessment, study process, student support)” and
“Public information”. Activity areas of “Information and knowledge management” and “Material resource (infrastructure) management” are addressed at quite equal extent in both generic and specific quality management models that were analyzed. Most uneven results are found in the fields of “Partnerships’ management” and “Financial resource management”. In one of specific models, i.e. Part 1 of the ESG, and one of generic models, i.e. ISO 9001 standard, these activity fields are neglected (“0”), whereas in other one of specific models, i.e. SKVC methodology, and other one of generic models, i.e. EFQM excellence model, the fields of “Partnerships’ management” and “Financial resource management” are addressed extensively (“++”).

Table 2. Comparison of selected quality management models’ content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality management models</th>
<th>Part 1 of the ESG</th>
<th>SKVC methodology</th>
<th>ISO 9001 standard</th>
<th>EFQM excellence model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance and change management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality management</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies’ activity (design and content of study programmes, methods of learning, teaching and assessment, study process, student support)</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resource management</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and knowledge management</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public information</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships’ management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial resource management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material resource (infrastructure) management</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
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</table>

Comparison results of separate models shows that the most comprehensive is EFQM excellence model with 7 areas which are addressed extensively (“++”), while in the second place of comprehensiveness is SKVC methodology with 6 areas which are addressed extensively (“++”), in the third place of comprehensiveness is Part 1 of the ESG with 3 areas which are addressed extensively (“++”) and, finally, least comprehensive of all compared models happened to be ISO 9001 standard with 1 area, i.e. “Quality management”, which is addressed extensively (“++”).

Comparison results suggest that EFQM excellence model could supplement SKVC methodology by additional self-analysis criteria and ISO 9001 standard could contribute to development of quality management procedures and structures that are not specified in Part 1 of the ESG. Taking into account overall orientation of analyzed models towards different fields of university activity, it would be sound to structure internal studies’ quality management system according to Part 1 of the ESG and SKVC methodology and to use ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model for the development of governing (planning and control) and support (IT, public pro-
curement, etc.) processes. As suggested by other authors, “rather than disregard the benefits of TQM [Total Quality Management (TQM) methods among which ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model are], there appears to be a need to find another approach that puts teaching and learning at the core but does not neglect the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and service functions” (Becket, 2008, p. 47).

3.3. Approach for the Integration of Analyzed Specific and Generic Quality Management Models

Based on the analysis and comparison of separate quality management models applied by universities, the approach for their integration was developed and is presented below in the figure.

As showed in the figure, it is suggested to plan, implement and control processes and results in the fields of “Performance and change management”, “Quality management”, “Studies’ activity (design and content of study programmes, methods of learning, teaching and assessment, study process, student support)”, “Human resource management”, “Information and knowledge management”, “Public information”, “Partnerships’ management”, “Financial resource management” and “Material resource (infrastructure) management” according to standards and guidelines provided in Part 1 of the ESG, accreditation methodology (equivalent to SKVC methodology), ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model at levels of university, its faculties and study programmes. Planning, implementation and control of processes and results at levels of university, its faculties and study programmes could take various forms, e. g. strategies, activity plans, performance agreements (targets), specifications, orders. Application extent of separate quality management models (whether high or moderate) to develop certain university activity is proposed based on the results of their comprehensiveness evaluation. Because of this, university implementing suggested approach of integration will be directed to all standards and guidelines within analyzed models applicable for particular activity, e. g. partnerships’ management. However, university itself should decide which of applicable standards and guidelines will be the most suitable to develop certain quality factor, e. g. to ensure and encourage international cooperation with other universities and to get corresponding results, such as creation of new joint study programmes, attraction of foreign students. Implementation of all applicable standards and guidelines to the full is practically impossible, since university resources are limited. Also, as suggested in the literature, decisions whether to invest into the development of certain quality factor and how much to invest should be made taking into account university mission.

As for decisions regarding university organizational structure, it could be developed (adjusted) according planned processes and results, i. e. when scope of activities and requirements for their implementaion are defined. These decisions can include centralization or decentralization of some activities, establishment of project groups. Centralization can serve as a mean for activity standardization and consolidation of certain competence. Classical examples of centralized university activities include organization of student exchange, career management services, gathering feedbacks on studies’ quality, etc. Usually ‘back office’ functions as accounting, person-
nel and infrastructure management, IT services are centralized. In contrast, decentralization can be used for particular activity specialization, its orientation towards specific needs of different groups. Lastly, the establishment of project groups can help to combine resources, as well as, different competences of separate departments for operative implementation of non-standard taks.

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Figure. Approach for European universities to integrate specific and generic quality management models

* – The order of models together and symbols (“++” and “+”) illustrate how extensively each model could be used for the development of certain university activity field. “++” indicates that model could be used at high extent, whereas “+” – at moderate extent.
As required by all models, internal university studies’ quality management system should be reviewed periodically. Based on the analysis of selected models’ application intensity, the suggestion would be:

- if institutional (university) accreditation is given for 6 years, to complete internal review at levels of university and its faculties every 2–3 years. Same requirement should be applied for internal review of study programmes which are accredited for 6 years;
- if institutional (university) accreditation is given for 3 years, to complete internal review at levels of university and its faculties every year. Same requirement should be applied for internal review of study programmes which are accredited for 3 years.

Proposed lengths of internal review cycles should allow university to facilitate and coordinate quality improvements at more rapid pace compared to the cases when internal review (self-analysis) is performed just before external evaluation.

For internal review, universities could consider the involvement of external party (experts). Also, as suggested in the literature, it would be better to perform internal review using performance or maturity type of assessment.

4. Conclusions

1. Generic quality managements models, namely ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model, are relevant to European universities of today as they can compensate some weak points of analyzed specific models. ISO 9001 standard and EFQM excellence model can help universities to establish basic principles of quality management (i.e. planning, implementation and control of processes and results), as well as, concrete quality management procedures. Results of models’ comparison showed that these aspects are poorly addressed in Part 1 of the ESG and analyzed national accreditation methodology developed by SKVC. Moreover, universities could benefit from internal review cycles suggested by analyzed generic models. Suggested cycles are shorter than required by national accreditation body (SKVC), thus, their implementation can help universities to facilitate more improvements and coordinate their realization at faster pace. Notably, in Part 1 of the ESG, the length of internal review cycles are not specified at all.

2. Quality assurance and improvement models developed specifically for higher education, i.e. Part 1 of the ESG and methodologies for national accreditation of universities and their study programmes, should be a foundation for internal university studies’ quality management system. Results of models’ comparison showed that analyzed specific models are comprehensive enough to cover the most important to quality management activity areas and are focused specifically on studies’ activity (design and content of study programmes, methods of learning, teaching and assessment, study process, student support). Also, it should be added that Part 1 of the ESG and methodologies for national accreditation of universities and their study programmes in the EHAE were developed towards serving as tools for quality management and improvement instead of quality control and assurance significantly over the
last decade. Examples of this include the development of improvement plans, follow-up procedures.

3. Since both specific and generic quality management models can contribute to the development of effective internal university studies’ quality management system, based on conducted analysis the approach for European universities of how to integrate analyzed models is proposed in the paper. Successful implementation of proposed approach should lead to the development of internal university studies’ quality management system that: (a) focuses on design and content of study programmes, methods of learning, teaching and assessment, study process, student support and other key studies’ activity aspects, but do not neglect governing and support processes; (b) covers effective quality management techniques tested over time in many sectors; (c) encourages continuous improvement by using performance or maturity type of assessment; (d) facilitates and coordinates quality improvements at more rapid pace.

4. Effectiveness of proposed approach of analyzed specific and generic quality management models’ integration is subjects for further research. It should be explored whether internal university studies’ quality management system developed according to proposed approach of integration provides expected benefits (improvements implemented at faster pace, etc.). Also, the impact on meeting studies’ quality targets set by university could be measured.

References


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