

Applications of the EFQM 2025 Model in Enhancing Quality Assurance Within Vocational Training Institutions.



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Abstract:

This article aims to explore the potential of employing the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM 2025) Excellence Model as a strategic framework to develop the quality assurance systems in Algerian vocational training institutions. The descriptive-analytical approach was adopted, addressing: the concept of quality assurance; an introduction to the EFQM 2025 model and its diagnostic tool, RADAR; and a review of possible ways to overcome the challenges facing its implementation. The study concluded that: the EFQM 2025 model is an integrated framework for leading quality assurance and making it a sustainable strategic process; and the RADAR logic represents an effective tool for linking approach to implementation and results, despite the challenges it faces, which require: cultural change, leadership support, and capacity building. This model can also form the basis for establishing a national and international system for accreditation and excellence in vocational training institutions.

Keywords: *EFQM 2025 model; Quality assurance; Quality assurance challenges; Vocational training institutions; RADAR logic*

Introduction:

In the context of international transformations and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Algeria faces a strategic challenge which is to prepare human capital capable of leading the transition to a productive economy and a knowledge economy. Vocational training institutions are the link that connects educational policies with market requirements for modern work. The reality revealed that Algeria suffered from a gap between the outputs of training institutions and the requirements of the labor market.

In accordance with the Algeria Vision 2030 which aims to modernize the education and training system (Al-Qatamin, 2025), there is a need to change the paradigm of the culture of quality from a logic of control and compliance to that of excellence. The European Excellence Model EFQM 2025 provides a practical framework to lead this transformation and remains the best choice, as it brings together expertise, scalability, modernity and inclusion in the (strategic-operational-results) dimensions, thanks to its adoption of the RADAR methodology, it allows the continuous improvement of its performance, the enhancement of innovation, the improvement of governance and makes it possible to ensure the alignment of institutions with the requirements of sustainable development and the labor market.

To understand the effectiveness of this model in practice, we reviewed prior studies that evaluated institutions against it and the impact resulting from the choice of adopting it. These studies include:

A study among Ali Mahdi and Blasem Hassan (2020) titled: **assessing organizational performance depending on European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model: a case study in an organization.**

The study aimed to employ the EFQM model to evaluate the organizational performance of the National Center for Administrative Development and Information Technology in the Ministry of Planning so that, based on this, the gap between its actual performance and the criteria established in the model could be identified. The study adopted case study methodology through the utilization of several checklists based on the criteria of the 'Enablers' part (Leadership, Strategy, People, Partnerships & Resources, Processes, Products & Services) and the criteria of the 'Results' part (Customer Results, People Results, Society Results and Business Results). In order to analyze the data of the study, the weighted arithmetic mean and percentages were used.

The results revealed a difference between the actual performance and the maximum performance in terms of the criteria, the highest difference value was in the criterion of Partnerships & Resources, in contrast, the lowest difference value was in the criterion of Processes, Products & Services. The study recommended start applying the EFQM model. So that by periodically

implementing the EFQM model through the initial stages of its assessment in the evaluation, and taking into account the RADAR logic will allow them to achieve excellence and obtain the European Excellence Award.

Mahmoud and El-Sayed (2024) Study title: " **Applying Institutional Excellence Practices in the Educational Directorates of Fayoum Governorate Using the European Excellence Model EFQM.**"

The study aimed to present a proposed framework for developing the performance of educational directorates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the light of the European Excellence Model (EFQM 2020) criteria by identifying the reality of the application of the European Excellence Model criteria, identifying the obstacles of development processes, identifying the requirements of developing performance, and revealing the differences of statistical significance among the estimates of the research sample due to the variables of gender, academic qualification, years of service, and the received training courses.

The researchers used the descriptive survey method with the questionnaire, which was applied to a purposive sample consisted of (312) leaders. The results concluded that the level of application of EFQM 2020 criteria was "moderate", whereas the level of challenges facing development was "high" and also the level of importance of fulfilling the requirements of development. Some of the statistical differences came in favor of some categories. The study concluded with the development of a proposed framework for developing the performance of educational directorates in light of the EFQM 2020 model.

Our review of literature shows that EFQM model in its earlier versions (before EFQM 2025) in the studies available in Arabic language have been applied in various sectors: planning ministries, educational institutions. The most recent version has not been applied owing to their newness. They are also limited to internal assessment and gap analysis and not comprehensive assessment. There were no documented studies on the application of EFQM model in any of its versions in vocational and professional training institutions despite the fact EFQM model provides an integrated framework for quality assurance and performance improvement and despite the existence of several EFQM recognize vocational training providers; emphasizing the interest of research on the application of EFQM Model to vocational training.

Based on this research gap, our study intends to shed light on the EFQM 2025 Model to improve the quality assurance of the Algerian vocational training institutions. The significance of the present study is increasingly supported when considering the content of the dialogue held on 31 May 2023 between a delegation from the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the Algerian Minister of Vocational and Professional Training over the idea of the establishment of an Algerian-European Center of Excellence in the field of vocational and professional

training (Ministry of Vocational and Professional Training, 2025). Thus, the implementation of the 'EFQM 2025' model becomes an urgent necessity, rather than an option, toward the tangible materialisation of this center, and the continued upgrading of the quality of the training system as a whole.

In this context, the underlying research question of this study can be formulated as follows:

- How can the implementation of the EFQM 2025 Model contribute to improving the quality assurance practices of vocational training institutes in Algeria?
- This central question results in the following sub-questions:
 - What problems vocational education and training institutes meet with regard to quality assurance?
 - What are the key elements of the EFQM 2025 Model (i.e. the Pillars, the Criteria and the RADAR logic)? In what way can EFQM 2025 Model provide solutions for quality assurance challenges?
 - What are practical recommendations and suggestions to aid vocational training institutions in their pursuit of excellence?

Study objectives:

Main Objective: Establishing an Integrating Theoretical Model for Clarifying Mechanisms and Reaping Benefits of the EFQM 2025 Model for Support of Quality Assurance and Excellence System in VET Providers.

Sub-Objectives:

To identify current quality assurance problems in the vocational training institutions which the model can solve. To explore the fundamental elements of the EFQM 2025 Model, the Pillars, the Criteria and the RADAR logic. To demonstrate how the EFQM 2025 Model contributes to solving the problems of quality assurance.

To develop practical recommendations and proposals to assist these institutions in embarking on the journey towards institutional excellence.

Significance of the Study:

The importance of this study is at several levels:

Theoretical and empirical significance:

Filling a knowledge gap: Filling a gap in the specialized Arabic literature that presents an in-depth theoretical relationship between the latest versions of the EFQM excellence models and the field of vocational training.

Enriching Managerial Knowledge: It provides a comprehensive theoretical framework illustrating how the holistic model of EFQM 2025 can create a paradigm shift in the philosophy and management of a vocational training center (from a bureaucratic model to excellence and continuous improvement model) .

Upgrading quality models: The study recommends the EFQM 2025 Model as a developed substitute or auxiliary to traditional quality assurance models, which will in turn contribute to the development of administrative thought in this field.

Practical implications:

For vocational training establishments: the study presents a “roadmap” for the practical implementation of the EFQM 2025 Model and the development of their operations, which will improve the quality of their outputs and their ability to satisfy the needs of the labor market which would increase the chances of these institutions being accredited and strengthen their competitive position.

For Policy Makers and Regulatory Authorities: It provides governments responsible for governing the skills- training sector a reference framework that could be utilized for the adoption of accreditation guidelines and assessment programs that would enable them make a transition from a supervisory role to partners in excellence.

For trainees and society: The study ultimately benefits the trainees by improving the quality of the training programs and assuring them that they will acquire the required skills and competencies. The study contributes to supporting their innovations and development of human capital and achieving sustainable development. It increases their chances of obtaining decent work opportunities and excelling in them.

1. Quality Assurance in VET Institutions

Al-Zaeem and Abu Rahma (2021), citing Al-Sawadi (2015), defined it as: "Quality assurance in education is a set of standards and characteristics that should be met or applied to all elements of the educational process in terms of inputs and outputs in a way that responds to the aspirations of learners and the needs of society".

The quality assurance concept for vocational education and training is organised around five thematic areas in which an institution operates according to the European Training Foundation (ETF): **Policies and Governance; Qualification Standards; Delivery Mechanisms; Assessment, Verification and Accreditation; and Data.** It covers standardised areas of measurement and monitoring (indicators) at European and international levels. **It enables a quality culture to be cultivated and**

consolidated and supports institutional sustainability. (European Training Foundation [ETF], n.d.)

Quality assurance is also defined as: the structure and the organization that comprises the responsibilities, the procedures, and the resources necessary to underpin continuous improvement in line with the mission and strategic orientation of the educational institutions, through effective educational leadership that enhances participation, institutional commitment and professional development programmes (Kihli et al., 2017, p. 31).

Accordingly, **quality assurance in vocational education and training** is a holistic regulatory and procedural system incorporating standards and indicators in policies, governance, and resources, encompassing all aspects of the educational process from inputs to outputs, so as to promote continued improvement through participatory, responsible, and efficient educational leadership, which contributes to the devising of professional development programs, establishing a culture of quality, supporting the effectiveness of VET outcomes, and promoting sustainable institutional development, thus meeting the needs of learners, the labor market, and societal demands.

2.The Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM):"EFQM 2025"

a. EFQM chronology

In 1988, the European Foundation for quality Management (EFQM) was founded (Al-Amoudi, 2018) with the aim of improving the international competitiveness of European businesses (Shtiwi, 2024). Following this, in 1991, the first EFQM Model for organizational excellence issued and in 1992 the **EFQM** Award for the organizational excellence was made (Al-Rawi, n.d.). The EFQM Model is periodically reviewed and modified based on: critical review of the model, academic and industry research backed by the scope variety of topics and methods, co-creative and inclusive process based on work values and work ethics in Europe and integrated with the UN sustainable development goals (United Nations Sustainability Development Goals) (Fonseca & Oliveira, 2021)). The EFQM Model had many versions, and the most recent model is the **(EFQM 2025) model**.

b. The Concept of the EFQM Model: (European Foundation for Quality Management)

The EFQM Model is a globally recognized international framework for the management and organizational excellence, within which the relationship between **the "Why" of a company or organization (Purpose & Strategy), the "How" (Execution) and the "What" (Results)** (EFQM, 2019a). The EFQM model helps organizations determine their current positions in achieving performance and determining how to improve the performance from the use of measuring tools,

analysing, and improving operations in the future as desired by aligning future ambitions with the current ways of working and responding to challenges that face the organizations to manage and achieve sustainable performance in an excellent manner (EFQM, 2019b). Moreover, it is a non-prescriptive framework for all organizations (EFQM, 2024), the model objective is "to achieve best practices and enhance the effective performance inside organizations" (Al-Amoudi, 2018, p. 22).

Positioned at the core of the EFQM 2025 Model, improving sustainable performance as well as creating sustainable value are based on the principle of continuity that is the very nature of its three basic pillars: direction, execution and results. Achieving environmental, social and economic sustainability is ensured through a response to global changing circumstances such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, sustainability and resilience of organizations (EFQM, 2024).

In brief: The EFQM Model is an acknowledged international quality and excellence assessment framework for organizations. Through a holistic methodology, which connects the "Why" (Direction) with the "How" (Execution) and the "What" (Results), and based on operational performance and a focus on sustainable results, the EFQM Model is a strategic tool that enables organizations in their professional development and allows them to measure their current position, as well as determine what is available for improvement. In this way, they can align their ways with the demands of digital transformation, artificial intelligence or sustainability, which ensures their permanence over time, creating sustainable economic, social and environmental value.

c. EFQM Model units (structure)

- **The Basic Concepts of Excellence:** They are the principles that make up excellence (Al-Amoudi, 2018).
- **Three Sections and Seven Criteria:** The EFQM model consists of three (03) main sections, which are (**Direction** includes two criteria (**Purpose, Vision & Strategy; Culture & Leadership**), **Execution** includes three criteria (**Engaging Stakeholders; Creating Sustainable Value; Driving Performance & Transformation**) and **Results** includes two criteria (Stakeholder Perceptions; Strategic & Operational Performance)) and each criteria consists of a set of indicators (EFQM, 2024); helping organizations implement the fundamental concepts of excellence through the RADAR methodology (Al-Amoudi, 2018). As shown in the following figure:

Figure (01): Illustrates EFQM 2025 Model



Source: (EFQM, 2024, p. 10)

In EFQM 2025 model, basis of sustainable performance is an explicit Purpose, Vision and Strategy supported by the institutional culture and holistic leadership. Execution focus is on aligning engagement of stakeholders and balancing of their interests, integration of drive performance for today and lead transformation for the future. And results are a direct outcome of stakeholders' satisfaction and perceptions and thus reflective of the degree to which the organization lives up to its purpose and strategy.

The model's diagnostic tool "RADAR": It is a performance definition and monitoring tool of an organization and the basis for assessment. It helps improve organizations elaborate successful strategies (Curpănar, 2021), by providing such organizations with a structured approach to consider the **DIRECTION, EXECUTION, and RESULTS**, to highlight perceived strengths and areas for improvement, and also support organizations in moving from **where they are** to **where they want to be** (EFQM, 2019b). This concept is based on the following main criteria: Reviewing Results, Assessment and the Deployment or methodology's Application (Curpănar, 2021), as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure (02): Demonstrates the core principles of RADAR and the mechanism of RADAR.



Source: Prepared by the two researchers, based on EFQM, 2024, and Curpănar, 2021.

For this reason, although the RADAR diagnostic tool of the EFQM is used to perform the scoring of vocational training institutions, it is also an integrated operational methodology for them. Through its operational orientation compass, it helps them define the results they seek to achieve, the most suitable approaches to achieving these results, how they plan to deploy them efficiently and effectively, and their assessment and review of performance in order to learn and improve. In this sense, RADAR is a living and cyclical system that ensures that performance is geared to satisfying the demands of sustainability and transformation.

3. Quality Assurance Challenges and how to tackle them in light of EFQM 2025 Model and (RADAR)

Quality assurance constitutes one of the biggest problems faced by organizations in their quest for excellence and sustainability, as it involves maintaining a balance between the needs for performance, efficiency and innovation. The EFQM 2025 Model with its accompanying RADAR methodology offers an integrated system for detecting weaknesses and finding improvement possibilities. In this model, **the RADAR matrices have been reduced from three to two guideline matrices** (one for Direction & Execution and another for Results). However, to facilitate the **comparative analysis** with previous models studied in previous works, they are presented separated in the following tables.

A. Quality Assurance Challenges and Ways to Overcome Them in Light of the "Direction" Section: As in the following table:

Table (01): Outlining Quality Assurance Challenges and Mitigation Strategies within the 'Direction' Criterion

Challenge	Impact on EFQM 2025	Impact on "RADAR"	Mitigation Strategies
Absence of a Vision and Strategic Plan	Weakens the "Purpose, Vision & Strategy" criterion.	Deficiency in Approach: Lack of a defined strategic plan.	Absence of a Vision and Strategic Plan: Co-create a long-term strategic plan with clear, objective measures (KPIs), and co-develop the vision and mission with all employee levels to build ownership.
Leadership Instability	Weakens the "Organizational Culture & Leadership" criterion.	Deficiency in Deployment: Inconsistency in the implementation of policies.	Leadership Instability: Strengthen leadership via programs on ethics, behavioral standards, and agility to stabilize performance, enable innovation, and sustain results; anchor direction in clear, enduring policies independent of personnel changes.
Centralized Decision-Making	Hinders "Fostering Creativity & Innovation" and "Promoting Unity."	Deficiency in Deployment: Failure to implement inclusive participation.	Centralized Decision-Making: Broaden stakeholder participation and delegate authority to middle managers to create shared leadership—sustaining performance and quality, speeding decisions, driving continuous improvement, and developing leadership capability and professional growth.
Lack of a Quality-Oriented Culture and Awareness	Weakens the "Steering the Organizational Culture & Fostering Values" sub-criterion.	Deficiency in Approach: Absence of a formal plan for culture-building.	Lack of a Quality-Oriented Culture and Awareness: Embed a quality culture through organization-wide workshops and awareness, and deliver Total Quality training for all roles (administrators, faculty, trainees/contractors).

Source: Compiled by the researchers, drawing on (Al-Maabdi & Mohdar, 2025); (Hammi, 2022); (EFQM, 2024).

The three studies agreed Ali Mahdi and Blasem Hassan (2020), Mahmoud & Al-Sayed (2024) on the existence of a clear gap between practices and what the requirements of excellence according to the EFQM model, which is reflected by the challenges presented in the Direction dimension in the table. The studies of both (Ali & Mahdi, 2020; Mahmoud & Al-Sayed, 2024) have shown how the challenges of absence of a strategic vision and leadership instability led to the weakening of the organizational culture and values, Approach and Deployment according to the RADAR logic.

B. Dimension Two: Quality Assurance Challenges and Overcoming Strategies Related to “Execution” as illustrated in the following table:

Table 2: Quality Assurance Challenges and Overcoming Strategies Related to “Execution”

Challenge	Impact on EFQM 2025	Impact on "RADAR"	Overcoming Strategies
Limited Resources (Financial and Material)	Hinders “Driving Performance & Transformation” and “Creating Sustainable Value.”	Failure in Results: Inability to achieve objectives due to a lack of resources.	Limited Resources (Financial and Material): Expand funding (larger budgets, partnerships, grants); optimize resource management—rationalize spending and prioritize quality assurance needs.
Technological Challenges	Hinders “Leveraging Data” and “Driving Innovation.”	Failure in Approach: Use of outdated technologies.	Technological Challenges: Invest in modern infrastructure and software for learning/management; train staff to use them effectively to improve processes.
Lack of Training and Competencies	Weakens “Attracting, Engaging & Developing Employees.”	Failure in Deployment: Absence of a comprehensive training system.	Lack of Training and Competencies: Provide continuous training for faculty and administrative staff; add incentives (financial and recognition) to drive self-development and commitment to quality.
Weak Participation	Weakens “Engaging	Failure in Deployment:	Weak Participation and Engagement: Establish

Challenge	Impact on EFQM 2025	Impact on "RADAR"	Overcoming Strategies
and Engagement	Stakeholders."	Non-implementation of participation mechanisms.	open, two-way communication; run suggestion systems and cross-functional working groups to improve processes and share ideas.
Resistance to Change	Obstructs "Leading Organisational Transformation."	Failure in Assessment & Review: Leads to a breakdown in "Learning" and "Improvement."	Resistance to Change: Involve stakeholders early and explain personal/organizational benefits; motivate and reward contributors; institutionalize gains to embed a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

Source: Compiled by the researchers, drawing on (Al-Maabdi & Mohdar, 2025); (Hammi, 2022); (EFQM, 2024).

The three studies Ali Mahdi and Blasem Hassan (2020), Mahmoud & Al-Sayed (2024) embody the executional challenges illustrated in the table. They all share the weak execution of excellence practices due to limited resources, lack of competencies, weak engagement and resistance of change. The study of Ali & Mahdi (2020) showed the gap in the criteria of "Partnerships & Resources" and its' obstacle toward attaining effective and sustainable results, which corresponds to the challenge of "Limited Resources" upon which are concerned performance and transformation leadership on EFQM 2025. However, the study of Mahmoud & Al-Sayed (2024) shows that the moderate level of application reflects the lack of training and encouraging participation, this matches with the challenge of "Lack of Competencies" and "Weak Engagement" and their influence in Deployment in the RADAR logic.

C. Dimension Three: Quality Assurance Challenges and Overcoming Strategies Related to "Results"

Table 3: Quality Assurance Challenges and Overcoming Strategies Related to "Results"

Challenge	Impact on EFQM 2025	Impact on "RADAR"	Overcoming Strategies
Low Motivation among Students and Community	Negatively impacts "Stakeholder Perceptions."	Failure in Results: Leads to low satisfaction metrics.	Low Motivation among Students and Community: Build strong parent/community partnerships to boost engagement; offer attractive, labor- market- aligned training programs.
Absence of Clear Criteria for Processes	Leads to weak "Strategic & Operational Performance."	Failure in Assessment & Review: Due to a lack of effective measurement.	Absence of Clear Criteria for Processes: Appoint a quality office to deploy EFQM/RADAR; document KPIs for all processes; run periodic reviews to identify and close gaps.
Legal and Procedural Challenges	Constrains "Strategic Performance."	Failure in Approach: Due to the unsuitability of procedures.	Legal and Procedural Challenges: Update internal regulations to be flexible and pro-innovation; work with legislators to amend obstructive laws for vocational training quality.
Multiple Beneficiaries and Difficulty in Prioritizing Results	Leads to scattered "Results."	Failure in Results: Inability to achieve a balance in outcomes.	Multiple Beneficiaries and Difficulty in Prioritizing Results: Regularly assess needs of students, parents, and employers; use a priority matrix to rank initiatives by impact and importance.

Source: Compiled by the researchers, drawing on (Al-Maabdi & Mohdar, 2025); (Hammi, 2022); (EFQM, 2024).

The three studies Ali Mahdi and Blasem Hassan (2020), Mahmoud & Al-Sayed (2024) show a direct link between the challenges of quality assurance in the "Results" dimension from the table with the determinants of organizational performance in the EFQM model and its RADAR logic. Ali & Mahdi (2020) revealed that the quality gap in the "Partnerships & Resources" criterion reflects quality in the final results of user satisfaction axis and service efficiency, which corresponds to the challenge of "Absence of Clear Criteria for Processes" from the table.

Mahmoud & Al-Sayed (2024) find that the organizational and legal challenges and weak institutional motivation limit its availability to achieve high results in EFQM criteria; more specifically, employee and community satisfaction criterion, which aligns with the challenges of "Low Motivation" and "Multiple Beneficiaries".

Conclusion:

Quality assurance challenges are fundamentally institutional—not merely organizational or technical—shaping institutional culture, leadership strength, and capacity to transform. The EFQM 2025 model, supported by the RADAR tool, shows that overcoming these challenges requires purpose and vision, embedded in a leadership culture and system that align with strategic direction. Effective implementation demands stakeholder engagement, creation of sustainable value, and driving performance and transformation to achieve anticipated results, measured through stakeholder perceptions and strategic and operational performance levels. RADAR diagnoses and guides sound planning for results, deployment of approaches, and continuous assessment and review for improvement. Consequently, RADAR elevates performance in vocational and professional training institutions and turns quality assurance into a continuous path of excellence, leveraging sustainability dynamics and innovation opportunities.

Study Recommendations: The study recommends **adopting the EFQM 2025 European model for excellence after adapting it** to the Algerian environment, using the RADAR methodology for continuous evaluation. The recommendations are explained as follows:

Directions Dimension: Review the strategic vision and link orientations to the requirements of the future labor market and national development. Build a culture of quality and excellence based on the principles of accountability and transparency.

Execution Dimension: Effective stakeholder engagement through advisory platforms and professional councils. Reengineering programs to build technical and soft skills through project-based learning. The recommendations give priority to digital transformation through the adoption of augmented reality and simulation technologies.

Results dimension: develop integrated results to measure satisfaction of all parties and tracking of graduates, linking all results to strategic objectives, analysis of gaps of objectives using the RADAR methodology, to ensure a path of continuous improvement.

These recommendations aim to transform vocational training institutions into **effective drivers of sustainable economic and social development**.

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