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Maria J. Manatos and Cláudia S. Sarrico

The development of quality management in higher education: beyond the debate of relevance and applicability

The strong development of quality assurance systems is one of the most significant developments of higher education since the early 1980s (Dill & Beerkens, 2010; El-Khawas, 1998). Concerns with quality in higher education are not new but it was mainly over the last thirty years that the logic of accountability became inseparable from the higher education sector and the concerns with quality became more visible and relevant for the higher education institutions, the government and society as whole. Quality management in higher education has gained an unparalleled relevance in a context of great expansion of higher education systems, wider participation in higher education, emergence of new players, diverse profiles of institutions, programmes and students, continuing advancement and rapid integration of new technology, greater internationalisation, increasing pressures on costs and new modes of financing, growing emphasis on market forces, and new modes of governance stressing performance, quality and accountability (Deem, 1998; Rosa & Amaral, 2007; Sarrico, 2021).

Similarly, "academics are encouraged 'to do more with less' and be more accountable for scarce resources" (Becket & Brookes, 2008, p. 46). The pressures come both from outside and inside of higher education institutions. Externally the pressures are exerted by funding bodies and external quality assurance agencies. Internally, the pressures are exerted by managers and administrators on academics and non-academic staff in higher education institutions (Deem, 1998).

At an international level, supra-national entities have been playing a relevant role in fostering the development and implementation of quality management at national and institutional levels. The European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students' Union have developed the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) for the internal quality assurance of institutions, for the external quality assurance of institutions by agencies, and for the quality assurance of agencies themselves, used in 54 countries. Similarly, the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) involving 41 countries has been working towards enhancing the quality of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region, by improving the quality assurance mechanisms of its members, exchanging theory and practice experiences, and promoting co-operation among members. In the U.S., state and accreditation agencies and professional and

disciplinary associations play a role in influencing the development of quality management at a national and institutional level. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is an umbrella organisation for higher education accreditation and quality assurance in the country, which also plays an international role through CHEA International Quality Group. There are also entities operating at an international level, such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), which gathers several quality management organisations, including regional associations such as ENQA, APQN and CHEA.

It is also worth mentioning the role of other international entities such as the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which despite having different goals and lines of action, have also been contributing to improve education systems worldwide. In the field of higher education, they have been promoting quality management mechanisms in higher education and have been contributing to improve the quality of institutions and their activities.

The OECD has developed several studies, including on quality assurance (OECD, 2008), supporting quality teaching in higher education (OECD, 2012b), and benchmarking higher education system performance (OECD, 2019).

The World Bank, which mostly provides financial and technical assistance, has developed the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). SABER is an initiative to produce comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems and the ultimate goal of promoting learning for all (World Bank, 2013). Particularly, it has developed a toolkit for evaluating higher education systems, which includes benchmarking of policies in several areas, including quality in higher education (World Bank, 2013), and developed a framework to guide its financial and policy advisory support for higher education (Arnhold & Bassett, 2021).

UNESCO also has a mandate regarding higher education policies, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. It provides technical assistance, especially to developing countries, to develop quality assurance in higher education, including support for the Africa Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) of quality assurance agencies. It has also developed the global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications to facilitate recognition and mobility of graduates across borders.

At a national level, 'supra-institutional quality assurance schemes' have been developed and implemented, once external entities started to require them, and accreditation has arisen (Westerheijden, Hulpiaub, & Waeytens, 2007).

At an institutional level, emphasis has been put on developing internal quality management systems and on ensuring that the accreditation of the study programmes and of the internal

quality management systems of higher education institutions is achieved (Westerheijden et al., 2007).

In this context, the benefits and limitations of the applicability of quality management and its principles to the public sector in general, and to higher education in particular, as well as the best way to achieve quality in higher education have been controversial topics of debate. The higher education context has particularities which influence the way quality is approached and managed and often drive insiders to sceptic positions, not only regarding the use of quality management models in higher education, but also, 'management' in a broader sense (Amaral & Magalhães, 2007; Becket & Brookes, 2008; Houston, 2007; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996; Rosa, Sarrico, & Amaral, 2012; Venkatraman, 2007).

The debate on the suitability of quality management models originally developed in other sectors of activity for higher education is further enlarged by an apparent conflict between quality for accountability and quality as improvement of the core missions of higher education institutions. Often quality management systems in higher education have a major focus on quality for accountability purposes, almost forgetting the emphasis on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and engagement with society, which should be at the centre of any quality management system (O'Mahony & Garavan, 2012; Sarrico, 2021).

Notwithstanding the debate, the application of quality management tools in higher education has shown that its implementation can be a complex, or even a "herculean but potentially beneficial task if the implementation process is effectively undertaken" (O'Mahony & Garavan, 2012, p. 185).

Despite the criticisms, there is a raising awareness of the potential benefits from the application of quality management principles to higher education (Houston, 2010; Rosa & Sarrico, 2012; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2005; Venkatraman, 2007). Principles such as continuous improvement, participation of internal stakeholders, satisfaction of customer needs and expectations and the existence of management procedures that reinforce quality, would be consensually considered relevant within the higher education context (Rosa, Saraiva, & Diz, 2005; Tarí & Dick, 2016).

Rather than attempting to reduce complexity and provide universal solutions, it is important to critically think of quality and improvement and to make commitments which "resonate with key ideas of higher education and (…) capture essential characteristics for achieving enhancement, rather than just monitoring, of quality in higher education" (Houston, 2010, p. 179).

Contrary to the perspective of quality management as synonym of just compliance with standards, accountability and instrumentalism, and placed in the other extreme of a quality culture characterised by academic excellence, commitment and idealism (Elken & Stensaker,

2018), this chapter brings a holistic and comprehensive understanding of quality management, embracing accountability and compliance but also enhancement and organisational development. More than the mere assurance of quality, the development of a comprehensive and integrative quality culture and the continuous improvement of quality are inherent characteristics and aims of quality management.

This chapter is meant as a reflection on how quality management has become a management tool for higher education and essentially a set of good practices of organisational management ultimately aimed towards the development of the quality of higher education institutions and their activities. It also reflects on how quality management has become integrated in the organisational governance and management of institutions, ensuring legitimacy and the long-time survival of the higher education endeavour. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the implications of the understanding of quality management as a set of good management practices, on future developments of the concept and on possible pathways for further research.

Quality as a management tool contributing to the delivery of good education, research and engagement

Although monitoring, accountability and the need for compliance with external quality requirements are still major drivers of internal quality management practices, the rapid development and sophistication of quality management systems has been moving the focus from their operational usage serving accountability purposes, to their broader usage contributing to organisational development and, ultimately, to the enhancement of higher education institutions' core missions.

On the one hand, when one analyses the contribution of quality management to organisational development, one observes that quality management has "a potentially innovative and developmental impact on higher education" (Brennan, 2018, p. 255), since it has the potential to provide data and information that are essential for effective decision-making, to create opportunities for dialogue between different parties, to provide mechanisms for the sharing of good practices between institutions and to identify and borrow good practices as well as identify and remove poor practices (Brennan, 2018; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996; Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010; Sarrico, 2021).

Indeed, there is evidence in the literature that external quality assurance processes, namely the accreditation of institutions and study programmes, have contributed to improve institutional management and particularly internal quality management processes (Brennan & Shah, 2000; De Vicenzi, Garau, & Guaglianone, 2018; Stensaker, 2008). External quality management practices can thus be understood as drivers for the development of "management tools" used "to better manage universities" (Cret, 2011, p. 421). Although such practices "do not entail organisational change by themselves" or "mechanically entail a rise

of quality provision" (Cret, 2011, p. 428), they can help governance and management bodies of higher education institutions to better manage their institutions.

However, when it comes to the impact of quality management in the actual quality of the outcomes of education, research and engagement, research is very limited (Brennan & Shah, 2000; OECD, 2012a; Sarrico, 2018; Stensaker, 2014).

The literature also highlights the perceived excessive concerns of external quality management exercises with quality assurance processes and procedures, rather than with the quality of the education, research and engagement outcomes (Shah & Nair, 2012). As Stensaker and colleagues (2011, p. 476) argue: "there is a real danger that quality assurance schemes can be accused of not being very efficient and of targeting processes stimulating bureaucracy, organisation and regulation more than addressing issues that are central in the minds of the academic staff and students." Indeed, academics are concerned that "quality initiatives emphasise processes rather than outcomes" or, in other words, assurance rather than enhancement (Lomas, 2007, p. 410). Nevertheless, there seems to be a growing acceptance and support of quality management by academics who believe that quality management results do result in improvement and not just in control (Kleijnen et al., 2011; Rosa, Sarrico, & Amaral, 2012).

There are also several criticisms related to a focus on the quantity of learning sometimes ignoring the content and the process of learning. "The attempt to quantify learning raises questions about the purpose and underpinning values of higher education and necessitates debate about the rationale for quantification – whether it is for accountability, measuring performance, assuring quality or for the enhancement of teaching, learning and the student experience" (Howson & Buckley, 2020, pp. 10-11).

According to Sarrico (2018, p. 128), one should address "not only the quantity of graduates a system produces, but also the quality of graduate outcomes. Graduate outcomes most obviously relate to learning outcomes and learning gains directly obtained from higher education. But graduate outcomes also reflect the effect of higher education on the labour market and social outcomes of graduates."

Concerns with the quality of the learning outcomes, learning gain, labour market and social outcomes are especially relevant in a context of increased participation and diversification of the student population. Statistics demonstrate an overall positive picture but concerning at the same time. On average, higher education graduates have better cognitive skills, higher participation rates in the labour market, better salaries and better social outcomes than the rest of the population (OECD, 2020). Still, in many countries the percentage of higher education graduates with low literacy and numeracy outcomes is significant, and inequity of access, experience, and outcomes remains a concern despite higher participating and widening of access initiatives (OECD, 2019; Sarrico, 2021).

Research productivity and scientific impact have been increasing, but there are concerns regarding its relevance to the world of work, public affairs and society (OECD, 2019), questioning the outcomes of higher education engagement mission (Sarrico & Godonoga, 2021).

Despite being challenging, the measurement of learning gain has great potential for enhancing quality in higher education (Kuh & Jankowski, 2018; Sarrico, 2018; Shavelson, Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, & Mariño, 2018). First, it "facilitates policy drives for competition, transparency and accountability". Second, it "has benefits over proxy metrics such as student satisfaction". Finally, "quantification approaches could also in principle help align various disciplinary-based quality approaches, addressing concerns around equity of experience and differential outcomes" (Howson & Buckley, 2020, p. 12).

In terms of managing quality, there has been a broad shift from process evaluation to outcome evaluation (Harvey & Williams, 2010). Quality in higher education increasingly relates to how well its outputs from the education, research, and engagement functions produce the intended outcomes, such as graduate learning outcomes and learning gain, labour market and social outcomes of graduates, knowledge creation, and product, process, and social innovation (Sarrico, 2021).

One sign of the focus of quality on outcomes is the integration of learning outcomes in existing quality management procedures, including external quality management, giving quality assurance agencies an additional set of criteria to use in their reviews, as a way to revitalise old assessment and accreditation procedures (Harvey & Williams, 2010; Stensaker, 2014). It seems that measuring the learning of students is the new quest in accountability-driven policy initiatives (Shavelson, 2010).

Quality as integral to organisational governance and management

The understanding of quality as a management tool contributing to the organisational development of higher education institutions is intrinsically linked to its understanding as a holistic, systemic and integrated tool (Cret, 2011; Manatos, Sarrico, & Rosa, 2018). Increasingly, higher education institutions are developing their internal quality management systems in a systemic manner and integrating them in their broader management and governance arrangements, covering different missions, organisational levels, and principles of quality management (Manatos, Sarrico, & Rosa, 2017).

The term integration generally designates "the degree of alignment or harmony in an organisation" and translates "whether different departments and levels speak the same language and are tuned to the same wavelength" (Garvin, 1991, p. 87). When linked to quality management systems, integration tends to represent the alignment of the quality management system with the strategy of the organisation (Bardoel & Sohal, 1999; Davies, 2008; Pardy & Andrews, 2010; Shih & Gurnani, 1997). The integration of a quality

management system can then be achieved "through a combination of multi-level use in the organisation; using it as part of the strategic planning process; aligning its use with other organisational systems, linking its use with performance management and involving staff in its use through teams" (Davies, 2008, p. 396). Furthermore, linking a quality management system with the strategic planning processes of an organisation helps to integrate the quality management model into the organisation's processes and to achieve its effective implementation (Bardoel & Sohal, 1999; Davies, 2008; Hansson, Backlund, & Lycke, 2003).

As in other organisational settings, in higher education, the literature has been emphasising "the importance of linking quality efforts to a strategic plan" (Horine & Hailey, 1995, p. 12); of "embedding quality assurance and improvement in the strategic planning process" (Dynan & Clifford, 2001, p. 512) and of developing holistic quality management models which can effectively meet the requirements of core functions of higher education institutions (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2002, 2004).

The argument is that the successful implementation of quality management in higher education will not result from isolated and independent actions and/or the establishment of quality offices, but "from clearly defined goals and strategic plans", at the same time that it must "be planned and managed (…) as any other organizational strategy" (Horine & Hailey, 1995, p. 16). In this sense, "quality issues should not be something separated from, or added to, the work that is carried out at the university" (Bowden & Marton, 1998, p. 287).

Having in mind the different 'levels' and 'dimensions' underlying the concept of quality management integration in higher education found in the literature, which includes but is not limited to the alignment of quality management with the strategy of the organisation, quality management integration in higher education can be defined as an approach to quality management which covers the different missions of higher education institutions (teaching and learning, research and scholarship, third mission and societal engagement, and their supporting processes), their different organisational levels (programme, unit and institutional level), and the principles underlining the definition of quality management (customer focus, leadership, engagement of people, process approach, improvement, evidence-based decision-making and relationship management (Manatos et al., 2018).

In the context of higher education, customer focus means the concern of higher education institutions with customer identification, above all its students, their needs and expectations. Leadership is related with the role of management bodies of higher education institutions, at institutional, unit and degree programme level, with respect to the definition of the mission, the values and the goals of the higher education institutions, the promotion of a quality culture and the promotion of the involvement of people in quality management. The engagement of people is translated into the efforts to engage the people working in higher education institutions (academic and non-academic staff and students) in the quality management mechanisms. Process approach has to do with the management of the different

core missions of higher education institutions as interrelated missions that function as a coherent system, as well as of their support processes, including professional support for students, institutional management and administration, and those that support the maintenance and operations of institutions. Improvement translates the efforts of higher education institutions to continually improve their quality. Evidence-based decision making, as the name suggests, means that decisions in higher education institutions are based on the analysis of data and information provided by different sources, often described as 'institutional research'. Finally, relationship management highlights the importance of the relationships of the higher education institution with all its stakeholders, including those upstream higher education, such as feeder non-higher education institutions and those downstream higher education such as employers of its graduates and society in general (Manatos et al., 2018; Sarrico & Rosa, 2016).

The concept of integration assumes also that quality management is part of the broader management and governance system of higher education institutions. This means that: quality management is part of the global strategy of higher education institutions; the management and governance bodies of higher education institutions have quality management as one of their areas of responsibility; and the results from quality management practices are used as information for the higher education institutions' strategic management.

It seems that the evolution of the industrial quality management models, highlighting the need to integrate quality management in the strategy of the organisations is leading to a trend towards the integration of quality management, in organisations, in general, and in higher education institutions, in particular (Manatos et al., 2018). Furthermore, and especially in the case of higher education, the recent developments influencing the management, the organisation and the governance of higher education institutions seem to be showing that, despite being traditionally fragmented and loosely coupled organisations (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; Deem, 1998; Frølich et al., 2013; Orton & Weick, 1990; Weick, 1976), higher education institutions are integrating their main processes and management practices and structures with further calls for further integration of higher education in the broader 'education supply chain' (Brückmann, 2015; Brückmann & Carvalho, 2014; Larsen, Maassen, & Stensaker, 2009; Melo, Sarrico, & Radnor, 2010; Sarrico & Rosa, 2016; Sarrico, Veiga, & Amaral, 2013).

On the one hand, the setting up of integrated management structures is leading to the centralisation of power in a small number of decision-making and governance bodies (Melo et al., 2010). Often, top executive bodies become smaller; collegial boards such as the academic senate or the institutions' assembly are either absent or at the advisory level; and power tends to be concentrated in one person, such as the Rector or the head of organisational units (Brückmann, 2015; Brückmann & Carvalho, 2014). On the other hand, it

leads to "a greater formalisation of roles and responsibilities especially concerning leadership often combined with stronger task specialisation" and dual structures are abandoned "in favour of integrated ones", which according to some, makes the "whole decision-making process more transparent, accountable and streamlined" (Larsen et al., 2009, p. 6).

The trend towards the integration of quality management is also observed in the frameworks developed by supra-national agencies. Taking the European context as an example, one observes that the European Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance have also been increasingly revealing signs of integration. Indeed, the policy for quality assurance described in the European Standards and Guidelines (for internal quality assurance – Part 1) states that "institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that (…) forms part of their strategic management" and that "quality assurance policies are most effective when they (…) take account of (…) the institutional context and its strategic approach" Simultaneously, the European Standards and Guidelines tend to integrate, the different missions of higher education institutions: "learning and teaching", "research and innovation", "support activities and facilities" and "contribution for social cohesion, economic growth and global competitiveness"; and "all the levels of the institution" (ESG, 2015, p. 11).

Moreover, quality agencies are increasingly elaborating guidelines for the development of the internal quality management systems of HEIs, integrating the different missions of higher education institutions and stressing the need to integrate quality management in institutions' strategic management. In the European context, Portugal and Finland are good examples. The Portuguese Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (A3ES) integrates in its framework: teaching and learning, research and development, interaction with society, support services; different organisational levels inside the higher education institutions; and the relationship between the quality assurance system and the governance and management bodies of the institution (A3ES, 2013). In Finland, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) has also developed a comprehensive framework integrating the planning, implementation and enhancement of education; societal engagement and impact; research, development, innovation and artistic activities with impact; and the use of the quality system in strategic management (FINEEC, 2018).

Lastly, the concept of integration is also related to the alignment of higher education systems with their downstream and upstream partners and more broadly with the concept of supply chain integration. This concept designates the coordination and integration of all the activities of a supply chain into a seamless process (Lumus & Vokurka, 1999). In higher education, this means the alignment of higher education systems with secondary education and with the labour market and civic society. Research has been showing that in education in general and in higher education in particular, such alignment is lacking and that there are supply chain integration problems (Sarrico & Rosa, 2016). As mentioned above, the engagement of higher education with the labour market is still limited (Sarrico, 2021). However, there are several

signs demonstrating that higher education is increasingly developing efforts to foster its relationships with secondary education, namely by promoting initiatives aiming at engaging secondary education students and schools in the activities of higher education institutions; and with different external partners from the labour market and civic society, by fostering the partnerships with partners from the world of work and civic affairs (Godonoga & Sarrico, 2019). Indeed, as the pressures for higher education institutions to engage with external stakeholders increase, so do the frameworks for quality management also propose the development of relationships with external stakeholders in order to enhance the quality of provision (Sarrico & Rosa, 2016).

Quality as a survival and legitimacy instrument

At a strategic level, quality provides a competitive advantage, in a time where higher education increasingly operates in a global market for students and staff. In more marketized systems, quality ensures the survival of the organisation. In Humboldtian, Napoleonic, and Confucian systems, where to different extents complex multi-level governance arrangements are present, the pursuit of quality means satisfying and being accountable to a myriad of internal and external stakeholders, maintaining legitimacy, and getting the necessary support to operate, including funding (Austin & Jones, 2016) .

External quality management schemes provide legitimacy to higher education institutions. It is well known that these schemes vary across the globe. For example, in the U.S. there is not a centralised authority that controls national higher education (Hegji, 2017). Instead, there are regional, national and programmatic non-governmental accrediting agencies. In Canada there is also not a national system of regional accreditation, but instead provincial legislation is used (Romanowski, 2021). In Europe accreditation is usually assured by national agencies. Similarly, in Australia accreditation is assured by an independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education – Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). In Asia, accreditation is assured by ASEAN national quality assurance agencies, which tend to be governmental departments. Both in Europe and in Asia, national quality agencies are registered respectively with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and with the Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR), which assure the reliability and trustworthiness of the agencies. But irrespective of the specificities of the regional and national quality management schemes, they are "used by institutions and programmes to demonstrate their legitimacy to deliver quality education", serving as "benchmark of acceptable quality" (Romanowski, 2021, pp. 1-2).

As Berkeens (2015) points out, legitimacy becomes one of the purposes of quality management. Higher education institutions, governments and quality assurance agencies need to be accountable for their quality to be able to obtain legitimacy from the society they

serve. Legitimacy thus results from accountability and transparency provided by quality assurance mechanisms.

Conclusion

Much energy has been spent trying to define quality in general and in higher education (Dicker et al., 2019). In addition, there is a long discussion on the applicability of quality management in higher education, given the idiosyncratic nature of higher education institutions compared to organisations in the business enterprise sector, where quality management and quality as a management tool as we know them have been if not been exclusively developed, at least most extensively implemented. With time higher education having borrowed from the experience of the private commercial sector, but also from the private non-profit and the public sector, made quality management their own, with its own models, frameworks, tools, and syntax. Quality management in higher education has been increasingly understood as a set of good practices of organisational management which go well beyond the compliance with external accountability requirements as it can contribute to improve the quality of higher education institutions, their management practices and their cores missions (Sarrico et al., 2010).

Obviously, quality in higher education is not new, and has always been rooted in a collegial culture of strong norms and peer review, but quality management in higher education as we know it, with its tools, institutional quality units, and external reviews is indeed a relatively recent phenomenon in the long history of higher education. Nonetheless, it is now firmly embedded in the management and governance arrangements of higher education institutions, and if at times it is equated with bureaucracy and compliance, there is increasingly an understanding that it does contribute to the delivery of good quality teaching and learning, research and scholarship and engagement with the world of work and civic affairs. As with other endeavours the devil is in the details. Far from being a straightforward exercise of going through rational, mechanistic, control tasks, it is as well a fuzzy, wicked, messy, social and political process within institutions, and at national and supra-national levels. It is a difficult Sisyphean process of negotiating organisational learning and continuous improvement. However, as more institutions and systems of higher education get involved, it opens further opportunities for the metric benchmarking of performance indicators generated by quality initiatives that raises questions for further investigation during processes of policy benchmarking among institutions and systems that lead to the comparison of policies, peer learning, generation of new ideas, policies and practices that spur creativity and innovation in the sector (Sarrico, 2021).

And continuous improvement and demonstration of relevance is essential for higher education institutions to survive and demonstrate legitimacy to operate. With the very welcome expansion of higher education and the push for widening access to traditionally

under-represented groups, the increasing cost of providing higher education competes with other sectors such as other levels of education, health and pensions. Consequently, higher education must constantly improve a difficult triumvirate: equity of access, quality of student outcomes, and societal relevance to maintain legitimacy among those who sustain it, i.e., government, households and other private sources of funding.

We propose that future developments regarding quality in higher education and specifically its tools will be less about the processes of learning and teaching, and more about measuring and demonstrating the quality of student outcomes in terms of learning gain, labour market outcomes and social outcomes of graduates, and ensuring the quality of different modes of delivery as a result of the digital transition and the emergence of alternative credentials (Kato, Galán-Muros, & Weko, 2020). It is a difficult arena to navigate but nonetheless a crucial one to maintain the legitimacy to operate and to continue attracting substantial amounts of resourcing. Consequently, research efforts should move along to investigate these developments to better understand them, and critically evaluate and contribute to the discussion on possible new meanings for quality in higher education, the effectiveness of emerging quality tools and management practices, and any impact they may have on those involved and ultimately whether they improve the quality of provision and outcomes of higher education.

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