

Expanding the Application of EFQM model for Institutional Accreditation of Educational Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Relevance of this article topic consists in the necessity to find some alternative to the existing practice of using of the 2015 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG-15) for accreditation of educational organizations in Kazakhstan. This study purpose is to develop the ways of expanding the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) use for institutional accreditation of universities. Methods: comparativ analysis, formalization method. *Results:* 1) the genesis, functions and levels of educational organizations' accreditation in Kazakhstan are described; 2) existence of the link between EFQM and ESG-15 is proved, however, EFQM is more adapted to institutional accreditation of higher education institutions; and 3) it is shown if formalized data are used to prescribe the scores when filling in the RADAR matrix, then filling in the RADAR matrix will be easier, and subjectivity will decrease, and accuracy will increase.

Keywords: Institutional accreditation in Kazakhstan; EFQM model; RADAR matrix

INTRODUCTION

Institutional accreditation based on the EFQM model will allow to use this model more widely, as there will be an alternative to the practice of accreditation based on ESG-15 established in Kazakhstan. This practice is based on the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MES RK). According to this document, universities are recommended to use ESG-15 when building their internal quality assurance systems ([1]).

To prove the possibility of this alternative, the need is to conduct a comparative analysis of two models, namely EFQM ([2]) and ESG-15 ([3]), while limiting ourselves to formal features only (names of criteria or standards). First of all, this relates to the requirements of the journal article in the part of its volume.

Since the process of accreditation of educational institutions in Kazakhstan is not fully understood in European countries, there exists some necessity to describe the genesis, functions and levels of accreditation in the country.

The benefits of EFQM have been found much in the literature concerned, however, based on my earlier publications (for example, article [4]), I will give a brief description of the RADAR matrix and indicate the reason for its infrequent use.

Thus, two questions are set to get the answers:

- 1) What are the advantages of EFQM over ESG-15 for institutional accreditation of universities?
- 2) How to improve the RADAR matrix to increase the applicability thereof?

Analysis of the literature in search of the answers to these questions has shown that researchers do not pose the problem precisely in this aspect. Therefore, the used literature list is small. This circumstance indicates this study novelty.

METHODS

Comparativ analysis method

1) Comparativ analysis is a method used to compare two or more objects (phenomena, ideas, research results, etc.), highlighting the general and the different therein for the purpose of classification and typology. In this article, it is used to identify the EFQM advantages over ESG-15 in institutional accreditation of the universities

Formalization method

Formalization is the meaningful knowledge display in a sign-symbolic form (formalized language). Formalization serves as the basis for algorithmic and programming of the processes, and, thus, for computerization of not only scientific and technical forms of knowledge but also the other forms thereof. The method will apply to formalize the data entered into RADAR matrix profile in order to simplify the assessment.

RESULTS

Genesis, functions and levels of accreditation of educational organizations in Kazakhstan

State regulation in the field of education is executed through legal support, education quality management, standardization and control ([5]). The system of quality assurance of higher education in Kazakhstan has gone through three stages of formation: - 2001-2005 - introduction of the state accreditation procedure; - 2006-2012 - transition started from quality control up to quality assurance, transfer of the state accreditation functions to independent competitive environment; -2010 - signing of the Bologna Declaration and confirmation of obligations to the ESG; - 2013-2017 - accession to the European ENQA network and the EQAR register of two national agencies, revision of standards of national accreditation bodies in accordance with the requirements of ESG-2015, participation of the Government of Kazakhstan in the EQAR Assembly as a member, placement of Kazakhstan universities in international rankings. Various stakeholders have been widely involved in the accreditation process, including the complete abandonment of the certification procedure for civil universities; -2018 - expansion of academic and managerial independence of universities, amendments to laws and regulations governing the activities of higher and postgraduate education in the country. Advances in Kazakhstan's quality assurance system demonstrate the international recognition of two Kazakh agencies that have become full members of ENQA and successfully entered EQAR [6] .

As established by the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Education [5], accreditation of educational organizations is a procedure for recognizing the compliance of educational services with the established accreditation standards (regulations) of educational services. It also specifies the function of accreditation. It is to provide objective information about the quality of these services and confirm the existence of effective mechanisms to improve it.

Quality assurance in higher education should be understood as the process of evaluation and accreditation of educational programs (program and institutional evaluation and accreditation), as well as the creation and operation of intra-university quality assurance systems. In this regard, it is necessary to distinguish 2 levels of accreditation: at the university level (self-assessment) and at the level of accreditation bodies.

Characteristics of EFQM in terms of its application for institutional accreditation

As you know, the specifics of quality in higher education are currently reflected in the Belgian-Netherlands model of improving the higher education quality based on the model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The EFQM model is used to improve the self-assessment and management system, to study and measure the organization management potential and to evaluate the effectiveness of management. Role of the EFQM model is to identify areas for improvement, implementation of which means increase of the organization competitiveness. Therefore, the said model implementation result is to assess the improvement level as a degree of convergence with an ideal organization.

Advantages of EFQM are illustrated in the scheme below (Figure 1)

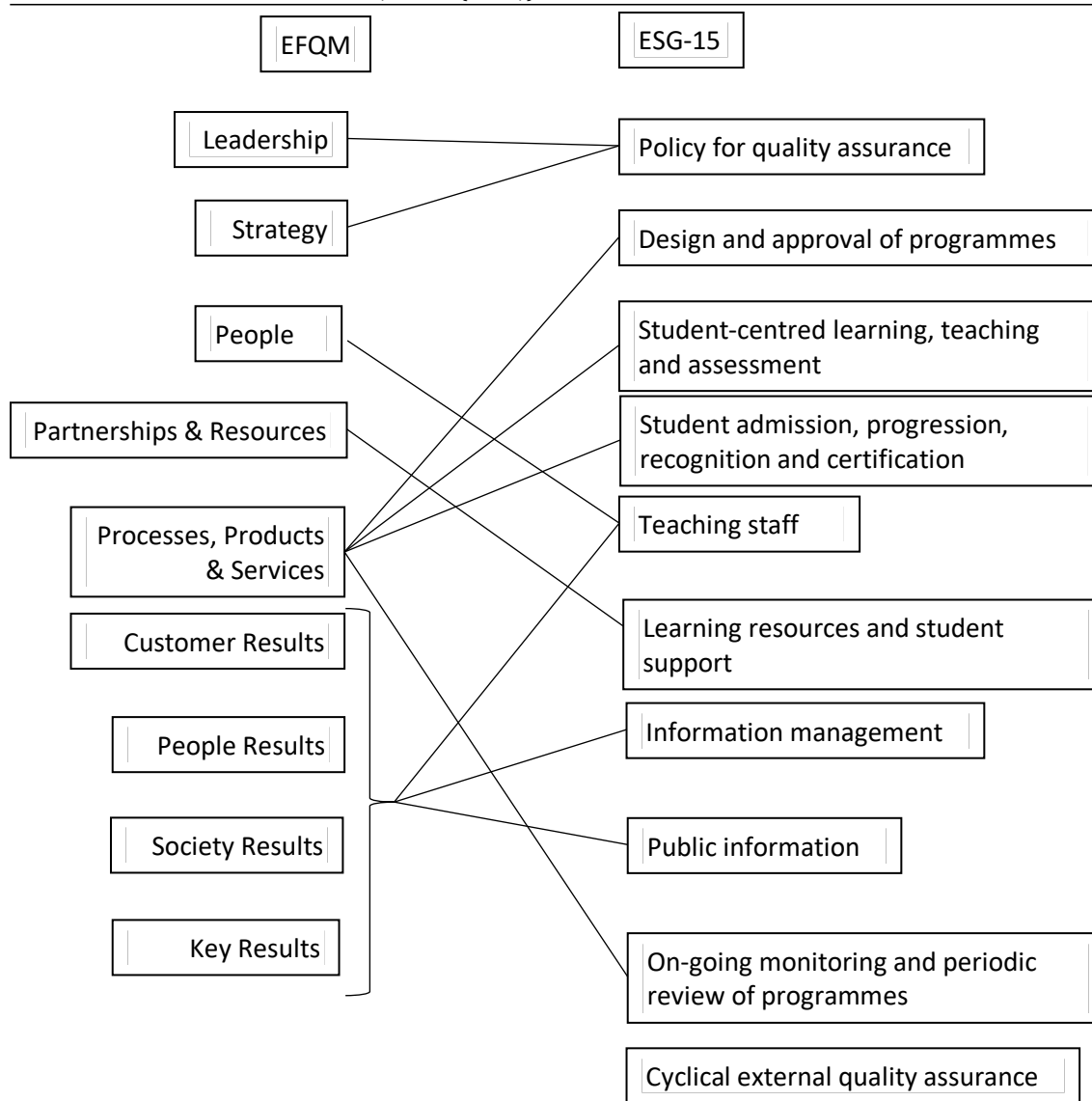


Figure 1. Connection between EFQM and ESG-15

As you can see, there is a connection between two models, though ESG-15 is more adapted to the program accreditation of universities.

It is proved by the fact that the criterion "Processes" in EFQM does not fully reflect such important processes in the university as design and approval of programs, student-centered learning, teaching and assessment, student admission, progression, recognition and certification, on-going monitoring and periodic review of programs. However, the absence of need for cyclical external quality assurance in EFQM reflects the essence of this model: in universities, the process of self-improvement should be carried out continuously, but not periodically. In addition, the presence of such criteria as Leadership, Strategy, Partnerships & Resources and the Results group in EFQM indicates the model's institutional nature. This is natural, since academic program managers do not develop a strategy, do not have the resources, and the results of the program should be considered in the context of all the activities of the organization.

Thus, EFQM is more adapted for institutional accreditation of HEIs compared to ESG-15.

Ability to assign points to indicators in the RADAR matrix for higher education institutions

The RADAR logic is a dynamic assessment framework and a powerful management tool that provides a structured approach to questioning the performance of an organization. At the highest level, RADAR logic states that an organization needs to:

- Determine the Results it is aiming to achieve as part of its strategy
- Plan and develop an integrated set of sound Approaches to deliver the required results both now and in the future
- Deploy the approaches in a systematic way to ensure implementation
- Assess and Refine the deployed approaches based on monitoring and analysis of the results achieved and ongoing learning activities [7].

RADAR matrix tool of is used to assess organizational performance and apply within the EFQM excellence model. As such, it is an integral part of the excellence model methodology. RADAR provides a structured approach to question the performance of an organisation. RADAR logic provides a structured approach to question the performance of an organization using EFQM excellence model [8]. Use of the RADAR matrix is based on filling in the self-assessment profile. Educational organization must fill out a profile (Figure 2) and provide evidence for each item.

Questions	Assessment according to the current situation	Urgency of Improvement	Evidences
1. Leadership			
Does management assure that the agreed upon image and business strategy of the organisation are followed?			
Does management encourage team work?			
Does management make sure performance drivers are frequently evaluated and improved?			

Figure 2. Fragment RADAR matrix profile

Upon completion of the self-assessment report, the educational organization should develop an improvement plan for the areas that can be improved and set out measures to implement the plan for several years. Prior to the official visit of expert group, the educational organization should mark 3 points on the self-assessment sheet and make improvements on these points.

Accreditation procedure algorithm is fully compliant with the EFQM's Excellence Model, which uses RADAR logic, in pursuit of excellence. However, many employees are not familiar with the EFQM assessment technology, so they face difficulty when filling out self-assessment sheets. In addition, the EFQM model is designed primarily for industrial enterprises, so it is not fully compatible with educational organizations. With this in mind, the application form for

institutional accreditation of educational organizations should be changed to be closer to the business processes of educational organizations. Take the profile questions in Figure 1 as an example. Because the questions are general, it is not clear to assign a score to them, they depend on the subjective opinion of the expert. In this regard, it is necessary to formalize the answers to the questions. With this in mind, Table 1 shows how to coordinate scores when supplementing the RADAR matrix. Here are the scores assigned to the answer options for the model's 1st criterion called "Leadership".

Table 1. Example of scoring when completing a RADAR matrix

Criterion "Leadership"	Scores assigned depending on the availability of evidences (%)			
	25	50	75	100
Is the head of the organization involved in the development of the organization's mission?	He/Her entrusted the development to one of the deputies	He/Her entrusted the development to one of the deputies and made recommendations	He/Her took part in the development and manage by process	He/Her individually developed of the mission
Is the head of the organization involved in the development of the organization's strategy?	He/Her entrusted the development to one of the deputies	He/Her entrusted the development to one of the deputies and made recommendations	He/Her took part in the development and manage by process	He/Her individually developed of the strategy
Is the head of the organization ensures compliance of the strategy?	He handed over control to one of his deputies	He handed over control to one of his deputies and requires periodic reporting	He handed over control to one of his deputies and requires systematic reporting	He/Her individually provides fulfillment of a strategy
Is the head of the organization involved in the development of the organization's management system?	He/Her entrusted the development to one of the deputies	He/Her entrusted the development to one of the deputies and made recommendations	He/Her took part in the development and manage by process	He/Her individually developed of the management system

In my opinion, if such formalized data is assigned for each criterion, it will be easier to fill the RADAR matrix, while subjectivity will decrease and accuracy will increase.

CONCLUSION

The EFQM model use for institutional accreditation is effective only if the assignment of scores to the indicators in the RADAR matrix for higher education institutions ensures the accuracy of each

criterion. Then the experts' assessments will be more accurate and the discrepancy will be reduced.

Thus, due to the RADAR matrix use, the universities will be exempt from voluminous reporting during accreditation, the digital data obtained will be more accurate, and, therefore, the scope of the EFQM model application will be expanded.

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Abbreviations

EFQM – European Foundation for Quality Management;
EHEA – European Higher Education Area;
ESG-15 – The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA, confirm in 2015;
HEI – Higher Education Institute
RADAR – Results — Approach— Deployment — Assessment— Review

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