

QMOD-ICQSS Conference

***(Quality Management and
Organizational Development -
International Conference on Quality
and Service Sciences)***

Main theme of the conference:

***Quality Management in
the Age of AI***

Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea

26–28 September 2025

Deadline for abstracts:

February 2, 2025.

www.qmod.org

BACKGROUND

This conference brings together academics and students, business and public sector leaders, theorists and practitioners of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Business Excellence.

As the conference name (QMOD) indicates, the principal aim of the QMOD conferences has been to provide a unique international forum to exchange knowledge on the multidisciplinary nature of research and practice related to Quality Management for sustainable Organizational Development.

The first conference in Zhengzhou, China, which attracted more than 500 participants from China and more than 100 participants from Asia, Australia, US and Europe, was organized after invitation from the Ministry of Aviation Industries. Lego was the main sponsor of the conference, and other sponsors were Xerox and VW.

The main subject or theme of this first conference, and the conference name, was QMED, which means *Quality Management and Economic Development*, indicating that Quality Management is the best means to initiate and/ or accelerate economic development in a region or country. This was what we learned from Japan after the 2nd World War.

All the papers presented were published after the conference in a book where a part of the binder showed *The Great Wall* which Lego had built with Lego bricks and put in the reception of the conference hotel during the conference.

It took almost one year until we decided (in 1998) to run the second conference in 1999 in Portoroz, Slovenia, after invitation from the *Ministry of Economics, Department of Privatization*. The conference was sponsored by Danfoss as well as the European Union.

We might have continued to use QMED as the conference name, but we decided to change the name to *QMOD (Quality Management and Organizational Development)*. Our thinking was that major *economic development* of a region or country

comes as a result if and only if companies as well as public institutions continuously develop better products/services as well as better infrastructure. For that purposes *Quality Management* as well as *Organizational Development* is “a must”.

After the second successful conference had been organized, we realized that there was a huge need for such a conference almost everywhere in the world, and we therefore decided to run this type of conferences every year under the *umbrella name* “QMOD”. We have done that until 2020 where we had planned to run the 22nd QMOD conference in Bratislava, Slovakia.

However, we had to cancel this conference even if almost everything was done to open the conference. More than 100 papers or abstracts were accepted to be presented during the 2-day conference and the conference hotel had been booked just at the Danube Riverbanks. But that was not enough to continue. Our planning had not foreseen that an enemy entered the scene in Europe and all over the world:

The Corona pandemia spread rapidly during the summer and autumn in 2020, and to participate in a big conference became risky, so we had no other choice than canceling the conference and wait-and-see. As the planning of a new QMOD conference lasts almost a year it took a long time before we were ready to start up new conferences. In short, we decided in 2023 that we for many reasons now were ready to re-start the yearly QMOD conferences especially because many previous participants contacted us through e-mails and other means asking us when they again could plan for participating in a QMOD conference.

Some Results of Organizing the QMOD Conferences

23 Conferences were organised,

with 3000+ participants

from 30+ different countries and 5 continents.

2500+ papers were presented, and 250+ papers were selected and published in international recognized research journals.

Several books and book chapters were published based on accepted QMOD papers. One two binds encyclopedia were published (2016) where several authors have been “*QMOD’ers*” which have participated in previous conferences.

The QMOD conference has gradually from *the grassroots period* grown into a *Quality Management Community* where *QMOD’ers became friends* who took initiative to work together in small groups writing research proposals, apply for fundings, do the research and publish the research results in international recognized journals and/or books.

So, the themes/ subjects discussed at each conference were spread to international research communities, to universities and to companies all over the world through the QMOD conference’s official publications as shown above as well as through the QMOD Community’s supplementary publications as well as *QMODers’* individual teaching and consulting all over the world.

During the years since the first QMOD conference was arranged in China (1997) we have discussed important research challenges at the yearly conferences as well as in subsequent publications. One example of an important research challenge/ question has been: How should you balance *the soft side of Quality Management* (the human dimension) with the *hard side* (tools and techniques)?

Finding good answers to this question is not easy because a good answer is dependent on the company’s context. However, to find *a good answer* you need normally more than understanding the company’s context. You also need a good model or framework which can guide you when you search for good answers to your question/ challenge. Such a model which often has been used in practice as well as in research is the EFQM Excellence Model (1992 – 2019). See Appendix.

The QMOD 2025 Conference

Innovative papers are invited from experts who have theoretical and/or practical experiences on how AI may improve the design of Quality Management systems to assure continuous improvements of “the 4P”:

People, Partnerships, Processes, Products/Services

As has been documented in many QMOD papers that *the greatest challenge* for companies in their continuous search for methodologies or road maps for successful Organizational Change and Development Programs is the design and implementation of a plan which balances the soft and hard side of Quality Management. It is our belief that this challenge will be one of the biggest challenges in the remaining part of the century because tools and techniques are still developing very fast, especially because of the development of new computer-based tools such as AI-GPT (*Artificial Intelligence - Generative Pre-Training Transformer*).

These tools are becoming more and more user friendly, and at the same time we observe that tools are being successfully developed and applied on applications focusing on understanding and developing people’s motivation and commitment for participating in Organizational Development projects.

The development of the “4P” model/ framework is a simplification of the EFQM Excellence Models from the

period 1992 – 2019 to help non-experts in their understanding of Excellence Models and hence also to help in the implementation of the EFQM Excellence Model when non-experts had achieved a more mature state where the full EFQM Excellence Model had become understandable and hence possible and attractive to use.

For a comparison and reflection of the EFQM Model and two different versions of “4P” models please see Appendix.

Based on the common awareness of human resources and their important role in organizational contexts we suggest that the basic and first unit to improve should always be “People”.

From this viewpoint it is argued that the priority of any quality or excellence strategy should be to build quality into people as the essential foundation and catalyst for improving partnerships, processes and products. But what does that really mean?

To answer that question, we need to understand human nature, human needs, human psychology, environmental and contextual factors of human behavior because the project of “building quality into people” can only be carried out when we have a profound knowledge of *people and psychology* (Deming, 1993).

The “4P Pyramid” symbolizes that the way to excellence goes through people. This pyramid was gradually developed through the previous QMOD conferences by analyzing previous theoretical findings together with participants’ practical experiences. We found a common agreement and recognition of employees as organizations’ greatest asset, and

at the same time a joint need to develop a more human oriented definition of organizational excellence. Such a definition should clearly signal that the first step in building organizational excellence is to build excellence into people, and that “the people first policy” and “total development of people” are essentials for achieving organizational excellence.

It is believed that a pre-condition for achieving Organizational Excellence defined as “Excellence in the 4P”, is to satisfy people’s needs in a balanced way. The core competencies are those capabilities, which, together with the core values, are important for satisfying people’s spiritual and mental needs so that Business Excellence can be achieved. It is assumed that the core values and emotional competencies are related to the first two P, i.e. People and Partnership.

Without focusing on the core values and the emotional competencies, it will be very difficult to achieve Excellence in the last two P, i.e. Processes and Products.

To build quality into the last two P, intellectual competencies are needed. The critical or core intellectual competencies are those competencies that are needed to satisfy people’s mental/ intellectual needs and at the same time necessary to build Excellence into the organization’s processes and Products.

Hence, the first aim of a quality strategy is to build quality into people through the strengthening of both core values and core competencies.

The quality strategy should always be implemented both through a top-down strategy and a bottom-up strategy. Such an approach provides a framework for building quality into

the following three levels: 1. Individual level, 2. Team level, and 3. Organizational level.

When developing the quality strategy, it is vital to have a balanced focus on both core values and core competencies. It is also vital that the quality strategy has a balanced focus on both core-competence subsystems, i.e. the emotional competencies as well as the intellectual competencies. This is a precondition for improving the quality of work (the partnership and processes).

An efficient quality strategy aiming at improving “the 4 P” can only be developed based on an understanding of the interrelationships between individuals, teams, and the organization and the critical contextual factors at each level. The Pyramid above illustrates these interrelationships and the process of building these different levels.

The pyramid signals that building excellence starts with building leadership, which means recruiting and developing (educating/ training) leaders with the right values and competencies.

The next step is to recruit and/ or develop employees with the right values and competencies. Especially on the value dimension leaders’ behaviors determine if core values (as for example trust, respect, openness etc.) will be diffused and will become a part of the organizational culture.

Building teams means that teams are established and developed, so that each team will be able to practice the right and needed values and competencies.

Building organizations means that leaders, individuals and teams, day by day try to practice the values and competencies needed based on the principle of continuous improvement and a continuous focus on the company's mission, vision, goals and strategies.

From this background it is understandable that *the Research Areas of interest under the QMOD theme* are varied and are being tackled by specialists and practitioners in fields such as leadership, business strategy, economics, human resource management, learning & knowledge management, social & organisational psychology, operations management and engineering.

Throughout its 24-year history QMOD has fulfilled its mission to bring the most advanced thinking to new territories and demonstrate how hard and soft techniques of advanced management practice can achieve startling improvements. The QMOD 2025 Conference will be no exception.

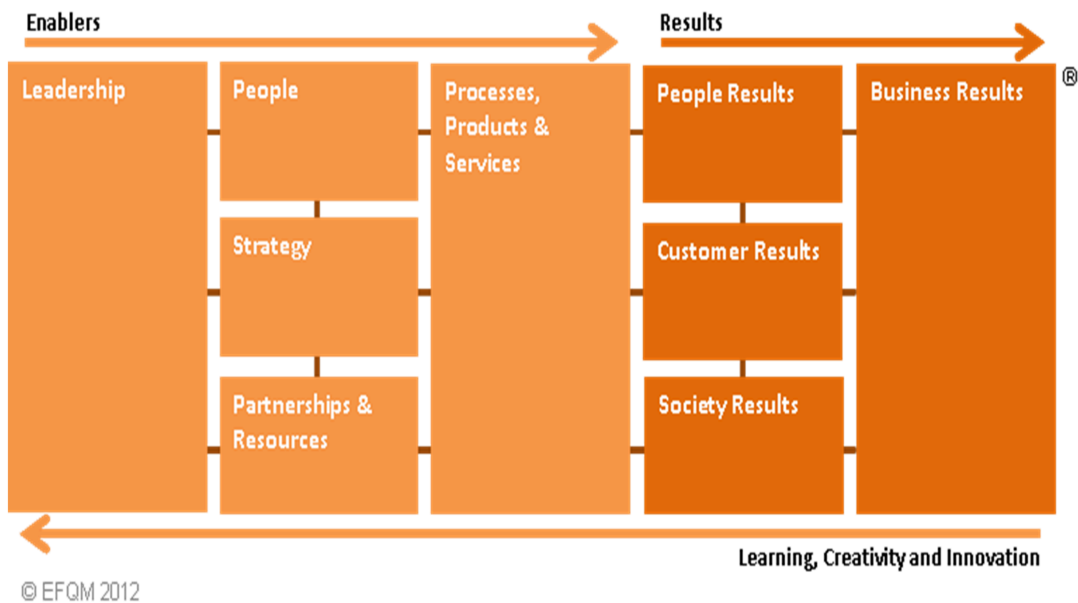
After the first 25 years of the new millennium have passed the greatest challenge is still the integration and co-operation between these specialists and practitioners. Our efforts towards integration and co-operation between the different research fields will not only contribute to deepening our knowledge and insight, but also contribute to establish partnership and harmonious co-existence.

Welcome to Seoul!

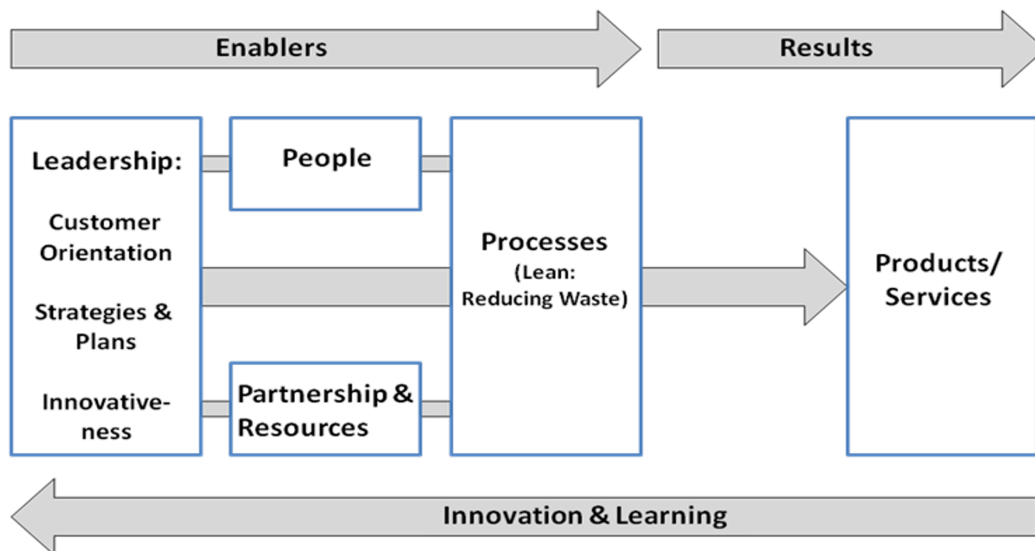
Su Mi Park Dahlgaard & Jens J. Dahlgaard, Professors
Lund University & Linköping University, Sweden
Conference Co-Founders and Co-Presidents

Appendix

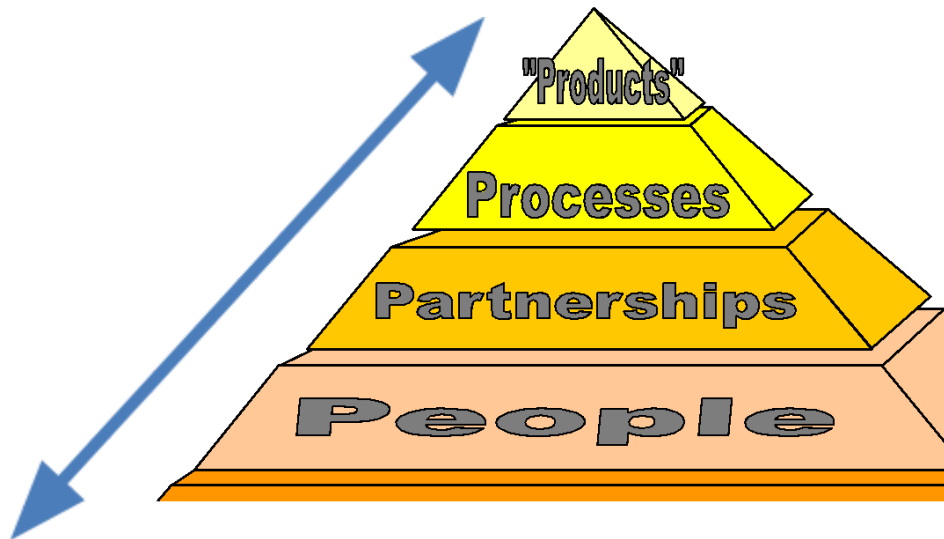
The EFQM Excellence Model (2013)



The "4P" model for diagnosing ILL (Innovativeness, Learning and Lean)



The “4P” Pyramid/Excellence Model:
A Strategy for Building Organizational Excellence



The “4P” Pyramid is based on a suggestion from Dahlgaard & Park Dahlgaard (1999) for a new definition of organizational excellence, called “the 4P definition”, in which the people dimension is recognized and emphasized as the primary enabler.

The *empirical basis* of the “4P” Excellence model, meaning companies where the model has been used either as a framework for implementation of quality management or as an analytic framework for diagnosing companies’ results of trying to implement TQM (Total Quality Management), are numerous. A few examples are:

Post Denmark (1997, 1999; Danish Hospital Clinique (1999); Royal Mail (1999); Post Norway (2000); Saab Bofors Dynamics, Sweden (2002); BT Products, Sweden (2006); 7 BT sup-suppliers (2007); Iranian Pharmaceutical Companies (2009, 2010); Iranian Telecom Company (2016); Iranian Hospitals (2010); plus, many other organisations in Denmark, Sweden, Taiwan, India, Japan...